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Red Crow Community College

A Case Study

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research project was to discover and describe the social, economic, political and cultural factors which are currently influencing First Nations post-secondary education. Based on personal observations with several First Nations communities over a period of approximately six years, it appeared that First Nations and federal and provincial governments might be at a point where these influences were converging in a significant manner to move post-secondary education in new directions.

The review of the literature has shown that various influences have shaped the nature of education for Aboriginal people in Canada. Government policies directed at the assimilation of First Nations and socio-economic practices of colonization have had a major impact on the survival of Aboriginal cultures and on the corresponding development of First Nations communities. Disagreement between the Government of Canada and First Nations regarding treaty obligations for post-secondary education have had significant impact on the development and delivery of courses and programs to students.

Within the overall framework of a qualitative case study, multiple methods used in this research project included: key informant interviews, student focus group discussions, document analysis, and participant observations. The case study framework and these methods were deemed to be effective in discovering, exploring and describing the current intentions for post-secondary education in a natural setting within the Blackfoot cultural context.

Research questions and methods explored the educational system and structure of Red Crow Community College on the Blood reserve at Standoff Alberta. Analysis of the data supported the emergence of four major themes influencing post-secondary education, namely: the continuing influence of the past, the struggle for cultural survival, striving for autonomy and credibility, and, the struggle for economic support and program funding. Within the parameters of these themes the data gathered in this project has identified population growth, policies of colonization and assimilation, economic instability and unpredictable program funding, threats to the preservation of Blackfoot culture, and

attempts to gain self-reliance and credibility through accreditation as significant factors influencing the development and delivery of post-secondary education.

The data has also indicated the specific manner in which these forces are perceived and experienced at Red Crow Community College. In addition, the data has shown how post-secondary education is perceived as a necessary and constructive force in assuring cultural survival and contributing to the socio-economic development of the community.

Implications considered on the basis of these findings included the need for federal and provincial government education policy decision makers to be cognizant of the need for cooperative and collaborative approaches with First Nations in planning for post-secondary education programs. This research also suggests implications for post-secondary education planners both among First Nations institutions as well as dominant society institutions. A deeper understanding of the influences acting upon program development and delivery could, through informed and sensitive decision making, assist in the design of effective learning opportunities. Similarly, dominant society post-secondary education institutions can benefit from a greater awareness of, and sensitivity to, First Nations post-secondary education issues in order to effect meaningful articulation agreements and effective transitions for students moving back and forth between two different cultures.

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Nature of the Study

<u>Background</u>

In the early autumn of 1990, Mount Royal College completed an agreement with the Blood Tribal Social Development Office and Red Crow Community College to offer a two-year Social Work diploma program to a group of staff from the reserve's Social Development Office. As the Chair of the Social Services department at the time, there was a responsibility, along with the Director of Credit Extension, to ensure that delivery of the program would be feasible, and that participation in this endeavor would be to the mutual benefit of all parties. This involvement began with a trip to the reserve with a colleague from Mount Royal College to meet with project participants. It was in many ways the beginning of a lengthy journey into First Nations post-secondary education.

On this trip, as Department Chair it was necessary to meet with the Director of Red Crow Community College to discuss mechanisms for collaboration and cooperation among programs, but it was an insightful trip in other ways as well. The first challenge was to find the College. The Blood Reserve is located in Standoff, Alberta, approximately thirty kilometers south of Fort Macleod on Highway #2.

Because this was an initial visit to the reserve, it was necessary to stop at a service station at Standoff to ask directions to the College. Representatives of Mount Royal College were told to continue south on the main highway and about 10 kilometers north of Cardston, Alberta, there would be a sign pointing out the turn-off to the College located a few kilometers west of the main highway. The service station attendant suggested "you can't miss it" if you just keep watching for a sign on the right side of the road. Half an hour later the emissaries found themselves in Cardston. Somehow the sign, the turnoff and the College had been missed. Confused, after driving back toward Standoff, the error was soon discovered. The sign indicating the turnoff to the College

had fallen over and was lying inconspicuously by the roadside. Just getting there had been more difficult than anticipated. Perhaps it was a harbinger of things to come.

The College was arrived at approximately two or three kilometers due west of the highway. It was situated, along with the Kainai Board of Education offices, in a large old red brick building that in an earlier era had been St. Mary's Indian Residential School.

The meeting with officials from Red Crow College and the Blood Tribe Social Development office went well. Communication was informal, open and friendly. There appeared to be a genuine commitment on the part of everyone involved to seek solutions to anticipated problems regarding program implementation. It was very encouraging. It became quite clear, however, both during the meeting and later as participants toured the town of Standoff that a very different cultural reality had been entered. Apart from the obvious differences in facilities and the many artifacts displaying Aboriginal culture, there were many things unfamiliar and unknown about the nature and interests of students and the appropriateness of the social work curriculum.

It was immediately obvious that Red Crow Community College was very different from Mount Royal College. The educational resources and support mechanisms which had come to be taken for granted were just not there. It became apparent quite early that the paradigm of education from an urban centre public community college perspective was not an obvious fit for a tribally-controlled college on a First Nations reserve. But the success of the meeting also held out hope that an attitude of cooperation and mutual respect might go a long way toward resolving anticipated future problems.

The intervening years have seen many positive and exciting developments in post-secondary education on the Blood reserve. Several College diploma programs have been successfully offered, an Arts and Science/University Transfer program has been developed, adult upgrading and University/College Entrance Preparation programs are in place. In a relatively brief space of time Red Crow Community College evolved and continues to develop into a vibrant and meaningful center for post-secondary education for members of the Blood reservation. There has been one other minor but significant

change. Now, when one drives to Red Crow Community College there is a new sign standing by the roadside. It is unmistakable, you can't miss it.

This research is an attempt to develop an understanding of the many forces and influences, often contradictory and confusing, which currently shape and direct post-secondary education in a First Nations community. The primary audience for this research is that group of Aboriginal people interested in and responsible for planning and developing post-secondary education for First Nations communities. The primary benefactors are intended to be those First Nations students who feel that "our backs are against the wall, we have no choice, we have to get an education in white society". It is hoped that this case study of Red Crow Community College will be a valuable contribution in ongoing efforts to develop meaningful alternatives and possibilities for post-secondary education.

There has actually been quite an extensive history of involvement between First Nations educational institutions and other Alberta educational institutions, particularly Mount Royal College. Between 1970 and 1975 Mount Royal College offered individual courses at Old Sun College in Gliechen, Alberta in Social Work, English, Geology, and Secretarial Arts. These were not part of an articulated College program, but rather were offered as "general education" courses in response to student interest. From 1982 to 1986 instructional development funds were secured to hire a term-certain project developer to research and develop a Native Social Work training program to be offered at Mount Royal College. This initiative (known as Project Warrior) was discontinued due to a lack of College funding.

Generally throughout the 1980's community Colleges were encouraged by the Alberta Department of Advanced Education to develop a particular academic "territory". Grant MacEwan College in Edmonton established itself as the primary source for First Nations college level education in Alberta. Mount Royal College continued to expand in the area of liberal arts and university transfer programs.

Between 1989 and 1990, the Credit Extension department at Mount Royal College developed and offered an Adult Vocational Training Project to paraprofessionals working

within the school system on the Stoney reserve at Morley, Alberta. Training included all of the social work courses within the two-year diploma program but did not include English or Arts and Science option courses. Students wishing to graduate with a diploma were required at the completion of their studies in Morley to take the remaining non-social work courses at Mount Royal College in Calgary.

In 1991 the Social Work Diploma program, referred to at the beginning of this paper, was initiated at Red Crow College on the Blood reserve at Standoff, Alberta. This year marked a significant increase in educational activity between Mount Royal College and First Nations communities in southern Alberta. The Stoney Shelter Training project was initiated at Morley. This project provided courses in Social Work, Early Childhood Education and Stoney culture to employees of the newly established Stoney Family Shelter. Individual courses in Social Work, Early Childhood Education, English, and Rehabilitation Services, were also offered at Eagle Point, the Adult Education facility, at Morley. The Social Work diploma program was initiated on the Peigan reserve at Brockett, Alberta. The Early Childhood Education Certificate program was offered at Red Crow Community College and subsequently, in 1995, to a group of predominantly First Nations students from Siksika Nation at Strathmore, Alberta. Throughout this period, the Business Administration diploma program was also offered at Red Crow College. An urban Aboriginal Centre was established at Mount Royal College. Known as the Aboriginal Education Project (AEP), its continuing mandate is generally to pursue curriculum development relevant to the educational needs of students living away from their reserve.

Throughout this period of time the researcher was indirectly involved in these activities in the capacity of department Chair as well as through the teaching of three courses to Aboriginal students, one at Old Sun College in Gliechen, and two at Eagle Point, in Morley. There is no doubt that these experiences and exposure to the Blood Tribal community and an involvement with post-secondary education at Red Crow Community College for a period of six years have played a significant role in the decision to pursue this research project.

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Definition of Terms

It is important to note that over the years many different terms have been used in Canada to describe the original inhabitants of this continent. As early as 1763, for example, in addition to referring to the inhabitants of the American colonies as "Our loving Subjects (sic)", the Royal Proclamation of King George specifically makes reference to the "several Nations or Tribes of Indians" (Imai & Hawley, p.295) of the new colonies. Interestingly, it is the legal use of this term which has supported the current conception of Canada's Aboriginal peoples as "First Nations".

The first statutory definition of who was an Indian was enacted in 1850. This definition contained concepts which were both a mixture of biology and culture. In 1876 the *Indian Act* established a set of legal criteria to determine who could retain their Indian status and who could not. The *Manitoba Act* of 1870 established statutory recognition of Metis people. James Frideres (1993) summarizes the discussion on defining who is a Native by stating, "The concept 'Indian' today does not solely reflect social, culture or racial attributes. The distinction between an Indian and a non-Indian is strictly a legal one" (Frideres, 1993, p. 30). Two descriptive terms which are more acceptable to indigenous people today are "Aboriginal" and "First Nations". The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, for example, uses the term "Aboriginal" almost exclusively. The Assembly of First Nations, on the other hand, appears more inclined to use the term "First Nations". This would appear to suggest a political usage for this terminology. According to James Frideres:

The Assembly of First Nations is an organization established by Chiefs to respect the sovereignty of First Nations. It can be described as an organization involved in a process of transition from the statutory origins of the National Indian Brotherhood toward a national political institution that derives its existence and direction exclusively and entirely from the First Nations. (Frideres, 1993, p.300)

The term "First Nations", then, is currently applied to those Aboriginal peoples who share a territory and boundaries which reflect both their historical and contemporary geographical realities. These "geographical realities" can appropriately be thought of as nations. While extensively using the term "Aboriginal", the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) appears to be supportive of this political interpretation and usage:

> The arguments for recognizing that Aboriginal peoples are nations spring from the past and the present. They were nations when they forged military and trade alliances with European nations. They were nations when they signed treaties to share their lands and resources. And they are nations today—in their coherence, their distinctiveness and their understanding of themselves. (RCAP, 1996, p. 23)

It is in the spirit of these interpretations that I have chosen to use the terms "Aboriginal" and "First Nations" throughout this research project. The terms "Native" and "Indian" have been retained in direct quotations from the literature and where they may be deemed historically relevant.

Aboriginal -   for the purposes of this research project refers to four major ethnic groups in Canada including "status Indians who are registered under the Indian Act of Canada; non-status Indians, who have lost or never had status under the Indian Act; Metis, who are of mixed Indian and non-Indian ancestry; and Inuit, who reside mainly in Canada's Arctic, in the Yukon and Northwest Territories, northern Quebec, and Labrador" (Norris, p. 182).

Blood Tribe -   that group of Aboriginal people who are members of the Blood reserve located at Standoff, in southern Alberta.

Credit Program - an educational program of 15 weeks or more in duration, for which the

institution grants academic credit for completion of the course/program.

Eagle Point - an adult post-secondary educational facility located on the Stoney reserve at Morley, Alberta.

Indian - a person who pursuant to the Indian Act is registered as an Indian or is entitled to be registered as an Indian (Indian Act, S.2(1)).

Kainai and Kainaiwa - the traditional names for members of the Blood tribe, and for the purposes of this research project used interchangeably with Blood.

Metis - a person of a mixed Indian-white background, but not registered as Indian under the Indian Act or a person of Indian and any other descent (Metis Nation of Alberta).

Nakoda - the traditional name for members of the Stoney tribe, and for the purposes of this research project used interchangeably with Stoney.

Old Sun College - an adult post-secondary educational facility located on the Blackfoot reserve (Siksika Nation) at Gliechen, Alberta.

Post-secondary education - for the purposes of this project, programs of study offered either to mature adult students or students who have completed their senior matriculation, leading to university transfer or professional career preparation. Post-secondary education programs in First Nations communities have included; adult upgrading, preparation for university, one-year certificate and two-year diploma programs. Red Crow Community College has also articulated joint agreements with the University of Lethbridge in Alberta and Gonzaga University in Washington to provide opportunities for Bachelor and Master's degree programs.

Red Crow Community College – an adult post-secondary educational facility located on
the Blood reserve at Standoff, Alberta.

Reserve – a tract of land, the legal title of which is vested in Her Majesty, that has
been set apart by Her Majesty for the use and benefit of a band (Indian Act,
S.2(1)).

Stoney Tribe – that group of Aboriginal people who are members of either the Bearspaw,
Chiniki, or Wesley bands and live on either the Morley, Big Horn, or Eden
Valley reserves located in the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains.

Siksika – the traditional name for members of the Blackfoot tribe and for the
purposes of this research project used interchangeably with Blackfoot.

Tsuu T'Ina – the traditional name for members of the Sarcee tribe and for the purposes
of this research project used interchangeably with Sarcee.

Western Canada/Western Canadian – for the purposes of this research project is generally
used to refer to the British and American influenced political, social,
economic, and cultural fabric of the three prairie provinces and British
Columbia.

Purpose, Rationale and Significance

Purpose.

The purpose of this research project is to develop an understanding of the
challenges currently facing First Nations post-secondary education and the development of
programs offered in a First Nations community. Specifically, this project will attempt to
identify and describe the social, cultural, economic, and political elements which are
currently influencing the choice of programs at Red Crow Community College on the

Blood reserve at Standoff, Alberta, and the manner in which these programs are being developed and implemented. The importance of examining and understanding these elements is mirrored in the writing of George Keller (1983) who proposed a model of academic strategic planning for colleges and universities in America. He asserts that: "If there has been any major transformation in outlook for higher education in the past few years, it has been in the acute new awareness of the economic, political, and cultural environment surrounding the campuses and of the market for educational services" (Keller, 1983, p. 69). It is assumed throughout this project that social, cultural, economic, and political elements are interrelated and interdependent, exerting a strong influence on the intentions which community members and educational planners hold for education.

Rationale.

Administrators in education are faced with the need to shape and develop programs in response to either stated or perceived social and cultural expectations. This process of shaping intentions into programs must be accomplished within the constraints of a particular economic and political environment. The accomplishment of this goal can become a very complex activity. At the very least it may require an understanding of the intentions and motivations of policy makers, an awareness of the resources available or needed, a sensitivity to the degree of either support or resistance to the goals for education, and an appreciation for the needs of potential learners. The intentions for educational programs within a community are often described, or at least contained, within statements of rationale or philosophy, and are usually further reflected as statements of goals or objectives. Ideally, the stated intentions of an educational program reflect the overt desires of the larger community and/or the political intentions of society. Striving to understand the social, cultural, economic, and political elements which impact on educational activities, then, can require an examination of many interrelated and obvious as well as less obvious underlying factors. It is an assumption of this project that First Nations education is at least as influenced by these elements as are the education activities

of dominant society. This project strives to identify the specific intentions for First Nations post-secondary education and the influences acting upon current programs.

Beneath the surface of educational programs are unstated intentions, inferred directions, unknown accommodations and compromises. Sometimes compromise is required of those developing the program, sometimes by those responsible for implementing it, sometimes by both parties. As one illustration, Fullan and Park (1981) suggest that this process of accommodation and compromise is necessitated by the differences that exist in the education system between the "intentions" of an educational policy as directed by the Ministry of Education and the "perceptions" of the policy as received and interpreted by school principles and classroom teachers. Moreover, there are also the personal aspirations and short and long range goals of the participants in the program that come to bear on how well it may be received. Often these covert aspects can be as compelling for educational administrators as the program itself.

Reflecting upon the intentions contained in public policies as an expression of the will of a community, Lorne Downey (1988) emphasises the role of values and desires as "essential" characteristics of public policy.

> A public policy is an authoritative allocation or choice from among competing values or desires - which is to say, the choice is made by a legal authority and, presumably, reflects the collective values or the dominant values of the society in which the policy is to be operative.
>
> A policy is a declaration of intent, a major guideline - which is to say that policies deal in major directions, not in specific regulations. (Downey, 1988, p. 54)

Where there is competition between values and choice made between them by a legal authority, it should not be surprising that the values of minority groups might suffer, particularly in a socio-economic atmosphere of misunderstanding and potential exploitation. As the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) have described them, government policies toward Aboriginal people have been developed and

Indian residential school in the Yukon "Education is a cultural process", and "Education, in every cultural setting, is an instrument for survival. It is also an instrument for adaptation and change. To understand education we must study it as it is—embedded in the culture of which it is an integral part and which it serves" (King, 1967, p. v). It is a credit to research done in a natural setting that this particular case study has remained significant and relevant for such a lengthy period of time.

In her discussion of the Mount Currie Teacher Education Program, June Wyatt (1990) cautions us to keep in mind that: "The assertion is frequently made that Native people, particularly members of the younger generation, have lost their culture. This assertion arises when Native culture is identified as traditional culture. Native culture of course includes traditional life, but it encompasses contemporary adaptive patterns as well" (Wyatt, 1990, p. 388). She continues to point out that within their program "the Board and student teachers want to promote the development of contemporary Native culture" (Wyatt, 1990, p. 389). Barbara Burnaby (1990) reminds us that there is a considerable amount of information about First Nations cultures available. The problem, according to her is that "Researchers and educators often do not know what to look for until they have found it. . . . social scientists have tended to look for the exotic aspects rather than concentrate . . . on mechanisms in Native cultures for adaptation and change. More study of the effects of schooling in all types of Native societies would be valuable" (Burnaby, 1990, p. 196, 197). Keeping these cautions in mind, it has been the intention of this research project to examine, describe, and discuss post-secondary education as much as possible as it exists within the current First Nations cultural context.

The First Nations House of Learning Research Team (1995) has stated that description and analysis of the current state of First Nations post-secondary education is lacking, information about programs in Canada is needed, and records of student enrolment and involvement are inadequate. In addition, they suggest that "there is a need for a case-history literature on which to base generalization about the more recent era: the account of the efforts of individual First Nations people to enter higher education, from the late 1930's to the early 1970's, is a literature that we should be producing now" (First

Nations House of Learning Research Team, 1995, p. 167). Mike Mountain Horse (1989) wrote his account of the Blood culture and his experiences as a Native Canadian during the 1920's. Joseph Dion, a Cree statesman, wrote an account of his experiences in the late 1910's. "There is little published in the way of life-history data and case study about the relatively small cohort of people who faced entrenched bureaucracies, restrictive policies, and negative attitudes, to become involved in higher education" (First Nations House of Learning Research Team, 1995, p. 168). Many among this 'relatively small cohort' have been students in the post-secondary education programs at Red Crow Community College on the Blood reserve.

Colonization and Government Policies.

One of the more significant characteristics (for Aboriginal people at least) of the relationship between First Nations communities and Canadian governments has been the experience of colonization (Barman, Hebert & McCaskill, 1986; Brookes, 1991; Calliou, 1995; Frideres, 1993; Haig-Brown, 1995; Hedican, 1995; Oppelt, 1990; Stevenson, 1991; Ward, 1992; Wotherspoon, 1991). The complexities of this form of economic and political control and the continuing impact of colonization are examined in greater depth in the review of the literature. At this point it is important to note, as suggested by Albert Memmi (1991) and Frantz Fanon (1993), that colonization is a politically supported form of economic exploitation. Colonization has been condemned by Aboriginal people. As the literature will show, it began on this continent at least as early as the 18th century with a paternalistic attitude that Aboriginal people needed to be protected. During the 19th and 20th centuries the practice of colonization was marked by policies of domination, assimilation and cultural genocide. These were most blatantly embodied in the practices of Indian residential schools and by legal sanctions such as the following:

In 1884, the Potlatch ceremony, central to the cultures of west coast Aboriginal nations, was outlawed. In 1885, the sun dance, central to the cultures of prairie Aboriginal nations, was outlawed. Participation was a criminal offence. In 1885,

the Department of Indian Affairs instituted a pass system . . . the directives were interpreted to mean that no Aboriginal person could leave the reserve without permission from the Indian agent. Reserves were beginning to resemble prisons. (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996, p. 14,15)

The impact of practices such as these and the changing face of colonization, or neo-colonization as it was recently described in a conversation with a prominent leader in First Nations education, continue as socio-economic and political influences on educational programs and activities today. One of the purposes of this research is to explore the nature and extent of these, and other related cultural influences.

Government Policies and Post-Secondary Education.

An examination and understanding of the policy positions of the federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) is very important to gaining insight into First Nations post-secondary education programs and initiatives. Post-secondary education is not specifically mentioned or included within existing treaties between Aboriginal peoples and the Government of Canada. What programs there have been, and currently exist, have been provided for under the policies of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND). As a result, First Nations post-secondary education is susceptible and potentially vulnerable to all of the influences mentioned earlier. This vulnerability became clearly obvious in the events of 1989, when the Government of Canada without consultation with Aboriginal leaders and arbitrarily through the DIAND threatened to eliminate programs and reduce funding.

In addition, the possibility of a transfer of responsibility for First Nations post-secondary education from the federal to the provincial government has recently been considered. This prospect, and its implications for Aboriginal communities, is examined in depth in the works of Long and Boldt (1988) and Frideres (1993) among others. The potential transfer to, and/or inclusion of, the Alberta Department of Advanced Education, would mean the involvement of more politicians and government departments, each with

its own set of policies, regulations and expectations. As a result, there would be that many more personal, political, and societal aspirations and intentions to inform the ongoing development of policies and programs for First Nations peoples. In these discussions First Nations education leaders are keenly aware that post-secondary education is not protected under the Indian Act.

In summary, this preliminary examination of issues in relation to First Nations education has explored the possibility that First Nations education planners and community leaders are faced with:

- a legacy of colonization and government policies of assimilation
- the lingering effects of economic and political control
- aspirations for greater autonomy and "self government"
- a need for accurate and up-to-date student demographic information
- a need for case study research in education
- a need to study the effects of all types of schooling in First Nations communities

Each of these, and their significance for education, will be examined in greater depth in Chapter 2.

Problem Statement

What influence, if any, do each of these issues have on the emergence of First Nations post-secondary education programs? To what extent are they interconnected and interdependent with the collective values and desires of First Nations students and educators? The following statement has been developed to describe the research problem for investigation by this study.

What are the forces and influences currently acting upon First Nations post-secondary education? How are these perceived by participants in that system?

How are these reflected among the stated intentions for First Nations post-secondary education?

At the onset of this research project, concepts such as "purposes", "goals and objectives", "policies", "trends", and "problems and issues" were explored and considered. In many planning documents intentions are either stated or inferred in a "mission" statement. While they may be expressed relatively clearly in planning documents, intentions are often not articulated as clearly in personal interviews or in focus group discussions. It was only after conducting the bulk of the literature review and completing the majority of the interviews with First Nations people that the broader concept of intentionality was settled on as a descriptive aspect of the research problem. It was felt that this would more readily accommodate an analysis of the complexity of social, cultural, economic and political data which was gathered.

While intentions may be described unequivocally in mission statements and statements of purposes for programs, it is generally acknowledged that the best of intentions "oft go astray". Invariably there are forces and influences, both overt and covert, affecting the development and implementation of educational programs and impacting both stated and implied intentions. The intentions for educational programs appear to become articulated, translated, shaped, and reshaped as a consequence of many interrelated factors. In order to strive for a more clear understanding of the intentions for First Nations post-secondary education, it would appear to be helpful to examine underlying as well as overt assumptions and attitudes and opinions about those forces and influences which may currently be affecting educational planning.

Force and Influence.

The term "force" as used in this project is meant to be value neutral, that is, neither positive nor negative in its connotation. Nor is this term meant as a description of any style of leadership, either Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal. Rather, the terms "forces and

influences currently affecting First Nations", are used in the manner described by Kurt Lewin and the technique which he developed known as force field analysis.

> At the heart of his [Lewin's] "field theory" is the conception that stability within a social system is a *dynamic* rather than a static condition. Seeming stability among the elements of a social system is, in this view, the result of opposing and countervailing "forces" that continuously operate to produce what we *experience* as stability. Change occurs when the forces shift, thus causing a disruption in the system's equilibrium. (Kettner, Daley, & Nichols, 1985, p. 105)

According to this theory, a number of contending forces operate in a given "field" or arena of action. Some of these forces move a system or an organization toward its goal, while other forces move the system away from its goal. A state of tension exists, producing a dynamic situation as forces act upon one another, though at any given moment these forces are in relative balance.

In exploring the relationship between "force" and "influence", it is important to keep in mind that they are closely related terms. The Oxford dictionary describes them as synonymous. The Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure explained, in the early 1900's, "Within the same language, all words used to express related ideas limit each other reciprocally; synonyms . . . have value only through their opposition" (cited in Lemert, 1993, p. 168). When applied to human endeavor, therefore, it may be important to examine the subtle distinction to be made between these synonymous terms.

The nature of "force" is that it is compelling—it requires a response of one type or another. It cannot be ignored. An essential quality of force, then, is power. In a philosophical discussion of the process of administration (which he distinguishes from management), Hodgkinson (1978) suggests, in the language of his time, that "the power of men over men (sic) is fundamental to administration" (Hodgkinson, 1978, p. 81).

Administration seeks the accomplishment of collective ends. It is the shaping of these ends through the formulation of policy and the deployment of means through the technology of management. The achievement of ends requires power. Simply defined, power is the ability to gain ends. . . . Administrative power can be further defined as the ability to achieve ends through others. (Hodgkinson, 1978, p. 81)

The nature of "influence" is that it is inviting—it <u>encourages</u> or invites a response of one type or another. In a sense, while influences may be just as compelling as forces in bringing about change, their power is derived from the fact that they are generally seductive in nature. Both forces and influences, often operating in tandem, are significant in shaping the articulation and translation of the intentions of an organization. This is the process of policy formulation and deployment of which Hodgkinson (1978) speaks. And, as he suggests, striving to achieve these ends requires some motive force or power. First Nations educators appear to have been frequently exposed to, and have become well versed in, the uses of power in policy formulation and deployment.

Celia Haig-Brown (1995) begins her case study of the Native Education Centre in Vancouver with an examination of the concept of power. "Power relations are integral to struggles between First Nations and non-Native society as well as among First Nations people themselves; educational practices are one of the ways in which power relations have been established and circulated" (Haig-Brown, 1995, p. 16). These concepts can be quite helpful when considering the many influences on First Nations education, particularly in consideration of the manner in which they may be either "driving forces . . . those variables that, when activated or enhanced, promote or support", or "restraining forces . . . those variables that, when activated or enhanced, hinder or create resistance" (Kettner, Daley, & Nichols, p. 105).

It is possible that assimilation into mainstream Western Canadian society might be experienced by First Nations people as an influence, perhaps even a powerful influence in its seductiveness. The promise of education, a career, quality health care, quality of life, may all seem very attractive. The cultural genocide inherent in not being allowed to speak

your language, in being taken from your home and family and placed into an institution where you are not allowed to practice your customs and culture, are more than influences. They are representative of forces which compel a response.

In addition to examples of force and influence which may be considered to be negative by Aboriginal people, Haig-Brown (1995) refers to the work of Michel Foucault to remind us that force and power can also be positive. "Subsequently he [Foucault] posits one of his major thesis: that power is not merely a 'force that says no' but is also a force which 'traverses and produces things [-] it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, and produces discourse" (Haig-Brown, 1995, p. 17). The manner in which the concept of force has been explored and applied in the research literature has been examined in greater depth in the literature review in Chapter 2. Clearly, the exploration of intentionality in educational planning is a very complex endeavor, requiring a methodology which can embrace complexity.

Research Questions

A case study research design (Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Merriam, 1988) was selected to explore this research problem. As a qualitative method, this approach is constructive and appropriate because it allows "the description of phenomena and events in an attempt to understand and explain them" (Krathwohl, 1993, p. 311). As he and other authors (Lincoln & Guba, 1989; Lancy, 1993; Wiersma, 1995) suggest "Qualitative methods are inductive: they let the problem emerge from the data or remain open to interpretations of the problem different from those held initially." (Krathwohl, 1993, p. 311). Wiersma (1995) and Lancy (1993) both speak of the value of viewing phenomena holistically, of operating within a natural setting and maintaining an openness about what is being observed. "Such a researcher tries to go into the field with an open mind, to carry out investigations in which the conclusions are post hoc rather than a priori." (Lancy, 1993, p. 9), and "a priori assumptions, and certainly a priori conclusions, are to be avoided in favor of post hoc conclusions" (Wiersma, 1995, p. 212). While this may be a valuable ideal, in reality "a priori" assumptions are likely impossible to avoid. How then does one

keep an open mind when engaged in inquiry in a natural setting? This ideal can be approached by applying a number of checks and balances common to qualitative research. The first of these is to acknowledge that the researcher does begin with some assumptions. These assumptions should be identified and examined. As a reflective practitioner, it is necessary for the researcher to review his/her initial assumptions throughout the project to assure that it is the emerging data which is shaping the analysis and conclusions. A second technique to encourage openness is the use of multiple sources of data. Described as triangulation, this technique builds an opportunity for the emergence of contradictory and/ or competing explanations, rendering it more difficult for the researcher to simply seek out explanations which confirm the initial assumptions. A third mechanism helpful in striving for openness, is to subject the research, while in progress as well as at its conclusion, to various forms of peer review. For a dissertation such as this, peer review can include critical formative input from the research supervisor and the supervising committee, as well as colleagues and research participants. Indeed, each of these mechanisms was put into place within the framework of this research study.

Keeping the previous admonitions about the value of having an open mind, then, it is important to note that the following questions were intended as general areas for exploration rather than as a rigid interview schedule as "neither the exact wording, nor the order of questions is determined ahead of time. This format allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic" (Merriam, 1988, p. 74).

In order to explore the stated research problem, the following general areas were initially considered. These and related questions were previously examined in a pilot study conducted in a different First Nations community a year earlier. This provided an opportunity to test the relevance and appropriateness of these areas.

Educational System/Structure.
- What are the purposes of the Blood tribe for post-secondary education?

- How has Red Crow Community College responded to the purposes for post-secondary education?

- To what extent are these purposes and responses consistent with provincial and federal intentions for post-secondary education?

- What is the current nature of post-secondary education at Red Crow College? What are the programs? How did they come about? What needs are they intended to meet?

- How is educational leadership provided? What is the management structure and how is the community involved?

- Who are the users of the program? What are the demographic characteristics of students?

Program Planning/Development.

- How was the current post-secondary educational program developed? Who was involved? What are the goals and objectives of this program? To what extent have these objectives been modified to reflect community goals?

- How are local educational needs assessed? What are the mechanisms for gaining feedback concerning current programs?

- What are the long range plans for post-secondary education?

- How are education program planning decisions made? Who participates in planning? What is the structure and/or mechanism for program implementation?

- What are the factors (social, economic, political, cultural) which have an impact on program planning?

- What are the current obstacles facing educational program development, change, and implementation?

As this study progressed many interesting additional areas emerged, such as; legal interpretations of the Indian Act and the Canadian Constitution, Aboriginal self-government and federal policies of "devolution" of control. While these provided

tempting distractions, they have been considered only in terms of their impact on the main focus of this study. In order to avoid becoming side-tracked, it frequently became necessary to refocus on the two main areas under investigation, namely, the First Nations post-secondary education system and structure within this community and its relation to program planning and development.

Potential Benefits

Research into all aspects of First Nations education is considered by some writers, such as Terry Wotherspoon (1991), to be of considerable importance for Aboriginal people.

> In the absence of a critical understanding of the mechanisms involved in social and educational change, Indian autonomy may be accomplished to the detriment of large proportions of the indigenous population who may have restricted access to meaningful educational and occupational opportunities. (Wotherspoon, 1991, p. 250)

Among the potential benefits of this project for Red Crow College is the possibility that the results will help First Nations post-secondary education planners to further clarify their goals and objectives for program development and implementation. In addition, this exploration into the meaning of educational programs for Aboriginal people may contribute to both short and long-term educational planning. It is also possible that participation in the project and dissemination of the results both to the academic community and to members of the Blood reserve may serve to enhance the public image of Red Crow College, its staff, and its students.

The potential significance of this research is that the results may help to inform educational planners from different cultures. It is possible, and perhaps necessary for Western Canadian educators to develop a greater sensitivity to First Nations community values and learning needs. In addition, heightened awareness of Aboriginal learning styles

and appreciation for First Nations traditional teaching methods will hopefully provide valuable insight for those involved in efforts to build bridges between the two cultures.

<u>Choice of Site</u>

The Blood reserve is located in southern Alberta. It is among the largest reserves in Canada both in population and in size. According to information gathered by James Frideres (1993) there are 592 Indian bands in Canada living on approximately 2241 reserves. Of these bands, only eleven are considered to be very large with 2000 or more members. The population on the Blood reserve in 1995 was 8156. Reserves in Canada can vary in size from a few hectares in total to a maximum of 71.5 hectares per person. The Blood reserve in Alberta encompasses a total of approximately 900 square kilometers. As described by Mike Mountain Horse (1989), the Blood tribe became signatories to Treaty 7 in 1877.

> The Blood Indian tribe, whose reserve lies north of Cardston in Alberta, comprises a component part in the great Blackfoot Indian Confederacy. In the year 1877 the federal administration of Canada decided to negotiate and conclude a treaty with these plains Indians of Western Canada. September 17th of that memorable year saw various western tribes under their respective chiefs, converging on Blackfoot crossing to meet the Queen Mother's representatives in council. . . . Red Crow, head chief of the Blood tribe, arose to deliver his famous eloquent speech favouring acquiescence by his tribe to the stipulations of the treaty as interpreted to them. (Mountain Horse, 1989, p. 1)

Red Crow Community College on the Blood reserve was selected for this research because: they have a proven track record for delivering First Nations post-secondary education programs during the past decade; the working relationship between Mount Royal College and the President at Red Crow College for the past six years has been both constructive and productive; and there has been an on-going relationship through advising

and consulting, with students, staff, and instructors who have participated in programs at this institution. This site offered as advantages: a sufficient number of sources of information and continuity over time of data; stable educational leadership; and a strong commitment to First Nations post-secondary education.

Red Crow Community College

Philosophy, Mission and Purpose.

From its humble beginnings Red Crow Community College has grown from a single classroom to being affiliated as an associate member with the American Indian Higher Education Consortium, an organization which involves 30 Indian Colleges in the United States and Canada.

The parameters established for College programs are outlined in the Blood Tribe Adult Education Bylaws as follows:

> In regard to educational matters, the Board of Governors shall be specifically responsible for establishing and maintaining adult education programs, vocational and technical education programs, post secondary education, continuing and community education programs, an alternate school for youth between the ages of seventeen (17) and twenty-one (21) years and also the management of the Blood Tribe Post Secondary Student Support Program. (Red Crow Community College Orientation Brief, 1997, p. 38)

As stated in the 1996/1997 Student Handbook and Program Calendar:

> The mission of the Red Crow Board of Governors is to provide quality educational/training opportunities to adult Indian and non-Indian residents and employees of the Kainaiwa Reserve and surrounding areas. The curriculum will reflect identified needs and interests of these residents by providing adult basic education, vocational education, academic, cultural and community interest programs, courses, seminars, workshops, activities and events. Assistance will be

provided to tribal institutions and departments in staff, planning and research, and evaluation services according to identified needs. The educational/training system will provide opportunities for individual self improvement for survival in a rapidly changing and technological world, and yet maintain the integrity of the Kainaiwa people. (Red Crow Community College, 1996, p. 3)

Philosophy.

The Red Crow Board of Governors proposes a comprehensive plan with curriculum designed to meet the special needs of the Kainaiwa of the Blackfoot Nation. While the system does not intend to exclude anyone, and maintains an "open door" policy, its primary purpose is to meet the needs of the Blackfoot population.

Purposes.

The Red Crow Board of Governors is designed to meet the following five interrelated purposes which are derived from the Mission Statement and Philosophy of the System.

1. Meeting tribal training and economic development needs,
2. Assisting with Kainaiwa cultural development,
3. Developing student academics,
4. Promoting Indian resident self-development, and
5. Planning for future facilities to meet tribal needs.

   Within College documents, Red Crow Community College has identified two major functions for itself, namely -

1. As designated by Chief and Council, Red Crow College is the center of adult education on the reserve. In 1996, $1,995,896 was available to fund this operation.
2. Red Crow College also administers the Post-Secondary Education Program. In 1996, $4,701,404 was available to fund this operation.

Red Crow Community College is situated on the traditional home of the Kainaiwa (Kainai) Indians. With the Majestic Rocky Mountains as a backdrop adult Indian and non-Indian residents and employees of the Kainaiwa Reserve (Kainaisksahko) and surrounding areas are provided with educational/training opportunities. Initiated under the direction of the Kainaiwa Education Committee, in September of 1986 Red Crow Community College opened its doors and offered a University/College Preparation Course Program (U.C.E.P.P.) which consisted of two High School courses, one University of Lethbridge course and a study skills component. Administration of the program was under the Kainaiwa Education Department.

Facilities.

The College operates in the building which was originally the St. Mary's Residential School, constructed in 1917. This is a three story brick and concrete structure, which has been adapted for use by the College and the Kainai Board of Education. There are 10 classrooms, with a capacity, on average, of 30 students per room. In addition, there are 8 rooms which are used for smaller meetings and seminars. Administrative space, including facilities for a receptionist, secretary, and administrative assistant is also available.

The space formerly used as the chapel has been converted for use by the college as a library. Although a new location for the library has been established, equipment is not on order and, according to the College Librarian, the present 8,000 volumes are roughly 12,000 short of adequate of the minimum expected for a library to serve the Red Crow College student body.

The former College gymnasium has deteriorated to a stage requiring major renovations to be considered safe for use. However, a gymnasium adjacent to the new residence which needs some repair may be available for use by the College in the future.

The cafeteria is modern, well equipped and provides food service during the day for the students at the college. Food services are currently not available for evening students.

A laboratory is located on the second floor, adjacent to the classroom used for instruction in Biology and Science. This space is rather limited and appears to lack comprehensive equipment. A separate laboratory has been established for Biology instruction on the third floor.

A new student residence building opened on June 1, 1997. Located about four miles south west of Red Crow College it was originally constructed in 1924 by the Anglican Church as the St. Paul Residential School. It has been completely renovated to consist of 39 suites for use by Red Crow College students and family. The suites are not furnished. Day care facilities, a laundry area, meeting and social rooms and a computer area are all included in the residence.

The College administrative structure is almost completely program oriented, rather than management oriented, with one part-time accountant and two support staff responsible for all financial aspects of the College operations (in 1996, $6,697,300). In comparison, there are currently seven coordinators of various educational programs. This type of organizational structure may have at least one advantage. Lines of communication are very short, leading directly from the program coordinators to the president. On the other hand, the president appears to have a very limited number of support staff to draw upon to forecast, plan, or assist with routine decisions. The president must either fulfil all the administrative functions necessary or delegate these responsibilities to coordinators already fully occupied with programs.

This structure probably reflects the fact that the college receives the majority of its income as education project grant money directed to specific programs. There appears to be little, if any, funding for planning, program, and staff development.

Programs.

Presently numerous courses are offered such as the University/College Entrance Program (UCEPP), the Job Entry Training Programs, the Social Work Program and University Transfer courses which are offered by the University of Lethbridge and Mount

Royal College. At Red Crow College there is a significant emphasis on the two upgrading programs being offered. For various reasons suggested in the literature review previous education systems have not been complimentary to the learning needs of aboriginal students and have not produced large numbers of high school graduates. The two upgrading programs offered at Red Crow Community College prepare students for post-secondary opportunities for which they would not have otherwise been eligible. Red Crow College has also developed a support system with other tribal organizations which enables motivated students to successfully complete their high school equivalencies. The main upgrading programs of presently provided by Red Crow Community College are as follows:

The University/ College Entrance Preparation program (UCEPP).

This program prepares students to complete their grade 11 and 12 subjects either to fulfil the requirements of advanced diplomas or to raise their grade point average in order to meet the admission requirements of mainstream colleges and universities.

Adult Upgrading.

This program provides the upgrading of Kainaiwa Tribe adults from grade 0-11. This is also considered a Pre-vocational Training Program as most present day training requires a minimum of grade 11 admission.

Alternate School.

Approximately 50% of Kainaiwa Tribe youth between the ages of 17 and 21 have not completed a high school diploma, are unemployed, and are not attending training/ educational programs. The Alternate School program is an effort to retrieve what has been described as high risk youth and assist them to obtain the necessary upgrading to qualify for employment training or further education. A recent project proposal which has been approved for Cooperative Education will target students of the Alternate School.

Life Skills.

Many Kainaiwa Tribe adults have been on social assistance and unemployed for several years. The experiences of First Nations educators have shown that for such persons to be successful in their return to educational endeavours they require extensive training in life skills. Therefore this program is offered by Red Crow Community College to those adults referred to the program by other departments and entities of the Kainaiwa. Many of the new upgrading students are graduates of this program.

Arts & Science Transfer Program.

Programs in this area in the past have included; Native American Studies, diploma programs in Social Work, Early Childhood Education, and Business Administration offered in conjunction with Mount Royal College. Currently, Arts & Science university transfer courses are being offered in English, Sociology, Psychology, Geography, and Computer Science. In addition to completion of the diploma program, the university transfer courses will fulfil admission requirements for the Bachelor of Social Work degree offered by the University of Calgary at the Lethbridge University campus, and for the Bachelor of Education degree offered by the University of Lethbridge.

Masters Degree Program (Gonzaga Off-Campus).

Red Crow Community College has given the opportunity to 17 individuals, 12 of whom are Blood members to obtain their Masters degree through an off-campus arrangement with Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington, USA. This program began in September, 1995 and all those involved in the program completed it in June of 1997. Three Red Crow Community College counsellors and three instructors have taken advantage of the program, as have two other instructors from Pincher Creek and Cardston, respectively. This is a full-time program operating at Red Crow College under Gonzaga University guidelines. The courses recently offered have been in the areas of Educational Psychology with a specialization in student counselling.

Human Resources

    Administrative Positions.

    The Red Crow Community College Board of Governors was established by The Blood Tribe Adult Education Bylaw approved by Chief and Council on March 13, 1995. The Board is comprised of five voting members selected as follows:

a. A Board of Director of the Blood Tribe Education Society as selected annually by the majority vote of the Board of Directors of that society;

b. A Council member of the Blood Indian Tribe as appointed annually by the Chief of the Blood Tribe Council;

c. A student representative of the student body receiving educational services as provided by the Board of Governors, and selected by annual election by those students receiving educational services;

d. An elder of the Blood Tribe as selected by the Elder's Advisory Committee;

e. A member at large from the Blood Tribe elected by the members of the Blood Tribe in accordance with the election provisions of the Blood Tribe Education Society By-Laws.

    The College president reports to the board and is also a member of the board. The President is the Chief Executive Officer of the College. With the rapid growth of Red Crow Community College the need arose for a person to coordinate the inception of new programs and maintain existing ones. Marie Smallface-Marule assumed her role as the President of Red Crow Community College on January 6, 1992, and brought with her an extensive background in education at the Post-secondary level. In addition, she was one of the authors of the document which has come to have so much impact on First Nations education, namely: *Indian Control of Indian Education*. In his examination of Aboriginal leadership in Canada, Peter McFarlane (1996) notes that:

When George Manuel took over as president of the NIB, he hired Marie Smallface Marule, a Blackfoot Indian who had spent three years working in Africa, as his executive director. Marie Marule was given almost complete power over the organization when George Manuel was absent, and he relied on her as a primary source of political advice. (McFarlane, 1996, p. 158)

The administration is organized into 10 departments, each managed by a senior staff member, reporting directly to the president. The departments are program specific, with each senior staff member responsible for all phases of the program. Job descriptions of all staff members have been developed. In brief, the duties of program coordinators and other management personnel are as follows -

1.   Registrar/Coordinator of the University College Entrance Preparation Program (UCEPP) - is responsible for all student records, for communication with other institutions delivering programs at the College and for administration of the UCEPP. The Registrar also acts as chief operating officer in the absence of the president.

2.   Coordinator/Instructor of the Kanai Cooperative Community Learning Partnership Program (KCCLP) - coordinates and provides leadership for this pilot project, organizes student work experience, counselling and support services - generally in charge of all phases of the program.

3.   Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) Coordinator - is responsible for the selection process to determine which applicants are to receive financial support. This program provides student support services, including finances and counselling for all students enrolled in post-secondary institutions either on or off Campus.

4.   Upgrading Coordinator – coordinates the operation of the academic upgrading program in co-operation with the instructors, including student counselling, arranging for work experience, recruiting students and any other facets of the program.

5.   Arts and Sciences Program Director – coordinates and supervises the Arts and Sciences programs delivered by other institutions on Red Crow College Campus, ensures that student registration forms are completed and submitted on time and all necessary academic records are maintained.

6.   Librarian – the library staff consists of one part-time librarian and a full-time library assistant. The library is presently in the final planning stages of a move to new space. All books presently in the collection have been catalogued, bar codes affixed and are targeted for entry in the library computer by summer, 1997.

7.   Senior Finance Officer – generally responsible to the president for all financial records and reports, ensuring financial operations are carried out in accordance with board approved policies and regulations, assists in budget preparation and prepares reports as required .

8.   Other Staff – Each coordinator is responsible for the instructional and counselling staff who work within the program. Administrative staff are supervised by the executive secretary who reports directly to the president.

9.   Operations and Maintenance Director – a new position, will be responsible for the operation and maintenance of both the main Red Crow structure and the student residence.

10.   Electronic Upgrading Consultant – duties of this position are divided between providing instruction and computer related areas such as developing a three year plan for

Red Crow Community College computer and electronic and software requirements, in-service staff training and establishing the Red Crow computer network and the connection with the Treaty 7 net server.

Personnel Policies.

Personnel policies for non-instructional staff are set forth in the Kainaiwa Board of Education Personnel Policies and Procedures. In the case of instructional and supervisory staff, each Red Crow employee position has a job description on file, signed by the incumbent and the appropriate supervisor. These agreements contain some provisions regarding terms of employment which take precedence over all other policies and procedures.

Student Population

Student enrolments at the College have enjoyed a steady increase over the years. At the time of this writing a total of 334 students were actively engaged in the following programs.

Table 1

Student Population on Campus

RCCC ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS	FALL 1996
University/College Entrance Preparation Program	59
Upgrading (Introductory, Intermediate, Advanced)	90
KCCLP (Alternate School, Grades 1-12)	75
Arts and Science Programs and Courses	110

In a report prepared by Red Crow Community College in 1994 concerning the adult educational training needs of Blood tribe members, a survey was distributed to 1000 members of the community. The completed and returned surveys numbered an impressive

702 respondents. From this survey data a picture of the 'average' Red Crow Community College student was compiled.

The average student is female, between 27 - 31 years of age, living common-law with two dependants, most likely in Standoff, unemployed, with a Grade ten education. Any post-secondary schooling would be limited to U.C.E.P.P., probably at Red Crow. More likely, she is unable to complete the program due to insufficient financial support, commitment to her family, or personal problems. Although only one semester of school has been completed, she would like to finish the program. She prefers to attend classes on the reserve because it's closer to home, more convenient and less expensive. She feels a desire to be with her own people.

Her goal in furthering her education is acquiring training in computers, management, or social work. It is unlikely she has ever had any training in a trade or apprenticeship program. She would like to attend school while she is employed. Transportation doesn't seem to be a problem but she needs a reliable daycare service for her children for the time being. (Red Crow Community College, October, 1994, p. 3)

Student Policies.
There are three sources for student policies.

1.   Students enrolled in courses/programs offered on Red Crow College Campus receive a Student Handbook and Program Calendar. The college policies regarding students are set forth commencing on page 30 of this Handbook. The policies end with a memorandum of understanding to be completed and signed by the student.

2.   Students enrolled in the Post-Secondary Student Support Program receive an additional PSSSP Student Handbook which covers all aspects of this program, which also requires a signed Memorandum of Understanding.

3.   Student Residence - students accepted into the new residence will receive a schedule of fees, rules and regulations. It is anticipated that this schedule will be available prior to June 1,1997.

Timetable

The weekly timetable for the Upgrading Programs is organized into four 75 minute periods and one 90 minute period. The year is divided into three semesters:

August 26 - December 20   January 6 - March 14   March 17 - June 18

The weekly timetable for the UCEPP is divided into five 90 minute periods. The year is divided into two semesters:

August 26 - December 20   January 6 - May 20

The Alternate school students are integrated into the classes that meet their individual program of study requirements.

Each staff member commits an extra 100 hours per year to committee work (graduation, timetable, computer, library, special events, powwow, sports, environment, audio-visual equipment, social fund and fund raising).

Community Liaison

Relationships with the community are developed in many ways, such as student recruiting and learning experiences. There are also specific college developments involving the Kainaiwa Tribal community, such as -

1. Community Education - The Farm Labourers Training Course, the Community Garden Program and the Life Skills courses are presented as the need is indicated in various locations throughout the reserve.

2. The Elders' Advisory Committee - The College Board includes one Elder as a member. In addition, the Elders' Advisory Committee meets every other month to give guidance and advice to the College from the point of view of the tribal elders.

3. Special Projects - such as the AIHEC Field Museum Project, computer literacy and upgrading courses and other continuing education courses, presented as a community need is identified.

4. Participation in organizations and conferences such as: The Treaty Seven Education Committee and Conference, The American Indian Higher Education Consortium, and The First Nations Adult and Higher Education Consortium

5. Support of Red Crow College students in Kainaiwa sports events and teams.

6. Participation in the student exchange program with the Navajo Nation.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Among researchers there can be a difference of opinion concerning when the review of the literature should be undertaken. David Krathwohl (1993) points out that:

Many who use qualitative or inductive methods, however, feel that to consult the literature too early will burden them with other people's perceptions. They don't want to miss what the naive eye might see; after all, we come fresh into a situation only once. They want to do the literature search after they have been exposed to the situation and begun to form their own notions about what is important, how things are related to each other, the general context, and what explanations they can advance. Then, with a very much sharpened notion of what they want to understand, they will go to the literature, ask how others have understood it, and compare that with their own understanding. (Krathwohl, 1993, p. 98)

A contrary position is that presented by Wax and Wax (1980), who suggest that reading about the situation and context one is about to enter

is a mark of respect to the hosts, as it demonstrates that one considers their affairs of sufficient importance to learn whatever one can about them before formal introduction. Preparation is also a mark of respect to the scholars who have studied the community in the past. . . . True, when one enters the field, one may be hampered by inaccurate ideas gained from prior studies, [but] the researcher will always be entering with some freight of expectations. It is better that these be grounded in past scholarship. (Wax & Wax, 1980, p. 6)

This debate is summarized by Alex Westerfeldt and Tracy Dietz (1997) who write:

Some proponents of qualitative research suggest doing the literature reviews later in the study. According to this view, your research will be "pure" in the sense that it will not be guided or biased—perhaps in a wrong direction—by what is known about your topic and what has been done by other researchers. Other qualitative researchers value the early review of literature to better understand the topic and to design the best possible study. (Deitz, 1997, p. 37)

This research study represents a blending of the two approaches. Prior to collecting data, and as part of preparing the project proposal for review by the University Joint Ethics committee, a preliminary review of the literature was completed. After interviewing many of the participants in this study it became obvious that the preliminary review of the literature had created an impression that colonization was essentially a past historic event. Based on interviews of key informants it became clear that for many Aboriginal students colonization is still being experienced as a current reality. This led back to the literature and a more thorough review of the works of Albert Memmi (1991), Frantz Fanon (1993), Sharilyn Calliou (1993 & 1995), Carlos Cordero (1995) and Evelyn Kallen (1995). It also served to reinforce an initial impression that in the area of education for First Nations peoples, at least, the events of the chronological past are still very much a current influence.

Historical Context

The history of the Plains Indians and Western Canada appears to be more than incidental to the development of First Nations education programs today. Historical incidents continue to be dynamic factors influencing emerging policies and programs in many areas including education. Understanding current issues in First Nations education requires a comprehensive understanding of what occurred in the past, what impact this had, and how it continues to influence policy decisions and program planning. Understanding First Nations education also requires a willingness to explore and accept a world view different from that of dominant Western Canadian society. Although

potentially discomforting, for mainstream Western educators, understanding First Nations education may also require educational planners to acknowledge the nature and extent of their complicity in the oppression of another culture.

Several authors such as Brookes (1991), Fisher (1986), Ross (1992), and Wilson (1986) provide detailed descriptions of Plains Indian culture at the time of first contact with European colonizers. Wilson, in particular, points out how this contact has led to stereotyping Aboriginal peoples as either "barbaric savages" or as "noble savages". According to him, the Plains Indian stereotyping has served in the past, and continues to serve, to reinforce tendencies in Canadian society toward paternalism. "The reserve system, as legislated by the Indian Act, embodies an assumption that Indians are not competent to govern their own affairs, that land and money must be held by the government in trust for them" (p. 357). He concludes that this assignment of what he terms as "non-adult legal status" to the Indian is "central to most of the public controversies concerning Indians in the last decade" (p. 358).

In examining the historical development of education programs for First Nations, Sonia Brookes (1991) presents an extensive and concise overview. In this overview, the most significant influences identified by her are the policies adopted by dominant Canadian society for First Nations education. She and other authors (Barman, Hebert, & McCaskill, 1986- 1987; Piwowar, 1990; Stevenson, 1991; Ward, 1992) suggest that these policies have always been formed with the intention of either encouraging or enforcing the assimilation of Aboriginal peoples into the dominant culture of Canadian society..

Missionary Education.

The earliest European dominated education programs for Natives in what is now Canada were the missionary operated schools in New France. In addition to the schools of the early 1600's operated by Catholic missionaries, a program was started whereby promising young Indian boys and girls were sent to France to attend boarding schools. By the mid 1600's Jesuit day schools were established on permanent Indian settlements, and by the end of the century they were abandoned in favour of "seminaries" or boarding

schools. The intent of these programs was to teach Catholicism, classical languages, and French culture. By the middle of the 18th century the Catholic church was widely involved in the education of Indians. "Decisions regarding policy were made in France and usually on the basis of what would be most advantageous to the colonists. The sole purpose of schooling was the pursuit of francisation" (Brookes, p. 164). The preservation of First Nations culture was not deemed relevant and conversion to Catholicism and European culture seemed to be the main goals.

> The two strongest ideological influences in seventeenth-century New France were Roman Catholicism and mercantilism, which was popular as an economic theory. French policy, rather than treating Indians as distinct and inferior, tried to make them over into French citizens, at least in Canada. This ideology of "Frenchification" is illustrated in various exchanges of letters between religious and state leaders of the day. (Frideres, p. 17)

In some ways this may have set the stage for future British relationships with First Nations peoples. "Through a policy, then, of assimilation, rather than genocide, the French were able to maintain relatively amiable relations with the Native population for quite some time" (Frideres, p. 18).

Although the players changed with the defeat of the French by the British, the play remained much the same. Colonial school boards were established but educational policies, programs and funding were now controlled by trustees who were in England.

> Until 1755, the English followed a policy of expediency. At first they chose to ignore the Native population. When this was no longer feasible due to the need for westward expansion, the English chose to isolate Indians through the reserve system, or to annihilate them, as they did the Beothuk Indians of Newfoundland. In 1755, Indian agents, today called superintendents, were appointed, formally establishing Canada's policy of treating Native people as wards of the state.

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Significantly, the Indian agents initially placed in control of the reserves were always military men. (Frideres, p. 19)

During this time apprenticeship programs were established whereby Indian children were sent to live with select families to learn a trade. At the time the superintendent of Indian Affairs "disapproved of the use of Indian books because he perceived the future of the Indians to be more entrenched with whites and therefore felt that teaching in Indian languages would be 'time and effort lost'" (Brookes, p. 166).

The missionary period of Indian education has been judged by several researchers who have studied it to have been a failure. As cited by Norman Oppelt (1990), in 1942 in her doctoral dissertation entitled "A History of Indian Education in the United States", Martha Layman formulated the conclusion that:

The net result of almost 100 years of effort and expenditure of hundreds of thousands of dollars for Indian education were a small number of poorly attended mission schools, a suspicious and disillusioned Indian population, and a few hundred products of missionary education who, for the most part, had either returned to [their tribal ways] or were living as misfits among the Indian or white population. (cited in Oppelt, 1990, p.13)

According to Oppelt (1990), a major cause of the failure of missionary Indian education was its inappropriateness for colonial Indians. The purposes for education were assimilation, the curriculum was imposed by the dominant culture, with no attempt to incorporate First Nations traditions, and the values imposed were foreign to First Nations students. "Unfortunately, the religious groups continued to be the major influence on what type of education was best for the Indians. *The principle of local citizen control of schools, that is a keystone of education in the United States, was never extended to the education of Indians because they were deemed to be unqualified to manage their own schools* (italicized by the author)" (Oppelt, 1990, p. 14). The intention appeared to be to

remould the Indian into a white European in every way - language, culture, and religion. "The only positive outcome of over two centuries of missionary directed education for Indians was that a few Indians educated during this period were able to help their people in dealing with the whites, and the seeds were sewn for tribal higher education which would bear fruit a century later" (Oppelt, 1990, p. 15).

A significant event in the eighteenth century in shaping the future relationship between British and First Nations peoples was the *Royal Proclamation of 1763*. Issued in the name of King George, the proclamation made it clear that Aboriginal peoples were not to be "molested or disturbed" on their lands.

> And whereas it is just and reasonable, and essential to our Interest, and the Security of our Colonies, that the several Nations or Tribes of Indians with whom We are connected, and who live under our Protection, should not be molested or disturbed in the Possession of such Parts of Our Dominions and Territories, as not having been ceded to or purchased by Us, are reserved to them, or any of them, as their Hunting Grounds. (George R. cited in S. Imai & D. Hawley, p. 295)

The Royal Proclamation of King George has emerged recently as an important document in support of the argument that First Nations were self-governing entities at the time of first contact with European nations. This position supports the claim that First Nations can and should justifiably be accepted as self-governing entities at this point in time.

> The proclamation portrays Indian nations as autonomous political entities, living under the protection of the crown but retaining their own internal political authority. It walks a fine line between safeguarding the rights of Aboriginal peoples and establishing a process to permit British settlement. It finds a balance in an arrangement allowing Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to divide and

share sovereign rights to the lands that are now Canada. (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996, p. 10)

Shortly thereafter, in 1776, Aboriginal people incorporated into the newly formed United States of America were no longer protected from being "molested or disturbed" by this proclamation of the King of England. In both countries westward expansion brought hardship and death to First Nations peoples. Carlos Cordero (1995) suggests that this extermination has had a long-lasting and extensive negative impact on their education.

Science has allowed us to understand that the disappearance of up to 90% of the Native population of the Americas was directly due, not to humans, but to microbes and viruses. You begin to understand that when there is a massive loss of humanity--in modern history called a holocaust--of 90% of your people, you also lose 90% of your knowledge base. This is the crux of the problem of education both in terms of the experience with education of Native people and in terms of the efforts at innovative and alternative approaches to the education of Native leaders. (Cordero, 1995, p. 31)

During the early 1800s, in Canada, the administration of Indian Affairs had been transferred from military to civil authority.

In a very extensive overview of "Prairie Indians and Higher Education", Winona Stevenson (1991) describes the signing of Treaty Number 4 at Qu'Appelle in 1874 in which the Lieutenant Governor accepted the government's commitment to Indian education in the following terms:

The promises we have to make to you are not for today only but for to-morro, (sic) not only for you but for your children born and unborn, and the promises we make will be carried out as long as the sun shines above and the water flows in the ocean. . . . The Queen wishes her children to learn the cunning of the white man

and when they are ready for it she will send schoolmasters on every reserve and pay them. (cited in Stevenson, 1991, p. 217)

Religious instruction, basic literacy, and industrial training became the order of the day. "The prime objective of the industrial schools was to teach the boys useful trades such as shoemaking, carpentry, blacksmithing, and tailoring. Girls were taught sewing, knitting, washing, and cooking" (Brookes, p. 166).

Residential Schools.

The development of residential schools on Indian reserve lands began around 1860 and lasted to approximately 1950. This form of segregated schooling was administered from the central government in Ottawa. It was dominated by various Christian churches which demonstrated their ongoing attempts on behalf of the central government at promoting assimilation. The negative impact of this experience has recently come to be acknowledged by religious and political groups and is described graphically by Roland Chrisjohn (1995).

The 'fallout' from the Indian Residential School era is presented as residing in the psychological trauma it may have created in some of the attendees. There is no recognition of the crimes, committed by all segments of Canadian society, that were perpetrated in these schools, and there is a distinct effort to limit the notion of damage (and therefore the compensation) to individuals who can demonstrate personal injuries; no recognition is given to how the horror of residential schooling has impacted on all First Nations peoples. (Chrisjohn, 1995, p. 25)

While the results may, in the long run, have been negative and the experience at the time one of horror, the intentions on the part of both cultures appears to have been positive and constructive. Indeed, as the writing of Mike Mountain Horse (1989) attests, participation in the residential school program on the Blood reserve was actively

encouraged by tribal Chiefs. It appears to be reasonable to conclude that negative cultural consequences were not intended, but rather, unanticipated and/or misunderstood.

> In 1893, when I was six years old, I was sent to St. Paul's Residential School. The need for such an institution had been recognized by the missionary societies in eastern Canada, and a boys' home had been erected on the Blood Reserve. The building of this school in 1889 . . . was the beginning of a new period of advancement for the Indians. When the boys' home was opened in 1893, the leading Indian chiefs who had asked the Indian Commissioner for such a home, set a good example by enrolling their own boys first. . . . My father brought me to the school one cold winter morning. After the entry of my name in the school books . . . . my brother Fred, then a pupil at the school, took me in charge. My Indian clothes, consisting of a blanket, breech cloth, leggings, shirt and moccasins, were removed. Then my brother took me into another room where I was placed in a steaming brown fibre paper tub full of water. Yelling blue murder, I started to jump out, but my brother held on to me and I was well scrubbed and placed before a heater to dry. Next came Mr. Swainson with a pair of shears. I was again placed in a chair. Zip went one of my long braids to the floor: the same with the other side. . . . My brother again took me in charge. "Don't cry any more," he said. (Mountain Horse, 1989, p. 15,16)

The relative merit of Indian residential schools can be gauged by the fact that "Not many students attended these schools for longer than three or four years and very few attended any form of secondary education" (Brookes, p. 169). Data collected by Barman, Hebert and McCaskill (1986) clearly demonstrate that Indian students were greatly disadvantaged by the Federal education policy. As summarized by Stevenson (1991), this data shows that:

By 1930 three quarters of all Indian students in Canada between the ages of six and eighteen years were in grades 1 to 3, and only three out of every hundred went past grade 6. In contrast, more than one half of their Eurocanadian peers in provincial public schools were beyond grade 3 and almost a third were beyond grade 6. (Stevenson, 1991, p. 223)

Parents were also apparently frustrated by this education policy. In 1911 a delegation of Saskatchewan Indians met with the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs and requested that more emphasis be given to academics and less to farming and manual labour exercises at schools (Barman, Hebert, & McCaskill 1986). "Educated and uneducated Indians alike were pressing the government for better quality education and access to higher levels of education." (Stevenson, p. 223). Reverend Edward Ahenakew of Saskatchewan was in the forefront of this protest as he urged the government to put more money into Indian education:

Surely the government is not thinking of being hampered by a race of ignorant and non-self-supporting people for all time to come. . . . Conditions as they are neither fair to the Indians nor to the white people who have to live in the same country with them. (Ahenakew, cited in Barman, Hebert & McCaskill, 1986, p.12)

Integration and Assimilation.

The decade between 1960-1970 was marked by a renewed attempt to use education in the form of "integrated" schools to achieve the assimilation of First Nations people. The concept of integrated education was viewed as an opportunity for providing a long-term solution to the problem of a welfare economy found on most reserves. The hope seemed to be that educational parity would lead to economic parity. Instead, the result appeared to be a very high drop-out rate of nearly 90 percent in some instances. The findings of the Hawthorne report of 1966-67 show this experiment to be a failure as, "only 12 percent of Indian students were in their proper age grade, with the average

Indian child being 2.5 years behind the average non-Indian student. It also confirmed a 94 percent drop out rate for Indian students" (Brookes, p. 171). The economic status of First Nations continued to be poor in comparison to the rest of the Canadian population. The Canadian government's continued attempt at integration and assimilation, in spite of the obvious failure of this program, was contained in the "White Paper" of 1969. This document was overwhelmingly rejected by First Nations people and condemned as "cultural genocide" by Harold Cardinal and other First Nations leaders.

As an alternative, in 1970, the Alberta Indian Association released a document entitled Citizens Plus which came to be known as the "Red Paper", and the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs submitted a document entitled A Declaration of Indian Rights - The British Columbia Indian Position Paper, which came to be known as the "Brown Paper". The ideas presented in both of these papers became the basis for the National Indian Brotherhood's education policy in 1972. This policy was based on the principles of parental responsibility and local control and was meant to apply to both reserve and integrated schools. As mentioned earlier in this paper, these principles included: (i) the need for local control of education; (ii) a more relevant school curriculum; (iii) special teacher training in Indian education; and (iv) improved school facilities. By recommending these changes, the National Indian Brotherhood intended to reverse the trend toward assimilation. In their document, entitled "Indian control of Indian Education", they state:

> Integration viewed as a one-way process is not integration, and will fail. In the past, it has been the Indian student who was asked to integrate: to give up his identity, to adopt new values and a new way of life. This restricted interpretation of integration must be radically altered if future education programs are to benefit Indian children. (cited in Mallea & Young, p. 148,149)

In order to accomplish this altered view of integration, the document and its authors proposed that Indian parents would need greater preparation and orientation

toward the purposes and goals for education so that they would be in a better position to make informed decisions and to help their children to adjust and succeed. They also recommended that Indian children would need preparation and orientation before being relocated into a new and strange environment. The architects of this document also suggest that the potential success of integration is not the sole responsibility of Indians. "Non-Indians must be ready to recognize the value of another way of life; to learn about Indian history, customs and language; and to modify, if necessary, some of their own ideas and practices" (cited in Mallea & Young, p. 149).

Recent developments in education policy for First Nations people in Western Canada have included the Memorandum Of Understanding Concerning Canada - Alberta Cooperation On Native (Indian and Metis) Development of 1985, the Alberta Education Agreement of 1989, and new tripartite tuition agreements of 1988-89. The Memorandum of Understanding makes only scant reference to education under the section relating to Social Development in article 3.2.4: "the parties will jointly examine such social development issues as child welfare; recreation; education; social infrastructure; life skills; and social assistance and its alternatives" (Long and Boldt p. 239). The Alberta Education Agreement provided the transfer of educational funds to a band, and the tripartite tuition agreements marked the first joint agreements between First Nations bands, the Provincial Government, and Provincial school boards. Although these agreements indicate a gradual move toward an increased influence of First Nations people and communities on First Nations education, ultimate control still appears to rest with the government and the school boards. "In essence, band control of Indian education is limited to the assessment of needs in accordance with existing programs available through Alberta Education" (Brookes, p. 177).

According to a report prepared by the department of Advanced Education in 1991, there appears to be little coordination or continuity among adult education programs in aboriginal communities. "While students are being encouraged and supported in their efforts to successfully complete their education, still, the number of First Nations students

are generally underrepresented in the post-secondary educational system" (Alberta Advanced Education, February, 1991, Appendix A, p.4).

Culture and Education

The need to understand First Nations culture in order to develop relevant and effective education programs is strongly emphasised in the books of R. Ross (1992), and Feehan and Hannis (1993). Having been involved in the delivery of social work education to First Nations communities in northern Alberta, Kay Feehan insists that "in attempting to understand Native culture, Western instructors must recognize the spiritual significance of the many concepts and beliefs they will encounter in the teaching process" (Feehan, 1993, p. 20). Furthermore, she points out that "given the primacy of spirituality in aboriginal peoples lives, educators must be cognizant of the spiritual needs of their students and their students families" (Feehan, 1993, p. 21) and "Knowing and respecting the students' spiritual traditions and practices affirms their dignity and worth and sheds significant light on their underlying personal issues and their potential coping skills." (Feehan, 1993, p. 22).

Rupert Ross (1992) presents a very insightful and thought-provoking exploration of the ethical underpinnings of First Nations culture. In examining traditional culture he attempts to explain First Nations beliefs about: non-interference in other peoples lives, not showing anger, prohibitions against praising the acts of others, the tendency when threatened to withdraw into physical immobility and silence, and, the notion that 'the time must be right' before one should act. In considering how these traditional beliefs may affect contemporary peoples, he suggests that "the central preoccupation of Native people today is with making decisions about which traditional commandments should be carried into the future with full force, which should be modified (and in what ways), and which should be discarded altogether" (R. Ross, 1992, p. 44). According to him, hope for the future will come from looking for a synthesis between First Nations and Canadian culture.

The fact of two differing world views and the attempt to force assimilation of First Nations students have conspired to prevent and/or undermine understanding and bridging

between our cultures. According to Pam Colorado (1993), "instructors ignore the history of genocide, which permits them to teach from a monocultural paradigm while working in a bicultural setting, or they ignore the spiritual/metaphysical aspects of causality (the essence of the Native mind), because western belief is that spirituality can be separated from physicality" (Colorado, 1993, p. 71). According to R. Ross, "a people whose knowledge is 'felt' knowledge, sensory knowledge, will look at the world very differently from those whose knowledge is primarily intellectual" (R. Ross, 1992, p. 81). "When you know things because you have felt them, you know them as alive, as having their own life, their own spirit. It is not that cute (or dangerous) little spirits live in them like cartoon characters; it is that they have spirit and, fundamentally, are spirits" (p. 83). Pam Colorado (1993) also points out that "Natives perceive the universe and its myriad life forms to be intelligent and related. Our life task and joy is to understand and complete these relationships. . . . To be effective with Native people, instructors must be willing to become true partners with the Native people and to join their students in the transformational process of recovery" (Colorado, 1993, p. 144, 145).

In considering the possible transformation of students, it is helpful to examine First Nations post-secondary education in view of the writings of Paulo Friere. His now well-quoted work "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" (1970) has become a classic for those attempting to understand education and social, political and economic change. Friere's major thesis as described by Stan de Mello (1994), is "founded on his assertion that education is not neutral . . . and that the usual pedagogical relations between teacher and student are based on a 'transmission model'" (de Mello, 1994, p. 16). It is suggested in this article, that traditionally students in the classroom have been treated like empty vessels needing to be filled with valuable knowledge by experts. The power differential between the (vessels) students and the (experts) teachers is all too obvious to anyone who has been a student. In this article, de Mello (1994) and his colleagues caution us to keep in mind that mainstream education (in Canada at least) has not followed this model of a priori determination of what is considered important and therefore valuable knowledge. Mainstream education has been rooted in humanism, and is therefore more respectful of

students. "Liberal education with its primary focus on self-directed learning and critical thinking has significant strengths" (de Mello, 1994, p. 16). A major value in the work of Friere is in heightening our sensitivity and concern about the social context in which learning occurs.

Another important point raised by this article is a question of whether the benefits of mainstream education have ever accrued to First Nations communities, and whether Aboriginal peoples have been subjected to the "transmission model". Most of the literature previously reviewed would suggest the latter.

In the Fall/Winter issue of "Perception", a publication of the Canadian Council On Social Development, David Ross (1992) writes that "the long-term solution to poor educational levels on reserves will only be achieved through the adoption of a preventive, holistic strategy controlled by Indians themselves" (D. Ross, 1992, p. 29). Writing about jurisdictional conflicts and the Blood Indian Band, Chief Roy Fox (1988) states:

We are now engaged in the orderly takeover of some other areas of responsibility that we believe are under our jurisdiction. We are conducting studies on tribal control of education and child welfare so that we will have the expertise required to establish and carry out programs superior to those already operating, and of greater benefit to the Blood Tribe. (Fox, 1988, p. 191)

In spite of the cultural and socio-political difficulties mentioned here, recognition by members of the dominant western Canadian society of an active and responsible First Nations ownership for educational issues appears to be growing. "Aboriginal people have developed an Aboriginal Literacy Action Plan, which seeks federal government support for aboriginal solutions to the problem of Indian adult basic education" (D. Ross, 1992, p. 29). This appears to be only one of many emerging educational initiatives. John Kersell (1989), professor of political science at the University of Waterloo writes, "We should respond with understanding and open minds. We have patronized, nay brutalized, these

sensitive, spiritual people far too long. We must stop forcing our individualistic adversarial materialism upon them." (Kersell, 1989, p. 9).

> The issue of entitlement to education and the rapidly emerging expression of self-governing through control over the delivery of child welfare and family support services as a means of regaining 'our children and our culture' combine to set an agenda in the 1990's for social workers open to becoming aligned with the First Nation social movement. (Howse & Stalwick, 1990, p. 81)

Referring also to the work of Paulo Friere and his respect for the experiences of others, and the empowerment which this can convey, Howse and Stalwick (1990) quote him as follows "only the oppressed, as the social class that has been forbidden to speak, can become the utopians, the prophets and the messengers of hope, provided that their future is not simply a reformed repetition of the present" (Howse & Stalwick, 1990, p. 85). They further suggest that "the process of dialogue-conversations among First Nations persons, progressive social workers, educators, and others involved in social movement offers promise as a means of critical self-examination and as a major catalyst for social change" (Howse & Stalwick, 1990, p. 87). One might conclude that there are cultural and political differences, but these differences may not be insurmountable.

Community Education.

The Canadian Journal of Native Education contains many recent articles of importance for post-secondary education. Sharilyn Calliou (1993) challenges our concept of community and its significance in writing about community schools. She suggests that it is "cruelly ironic" that Natives should be "forced to reassert their rights to self-expression, self determination, and self-administration in order to retain their identity, their sense of self-worth, and their culture" (Calliou, 1993, p. 33). She asserts that community education is about planned change, and that the changes identified are about common needs, problems, concerns and resources. Citing the Indian Chiefs of Alberta (1970) and the

National Indian Brotherhood (1972), she suggests that "A community-based curriculum, which involves learners of all ages would be appropriate because curricular experiences from day schools, residential schools, or integrated schooling were culturally irrelevant or negligent" (Calliou, 1993, p. 35). The concept of community and community schooling appears to be important for First Nations education as an embodiment of the principles of parental responsibility and local control established by the National Indian Brotherhood.

In the same issue Leslie Vaala (1993) reports on a research project conducted with adult First Nations students enrolled in a Criminal Justice certificate program. Using questionnaires to compare the responses of First Nations students receiving adult upgrading alone, and those receiving upgrading along with their Criminal Justice program, Vaala examined their responses about; family relationships, their own abilities, their adjustment to campus, and how they felt about their instructors. Among the conclusions arrived at were that "as a group, Native students portrayed their ties to family differently than did the other students. Native students more frequently commented that their studies not only separated them from family but also caused feelings of loneliness" (Vaala, 1993, p. 85).

Like Calliou, Peter Martin (1993) also emphasises the importance of community for educational planning and suggests that Aboriginal values, cultural processes, and cultural perspectives are fundamental to program planning. He also suggests that non-aboriginal program planners, to be effective, must accommodate their processes of planning to create "biculturally oriented" programs. "Aboriginal adult education programs must be planned in accordance with aboriginal values and beliefs and must work toward combining them with the non-aboriginal skills, concepts, and information necessary for future student success in a bicultural world" (Martin, 1993, p. 174).

Racism, Colonization and Education
Colonization.
"Five hundred years of colonialism, and the colonizers still ponder whether we are peoples with lands. Five hundred years of colonialism, and court judges still rule whether

or not we are peoples with laws. And what of our cultures? They too have been ruled on by others, determining whether we have a history, art, literature, or even an imagination" (Todd, p. 71). Loretta Todd (1992) is a Metis living in Vancouver where she is employed in film production. Writing from a personal perspective about the impact of colonization on indigenous culture, she states, "From the beginning, the destruction of indigenous peoples and cultures was integral to conquest and expansion in North America. The dichotomy of Eurocentric thinking placed indigenous cultures in opposition to Western cultures. We were seen as those things Western culture didn't see itself to be: archaic, intuitive, simple, unscientific" (Todd, 1992, p. 74). For her, the perpetrators of colonial domination are obvious; "For indigenous people those systems that function to silence us have been the church, the state and the education system, with their legacy of cultural genocide and assimilation" (Todd, 1992, p. 77). Based on the current overrepresentation of Aboriginal adults in Canada's prisons, one might also add the Justice System to this list.

Acknowledging the manner in which First Nations people are prevented from effectively participating in the social, economic, and political structure of our society, James Frideres (1993) concludes that "the indigenous peoples of Canada were unquestionably colonized and . . . their position in Canada today is a direct result of that colonization process" (Frideres, 1993, p. 3).

Based upon their work with First Nations in northern Alberta, Feehan and Hannis (1993) suggest that a very important step toward becoming 'true partners' rests in the ability and willingness of non-natives to acknowledge and understand how they may have promoted and encouraged, either overtly or covertly, the colonization of First Nations peoples and the oppression of their culture. David Hannis (1993) describes his experience in this regard and comes to the conclusion that:

> Offering post-secondary educational opportunities to aboriginal students is a desirable goal, provided that teachers and students recognize that such learning has the potential to both liberate and oppress. Education is a two-edged sword.

Historically, colonial powers have used education as a vehicle to stifle criticism and ensure conformity, and their curricula and educational standards have usually reflected male, urban, white, middle-class, European, capitalist values. (Hannis, 1993, p. 48)

This is a theme echoed strongly by Roland Chrisjohn in his review of post-secondary education for the Treaty 7 Tribal Council. In it, he challenges the role of grant and tuition-driven educational institutions, the impact of capitalism, and the potential consequences of the 'New World Order' as exemplified by GATT and NAFTA. He warns First Nations leaders that:

In the absence of a determined effort to reverse current trends, it is likely we will witness within our own lifetimes the success of the genocidal program launched against us over 500 years ago. And the end will come with a "whimper" instead of a "bang," as the absence of a comprehensive perspective on what is happening to us and why permits them to destroy us in "gentle degrees," with our own cooperation, and even at our own insistence. (Chrisjohn, 1995, p. 21)

While this warning may indicate the importance of inculcating First Nations values among their youth, the very fact that First Nations, and their elders and academics, have survived with their culture intact would argue against the threat of cultural genocide. Survival over the past 500 years in the face of such an apparent concerted affront must have required the effort of a very resilient and determined people. The threat may be real and the warning justified, but it is possible, given past experience, that among First Nations the ability to respond and cope constructively with the threat may be just as real.

The literature that has been reviewed thus far appears, at the same time, to be encouraging and discouraging, enlightening and confounding. The issue of post-secondary education for First Nations people appears to be a serious challenge for both cultures. As one graduate of the Mount Royal College Social Work program recently commented

"we're backed up against a wall. We <u>have</u> to learn education in a white culture." Be that as it may, it appears, in retrospect, that Mount Royal College and other Provincial public post-secondary institutions may have inadvertently stumbled into similar cultural concerns and issues as those raised in the books and articles cited above. First, it seems that education planners for Social Work extension program activities may have fallen (or been lulled) into the habit of planning for, rather than with, the First Nations community at Red Crow College and at Morley. Second, it would appear that an educational curriculum was essentially imposed on several groups of First Nations students, rather than developed with mutual input. Third, the concern must be raised that Mount Royal College (with the covert sanction of Red Crow College) may be inadvertently continuing or fostering the dominant Western society's goal of assimilation for First Nations people. Reflecting upon the concerns raised earlier in the literature by David Hannis (Feehan & Hannis, 1993), one might well ask - has the consequence of the education we have provided been liberation or oppression?

<u>Racism.</u>

Many authors and research investigators (Calliou, 1995; Haig-Brown, 1995; Hampton, 1995; Hedican, 1995; Frideres, 1993; Kallen, 1995; Oppelt, 1990) have written about racism and colonization and the negative impact this had, and continues to have, on Aboriginal culture. Their writings examine and respond to the following questions. What is the meaning of racism? How does racism relate to colonization and function in the destruction of a culture? Are these terms, considered to be pejoritive in Canadian society, appropriately descriptive of what has happened in reference to First Nations education, in general, and particularly to First Nations post-secondary education?

In her examination of the concepts of racism, ethnicity and culture, Evelyn Kallen (1995) defines racism as; "a set of beliefs, policies, and/or practices predicated on the erroneous assumption that some human populations are inherently superior to others and that human groups can be ranked in terms of their member's innate (biological) superiority/inferiority" (p. 21). The scientific concept of 'race', on the other hand

"includes two important points: first, race refers to an arbitrary social category (*not* a social group) and second, racial classifications are based solely on biological differences between human populations (*not* on cultural differences)" (Kallen, 1995, p. 19). As Frideres (1993) explains it:

> this biological racism has been supplanted with a new form of social/cultural racism which focuses on the inferiority of a group's way of life, their ethos and their assumptions about the world. . . . Individual racism has given way to structural racism. Examining structural racism allows one to focus on the way discrimination is built into systems of power and institutions in Canada. (Frideres, 1993, p. 11).

In a similar vein, Sherilyn Calliou (1995) asserts that "I see racism as a continuum spreading from racial dislike or hatred (which may motivate or legitimate termination) to self-justified advantage or superiority (which enmeshes all parties to no one's benefit)" (Calliou, 1995, p. 65).

Understanding racism, according to Kallen (1995), requires an appreciation of fundamental human rights. Included among these rights are; individual human rights, based on the principles of freedom and equality; collective cultural rights, based on the free expression of cultural distinctiveness; collective national rights, based on the demonstration of a continuing association between a people, its ancestral territory, and its ethnoculture; and categorical rights, based on the collective adverse impact of past discrimination against members of a particular social category. To this list she also adds collective aboriginal rights, based on claims to land occupied 'from time immemorial' which have not been extinguished by land cessation treaties. As she points out, "the potential for antagonism between individual human rights (unitary principle) and collective cultural rights (diversity principle) is what can and frequently does manifest itself as racism" (Kallen, 1995, p.17). Kallen argues further that race and ethnicity are social constructs. Moreover, they are socially constructed in such a way as to reflect "the

ideological, political, economic and cultural biases of the ruling authorities of the society" and "Populations defined in terms of the social constructs of race and ethnicity are not merely categorized or classified in a statistical sense; they also are evaluated in terms of the values and standards established by majority authorities as the norms for all members of the society" (Kallen, 1995, p. 18).

Speaking about her personal experience with the social construction of race and ethnicity, Joane Schubert-Cardinal (1992) writes:

It is to be in a position of powerlessness, to have absolutely no control over your own identity, that is how society has crippled Native people for such a long period of time. The government declares by number who is Native and who is not and these numbers were, and continue to be, referred to as treaty and status numbers to indicate your "official" and legal status as an Indian or Native. Under this system, whole families have been decimated for generations. . . . The church and education systems had taken them and tried to strip them of their beliefs, yet they managed to retain those beliefs despite diseases and abuse; as well, they were further abused when their precious treasures, the children, the hope of the future, were taken from them and physically and intellectually abused. (Schubert-Cardinal cited in McMaster & Martin, p. 132)

Aime Cesaire (1993), who experienced colonization and racism first hand while growing up in Martinique, presents a subjective description of their meanings. From his frame of reference colonization is dehumanizing and destructive.

My turn to state an equation: colonization = 'thingification'. I hear the storm. They talk to me about progress about "achievements", diseases cured, improved standards of living. *I* am talking about societies drained of their essence, cultures trampled underfoot, institutions undermined, lands confiscated, religions smashed,

magnificent artistic creations destroyed, extraordinary *possibilities* wiped out. (Cesaire, 1993, p. 371)

Referring to the work of Kennedy (1945), and Blauner (1969), James Frideres outlines seven parts or general aspects to the processes of colonization as follows:

- The first concerns the incursion of the colonizing group into a geographic area
- The second attribute of colonization is its destructive effect on the social and cultural structures of the indigenous group.
- The third and fourth aspects of colonization are the interrelated processes of external political control and Native economic dependence.
- The fifth characteristic of colonization is the provision of low-quality social services for the colonized Natives in such areas as health and education.
- The last two aspects of colonization relate to social interactions between Natives and Whites and refer to racism and the establishment of a colour-line. (Frideres, 1993, p. 3, 7)

"Racism is a belief in the genetic superiority of the colonizing Whites and the inferiority of the colonized Natives" (Frideres, 1993, p. 7). As an example of how this contributes to the establishment of a colour-line in which interaction goes on only among members of the same group, Frideres notes that in Canada, "Indians have the highest rate of marriage within their own ethnic group--93.6 percent" (Frideres, 1993, p. 7). Not only does this indicate the existence of a "colour-line", as the author suggests, but also would indirectly support the suggestion that assimilationist policies for First Nations have not been a success in Canada.

Colonizers and the Colonized.

Is the relationship between colonizers and those colonized necessarily one of racism? According to Albert Memmi (1991), "it is significant that racism is part of

colonialism throughout the world; and it is no coincidence. Racism sums up and symbolizes the fundamental relation which unites colonialist and colonized." (Memmi, 1991, p. 70). Throughout his writings Memmi points out that colonizers are mutually dependent with those being colonized. Racism, in his framework, establishes and legitimizes the cultural differences between two peoples and allows and/or justifies the exploitation of these alleged differences.

> Colonial racism is built from three major ideological components: one, the gulf between the culture of the colonialist and the colonized; two, the exploitation of these differences for the benefit of the colonialist; three, the use of these supposed differences as standards of absolute fact. . . . Racism appears then, not as an incidental detail, but as a consubstantial part of colonialism. It is the highest expression of the colonial system and one of the most significant features of the colonialist. Not only does it establish a fundamental discrimination between colonizer and colonized, a sine qua non of colonial life, but also lays the foundation for the immutability of this life. (Memmi, 1991, p. 71, and p. 74).

Joseph Tehawehron David (1992) suggests a somewhat sinister reason for the continued practice of colonization in Canada:

> In my view a cover up of monumental scale took place - is still taking place - and artists become unwitting accomplices by adding their confusion to the historical record. It may be possible that mainstream educators are also "unwitting accomplices", contributing to the "immutability of this life". It should come as a surprise to no one that those who have experienced the negative effects of this socio-economic exploitation should feel anger and outrage. . . . The catalyst for strong expression, logically, is direct involvement. I would not be compelled to make a strong statement, whether it be in print, paint, or spoken word, had there not been this outrage, this anger engendered by an attack on my people. Strong

emotions came with the realization that in Canada, the "colonial attitude" is alive and well, and that "Might is Right" is still the doctrine practiced. Freedom, equality and justice are still relative as long as you are rich, white or subservient. (Tehawehron David cited in McMaster & Martin, p. 140, 141).

Not only First Nations, but Canadians in general have directly and indirectly experienced the economic and social impact of colonization. The nation began as a colony of France and England and continued after confederation as a colony of Great Britain. Since the end of the second world war many observers would argue that the country has evolved into a colony of the United States of America. Moreover many residents of western Canada, including Reform Party spokespersons, suggest that the prairie provinces have been economically exploited as a colony of central Canada. Residents in northern Canada likewise proclaim that their territory is exploited as a colony of southern Canada. It would seem that everyone in this country is either engaged in colonizing or being colonized.

In Canada's north there is a colonial sense that decisions are made for them down south. One case study found teachers in the Yukon preoccupied with their Commonwealth identities, administrators absorbed in their handbook philosophy and children excluding Indians, like themselves, from the category of Canadians. Innovations including multiculturalism spread slowly from more dominant areas. All forms of power reinforce this subordination. (Mitchell, 1990, p. 74)

Critics of the current Progressive Conservative government of Alberta and its education policy, such as Heather Jane Robertson and Maude Barlow (1994), would argue that recent budget cuts and program initiatives reflect an attempt to reorganize the education system into a model styled after the system extant in the United States.

How does the dominance of one group (the colonizers) become established over the other group (the colonized) in our current Canadian society where military oppression and physical force are relatively absent? In addition to socio-economic practices of discrimination, another mechanism through which this dominance occurs is called vertical integration.

> Minority groups have a culture of their own, with a distinct set of values. . . . Negating these values places majority groups in the elitist position of saying that they know what is good for a people even though those in question may not want it. This is a problem common to most justifications of imperialism in the nineteenth century: it was supposedly the 'white man's burden' to lead 'inferior' peoples into the 'light of civilization'. . . . Inequality between dominants and colonials is developed in this theory through the process of vertical integration. Vertical integration means that the developed materials of education like textbooks, tests, computers and computer programs are provided by the dominant group while the subordinate one is the hewer of wood. (Mitchell, 1990, p. 72, 81)

By what processes do the alleged differences between peoples become "standards of absolute fact"? Evelyn Kallen (1995) and Albert Memmi (1991) both offer explanations of how "ethnic stereotyping" serves to accomplish this end. "Ethnic stereotypes are associated with the cognitive or ideological component of prejudice. An ethnic stereotype is an overgeneralized, standardized ethnic group image that amplifies selected physical, cultural, and/or behavioural characteristics and disregards others" (Kallen, 1995, p. 45).

> the oft cited trait of laziness . . . it is easy to see to what extent this description is useful. It occupies an important place in the dialectics exalting the colonizer and humbling the colonized. . . . Nothing could better justify the colonizer's privileged position than his industry, and nothing could better justify the colonized's

destitution than his indolence. The mythical portrait of the colonized therefore includes an unbelievable laziness, and that of the colonizer, a virtuous taste for action. (Memmi, 1990, p. 79)

In an examination of ethnic stereotypes and the assumption that they generally contain a 'kernel of truth', Evelyn Kallen cites a work by Mackie (1974) in which he concluded that these stereotypes generally represented distorted images or caricatures which exaggerate some group attributes and disregard others. According to her this data also revealed that "prevailing ethnic stereotypes reflected reality more accurately than the 'kernel of truth' suggested by the literature. The most unfavourable ethnic stereotype was found to be that of the Indian, who was generally perceived as unambitious, dirty, poor, uneducated, oppressed, and in trouble with the law. What the stereotypic skid-row image of the Indian represents, in stark actuality, is the disastrous consequences of the self-fulfilling prophecy of racism" (Kallen, 1995, p. 45).

the indigenous people have had to come to grips with the concept of being victims and being stupid. The words that explain or define us have been "primitive", "ethnic", "minority", and "lazy". In twenty years as an educator I have watched Indian students enter the university from a white educational system that provides little or no support to help them progress in a white society. We have the highest drop-out rate - over seventy-five percent - because of the "dumb", "stupid", and "failure" pictures put in our space. (George Longfish in McMaster & Martin, p. 150).

It becomes obvious that the colonized, whatever he may undertake, whatever zeal he may apply, could never be anything but lazy. This always brings us back to racism, which is the substantive expression, to the accuser's benefit, of a real or imaginary trait of the accused. . . . Wilfully created and spread by the colonizer, this mythical and degrading portrait ends up being accepted and lived with to a

certain extent by the colonized. It thus acquires a certain amount of reality and contributes to the true portrait of the colonized. (Memmi, 1990, p. 81, 88)

In their discourse on "The Indian Residential School Experience in Canada", Chrisjohn and Young (1994) acknowledge that colonization was pervasive throughout European society at the time. The fact that it was common practice among European nations, however, does not excuse its destructiveness, a reality which these authors equate with the genocide of First Nations people.

Whether at home or moving east, west, north, or south; whether their religions posed as spiritual or as worldly truths, or some combination of the two; Europeans were singularly persistent in the educational work they undertook. From the earliest times of colonialism certain attitudes have been an article of European faith; and the genocide that engulfed the Aboriginal Peoples of North America was nothing less and nothing more than a tune, with slightly different orchestration, that was being played throughout the world. . . . The "education" delivered time and again, did not have as its goal the broadening of intellectual horizons, but rather the inculcation of the images Europeans carried of themselves and of the oppressed into the oppressed. (Chrisjohn & Young, 1994, p. 4)

Speaking of the relationship between colonization, identity and education, Carlos Cordero (1995) suggests that the wrongs of the past continue to have a negative impact on First Nations education today:

This massive loss of knowledge base and the experience of conquest can clearly be seen in a study of the faces of those colonized. These include all forms of public education—elementary, secondary, and university level—that Native people have been subjected to in the past and continue to be today. In the process of becoming educated we are in fact engaging in processes of colonization. This is why the

experience of Indigenous education is negative and why the only too familiar catastrophic dropout rates exist. These in turn reinforce the stereotypes of minorities as inferior and not capable of benefiting from education at any level, elementary, secondary, or university. (Cordero, 1995, p. 31)

First Nations Post-Secondary Education

Historical information concerning post-secondary education for First Nations students has been relatively scant. This is understandably so, because in the past few Aboriginal students persisted beyond elementary schooling. In the United States of America the establishment of new tribally controlled colleges, located on or near western reservations in the 1960's and 1970's began a totally new era in Indian higher education. As Norman Oppelt, (1990) writing in the preface to his book about tribally controlled colleges, describes it; "More has been accomplished in the two decades since the founding of the first tribal college to meet the higher education needs of the tribes and their members than in the two hundred years since the first Indian graduated from Harvard University" (Oppelt, 1990, p. ix). In the fall of 1988 there were 17 tribally controlled colleges in the United States. At that time it is not insignificant that there were none in Canada. According to this report First Nations education leaders and elders suggest that in pre-contact times all forms of education were provided by tribal societies for those persons needing special skills beyond the basic necessities for survival.

Most evident were the medicine men or shamans who needed to know the often complicated and long chants, symbols, and paraphernalia for religious ceremonies. These special persons usually served long apprenticeships under an old religious leader. Their training was necessary because the survival of the tribe was seen as dependent upon the holy persons placating or communicating with the supernatural forces which controlled their lives" (Oppelt, 1990, p. x).

There may be an ironic parallel to the higher education and training of First Nations people at this time in history. As they see it, the survival of their tribes may be equally dependent on educated persons from their communities placating or communicating with superior forces represented by the Provincial and Federal governments of mainstream society.

Historically, the first institution of higher learning established in the British colonies in North America, following upon the efforts of seventeenth century missionaries, was Harvard College. The second building to be erected on the Harvard campus was known as the Indian College. It was completed in 1654 with accommodations for thirty students. The objective of the College was to educate First Nations students to be preachers of the Gospel so that they might return to their tribes to continue the effort to convert First Nations peoples to Christianity. As an opportunity for higher learning for First Nations people, the Harvard Indian College was anything but a success. Apparently less than a half dozen First Nations students ever attended the institution during its existence, and during the latter part of the seventeenth century there was only one recorded First Nations student to graduate. Unfortunately, he died of tuberculosis the winter after his graduation (Davis, 1980 cited in Oppelt, p. 2). For the most part, the Indian College at Harvard was used as a residence for white students. "The Indian College building was razed in 1698, and the bricks were used in the construction of other buildings on the Harvard campus. Thus, the first attempt to provide higher education for American Indians at America's first college was a failure" (Oppelt, 1990, p. 2).

Prior to the American revolution, Dartmouth College was established in 1769. It was the first independent college in North America founded primarily for the education of American Indians. The first charter of the college not only indicates the commitment of the College to First Nations education, but also clearly reflects the colonial attitude at the time toward its Aboriginal students. Dartmouth was founded for:

The education and instruction of youth of the Indian tribes in this Land in reading, writing and all parts of Learning which will appear necessary and expedient for civilizing the Christianized Children of Pagans, as well as in all Liberal Arts and Sciences; and also of English youth and any others. (Layman, 1942, p. 87, 88 cited in Oppelt, 1990, p. 5)

This early attempt at post-secondary education for Aboriginal students appears also to have been largely unsuccessful. Prior to 1800, fewer than one hundred First Nations students attended Dartmouth, soon outnumbered by white students. Between 1800 and 1900 the list of Aboriginal students included only 55 names in total, and during the one hundred year period between 1865 and 1965 only 28 Indian students were enrolled. On the plus side, numerous Indian tribes were represented during this time including a few from the Choctaw and Cherokee of the Southeast and the Sioux and the Blackfeet of the Northern Plains.

Records show that three Indians graduated from Dartmouth in the eighteenth century. One of these, L. V. Sabatannen, a Huron, was the first Canadian Indian to graduate from college.

Earlier references to the literature in this paper have alluded to the fact that Canadian federal government policies have historically interfered with the pursuit of higher education by Aboriginal people. Prior to the 1927 revision of the Indian Act, for example, the attainment of either professional certification or a university degree by First Nations members was linked to enfranchisement or loss of Indian status. The Indian Act of 1876, which outlined federal responsibilities for various areas of Indian life, had no provisions for educational services beyond the mandatory age of sixteen. Similarly, the Indian Act of 1951 contained no provision for post-secondary education. Under the section entitled "schools" it also delimited legislative provisions to Indians aged seven to sixteen. As a result, federal support for post-secondary educational activities, which began in the 1950's, did so as a function of government department policy rather than government

legislation. In her historical overview of Prairie Indians and Higher Education, Winona Stevenson (1991) describes the change in government policy at that time:

> during the mid-fifties Indian people's dissatisfaction with their lack of educational opportunities pushed the federal government into taking a more active and supportive role in post-secondary training. In 1956 the Indian department began organizing special vocational courses in cooperation with provincial education authorities and other federal departments. The vast majority of these programs were community development oriented and strove towards aiding economic and social self-reliance on reserves. (Stevenson, 1991, p. 226)

A significant movement in post-secondary education in both Canada and the United States which strongly influenced the form of self-determination in Indian higher education, initially in the latter country, during the 1960's and 1970's was the rapid growth of community colleges. The concept that was then promoted was of a two-year college designed to meet the educational needs of a particular community. It became evident to many educators in First Nations communities that the concept of the community college was ideally suited to meet the needs of people on an Indian reservation. For example, Mount Royal College established its first extension courses at Old Sun College on the Blackfoot reserve at Gliechen, Alberta, in 1970. Like other colleges establishing educational programs in First Nations communities, it included both vocational training and general education courses to facilitate transfer to mainstream employment and higher education institutions. Higher education courses and programs emerged and became available to relatively isolated communities overcoming distances that previously prohibited attendance. "The two-year colleges could offer flexible admission standards, remedial services, and delivery systems tailored to the circumstances peculiar to the non-traditional students on isolated reservations" (Oppelt, 1990, p. 32).

Unlike the Government of Canada which has to this day denied that First Nations have a right by treaty to post-secondary education, the Government of the United States

of America in 1975 passed The Indian Self Determination and Assistance Act. This act provided for the submission of "a specific program, together with detailed legislative recommendations, to assist the development and administration of Indian controlled community colleges" (Oppelt, 1990, p.33). The first tribally controlled community college was established in the United States in 1968. By comparison, the first tribally controlled community college in Canada, Red Crow Community College on the Blood reserve, was not established until 1991, almost a quarter of a century later. The founding of America's first tribally controlled college, Navajo Community College, represented a major step forward in the pursuit of self determination in American Indian education. "This landmark institution was an innovative means to meet the long unmet postsecondary educational needs of tribal Indians. It was the first college established by Indians for Indians. It set a precedent for later Indian controlled community colleges" (Oppelt, 1990, p. 33). In the following decade in the United States fifteen similar colleges were founded by other Indian tribes.

From its inception, Navajo Community College was an independent institution. Unlike later tribal schools and many First Nations higher education programs in Canada, it was not tied to a sponsoring institution of higher learning. It has not been affiliated with any university. This relative autonomy was probably aided by the fact that in 1971 the federal government passed the Navajo Community College Assistance Act. "This act provided that federal funds be authorized for support of a community college for members of the tribe and other qualified persons. Funds were appropriated for operating costs and for construction of facilities on a permanent campus. Although the funds allocated were not sufficient to fully support the operation of NCC, PL 89-192 set a precedent for federal funding of a tribally controlled college and made NCC more fiscally stable." (Oppelt, 1990, p. 35). This contrasts very sharply with Red Crow Community College, where federal funds are not provided directly for operating costs nor for construction of facilities. To further contrast the stance of the two federal governments toward post-secondary education for Aboriginal students, in 1978 "through the efforts of tribal leaders and educators with the coordination of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium, the

United States Congress passed Public Law 95-471, The Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act. This act provided for the appropriation of funds for all qualified tribally controlled colleges based on the number of full-time equivalent Indian students enrolled at each school" (Oppelt, 1990, p. 38). In Canada, in 1988 under the leadership of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, the government attempted to eliminate all financial assistance for post-secondary education for First Nations students.

Canadian Initiatives.

Several Canadian universities and some colleges became involved in special programs for First Nations students in the early 1970's. Generally, these programs were defined as "special" in terms of offering one or more of the following for Aboriginal students:

a) admission and recruitment; b) counselling and other support resources;

c) location, in that some were established away from main campuses; and

d) program course content. . . . Law and education were the disciplinary fields in which the first special content programs were established.

(First Nations House of Research Team, p. 169)

One of the recommendations of the National Indian Brotherhood position paper in 1972 was the training of Indian teachers. The paper suggested that First Nations teachers and counsellors could best create a learning environment for Aboriginal children based on their intimate understanding of cultural traditions, language, and way of life. Throughout the 1970's twenty Teacher Education Programs were established across all regions of Canada. Examples of these programs in western Canada were Project Morning Star at Blue Quills School in Alberta, and the Native Indian Teacher Education Program at the University of British Columbia. By 1970 such programs as these had produced 369 degreed and 725 certified teachers, and in 1985 there were reported to be 885 students

enrolled in Teacher Education Programs in Canada. One of the problems experienced by students in these programs is that in many cases participants were required to leave their home communities. In itself leaving one's home community may or may not be perceived as problematic. Thousands of non-Native students across Canada from smaller communities have been forced to do this in order to attend higher education. The added burden on First Nations students is that when they leave their communities to pursue higher education, they also leave their cultural support mechanisms behind them. As reported in the Masters Degree thesis by Elizabeth Piwowar (1990), one of the greatest dangers of Teacher Education Programs is that the training of Indian teachers may result in them becoming virtually identical to dominant society teachers. "Teacher training as seen at universities across the country is reproductive of the values of the dominant society. The training fails to develop the skills and knowledge that will give Native teachers the chance to make Native education truly productive and truly Native" (Piwowar, 1990, p. 79).

Other initiatives in post-secondary education in western Canada have included programs in agriculture at Lethbridge Community College, access programs in medicine at the Universities of Manitoba and Alberta, the University of Lethbridge's Centre For Aboriginal Management and its Four Worlds Development Project in education and community development. The establishment of the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College (SIFC) represents a First Nations movement toward the creation of cultural colleges in the mid 1970's. According to the First Nations House of Learning Research Team:

> The case of SIFC is special and exemplifies yet another area where an impact began in the 1970s in First Nations postsecondary education in terms of First Nations control and administration of tertiary education institutions. SIFC is unique in its range of programs and the mandate it has received from both First Nations governments in Saskatchewan and the government of the province. (First Nations House of Learning Research Team, 1995, p. 171)

Unlike other First Nations institutions which often broker university courses and create university-level courses of their own, only the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College in Regina presently offers complete university programs.

A major difficulty in grasping the nature and true significance of First Nations post-secondary education is that "There is no single comprehensive review, description, or analysis of the current state of First Nations postsecondary or university education in Canada" (First Nations House of Learning Research Team, 1995, p.172). In 1988, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) published an important summary statement of current conditions and needs entitled "Tradition and Education: Towards a Vision of Our Future". According to the First Nations House of Learning Research Team this summarization of issues by the AFN represents the most comprehensive statement available in the literature. The AFN's summary suggests the following points:

- Most First Nations people with postsecondary education are working directly or indirectly with other First Nations peoples.
- Tertiary education should be oriented toward competency in areas reflected in the current job market.
- A continuing priority need is for university-trained First Nations teachers.
- There is a need to develop postsecondary curriculum that is in fact relevant to First Nations people in several areas, particularly in areas where there are culture-specific considerations (e.g., communications methods; teaching techniques).
- The area of First Nations languages is of special concern: the nature of the relationship of First Nations languages to First Nations communities has to be taken into consideration in developing language-related programs; an extraordinary need exists for the training and certification of teachers of First Nations languages.
- More university-based teacher education programs are needed, but so are "satellite" and "extension" programs in First Nations communities.

- Lack of good counselling and guidance at the secondary level have created a requirement for especially good counselling resources at the tertiary level.

- First Nations need an information sharing network for developing and dealing with postsecondary education issues, and other mechanisms whereby they can work cooperatively.

- Financial support for First Nations students in tertiary education must be improved, with a high priority placed on such support; the AFN takes the position that postsecondary education is an aboriginal right, and that funding for individuals should be administered by individual First Nations.

(First Nations House of Learning Research Team, 1990, p. 172, 173)

The mid and latter 1980's saw radical federal government policy changes that made funding much more difficult to obtain for Aboriginal students. As reported by Darlene Lanceley (1991), "Bill McKnight, Minister of DIAND, unilaterally imposed "a cap" on post-secondary education in June, 1987, and introduced a priority list for access to education" (Lanceley, 1991, p. 242). The consequence of these changes was that funding was limited to $130 million, fewer students would receive post-secondary assistance and the amount of education that an Aboriginal student could acquire was limited.

The new policy is likely to inhibit further increases in Indian post-secondary enrollment. DIAND has developed a formula for determining which post-secondary institutions students may attend and, to add further insult, imposed a restriction on students' rights to choose their field of study. The department also introduced a priority list for access to education. (Lanceley, 1991, p. 242)

Not surprisingly, representatives of Indian communities and First Nations students in particular were angered by these policies. A vigorous student protest movement ensued including a "National Day of Protest", demonstrations in every province, hunger strikes,

and peaceful sit-ins. Charges of "public mischief" were laid against hundreds of Indian and Aboriginal students and their supporters. In spite of this reactionary and repressive response, the student protest was not in vain. After meetings between the department and Indian representatives in August and September, 1989, the minister agreed to implement the following nine of fourteen recommendations:

1. Flexibility will be provided in the Policy to allow Indian administering organizations the freedom to establish their own allowance rate structures, providing these do not exceed their total budget allocations.

2. The "months of assistance" as described in the Old Policy will continue to apply to continuing students, providing they are successful in their academic studies.

3. Students who receive specific child-care allowances will be assisted at the level provided under the Old Policy. This will provide interim relief for the 1989-90 academic year, pending the outcome of the forthcoming child-care study.

4. Those students who have only one year left to graduate and have run out of student months will receive an additional year of funding.

5. The policy will clearly state that support is provided for Masters and Doctorate degrees.

6. The "appeals process" will be clarified.

7. The term "Treaty/Status Indian" will be used to describe all students who are registered Indians and eligible to apply under this policy.

8. The policy will indicate that full tuition, registration, and tutorial fees will be provided to qualifying students; and

9. The name of the policy will be changed to "The Post-Secondary Student Support Program" and it will state that the University and College Entrance Preparation Program is an integral part of the post-secondary support to Indian Students. (Lanceley, 1991, p. 244, 245)

In the 1990 Assembly of First Nations Annual Report Grand Chief George Erasmus stated, "Out of the evil of the confrontation on funding of our post-secondary students came the good that we finally managed to convince the government to work on defining treaty rights with our direct involvement" (Erasmus cited in Ward, 1992, p. 161).

Forces and Influences Acting on Education

The impact of political decisions throughout this decade on First Nations post-secondary education has been of major significance. It is probable that political decision making represents but one of several important influences on the development of First Nations education programs. What are other significant influences, and how can they best be identified and described?

A cursory examination of library sources reveals a variety of terms and phrases to describe "that which causes an effect". While the term "influence" is not uncommon, the term "force" is also used, though less frequently. Authors and researchers writing about change in education have used such terms as; "emerging issues", "current trends", "legal concerns", "conflicting imperatives", "federal intrusions", "concerns and priorities", and "vehicles for change". These few examples, quickly identified from the literature, suggest the shortcomings of language in describing the processes of educational program development. Are imperatives not forces? Do intrusions not require force? Do changes to systems arrive in vehicles like workers on the morning bus?

Michael Fullan (1981), a noted researcher and author in the area of curriculum change and implementation, has identified a number of "factors affecting implementation" for curriculum change. In addition to external factors, he identifies three sets of characteristics relating to the nature of the innovation and to the nature of the school and the education system. While this model, and its examination of characteristics, may be very helpful in identifying and describing, it seems to fall short of encouraging an understanding of the dynamics of educational program development. As Sam Mitchell (1990) points out in his book on educational innovation and reform, "There is a dynamic tension between those who want change and those who preserve their power by

maintaining the *status quo*. Despite the dynamic tension, changes which do occur are often motivated by the forces of power and privilege" (Mitchell, p. xi). In explaining this concept further he states:

> Professionals as a group rely on an external concept of power; such a concept has influenced the very definition of what is an innovation. Often an external concept of power is only joined to a personal one when people see themselves as subordinated to others or rejected by them. However, an internal source of power is necessary for people to raise their levels of concern in order for them to have the energy for the demands of the innovation. (Mitchell, 1990, p. 71)

In his book, Mitchell identifies "some of the larger forces like American influence and imperialism . . . social stratification and gender differences . . . television and computers" (p. 177) which have functioned as external and internal sources of power to bring about, or in some instances to force, the reform of education.

Edward Hedican (1995) touches on a possible explanation why the concept of force may have been largely overlooked in the literature, and in particular that literature which deals with ethnographic research. He suggests that among anthropologists at least, the tendency for researchers has been to study populations and groups in the field; that is, to "study down". "If the whole problem of racial intolerance essentially has to do with the control of power in society . . . then this poses a difficult and novel problem for anthropological fieldwork: studying up, rather than down" (Hedican, 1995, p. 31). The danger is that by predominantly looking at "the natives" anthropologists and ethnography understandably come to be viewed as "the servant of the political elite". Quoting from an article by L. Nader (1982), he agrees that studying up is a pressing matter. "There is a certain urgency to the kind of anthropology that is concerned with power, for the quality of life, and our lives themselves may depend upon the extent to which citizens understand those who shape attitudes and actually control institutional structures" (Hedican, 1995, p. 31). This author concludes that "Perhaps the greatest failing of North American

anthropology has been the inability to adequately portray the effects of the external changes forced upon indigenous societies by western industrialized nations" (Hedican, 1995, p. 40).

In her discussion of "Forces Shaping the College of Arts and Sciences", F. Horn (1971) attempts to point out what she sees as some of the "forces accelerating change in higher education in general and in the university's college of arts and sciences in particular" (Horn, 1971, p. 66). Writing at a time when universities in the United States had experienced severe upheaval, from sit-ins to destruction of computer systems to shooting and killing campus activists, she asserts that: "In today's revolutionary society we must look to the future for our guideposts, taking into account what scientific knowledge is appropriate. Nevertheless, one can see forces that already are at work, shaping tomorrow's university" (Horn, 1971, p. 67). Among these forces, she identified:

- population growth with more students generally attending university and more students specifically enrolled in graduate studies
- a "great upsurge" of continuing education for adults encouraged by greater longevity and increasing numbers of adult part-time students
- curriculum changes in the areas of increased general education requirements
- a greater emphasis on foundation courses, and the tendency to make more programs graduate programs
- more transfer students from two-year colleges
- learning processes based on television, programmed learning and independent study
- an end to the tenure principle, and
- expanded and flexible alternatives in progressing toward a degree.

"If the country is to be saved by more effective higher education, certain forces at work shaping the university must be redirected. Among them is the decline in the status of teaching. Some balance must be restored between teaching and research" (Horn, 1971, p.

76). "In the end, deans and presidents may well be the most influential forces shaping tomorrow's college of arts and sciences" (Horn, 1971, p. 78).

J. Dennison and P. Gallagher (1986) have examined the influences on community colleges and post-secondary education. They point out that public demand for more advanced education opportunities and government financial capacity to respond to these demands coincided dramatically in the 1960's resulting in the "golden age" for public education in Canada. Why, they ask, did this surge in post-secondary education occur in Canada at this time? Why did new colleges and new college systems come into existence?

The influences which they identify to account for this phenomena are first: a rapidly increasing number among the eighteen to twenty-four year old segment of the population "there was widespread concern about the capacity of the higher education institutions, particularly the existing universities, to absorb such an increase" (Dennison & Gallagher, 1986, p. 12) Secondly, they point to the impact of scientific and technological change placing new demands on the workforce. Related to this, "the traditional practice of importing rather than training skilled workers as a solution to new manpower needs was becoming no longer politically or economically acceptable" (Dennison & Gallagher, 1986, p. 12). Other influences which they identify are the growth of community colleges in the United States in response to the perceived need for an "intermediary" level between high school and college and public acceptance of the college as "full partner in the spectrum of American post-secondary education and as a practical expression of the idea of equal opportunity for all citizens to pursue further education despite academic, socioeconomic, or geographic barriers" (Dennison & Gallagher, 1986, p. 14). In Canada, federal legislation embodied in the Technical and Vocational Training Assistance Act (1960) and the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences, and cost sharing agreements with the provinces resulted in the injection of eight hundred million dollars (75% from the federal government) into post-secondary education over a ten year period.

In a discussion of directions and options for the future of community colleges in Canada, Dennison and Gallagher (1986) identify issues relating to student and faculty

participation on boards of governors and their desire for "increased government spending with less government interference", while governments would probably like more control over college programming decisions. They point out that "Much more than in the past, all components of the public post-secondary sector—colleges, specialized institutions, universities—will share common concerns such as programme allocation, credit transfers and articulation, assignment of federal funds, policies on accessibility, and co-ordination." (Dennison & Gallagher, 1986, p. 192). After considering these prognostications, they come to the conclusion that:

> Generally speaking, public colleges have been seen as instruments of government policy implementation for economic development, manpower training, the elimination or reduction of adult illiteracy, and other government sociopolitical priorities; for the most part they have been seen, and they have perceived themselves, as part of an explicit or implicit strategic development plan of their provinces. (Dennison & Gallagher, 1986, p. 192)

Gail Barrington (1981) presents a helpful examination of forces and influences on Alberta community colleges. In her dissertation research she identifies and explores some of the "environmental forces" which are likely to have an impact on the development of policy for post-secondary education. The concept of environmental forces is taken from the work of Richard Hall (1977) in which he summarized general environmental conditions into seven factors: technological, legal, political, economic, demographic, ecological, and cultural. Using questionnaires, Barrington probed her research problem in increasing degrees of specificity, moving from the identification of environmental forces, to rank ordering of major forces. She then examined the impact of these on community colleges, the influence which they had on particular policy decision areas, and finally, she identified possible college responses to these influences.

The major findings in Barrington's study revealed that political forces were perceived as the most prevalent, but that economic forces were judged as the most important. When all of the forces identified were rated in respect to their likelihood of future impact and rank ordered from the most significant to the least significant, the following categories emerged:

1. Technological demand for training and retraining

2. A growing Alberta population

3. Intensified development of the resource industry

4. Inflation, Industry as a pressure group, Increasing in-migration

5. Buoyant economy, Decentralization of college services by region, Regional expansion of the population

6. Faculty as a pressure group, A government policy of fiscal restraint, Industrial expansion, Computer technology

7. Growth in the service sector

8. Government priorities among all sectors, A different student population (Barrington, 1981, p. 236,237)

Among the conclusions that she reaches are suggestions that demands for flexibility and accountability will have a significant impact on college policy development.

How do the concepts of force and influence apply to First Nations post-secondary education? Wallace Mountain Horse, quoted as a Kainai elder in Dianne Meili's book, (1991) proclaims that the pendulum of progress is swinging from 'outward living' to 'inward searching'. He says critical issues—a dying mother Earth and declining moral values—are pushing kids to reject the empty ways of mainstream society and return to the religion they thought was 'crazy' and something to get rid of." (Meili, 1991, p. 158). First Nations youth have become more outspoken and are less willing to passively tolerate policies and practices which threaten their future. When the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in 1989 brought in policies that would deny access to

post-secondary education, they responded by demonstrating, fasting, and peaceful sit-ins. "The voice of Indian students struck the Canadian public with intense force. . . . The education issue came to be characterized by on-going conflict between the Indian students, Indian representatives and the federal government" (Lancely, 1991, p. 235) Signalling the reality of student power "the hunger strike and protest awoke not only the Canadian public; it awoke the Indian nations to the fact that the new generation of Indian students is unwilling to be submissive to either government or Indian leadership when it ignores their interests" (Lancely, 1991, p. 247). First Nations students appear to have emerged as the most recent force in the field of post-secondary education.

Several researchers have identified what they consider to be current influences on First Nations post-secondary education. Terry Wotherspoon (1991) writes about Aboriginal land claims and Native rights; government initiatives to "downsize"; neo-conservative ideology; funding restrictions for post-secondary education; and, government recommendations for reduction in First Nation school construction, as "dangerous" trends for Aboriginal people. Norman Oppelt (1990) reminds us that all influences are not negative. "In the founding and development of all tribal colleges (except for NCC), external influences have played an important role, most commonly in a positive direction" (Oppelt, 1990, p. 83). Among these positive influences he sites the staff of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), state education officials and state board of education members, nearby two-year and four-year colleges, the National Congress of American Indians, the National Indian Education Association, and the National Advisory Council on Indian Education (NACIE). Other influences on tribally controlled colleges that he identifies are: funding, tribal populations, and accreditation.

In considering a "vision of the future" for First Nations education, Simon Brascoupe (1996) applies a form of force field analysis (without actually naming it as such) to the challenge of interweaving traditional knowledge with new technologies. He identifies what he perceives to be four "favourable conditions" (driving forces) for Aboriginal people.

First, they have greater political autonomy (self-government and land claims) and therefore are able to negotiate for greater control over their lives and resources. Second, in the current restructuring of the world economy, with its emphasis on resolving the environmental crisis, there is a place for traditional ecological knowledge. Third, society demands more environmentally sound solutions to production and development. Fourth, there is a growing awareness that a serious environmental strategy does not conflict with education, employment, and training programs. (Brascoupe, 1996, p. 356)

Among the strategies suggested by him, to be applied to First Nations communities, are: sustainable resource harvesting, restoration of the environment, continued efforts to resolve land claims, and to learn both traditional knowledge and new technologies. Future development, he suggests, should occur in the areas of: tourism, forestry, business, and new technologies. He asserted that among the barriers (restraining forces) to realizing this strategy are:

1. Lack of understanding of the traditional economy and traditional knowledge of aboriginal peoples;

2. Lack of models for the strengthening of traditional economies as a viable alternative to the present exploitive models of economic development; and

3. Lack of understanding of how to link traditional environmental knowledge and science. (Brascoupe, 1996, p. 356)

Overcoming these restraining forces or barriers, he suggests, will involve research and education. As a conclusion to her case study of the Native Education Centre, Celia Haig-Brown (1995) states, "There are no final resolutions, there is no end to struggle. There is a possibility that in observing First Nations struggles to take control of their own education, in anlayzing and naming that struggle, that ignorance will transform into knowledge" (Haig-Brown, 1995, p. 253).

According to the First Nations House of Learning Research Team, "The recent political context has been one in which self-government by First Nations has been widely accepted by Canadians as an inevitable consequence of applying standards of justice and equity to a new definition of the relationship between First Nations and others" (First Nations House of Learning Research Team, 1995, p. 163) They also emphasize that this move toward self-government comes not as a response to government policy, but rather "because of an assertion of moral authority and responsibility to be self-governing." Claude Denis (1996) states the case quite clearly: "aboriginal peoples were on this continent first, they were self-governing societies, and they never gave up that sovereignty. Hence the contemporary claim by aboriginal peoples that the Canadian state should recognize their inherent right to self-government" (Denis, 1996, p. 199). The First Nations House of Learning Research Team warns us though, that the fact that change is happening at a rapid pace may cloud the issue that "First Nations education all over North America continues in a state of crisis" (First Nations House of Learning Research Team, 1995, p. 163).

In support of this assertion, the Research Team cites the commission of a task force in the United States of America in 1990, to investigate current dimensions and issues in First Nations education and to point out directions for change. According to the Research Team, "the information published by the task force summarizes academic, political, and First Nations community responses to crises in education." Similarly, a report by the Auditor General for Canada in 1991 asks "Who is ultimately responsible, in an environment of devolution, for meeting the needs of First Nations in health, education and housing?" and responds that the department has been unclear and confused about this basic question. According to the report of the Auditor General, the government has failed to establish an "accountability framework" for First Nations programs, which should be based, the report suggests on the creation of an information and knowledge structure. Such a structure would not only contain accurate demographic information, but also provide an infrastructure which could make this information available to planners. Anthony Long and Menno Boldt (1988) also point an accusing finger at the federal

government; "Through policy and program neglect it has impelled the provinces to bring Indians under provincial social and economic programs. As a consequence, the development of provincial policies and programs for Indians has been reactive to federal initiatives [or the absence thereof]" (Long & Boldt, 1988, p. 21).

In their summarization of the documentation of a lack of policy and initiative, The First Nations House of Learning Research Team emphasizes the importance of a knowledge and information base and a technological infrastructure to support the "devolution" of control away from the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs and the enhancement of First Nations self-government. "Yet no clear policy and no clear accountability have been established by the federal government for the involvement of universities, with First Nations people, to create such an infrastructure and to educate" (First Nations House of Learning Research Team, 1995, p. 164). I would add that the same absence of policy appears to exist in the relationship between First Nations people and the community colleges of Alberta. The Research team concludes; "There is a crisis in policy. There is a crisis in personnel" (First Nations House of Learning Research Team, 1995, p.164).

Chapter Three

Methodology

A research methodology which can engage educational and cultural contexts and focus on the perceptions and experiences of First Nations people involved with post-secondary education is the qualitative case study. Within this research framework direct observations, interviews and document analysis, have been used in an attempt to understand the meaning and significance of ongoing interactions and relationships which influence and impact the development and implementation of First Nations post-secondary education programs at Red Crow Community College. The goal of the research conducted was to discover, explore, describe and analyze interactions and interconnections between forces and influences which shape the stated intentions for First Nations post-secondary education. In this process, First Nations and non-First Nations educational planners and managers are viewed as interpreters and implementors of educational intentions through their interaction with educational policy. Program coordinators and instructors are viewed largely as constructors, translators of, and contributors to the development of the curriculum. The role of students as participants in adult learning is expanded to consider them not only as the recipients of knowledge and understanding, but also as significant contributors to shaping the intentions for First Nations post-secondary education.

A difficulty, according to Henshel (1990), with understanding social behaviours and the manner in which they are sometimes manifest as social problems is that they do not lend themselves to study "as unambiguously as mechanical or biological situations ... entanglements with perceptions, values, and ideologies are unavoidable" (Henshel, 1990, p. xv). Quantitative methods are limited in helping us to understand the context of a social phenomena, nor do they readily inform us about the values and beliefs, the hopes and aspirations which guide human endeavour. How people feel at a certain time or stage of development, and the social and physical environment in which they are functioning are

important factors in the study of education and are effectively examined within the naturalistic inquiry framework.

Choice of Methodology

The choice of methodology for this research project reflects the influence of Bogdan and Biklen (1982) and Guba and Lincoln (1989) and their concept of naturalistic inquiry. As Guba and Lincoln point out, "Phenomena can be understood only within the context in which they are studied" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 45). Bogdan and Biklen call this, "thinking naturalistically". Researchers, they suggest, try to understand how individuals perceive the meaning of the world around them. First Nations communities in which post-secondary education programs are offered constitute an appropriate natural context in which to carry out this form of inquiry. In describing illuminative evaluation as a form of naturalistic inquiry, Worthen and Sanders (1987) point out that "Illuminative evaluation is primarily concerned with description and interpretation, not measurement and prediction. No attempt is made to manipulate or control variables, but rather to take the complex educational context, as it exists, and attempt to understand it" (Worthen & Sanders, 1987, p. 132). In a similar vein, the focus of this research is on "description" and "interpretation". Referring to Bogdan and Biklen, Guba and Lincoln (1989) summarize naturalistic inquiry as "collecting descriptive data in the natural setting, with the evaluator serving as the inquiry instrument; focusing on 'educational issues as they are perceived and experienced by people' . . . and utilizing an inductive process that focuses and narrows as the evaluation proceeds" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 95, 160). This research project conforms clearly to this definition of naturalistic inquiry as: one, extensive amounts of descriptive data were sought, two, Red Crow College was explored in its natural community context, three, the researcher served as the instrument of inquiry, and four, an attempt was made to describe issues and intentions from the perspective of those people experiencing them.

An important characteristic of qualitative research is that it seeks to discover meaning within a natural setting, and, in this case within a particular cultural context. The

discovery of meaning is greatly aided by careful, systematic and reflective description and analysis of that which is being explored and examined. This process of understanding is unavoidably influenced by the use of language. Language by itself is an imperfect vehicle for conveying meaning. At the same time, language also has a significant role in the construction of meaning. In deference to this potential shortcoming, definitions and interpretations of words and phrases that might be more susceptible to misunderstanding, have been provided throughout this dissertation.

Case Study Research

Defined generally by their purposes, Sharan Merriam (1988) describes three types of case study methodology within the framework of qualitative research. These are; the descriptive case study, the interpretive case study and the evaluative case study. Useful in areas of education where little formal research has been done, the descriptive case study attempts to present a detailed account of the phenomenon under study. This type of study is seldom guided by established hypotheses, nor does it seek to form a general hypothesis. Often focusing on innovative programs and practices, such studies can form a helpful data base for future comparison and theory building.

Interpretive case studies employ descriptive data "to develop conceptual categories or to illustrate, support, or challenge theoretical assumptions held prior to the data gathering. . . . the level of abstraction and conceptualization in interpretive case studies may range from suggesting relationships among variables to constructing theory" (Merriam, 1988, p. 28). Because of their greater emphasis on the analysis of large amounts of data, some sources such as Shaw (1978), refer to these as "analytical" case studies.

Evaluative case studies add an important element of judgement to the activities of description and explanation. Because of its ability to explain causal links in complex, real-life situations, the case study method has been particularly suited to educational evaluation.

Literature on research methodology also points to an overlap between case study and ethnography. Ethnography as research, according to several authors (Haig-Brown, 1995; Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Merriam, 1988) is based on the direct study of human beings in interaction in their everyday settings. "As people interact, they create their social realities (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) and derive meanings for their lives (Blumer, 1969). Ethnographic research is based on these tenets . . . it resembles the routine ways that people make sense of their lives" (Haig-Brown, 1995, p. 15). In some instances, the case study method may take on some of the characteristics of ethnography. "An ethnographic case study . . . is a socio-cultural analysis of the unit of study. Concern with the cultural context is what sets this type of study apart from other qualitative research" (Merriam, 1988, p. 23). In other instances, some of the characteristics of ethnography may emerge in evaluation studies. Goetz and LeCompte (1984), for example, refer to the case study evaluation of educational issues as ethnographic evaluations.

To some extent, all of these elements may be present in this research study. However, in terms of the specific purposes for this project it can most appropriately be described as a combination of descriptive and interpretive case study. As a descriptive and interpretive case study this research project represents an investigation into the ways in which people associated with post-secondary education programs at Red Crow College describe and act on their understandings of current local, provincial, and federal educational policies. Consistent with qualitative research, no attempt has been made to form generalizations about First Nations post-secondary educational institutions.

Sharan Merriam (1988) asserts that "Case study research, and in particular qualitative case study, is an ideal design for understanding and interpreting observations of educational phenomena" (Merriam, 1988, p. 2). Considering the focus of this study on First Nations post-secondary education, a descriptive and interpretive case study, utilizing strategies such as document analysis, focus group discussions and key informant or "elite" interviews (Marshall & Rossman, 1995), can lead to the discovery and analysis of meaningful information in a unique context. Among the strengths of case study research

are that it "has proved particularly useful for studying educational innovations, for evaluating programs, and for informing policy" (Merriam, 1988, p. 33).

Three criteria, according to Kenny and Grotelueschen (1980), are suggested as a test for the appropriateness of case study research. First, a case study can be considered when "the desired or projected objectives of an educational effort focus on humanistic outcomes or cultural differences" (p. 3). Secondly, when the information obtained from participants is not subject to truth or falsity, but "can be subject to scrutiny on the grounds of credibility" (p. 4). Thirdly, case study research is appropriate when it is used to examine a unique situation.

This research project satisfies all three of the above conditions. Humanistic outcomes such as the need for healing and a desire to contribute to the betterment of the Blood community, as well as significant concerns about the preservation of Blackfoot culture, emerge clearly from the data. Secondly, educational policy documents are not constructed on the basis of truth or falsity, but rather in response to community need and intentions. They are generally responsive in nature and as a result the extent to which they accurately reflect human need is a function of credibility. Furthermore, this project has utilized key informant interviews. Interview participants were selected precisely because of their credibility. In respect to the third criteria, Red Crow Community College represents a unique experience in post-secondary education. It exists on site on the largest reserve in Canada. As a First Nations college it remains autonomous, that is, unaffiliated with a parent institution such as a local university. It is the first, and perhaps the only, tribally controlled community college in Canada.

In Worthen and Sanders (1987) examination of the related area of investigation called evaluation research the necessity for anticipating and coping with the political implications of program evaluation are emphasised. Summarizing the views of David Cronbach, they state, "evaluation of public supported enterprises is inextricably intertwined with public policy formulation and all the political forces involved in that process" (Worthen & Sanders, 1987, p. 292). Not only has this research project targeted a 'public supported enterprise', but it has targeted one situated in a First Nations community

with its own unique cultural context and socio-political structure. Because of the current political sensitivities of First Nations communities, prior to gathering and analyzing research data, it was essential to become familiar with the political context of First Nations communities. Many aspects of the review of the literature have attempted to accomplish this familiarization. This was also greatly facilitated by a colleague who was formerly the Director for Indian Affairs for Calgary with many years experience working, both formally and informally, as a community development resource person in several First Nations communities in southern Alberta. As a mentor and colleague he provided much helpful advice about politically and culturally sensitive issues.

The Setting

One of the challenges in qualitative case study research is to develop an understanding of context and culture. If one is too closely associated with the cultural context there is a possibility that over identification with concerns and issues may cloud the researchers observations. If one is too distant, then subtle nuances and meanings might be missed or misinterpreted. Where the researcher comes from a different cultural background there is not only a possibility of misinterpretation of incidents and events, but also concern about whether the researcher will be accepted in the community and whether information will be openly and accurately shared. How does one successfully bridge two cultures and invite participation in a search for meaning? Haig-Brown (1995) raises some meaningful precautions:

> For First Nations people, the possibility of participating in the research process holds special significance. Many people involved in First Nations education object to the strong Eurocentric bias of the language and concepts used in most studies conducted by academics. . . . Much research conducted upon First Nations people has been extremely exploitative. While Whittaker (1986) acknowledges that 'all research is exploitative', First Nations people have been subjected to too many researchers who gather information for personal and professional benefit without

giving anything back to them. In addition, failure to check one's findings with those studied can lead to inaccurate and unfair representations as well to the 'studied subjects' feeling as though they have been objectified. (Haig-Brown, 1995, p. 32)

When the President of Red Crow College was approached with a request to conduct a case study on site, the response was very positive and more helpful than anticipated. In addition to agreeing to the research study, the President indicated that Red Crow College was about to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of all of its programs and activities, and requested the researcher's participation as chair of the evaluation team, an offer that was willingly and gratefully accepted. Participating on the evaluation team, comprised of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members, provided an excellent opportunity to become more closely associated with the College, to have access to a depth of information that would minimize misinterpretations, and to provide something constructive and valuable back to the College and to the community.

Marshall and Rossman (1995) suggest that in qualitative research, when questions are relatively diffuse and exploratory in nature, "the plan for deploying the self should ensure access to a number of events, people, and perspectives on the social phenomenon chosen for study" (p. 61). Unremunerated involvement on the comprehensive evaluation team was viewed as a further means of gaining access to significant events and people and of extending the researcher's perspectives on First Nations post-secondary education. Furthermore, as to the issue of negotiating entry into the naturalistic research site they assert that, "instead of controlling and sanitizing their presence, qualitative researchers identify and present aspects of themselves that will be useful" (p. 61). Participation in the comprehensive evaluation, then, served several useful purposes in terms of placing the researcher in the context and facilitating entry, as well as allowing an opportunity to provide something specific and helpful in return for participation of the College community. It was not without its problems, however, as some of the research data was gathered at the same time as the comprehensive evaluation was being conducted. This

issue is further examined under the section of this chapter dealing with the research limitations.

Self as Instrument

The concept of the inquirer serving as the instrument of the inquiry is described by Marshall and Rossman (1995) as "fundamental to the design." They state that "Whether that presence is sustained and intensive . . . or whether relatively brief but personal . . . the researcher enters into the lives of the participants" (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 59). Egon Guba (1982) refers to this phenomena as "The inquirer-object relationship":

> It is commonly understood that objects of inquiry, when they are human, may react to inquirers of their inquiry methods. Less appreciated is the fact that the inquirer is also subject to interaction. Just as the inquirer may shape the respondents behavior, so may the respondent shape the inquirer's behavior. Nor should it be supposed that the interpolation of a layer of objective instrumentation between the inquirer and the respondent(s) is sufficient to overcome or offset this interaction. . . . Far from deploring inquirer-respondent interactivity, the naturalist exploits it. . . . because it is precisely this interactivity that makes it possible for the inquirer to be a smart instrument, honing in on relevant facts and ideas by virtue of his sensitivity, responsiveness, and adaptability. (Guba, 1982, p. 318, 319)

In considering the implications of the 'self-as-instrument' concept (Eisner, 1991) for data gathering, as the primary research practitioner involved in the design and implementation of this study, it may be important to review the researcher's background and qualifications. This extends an opportunity to the reader to evaluate the potential effect of the background, motivations and perspectives of this particular researcher on the results of the project. For six years the position of Chair of the Department of Social Services at Mount Royal College was held, prior to entering the Doctoral program in Educational Policy and Administration Studies. As indicated in Chapter 1, during this

time there was active involvement, along with members of the College's Credit Extension Department, in the negotiation for and development and delivery of the Social Work diploma and Early Childhood Education certificate programs to a number of First Nations communities in southern Alberta. The most extensive and enduring of these contracts has been with Red Crow College on the Blood reservation near Standoff Alberta.

Six years as Chair of the Social Services department, as well as three years as Coordinator of the Academic Development Centre and two years as Chair of the Behavioural Sciences department at Mount Royal College have been valuable assets in developing the ability to analyze and interpret educational policy documents. In addition, two years on the Board of Governors for the College and six years on the Board of Directors for The Canadian Mental Health Association have provided familiarity with the language of social policy and with the processes of policy formation. A Master's degree in Education with a specialization in Curriculum Development have also aided in developing an understanding of the processes through which educational programs are shaped.

An initial professional career and Master's degree in Social Work have provided extremely helpful preparation for interviewing. Several years as a Social Work practitioner have developed an ability to listen effectively to others, to tune in to key concepts and phrases, and to respond to those interviewed in a manner which communicates understanding. And finally, throughout many years at Mount Royal College, in addition to being an administrator, continuing to be a classroom teacher has helped to keep issues in perspective, and to be constantly reminded that ultimately the goals of education are for the learning of students.

Again, this overview of qualifications and experience is provided so that the reader can formulate a reasonable estimation of the effectiveness of the researcher "as instrument" in this project.

Initial Assumptions

      The first and major assumption made was that developing an understanding of the complex social phenomena of another culture can effectively be achieved through qualitative research methodology. In a related manner, it was also assumed that the descriptive and interpretive case study methodology would include community input and participation and as a result, would be viewed in a positive manner by participants.

      Other assumptions that were made prior to the start of this research study have included the following:

- that First Nations post-secondary education is experiencing a state of tension between the desire to preserve culture and traditions (autonomy) and the pressure to adopt Western Canadian culture (assimilation).

- that there is strong First Nations community support for tribally controlled education programs.

- that federal and provincial systemic support for First Nations education reflects minimal structure and resources.

- that First Nations have made steady and strong progress in the development of post-secondary education

- that planning for First Nations post-secondary education may be hampered by unclear or conflicting goals and purposes.

- that the learning experiences of Aboriginal students may be enhanced by curriculum modifications and options specifically designed to reflect First Nations culture.

- that dominant Western Canadian society is poorly informed about First Nations educational objectives.

- that First Nations post-secondary education initiatives reflect First Nations cultural and community aspirations.

- that participants and respondents in this research project will freely and openly discuss their experiences.

- that the results of a First Nations case study may be valuable to those education planners involved in promoting and developing post-secondary education programs.

While these assumptions reflect an initial understanding of First Nations education, it is important to point out that a conscious attempt was made throughout the project to keep an open mind. Rather than as a list of *a priori* conclusions, they provided a starting point for investigation and often served to stimulate reflection and an attempt to achieve increased self-awareness.

Participant/Sample Selection

Given the case study methodology which was followed for this project, there were three related aspects of participant/sample selection that were considered. The first of these had to do with the choice of site in which to conduct the project. This issue was discussed in Chapter 1 of this dissertation, but what was not mentioned was that originally the possibility of selecting a different community for the research had been considered as well as the possibility of a comparative study using two First Nations communities in closer proximity to Calgary. However, the choice of Red Crow College was not a difficult one. Based on preliminary observations and previous contact it was felt that the other community did not have as stable and well-integrated a post-secondary education program as the one on the Blood reserve. Also, given the exploratory and descriptive nature of this study, it was felt that a comparative research project would have been too complex without the singular studies in place.

The second area of selection had to do with choosing participants to be interviewed. This selection generally followed what Sharan Merriam (1988) and David Krathwohl (1993), refer to as 'purposive' or 'purposeful' sampling. "Purposive sampling is based on the assumption that one wants to discover, understand, gain insight; therefore one needs to select a sample from which one can learn the most" (Merriam, 1988, p. 48). "We are able to select a purposive sample that includes individuals, documents, situations,

events, processes, times, and other aspects that can further develop our target area of information" (Krathwohl, 1993, p. 324). In this regard, interview choices included two individuals who were involved in the initiation of the post-secondary education program at Red Crow College, two members of the current Board of Directors for the College, two members of the previous Board, and three instructors who have taught or are currently teaching in the program. The current President of the College and two members of the staff who have been responsible for coordinating the Arts & Science/University Transfer program of the College were interviewed on more than one occasion. Lastly, two focus group interviews were conducted with classroom groups of continuing students who are registered in two different courses in the Arts & Science/University Transfer program at the College.

The third aspect of selection for this project has to do with the documents which were chosen for content analysis. Principally they have included; documents produced since 1989 either by the Blood Tribal Council and/or the Board of Directors for Red Crow Community College, the Alberta Department of Advanced Education, and the Federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development which contain policies for First Nations post-secondary education. As indicated by the review of the literature, 1989 was a particularly significant year in the formation of Federal Government policy toward First Nations post-secondary education. Documents produced prior to this time have been dealt with in the literature review as historically significant to understanding the current context for educational programs. Documents produced after this date have been considered as an integral part of the current context, interacting directly with the process of program development and implementation.

Federal government documents have included: *The Indian Act; The Constitution Act, 1982; The Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs; The Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Canada - Alberta Cooperation on Native [Indian and Metis] Development; Pathways to Success: Aboriginal Employment and Training Strategy;* and the many reports of the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.*

Provincial government documents have included: *The Secondary and Post-Secondary Transition Needs of Native Students; New Directions for Adult Learning in Alberta; Institutional Accountability in Alberta's Post-Secondary System;* and, *Meeting The Challenge IV: Detailed Three-Year Plan for Education in Alberta.*

Blood Tribe and Red Crow College documents have included: *Post-Secondary Student Support Program: Program Handbook; 1996/1997 Student Handbook and Program Calendar; Annual Reports from 1994/95 and 1995/96; Cooperative Education Policy; Long Term Strategic Plan; Adult Education Training Needs Assessment; Orientation Brief to Blood Tribe Chief and Council;* and, *Comprehensive Evaluation, 1997.*

Data Analysis

Field notes were made of all observations and a detailed 'fieldwork journal' (Merriam, 1988, p. 98) was prepared, including subjective reactions as well as a narrative account of observations. All formal interviews were tape recorded and a typewritten transcript for each interview was prepared. Participants were offered an opportunity to read the transcripts of their interviews and suggest alterations to, or clarification of, their statements. Focus group discussions were tape recorded.

The fieldwork journal, personal observations, and informal conversations with members of the College community have been analyzed reflectively in order to develop an understanding of the context in which educational program development is occurring at Red Crow College. All data gathered from the interviews including the focus group interviews were initially organized chronologically and photocopied. This information was read through and reviewed several times generating comments and questions which were written in the margins (i.e. 'memos', Miles and Huberman, 1984). Different coloured highlighter pens were used to identify common topics and themes. Using guidelines suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1981) concerning the construction and reconstruction of realities, the data was divided into categories. Using file folders, the photocopied pages

were cut up and coded sections were placed into the appropriately categorized and labelled folders.

Document analysis was used to identify and describe current local, provincial, and federal policies which relate to First Nations post-secondary education. As Merriam (1988) points out a significant advantage of documentary material for research is its stability because it is essentially 'nonreactive' with the researcher. She also points out that "documentary data are particularly good sources for qualitative case studies because they can ground an investigation in the context of the problem" (Merriam, 1988, p. 109). Content analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Marshall & Rossman, 1995) of these documents was undertaken. Using Lorne Downey's work (1988) as a general guideline the content analysis attempted to identify and categorize First Nations post-secondary education policies as: "an authoritative allocation or choice from among competing values or desires... a declaration of intent, a major guideline... future oriented (dealing with uncertainty) . . . a direction for action" (Downey, 1988, p. 54). A file folder system of categorizing document content was also used similar to the method used for categorizing interview content.

All documents have been read several times, compared and contrasted, and an effort made to identify and explore areas of congruence, complementarity, and consistency, as well as possible gaps, incongruence, and inconsistencies.

Limitations

Among the limitations inherent in this project were; the amount of time available to complete the study, the extent of access to documents, the availability and willingness of interviewees to participate openly and freely in discussions, and the extent to which the Arts & Science/University Transfer program is representative of planning for First Nations post-secondary education programs. The researcher did not reside on the reserve and had to spend a great deal of time driving to and from Calgary. A very important limitation was the fact that the researcher is in many ways unfamiliar with Blackfoot culture. From another perspective, namely that of keeping an open mind and viewing a social

phenomenon from a fresh perspective, this limitation could actually have some advantages. Given that the purpose of this research was to identify, describe, and in some ways define, it is highly likely that the dominant society cultural background of the researcher along with more than 25 years of employment at a large mainstream community college, was a significant influence on both perceptions and interpretations of Red Crow Community College and its goals and objectives. Another cultural limitation to keep in mind is that plains Indian cultures are not homogenous. While there may be many similarities among tribes of the western plains, assumptions of commonality and generalizations should not be made based on the data gathered in this study. A further factor to consider is that analysis of the many documents included in this study was limited by the conceptualization skills and the administrative background and experience of the researcher. Attempts to define issues and concerns are dependent on this researchers ability to exercise creative judgement and insight.

An additional limitation, suggested earlier, was the fact that a comprehensive evaluation of Red Crow Community College was taking place approximately at the same time as this research and that the researcher was a participant on the evaluation team. While the role of the researcher was mainly facilitative, organizing and chairing evaluation team meetings, it is possible that the concurrence of these events and the dual role of the researcher may have influenced the responses of some participants. The two student focus group discussions and two of the instructor interviews occurred at the same time as the comprehensive evaluation was being conducted. On the other hand, two interviews of program coordinators took place prior to the commencement of the comprehensive evaluation, and participation in the annual planning retreat, two instructor interviews, and the majority of the key informant interviews took place from one to two months after completion of the evaluation.

Delimitations

In addition to decisions made about the amount of travel and time on-site, it was deemed for practical purposes necessary to limit the number of interviews to

approximately ten. In addition, the number of student focus group discussions conducted by the researcher was limited to two. The number of days spent at the College comprised an average of one day per week for approximately four months. The costs (budget) were kept as much as possible to a minimum, reflecting the student status of the researcher. In this regard transcripts of tape-recorded interviews were primarily prepared by the researcher himself. While this may have created some problems in terms of target dates and timelines, these drawbacks were felt to be more than adequately compensated for by providing for detailed and in-depth review of the interviews.

Validity and Reliability

Several authors (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Krathwohl, 1993; Marshall & Rossman 1995; and Merriam, 1988) write about the importance of establishing validity and reliability in qualitative research.

> For if *understanding* is the primary rationale for the investigation, the criteria for trusting the study are going to be different than if discovery of a law or testing a hypothesis is the study's objective. . . . What makes the case study work 'scientific' is the observer's critical presence in the context. (Merriam, 1988, p. 166)

In order to determine the "trustworthiness" of a qualitative inquiry, Guba and Lincoln (1989) propose a set of criteria that are "parallel" to those of quantitative inquiry methods. Referred to as foundational criteria, they include the concepts of: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Credibility is considered by them to be parallel to internal validity, transferability parallel to external validity, dependability parallel to reliability, and confirmability parallel to objectivity.

<u>Credibility</u>.

An examination of the criterion of credibility for this research project must take into account the following techniques:

1. <u>Prolonged engagement</u>: considered necessary in order to establish rapport and build trust and to "facilitate immersing oneself in and understand the context's culture (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 237). In addition to frequent contact between the researcher and Red Crow College over a period of six years, this criterion was met to the extent that the researcher was actively involved over a seven month period from January to July, 1997, in gathering information and interviewing participants. In addition, engagement was enhanced by the researcher's participation in College planning activities which led to several meetings with the College Board of Governors and numerous conversations with College staff.

2. <u>Persistent observation</u>: considered necessary in order to focus on issues in detail and to add depth to the information gathered. The parallel activities of conducting this research while at the same time participating on the comprehensive evaluation team added considerably to both the range and depth of information gathered. Depth of information may also have been facilitated by the researcher's pilot study and previous experience in this community.

3. <u>Peer debriefing</u>: considered important as a means of testing findings, clarifying the researchers attitudes and beliefs, testing working hypotheses, exploring methodological alternatives and as "a means of catharsis within a confidential, professional relationship" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 237). Activities consistent with the pursuit of this criteria included many discussions with colleagues, peer review and feedback of this dissertation throughout its many stages of development, and many opportunities for review and feedback throughout the research process with the research supervisor.

4. <u>Negative case analysis</u>: which is "the process of revising working hypotheses in the light of hindsight" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 237). Encouraged through the processes of peer debriefing and reflection, revisions occurred throughout this research project. As a result, the working title was changed several times, the research problem was clarified and restated, research questions were modified, the literature review was extended and interview questions were altered. All of these changes reflect an effort to frequently rethink and test the original working hypothesis.

5. <u>Progressive subjectivity</u>: is based on the assertion that "the inquirer's construction cannot be given privilege over that of anyone else . . . the technique of progressive subjectivism is designed to provide a check on the degree of privilege" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 238). This criterion has been met to the extent that the researcher attempted to identify assumptions at the outset of the inquiry, that a pilot study was conducted, that the research proposal was submitted to and approved by the Education Joint Research Ethics committee, and that the research supervisor frequently challenged and debated emerging perspectives.

6. <u>Member checks</u>: refers to "the process of testing hypotheses, data, preliminary categories, and interpretations with members of the stakeholding groups from whom the original constructions were collected" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 238, 239). Typed transcripts were provided to interview participants and in three instances follow-up discussions were arranged in order to further clarify the information provided. In addition, the workshop which was conducted during the staff planning retreat provided an opportunity to get feedback concerning preliminary results. Copies of Chapter 5 of this dissertation were also provided to the President of Red Crow College and to the Chair of the board of Governors for review and feedback prior to its inclusion.

Transferability.

"The object of the game in making transferability judgments is to set out all the working hypotheses for *this* study, and to provide an extensive and careful description of the time, the place, the context, the culture in which those hypotheses were found to be salient" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 241, 242). Transferability judgements are basically to be made by the reader, not the writer of research. To facilitate this, multiple data sources have been utilized throughout this project. A conscious effort has been made to provide as complete and comprehensive a data base as possible. This has been facilitated in several instances by research participants who have suggested sources of information to be incorporated into the project.

Dependability.

This criterion refers to the "stability" of the data and is facilitated by techniques for "documenting the logic of process and method decisions" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 242). The logic of these decisions is contained within this chapter and is, again, supported by prior activities such as the pilot study and the proposal for approval by the ethics committee. To some extent the stability of the data may be inherent in the stability of interview participants, all of whom have been involved in First Nations Post-secondary education for many years. Also, wherever modifications have been made to the original research design, these have been documented and explained.

Confirmability.

According to Guba and Lincoln (1989), confirmability "means that data . . . can be tracked to their sources, and that the logic used to assemble the interpretations into structurally coherent and corroborating wholes is both explicit and implicit in the narrative of a case study" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 243). The concept of an "audit trail" (Schwandt & Halpern, 1988; and Guba & Lincoln, 1989) is suggested as the usual technique for confirming the data and interpretations of a given study. The audit trail for this research project is imbedded in chapters four and five which include numerous direct

quotations, anecdotes, field notations and comments made by participants. Another very important aspect of confirmability is the use of Red Crow College documents as sources of data.

Compliance With Ethical Standards

As suggested by Bogdan and Biklen (1982) "Two issues dominate recent guidelines of ethics in research with human subjects: informed consent and the protection of subjects from harm" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 49). As a result, an attempt has been made to insure as much as possible that:

1. Subjects enter research projects voluntarily, understanding the nature of the study and the dangers and the obligations that are involved.

2. Subjects are not exposed to risks that are greater than the gains they might derive. (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 49)

Permission to conduct educational research at this institution was sought from the Red Crow Community College President and Board of Governors. A written letter of permission to conduct case study research (see Appendix A) was provided by the President of the College and the Board of Governors formally approved the research proposal at one of its regular meetings in February, 1997. In addition to the letter of permission, College authorities received a copy of the research proposal which was approved by the University of Calgary Joint Ethics committee. Consent forms (see Appendix B) were signed by interview participants. A written copy of possible topics to be discussed during the interview was made available where possible in advance, and in those instances where written discussion topics could not be shared in advance, possible topics were discussed with participants immediately prior to the interview. Finally, interview participants were also provided with an opportunity to read and respond to transcripts of their interview. In addition, when the first draft of the dissertation was completed, a copy was submitted to the College president for review and feedback.

Two classes were selected for the focus group discussions. Initially, it was hoped that selection of these groups could be done in a random manner. Because this research was occurring at the same time as the comprehensive College evaluation, random selection was not possible. Sections other than the Arts & Science students were already being interviewed by members of the comprehensive evaluation team. To use the same groups might have led to confusion. This left the two existing Arts and Science classes for the research focus group discussions. The focus group discussions were held during the students regular class times, the instructor was not invited to be present, and students were reassured that their participation was voluntary, that their comments were confidential, that participation would not affect their grades or be used as a form of evaluation, and that their identities would not be revealed.

Guba and Lincoln (1989) identify five potential areas of risk for participants in case study research. These are; face-to-face-contact, the difficulty of maintaining privacy and confidentiality, the potential for violation of trust, the need for open negotiations with participants, and, inclusion/exclusion or selection in framing the case study. In addition to the measures already described, every attempt was made to minimize these risks by making it clear to participants that after interviews were transcribed they would be offered the opportunity either to correct erroneous information or to provide additional information or clarification of the intended message. To minimize possible feelings of a power differential, it was made clear to all participants that the researcher no longer held the position of Chair of the Social Services department at Mount Royal College, and that, upon sabbatical completion, would be returning to the classroom. The risks inherent in face-to-face contact and maintenance of trust demand a high level of self awareness on the part of the researcher (Haig-Brown, 1995; Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Efforts to maintain self awareness included regular examination and reflection upon personal motives and interactions with participants, usually during the two hour drive back to Calgary after a day at the College. Many of these reflections were tape recorded and many thoughts were written in an ongoing basis in the fieldwork journal. Precautions have been taken by maintaining a confidential filing system at home so that participants not be identified. In

respect to the fifth area of risk, the case study has been guided by a fundamental principle suggested by Guba and Lincoln (1989), that "the problem of selection, inclusion or exclusion can only be resolved on the basis of what is needed and appropriate in this setting, in this place, in this time, and for these stakeholder audiences" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 137).

Sensitivity to cultural issues and reporting phenomena from the perspective of participants is fundamental to the design of a case study inquiry, and as a result the design itself serves to reduce concerns about doing research in a different cultural setting. "The basic ontological and epistemological positions of the naturalistic paradigm militate against many of the difficulties noted" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 137). Among the advantages suggested by Guba and Lincoln are that:

> the constructivist position is empowering to all of the parties involved in the inquiry . . . the constructivist shares power. The constructions of all are solicited and honored . . . all have the opportunity to confront and develop criticisms of their own constructions as well as the constructions of others . . . the naturalistic approach does not seek justification of anyone's present position but rather seeks connection between the positions as a means to move to higher intellectual, moral, and ethical ground. (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 138, 140)

As a final consideration, all data (including audio cassettes, computer discs, and transcripts) have been kept in a locked filing cabinet and on a personal computer at the researcher's residence. Within three years or at the completion of the dissertation all raw data will be destroyed, paper materials will be shredded, audio tapes erased, and computer files deleted.

Chapter Four

Presentation of the data

Multiple methods have been used in this research project to gather data from a wide variety of sources. Although this has added to the complexity of both presentation and analysis, it was felt to be necessary for several reasons. As indicated in Chapter 1, the purpose of this project was to identify, describe and explain the various intentions for First Nations post-secondary education. Given this purpose, a broad range of data sources appeared to be preferable. In addition, the qualitative nature of this study encouraged discussions and interviews with many different sources to obtain a wide variety of input. It is hoped that further research into this area of investigation could benefit from this broad range of investigation to pursue specific research questions in greater depth. An additional advantage of examining as many sources as those following in this chapter, is that they provide very helpful input for triangulation. The many sources of data examined in this chapter are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2
Summary of Data Sources

1. Demographic Information
   a. James Frideres (1993)
   b. Mary Jane Norris (1996)
   c. Red Crow Community College Annual Reports (1994/95 and 1995/96)

2. Key Informant Interviews
   a. Members of the Board of Governors (2 current and 2 past)
   b. Members of the Administration and Strategic Planning group (3)
   c. Program Coordinators and Instructors (2 coordinators and 2 instructors)

Summary of data Sources

3. Participant Observations from the Annual Planning Retreat
    a. Large and small group discussions including; members of the Board, administration, staff and faculty and 3 representatives from the Elders Advisory Council
    b. Discussion summary and recommendations

4. Information from the Comprehensive Evaluation
    a. Instructor Correspondence
    b. Instructor Evaluations
    c. Student Focus Group Results

5. Arts and Science Student Focus Groups (2)

6. Student Survey Results

7. Document Analysis
    a. Post-Secondary Student Support Program Handbook, 1996/97
    b. Student Handbook and Program Calendar
    c. Red Crow Community College Annual Reports, 1994/95, 1995/96
    d. Orientation Brief to Blood Tribe Chief and Council, 1997
    e. Long Term Strategic Plan
    f. Cooperative Education Policy
    g. Red Crow Community College Comprehensive Evaluation, 1997

Demographic Profile

The importance of examining and understanding demographic information is emphasized by Mary Jane Norris (1996), who states that such data is "fundamental to meaningful analyses of issues and the development of relevant policies and programs . . . essential in evaluating and determining the success of various policies and programs and in determining what will be required for the future" (Norris, 1996, p. 179). Demographic data, then, may be viewed as important in respect to First Nations post-secondary education, particularly because new courses and programs specifically designed to respond to community needs are under consideration.

The major sources for demographic information used by Norris (1996) and James Frideres (1993) referred to in this chapter include Indian and Northern Affairs Canada [INAC], Health and Welfare Canada [HWC], Statistics Canada, the Vital Statistics section of the Health Division of Statistics Canada, and the Decennial Censuses of Canada.

According to the authors mentioned above there are a number of limitations that one needs to be mindful of, particularly in reference to demographic reports concerning First Nations. James Frideres (1993) points out that the different government sources cited above differ widely in their terms of reference and in their method of enumeration. As a result, information may not be comparable from one agency to the other.

Needless to say, the lack of standardized data severely limits the accuracy of short-term trend analysis and makes future projections difficult. Moreover, because the definition of an Indian has changed over time, statistics reported by different agencies show wide discrepancies; in some cases, revised definitions of Indian status have meant that statistics related to a certain group are no longer appropriate. (Frideres, 1993, p. 128).

Jane Norris (1996) also points out some important shortcomings among current demographic data relating to ethnic background.

There are a number of inherent limitations associated with ethnicity data, a main one being the 'subjective' self reporting of the respondent. Also, while a respondent may report more than one ethnic origin, the degree of importance of each of the ethnicities is not known. . . . Another aspect of aboriginal ethnicity is 'identity'. . . even though one may report aboriginal origins, one may or may not necessarily identify with these origins." (Norris, 1996, p. 181)

An attempt was made following the 1991 census to clarify the reporting of 'ethnic origin' and 'ethnic identity' through a post-censal survey called the Aboriginal Peoples

Survey (APS). Norris (1996) has used data from the APS wherever possible to avoid confounding the concepts of 'origin' and 'identity'.

All of the present data sources are limited due to under coverage, incomplete enumeration, and misreporting in the census or APS, or late and underreporting in the register. Census and APS data are based on self-reported counts and characteristics. As such, these data can be at variance with other estimates of aboriginal group populations . . . the census excludes institutional residents from its ethnic data, such as prison inmates, chronic care residents, those in rooming homes, hotels, etc., and those no longer officially residing in Canada. (Norris, 1996, p. 182, 183)

This latter point may be particularly significant given the fact that Aboriginal people are consistently overrepresented in Canada's prison systems (Monture-Angus, 1996, R. Ross, 1992, Task Force, 1991). The ensuing discussion on population growth suggests that young adults, as a group among First Nations, are proportionately larger than the same non-Aboriginal group in mainstream society. This group of First Nations young adults are among the age group that would be deemed most likely to utilize the post-secondary education system if it was available to them.

Population Growth.

The overall Aboriginal population (Indian, Metis, Inuit) is growing very fast. It is estimated that by the twenty-first century, the Aboriginal population will be in excess of 1 million. . . . Projections show that from 1981 to 1991, on-reserve Indians have increased their population by one-third. During this same period, off-reserve Indians will have more than doubled. . . . In summary, status Indians and Inuit will continue to have higher growth rates than the Canadian population for several decades. (Frideres, 1993, p. 129)

Canada's Aboriginal population has a much younger age structure than that of the general population. Half the Aboriginal population is under the age of twenty two, compared with the general population of Canada where half the population is under the age of thirty four. Thirty six percent of the total population with Aboriginal ancestry is aged 0-14, compared with twenty three percent of Canadians overall. "The much younger age structure of the aboriginal population, in comparison to the structure of the total Canadian population, is a reflection of the historically high fertility levels of the aboriginal population" (Norris, 1996, p. 196). The components of growth in Aboriginal communities relate to four factors; fertility, mortality, migration, and Bill C-31 amendments to the Indian Act.

> Natives, since the turn of the century, have gone through three stages of birth-death trends. During the first half of the century, the Native population was characterized by extremely high birth and death rates. Then, after World War II, the death rate decreased substantially (because of medical advances and increased sanitation and housing), although the birth rate remained high. Today we see the third phase, which is a decline in both the fertility and mortality rates. (Frideres, 1993, p. 137)

In June, 1985, Bill C-31 restored Indian status and membership to those persons, mainly women and their children, who had lost this status as a result of provisions in the earlier Act. This has been a significant factor in population growth, particularly as it affects the "out-marriage" of status women to non-status individuals. "Over the past decade, about 96 000 persons were reinstated as a result of the 1985 amendments...the registered Indian population, which by 1995 had already gained close to 100 000 persons through Bill C-31 reinstatements, is expected to have gained a grand total of some 143 000 by 2016" (Norris, 1996, p. 215).

<u>Projected Aboriginal Population</u>.

Just as current demographic information shows that First Nations populations have increased significantly, so too population projections indicate a continuing high rate of growth.

> As both the Native and Canadian populations continue to age, the starting points are different: in the case of the general population, they are aging into retirement, while Natives are aging from youth to the working age group. . . . Clearly, there is a stable Native population growth rate, meaning continued high growth, as well as a decreasing death rate. Unless birth rates also decrease, more and more Natives will belong to the prime employment category of 15 to 40, and the demand for jobs will increase. . . . The data from census Canada show that the number of people in the labour force (15-64) has been increasing--from 46 percent in 1966 to nearly 65 percent by 2001. This will likely add more than 75,000 Native people to the labour force. (Frideres, 1993, p. 143)

Similar projections are made by Norris (1996) who states that "The working-age (15-64) population is expected to grow substantially (73 percent), from 434 000 in 1991 to 753 000 by 2016. Among the three subgroups of the labour force--15-24, 25-34, and 35-64--the last is projected to increase the most (147 percent) and the first to increase the least (23 percent)" (Norris, 1996, p. 225). Projected under a medium growth scenario:

> The population with aboriginal ancestry is expected to increase by almost 50 percent from around 1 million in 1991 to about 1.6 million by the year 2016. . . . The population with aboriginal identity is projected to increase from an estimated 720 000 in 1991 to 890 500 by the turn of the century. Under the continuation of current trends and migration . . . by 2016 the population will have increased by 52 percent to about 1 093 400. (Norris, 1996, p. 217, 218)

Location and Residence.

"The data show that while the overall Indian population has increased all over Canada, the biggest gains were in Saskatchewan and Alberta" (Frideres, 1993, p. 143). "Together, British Columbia (17 percent) and Alberta (15 percent) accounted for nearly a third of Canada's Native population, while another 21 percent resided in Manitoba and Saskatchewan" (Norris, 1996, p. 191). These conclusions would appear to have great significance for First Nations education planners in western Canada.

> By 2016, under the continuation of current trends and migration, the aboriginal populations of both Ontario and Alberta are projected to surpass 200 000, followed by 187 000 in British Columbia. Ontario's share of aboriginal population is projected to decrease from 20 percent in 1991 to 18.6 percent by 2016, while Alberta's share is projected to increase from 16.4 percent to 18.6 percent. (Norris, 1996, p. 226)

For registered Indians, the projected pattern of migration is favourable to reserves. "The registered Indian population is projected to grow most rapidly on reserves, by some 64 percent . . . the number of registered Indians living in urban areas is projected to increase by 50 percent" (Norris, 1996, p. 222). While it might be difficult to suggest accurately why the number of residents on reserves will increase by such a significant projection, regardless, it will be a factor in supporting the need for local First Nations post-secondary education programs.

Education.

James Frideres (1993) points out that at the time of his writing, First Nations students could attend either federal or integrated joint schools for their elementary and secondary schooling. "There are four types of federal schools: day schools; denominational (also called residential or religious) schools; boarding and hospital schools; and band schools" (Frideres, 1993, p. 176).

The creation of band schools emerged out of the political lobbying that Natives participated in during the late 1960's and early 1970's. By 1973 the National Indian Brotherhood produced a document, *Indian Control of Indian Education*, which was later accepted by the federal government and adopted as official education policy for Native education. . . . The educational branch of Indian Affairs established guidelines and procedures for school transfers to bands and introduced a national formula-funding system for the allocation of resources for the band operated schools. . . . By 1980, well over one hundred band-operated schools were educating students. By 1990, the number had increased to three hundred. On average, the number of band-operated schools has increased by 15 each year. Out of the 379 federal schools, 80 percent are now band-controlled schools. (Frideres, 1993, p. 176)

It is important to keep in mind that these schools provide education at the elementary level. Schools providing post-secondary education are less common, and band controlled schools at the college level are very rare - Red Crow College being a notable exception.

Most Indian children attend federal schools until Grade 6 and then switch to provincial schools for their secondary education. . . . The switch from one school system to another has a serious disruptive influence on the educational and social development of Native children . . . Native students at provincial schools face considerable discrimination. On the reserve, these students have already met indirect, institutionalized racism; however. . . . Native students in integrated schools are exposed daily to direct discrimination from teachers and other students. . . . Not surprisingly, these social disruptions eventually result in a high drop-out rate among Native students. (Frideres, 1993, p. 179)

In critiquing the appropriateness of the Canadian educational system for First Nations students, Frideres (1993) reminds us that it is a system developed and refined for a white, urban, middle-class culture.

> The subject matter is largely irrelevant to the Native child's everyday life. And the curriculum is set firmly within a White, middle-class system of values, bearing little relation to local Native concerns. Classes are taught by teachers who are almost always White and who seldom become involved with the local Native community. (Frideres, 1993, p. 186)

The conclusions reached here are further supported later in this chapter in the rationale presented in the proposal for a four-year Bachelor of Education degree prepared and submitted jointly by Red Crow Community College and the Faculty of Education at the University of Lethbridge.

Post-Secondary Education.

"Since the mid-seventies, the Native post-secondary enrolment has increased nation-wide form 2500 to over 15 000. This reflects an increase from less than one percent to about 9 percent in the past two decades (for those in the 18 to 24 age group). Nevertheless, this is still considerably lower than the overall national rate of over 20 percent" (Frideres, 1993, p. 187).

> The challenge facing Native communities today is to take control over the formal education process; however, there is nothing in the *Indian Act* that would give them any leverage in doing this. The minister of DIAND has complete control over which schools students attend and over the nature of contents of any education agreement. . . . Even if the *Act* were changed, it is unlikely that Natives could take control of the education process. In the first place, the federal government has more trust in provincial school authorities (with regard to

finances) than in native people. Second, because the federal government does not operate an educational system, it relies on the provincial curricula and standards. (Frideres, 1993, p. 189, 190)

Conclusion.

The demographic profiles of First Nations people show how distinct this population is from the rest of the Canadian population. It is a much younger, faster-growing population, with fertility and mortality levels higher than the overall Canadian levels. "The implications of aging for the aboriginal population are most pronounced for the growth of the working-age population and what that suggests in terms of the growing importance of education and job training for the future" (Norris, 1996, p. 228, 229). While the increasing importance of education may be evident from the demographic data, so too is the evidence of alienation from mainstream society.

> Native Canadians do share one common feature: across Canada, they lead marginal lives, characterized by poverty and dependence. Indeed, many people argue that Natives are members of a culture of poverty. Not only are they alienated from middle-class Canadian society through White racism, but also through the destructive mechanisms by which one class profits at the expense of another. . . . The subjugation and control of Native Canadians has been continued through a process of individual and institutionalized racism. The federal government has neglected to consult with Natives concerning their welfare, has failed to develop and finance effective programs to assist Natives, and, at times, has actually prevented Natives from becoming organized in pursuit of their rights. (Frideres, 1993, p. 218)

These conclusions are echoed later in this chapter in interview data obtained from the President and program coordinators of Red Crow Community College.

Post-Secondary Education in Alberta

In 1990, the Alberta Department of Advanced Education completed a survey of programs and services for "students of native ancestry" in the public post-secondary institutions. This survey showed that there had been a 22% increase in enrollments of First Nations students over a three year period. In 1989-90, the survey reported 5260 aboriginal students enrolled, of which, 69% were in full-time, on-campus programs. Among those students enrolled; 55% were attending Adult Vocational Colleges, 27% were attending Community Colleges, 11% were attending Universities, and 7% were attending Technical Institutes. By far the greatest increase over this time frame was in enrollments at Adult Vocational Colleges. Their full-time enrollments increased by 112% and their part-time enrollments by 238%. In 1989-90, "836 native students graduated from institutional credit programs. This is a 66% increase over the 504 students who graduated in 1987-88. Most of these 425 graduates were from the AVC's" (Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development [AAECD], November, 1991, p. 2).

This survey also showed that: "There were between 840-980 full-time students enrolled annually in on reserve post-secondary programs, offered by public post-secondary institutions, between 1987-88 and 1989-90. Funding for these programs came primarily from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), Health and Welfare Canada, Employment and Immigration Canada and the bands." (AAECD, November, 1991, p. 5). The distribution of public post-secondary programs on reserves was reported as follows: 20% were provided by AVC's, 68% were provided by Colleges, 9% were provided by Universities and 3% were provided by Technical Institutes. It may be significant to note that a reported 30% of the on reserve students were enrolled in upgrading/life skills courses. Also, according to this survey, "between 1987-88 and 1989-90, over 1020 students graduated from on-reserve credit programs; 38% from the AVC's, 35% from colleges, 25% from technical institutes and 2% from universities" (AAECD, November, 1991, p. 4).

While the results of this provincial government sponsored survey indicate increased numbers of First Nations students participating in post-secondary education

programs both on and off-reserve, the writers have urged caution in the interpretation of their results. A major limitation of this survey is that information was provided on the basis of "best estimates" of enrolment. Unfortunately Alberta is without any comprehensive and independently verifiable source of information on aboriginal students. The writers emphasize that "readers are cautioned to remember that data in this report are limited to the extent that they are based on voluntary self-reporting by students and the experience of the institutional contact people" (AAECD, November, 1991, p. 9).

A subsequent and related report examined issues facing First Nations students specifically faced with the need or desire to enter the post-secondary education system off reserve in Alberta's public institutions. An underlying assumption of this report, entitled "The Secondary and Post-Secondary Transitional Needs of Native Students", was that improving educational opportunities for "native people" may require changes in existing programs and services. It may be significant to note that the "committee found that few (if any) "intentional" institutional barriers prevent native students from making a successful transition from secondary to post-secondary education and employment. However, there are many circumstances within communities, and in the basic and post-secondary education systems, that tend to limit the progress of native students" (AAECD, February, 1991, p. 2).

In the provincial government committee report cited above, among those areas identified for further action were; adult basic education, program policy and funding, research, Native student support programs, staffing and training programs, cultural recognition, participation and consultation, coordination, student access to program funding, and, curriculum and program quality. In respect to the first area, the report highlighted what it perceived as "a critical need for a clear policy with clear objectives in adult basic education and academic up-grading....there are many structural impediments to student access, and there is very little continuity between programs in some communities" (AAECD, February, 1991, p. 3). With respect to the second point, "the committee was repeatedly informed that funding for native education, at all levels of the educational system, tends to be inconsistent" (AAECD, February, 1991, p. 4). The next point

highlighted the need for research and the development of an accurate and current data base. "There is a considerable lack of data on the experiences of native students in the Alberta public/separate and post-secondary systems" (AAECD, February, 1991, p. 5). Apart from the 1989-90 survey, no further action appears to have been taken in this area. With regard to the need for native student support programs, the report suggests that "a major issue for native students is a lack of support services. Students need help to plan their programs and to get through difficult experiences while they are in the education system" (AAECD, February, 1991, p. 5). With regard to staffing, the report concluded; "the number of native staff members in our educational institutions is not in proportion to the numbers of native students being served. There is also considerable need to train staff in intercultural and native education" (AAECD, February, 1991, p. 6). In order to ensure that programs offered are appropriate to aboriginal students and their communities, the report recommended that "Native people must be involved in the development and management of programs, **at the very least** in an advisory capacity" (AAECD, February, 1991, p. 7). The report committee acknowledged that aboriginal students have been under represented in the education system. In order to address this situation, they recommended a systemic restructuring which "should include local delivery and distance education initiatives as well as funding for specific native student programs" (AAECD, February, 1991, p. 8). Lastly, "the committee was reminded on several occasions that curriculum offered by various levels of the education system must recognize native people and their perspectives" (AAECD, February, 1991, p. 9).

This report is helpful in identifying key issues for aboriginal students facing transition to dominant society educational institutions. However, it does not address a central question, namely, what is the purpose of post-secondary education for First Nations students? Is it preparation for adult living? Is it assimilation? While the report does acknowledge this dilemma it avoids a conclusion on this issue other than to suggest the need for dominant society institutions to ensure that their education offerings to First Nations students are "relevant and consistent with the expectations of students and the

local community" (AAECD, February, 1991, appendix, p. 5). How this might be achieved, is also not addressed.

Post-Secondary Education at Red Crow Community College

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Red Crow Community College commenced operations in 1986 under the auspices of the Blood Education Committee. This committee operated the College until 1991, when the Red Crow College Board of Governors was established. According to the College's Annual Reports, student populations increased from 70 in 1991, to 152 in 1992, to 213 in 1993, to 280 in 1994 and 392 in 1995. Correspondingly, the number of full-time staff at Red Crow Community College increased from 13 in 1992 to 21 in 1994 to approximately 37 in 1996-97.

In addition to the College mission and purpose statements presented in Chapter 1, Red Crow College has developed the following goals and objectives:

GOALS
1. PROVIDE community-based "Blood Reserve Classroom" which extends the functional boundaries of the Red Crow Society beyond the structure of a single facility, and which engenders a sense of IDENTITY FOR ALL on the Blood Reserve.
2. PREPARE educational/training action plans and identify personnel and resources to enhance Native people's self-respect, self-esteem, and pride.
3. ASSIST all Native people on the Blood Reserve to trust in their personal and collective abilities to PLAN, IMPLEMENT, and MANAGE tribal determination in education on the Blood reserve.
4. DEVELOP networks of Native and non-Native personnel and resources to PLAN, MANAGE, and ADMINISTER an adult post-secondary educational/training network under tribal determination.
5. PROMOTE Native and non-Native people's lifelong holistic personal growth and development.
6. FASHION a functional prototype for accomplishing the proposed mission statements of the Red Crow Society.
7. EMPLOY the sociocultural context and the Blackfoot language to install hope in the Blood Tribe members.
8. INCREASE Native and non-Native parental choice and involvement in shared family, community, and educational/training endeavors.

9. ACQUIRE information from all facets of the community on the Blood Reserve and incorporate these data into the planning phase.
10. PROVIDE linkages between/among Native schools, families, and Reserve and off-Reserve community.
11. PROVIDE an adult post-secondary system to meet Native and non-Native educational/training needs "on demand".
12. CONSTRUCT a plan of action to provide <u>shared experiences</u> between/among diverse groups on the Blood Reserve and in the surrounding areas.

<u>OBJECTIVES</u>
1. To provide adult-education and post-secondary educational opportunities for Indian and non-Indian residents of the Blood Indian reserve and the surrounding areas in the following: Vocational Training, college transfer programs, occupational training, community service and interest oriented programs, and Indian culture, language and history, adult basic education, and community based education and other research activities.
2. To measure the needs, talents and aspirations of the residents of the Blood Indian Reserve and surrounding areas to provide a comprehensive educational program in recognition of the desires of the Blood Indian community.
3. To promote and conduct such research and development activities as deemed necessary to the efficient provision of adult post-secondary educational opportunities on the Blood Indian Reserve community.
4. To assist with the community development needs of the Blood Indian Reserve.
5. To provide culturally relevant pre and in-service training for professionals working with Native people.
(Red Crow Community College, 1997, p. 20, 21)

In addition to the programs outlined in Chapter 1, Red Crow Community College has also been involved in several community education and research activities. The College has been providing computer literacy and computer skills upgrading courses for the Blood Tribe community. Non-credit courses have been offered in Mural Etching, Community Garden, and Farm Labourers Training. In addition to ongoing internal research to improve program outcomes, the College has also been engaged in joint research with the University of Lethbridge. In cooperation with the Native American Studies Department, Red Crow Community College has been researching Traditional Methods of Healing.

The most current program developments for the College have included a recently approved Cooperative Education Program (Spring, 1997), and a joint proposal with the

Faculty of Education at the University of Lethbridge for a Degree Program in Nitsitapi Teacher Education.

The Cooperative Education Program is designed for adult learners generally between the ages of 17 to 21 who do not have a high school education. Comprised of three modularized components, students must successfully complete approximately 40 hours of classroom instruction before being placed in a work program. The work placement will be approximately two months in duration, and "students who have identified career goals which lead to a vocational/technical career will be placed with an agency/business which would allow the participant to experience working in an environment they are interested and have an aptitude for" (RCCC, 1997, <u>Cooperative Education Policy</u>, n.p.).

A relatively immediate intention of Red Crow College is the development of a four year Bachelor of Education degree program.

> The Faculty of Education at the University of Lethbridge proposes to offer a term-certain B.Ed. degree program with a primary focus on Nitsitapi education in cooperation with Red Crow Community College. . . . Graduates of the program will meet teacher certification requirements of Alberta Education. . . . Students will have the choice of completing program components or individual courses at either the College campus or, where available, on the University campus. (RCCC, 1997, <u>Orientation brief 1995/96</u>, n.p.)

Although not approved at the time of this writing, this proposal gives a clear indication of the perceived need to develop a culturally influenced and locally available post-secondary program to the Blood community. As stated in the background to the proposal, "this proposal is due to the urgency of the KBE [Kainai Board of Education] requirement for Blood tribe members to be trained as teachers in a culturally appropriate program. The KBE views the success of their schools to be dependent on the availability

of such teachers" (RCCC, 1997, Orientation brief 1995/96, n.p.). As a further rationale for the need for this program, the proposal states:

> first there are not enough teachers to serve as role models for young learners who share their cultural heritage; second young people find that too few of their teachers know an aboriginal culture, including language, values and knowledge; and too few are trained to be aware of different learning styles and the subtle nuances of cross cultural communication. The school career of young aboriginal students can easily be an alienating experience in which self esteem is not fostered. (RCCC, 1997, Orientation brief 1995/96, n.p.)

The need for post-secondary education is further emphasized in the Blood tribe Economic Development plan which states:

> 1993 INAC statistics show a total reserve population of 6,157. Other studies show 93% of the population has less than a completed high school education. The adult population between the ages of 18 and 55 is 3,215. Ninety three percent of these persons, 2,990, have less than a completed high school education and may need to attend Red Crow College to improve their academic standing. (RCCC, 1996, Long Term Strategic Plan, p. 13)

This argument is consistent with the demographic information provided by Frideres (1993) and Norris (1996) earlier in this chapter, and appears to provide a strong rationale for post-secondary education on the Blood reserve.

Key Informant Interviews

Key informants, or "elite" (Marshall & Rossman, 1995) members to be interviewed were selected on the principle identified in Chapter 3 of purposive (Krathwohl, 1993 and Merriam, 1988) sampling. Key informant interviews have included members of the Board

of Governors, the College president, strategic and long-range planners, program coordinators, and instructors associated with Red Crow Community College.

<u>Board of Governors.</u>

Two members of the current Board and two members of the previous Board were interviewed to get feedback about the following areas; their comments are summarized as follows:

<u>Financial Performance.</u>
- additional funding is needed, student demand is high
- project based funding is problematic—often less than what is needed and confusing concerning balances due to the necessity of moving funds from one account to another
- financial statements presented to Board have been confusing
- currently facing a deficit
- need for improved financial management
- need for clear written documentation of financial agreements
- institution is definitely under-funded
- criteria for approving student funding must be clear and policies must be followed to maintain high standards of learning and achievement

<u>Student Selection and Enrolment.</u>
- demand will continue to increase creating further pressure on facilities and equipment
- additional computer resources will be needed
- increased enrolment will necessitate computer data base to maintain accurate student records
- increased enrolments are creating problems for operating and maintenance costs which are currently not funded

- increased enrolment will also create security problems
- increased demand for support for students both on and off campus will require careful balancing of financial resources
- may need to move away from upgrading toward more career preparation programs
- limited resources may require College to support "well motivated" rather than "reluctant" learners who perhaps see further education as a source of income
- student profile has changed to more single, younger, students
- need to recruit and prepare more Blackfoot teachers for schools in the community, at all levels of education

Governance and Management.

- staff members are available to provide information to Board
- student representative is elected from student body
- long range planning is a significant, ongoing activity
- staff appear to get along well with each other
- communication between teachers and students appears informal and effective
- have been formal attempts to determine training needs
- need more workshops and activities to be more relevant for the community
- education activities should be centralized at Red Crow
- lack of formal accreditation is an obstacle to program development
- Red Crow goal should be to offer its own degrees
- College staff and faculty appear to be well-respected in the community
- senior staff need to maintain positive working relationship with other community agencies and services
- support for College by Blood Tribe administration should be reinforced
- Board should have a more active role in recruitment and selection of employees
- need to follow standardized personnel policies
- would be helpful to have management more available on-site

- Red Crow could take leadership role in providing workshops and activities to community members on 'conflict resolution', 'dealing with the residue of residential school'
- need to continue to actively pursue accreditation

Support Services, Physical Plant, and Equipment.

- desperate need for a library, funds not currently available
- could be a factor in qualifying for accreditation
- funding is needed for cafeteria—W.O.P. funding not effective
- many sources of funding but no guarantees for long-term
- dependent on private donations to improve facilities

General Comments.

- should be more student input—should make more effort to voice their opinions
- teachers sometimes not aware of student issues and concerns
- learning atmosphere is very positive
- staff constructive and helpful
- student orientation excellent opportunity to learn about policies
- as additional equipment is obtained security becomes more important
- Red Crow College has shown progress over the years and should continue to grow in the future

Administrators and Strategic Planners.

Interviews were conducted with the current president of Red Crow Community college, a former president of a similar community college from a different Blackfoot community who has been recently involved in strategic planning with representatives from Red Crow College, and a former community social worker who has been involved for many years in the development and delivery of post-secondary education programs to several First Nations communities in southern Alberta.

In addition to providing information about their background with respect to First Nations post-secondary education generally, and reflections on their current experience with adult post-secondary education at Red Crow Community College, interview participants were generally asked:

- What do they perceive as the goals and purposes for post-secondary education at Red Crow Community College?
- How well do they feel these goals and purposes are currently being met?
- What obstacles or problems do they see for the College in striving for these goals?
- What do they see as the major issues currently facing First Nations post-secondary education? and,
- What are the future prospects for First Nations post-secondary education?

Goals and Purposes.

Interviews with key informants indicated that, generally, the goals and purposes for post-secondary education related more to issues of becoming, being, existing, surviving and continuing than to thriving, flourishing, enhancing or expanding. Merely existing as a First Nations college represents the fruition of a major goal ". . . we have to overcome that resistance, even among our own people in our own community towards promoting our own institutions, our own systems, and our own business" (personal interview, June 3, 1997). "I think maybe there was a lot of tension at Red Crow College . . . a need to prove or demonstrate success, and I think there was probably at the same time, a lot of problem in terms of the financial support for the program . . . concern about proving success and surviving with a limited budget . . . " (personal interview, June 12, 1997).

In some ways the goal of becoming a Tribally controlled college is viewed as a potential framework for ensuring survival. "It's going to mean a stronger commitment from our Tribal governments and other entities within the tribe" (personal interview, June 3, 1997). Through an improved knowledge of the financial requirements of the College

and a potential contribution of greater resources, the Tribal administration may be encouraged to accept a greater sense of ownership and responsibility for Red Crow Community College. "We don't see any alternative to survival, and that's what we end up looking at is survival for us" (personal interview, June 3, 1997). Other alternatives to being a Tribally controlled college, which were considered, included incorporating as a non-profit corporation or establishing themselves as a community society and applying for society status. This would have created an opportunity to apply for recognition as a "private" college. Other First Nations colleges in Alberta have done this, however, this option was rejected by the Board of Governors for Red Crow College because "There was absolutely no advantage to them" (personal interview, June 3, 1997).

One of the goals for post-secondary education at Red Crow Community College which appears to relate directly to survival is the goal of promoting the learning of Blackfoot culture. This goal has been deemed to be so important that the Elders have recently pressed for immersion programs throughout the Blood education system. "So we're starting with . . . day care and Head Start immersion programs. And the Kainai Board of Education has been told 'You start looking at immersion courses' in the schools, because we've got two elementary schools, one of them could be fully Blackfoot immersion" (personal interview, June 3, 1997). Other than identifying language, which is admittedly very important to culture, additional aspects of culture are not clearly defined.

> Can't we design a teacher training program that will make our teacher trainees more aware of their own culture and history? Clearer on their identity and values and philosophy as First Nations people? And where they will be able to reflect that cultural perspective within the curriculum that they are teaching? . . . They hadn't understood that they could learn so much about their own community, their own culture, their own history and its made a lot of things clearer for them and they've really enjoyed it and they have a better understanding of themselves and their community. (personal interview, June 3, 1997)

In a more general sense, this goal was acknowledged in an interview with a non-Aboriginal instructor who has taught in several First Nations communities. "Native education planners have occasionally talked about . . . the need to preserve and maintain Native customs and traditions and culture within the curriculum of programs that are offered" (personal interview, June 12, 1997) A further issue raised by this instructor was the manner in which student experiences with the Indian Residential School system may interfere with student learning and their ability to pursue the goals of education. His opinion was shared by a consultant, also interviewed. Both persons suggested that it is necessary to deal at the outset with the negative aspects of colonization which have been experienced through previous schooling.

> It is extremely essential that the first part of every course had to deal with their past history with residential schools . . . that was very important for people to talk about all their anger and their hostility. . . . The old residential schools created an anti-education atmosphere on the reserves. People who had gone through an education process in a residential school, by-and-large, couldn't wait for the day when they became 16 years old and got out. (personal interview, June 12, 1997)

> It's very real, so almost the first thing you have to do on a reserve, you have to go out and you have to sell education. Education is not bad! Education is not an unpleasant experience! Red Crow College is not a bad building to go into! . . . When you go to them and you say "what's your educational goal" very few of them have an educational goal of any sort. (personal interview, June 12, 1997)

This is not to say that First Nations students do not value education, but rather that many adult students who have experienced the negative ('genocide', 'racist', 'colonial') aspects of education in their past may have difficulty, at least initially, in identifying with the current socio-cultural and community goals for post-secondary education.

Adult Upgrading.

One of the earlier goals established for Red Crow Community College at the time of its inception was the provision of adult upgrading for many potential students who had never completed secondary schooling. Many such students were unemployed and an upgrading program was viewed as one avenue toward getting a job. Another group of such students were employed, but without formal education relating to their occupation. Several social work practitioners at the Blood Tribe Social Development office appeared to fit into this category. For them "there was a perceived lack of preparation and training of their staff as social work practitioners" (personal interview, June 12, 1997). For that group of students without employment, the initial challenge of the College was to re-engage them as adult learners.

> So we said that the major thrust of Red Crow College was going to have to be in effect "educational repair". I think it was less than 10% of the people on the reserve had completed grade XII and maybe even less than that had a high school diploma or university or college entrance. . . . But being able to start on the reserve . . . I think that's absolutely vital. (personal interview, June 12, 1997)

Social/Economic Development.

In each of the interviews with administrators and education planners, the social and economic development of the Blood community emerged as a central concern. Within this community economic and social development appear to be viewed as interdependent with education. Education is seen as the key to community development. As stated by one participant, "there has to be some very close liaison between economic development and Red Crow. . . . Economic development and education must travel completely together. . . . They have to. (personal interview, June 12, 1997)

> there seems to be a real move, the way I see it, moving more into economic development, more business administration, to some degree into the sciences. . . .

I would see adult education in the very broadest, broadest sense, and not strictly in the classroom. I would see adult education as synonymous with community development. I would point them out as synonymous. Used interchangeably . . . adult education has to replace what presently exists . . . (personal interview, June 12, 1997)

The social and economic development of this community is also seen to be dependent on the ability to reverse the negative impact of colonization. Here again, education is viewed, by those interviewed, as the best hope for accomplishing this goal.

we've all been to the same school of thought about Indian Control of Indian Education, so to a large extent that's a common held goal by us. . . . I know the only way we're going to de-colonize the minds is through the school system, through courses that we provide, and that it is critical if we're going to really get a sense of self determination and control our own destiny. (personal interview, June 3, 1997)

How well goals have been met.

The diploma programs offered in Business Administration and Social Work have reportedly been quite successful. The comprehensive evaluation document for Red Crow Community College contains a large volume of evidence attesting to the success of the College in reaching its goals. One person interviewed suggested that perhaps part of the success of Business Administration and Social Work programs is because they closely parallel community need "it almost seems to parallel perhaps a community need. First of all for some form of healing, some form of coming to grips with past issues that Native people maybe have experienced in that community, but also, perhaps reflects a perceived need to move on in this area of economic development" (personal interview, June 12, 1997) Another observer suggests that student choice of career may have been influenced by their personal experience ". . . on the reserve the role model(s) . . . have been social

workers and teachers and RCMP. Very popular to go into the RCMP. So when you ask a student out there what there goal is, you usually get teaching, social work, police" (personal interview, June 12, 1997)

Among the concerns raised about the ability of the College to meet its goals, one respondent claimed that "there's very little energy being placed on the preventative aspects of. . ." alcoholism, drugs, prescription drug abuse, and fetal alcohol syndrome. Another concern was that the College may ". . . spend such a heavy emphasis on university and I think it may have been overdone . . . the credibility of things like SAIT or DeVry have not been utilized as effectively as they can be." (personal interview, June 12, 1997)

In some ways the success of educating First Nations students in mainstream institutions is described as problematic to achieving the goals of Red Crow Community College and the Blood tribe. "When they get back they're unable to integrate their lives with the reserve to what they had been taught in school . . . people who graduate with degrees go back and then just carry out what they've been taught at the university. . . . I know that's been somewhat of a disappointment, its been a real struggle" (personal interview, June 12, 1997) As another individual put it ". . . even with our own people who come out with degrees that they need a significant amount of reorientation . . . it's almost like internalized racism . . . the attitudes and expectations of students reflect more a mainstream attitude than a First Nations one" (personal interview, June 3, 1997) Mainstream education, it is suggested, appears to encourage an internalized self-depracating attitude that somehow First Nations programs and professionals do not quite measure up to mainstream standards. "We can give the best high school upgrading, but they still want that Alberta diploma. . . . They lack the confidence in our own institutions, our own people to accomplish the same quality and effectiveness as other non-Indian institutions and professionals" (personal interview, June 3, 1997).

More positive evaluative comments have included the statement that "I think we've gone a long way in developing our profile within our own community" And that there is optimism that "we've got a strong force in this community that is saying 'Yes we do want real control in what matters, not just simply in money and teachers but in the

content of education programs and the promotion of our culture" (personal interview, June 3, 1997). Also, on a positive note one individual suggested that, over time, the changes in First Nations post-secondary education have been very positive.

> I'm very optimistic. Extremely optimistic, because I've watched the evolution since 1964, and seeing the changes over the past years have been just absolutely phenomenal . . . they don't realize what it was like when we started out 30 years ago. They have no idea what it was like and the changes have been nothing short of dramatic. (personal interview, June 12, 1997)

Obstacles facing the College.

Generally, the goals identified during these interviews concerning post-secondary education at Red Crow College included; first, the survival of the College and its programs, second, the preservation and promotion of Blackfoot culture, third, overcoming or "healing" from the negative educational experiences of the past, fourth, preparation of students for higher education and future employment, and fifth, the promotion of social, economic and community development. Among the perceived obstacles to the attainment of these goals, one respondent suggested that:

> there has to be a greater involvement of the total community in deciding the kind of services and the kind of quality of life which they have. . . . I think there needs to be more broader community participation in what is taking place . . . a number of people [need to] have a say in what's going on . . . I think they still see it as very few people being responsible for the betterment of others (personal interview, June 12, 1997).

Another respondent raised concerns that "they have no vocational facilities" and the College is located "down in the southwest corner" of the largest reserve in Canada which extends 40 to 50 miles from east to west. "The roads are poor, "the chances of

somebody in the northeast corner getting to Red Crow on any particular day in the winter are quite slim" (personal interview, June 12, 1997).

In addition to the lack of vocational facilities, poor roads and possibly a poor location, the building itself represents an oppressive past. It is old, poorly designed for its current function, and worn out. "Red Crow College is in a building that would long since have been demolished if it had been off the reserve. It would never exist today. The College building isn't designed to be a College" (personal interview, June 12, 1997).

A further obstacle to the achievement of the goals of the College is the fact that there is a lack of direct political influence on the Federal government.

> There is not one single constituency in Canada where a member of Parliament is elected by Native people. They have no political leverage whatsoever. None. And the net result is nobody listens to them very much unless they go block off a road or shoot at a policeman or do something desperate like this, in which case they get put in jail but not in university. (personal interview, June 12, 1997)

A recurring concern about the ability of the College to attain its goals has also to do with a lack of reliable fiscal support. The College does not receive an annual operating grant such as that provided to provincial public community colleges. Instead, at Red Crow Community College individual programs are funded on a year-to-year project approval basis. At the conclusion of any fiscal year funding for a particular project or program could be unilaterally discontinued by the government. Not only does this threaten the continuity of programs, but also interferes directly with attempts by education planners at the College to develop programs which respond to the needs and interests of the community. Decisions about which projects and programs will receive funding are made in Ottawa on a unilateral and nation-wide basis. They are likely to reflect the needs of the Department of Indian Affairs more so than the needs of the Blood tribe. In conversations and interviews respondents pointed out "economically, they have to survive on sort of project based funding. This seems to create an on-going continuing problem"

(personal conversation, June 14, 1997). "You can pay them year by year, because every dollar you get is year by year, so everything in your operation starts when you get your money and ties down towards the end of the year and starts again. It's a terrible way to operate" (personal interview, June 12, 1997).

> I'm less certain about the future of our First Nations colleges because, unless we make some progress in more secure resourcing, we'll be just struggling again from year to year depending on program cutbacks, or elimination of programs - may end up not having adequate resources. (personal interview, June 3, 1997)

Similar concerns were raised about financial support for students. Currently adult students are eligible to apply to the Post-Secondary Student Support Program for assistance with education expenses. Unilateral policy decisions imposed by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada make it difficult for First Nations communities that value education to provide adequate support for their own people.

> We have a high use of that program (the Post-Secondary Student Support Program) here and we had over 800 applicants last year, and I would say maybe 200 of them were ineligible because of the narrow definitions of post-secondary education did not allow sponsorship of some students into some programs of studies, or into attending certain institutions" (personal interview, June 3, 1997)

This form of obstacle, inherent within the current political system, is seen to be "the result of institutionalized racism, and the result of colonial experience" (personal interview, June 3, 1997). As to the motivation and interest of students, one person interviewed suggested that "a great many of them are eager, they don't lack in intelligence, they don't lack in desire, they just lack basically in opportunity and any concept of the advantages of education" (personal interview, June 3, 1997). Other aspects of student motivation and ability which might serve as obstacles suggested were:

there is some barrier that most First Nations people have with the science classes in school and it is hard to say exactly what it is but I suspect it is that compartmentalization of information without a clear framework which pulls it together into some understandable integrated perspective. . . . [the students] have internalized the idea that they're not really as good as anybody else and they really can't accomplish as much as other people can. (personal interview, June 3, 1997)

The extent to which there may be a self-deprecating attitude among First Nations adult students would certainly serve as an obstacle to the achievement of the goals of the College. As a senior College administrator stated, "I'm convinced, and I think there's a lot of evidence out there to support it, that a better understanding of one's own community and self and heritage makes a great deal of difference in a child's and a person's self esteem and self confidence and goal setting." (personal interview, June 3, 1997) In addition to improved understanding of one's heritage as a counter to a defeatist attitude, another respondent spoke of the need to believe in the possibility of improvement. "You've got to have a desire to be better off before you're going to be better off. You've got to have a knowledge that things can be better before you try and get them better. A lot of those ideas don't exist even on the good reserves like the Blood reserve." (personal interview, June 12, 1997) On the other hand, a very successful counter to a self-deprecating attitude appears to have been the relative academic success of many First Nations people who have completed university. "On the Blackfoot reserve a great many of their teachers are Blackfoot people who went to university, got their teaching degrees and are fully qualified. The attendance seems to pick up, the success ratio improves, everything about it (education) improves" (personal interview, June 12, 1997).

Major Issues Currently Facing First Nations Post-Secondary Education.

One of the most frequently referred to issues currently facing First Nations post-secondary education is described as a problem of "uninformed" decision makers

within mainstream systems. "They haven't discussed the marginalization they haven't discussed the isolation and segregation and the changes that had to take place in our relationship with the Federal Government to bring into play our usage of the parliamentary system for our goals and objectives" (personal interview, June 3, 1997). Either intentionally or unintentionally bureaucrats and politicians are perceived to have continued to press the agenda of assimilation.

> I think for that purpose only they funded post-secondary education, with the assumption that once we were off the reserve within mainstream institutions we would become assimilated, and then we would become the colonizers of our own people. I think that was very much a part of the funding post-secondary education in an early date. It's interesting because they really pushed it when people were not ready. They were really anxious to get us into colleges and universities. Then when we were taking advantage of it, and they were not seeing the results they expected, they started to pull back on their funding. (personal interview, June 3, 1997)

From a First Nations perspective, the assimilation agenda appears to have been very strongly enforced and pervasive throughout all social programs. "So anyway, you have Indian Affairs gearing all their programs and policies towards furthering assimilation into mainstream society, in every area, you know not just education, but if it's health or social services, or everything. And we've been fighting them on this as long as they've been pushing it" (personal interview, June 3, 1997).

Since the elimination of residential schools and the establishment of Band controlled schools, how has the push toward assimilation been expressed? In a sense it appears to have been institutionalized into the decision making and accountability procedures of the Department of Indian Affairs.

90% of their guidelines had to do with management of monies. Pretty straight forward stuff, no problem, but 10% was this assimilation mind set. Where we had to have incorporated education authorities, separate from Tribal government, and where we had to accept the provincial curriculum, and provincial certification of teachers. All of those constraining the actual flexibility for our on-reserve schools and education programs. (personal interview, June 3, 1997)

In addition to assimilation conditions built into the decision making process, one respondent suggested that the government has subtly attempted to encourage First Nations leaders who would not resist the assimilation agenda.

Indian Affairs likes to subtly support such leaders because then they easily accept certain agreements, or they compromise certain rights and jurisdictions because they have big bucks dangled in front of them. And do not have the awareness, the political awareness of some of the pitfalls related to the government offer of megabucks for doing such-and-such a thing. The more experienced guys look into the Trojan Horse. (personal interview, June 3, 1997)

As to possible solutions to these perceived issues, a number of points were made during the interviews. These ranged from suggestions about resolving the jurisdictional issue for post-secondary education to initiating activities which would encourage decolonization, to becoming more politically astute, to developing a stronger sense of community identity and responsibility.

But the first thing that has to happen before Native education is going to go anywhere, is this conflict as to who is responsible between the Federal government and the Provincial government has to be resolved. . . . The Native people are ready. Governments are not ready. The funding of post-secondary education has got to increase, and as soon as it does of course the incomes on the reserve will

increase, and eventually the cost to the government will decrease. (personal interview, June 12, 1997)

Acknowledging the theory of Fanon (1993) and Memmi (1991), that colonization is destructive to both the colonizer and the colonized, one respondent suggested, "we both have to go through a process of decolonization if there are to be better, more humanistic relationships develop" (personal interview, June 3, 1997). This individual pointed out that she frequently referred to the writings of Frantz Fanon when speaking to the general public concerning issues of colonization and assimilation in respect to First Nations peoples. Because they write from the perspective of their own personal experiences with colonization, they appear to speak meaningfully and directly to the issues of others experiencing similar situations.

As a helpful resource for First Nations educators and a mechanism for dealing with government dominated decision making, Treaty 7 Tribal Council, located in Calgary, and its Education program were mentioned and commended.

> Treaty 7, for post-secondary education has been very useful because as well as representing our interests in education on the National Education Council and taking our perspectives there, and our issues there, . . . brings back a lot of information and because she's efficient we can process it, usually fairly quickly, and develop our positions. And then with clarity on our issues and what changes we want, she very ably represents us on that body. That gives us a lot more influence, I think, than less well organized areas in Canada. (personal interview, June 3, 1997)

From a community and social perspective, another respondent raised concerns about the pervasive and perhaps insidious intrusion and adoption of dominant society values and vices. Learning how to respond and cope with these influences, he believes, is a responsibility of First Nations communities in general.

So they have to learn how to become aware of the consequences of this. You can't get rid of it. You can't get rid of cars, you can't get rid of trucks, you can't get rid of television sets, you can't get rid of all the pornography, you can't get rid of any of that. I mean it's there, but learning how to deal - to find something that is better than presently exists. Otherwise I think it will be completely assimilation - totally. (personal interview, June 12, 1997)

<u>Coordinators and Instructors.</u>

The Arts and Science program on-site at Red Crow College is currently focused on preparing students to meet the entrance requirements for the Bachelor of Social Work and Bachelor of Education degree programs at the University of Lethbridge. In addition, students interested in pursuing university transfer to unspecified programs at other Colleges and Universities are encouraged to take arts and science courses which are available at Red Crow. The current and former coordinator of the Arts & Science/University Transfer program and two current instructors and one former instructor were interviewed on four separate occasions. Both program coordinators and one of the current instructors are members of the Blood tribe. One of the current instructors and the former instructor interviewed are not members of a First Nation. The following advantages to participating in this program were identified:

- evening courses are very helpful to students who are working
- students enjoy supportive relationships with their fellow students as well as with their instructors
- students can remain part of the local community while keeping their language
- there is an opportunity for networking and bonding among students
- theoretical material becomes more relevant when applied in the local situation
- students have an opportunity to develop self confidence and self esteem in the program
- smaller learning projects interspersed with a variety of learning activities has been

effective

- many students have received high honours for their achievements in the Social Work and Business Administration diploma programs

In the interviews, the following suggestions were made for improvements:

- hire a full-time person responsible for program development who could coordinate the generation and submission of proposals and program planning with other departments
- develop an orientation program for new staff and an orientation program for instructors coming to Red Crow from other institutions
- have clearly defined roles and responsibilities for program coordinators
- develop a centralized student information system
- make decisions about courses to be offered earlier to allow more time for instructor/course preparation
- have clearly established criteria for student performance, and require and reinforce student responsibility for their own learning
- provide more effective role-modeling for current and prospective students
- develop more effective access to library and Internet resources
- develop a handbook for instructors outlining expectations of the College, how programs fit together, suggestions on how to run courses, guidelines for structuring assignments and exams, grading and attendance policies and expectations.
- develop policies with regard to lateness and absenteeism and enforce them
- organize a workshop for current and former instructors from the University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge Community College, Mount Royal College and Red Crow College, to share information about successful teaching strategies and common issues
- develop student 'recipe books' or 'survival guides' for how to handle college and

university level education, how to take notes, how to read textbooks effectively

In addition, the following general comments were made:

- coordinating the programs of two different colleges and a university is complicated by the fact that they each have different policies, timelines, and operational procedures
- many students have been in courses without a break for several years and are in danger of burnout
- most students express a desire to continue their education at Red Crow College rather than leave the community
- becoming an accredited institution would add respect for education and for the community

The evolution and development of this College and its continuation represent a unique struggle for survival. Not only the survival of a particular educational institution and its programs, but also for the survival of a culture. As one staff member of Red Crow College suggested in an interview:

> we're dealing with the effects of cultural genocide . . . that's why I think it's extremely important that we do have a holistic approach, and Native education be approached differently, the Western education was a part of that genocidal taking away . . . you can give the identity back; good, strong, healthy, cultural identity again . . . we need to understand what our purpose in life is in order to get over the effects of cultural genocide . . . part of survival is understanding. Know the enemy, it may not be a physical enemy, it might be just a mind thing, but know what's going to be opposite you at the negotiating table . . . we've still got to know how to function out there as well too, otherwise we won't survive. (personal interview, June 3, 1997)

The most important element of survival is to look at the information of the game you are playing. When you know your information then you can make choices and decisions. *This is freedom.* The only time you make a mistake is when you don't look at the information. For myself, the more I have choices, the more I have freedom. While we as cultural people have learned and changed in order to survive, we now find that the dominant society no longer wants the Indian to change. *An interesting dilemma.* We are much less threatening to the white man when we are uneducated in his ways, and when we are unable to have our Indian ways. The more we are able to own our religious, spiritual, and survival information, and even language, the less we can be controlled. (George Longfish cited in G. McMaster & L. Martin, p. 151)

The continuing tragedy of Aboriginal people in conflict with the systems of modern society is directly rooted in the loss of their traditional spirituality. It is not that this spirituality is not adaptable to contemporary life, but that there is a concerted effort to block its application to those who have no understanding of it and no willingness to learn. . . . Aboriginal people must look to our spiritual leaders for guidance. Only through spiritual renewal can we find out who we really are, be empowered to achieve our potential and acquire the wisdom to eliminate the influences that bring tragedy upon us and destroy us. (J. A. Poitras cited in G. McMaster & L. Martin, p. 166 and p. 167)

Annual Retreat and Planning Workshop

The purposes for education at Red Crow Community College were reviewed by; members of the Board of Governors, representatives of the Elders Advisory Council, College administrators, a group of instructors, staff and counsellors, at the annual College planning retreat. The role of the researcher on this occasion was to serve as a co-facilitator of the small group discussions and a co-recorder of the conclusions which were reached. Based on large and small group discussions held during this planning

session, participants' suggestions for the purposes for education at the College can be summarized as follows:

- to provide a holistic education which will be responsive to the academic, personal, and community needs of students
- to provide an opportunity for students to develop their knowledge and skills, to complete high school, and to prepare for college and university
- to provide an opportunity for personal growth and development, to develop life and survival skills, and to empower students to take charge of their own learning
- to maintain the traditional way of life through teaching Blackfoot language, history, and customs, and to provide for spirituality
- to be responsive and adaptable to changing educational and training priorities
- to be a role model for the community and to become a focal point for community based learning activities

Among the purposes for education, further discussion suggested that the priorities for Red Crow College should be to strive for:

- opportunities for balanced personal growth
- continuing education in the areas of upgrading and post-secondary programs with the inclusion of Blackfoot culture and spirituality
- to provide more practical work ethics and work experience
- to provide coordination and leadership to other reserve-based agencies and/or departments, for the purpose of addressing common issues
- to instil pride in being a Red Crow Community College student, and in being a Blood Tribe member and citizen

Following their review and discussion of these purposes for the College, participants at the staff retreat identified several recommendations which could move the

College further toward their achievement. Those additional recommendations identified by this group were:

- That consideration be given to changing the College from its focus on programs and projects, to a focus on organizational structure and function
- That the current College building be the subject of a comprehensive review, to consider possible renovation and/or redevelopment to adapt more effectively to the requirements of College operations
- That adequate budget be allocated to provide resources needed to support all programs
- That the issue of student absenteeism and punctuality be addressed consistently throughout the College
- That provision be made for an Instructional Assistant or that a student mentoring program be established to support student learning
- That increased opportunity for student counsellors be made available to assist with crisis intervention, personal counselling, and workshops with students on Native issues.
- That a handbook for instructors be developed outlining expectations of the College, how programs fit together, suggestions on how to run courses, guidelines for structuring assignments and exams, grading and attendance policies and expectations.
- That Red Crow Community College take a role (and a leading one if not otherwise warranted) in an ongoing forum coordinating Kainaiwa interagency planning

Members of the group also identified several additional recommendations that they felt needed further emphasis; these were:

- encourage spirituality in learning and broaden the cultural perspective of education
- include elders in future evaluations

- place more emphasis on counselling to provide personal and emotional support
- encourage cultural and community integration
- seek opportunities to have fun and enjoyment in work and learning: "humour is a good medicine"
- involve former students in mentoring and workshops with current students
- examine the extent to which cultural goals are being met within current courses
- develop strategies for maintaining and perpetuating cultural goals
- set a target date for establishing accredited programs on campus

Comprehensive Evaluation Results

As an aspect of the comprehensive evaluation which unavoidably occurred at the same time as some of the components of this research were being conducted, focus group discussions were held with students from each of the programs at Red Crow Community College. At the end of these group discussions students were asked to respond to a short questionnaire to capture any additional comments that students wished to make that they had not already expressed. In summary, the following focus group discussion information was provided by three groups of students, one enrolled in Basic Upgrading, another in the University Entrance Preparation Program, and the third in the Life Skills program.

The first question asked students to comment on the manner to which their program was meeting their expectations. Across the three groups, students generally reported that they felt that each program was meeting their expectations. They indicated that these programs were helpful in preparing them to meet future education program entrance requirements as well as job expectations. In addition, students suggested that these particular programs (Adult Upgrading, UCEPP, and Life Skills), were helpful in re-engaging them in educational processes and in helping them to address personal issues. A few concerns were raised about a perceived lack of support from either instructors or school counsellors.

The second question asked students to discuss what they felt they may have gained from their program. Students reported gains in the areas of; improved learning skills,

greater understanding of socio-economic and political issues, improved communication skills, ability to function with greater independence, and improved problem-solving and conflict resolution skills.

The third area asked students to explore aspects which they considered to be positive about their programs. Students responded by citing instructor and tutor support, the opportunity to establish new friendships and gain peer support, and small class sizes and the availability of individualized help. Students also mentioned the convenience of the location as an asset, as well as activity based learning such as field trips and role playing exercises. Several students spoke very positively about their Blackfoot Studies courses.

Fewer negative aspects were perceived about their programs. In response to this question students identified; the need for up-to-date program information, more guidance, less than adequate facilities, not enough time to complete assignments, and poor attendance. The latter point was perceived as negative in-as-much as it interfered with their ability to engage in activity based learning activities.

Suggestions for improving their programs basically fell into five categories: first, a new and/or improved building and facilities, second, higher expectations of students, third, increased financial support, fourth, learning skills support, and fifth, more effective program planning and management. Additional general comments reinforced the need for specific facilities and more educational program variety, as well as positive comments about the opportunity to learn Blackfoot culture with other Native students.

The above information, gleaned from the comprehensive evaluation, is helpful in as much as it confirms and supports data obtained from other sources. As a mechanism for triangulation, this source confirms strong positive student responses to Red Crow Community College, its programs and its instructors, and supports general concern about the suitability of the building and its facilities. As indicated earlier, in Chapter 3 a possible limitation of this study may have been the fact that these particular focus group discussions and other evaluation related activities, such as classroom visitations, were occurring at the same time as some of the research data was being gathered.

Correspondence from Former Instructors.

Three instructors who previously taught in the program provided unsolicited feedback about their teaching experiences at the College. This input was analyzed and reported among the results of the comprehensive evaluation. Concerns raised by them related to four general areas; student screening and preparation, classroom management, student maturity and personal issues, and, student learning issues.

With respect to student screening/preparation, instructors suggested that in the future students should be selected for the program on the basis of: a mature approach to learning, effective writing skills, conflict resolution and coping skills, effective work and study skills, and, demonstrated responsibility.

In terms of classroom management, instructors expressed concern that class sizes were too large (over 30), and that more time was needed to provide help to individual students. Examples of student maturity and personal issues cited by instructors were; inability to deal with minor conflicts, inability to keep commitments (lateness for classes and assignments), the need to balance personal and professional lives, the need to learn conflict resolution skills and to deal with personal issues, and, the lack of access to personal support systems.

Table 3

Concerns and Issues From Former Instructor Correspondence

CATEGORIES	SUMMARY OF COMMENTS
Student selection/preparation	Should select students with a mature approach to learning Seek students with demonstrated coping and conflict resolution skills Should have matriculation level writing skills Demonstrate effective work and study habits Demonstrate responsibility

CATEGORIES	SUMMARY OF COMMENTS
Class Management	Class sizes are too large More time is needed to help individual students
Coping and Maturity	Students need to balance their personal lives with their professional training Students are often unable to deal with minor conflict Students lack access to personal support systems Students often fail to keep commitments, are late for class and late for assignments Students need to learn conflict resolution skills
Teaching and learning	Students need to learn to integrate theory with practice They need to learn to improve their written and verbal skills They need to be emotionally prepared for the realities of their practicum They need to learn to separate their personal lives from their professional lives

Learning issues of concern to instructors included; difficulty integrating theory with practice, the need for improved written and verbal skills, better preparation for the realities of the fieldwork practicum, and the need to learn how to separate personal issues from professional practice.

Evaluations of Former Instructors.

The data which was gathered from evaluations of instructors by students throughout the program is very rich in the amount of detail provided. With respect to 'instruction', students expressed many concerns about both the professional and personal qualities of their instructors. From a professional perspective, they value teachers who are: enthusiastic and motivated, clear about their expectations, well organized, willing to listen and explain, effectively pace their teaching, provide constructive feedback, and, are

available for consultation outside of class time. The personal qualities they value in an instructor are: sensitivity to student personal issues, a sense of humour, respect, and, an understanding of First Nations issues.

Student evaluations of instructors provided overwhelmingly positive feedback about the nature and quality of the course content and curriculum. Feedback about learning revealed that students were predominantly concerned about the processes rather than the products of learning. Concerns about tests and exams related to the weighting of assignments, the perceived "fairness" of exams, and the clarity of exam criteria and expectations. The subject of administrative support raised issues about: class scheduling, time constraints, attendance policies, access to learning materials and resources, and, the difficulties which resulted from changing instructors after a course had already begun.

Table 4

Concerns/Issues Identified from Instructor Evaluations

CATEGORIES	SUMMARY OF CONTENTS	NUMBER
Instruction	Unclear directions and expectations	24
	Enthusiastic and motivating style of teaching	19
	Instructor demonstrates willingness to listen and explain	15
	Instructor willing to take personal issues into consideration	14
	Instructor too lenient	14
	Importance of teaching with a sense of humour	12
	Need for instructors who understand Native issues and concerns	12
	Need instructors who are organized in presenting their material	12
	Importance of receiving constructive feedback from instructors	8
	Availability of instructors outside regular class time	6
	Instructors too fast in their course delivery	6
	Critical of instructors being late for their own class	4

CATEGORIES	SUMMARY OF CONTENTS	NUMBER
Course content/ curriculum	Positive comments on specific aspects of selected course topics	37
	Courses help to improve professional skills and knowledge	33
	Content contributes positively to students own self analysis	22
	Negative comments regarding specific courses	8
	Content specifically addresses issues of particular interest to First Nations students	6
Learning	Acknowledging the value of formalized discussions and group sessions in the classroom	31
	The value of individual and group presentations	28
	Emphasizing the importance of 'fun' in the classroom experience	20
	Acknowledging the importance of lectures	15
	Importance of multimedia materials and activities	13
	Preference for diversity of teaching methods and materials	12
	Importance of opportunities for student feedback in the classroom	11
	Enjoy case scenarios and role playing	6
	Enjoy meditation as part of the learning experience	5
Tests/Grades	Open book exams of particular value	5
	Criteria for exam scoring is not clear	5
	Unfair or uneven grading of student exams	3
	Frequency of exams is helpful	3
	Value/weighting of final exam too high	3
	Value in participating in self-grading of exams	2
	Too many exams	1
Admin./Support	More class time needed for courses	16
	Time of day classes are held is problematic	15
	Difficult changing instructors during semester	12
	Strict attendance policies not appreciated	10
	Need better access to research materials	4
	Need better access to computers	3
	Strict attendance policies are appreciated	3

CATEGORIES	SUMMARY OF CONTENTS	NUMBER
	Classes should be shorter in duration	3
	Need better screening of students	1
	Would prefer all male instructors	1
	Wants to take computer course as well as program core courses	1
	Burnout from 3 years without a break from work and school	1

Student Focus Group Discussions

As indicated in Chapter 3, two classroom groups of students were invited to participate with the researcher in focus group discussions specifically for this research. Both of these groups represented students in the Arts & Science/University transfer program. Student participation was voluntary and the classroom instructor was not present during the discussion. One group, consisting of 9 students, were enrolled in a Blackfoot Studies course; and the other group, consisting of 21 students, were enrolled in a Computer Sciences course. Their responses to each of the following questions are combined and summarized as follows:

1. How is your program meeting or not meeting your expectations?
   - preparation for career
   - completion of Arts & Science requirements
   - preparation for employment
   - extremely valuable
   - helpful to know more about our culture
   - provides requirements for University programs in Social Work and Education

   "I took Blackfoot because I'm not very fluent. I understand it, it's my culture, and there was a very good teacher, so that's why I wanted to take Blackfoot."

"As a parent it will help you teach your kids to use the computer...because that's the future, computers are the future."

2. What are you gaining from your program?
   • important to know what happened with our culture
   • Canadian Indian history
   • learning about Native issues
   • knowing what happened with this community will help us in the future
   • more skills and increased opportunities
   • access through Internet and CD-ROM to research material

   "In our class discussions we note things that happened, stuff that happened earlier and we can discuss that."

   "It's broadened my world literally speaking in the sense that I am almost parallel to those who are using them in the workplace."

3. List aspects that are positive about your program.
   • that we are all Native and can communicate with one another
   • don't have to travel far to get here, location is ideal
   • share the same culture, similar interests and background
   • instructor is knowledgeable, supportive, and helpful
   • instructors are accessible and easy to communicate with
   • class sizes are smaller than other institutions
   • evening courses allow students to keep jobs
   • good student support and counselors available
   • more recognition of accomplishments here

   "...if there are problems and conflicts and what not, you have somebody you can talk to" "If you had to go to university you will probably never get to say 'boo' to your instructor, you are just a number."

4. List aspects that are negative about your program.

- access to computers during the evening
- nothing open on the weekend, library materials not available, books and library materials difficult to get off-campus, cost of library user cards is very expensive for people not living in Lethbridge or Cardston
- supplies not available during the evening
- more access to learning materials and resources
- cafeteria is closed, no lunch available
- limited range of courses, need to extend courses to higher levels

"We work from 8:00 'til 4:00, and we go to school from 4:00 'til 7:00, so we haven't had any break since 8:00 in the morning"

5. What suggestions do you have for improving your program?

- more option courses, more alternatives, opportunity to take higher level courses
- a new building, or renovate the current one
- photocopy machines, a big library and a supply store and more computers
- lab needs to be more structured with more time available
- better access to books and materials from other libraries
- better course advising information
- course information available sooner (avoid last minute changes)
- transfer credit for Red Crow Community College Courses rather than offered through other institutions
- expand the number of courses offered, include vocational courses
- provide workplace learning and have a learning resource centre
- install bank machines, a bookstore and take into account US exchange for sponsored students

"I had a handicapped daughter...she comes up to the first floor and then she's stuck. ... and then there's students who have arthritis and they have to carry those heavy books (up the stairs)"

"We need to bring our education back home...it's a very important issue to look at because we are Native people and the way we feel and the way we think and do things are totally different. You know that's something that needs to be recognized and respected."

Student Survey.

Open-ended questions were used in the survey of current students. The numbers in brackets following each response refers to the number of students who gave that response.

Table 5

Student Survey Results

QUESTIONS	SUMMARY - RESPONSES	NUMBER
What aspect of the Arts and Science program do you consider to have been of most value to you?	Convenient location	8
	English course	4
	Quality of instruction/instructor support	4
	Native American Studies (NAS) courses	2
	Evening class time	2
	Opportunity for further education	2
	Opportunity to learn with Native students	1
	Computer Science course	1
	Opportunity to maintain work and family obligations while being a student	1
Describe aspects of the program that you feel may have been very frustrating or difficult for you.	Confusion about program expectations	4
	Course scheduling/timetable conflicts	4
	Uncooperative or unhelpful teacher	3
	Computer Science lab	3
	Limited number of courses available	3
	Classes cancelled without notification	1
	Limited amount of financial support	1
	Limited access to computer or typewriter	1
	Native American Studies (NAS) 1000	1
What suggestions would you have for strengthening	Improved course/program advising	3
	Campus facilities and food services	

QUESTIONS	SUMMARY - RESPONSES	NUMBER
this program in the future?	available during the evening	2
	Courses in place at beginning of semester	1
	More classes in the morning and afternoon	1
	Instructors available outside class time	1
	Improve the library	1
	More publicity for Red Crow College	1
	A new building	1
	Add Indian perspectives to courses	1
	Improved computer lab	1
	Improved transfer credit and credibility with other colleges and universities	1
	Tutors for students	1
Has the teaching/learning in this program met your expectations? Less than you expected? Better than you expected?	Yes, met expectations	10
	Yes, better than expected	4
	Mixed, yes and no	2
	No, less than expected	1
What are your plans after you graduate? Further education? Employment?	Further education (B.Ed.)	3
	Further education (B.S.W.)	3
	Further education (unspecified)	5
	Employment, then further education	2
	Employment	3
	No response	1
Additional Comments	Learning skills workshops and resource centre is needed	1
	Lack of courses available is holding students back	1
	Some teachers appear to be unmotivated	1
	Library needs to be expanded	1
	Hope that courses will transfer to U of L	1
	Saturday classes difficult to attend	1
	Need for increased financial support	1
	Thanks to the administration (especially Marie Marule) for all they have done	1

<u>Document Analysis</u>

Federal and provincial government documents have been examined and referred to extensively throughout this dissertation. Federal documents used have included: <u>The Indian Act</u>; <u>The Constitution Act, 1982</u>; <u>The Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs</u>; <u>The Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Canada - Alberta Cooperation on Native [Indian and Metis] Development</u>; <u>Pathways to Success: Aboriginal Employment and Training Strategy</u>; and the many reports of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Provincial documents have included: <u>The Secondary and Post-Secondary Transition Needs of Native Students</u>; <u>New Directions for Adult Learning in Alberta</u>; <u>Institutional Accountability in Alberta's Post-Secondary System</u>; and, <u>Meeting The Challenge IV: Detailed Three-Year Plan for Education in Alberta</u>.

As indicated in Chapter 3, information from these documents prior to 1989 has generally been included in the literature review as historically significant, whereas more recent information has been presented as data gathered in this chapter. Additional information from these documents deemed important to understanding the intentions for First Nations post-secondary education and current socio-economic, cultural and political influences, will be analyzed in Chapter 5.

Documents specific to the Blood Tribe and Red Crow College documents have included: <u>Post-Secondary Student Support Program: Program Handbook</u>; <u>1996/1997 Student Handbook and Program Calendar</u>; Annual Reports from 1994/95 and 1995/96; <u>Cooperative Education Policy</u>; <u>Long Term Strategic Plan</u>; <u>Adult Education Training Needs Assessment</u>; <u>Orientation Brief to Blood Tribe Chief and Council</u>; and, <u>Comprehensive Evaluation, 1997</u>.

The above documents generally reveal a large amount of information concerning each of the following areas:

Table 6
Red Crow Community College Document Content.

1. Statements About Red Crow Community College -
   a. Philosophy and Mission
   b. Mandate
   c. Purposes
   d. Goals and Objectives

2. Information Concerning Students -
   a. Interest in post-secondary education
   b. Scholastic achievements
      i. Phi theta Kappa
      ii. Dean's Honour Roll
      iii. President's Honour Roll
   c. Enrolment data
   d. Completion data

3. Program Descriptions -
   a. Programs previously offered
   b. Programs currently available
   c. Proposed programs pending approval
   d. Current research activities
   e. Timetables of available courses

4. Policy and Procedure Statements Describing -
   a. The relationship with Blood Tribe Chief and Council
   b. The role and responsibilities of the Board of Governors
   c. Specific education program requirements
   d. The relationship to affiliated organizations
      i. Treaty 7 Tribal Council
      ii. First Nations Adult and Higher Education Consortium (FNAHEC)
      iii. American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC)

5. Descriptions of Community Related Activities -
   a. Community/continuing education
      i. Mural Etching
      ii. Farm Laborer's Training
      iii. Community Gardens
   b. Student Residence - St. Paul's

Red Crow Community College Document Content - continued

a. Business Assistance Centre
b. Blood Tribe Field Museum
c. Student exchanges with Navajo Community College
d. Sporting and social events

The first step in the analysis of these documents was to review them with a view to identifying common themes in regard to statements of intention in respect to social, cultural, economic, and political influences acting upon First Nations post-secondary education. This activity was complicated somewhat by the fact that these broad categories of influence (social, economic, cultural, and political) are closely interrelated and interconnected. In some instances distinctions had to be made between them in order to facilitate sorting. While these distinctions may have been somewhat arbitrary in this chapter for purposes of identification and description, in the next chapter of this project an attempt has been made through analysis of the data to show how they impact and influence one another.

The first step in the analysis of these documents was to review them with a view to identifying common themes in regard to statements of intention in respect to social, cultural, economic, and political influences acting upon First Nations post-secondary education.

Social Intentions.

Among the sub-categories which emerged in relation to statements of intent primarily of a social nature were those which related to four general areas. In establishing the parameters for statements that would constitute social intentions the following four areas evolved: statements which described and defended the community/social need for post-secondary programs, statements which rationalized the goal of post-secondary education as one of community development, descriptions of the responsiveness of

post-secondary education to community needs, and descriptions of the manner in which post-secondary education is helpful in developing interpersonal and social skills among its students.

The following are examples of statements reflecting the need for post-secondary education.

The need for academic upgrading NOW is somewhere between 2,186 and 2,990. The additional need for reserve residents younger than 18 years now, is somewhere between 1,700 and 2,325. This "need" is strictly a remedial "catch-up" need, required to place the reserve residents on an educational and employable basis comparable to other Alberta residents (RCCC, 1995, Post-secondary student support program, p. 3).

1993 INAC statistics show a total reserve population of 6,157. Other studies show 93% of the population has less than a completed high school education. The adult population between the ages of 18 and 55 is 3,215. Ninety three per cent of these persons, 2,990, have less than a completed high school education and may need to attend Red Crow College to improve their academic standing. (RCCC, 1996, Long Term Strategic Plan, p. 13)

The following are examples of statements which rationalized the goal of post-secondary education as one of community development.

The objective of the Red Crow Community College Student Support Program is to support Blood tribe members to gain access to post-secondary education and to graduate with the qualifications and skills needed to pursue individual careers and to contribute to the total development of the Blood Tribe and its members. (RCCC, 1995, Post-secondary student support program, p. iv)

Because of the increasing number of individuals who are currently receiving social assistance benefits, but who want to improve their status and quality of life through such means as education in order to obtain meaningful work, it is the intent of RCCC to provide quality programs to suit their needs. (RCCC, 1994, Kainaiwa Pre-vocational training initiative proposal, n.p.)

Some of these changes in the program were a part of my personal dreams, others were the goals of the RCCC team, but most importantly they were the aspirations of the Blood community which knew what it wanted, voiced it and committed to getting involved in the education movement. (RCCC, 1994, Upgrading Program, n.p.)

Descriptions of the responsiveness of post-secondary education to community needs included statements such as the following.

RCCC academic program is flexible, student-centered and competency-based to accommodate student learning styles and rate of progress. Learning disabilities are taken into consideration. (RCCC, 1994, Kainaiwa Pre-vocational training initiative proposal, n.p.)

I've been to College off the reserve and it wasn't the same. I was just another face in the crowd. Here at RCCC I felt that I was part of a family (RCCC, 1996, 1996/1997 Student handbook and program calendar, p. 20).

Being able to pursue a post-secondary education on the reserve has made it possible for young and mature adults with families to reach their educational goals, regardless of age or family commitments. (RCCC, 1996, 1996/1997 Student handbook and program calendar, p. 21)

Due to the fact the program follows guidelines set by Alberta education, we believe that academic standards must be upheld in order to deliver quality education. However, at the same time we understand we are an alternate education institution and feel we must be as open-minded and empathetic to those problems faced by our student population in their quest to complete secondary education. (RCCC, 1995, Red Crow Community College: Tenth anniversary annual report, p.29)

The manner in which post-secondary education is helpful in developing interpersonal and social skills among its students is exemplified in the following statements.

Among the objectives of the summer student exchange program with Navajo Community College are: "To promote friendship and unity" and "To enhance student's interpersonal and communication skills" (RCCC, 1995, Red Crow Community College: Tenth anniversary annual report, p.23).

The Kainai Life Skills program is an off campus course offered by the Red Crow Community College. The course is offered to the various communities on the Blood reserve in an effort to heal the family and community. . . . The Life Skills program serves the four main communities of the Blood reserve [Stand-Off, Old Agency, Lavern, Moses Lake]. (RCCC, 1995, Red Crow Community College: Tenth anniversary annual report, p. 27)

Students enrolled in the Cooperative Education Program must enroll in a 40 hour Self-Assessment Program. The Self-assessment component enables students to identify their strengths, skills, interests, aptitudes, temperaments, values and weaknesses. (RCCC, 1997, Co-operative Education Policy, n.p.)

A major educational needs assessment activity which was undertaken by Red Crow Community college was the Adult Educational Training Needs Assessment (AETNA) survey completed in 1994. This survey revealed a great deal of helpful information concerning the background, previous educational experience and current interests in education of members of the Blood Tribe. "One thousand questionnaires were printed and distributed to all points of the reserve as well as to those organizations/entities who chose to participate. . . . Seven hundred and two surveys were returned for analysis" (RCCC, 1994, Red Crow Community College: Adult educational training needs assessment, p. 9).

Seventy percent of the respondents to the AETNA survey were between the ages of 22 and 44. Sixty-three percent of the respondents were either married or living common-law. Seventy-four percent reported that they had dependents, of which fifty percent reported to having from 2 to 4 dependents. Thirty-seven percent of those responding reported that they were unemployed, and twenty-six percent indicated that they had schooling beyond grade twelve. Sixty-six percent reported that they did not have a high school diploma, and of those with a diploma, seventy-eight percent did not have senior matriculation. Thirty-three percent of the respondents graduated from Kainai High School, twenty-six percent from Cardston High School, thirteen percent from Lethbridge High School, and seven percent from Fort Macleod High School. Of those reporting to have some college education, approximately fifty-two percent had attended Lethbridge Community College, nineteen percent had attended Red Crow Community College, nine percent had attended Mount Royal College, and four percent had attended S.A.I.T. The areas of study covered a wide spectrum of fifty-eight subjects; some of which were vocational training, some career preparation, and some liberal arts. The most significant area of study (23 %) was University/College Entrance Preparation.

Table 7

<u>Reasons For Wanting to Attend College or University Either On or Off Reserve</u>

ON RESERVE	NUMBER	OFF RESERVE	NUMBER
Closer to home	150	Better educational facilities	22
More convenient	43	Closer to attend	22
Less expensive	32	Too many distractions/social	
Be with own people	23	problems on the reserve	18
Accessible transportation	21	To attend college/university	17
Home/family on reserve	14	Better programs/teachers	13
Wish to stay on reserve	10	More classes/activites offered	13
Community support	8	Better learning opportunities	12
To complete education	7	To interact with non-Native	
Convenience for daycare	6	community	12
		Program not offered at RCCC	11
		Broaden outlook, try harder off	
		reserve, more convenient	8

<u>Note.</u> Adapted from "Adult Education Training Needs Assessment" Red Crow

Community College, 1994, p. 25, 26.

From this same needs assessment ten of the most frequently identified services or facilities that would make it easier to attend Red Crow Community College were:

1. Bus transportation to and from college (78)
2. Certified day care centre with certified day care instructors (60)
3. Evening classes (30)
4. More classes (High School and University) (12)
5. Better roads, paved roads (11)
6. Financial support (10)
7. More accessible location for RCCC (10)
8. Better access for handicapped/disabled, on-campus housing (9)
9. Better instructors, Updated library (8)
10. Study groups/tutorials (7)

(RCCC, 1994, <u>Red Crow Community College: Adult educational training needs</u> <u>assessment,</u> p. 30)

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Among the most common reasons given by students who did not complete their program of studies were; insufficient financial support, family commitments, personal problems, attendance problems, and the fact that they had found employment.

A total of 153 possible community education courses were identified. These covered a very broad range of subjects including; leisure and physical education activities, general health and hygiene courses, arts and crafts, and home and automotive mechanics, repair and maintenance. Interestingly, of these the top three mentioned were: Native Rights, Native Law, and Blackfoot Language. This would appear to indicate a very high degree of community interest in First Nations political issues as well as acknowledgment of the need to preserve Blackfoot culture.

Cultural Intentions.

Among the sub-categories which emerged in relation to statements of intent primarily of a cultural nature were those which were deemed to relate to three general areas. These areas included: statements which encourage a valuing of traditional culture, statements of intention to preserve and protect Blackfoot language and culture, descriptions of activities and programs which are shaped in such a way as to encourage responses deemed by the College to be culturally appropriate.

The following are examples of statements which embody a greater valuing of traditional culture:

I especially encourage everyone to enroll in the Blackfoot studies and language programs offered here....We have a lot to be proud of and don't let anyone tell you otherwise....We're all the same. We have no reason to feel that we are less than others. . . .(RCCC, 1996, 1996/1997 Student handbook and program calendar, p. 8, 19)

A similar goal is reflected in the statement of objectives of the summer student exchange program with Navajo Community College.

To gain an understanding of each others traditional culture.

To explore and/or identify the changes of traditional culture, lifestyles and heritage of each other.

To acquire a general knowledge and understanding of the contemporary lifestyles. (RCCC, 1995, Red Crow Community College: Tenth anniversary annual report, p. 23)

The traditional dance demonstrations, gift giving, and a feast punctuate the emphasis on tradition at RCCC. On no other campus can you be so in touch with your own communities traditions and know the importance of them. There is indeed something special about it. That fact has allowed so many more students from RCCC to succeed in their chosen pursuits (RCCC, 1995, Red Crow Community College: Tenth anniversary annual report, p. 62)

it is important to continually emphasize the importance of identifying and addressing personal and social issues, and to be aware of the important role cultural identity and spirituality (purpose in life) have in becoming a healthy, balanced individual. The latter is critical in the healing process Aboriginal peoples must undergo in order to restructure and rebuild their communities (RCCC, 1997, Co-operative Education Policy, n.p.)

The following are examples of statements of intention to preserve and protect Blackfoot language and culture:

Red Crow Community College's mandate is to combine our ancestral wisdom and knowledge with the information, technology and skills which are necessary for a quality life in the present and future and to convey this synthesis through the educational/training programs required by our communities in the quest for real development. . . . Cooperatively we can revitalize and maintain our rich cultural

heritage for many more centuries. (RCCC, 1996, <u>1996/1997 Student handbook and program calendar</u>, p. 2)

The goal of the conference was to provide an opportunity...to participate in a unique language experience. They were able to learn 'Niitsi ' poahsini', the true Blackfoot language, with emphasis on sign language, humour, religious ceremonies, teaching methods. (RCCC, 1995, <u>Red Crow Community College: Tenth anniversary annual report</u>, p. 22)

The workshop was intended for native language teachers and students looking for new ideas on how to make language come alive, to learn simple mime movements, such as walking, climbing and the use of body language. (RCCC, 1995, <u>Red Crow Community College: Tenth anniversary annual report</u>, p. 22)

a hands on Drum Making Workshop for the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC). . . . The beat of the drum is referred to as the heart beat of First Nation's people. Therefore students were given the opportunity to learn: Drum making, singing, and dance. (RCCC, 1995, <u>Red Crow Community College: Tenth anniversary annual report</u>, p. 22)

The following are examples of descriptions of activities and programs which are shaped in such a way as to encourage culturally appropriate responses:

The purpose of the Social Work Task Force is to give expert advice and guidance to Red Crow Community College in developing a training curriculum that is both relevant and respectful of the realities of First Nation cultures and communities. The ultimate goal being the effective and efficient delivery of community mental health development to all First Nations members. (RCCC, 1995, <u>Red Crow Community College: Tenth anniversary annual report</u>, p. 51)

It was also recognized that the existing methodologies and practices will have to change to accomodate (sic) culturally relevant Health and Social programs that are much needed in First Nations communities. . . . The relevant culturally specific (theoretical and practical) training needs identified by the Social Work Task Force will provide the basis for the design of the most appropriate First Nations Training Program and courses, within College and University settings. . . . In development of the curricula the cultural, linguistic, experiential, and educational background of the intended participants must be taken into account. (RCCC, 1995, <u>Red Crow Community College: Tenth anniversary annual report</u>, p. 52)

These Elders have significant commitment to knowledge of and an appreciation of the history, customs, traditions, culture, language, and lifestyles of Kainaiwa. They are the role models, teachers, counsellors, friends, family, and support to all staff and students. (RCCC, 1995, <u>Red Crow Community College: Tenth anniversary annual report</u>, p. 64)

An excellent example of all three sub-categories in this area of cultural intention are contained within the statement of philosophy of the First Nations Accreditation Board, as follows:

In consideration of the sacred responsibilities given to us by the Creator, upheld through our culture and which continues to be perpetuated through our Elders, we are committed to:

1. Provide the educational needs and programs of First Nations people with full participation by the Elders, the parents and the community.
2. To actualize the mental, physical, emotional, spiritual and social well being of our people by preserving and re-enforcing First Nations culture, practices and teachings.
3. Develop and implement community based education programs which focus on the needs of the First Nations community and are controlled and monitored at the community level.

4. Affirm our right to maintain and develop educational practices and programs that are truly aboriginal and are reflective of our culture.
5. Aboriginal programming should be community based, non-materialistic in nature and subject to the monitoring and guidance of our Elders.
6. The accreditation board must be non-confrontational and encompass the values of sharing and respect.
7. The equitable fair treatment of all who enter into a relationship with the board must be paramount.
8. Institutions applying for accreditation must demonstrate First Nations control and accountability.

(First Nations Accreditation Board Statement of Philosophy n.p.)

Economic Intentions.

Among the sub-categories which emerged in relation to statements of intent primarily of an economic nature were those which related to four general areas. These four areas included: indications of compatibility in tuition fees and costs between Red Crow Community College and other post-secondary education institutions, statements concerning student funding for post-secondary education, indications of the inter-relatedness of economic development and post-secondary education, indications of areas of mutual financial support and financial need.

The following are examples of statements indicating compatibility of fees between Red Crow Community College and other post-secondary education institutions:

For resourcing purposes tuition support is provided for students attending Canadian public institutions at the normal rate charged by the institution for a Canadian student. . . . In the case of a Native post-secondary institute, the tuition fees will be those normally charged to students by the associated institution for a comparable program. (RCCC, 1995, Post-secondary student support program: Program handbook, p. 5)

Likewise, the definitions used for both full and part-time student status are the same as for mainstream post-secondary education institutions. "Full-time students' and

'Part-time students' are as defined by the post-secondary institution" (RCCC, 1995, Post-secondary student support program: Program handbook, Annex I, n.p.). The same course load criteria is also applied in the determination of full-time student status. "All students are to register in a minimum of three courses to be considered full-time" (RCCC, 1996, 1996/1997 Student handbook and program calendar, p. 30).

Financial support for students is arranged according to three separate levels within the Post-Secondary Student Support Program. These levels of support also reflect an acknowledgment of mainstream educational systems. For example, Level I financial support is provided for students registered in Diploma or Certificate programs, Level II financial support is provided for Undergraduate Degree enrolment, and Level III financial support is provided for Graduate Degree studies in Masters and Doctorate programs. (RCCC, 1995, Post-secondary student support program: Program handbook, Annex I, n.p.) Among the limitations placed on funding, the handbook also states that "Tuition support . . . will be provided to students for one program of studies at each level of studies" (RCCC, 1995, Post-secondary student support program: Program handbook, p. 11).

College documents make it clear that financial support for post-secondary education is facing severe constraints.

The number of students applying for sponsorship has been increasing by approximately 25% per year over the past five years, and the cost of tuitions in most Alberta public colleges and universities have been increasing by at least 25% per year for the past 5 years (University of Calgary tuition has increased by 500% in the past five years). The cost of living has increased significantly over the past 10 years yet the Blood Tribe Post Secondary Student Support Program cannot increase its training allowance rates for its students because of the severe shortage of funds. To prove the level of need on the Blood Reserve the Kainai Board of Education decided to fund all eligible students in the period from April 1, 1992

until December 1994 (RCCC, 1995, <u>Red Crow Community College: Tenth anniversary annual report</u>, p. 10)

From the review of the literature, it was noted that federal support for First Nations post-secondary education formally began in the 1950's, essentially as a matter of department policy rather than government legislation. According to Margaret Ward (1992), the government's objectives for this program have changed over the years.

> from the program initially being established to provide a means for First Nations members to access training and preparation for employment in the broader Canadian society to being a program through which First Nations post-secondary graduates can contribute to the achievement of First Nations self-government and economic self-reliance. The manner of policy formulation has also changed over the years, from one of unilateral policy decision-making to one that strives for concensus-building between First Nations and the federal government. (Ward, 1992, p. 357)

The rationale of the federal government for this program remains essentially the same, that is, to address the inequity between First Nations participation in higher education and that of the general public.

The following statements are examples of indications of the inter relatedness of economic development and post-secondary education:

> The Economic Development Strategy implies a significant increase in Economic Development, providing employment opportunities for reserve residents. According to the strategy "Education is a top priority for the Reserve". For past years, education for reserve residents older than 16 years of age was very limited. . . . In order to pursue this strategy of developing a sustained and self-reliant

economy and placing education as a top priority. (RCCC, 1995, Post-secondary student support program: Program handbook, p. 4)

The goal of Red Crow Community College will be to provide this second group, as well as those persons becoming 18 years of age prior to the year 2000, with skills and knowledge matching the employment opportunities generated by economic development. (RCCC, 1995, Post-secondary student support program: Program handbook, p. 5)

With employment opportunities arising both on and off the Blood reserve many people realized the importance of a High School and post secondary education to gain employment (RCCC, 1996, 1996/1997 Student handbook and program calendar, p. 4)

The Blood Tribe Economic Development Department and the Red Crow College Board must establish direct lines of communication, so the planning of education and training can be a part of every economic development project (RCCC, 1995, Red Crow Community College: Tenth anniversary annual report, p. 4)

Following are examples of statements indicating areas of mutual financial support and financial need:

In order to assist persons in becoming employed and maintaining employment, a counselling, testing and evaluating process will be necessary (RCCC, 1995, Post-secondary student support program: Program handbook, p 6).

There is no other building, available or planned, intended for the presentation of adult education programs (RCCC, 1995, Post-secondary student support program: Program handbook, p. 7).

In order to prepare a comprehensive strategic plan for the college, the following information and decisions are required:

1. A detailed demographic study of reserve residents, identifying (among many other details) present level of education and, where possible, career aspirations.
5. An investigation of all possible sources of operating funds (5 Year Plan, p. 5).

Ensure that both physical facilities and finances are adequate to achieve the educational and economic goals of the Blood Tribe (RCCC, 1995, Red Crow Community College: Tenth anniversary annual report, p. 4).

...Kainaiwa Board of Education...costs of Operation and Maintenance of our facilities and the provision of a cafeteria....RCCC has no source of funds to continue to provide cafeteria services....mean securing $80,000.00 from some source (RCCC, 1997, Orientation brief 1995/96, p. 12).

Political Intentions.

Among the sub-categories which emerged in relation to statements of intent deemed to be primarily of a political nature were those which related to four general areas. These four areas included the following: the interpretation of treaty rights, particularly as they relate to First Nations post-secondary education, self-determination and sovereignty, comparability of First Nations education programs with non-First Nations programs, and decolonization.

The following are examples of statements relating to the interpretation of treaty rights as they relate to First Nations post-secondary education:

We recognize that Post-Secondary Education is a Treaty Right, therefore, the Blood Tribe will ensure that sufficient funds are available from the Federal Government to administer the Blood Tribe Post-Secondary Student Support program (RCCC, 1995, Post-secondary student support program: Program handbook, p. 4).

...understand that it is my right to have an education (RCCC, 1996, <u>1996/1997 Student handbook and program calendar</u>, p. 31).

First Nations colleges must act cooperatively to get federal recognition of tribally controlled colleges in Canada and secure more appropriate and adequate funding for such educational institutions of First Nations (RCCC, 1995, <u>Red Crow Community College: Tenth anniversary annual report</u>, p. 5).

The following are examples of statements related to self-determination and sovereignty for Red Crow Community College in particular and the Blood Tribe in general:

Kainaiwa has been asserting its right to self-determination and sovereignty. For the first time since our colonization began, the colonial governments are willing to recognize our right to self-government....Red Crow Community College is a critical institution for our struggle for self-determination and preparation for the future. (RCCC, 1996, <u>1996/1997 Student handbook and program calendar</u>, p. 2)

The transfer of governance for adult post-secondary, continuing, community, vocational and technical education from the Kainai Board of Education to the Red Crow Community College Board of Governors...[including] management of the Blood Tribe Post-Secondary Student Support Program and the Kainai Community Cooperative Leaning Program . . . established the first tribally-controlled community college in Canada. (RCCC, 1995, <u>Red Crow Community College: Tenth anniversary annual report</u>, p. 3)

The following are examples of statements indicating a desire to achieve comparability between Red Crow Community College and other post-secondary education institutions:

Develop Red Crow College programs of study and courses for accreditation and acceptance by other institutions. Establish Red Crow College certificate and diploma programs. . . . Work towards establishing acceptance of Red Crow College courses by other institutions as transfer courses. . . . Work towards establishing Red Crow College as a public institution through the federal government (RCCC, 1997, Orientation brief 1995/96 , p. 2).

Critical criteria for accreditation by any authority include financial stability, qualified academic personnel, adequate and appropriate student resource services. . . . To attain accreditation as a college, Red Crow Community college must develop college and university level courses of its own and attain transferability of these to other public institutions . . . all institutions of higher learning require a research component. (RCCC, 1995, Red Crow Community College: Tenth anniversary annual report, p. 6, 11, 12).

The following are examples of statements indicating a desire to initiate and/or encourage a process of decolonization:

We do, however, need to remind ourselves that throughout history colonizers have used the educational system, through coercion or denied access, as an institutional device for social restructuring. It can be argued that through time educational conformity to dominant societal values becomes systemic to the existing educational system. . . . In education as in train tracks, Parallelity (sic) leads to the same destination. We need to ask ourselves such a fundamental question as what is our destination? And be prepared to embark on a radical path of decolonization. (First Nations Accreditation Board, pp. 4, 5)

Chapter Five

Analysis and Discussion of the Data

As indicated in Chapter 3 the preceding data sources were reviewed on several occasions. Related sources were identified and sorted into separate files, and coloured highlighter pens were used extensively to identify related categories of information. The "cut and paste" functions of the computer were also extremely helpful in sorting, arranging and rearranging data as different themes emerged.

Generally, the process of data gathering proceeded without significant difficulty. Anticipated obstacles, such as; time constraints, scheduling problems and extensive travel certainly had to be dealt with, but they proved to be manageable. A major factor in the relatively satisfactory completion of this stage of the research was the helpful and willing participation of administrators, staff and faculty of Red Crow Community College. Both time and information were openly and freely shared. The general response was one of cooperation and support. From the outset the College President and the Board of Governors were supportive. Faculty and staff members interviewed were cooperative, open and candid in their responses to questions. Student input appeared to be given freely, both in the form of focus group discussions as well as informal conversations in hallways and stairwells. There was an extensive amount of information contained in College documents which was also openly and freely shared.

Initially, when the concept of this research endeavor was presented to the College President, and then subsequently to the Board of Governors, questions about the nature and purpose of the project were responded to by the researcher as openly and candidly as possible. Also, whenever staff and faculty were interviewed, the project was explained and any questions or concerns were responded to, hopefully, effectively. Students were likewise given an overview and an opportunity to ask questions about the project. Partly for these reasons, but also of equal importance because scholarly research appears to be viewed as an important and meaningful mandate for First Nations post-secondary

education, this project was accepted as non-threatening to, and potentially helpful for Red Crow Community College.

General Observations

Before proceeding to examine the specific themes which emerged, it is helpful to look at each of the major areas of data gathering in turn, and identify significant concepts, concerns and issues for this research. The information and data sources which informed the dissertation have included; the review of the literature, demographic data, key informant interviews, instructor correspondence and evaluations of instructors, student focus group discussions and surveys, and College documents. In addition, as a consequence of the struggle to analyze the data and bring meaning and order to large amounts of information, three theoretical models have emerged as organizers. These conceptual organizers include; the Social Process model of policy making (Downey, 1988); "force field analysis" (Kettner, Daley & Nichols, 1985), mentioned in Chapter 1; and the various conceptions of curriculum identified by Eisner and Vallance (1974) further elaborated on by Connelly, Dukacz and Quinlan (1980).

Organizing Concepts.

The Social Process model has been helpful in focusing on the varied social influences currently acting on the development of education policy within the Kainai Nation. Force field analysis has been helpful in understanding the dynamic tensions operating within the milieu of First Nations post-secondary education, and the curriculum conceptions have been helpful in understanding the goals and purposes for First Nations post-secondary education, particularly as they apply to Red Crow Community College.

The Social Process (socio-political) model of the policy making process provided a helpful framework for exploring general questions about the education system and its structure. Within this model Lorne Downey (1988) identifies the characteristics of policy as an instrument of governance as follows:

A policy is an authoritative determination, by a governing authority, of a society's intents and priorities and an authoritative allocation of resources to those intents and priorities.

A policy is also an authoritative guideline to institutions governed by the authority (and persons who work in them) as to what their intents are to be and how they are set out to achieve them. (Downey, 1988, p. 10)

The social process model suggests that policy choices are essentially the product of group interaction. Policy formation in Aboriginal communities appears to be very consistent with this model. In this instance, the governing authority is the Blood Tribe Chief and Council. The intents and priorities of society, in this case members of the Blood reserve, have been determined through comprehensive needs assessment such as the Adult Educational Training Needs Assessment. The allocation of post-secondary education resources has taken place throughout the authority of the Board of Governors for Red Crow Community College. While the intents of members of the Blood Tribe and authorities from the College may be relatively clear, the intents of the governing authority they report to, namely the federal government of Canada, appear to be far less clear.

In addition to the framework for policy and decision making, the social context is also very important to this model making it very helpful for a qualitative research such as this. According to a summary provided by Downey (1988), "PARTICIPANTS as INDIVIDUALS OR IN GROUPS with varying PERSPECTIVES and holding particular BASE VALUES interact in specific SITUATIONS by using coercive or persuasive STRATEGIES to produce desired value, decision, and choice OUTCOMES which have EFFECTS on other values and institutions" (Downey, 1988, p. 57). This model, accredited by Downey to Harold Lasswell "is illustrative of the view of policy making typically adopted by persons who believe that group decisions (public policies) are the results of continuing interactions among the actors in public affairs" (Downey, 1988, p. 57). From this analysis of the data First Nations education policy making at Red Crow Community College appears to be very illustrative of the Social Process model. Decision

making appears to have been highly interactive, and College documents show that consensus building has occurred as an important function among members of different community groups.

Analysis of key informant interviews and education documents shows clearly that policy formation has been a product of "group interaction". Tribal control of post-secondary education has necessitated dialogue between education planners and tribal leaders and administrators. Accountability to tribal authority has resulted in regularly sharing information in the form of annual reports, budgets and planning documents. In addition, Red Crow Community College has played a significant role in the orientation and preparation of the newly elected Chief and Council. As well as working closely with elected representatives of the Blood tribe, the College maintains a close working relationship with tribal elders. There is an Elders Advisory committee to the College Board of Governors, and one of the members of the Board is an elder. In addition to elder representation, students of the College also have a representative on the Board. As well as a commitment to community participation in program planning and development inherent in this structure, the College has demonstrated a high level of motivation to seek input into its planning process through the initiation of the Adult Education Training Needs Assessment (AETNA). Given the relatively large number of community members surveyed (1000) and the correspondingly high ratio of surveys returned (702) it would appear that the College has attempted to maximize community input. Or to frame it in Downey's (1988) context, to provide for "continuing interactions among the actors in public affairs" (Downey, 1988, p. 57).

The third analyst constructed category also arose after an initial review of the data. From the interviews and the policy documents many statements are made about curriculum goals and objectives for the Kainai Nation. A very helpful organizer for examining these perspectives is provided by Eisner and Vallance (1974) in their book Conflicting Conceptions of Curriculum. These conceptions, or orientations to the curriculum, are described as "The development of cognitive processes", "Curriculum as technology", "Self-actualization, or curriculum as consummatory experience", "Social

reconstruction-relevance", and "Academic Rationalism". (Eisner & Vallance, 1974, p. 5, 13) Briefly summarized, the development of cognitive processes refers to curriculum approaches concerned with the refinement of intellectual operations, focusing on the how rather than the what of education. Curriculum as technology is concerned with mechanisms by which knowledge is communicated and learning is facilitated. The conception of self-actualization is highly value laden and views the function of curriculum as providing personally satisfying growth and development experiences for each learner. The process of developing toward one's full potential is referred to by Cree elder Rose Auger as human development. "Human development is the finding of your identity by looking at your history, your roots. It's a way of life that guides you and helps you to know the right thing to do" (cited in D. Meile, 1991, p. 23). Social reconstruction-relevance places a strong emphasis on the role of education within the larger social context. Social reform and responsibility to the future of society are primary. Referring to traditional values, Blackfoot elder Russell Wright states "the emphasis was on human worthiness--to be worth something to the tribe. This is an ancient tribal philosophy, and it's why our ancestors were so strong. They were strong in the community sense, and they stayed together as a holistic society" (cited in D. Meili, p. 50). The curriculum conception of academic rationalism, views education as "primarily concerned with enabling the young to acquire the tools to participate in the Western cultural tradition and with providing access to the greatest ideas and objects that man has created" (Eisner Vallance, 1974, p. 12). The results of analyzing the data from Red Crow Community College indicate that this institution clearly supports at least two of these conceptions, namely, self-actualization and social reconstruction-relevance.

A significant shortcoming in the conceptions of Eisner and Vallance is that they leave out the concept of culture. They have been included here specifically because their concepts of self-actualization and social reconstruction fit so well with the intentions for First Nations post-secondary education articulated in documents and interviews. In order to examine the concept of culture the more recent writings of Leavitt (1995) and Strain (1995) are included later in this chapter.

Observations Concerning the Literature.

Because it reflects issues that are directly observable at Red Crow Community College information contained in the literature is considered to be of major significance to this research. This is apparent in two ways, first, the descriptive nature of this research is heavily influenced by perceptions of what has occurred, and is occurring, in preceding and extant educational systems, and secondly, there appears to be a high degree of consistency between forces and influences acting upon First Nations post-secondary education identified in the literature and those currently interacting with post-secondary education at Red Crow Community College. In the literature these socio-economic and political forces and influences have included; racism, colonization, assimilation, and devolution. Interviews and observations at Red Crow Community College have likewise demonstrated allegations and perceptions by research participants of experiences of racism, colonization, assimilation and devolution of control.

Is there anything more essential to the survival of a culture than education and language? For First Nations, hunting and fishing are not merely sporting pastimes. They are protected rights under the constitution (sec. 35) of Canada. These activities enjoy this privilege because they are deemed essential to the preservation of Aboriginal culture. Tribal Chiefs and First Nations education administrators referred to in the literature argue that post-secondary education, like hunting and fishing, also needs to be protected within the framework of Canada's constitution. Currently the Indian Act protects education for First Nations children. First Nation's leaders argue that post-secondary education for adults is a treaty right and should also be protected and provided for by the Government of Canada. The absence of adequate protection and provision for post-secondary education has resulted in social and economic hardship for First Nations adults. The limitation of opportunities for higher education, for example as a result of capped funding based on a per capita allocation formula, have severely impacted employability for First Nations people. Refusal by the Government of Canada to acknowledge these issues, as evident by their hesitancy to take action on the report by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, will make it difficult to redress the problems of the past.

Many authors cited in the literature review have written about the negative aspects of racism. They point out that racism is a reality for First Nations, and that it is destructive of self-image, feelings of self-worth and, ultimately, culture. The data obtained from Red Crow Community College confirm both the destructive consequences of racism as well as its continuing impact from the point of view of those interviewed. The interview data also indicates that while respondents suggest that the incidence of overt acts of racism may have declined, there appears to be a very strong presence of institutionalized and internalized forms of racism and colonization in both dominant society and First Nations education systems.

Emergence of General Themes

The process of generating themes and patterns resulted from searching for consistencies and inconsistencies within documents and among related documents. Corroborating or conflicting statements from interviewees and the focus group discussion were sought by reading and rereading transcripts. An attempt was made to identify data which did not fit, and/or to discover gaps in the data as well as to identify commonalities and interconnectedness. As a result of this process, four general themes emerged. These have been identified as; first, the continuing influence of past experience, second, the struggle for cultural survival, third, striving for autonomy and credibility, and, fourth, the struggle for economic support and program funding.

The Continuing Influence of Past Experience.

The data presented in the previous chapter clearly demonstrates the variety of ways in which past events and educational practices continue to influence First Nations post-secondary education, particularly at Red Crow Community College. According to interview respondents, some prospective students are hampered by a negative attitude toward education, other potential students are unable to enter the College without bursting into tears or becoming physically ill because of the buildings former use as a residential school. Participants consistently reported that federal and provincial

governments continue, either intentionally or unintentionally to press post-secondary education students toward assimilation. Mainstream educational institutions continue to "broker" their programs among First Nations. In all likelihood they are unaware of the subtle way this practice may be perceived as a neo-colonial economic exploitation of First Nations post-secondary education students. Documents and discussions in the previous chapter show that a great deal of College time and resources is directed toward dealing with and responding to these continuing influences. Among the many descriptions of the destructive aspects of this process, Celia Haig-Brown refers to the term 'cultural self-hatred' to categorize "the conflict students are exposed to as a part of their daily existence within a racist society" (Haig-Brown, 1995, p. 250). Recent news releases indicate that the federal government has become willing to acknowledge and attempt to remedy some of the negative influences on First Nations education which have their roots in the past. The first step in this process of reconciliation was a government statement reported in The Calgary Herald to read:

> The Government of Canada acknowledges the role it played in the development and administration of these [residential] schools. Particularly to those individuals who experienced the tragedy of physical and sexual abuse at residential schools, and who have carried this burden believing that in some way they must be responsible, we wish to emphasize that what you experienced was not your fault and should never have happened. For those of you who suffered this tragedy, we are deeply sorry. (Calgary Herald, January 7, 1998, p. 2)

In addition to this formal apology from the government of Canada as a means of helping First Nations resolve issues of the past, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has recently released a new strategy for resolving issues and developing a more effective working relationship with First Nations communities. Entitled Gathering Strength: Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan, this recently released document states:

The Government of Canada recognizes that policies that sought to assimilate Aboriginal people, men and women, were not the way to build a strong country. We must instead continue to find ways in which Aboriginal people can participate fully in the economic, political, cultural and social life of Canada in a manner which preserves and enhances the collective identities of Aboriginal communities, and allows them to evolve and flourish in the future. (DIAND, 1997, p. 3)

In addition to the statement of reconciliation offered by the Government of Canada, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has adopted a policy of working toward healing the wounds of the past. In its recently released policy document DIAND suggests that in dealing with the legacies of the residential school system, "we need to work together on a healing strategy to assist individuals and communities in dealing with the consequences of this sad era of our history" (DIAND, 1997, p. 3). Although the specifics of a healing strategy are not outlined, among the encouraging aspects of this policy are an acceptance rather than denial of the continuing harm initiated in the past as well as a firm commitment to work together in partnership.

The Government of Canada is also committed to assisting in community healing to address the profound impacts of abuse at Residential Schools. Healing initiatives will be designed in partnership with the Aboriginal leadership and victims groups and will be delivered in the broadest possible fashion to all Aboriginal people, including Metis and off-reserve individuals and communities that have been impacted by the residential school system. (DIAND, 1997, p. 5)

First Nations participants in this research have also indicated a need for healing within their community. The fact that the Government of Canada and First Nations have mutually acknowledged and accepted the need for healing would appear to be cause for optimism. What may be lacking at this point is a more clear definition of what "healing" might entail and how it can effectively be pursued. The challenge for First Nations and

Federal Government education planners will be to clearly define this area and work together collaboratively in developing solutions.

The Struggle for Cultural Survival.

This theme has emerged clearly from the voices and language used by students and staff to describe how imperative it is that education should be used as a means of preserving Blackfoot culture. Russell Wright reminds us that there are material, spiritual, social and artistic components of a healthy culture. Material objects become animated when people find useful purposes for those objects. Artistic culture, evident in First Nations arts and crafts "are known worldwide. . . . "spirituality is the only thing working in penal institutes and drug and alcohol programs. What we really need to work on is bringing back our social culture . . . that needs to be applied through the education system" (cited in D. Meili, 1991, p. 56). Those interviewed spoke of "cultural genocide". The concept of "institutionalized racism" was introduced to explain difficulties that students and College administrators have in being accepted as equal partners among post-secondary education institutions. Elders among the Blood tribe have recognized the difficulty of preserving their culture and have encouraged their educational institutions to begin Blackfoot emersion courses and programs. For several years Red Crow Community College has developed and offered courses to adult students in Blackfoot language and Native American Studies. The threat to Blackfoot culture is felt acutely, and yet the need for social and economic development within the context of mainstream society is felt just as acutely. An apparent paradox arises, namely, how to preserve Blackfoot culture while at the same time participating with mainstream societal institutions in education and economic development? This issue appears to be the most central tension underlying First Nations post-secondary education. The need for autonomy has been clearly stated, but so too has acceptance of the reality of existence within the framework of a larger dominant society. Is it possible that post-secondary education might be one area where this paradox could be addressed with sensitivity and creativity?

For its part, the Federal Government has recently indicated a willingness to help to preserve and protect Aboriginal culture. At the same time, economic and educational pressures may continue to move residents of the Blood reserve in the direction of assimilation.

> Respect and support for Aboriginal language, heritage and culture is an important element of a renewed partnership. The Government of Canada will work to help preserve Aboriginal languages, both as a link to our collective past and as a promise for the future of Aboriginal people. We will continue to work with Aboriginal people to establish programs to preserve, protect, and teach Aboriginal languages, and to ensure that these languages are kept alive for future generations. (DIAND, 1997, p. 7)

What is the meaning of culture for First Nations post-secondary education? Research participants, and the documents reviewed, indicate both the need and desire to preserve and protect Blackfoot culture. Students and administrators have requested curriculum modifications to incorporate unspecified aspects of culture. Unfortunately, the meaning of culture for education at Red Crow Community College remains unclear. Specific interpretations and concrete suggestions for the incorporation of Blackfoot culture into the curriculum need to be explained and clarified by education planners. What is meant by culture, and how might it be reflected within the curriculum?

Robert Leavitt (1995) and Arlene Stairs (1995) have examined the implications for First Nations culture in elementary schools. They provide a helpful framework for exploring and understanding culture within an educational context. Within their framework four aspects of culture are identified, namely; material culture, social culture, cognitive culture, and linguistic culture.

- *Material Culture* is ordinarily the sum total of 'Native Content' found in school programs. It includes the objects and skills pertinent to a people's ecology and economy

- *Social Culture* has implications for classroom interactions: How do teachers' roles fit into the patterns of personal interaction, communication, kinship organization and other relationships within the community?

- *Cognitive Culture* has implications for the organization of program content: What are the characteristics of individual and collective world-views, value systems, spiritual understanding, and practical knowledge?

- *Linguistic Culture* consists of the role of language in the community. It includes how language is used (stories, gossip, conversation, negotiation, etc.) and how language maintains individual and group identity and transmits material, social, and cognitive culture from one generation to the next.

(Leavitt, 1995, p. 126)

Each of these facets of culture are interconnected and interrelated. Unfortunately, incorporating cultural learning in many school situations has meant disconnecting significant aspects of culture so that they can be taught as separate elements added to the curriculum. Leavitt (1995), for example, points out that even where a school curriculum pays attention to social, cognitive, and linguistic culture, it is almost always from a material point of view. There has been some evidence from this research project to indicate that this might be true for Red Crow Community College, at least in respect to diploma programs brokered from mainstream colleges and universities. "Spiritual beliefs and legends, for instance, are treated as artifacts, and these, together with descriptions of kinship patterns, transportation and hunting techniques, and the names of languages, tools, and food plants, make up a static set of data . . . with few exceptions, the educational principles and practices of Native cultures are not applied in the classroom" (Leavitt, 1995, p. 127). This observation appears to be equally true for Red Crow Community College, again, at least for arts and science courses provided by outside institutions. Learning about the culture, rather than learning within the framework of a particular cultural style, runs the risk of segmenting "Native life in a non-Native way, by viewing it in English terms as a composite of specializations. This

may happen even when the medium of instruction is a Native language" (Leavitt, 1995, p. 134).

To the four definitions of culture provided above, Arlene Stairs (1995) adds the concept of ecological culture. According to her, this form of culture includes a way of passing along knowledge through observation and imitation imbedded in daily family and community activities. It represents a way of learning characteristic of many of Canada's traditional Aboriginal cultures. "Native learners typically develop concepts and skills by repeating tasks in many different situations . . . They do not traditionally make explicit verbal formulations of basic ideas or rules for success, but rather recount what they have experienced and listen to stories which present concepts and principles implicitly" (Stairs, 1995, p. 141). Recognition of this style of learning as culturally different from mainstream dominant societal learning and recognition of the five interrelated aspects of culture, raise the possibility of approaching its incorporation into the curriculum in two significantly different ways. These two ways are; to add largely material and linguistic aspects of culture to the curriculum, and/or, to establish a First Nations cultural base within the educational system and processes of learning. Stairs (1995) refers to the former activity as "Native Cultural Inclusion", and the latter as "Native Cultural Base". Red Crow Community College has many examples of the former. What appears to be lacking and what respondents may actually inadvertently be asking for is the development of a significant Native Cultural Base for the College.

Native cultural inclusion, incorporates Native language and many forms of material cultural content. The move toward a Native cultural base for Red Crow Community College would mean adding to this: awareness of the "ecological" concept of culture and learning and applying it throughout the curriculum, opportunities in daily interactions at the College to engage in appropriate cultural social processes, and opportunities through school learning activities to engage in appropriate cultural cognitive processes. These would include the concepts of spirituality and a holistic worldview alluded to by elders, staff, students, and the documents.

<u>Striving for Autonomy and Credibility.</u>

The struggle for autonomy is closely related to the theme of striving to preserve Blackfoot culture. The negative effects of colonization, as reported in the literature and confirmed in interviews described in Chapter 4, include economic and political dependence, destruction of one's culture, and a negative self-image. Having a tribally controlled community college, and in particular one that places a high value on community input and cultural relevance such as Red Crow College, should go a long way toward reversing some of the negative impact of colonization. In general, the movement toward First Nations self-government can only help the College in its own efforts to achieve autonomy and credibility as an equal among community colleges in Alberta and Canada. As recently reported in <u>The Ottawa Citizen</u> "a behind-the-scenes agenda agreed to by the Assembly of First Nations and the federal cabinet will establish a new "nation-to-nation" relationship between the government and Indians on reserves" (Ottawa Citizen, January 7, 1998, p. 1) In addition to greater autonomy generally for First Nations, being a tribally (rather than provincially) controlled college, participating as active members of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium and the First Nations Adult and Higher Education Consortium, and eventually achieving formal accreditation from the First Nations Accreditation Board, are all indicators of the significance of autonomy and credibility for Red Crow Community College. At the same time, these actions indicate how strongly College officials may resist inclusion in the Alberta provincial public college system. If Red Crow Community College is not to become a private college nor a public college, within the Provincial framework, how will it relate to other colleges and institutions as a tribal institution? In part, by exercising leadership in its accreditation and affiliation agreements with other national and international first Nations education bodies, Red Crow Community College appears to be attempting to forge its own answer to this question.

The issue of autonomy and credibility for First Nations post-secondary education is closely associated with the issue of political and economic autonomy for First Nations themselves. For this reason the Blood reserve has established Red Crow Community

College as a tribal college, and for this reason Red Crow College is pursuing accreditation through the First Nations Accreditation Board. From the perspective of the Federal Government, autonomy for First Nations is linked to its programs of devolution of control.

In its policy documents, the Federal Government speaks of "developing practical arrangements for self-government that are effective, legitimate and accountable" (DIAND, 1997, p. 4). In the process of developing these practical arrangements, the Government also acknowledges that it will be necessary for Aboriginal people to "participate fully in the design and delivery of programs affecting their lives and communities" (DIAND, 1997, p. 6). As an indication of its support for the concept of devolution, and its intention to continue this program, the Federal Government reports:

> Federal departments continue to devolve program responsibility and resources to Aboriginal organizations. More than 80 percent of the programs funded by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development are now being delivered by First Nation organizations or governments. In April 1996, the administration and funding of cultural education centres was transferred to First Nations control, and management of the Aboriginal Friendship Centre Program was devolved to the National Association of Friendship Centres. Responsibility for administering training supports has been devolved through regional bilateral agreements. (DIAND, 1997, p. 8)

Devolution appears to continue to hold a central position in the Government's policy intentions toward Aboriginal peoples. Documents show that similar arrangements to the ones mentioned above concerning Aboriginal Friendship Centres "will be considered and implemented wherever possible and appropriate" (DIAND, 1997, p. 12). In order to support this direction, the Government has also indicated that new fiscal relationships will be developed with First Nations governments, allowing them to exercise increased autonomy and greater self-reliance through the creation of expanded

new transfer arrangements. Improved fiscal relationships with the Federal Government would appear to be complimentary to the goals of a tribally controlled college such as Red Crow College.

The Struggle for Economic Support and Program Funding.

Several persons interviewed spoke about the difficulties which are currently being encountered in terms of program funding. As explained earlier, the fact that the College does not receive an annual operating grant creates significant difficulty. The details of this situation are discussed later in this chapter but as one College administrator described the situation, "we are always robbing Peter to pay Paul". In the absence of an operating grant, the College must rely on individual program grants to sustain its operations. The federal government has been reluctant to commit funds to post-secondary education other than as project grants, and, until legal disagreements over interpretations of treaty responsibility for education are resolved, the College may continue to be forced to operate "on a shoestring". Continuation of this form of economic uncertainty has a very negative impact on educational program planning and development. At the present time the College has put forward a proposal to offer a four year degree program in education. A high ranking administrator of the college admitted that if this proposal gets approved she has no idea where the College will find the money to develop and deliver the program.

It would appear that the recent promises of the Federal Government to develop new fiscal relationships with First Nations governments holds out the possibility, at least, that some of the current problems around educational program funding may be resolved.

> The government will continue to work in partnership with Aboriginal, provincial and territorial governments to further improve its fiscal relationship with Aboriginal governments and institutions. Future multi-year arrangements will establish clear funding formulas which will provide a more stable and predictable flow of revenue to facilitate program and financial planning. The government

also intends to develop a process for renewing funding agreements with its Aboriginal partners. The overall aim will be to ensure that programs and services provided by Aboriginal governments and institutions are reasonably comparable to those provided in non-Aboriginal communities.

This policy statement would appear to be very encouraging as one of the major problems identified with sustaining First Nations post-secondary education has been the uncertainty of long-term funding. Not only would the successful implementation of this policy lead to much greater stability in funding, and therefore greater stability and predictability in long-term post-secondary education planning, but also, by establishing mainstream institutions as a benchmark, would lead to a much needed improvement in resources.

Demographic Data

Among its planning documents Red Crow Community College officials have argued that there is demographic support for post-secondary education programs and facilities on the Blood reserve. Based on the demographic data in Chapter 4, taken from Frideres (1993) and Norris (1996), this position appears to be well founded. In his work Frideres points out that "status Indians and Inuit will continue to have higher growth rates than the Canadian population for several decades" (p. 129). Both authors suggest that Canada's Aboriginal population has a much younger age structure than that of the general population. Frideres points out that "Natives are aging from youth to the working age group" (Frideres, 1993, p. 143).

Also of demographic significance of the need for post-secondary education on the Blood reserve is the observation by both authors that the largest First Nations population gains in Canada have been in the prairie provinces. According to Norris (1996) British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba account for 53 percent of this population group. "Alberta's share is projected to increase from 16.4 percent to 18.6 percent" (Norris, 1996, p. 226). Furthermore, Norris points out the population of

registered Indians is projected to grow and "the registered Indian population is projected to grow most rapidly on reserves, by some 64 percent" (Norris, 1996, p. 222). Given these projections, the need for education programs on the Blood reserve, already the largest reserve in Canada, will continue into the foreseeable future.

Specifically regarding education programs, the demographic information shows that; there has been a continual increase in band-controlled elementary schools (currently 80%), most First Nations children in Canada are forced to switch to provincial schools for their secondary education (Frideres, 1993, p. 179), First Nations post-secondary education enrolment in Canada has been steadily increasing in the past two decades (from less than 1 percent to 9 percent), in Alberta between 1987 and 1990 First Nations post-secondary education student enrollments increased by 22 percent.

Surveys completed by the Alberta Department of Advanced Education have confirmed this growth trend within the province. In addition, they have shown that funding for on-reserve post-secondary education programs has been provided primarily by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), Health and Welfare Canada, Employment and Immigration Canada, and the Bands themselves. Among the programs offered on-reserve, 68% were provided by community colleges. These surveys (AAECD, February, 1991 & November, 1991) also indicate that; "funding for native education, at all levels of the educational system, tends to be inconsistent" (AAECD, 1991, p. 4), "a major issue for native students is a lack of support services" (AAECD, 1991, p. 5), "the number of native staff members . . . is not in proportion to the numbers of native students" (AAECD, 1991, p. 6), and "curriculum offered by various levels of the education system must recognize native people and their perspectives" (AAECD, 1991, p. 9).

In considering the data regarding Red Crow Community College, it may be significant to note that adult education programs have only been established there since 1986. Furthermore, College governance under its own Board of Directors was established in 1991, less than one decade ago. In this relatively short period of time the College has progressed from providing primarily Adult Upgrading, to currently offering a

very broad range of courses and programs. Correspondingly, the number of full-time students has increased from approximately 70 in 1991 to 392 in 1995. Full-time staff and faculty at the College have likewise increased from 13 in 1992 to 37 in 1996/97.

There may be some interesting parallels between the recent growth of Red Crow Community College and the general growth of community colleges in Canada during the 1960's. According to Dennison and Gallagher (1986) there were at least five major reasons, almost four decades ago, for this growth in Canada. These included; first, a rapidly increasing number among the eighteen to twenty-four year old segment of the population, second, the impact of scientific and technological change placing new demands on the workforce, third, a rejection of the previous practice of importing rather than training skilled workers, fourth, public acceptance of the community college as "full partner in the spectrum of American post-secondary education" (Dennison & Gallagher, 1986, p. 14), and fifth, the injection of eight hundred million dollars into post-secondary education over a ten year period. Similarly, as the demographics have shown, there has been a rapid increase among the number of eighteen to twenty-four year olds among First Nations and on the Blood reserve. The impact of changing technological demands on the workforce continues to be a factor throughout society and has certainly been acknowledged by students at Red Crow College. This likely accounts for the large number of students currently enrolled in computer science classes at the College. Rejecting the traditional (pre-1960) Canadian practice of importing skilled workers could be viewed as this First Nation's response to colonization. Similarly, directions contained in economic and education planning documents for the Blood reserve indicate a strong desire to develop the skills and abilities of their own workforce. To a large extent this effort may represent the emerging influence of de-colonization efforts in First Nations communities. The fourth factor, acceptance of community colleges as full partners, is a very real and immediate influence which will be analyzed in greater detail later in this chapter. Red Crow Community College has certainly made significant gains in this area in terms of transfer arrangements and acceptance of course for credit by mainstream institutions. However, the struggle for credibility and accreditation continues as a major

theme for this institution. The fifth factor, injection of large sums of money, remains a major problem for Red Crow College. This will also be discussed further in this chapter, but suffice it to say that at this point drawing parallels between the development of mainstream community colleges in the 1960's and the development of Red Crow Community College in the 1990's breaks down. First Nations community colleges have not received large infusions of federal and provincial money. On this very important issue alone the continuance and survival of this College is threatened.

Reviewing the stated goals and objectives for Red Crow Community College reveals some interesting trends. There appears to be a high degree of consistency between the goals and objectives of the College and the goals originally outlined by the National Indian Brotherhood in 1970 in its document "Indian Control of Indian Education". This connection can clearly be made to the proposal by the College for the development and implementation of a Bachelor of Education degree specifically designed for First Nations students who will eventually teach First Nations children in First Nations communities. If approved, this proposal would continue the vision of providing not only for "local control" of education, but also for the preservation of First Nations culture. Another trend which emerges from Red Crow College is the commitment to viewing and responding to education and economic development as mutually dependent processes for community development. Not only do tribal planning documents reinforce this relationship, but the recently approved Cooperative Education program would appear to demonstrate the commitment of the College to both education and employment.

In addition to reflecting a comprehensive approach to education and a rigorous attempt to identify and respond to community interests, the College appears to have a tendency to view adult continuing education as integral to College operations and integrated with, rather than segregated from, academic programs and activities. Some mainstream community colleges may have a tendency to regard these activities as mutually exclusive. At Red Crow Community College instructors and staff have reported that they spend as much as 100 hours per week in community related activities. Projects

such as the Farm Labourers Training Course, the Community Garden Program, and development of the AIHEC Field Museum Project are clear examples of how the community and the College are interrelated and interdependent. The concept of these activities as somehow part of a separate "continuing" education program does not appear to exist.

A further observation of the goals and objectives of the College is; while they include some items necessary to provide direction for the management and administration of the institution, they also contain many statements which reflect what Eisner and Vallance (1974) would describe as "self-actualizing" and "social reconstruction" intentions for education. In regard to self-actualization, the goals speak of engendering; a "sense of identity for all", "Native people's self-respect, self-esteem, and pride", "trust in their personal and collective abilities", "lifelong holistic personal growth and development", and "Blackfoot language to install hope" (RCCC, 1997, Orientation brief 1995/96, p. 20, 21). Statements reflecting the social reconstruction goals for education include an appeal to "plan, implement, and manage tribal determination in education", "increase . . . choice and involvement in shared . . . educational/training endeavors", "construct a plan of action to provide shared experiences between/among diverse groups on the Blood reserve and in the surrounding areas", and "to provide culturally relevant pre and in-service training for professionals" (RCCC, 1997, Orientation brief 1995/96, p. 20, 21). The themes of self-actualization and social reconstruction emerge throughout all of the data gathered for this project and will also be analyzed further in this Chapter.

Key Informant Interviews

Among the key informants interviewed, members of the Board of Governors, like other sources, raised concerns about the lack of financial resources provided to support the College infrastructure. Members of the Board appear to share very positive perceptions about the College and provided a great deal of positive feedback about College programs. Members of the Board also appear to be strongly committed to the autonomy of the College, both within the Blood community as well as within the larger

Provincial context, citing the need for centralizing educational activities at Red Crow College and the goal of eventually offering its own degrees. Lack of formal accreditation was seen as an obstacle to program development and a potential threat to College autonomy. Like members of the faculty and staff, College Board members expressed strong concerns about the survival of Red Crow Community College.

College administrators and strategic planners echoed many of the same concerns raised earlier. In addition, their comments clearly demonstrate how, from their perspective, issues of colonization and racism still operate within First Nations educational experiences.

An alternative possibility to the concerns raised by this group about threats to the continuance and survival of the College may in part be explained by examining the life cycle of the institution. It is still very early in the development of the College and its programs and as such it is not surprising that administrators should be preoccupied, somewhat, with issues of becoming and existing. Once established as an institution, the normal course of events would see a transition to issues that might relate more to program maintenance, accountability and possibly expansion. While in part these might reflect issues appropriate to the life cycle of the institution, there can be no denying that uncertainty concerning political autonomy and financial support contribute to the urgency of these concerns. In this regard, the importance of being a tribally controlled College is clearly a reflection of attempts to achieve greater security as well as autonomy and a sense of institutional self-efficacy.

As indicated in the previous section, administrators interviewed also regarded the promotion of learning Blackfoot language and Blackfoot culture as an important aspect of survival. This particular goal acknowledges the fact that the destructive aspects of the assimilation agenda of the past are still operating with negative consequences for First Nations of today. Preservation of language is essential to the preservation of culture, and preservation of language and the promotion of culture are seen as integral to the functions of Red Crow Community College. Influences of the past and the goals of self-actualization and social reconstruction are intertwined, interrelated and expressed in

the living culture of the College. The realities of this interconnectedness are seen in statements about College goals and objectives mentioned earlier, in the imperative from Blood tribe elders that Blackfoot emersion programs be started, and in the advice from an instructor who suggested that "it is extremely essential that the first part of every course had to deal with their past history with residential schools". Another individual referred to this situation as a task of "educational repair", and suggested that it is critically important that prospective students should come to a valuing of education and a realization that unlike their past experiences, "education is not bad!" All those interviewed agreed that education could function as the mechanism for counteracting colonization and that education is "critical if we're going to really get a sense of self determination and control our own destiny" Again, the socio-economic and political intentions of this community appear to be interrelated and interconnected with past/present educational experiences and goals of self-actualization and social reconstruction.

Information provided by those interviewed is not without its contradictions. Like the study of the Native Education Centre in Vancouver completed by Celia Haig-Brown (1995), these contradictions are to be viewed not as inconsistencies in logic, but rather as dialectics. "Dialectics examines all phenomena as part of the world of interaction, motion, and change" (Haig-Brown, 1995, p. 234). In her book she regards contradiction as being at the heart of dialectics, and suggests that "it is an attempt to acknowledge the fluid existence of all things and to talk about things in ever changing contexts" (Haig-Brown, 1995, p. 236). From this perspective, then, the fact that there are contradictions between what one and another person or what one and another document say, (or even between what one person says at this time and then at another time) should be viewed as an expression of inter relatedness. In any event, the very identity of Red Crow Community College appears to be centered around the dialectic tension within those forces simultaneously impelling and restraining participants toward and away from assimilation with dominant society.

Among the contradictions expressed are the dialectic tensions between: assimilation and autonomy, becoming educated in mainstream institutions and maintaining one's traditional culture, receiving financial support and being self-governing, and, federal government treaty obligations for First Nations education versus provincial government constitutional responsibility for education. Similarly, there are driving forces moving First Nations toward assimilation with dominant society, toward mainstream Euro-American culture, toward economic and political dependency, while at the same time feeling restrained by traditional concepts of culture and community.

Just as the concept of dialectical tension accepts contradiction as essential and necessary, so too, the theory of Force Field Analysis suggests that in a stable organization there are counterbalanced forces simultaneously driving the organization toward and restraining the organization from an objective. In the case of dialectics, "The concept of contradiction is required in order to stress that such concrete opposition is not external and accidental to things, but rather essential and necessary: it is internal to things and part of their nature" (Haig-Brown, 1995, p. 237). Likewise, driving and restraining forces are suggested to be integral to the operation of organizations, in this view, seeming stability in a social system is "the result of opposing and countervailing "forces" that continuously operate to produce what we *experience* as stability. Change occurs when the forces shift" (Kettner, Daley, & Nichols, p. 105). Referring to the writing of Mao Tse-tung, a helpful description of both concepts in operation is presented by Celia Haig-Brown. "It is so with all opposites; in given conditions, on the one hand they are opposed to each other, and on the other they are interconnected, interpenetrating, interpermeating and interdependent, and this character is described as identity" (cited in Haig-Brown, 1995, p. 237). Perhaps this view of First Nations identity can be accepted as holistic.

Again, the central dialectic tension identified in this particular case study appears to reside in the inherent forces simultaneously impelling and restraining adult students toward and away from assimilation with dominant society.

Many of the difficulties facing First Nations education are attributed to experiences of colonization and policies which have encouraged assimilation. While this may well be the case, Albert Memmi (1991) clearly pointed out that assimilation and colonization are contradictory goals. Colonization, in his words, exists for the economic exploitation of the colonized. Assimilation attempts to integrate and incorporate one culture or group into another more dominant culture or group. If assimilation succeeds the colonial exploitation of one group by another can no longer occur. There would no longer be a separate colonized group to exploit. This is not to say that exploitation would no longer exist in a diverse multicultural society. Class distinctions and socio-economic processes of marginalization will likely always encourage the exploitation of one group by another. The dynamics of exploitation would of necessity change, no longer justified by a philosophy of colonization. While this may be the case it does not change the fact that both assimilation and colonization have had a harmful impact on First Nations culture. Nor does it change the fact that both practices have been imposed unilaterally, without consultation or collaboration, and against strong opposition from First Nations communities. Nor does it contradict the suggestion by one person interviewed that the purpose for assimilative educational policies for First Nations was to encourage them in the further colonization of their own people. While the ultimate outcomes of assimilation and colonization might be contradictory, the Red Crow Community College experience is offered as an example of how they can coexist in ever changing contexts.

Being educated has traditionally meant that First Nations students have been forced to leave their families and their communities. As indicated earlier in the review of the literature, most First Nations children in Canada are forced to switch from band controlled elementary to provincially controlled secondary schools. One would suspect that an even greater proportion of post-secondary education students must leave their home communities to pursue higher education. While this opportunity may serve to achieve certain self-actualizing goals for First Nations students, it appears to conflict with the social reconstruction goals of the community. More than one person interviewed

suggested that attendance at colleges and universities was detrimental to the preservation of Blackfoot culture for these students involved. Success at university, they argue, requires identification with mainstream values and behavioral norms. This identification becomes so strong that when graduates return to their home community they are no longer able to identify with the issues of their own people. Moreover, in the case of those who return to teach First Nations students, this identification with mainstream culture and values encourages them to impose expectations which may be neither appropriate nor helpful. Concerns raised by First Nations instructors in Chapter 4 would appear to bear out this argument. Their concerns about students being late for classes and assignments and about "poor" attendance would appear to reflect an identification with and adoption of mainstream values regarding student behaviour. Unfortunately, there also appears to have been a tendency to judge such behaviour as "irresponsible" rather than accepting the possibility that such behaviour might be quite understandable and reasonable within its own cultural context.

The contradiction between needing financial support and striving for autonomy might be viewed in a manner similar to that of a young adult maturing toward increasing independence. It can be regarded as a natural process at least as much, if not more, than a political process. As stated by Reverend Edward Ahenakew many years ago "surely the government is not thinking of being hampered by a race of ignorant and non-supporting people for all time to come" (cited in Barman, Hebert, & McCaskill, 1986, p. 12). As a result of the treaties between Canada and First Nations, the government of Canada has established a fiduciary relationship with First Nations. Just exactly what it is that the federal government is holding in trust for First Nations as a result of the treaties continues to provide employment for numerous constitutional lawyers. Nevertheless, whether intentional or not it is understandable that under the circumstances a relationship of dominance and dependency should evolve. Those interviewed have clearly acknowledged that there still exists a state of financial dependency; one which is at the same time criticized for its inconsistency and lack of reliability. Over a ten-year period during the 1960's the federal government contributed

eight hundred million dollars to the development of community colleges within the framework of relatively autonomous provincial governments. Why should it not now do likewise for the development of First Nations community colleges within the framework of relatively autonomous First Nations communities? In viewing the right to Aboriginal self-government in relation to the right to self-determination, Patrick Macklem (1995) argues that:

> Qualified groups ought to be free to determine their collective political future, and if a particular group is of the view that separate political institutions are necessary to protect communal difference, it ought to be free to design institutional arrangements that attempt to secure such a result. Viewing the right of Aboriginal self-government in these terms involves a recognition that Aboriginal forms of government are necessary to secure conditions required for the expression of group identity. This in turn involves an implicit acknowledgment that Canadian political institutions have failed and will continue to fail Aboriginal people in this regard, despite any possible future reforms that seek to ensure greater Aboriginal inclusion. (Macklem, 1995, p. 28)

A related issue of financial concern has to do with funding for post-secondary education students. At this time the federal government continues to deny treaty responsibility for adult education. Representatives of the federal government have adopted the position that treaty commitments for First Nations education extend only to children. Needless to say this position is contested by First Nations. The Post-Secondary Student Support Program handbook for Red Crow Community College states "we recognize that post-secondary education is a Treaty Right" (RCCC, 1995, Post-secondary student support program: Program handbook, p. 4). The students are caught in the middle. Because of the cap which has been placed on the total amount of money available and because money from this resource is allocated solely on a per capita basis to different bands, First Nations like the Blood reserve who strongly encourage and

extensively use post-secondary education actually end up having less money to grant to individual students. The more people who use it, the less there is to go around. Whether intended or not there is a danger that this could become a disincentive for adult post-secondary education.

A further complexity of this theme relates to the question of who should have responsibility for First Nations adult post-secondary education. As mentioned earlier, the Federal Government has obligations toward education established within the treaties. Constitutionally, in Canada the provinces are responsible for education in general. More recently First Nations have indicated a willingness to take responsibility for education of their people as an obligation of self-government. Through its current policies of devolution, the federal government appears to be willing to divest itself of responsibility for First Nations education but appears to favour an arrangement where the provinces would accept greater responsibility. First Nations appear to be hesitant to enter into a relationship with the provinces which would see an erosion of their autonomy and a loss of the protections afforded them by the treaties. Provincial departments of Education and Advanced Education appear to favour the traditional assimilationist approach to First Nations education. In the face of federal government policies of devolution, consistent with striving for greater autonomy, and possibly to stave off Provincial Government incursions, First Nations education leaders have established their own policies and procedures for the accreditation of First Nations institutions and programs.

Interviews specifically with program coordinators and Arts and Science instructors related less to political issues and far more to problems and concerns about the day to day management and delivery of programs and courses. Because they are directly responsible for informing prospective students about educational programs and advising them in respect to course selection and transfer opportunities to other educational institutions, program coordinators more than others may be called upon to help students walk the fine line between assimilation and autonomy. To varying degrees instructors who have taught at Red Crow College have accepted responsibility for modifying mainstream material to accommodate culturally relevant learning. Some

instructors with extensive teaching experience and familiarity with First Nations who were interviewed willingly approached this objective in apparently thoughtful and creative ways. Those instructors who appeared to modify their courses less to accommodate Blackfoot culture, were from a mainstream institution and were also relatively new to Red Crow College and the Blood community. Based on the interviews it appears that instructors and coordinators alike have attempted to respond to student crises and issues with sensitivity and support. In fact, a concern raised by one of the coordinators had to do with the fact that a great deal of her time was spent providing personal support to students who were experiencing an almost overwhelming amount of difficulty. Other input received from instructors and coordinators relates to themes already identified elsewhere, such as; acknowledging the value of having post-secondary education available locally, the importance of accreditation for the College, the manner in which post-secondary education at Red Crow has contributed to student self-confidence and self-esteem, and the value of peer support available in a First Nations institution.

Information obtained from participation at the College annual planning retreat provided further clarification of the purposes and intentions for post-secondary education. The planning retreat is an annual event in which staff and faculty, administrators, members of the Board and the Elders Advisory Council gather to establish planning priorities for the coming academic year. On this particular occasion participants considered how the results of the recently completed comprehensive evaluation might influence the stated purposes of the College, how the goals of the college should be prioritized, and general recommendations concerning future directions for Red Crow College.

This planning session appeared to provide an effective opportunity for communicating interests and clarifying goals among the various constituents of the College. It seemed particularly helpful to receive input from members of the Elders Advisory Committee in attendance who approached the discussions from a different, often more objective, perspective than staff participants. Generally, at this meeting members in attendance reinforced the commitment of the College to: holistic approaches

to education, the preservation and promotion of Blackfoot culture, the value of spirituality, the involvement of the community, and, continued and possibly expanded involvement for community elders.

As with other forms of data previously cited, themes relating to student self-actualization and the social reconstruction of the community emerged. In regard to the former, one of the goals identified for the College was "to provide opportunities for balanced personal growth". A statement made in respect to the role of the College in relation to the community was that it would be appropriate "to provide coordination and leadership to other reserve-based agencies".

In general, this planning activity appeared to demonstrate the strength of commitment which Red Crow College maintains in relation to the Blood Community. There was a strong sense of the College as part of, rather than separate from, the community. In this sense, Red Crow clearly demonstrates its identity as a community college. The same cannot be said for all other Alberta mainstream colleges. Mount Royal College in Calgary, for example, quietly deleted the word "community" from its title several years ago. Throughout this planning activity, Red Crow Community College consistently demonstrated its openness to community input and its willingness to attempt to respond to perceived community educational needs. Blackfoot culture and learning in general place highly among the values of the College, as does acceptance by the College of its responsibility for community development. Consistent with First Nations culture, the College has a strong commitment to the holistic growth and development of its students.

Instructor Correspondence and Evaluations

Among the concerns raised in their correspondence by instructors were indications that many students entering post-secondary education programs may be lacking in learning skills and sufficient emotional maturity to deal effectively with personal crises and the stress of higher learning. Their concerns appear to be motivated out of an awareness that many individuals and families living on reserves are exposed to

severe emotional problems, and many students entering post-secondary education do so without senior high school matriculation. While this situation may be gradually improving on both counts, none-the-less the realities of life on the reserve can be emotionally debilitating. Rather than using these apparent deficits as a mechanism for screening out educational program applicants, might it not be more reasonable to take into account this aspect of student background and attempt to develop life skills and learning skills programs and activities to support students throughout their studies?

Part of the difficulty in student progress and completion may relate to the fact that student performance is being viewed through the eyes of mainstream society educational standards. Most, if not all, instructors at Red Crow College have graduated from (and consequentially been socialized by) mainstream educational institutions. There is a tendency among educators to teach in a manner similar to that in which they were taught. It is not surprising then, that instructors would have a tendency to view student performance from a perspective of mainstream values and expectations. It would appear, for example, that concerns raised about levels of student maturity reflect a tendency to view emotional development and personal crises as potential impediments to academic progress. If so, this might reflect a tendency to value academic (intellectual) learning more highly than emotional, artistic, or cultural learning. A holistic approach to education, it is assumed, would have a tendency to value each form of learning more evenly. In short, the attitudes inherent in these instructor initiated concerns, however well-meaning, might be viewed as another example of neo-colonization in which dominant society values are once again being imposed upon a minority group.

A further and related complication in expectations regarding student performance has been the fact that many programs have been funded through CEIC (Canada Employment) funding. Student attendance is a condition of continued funding support by CEIC and in many cases the responsibility for tracking attendance has fallen to College instructors. While this is a standard government funding requirement for all educational institutions, it places conflicting expectations on both students and instructors. Some instructors have expressed resentment about having to collect

attendance information in order to satisfy what appear to be bureaucratic requirements. A similar dilemma is described by the Native Education Centre in Vancouver:

> As a result, an emphasis on the requirement for regular attendance as a sanctioned constraint on individual judgment and circumstances has led, at times, to considerable distress on the part of both staff and students. Many people thought attendance should be the responsibility of the student. In other post-secondary institutions, this is usually the case, although in some upgrading programs there are financial-support deductions made for days missed. . . . Some people were concerned that the enforcement of attendance was taking precedence over the accommodation of the needs of First Nations people and their personal and community responsibilities. (Haig-Brown, 1995, p. 241)

Similar concerns were discussed at the Red Crow Community College planning retreat. The issue of whether poor attendance is an indicator of irresponsible student behaviour, and therefore needing corrective action, or whether it is the consequence of unavoidable social responsibilities and/or problems was discussed, but remains unresolved.

Overall, the evaluations done by the students of their instructors display a very positive regard for their learning experiences. Students spoke very positively about the value of learning, in general, as well as the value of specific courses and specific course content. Given that their courses were brokered on-site by mainstream institutions, this may speak very positively about the potential for establishing cooperative and collaborative programs and activities between institutions, at least from a student perspective. It likely also speaks very highly about the motivation and skills of individual instructors. In any event, student comments clearly indicate that brokered programs and partnerships can be even more meaningful; if the working relationship between institutions and programs is clarified, if programs and instructors are responsive to and

incorporate First Nations issues and concerns, and if instructors employ diverse teaching methods and materials.

Focus Group Discussions and Student Surveys

Both of these sources of data spoke to the overall value of education and the place which Red Crow Community College holds in respect to facilitating student access to post-secondary education learning opportunities. Student comments about their instructors, courses and programs were generally positive, and students particularly emphasized how beneficial it was to have this educational facility in their own community. Student comments did not raise alarms about the possibility that education might be moving them in the direction of assimilation. It is possible that they might not have been aware of this issue, or that they might be accepting of it, or perhaps the emphasis which the College places on Blackfoot language and Native American Studies courses has served to counteract the threat of assimilation. The effect of this cultural awareness on students when they graduate from Red Crow College and enter mainstream institutions away from home remains to be seen. Will future graduates returning to teach their own people be better prepared than their predecessors to reintegrate into their home community? Will they be more sensitive and responsive to new students following in their footsteps? An important factor pointed out by the student survey conducted as part of this research is the large percentage of graduating students who intend to go on to further education. Although one should be cautious about generalizing due to the small number of student respondents, still, 76% of those surveyed indicated that they would be continuing post-secondary education either immediately or after a period of employment. For this group of students, issues of assimilation versus community and cultural reintegration will probably be very real.

Red Crow Community College Documents

One cannot help but be impressed by how numerous, extensive and well-developed are the planning documents for the College. Given the apparent lack of

resources for administrative support, this would appear to be a significant accomplishment. The quality of College documents most likely speaks to the motivation and dedication of Red Crow Community College staff and administration.

Data in this section was organized into categories consistent with the broad divisions related to the research rationale and problem statements outlined in Chapter 1. These statements included a commitment to examine intentions for First Nations post-secondary education in relation to social, economic, cultural and political influences.

As a reflection of the manner in which the College embodies social intentions for post-secondary education, the documents indicate an awareness and sensitivity to demographic realities, and a comprehensive attempt at determining community perceptions of educational need. In addition, the involvement of the College in the community and its commitment to the overall development of the Blood community appear to reflect a constructive melding of current practice with traditional cultural values. Statements about contributing to the "total development of the Blood Tribe and its members" and of improving the status and quality of life through education of individuals currently receiving social assistance, would suggest a very strong sense of social responsibility. Related to this, student admission policies appear to be enabling rather than restricting. That is to say that rather than rigorous screening mechanisms to exclude potential students, Red Crow College offers post-secondary education to many students. They do not quite operate with an "open door", but the College does attempt to provide educational opportunity to as many students as it can, subject to budget and space limitations. In addition to the Arts & Science/University transfer program, the programs in Adult Upgrading, University College Entrance Preparation, Life Skills and Cooperative Education each reflect attempts at better preparing students for the challenges of post-secondary education. Correspondingly, student comments reflect a deep appreciation for the opportunity to develop their interpersonal and communication skills. The emphasis on interpersonal and communication skills may also reflect the self-actualization theme, and a corresponding consistency between student and College goals.

Valuing of traditional Blackfoot culture emerges clearly from the documents as an intention for post-secondary education at Red Crow Community College. Through its initiation of Blackfoot Language and Native American Studies courses and numerous community activities the College actively encourages students to embrace their culture. As reported by one of the students: "On no other campus can you be so in touch with your own community's traditions and know the importance of them. There is indeed something special about them."

The importance of education to the preservation of culture through the transmission of ethnic identity is reinforced by Edward Hedican in his examination of applied anthropology in Canada. "For Aboriginal people in Canada the educational system has been a major source of the interrelated problems of cultural dissonance and conflicting expectations" (Hedican, 1995, p. 216). He continues further to state;

> For many Aboriginal people the real problem in countering the divisive effects of cultural discontinuities is one of reconstructing a positive ethnic identity. . . . In this sense, when Aboriginal people put forward claims to exert more control over educational institutions it is a sociopolitical act, since these are also claims to control the construction and reaffirmation of their identity" (Hedican, 1995, p.217).

James Youngblood Henderson reinforces this position by asserting that "Aboriginal control of education has always been a customary right. Education was not a separate function but a comprehensive experience in all families. Often, the unified educational experience is referred to as 'culture'. Aboriginal control of those experiences called education in modern society has always been an integral and inherent part of First Nations culture and has always been essential to the physical survival of First Nations" (Youngblood Henderson, 1995, p. 246). Eber Hampton states the case even more strongly;

The educator who sees education as culturally neutral is similar to the spouse of an alcoholic who denies alcoholism. . . . It is understandable that the educator with a self-concept tied to the ideal of helping children, with preparation that does not include multicultural competence, with a curriculum that ignores or systematically distorts the culture of his or her students, and with unresolved personal issues of racism and ethnocentrism could not recognize the extent to which education is both culturally bound and actively hostile to Native culture. (Hampton, 1995, p. 36)

The intentions of the College toward the preservation and promotion of Blackfoot culture appear to be highly consistent with the statement of philosophy of the First Nations Accreditation Board and combine this goal with the concept of self-actualization in the second article of that statement: "To actualize the mental, physical, emotional, spiritual and social well-being of our people by preserving and reinforcing First Nations culture, practices and teaching" (First Nations Accreditation Board Statement of Philosophy n.p.). The intentions for post-secondary education appear to be very much as a means rather than as an end.

An important distinction to be made concerning the economic intentions for post-secondary education at Red Crow College, is that the College and the Blood Tribe Chief and Council view economic development and educational development as complementary and mutually dependent functions. The current Economic Development Plan for the Blood Tribe states that "Education is a top priority for the reserve".

The demand for Red Crow College programs will grow with the need of the present and future population for academic upgrading to meet entrance levels for vocational and professional programs and with the economic development requirement for pre-employment job related training. . . . In the long term Red Crow College will face an increased demand for a wide range of post-secondary

programs to be available on the reserve. (RCCC, 1996, <u>Long Term Strategic Plan</u>, n.p.)

From the point of view of an education program administrator it is refreshing to see a situation where the governing authority shares a complementary philosophical viewpoint regarding education and economics. Students from another reserve in western Canada indicated in an interview that their Chief and Council have suspended post-secondary education programs and are going to keep adult education on hold in favour of putting their limited resources only into economic development. Apparently planners in that community see economic development as separate from educational development.

The political influences acting on First Nations post-secondary education have been outlined in some detail in Chapter 2. Corresponding political intentions on behalf of Red Crow College, as outlined in College documents, indicate concerns about the preservation of treaty rights, the autonomy of the College as a tribally controlled institution within the framework of a self-governing Kainai nation and the related goal of decolonization. These issues have been discussed earlier in this chapter as part of the analysis of key informant interviews. In addition to that discussion, it is important to note that the documents reviewed are consistent with information provided during interviews. This consistency would appear to support a conclusion that these concerns are not just the opinions of a few, but rather that they are shared by many constituents within this community. The documents reviewed reflect the input of Board members, elders, students, instructors and staff, and community members. All appear to be in agreement. Colonization has been experienced as harmful and a process of decolonization is deemed necessary. Decolonization requires the elimination of social and economic dependency which, if the process is to succeed, must in turn be replaced by self-reliance and autonomy. The College itself will move in the direction of becoming an accredited institution under the First Nations Accreditation Board. Assertions by First Nations of the rights to self-government and education for adults remain contested by

Canadian governments. "Federal initiatives do not necessarily spring from a sense of outrage or injustice, but from a self-serving need to off load departmental functions under the guise of aboriginal empowerment . . . the government is anxious to reduce "unnecessary" expenditures, arguing that only about 25 percent of current funding in Native Affairs is necessary to meet legal obligations" (Fleras, 1996, p. 153, 155).

Similarities With Mainstream Education

Up to this point this research project has been primarily concerned with discovering what is unique and idiosyncratic about First Nations post-secondary education. It is clear through direct observation and review of the many sources of data, that there are also many important similarities between Red Crow Community College and mainstream institutions. There are similarities of structure and function as well as similarities of goals and purpose.

The similarities in structure and function begin with the fact that, like mainstream post-secondary education institutions, Red Crow Community College is governed by a Board of Governors. The Board is charged with establishing educational policy for the institution, as well as dealing with personnel issues and maintaining fiscal accountability. Where the Red Crow Community College Board appears to differ slightly is in its association with the Elders Advisory Council and membership of an elder on the Board itself. This may be similar, in function, to community advisory committees which mainstream institutions maintain to provide input and feedback from the community to program decision making. At Red Crow College, however, this form of community input exists at a much higher level on the hierarchical ladder.

Another area of obvious similarity is in the administrative structure of the College. There is a president who, like mainstream institutions, is directly accountable to the Board of Governors. There is a registrar and a financial officer, various support staff and maintenance staff. There are program coordinators, student counsellors and instructors. The titles and job responsibilities are very similar to those of mainstream post-secondary education institutions. Where Red Crow College differs is in the amount

of staff resources. The administrative structure is hierarchically very flat. There are no vice-presidents or academic deans or department chairs. Many of the staff occupy more than one position and some are only available on a part-time basis. Everyone appears to be expected to pitch in to accomplish whatever needs to get done in spite of whatever specific job title they may hold. While the structure is essentially bureaucratic, the College appears to function in a creative problem-solving manner.

Perhaps because of its close association with mainstream community colleges and an initial dependency on mainstream post-secondary education institutions for its programs, the curriculum of Red Crow Community College is also very similar to that of other colleges in Alberta. In some instances programs are still being brokered to Red Crow College from Lethbridge and Calgary. There is very little opportunity to make significant modifications or alterations to these course offerings. Where the curriculum does differ is in the offering of culturally relative courses such as Native American Studies and Blackfoot Language. Even here, though, the structure is similar to that of mainstream colleges. Courses are organized into semesters and assignments and grades are constructed and awarded in a similar fashion. In addition, similar requirements are applied to the processes of admission and graduation.

On one hand these similarities might reflect the impact of educational colonization on Red Crow Community College. On the other, it may reflect an ongoing attempt on the part of the College to adapt and develop an effective bridge between two cultures. Out of the dynamic tension between driving and restraining forces emerges existing programs.

Student focus group discussions, evaluations of instructors and instructor correspondence and feedback also reveal many similarities in role expectations between First Nations students and their instructors and non-First Nations students and their instructors. As indicated in Table 4, high among the list of concerns raised by students in their evaluations of instruction were comments about: the need for clear directions and expectations, the value of an enthusiastic and motivating style of teaching, instructor willingness to listen and explain, and instructor willingness to take student issues into

account. It would seem most likely that similar, if not identical, concerns would be raised by non-First Nations post-secondary education students about their instructors.

Similarly, correspondence and feedback from former instructors of this group of First Nations students, presented in Table 3, raises concerns about: selecting students with a mature approach to learning, seeking students with demonstrated coping and conflict resolution skills, and the importance of matriculation level writing skills, and responsible and effective work and study habits. These concerns can be heard about students entering post-secondary education at any institution in Alberta. Clearly, there appears to be a high degree of similarity in student and instructor role expectations, at least as they relate to one another.

The Provincial Post-Secondary Context

While the structural and functional similarities to mainstream education become evident, what of the stated intentions for mainstream post-secondary education in Alberta? At this point Red Crow Community College is not controlled by the provincial government. Should the College choose to seek accreditation within the Alberta provincial system, the current context would likely become a major influence in the area of program planning and development. Recently proclaimed goals and objectives for Alberta's post-secondary public colleges potentially hold significant implications for First Nations post-secondary education.

In the document "New Directions for Adult Learning in Alberta" published in October, 1994, the Department of Advanced Education And Career Development (AAECD) has outlined its platform for the reform of post-secondary education in Alberta. As evidence of the need to reform education, the government lists: the increasing number of learners in Alberta, the changing characteristics of learners, the changing economy, a shifting emphasis in social policy, changing educational program delivery mechanisms and limited public resources. While suggesting that "Albertans are recognized globally for the excellence of their knowledge" (AAECD, 1994, October, p. 6), the document identifies four goals that were allegedly "confirmed by Albertans as

necessary to realize Alberta's vision for the future of adult learning" (AAECD, 1994, October, p. 7). These four goals have been described, broadly, as "Accessibility", "Responsiveness", "Affordability", and "Accountability". Other than the suggestion that these goals were "confirmed by Albertans", little evidence is presented in the document to support the need for their pursuit. Nor is there any indication that consultations were held with First Nations educators in the development of these goals. The goals of accessibility and responsiveness appear to reflect concerns about efficiency and improved management of public post-secondary education institutions. The goals of affordability and accountability appear to relate to the businesslike and productive allocation and monitoring of educational resources.

The goals of affordability and accountability are closely linked in Alberta's post-secondary education planning documents. In addition to the strategy of accomplishing affordable education by increasing student tuition fees, the new policy will also annually adjust the amount for student loans so that students can pay the increased fees. Spouses and parents of recent high school graduates will also be "expected to share in the responsibility" (AAECD, 1994, October, p. 14). It would seem that the intention of the Alberta government is to make post-secondary education more affordable from the point of view of taxation and the government's own budget expense column, while increasing the cost of post-secondary education to the student and his/her parents. The remaining strategies for achieving affordability also relate to the government's other goal of accountability. These strategies have to do with "rewarding performance and productivity in publically supported post-secondary education (and holding) institutional boards accountable for revising collective agreements" (AAECD, 1994, October, p. 15). In addition to the accountability measures listed under the goal of affordability, the Government has identified the following measures:

4.1   Require providers to measure and report on performance through an accountability framework to advise Albertans of results achieved in publically funded learning opportunities. . . .

4.2   Ensure that providers of learning opportunities have met appropriate
        standards of quality to protect the learner.
        (AAECD, 1994, October, p. 16, 17)

While the document states that "standards for programs are necessary to ensure
that public funds supporting learning opportunities are well spent" (AAECD, 1994,
October, p. 17). Very little evidence is presented to demonstrate that standards are not
currently in place for post-secondary educational programs nor is evidence presented to
support the contention that public funds are not currently being well spent.

There are many different aspects to accountability in professional organizations.
At Red Crow Community College, faculty members are accountable for their classroom
teaching to the students who evaluate them each semester and to the Board of Governors
through the administrative reporting lines of various program coordinators and
administrators. In addition to accountability through student evaluations, part-time
instructors who are also members of the faculty associations of other Alberta colleges
participate in rigorous pre and post-tenure evaluations. All support staff and managers
participate in annual performance appraisals. As to fiscal accountability, Red Crow
College, like all other post-secondary educational institutions, has rigorous department
and program accounting procedures. In addition, the College is required to submit
audited financial statements annually through its Board of Governors to the Blood Tribe
Chief and Council. Red Crow Community College is also frequently required to account
for its educational activities to federal bodies such as the Department of Indian and
Northern Affairs.

A subsequent document entitled "Institutional Accountability In Alberta's
Post-Secondary System" was released in February, 1995. In its critique of the current
and traditional accountability measures, the document states "most of these measures
focus on what resources are going into the system rather than on the results. There is
also a clear expectation that the system will have to do more with fewer resources.
Consequently, the time has come to look more closely at whether desired outcomes are

being achieved and to what degree students and public benefit" (AAECD, 1995, February, p. 5). All existing accountability measures, with the exception of student graduate surveys, appear to have been dismissed by the provincial government as having shortcomings because they "have been concerned with 'input' and 'process'" (AAECD, 1995, February, p. 4) In its place the Provincial Government has imposed a system of accountability which is based largely on 'output' and 'product'. The Alberta budget of 1993 emphasised "business planning". The Government's New Directions document of 1994 is described as part of the Government's business plan. The Institutional Accountability document sets the stage for how the business of education will be conducted. It seems to be consistent with the warnings of Barlow and Robertson (1994) that "the new ideology insists that there are no ideologies, only pragmatics" (preface, p. vii). Elimination of accountability measures for post-secondary education except those which deal with outputs and products, appears to move post-secondary education farther away from educational ideology and closer to the pragmatic world of profit and loss statements.

Implementation of the Government of Alberta's current output-oriented pragmatic plan for accountability, rests squarely on the concept of "Key Performance Indicators". These are now required of all public colleges and consist of annually submitted numerical calculations of "Program/Student Outcomes", "Financial Productivity", and for universities, "Research".

Program/Student Outcomes are determined by measuring: the number of students served, the program completion rate, the satisfaction of graduates, the employee success of graduates, and, the success of students who transfer from college to university. The satisfaction of graduates criteria will be determined by surveys asking whether they reached their personal goals, and their comments on their perceived quality of instruction. Graduates will also be surveyed about whether they would recommend the program to others, and whether they feel they have benefited from education specifically for the purposes of employment, transfer or personal development.

Employment success measures will focus on graduates' labour force status and the percentage who find employment related to their education and training.

Financial Productivity includes: costs per student in each program, costs per graduate for each institution, workload of teaching staff, basic components of institutional revenue, and basic components of expenditure. Basic components of revenue are reported as the percentages of revenues from government sources, tuition fees and "other" sources. Expenditures are described as the percentages of expenditure on instruction and administration.

What appears to be evident from the provincial government's documents is that accountability for post-secondary education in Alberta will be considered meaningful if it is quantitative and product-oriented in nature. Previous accountability measures that attempted to establish the quality and meaningfulness of education, for educators and students alike, appear to no longer be considered relevant. What is perhaps even more far reaching for First Nations post-secondary education is the clear implication that through its accountability measures Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development will be closely and directly involved in the development, delivery, and evaluation of programs. As Barlow and Robertson (1994) have warned, "current economic conditions appear to shape public perceptions" (p. 13). The concept of "doing more with less" continues, apparently, as a political platform rather than the result of rigorous analysis. The current policy reflects the intent attributed to Jim Dinning by Barlow and Robertson of breaking "the monopoly of public schools" (p. 222), which is consistent with the advice of former New Zealand finance minister Roger Douglas to "abandon incrementalism", base "student enrolment on individual choice", and have "public money follow the student, a consumer of services in an open private/public educational marketplace" (p. 223). The winners and losers in this post-secondary educational marketplace are now determined by Alberta Advanced Education And Career Development using their newly established Key Performance Indicators. Participation in a competitive, market-driven, post-secondary education system would clearly place Red Crow Community College at a disadvantage.

Advocates for public education such as Maude Barlow and Heather-Jane Robertson (1994) describe what they call as the "Restructuring" of education from the "Right". The impact of the "business paradigm" and the influence of what Neil Postman refer to as "Technopoly" have led to the conclusion that "we are no longer a culture, but an economy" (Barlow & Robertson, 1994, p. 143). The Southern Alberta Institute of Technology in Calgary recently announced that if businesses are dissatisfied with S.A.I.T. graduates, they will willingly take them back and retrain them. Not only will we have post-secondary education with accountability, but now also the promise of education with a warranty.

"Policy Perspectives", recently published by the Pew Higher Education Roundtable (1994), suggest that there are currently three factors bearing on the need for reform "on every higher education institution, regardless of size, control, or mission" (p. 1A). These are; Vocationalism, Technology, and Privatization. "The most visible and in many ways the most relentless pressure on colleges and universities derives from the changing nature of the American economy and the nearly singular role a college degree has come to play in providing access to good jobs" (The Pew Higher Education Roundtable, 1994, April, p. 2A). Vocationalism, as they call it, appears now to be affecting everything from the choice of an academic major to the demand for student services that focus on job placement.

As the Pew Roundtable suggests, "much more of the rising demand for higher education derives from a narrowing vocationalism that has brought with it increased public scrutiny and a new willingness to 'trust the market' to define educational effectiveness" (The Pew Higher Education Roundtable, 1994, April, p. 2A). Vocationalism and consumerism are clearly reflected among the criteria contained in the Government's Key Performance Indicators.

A great deal has been written about the potential impact of the second major factor identified by the Pew Roundtable, namely, technology. Although developments in this area are addressed by the planning documents reviewed herein, they do not relate directly to issues of accountability. The third of the major forces which they suggest is

reshaping Higher education in America is the "increased substitution of market revenues for public appropriations--and the public's growing acceptance of market mechanisms as the most practical way to distribute resources, even to the point of determining the relative value of different institutional missions" (The Pew Higher Education Roundtable, 1994, April, p. 4A).

Red Crow Community College has chosen tribal control over provincial control. within the provincial context described above is this an advantage or a disadvantage? When asked this question, the President of Red Crow College replied:

> Well, I have looked at it here. You either incorporate as a non-profit corporation or you establish a community society and apply for society status. . . . and then you have to apply to get recognized as a private college. Then you are under Provincial legislation and jurisdiction and you are at their beck and call. The other colleges had done one or the other, incorporated or formed a society . . . there was absolutely no advantage to them. They didn't receive any kind of recognition in terms of resourcing by the Provincial Government, and they didn't have any easier time articulating and affiliating. (personal interview, June 3, 1997)

A very important factor in coming to this decision appears to be the threat to the loss of autonomy and self-governance, expressed as "jurisdiction", in the apparent absence of any potential benefits. What value can there be to pursuing assimilation if the only tangible result is going to be a loss of autonomy? The argument was presented, and accepted by the College Board of Governors and the Blood Tribe Chief and Council, that it was better to maintain and strengthen tribal jurisdiction over post-secondary education. To do otherwise would appear to threaten several of the community's intentions for First Nations post-secondary education identified earlier, namely: dealing with the negative consequences of past harmful experiences with education, striving to preserve Blackfoot culture, and striving to achieve autonomy and credibility.

Chapter Six

Summary and Alternative Interpretations

<u>Background</u>

The primary purpose of this research study was to develop an understanding of the challenges currently facing First Nations post-secondary education and the development of programs offered in a First Nations community. Specifically, this project has attempted to identify and describe the social, cultural, economic, and political elements which influence the choice of programs at Red Crow Community College on the Blood reserve at Standoff, Alberta, and the impact which these influences have upon the development and implementation of those programs. The data gathered has indicated various forces and influences acting upon the education system as well as potential directions for enhancing post-secondary education through modification of curriculum, instructor preparation and attention to barriers to learning for First Nations students.

Mount Royal College has been involved in First Nations post-secondary education since 1970 when an introductory course in Human Relationships was offered to adult students at Old Sun College on the Blackfoot reserve at Gliechen, Alberta. As well, introductory courses in Human Relationships were offered to students at Eagle Point Adult Education Centre on the Stoney reserve at Morley, Alberta. Between 1989-1991 an Adult Vocational Training program prepared employees of the Stoney Education department to work as "paraprofessional" student counsellors in the school system. A two-year Social Work diploma program was offered on the Peigan, Blood and Morley reserves between 1990-1997. While these experiences all contributed in some ways to a greater appreciation for the struggle to offer post-secondary education programs to First Nations, it was the collaborative initiative occurring specifically on the Blood reserve that formed the impetus for this research project.

Red Crow Community College was considered to be well-suited for case study research because of its many unique traits. First, it operates out of a building that was

formerly an Indian Residential School, second, it is located on-site on the largest reservation in Canada, third, it operates as an autonomous institution rather than as an affiliate of a mainstream university or college, and lastly, it operates independently from the Provincial Government as perhaps the only tribally controlled college in Canada.

In addition to training programs in Social Work, diploma programs have also been developed and offered at Red Crow Community College in Business Studies and Early Childhood Education. Several individual courses have also been offered as Arts and Science options in Computer Sciences, English, Speech, Theater Arts, Psychology, Sociology, and Geography. At the same time, Red Crow Community College developed its own courses in Blackfoot Language and Native American Studies. Initiative for these educational programs and course offerings rested largely with First Nations community leaders who acknowledged the need for further education.

The original hope for post-secondary education at Red Crow Community College was to develop a modified curriculum for First Nation students, however, as work began it was clear that although financial resources were available to support program delivery, limited resources were available for development of a more culturally sensitive curriculum. Consequently, the framework for "brokered" educational programs was based on existing Social Services and Business Studies diploma program curricula from Mount Royal College in Calgary, as well as Arts and Science transfer courses and the Bachelor of Social Work degree available from the University of Lethbridge. Over time some modifications to the curriculum, largely initiated by individual instructors, resulted in movement towards a more culturally sensitive program. Many of these instructors came from within the Blood community, while others commuted from Calgary and Lethbridge.

Literature Review

Early education programs for First Nations, including missionary-operated schools, were judged as a failure by historians primarily because they were formed with the intention of assimilation (Barman, Hebert, & McCaskill, 1986; Brookes, 1991; Piwowar, 1990; Stevenson, 1991; Ward, 1990). The intention appeared to be to assimilate

Aboriginal people into Canadian/European traditions in very significant ways, including, language, culture, and religion. "The only positive outcome of over two centuries of missionary directed education for Indians was that a few Indians educated during this period were able to help their people in dealing with the whites, and the seeds were sewn for tribal higher education which would bear fruit a century later" (Oppelt, 1990, p.15). While indicative of the short term failure of these initiatives, it is clear that in a larger sense education has remained a cherished value among First Nations.

In light of the high dropout rate at elementary and secondary school levels one can predict that First Nations students are generally underrepresented in the post-secondary educational system. (Alberta Advanced Education, 1991). Also of note is that federal government policies have historically interfered with the pursuit of higher education by Aboriginal people. Prior to the 1927 revision of the Indian Act, for example, the attainment of either professional certification or a university degree by First Nations members was linked to loss of Indian status. The Indian Act of 1876, which outlined federal responsibilities for various areas of Aboriginal life, had no provisions for educational services beyond the mandatory age of sixteen. Similarly, the Indian Act of 1951 contained no provision for post-secondary education. It is likely not a coincidence that in the absence of encouragement and support, relatively few First Nations students continued their education beyond the primary and secondary school level.

Beginning around 1860 and continuing into the 1960's residential schools dominated by various Christian churches shaped the course of First Nations education. The relative merit of Indian residential schools can be gauged by the fact that "not many students attended these schools for longer than three or four years and very few attended any form of secondary education" (Brookes, p. 169).

The decade between 1960-70 was marked by a renewed attempt to use education, in the form of "integrated schools" to achieve the goal of assimilation. The findings of the Hawthorne report of 1966-67 show this experiment to be a relative failure as "only 12 percent of Indian students were in their proper age-grade, with the average Indian child

being 2.5 years behind the average non-Indian student. It also confirmed a 94% dropout rate for Indian students" (Brookes, p.171).

In 1972, the National Indian Brotherhood, in an attempt to reverse the trend toward assimilation, developed an education policy based on the need for local control of education, more relevant school curriculum, special teacher training in Indian education, and improved school facilities. While significant advances were made in the area of extending local control and a more relevant school curricula to the elementary and secondary school system, post-secondary education lagged behind. The issue of support for post-secondary education as a Treaty right of First Nations arose during 1987 through 1989 as a result of attempts by the government to revise and severely delimit its post-secondary student support program. A unilateral policy decision was made to operate the existing program under a fixed annual budget, regardless of program demand. Following rigorous student protests, the government entered into bilateral negotiations with First Nations leaders, marking a significant shift away from the previous practice of imposing unilateral decisions upon First Nations post-secondary education. Currently, federal government financial support for post-secondary education remains a non-statutory program. The government's objectives for post-secondary education appear to have changed over the years. Initially, according to Ward (1992), the program was established to provide a means for First Nations members to access training and preparation for employment within Canadian society. The purpose for post-secondary education support has since shifted to being an initiative through which First Nations post-secondary graduates can contribute to self-government and economic self-reliance within their own communities.

Embedded in a history of oppression, assimilation and low achievement rates, the First Nations educator today is faced with the challenges of providing relevant and effective education in an environment bereft of effective role models. A body of literature on First Nations education is emerging which emphasizes the need to understand Aboriginal culture in order to develop relevant and effective education programs (Feehan, 1993; Haig-Brown, 1995; McCormick, 1995; & Ross, 1992). Some authors suggest a

partnership which rests in the ability and willingness of non-natives to acknowledge and understand how they may have promoted and encouraged, either overtly or covertly, the colonization of Aboriginal peoples and the oppression of their culture (Colorado, 1993; Kersell, 1989; Ross, 1992).

Recognition by members of the dominant society of an active and responsible First Nations ownership of educational issues appears to be growing "Aboriginal people have developed an Aboriginal Literacy Action Plan, which seeks federal government support for aboriginal solutions to the problem of Indian adult basic education" (Ross, 1992, p.29). The First Nations House of Learning Research Team (1995) reported "the recent political context has been one in which self-government by First Nations has been widely accepted by Canadians as an inevitable consequence of applying standards of justice and equity to a new definition of the relationship between First Nations and others" (p.163). However, they warn that self-government with its accompanying rapid changes does not mitigate against the current crisis in Aboriginal education, "First Nations education all over North America continues in a state of crisis" (p.163) primarily because of lack of policy and clear initiative for post secondary education. The First Nations House of Learning Research Team emphasizes the importance of a knowledge and information base and a technological infrastructure to support the "devolution" of control away from the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs and the enhancement of First Nations self-government. "Yet no clear policy and no clear accountability have been established by the federal government for the involvement of universities, with First Nations people, to create such an infrastructure and to educate" (First Nations House of Learning Research Team, p.164). The Research team concludes, "there is a crisis in policy. There is a crisis in personnel" (p.164).

Demographic Profile

The demographic profiles of First Nations show how distinct this population is from the rest of the Canadian population. It is a much younger, faster-growing population, with fertility and mortality levels higher than overall Canadian levels. "The

implications of aging for the aboriginal population are most pronounced for the growth of the working-age population and what that suggests in terms of the growing importance of education and job training for the future" (Norris, 1996, p. 228, 229). Information concerning population growth suggests that young adults, as a group among First Nations, are proportionately larger than the same non-Aboriginal group in mainstream society. This group of First Nations young adults are among the age group that would be deemed most likely to utilize the post-secondary education system if it was available to them. While the increasing importance of education may be evident from the demographic data, so too is the evidence of alienation from mainstream society. As James Frideres (1993) points out, many Aboriginal people survive within a "culture of poverty". Accusing dominant society of institutionalized racism, he suggests that the federal government has "neglected to consult with Natives concerning their welfare, has failed to develop and finance effective programs to assist Natives, and, at times, has actually prevented Natives from becoming organized in pursuit of their rights" (Frideres, 1993, p. 218).

Research Methodology

As a form of qualitative research, this case study represents an investigation into the ways in which planners and educational policy decision makers associated with post-secondary education programs at Red Crow College describe and act on their understandings of current local, provincial, and federal education policies. Consistent with case study research as a form of institutional analysis, no attempt has been made to form generalizations about First Nations post-secondary educational institutions. Rather, the focus is on a particular post-secondary institution in a specific community. Multiple methods have been used to examine this research subject including; key informant interviews, student focus group discussions, participant observation, and document analysis.

Case study research, and in particular qualitative case study, is described by Sharan Merriam (1988) as an ideal design for understanding and interpreting observations of educational phenomena. Considering the focus of this study, a combination of descriptive

and interpretive case study, utilizing multiple methods for examining a variety of data sources, was deemed to be appropriate in providing an analysis of this particular educational institution. Sharan Merriam (1988) has pointed out the strength of the case study approach and its utility in striving for a sociocultural analysis of the unit of study. She also has indicated that one of the significant advantages of case study is that it allows for the inclusion of concerns with cultural context. Indeed, it is this quality which sets this type of study apart from other qualitative research. According to her, among the strengths of this form of research are that it "has proved particularly useful for studying educational innovations, for evaluating programs, and for informing policy" (Merriam, 1988, p. 33). How people feel about education and its inherent goals at a certain point in time or stage of development, and the social and physical environment in which they are functioning are important factors in the study of education and are effectively examined within what can be described as a naturalistic inquiry framework.

Problem Statement.

In response to the suggestion by the First Nations House of Learning Research Team that there is currently a crisis facing First Nations post-secondary education, this case study attempts to explore the nature of this crisis and how various forces emerge as factors in developing and delivering training programs in First Nations communities. This project has examined the concerns and issues raised by participants regarding the delivery of post-secondary education programs as well as the philosophy and rationale behind the initiation of those programs. To reiterate, the original research problem guiding this study was: "What are the forces and influences currently acting upon First Nations post-secondary education? How are these perceived by participants in that system? How are these reflected among the stated intentions for First Nations post-secondary education?"

It was assumed, with support from the literature, that intentions for educational programs are developed and shaped in response to both overt and covert forces and influences which may emanate from a wide variety of sources. Correspondingly, it was

felt that organized inquiry into such a complex area of investigation would necessitate the examination of a relatively wide variety of data sources.

Data Collection.

The data sources from documents in this project were secondary rather than primary in nature. That is, they constituted documents which were originally prepared for other purposes, such as College policy statements, orientation information, and program descriptions. In addition to the data gathered from Red Crow Community College education policy documents, information was also obtained from; federal and provincial government education policy and planning documents, instructor correspondence, student evaluations of instructors and student surveys. Student focus group discussions were conducted voluntarily with students currently in the Arts and Science program, and "key" informant interviews were conducted with members of the Board of Governors, educational administration, staff and instructors.

In selecting human subjects, the researcher generally followed what Sharan Merriam (1988) and David Krathwohl (1993) refer to as 'purposive' or 'purposeful' sampling. As suggested earlier in Chapter 3, "purposive sampling is based on the assumption that one wants to discover, understand, gain insight; therefore one needs to select a sample from which one can learn the most" (Merriam, 1988, p. 48). Again, in this type of case study and with this type of sample one is not concerned with issues of "truth or falsity", but rather with the credibility of the information provided. With this in mind, interview participants were selected based on their ability to provide credible information. All of the individuals interviewed, with the exception of two of four instructors and one experienced education planner, were Aboriginal. In addition, all participants interviewed were selected because of their extensive experience with First Nations education in general, and specifically, because of their involvement with Red Crow Community College.

<u>Data Analysis.</u>

The documents chosen for analysis included; education policy documents produced by the Blood Tribal Council, Red Crow Community College, the Alberta Department of Advanced Education, and the Federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, as well as instructor correspondence and student evaluations of instruction. As Merriam (1988) pointed out "one of the greatest advantages of using documentary material is its stability" (p. 108), because it is essentially 'nonreactive' with the researcher. These assertions appear to have proven to be true in regard to this research project and this particular quality was a very helpful factor in assessing the overall credibility of data provided by participants. She also noted that "documentary data are particularly good sources for qualitative case studies because they can ground an investigation in the context of the problem" (p. 109).

As described in Chapter 3, a file folder system of categorizing document content was used similar to the method used for categorizing interview content. All data was read and reread, compared and contrasted, and an effort was made to determine areas of congruence, complementarity, and consistency, as well as possible gaps, incongruence, and inconsistencies. Focus group discussions were initially tape recorded and transcribed, and then subjected to a similar process of analysis. Using guidelines suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1981) concerning the construction and reconstruction of realities, the data was divided into categories. Using file folders, the photocopied pages were cut up and coded sections placed into appropriately categorized and labeled file folders. A great deal of the data was transferred to computer files wherein the cut and paste functions were used extensively to match common themes and ideas.

<u>Results</u>

As indicated earlier in this chapter, the document data sources reviewed in this project were secondary in nature. As such, documents and surveys were not constructed specifically for this research, but rather, an attempt was made to locate and examine relevant information from existing documents which could shed light on the current

post-secondary education programs on the Blood reserve. While this use of data is very helpful in preserving the immediacy of information, it is limited in not allowing for the customization of questions. Key informant interviews, on the other hand, were conducted specifically to achieve the purposes of this research, and as such served as an excellent means for examining the relevance and significance of information obtained from the documents and other sources.

Key Informants.

As indicated earlier, interview participants were purposefully selected on the basis of their ability to provide information and insights as a result of their extensive personal experience in the area of First Nations post-secondary education.

Interviews with key informants indicated that the goals and purposes of post-secondary education related more to issues of becoming, being, existing, surviving and continuing rather than thriving, flourishing, enhancing or expanding. While mainstream colleges may be engaged in activities directed at expanding their programs and extending their "market share" of the business of education, the energies of Red Crow Community College are directed primarily at "staying alive". Because one of the primary goals of the institution has been locally controlled education, merely existing as a tribal institution has been an achievement. "We have to overcome that resistance, even among our own people in our own community towards promoting our own institutions, our own systems, and our own business." In some ways the goal of becoming a tribally controlled college is viewed as a potential framework for ensuring survival. "It's going to mean a stronger commitment from our tribal governments and other entities within the tribe. We don't see any alternative to survival, and that's what we end up looking at is survival for us." The challenge, it appears, will be to convince not only government officials but also the local community of the value and viability of this particular post-secondary education opportunity.

Another factor related to survival is lack of protection of post-secondary education for First Nations. Currently the Indian Act protects education for First Nations children

however no provision is made in the act for the maintenance and protection of post-secondary education. Historically, the Federal government has been reluctant to commit funds to post-secondary education other than as project grants, and until legal disagreements over interpretations of treaty responsibility of education are resolved, First Nations education administrations are forced to operate "on a shoestring". Continuation of this form of economic uncertainty has a negative impact on educational program planning and development. As a consequence, students are limited by funding caps which are based on a per capital allocation formula, whereby the more that people use the funding, the less there is to go around. The Blood reserve, for example, is one that strongly encourages and extensively uses post-secondary education and as a consequence has less money to grant individual students. The current funding formula is not based on individual community use and/or need. Paradoxically, this constraint could actually serve as a disincentive to using the Post-Secondary Student Support Program.

One of the earlier goals established for Red Crow Community College at the time of its inception was the provision of adult upgrading for many potential students who had never completed secondary schooling. Many such students were unemployed and an upgrading program was viewed as one avenue toward getting a job. Another group of such students were employed, but without formal education relating to their occupation. As an example of changing goals and influences on the College, it appears that this particular objective no longer holds the central position in program planning. While adult upgrading is still an important College activity, it now must share limited resources with other existing educational programs as well as emerging programs such as the Cooperative Education program and the proposed Aboriginal Teacher Education program. During the past decade, then, Red Crow Community College has evolved from primarily an adult upgrading facility to a comprehensive college attempting to respond to a very wide variety of educational needs and interests.

In some ways the success of educating First Nations students in mainstream institutions is described as problematic to achieving the goals of Red Crow Community College and the Blood tribe. Mainstream education, it is suggested, appears to encourage

an internalized self-depracating attitude that somehow First Nations programs and professionals do not quite measure up to mainstream standards. In addition, once educated in mainstream higher education systems, graduates who return to the community appear to have lost touch with their cultural background and may demonstrate insensitivity to the struggles of current students.

In summary, the key informants interviewed have identified the continuation and survival of Red Crow Community College on site as a tribally controlled college as a major concern. Threats to the survival of the College are seen as: interpretations of the Indian Act which would absolve the Federal Government of responsibility for post-secondary education, limited and inconsistent financial support for on-going programs, high student demand for adult education which is creating an almost unbearable financial burden on the College, changing student educational interests, and the internalization among students and faculty of competing values adopted as part of an assimilation process with mainstream society.

Board of Governors and Administrators.

Interviews with the Board of governors revealed concerns about a wide range of areas including: financial performance, student selection and enrolment, the college structure for governance and management, and support services including the physical plant and equipment.

Generally, the goals identified concerning post-secondary education at Red Crow College included; first, the survival of the College and its programs, second, the preservation and promotion of Blackfoot culture, third, overcoming or "healing" from the negative educational experiences of the past, fourth, preparation of students for higher education and future employment, and fifth, the promotion of social, economic and community development.

Coordinators and Instructors.

Interviews specifically with program coordinators and instructors focused less on policy issues and more on problems and concerns about the day to day management and delivery of programs and courses. Because they are directly responsible for informing prospective students about educational programs and advising them in respect to course selection and transfer opportunities to other educational institutions, program coordinators appeared to feel very responsible for helping students walk the fine line between assimilation and autonomy. Program coordinators often found themselves in the role of personal counsellors while students struggled with individual and family crises. Coordinators also functioned as academic advisors and played a key role in assisting students in the selection of courses and programs. A major challenge for program coordinators was to become familiar with the entrance and transfer requirements of a variety of colleges and universities in Alberta, British Columbia and Montana, where students were most likely to apply for admission. Based on interview data, it appeared that program coordinators have attempted to respond to student issues with sensitivity and support. In fact, a concern raised by one of the coordinators was that too much of her time was taken up with providing personal support to students in difficulty. Students valued the supportive relationships with their fellow students and instructors and utilized this network to integrate non-native theoretical information with their experiences as First Nations learners.

To varying degrees instructors accepted the responsibility for modifying mainstream material to accommodate culturally relevant learning. In essence, some First Nations instructors appeared to attempting to create a culturally sensitive curriculum through dialogue (often in their own language) with community members who were fellow students. To enhance the quality of instruction, recommendations from instructors and coordinators included:

- Developing an orientation program for new staff and instructors

- Organizing workshops for current and former instructors with the goal of sharing information on issues of common concern and suggestions for successful teaching strategies
- Developing a handbook for instructors outlining expectations of the college, a description of the educational programs, classroom management suggestions, guidelines for structuring assignments and examinations, grading and attendance policies.
- Making decisions about course offerings, which allow ample opportunity for instructor input into course development and preparation.
- Developing policies related to lateness, absenteeism and grading criteria.

Student Focus Group Discussions.

Student focus group discussion data was provided by two groups of students specifically selected for this project. Initially, students were asked to comment on the manner to which their program was meeting their expectations. Across all groups, students generally reported that their program successfully met their expectations and indicated that the education was helpful in preparing them for future program entrance requirements as well as employment. In addition, students suggested that their particular programs were helpful in re-engaging them in educational processes and in helping them to address personal issues. They also suggested that increased support from instructors and school counsellors could enhance their learning.

The second question asked students to discuss the ways in which they felt they might have gained from their program. Students reported gains in the areas of; improved learning skills, greater understanding of socio-economic and political issues, improved communication skills, ability to function with greater independence, and improved problem-solving and conflict resolution skills. As one student described it, "we need to bring our education back home . . . it's a very important issue to look at because we are Native people and the way we feel and the way we think and do things are totally different. You know that's something that needs to be recognized and respected."

The third area of inquiry related to positive perceptions of their programs. Students responded by citing instructor and tutor support, the opportunity to establish new friendships and gain peer support, small class sizes and the availability of individualized help. "If there are problems and conflicts and what not, you have somebody you can talk to . . . if you had to go to university you will probably never get to say 'boo' to your instructor, you are just a number." Students also mentioned the convenience of the location as an asset, as well as activity-based learning such as field trips and role playing exercises. Several students spoke very positively about their Blackfoot Studies courses. Interestingly, many students indicated that this course in particular provided many insights into their own culture, of which they had been unaware.

Students reported relatively fewer negative aspects about their programs. In response to this question students identified; the need for up-to-date program information, more guidance, more adequate facilities, more time to complete assignments, and, a more effective College response to poor attendance. The latter point was perceived as negative in-as-much as it interfered with the ability of those in attendance to engage in activity-based learning.

Suggestions for improving their programs basically fell into five categories: first, a new and/or improved building and facilities, second, higher expectations of students, third, increased financial support, fourth, learning skills support, and fifth, more effective program planning and management. Additional general comments reinforced the need for specific facilities and more educational program variety, as well as positive comments about the opportunity to learn about Blackfoot culture with other First Nations students.

As mentioned earlier, in Chapter 3, this component of the research was conducted at the same time as the College was engaged in a comprehensive evaluation. As a result, in spite of verbal explanations, it is possible that respondents may have confused the two activities and misinterpreted the role of the researcher. With that caution in mind it is important to note that focus group participants viewed Red Crow Community College as an important educational resource. Some participants had previously attended mainstream higher education institutions in Edmonton, Calgary and Lethbridge. Most of them

indicated an intention to return to mainstream educational institutions at some point in the future. Red Crow Community College was viewed by them as an integral part of their ongoing education. From a student perspective, the College appears to be highly valued as a home base where continuing students can return periodically to take additional university transfer courses in a comfortable and supportive learning environment.

Correspondence From Previous Instructors.

Instructors who previously taught in the program provided unsolicited feedback about their teaching experiences with First Nations students in the Social Work diploma program. Concerns raised related to four general areas; student screening and preparation, classroom management, student maturity and personal issues, and, student learning issues.

With respect to student screening/preparation, instructors suggested that in the future students should be selected for the program on the basis of; a mature approach to learning, effective writing skills, conflict resolution and coping skills, effective work and study skills, and, demonstrated responsibility.

In terms of classroom management, instructors expressed concern that class sizes were too large (over 30), and therefore less time was available for providing help to individual students. Examples of student maturity and personal issues cited by instructors were; inability to deal with minor conflicts, inability to keep commitments (lateness for classes and assignments), the need to balance personal and professional lives, the need to learn conflict resolution skills and to deal with personal issues, and, the lack of access to personal support systems.

The main area where their concerns may differ from mainstream colleges, appears to be in the identification of potential deficits in the area of conflict resolution and the ability to cope with personal crisis. This is not to suggest that First Nations students are less able to cope with crisis than non-Aboriginal students, but rather that First Nations students are likely to be faced with far more serious and overpowering social problems and issues than non-Aboriginal students. This is confirmed by the literature which also

suggests that the need to survive and deal with emotional and physical crises among First Nations students is exceedingly high.

Learning issues of concern to instructors included; difficulty integrating theory with practice, the need for improved written and verbal skills, better preparation for the realities of the fieldwork practicum, and the need to learn how to separate personal issues from professional practice. This latter item was raised as a concern particularly for students pursuing careers in education and social work.

Evaluations of Former Instructors.

The data gathered from College documents included evaluations of former instructors by students involved in the Arts and Science program. This data source is very rich in the amount of detail provided. A total of eight student-instructor evaluations were analyzed. Four of the eight were non-Native and two instructors taught courses in more than one First Nations community. In their comments, students indicated that they value teachers who are; enthusiastic and motivated, clear about their expectations, well organized, willing to listen and explain, effectively pace their teaching, provide constructive feedback, and, are available for consultation outside of class time. The personal qualities which these students reported of value in an instructor are; sensitivity to students' personal issues, a sense of humour, respect, and, an understanding of First Nations cultural issues.

Student evaluations of instructors provided overwhelmingly positive feedback about the nature and quality of the course content and curriculum. Feedback about learning revealed that this group of students appeared to be predominantly concerned about the processes rather than the products of learning. Concerns about tests and exams related to the weighting of assignments, the perceived "fairness" of exams, and the clarity of exam criteria and expectations. The subject of administrative support raised issues about; class scheduling, time constraints, attendance policies, access to learning materials and resources, and, the difficulties which resulted from changing instructors after a course had already begun.

Student Survey.

A voluntary survey consisting of open-ended questions was administered to students who had completed the Social Work and Business Studies programs to get a sense of general satisfaction toward their program. In general, the responses to these surveys indicate a positive reaction to the learning experience. Nearly half of the students who participated in these surveys cited the convenience of the location as a valuable aspect of their education. Approximately one quarter of the responses included a positive reaction to specific courses, such as English and Native American Studies, as well as a positive response to the perceived quality of instruction and instructor support. Uncertainty about program expectations and course scheduling and management were cited by approximately one quarter of the students as frustrating or difficult aspects. More than 80 percent of the students who completed the surveys indicated that the program had met or exceeded their expectations. In addition, 65 percent of the students indicated that they intended to continue their education at the completion of their training program and 11 percent stated that they intended to pursue further education after an unspecified period of employment.

Data which was derived from student input, namely; focus groups, instructor evaluations, and student surveys, raised very few overt concerns about the issues of colonization and assimilation. Other than the need for increased financial support for adult students, there were also very few comments or concerns raised by students concerning policies of the Federal Government. Some comments were made about the reluctance of some students to attend what was formerly an Indian Residential School, and some comments were made about the cultural shortcomings of mainstream education. Perhaps not surprisingly, many of the concerns and issues raised by students could be described as issues related to their immediate situation. Many comments were made about the inadequacy of the building and facilities, difficulties in accessing food and library services after hours, and the need for learning skills support. It may be a fact of life in educational institutions that the farther one is distanced from participation in educational planning and decision making, the less one is concerned about policy issues. It might also be possible

that this type of data gathering process could have been viewed as too impersonal or perhaps even threatening for sharing student concerns about assimilation and colonization experiences.

Document Analysis

The first step in the analysis of the many documents reviewed was to read them thoroughly and critically to identify common themes regarding statements of intent in respect to social, cultural, economic, and political influences acting upon First Nations post-secondary education. As with other data sources, statements relating to each of these areas were colour coded using different coloured highlighter pens. Common areas were identified, copied, separated and collected into files for further examination and comparison. It should be noted that numerous documents were available for examination and review, and that together they offered a very wide variety and comprehensive source of information. One of the many values of this form of data, as pointed out by Merriam (1988), is its stability. Information from the documents was very helpful as a mechanism for triangulation. Generally, this source of data was highly consistent with information obtained from other sources and frequently served to confirm information presented in the interviews.

Social Intentions.

Statements of intent primarily of a social nature emerged from the documents in relation to four general areas, namely; statements which described and defended the community/social need for post-secondary programs, statements which rationalized the goal of post-secondary education as one of community development, descriptions of the responsiveness of post-secondary education to community needs, and descriptions of the manner in which post-secondary education is helpful in developing interpersonal and social skills among its students.

Documents, such as the Long Term Strategic Plan and the Kainaiwa Pre-Vocational Training Initiative Proposal, clearly indicate how education is perceived as

a social need. Furthermore, demographic statistics drawn from the department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) are used effectively as justification of the need for post-secondary education programs. These documents, and information provided by the Post-Secondary Student Support Program Handbook, also indicate the relationship which is perceived to exist between the education of individual students and the social reconstruction or community development agenda. Not only is there a clear suggestion that post-secondary education will be a mechanism for community development, but the documents also seem to imply that students who succeed in their post-secondary education endeavors have a responsibility to use their education in this manner. Clearly, documents such as the Tenth Anniversary Annual Report and the Student Handbook and Program Calendar portray Red Crow Community College as the educational facility responsible for responding to adult student learning needs. Also, in relation to its reciprocal role, the documents describe many ways in which the College responds to encourage interpersonal and social skill development among its students.

Cultural Intentions.

Among the sub-categories which emerged in relation to statements of intent primarily of a cultural nature were those which were deemed to relate to three general areas. These areas included; statements which encourage a valuing of traditional culture, statements of intention to preserve and protect Blackfoot language and culture, descriptions of activities and programs which are shaped in such a way as to encourage responses deemed by the College to be culturally appropriate.

Valuing traditional culture and preserving and protecting Blackfoot language and culture are closely related goals. The documents describe the need to instill pride in traditional culture in response to the destructive consequences of colonization. Activities, such as; participation in a student exchange program with Navajo Community College, and the proposed development of a Blackfoot culture field museum in cooperation with the American Indian Higher Education Consortium, are concrete examples of how the College is encouraging movement in this direction. So too is the recent recommendation

from the elders that the community should move toward Blackfoot immersion in the elementary school system.

Virtually every document examined contained examples and descriptions of activities which have been undertaken in an attempt to preserve and protect Blackfoot culture. Educational conferences, workshops with Native language teachers, drum making workshops were but a few of the many activities cited as culturally supportive endeavors. In addition to activities designed to raise awareness and increase appreciation among members of the Blood tribe for Blackfoot culture, the documents also identified a need for enhanced cultural awareness among community institutions. In addition to encouraging greater cultural sensitivity in the post-secondary education curriculum, the documents also suggested a need to develop culturally relevant health and social services programs.

Economic Intentions.

Those statements of intent which emerged primarily of an economic nature appeared to relate to four general areas. These four areas included: indications of compatibility in tuition fees and costs between Red Crow Community College and other post-secondary education institutions, statements concerning student funding for post-secondary education, indications of the inter relatedness of economic development and post-secondary education, indications of areas of mutual financial support and financial need.

The need for improved financial agreements to ensure the continuance of Red Crow Community College and its post-secondary education programs emerges clearly from the Annual Reports and Strategic Planning documents. It is difficult to ascertain from these documents what the Federal Government's intentions are for First Nations post-secondary education. What does emerge clearly is the extent to which current programs are threatened if decision making and planning processes cannot be improved. From the documents examined, it appears that the role of the Federal Government has been to function as gatekeeper of the public purse rather than facilitator of educational

program development. By and large it appears that financial planning for First Nations post-secondary education has been done by officials of the Government of Canada without meaningful collaboration or input from local First Nations educators. The economic consequences may be dire. Rather than being applied to locally perceived educational needs, funding is provided for projects determined by Ottawa to be needed. In order to obtain any finances for post-secondary education, local First Nations education planners must submit proposals for funding for those Federally defined projects. Moreover, not every First Nations community that applies will receive funding as the Federal Government allocates project money on a proposal "competition" basis, rather than a community need basis. Many documents examined reflect uncertainty about future funding and the related threat this proposes to the long-term viability of Red Crow Community College.

Political Intentions.

In relation to statements of intent deemed to be primarily of a political nature, the documents suggested items related to the following four general areas: the interpretation of treaty rights, particularly as they relate to First Nations post-secondary education, self-determination and sovereignty, comparability of First Nations education programs with non-First Nations programs, and decolonization.

The Post-Secondary Student Support Program Handbook, in particular, takes the position that post-secondary education is a Treaty right. In addition, the Student Handbook and the Annual Reports assert the right of the Blood tribe to self-determination and autonomy. Importantly, Red Crow Community College is identified and described in the documents as "a critical institution for our struggle for self-determination and preparation for the future" (RCCC, 1996, 1996/1997 Student handbook and program calendar, p. 2). Attempts at achieving accreditation and credibility for the College can be viewed as essentially linked to the political call for self-determination and autonomy. Mainstream education systems are identified as instrumental in the process of colonizing First Nations peoples. Autonomous and accredited First Nations educational institutions

are viewed as an important mechanism for achieving decolonization. The struggle against assimilation, on the other hand, may be far more complicated. It is paradoxical that while the College is a manifestation of this struggle against assimilation, by virtue of the very fact that it opens the door to increased higher education opportunities in mainstream society, the College itself may actually be facilitating processes of assimilation. Perhaps assimilation need not be wholly an either/or dilemma. It might be possible that the solution to this paradox could come in the form of a limited type of assimilation in political and economic areas in conjunction with relative autonomy in social and cultural areas.

Conclusions.

Social, cultural, economic, and political forces were researcher constructed categories applied to the documents. In addition, out of an examination of the documents, key informant interviews and focus group discussions, the themes regarding the continuing influence of past experience, the struggle for cultural survival, striving for autonomy and credibility, and the struggle for economic support and program funding, emerged. The researcher constructed categories are relatively broad and may be generic to any society. It was not difficult to identify data which could fit into these categories. What might be significant is the manner in which they find expression within their community and cultural context. A major possible advantage of the emergent themes, on the other hand, in relation to the researcher constructed categories, is that they help to explain how the data is interconnected. They also serve to qualify the meaning and significance of the data from the unique perspective of participants in First Nations post-secondary education.

Implications for Post-Secondary Education

One of the more frequently referred to issues currently facing First Nations post-secondary education is described as a problem of uninformed or uncaring decision makers within mainstream systems. Either intentionally or unintentionally bureaucrats and politicians are perceived to have continued to press the agenda of assimilation. More recently, the Royal Commission Report on Aboriginal People appears to have done much

to bring this agenda to an end. The implications for First Nations post-secondary education are very significant. Without having to combat assimilation policies and attitudes, education leaders can focus more of their energy and creativity on building responsive educational programs which are deemed necessary to facilitate economic and community development for First Nations.

Important issues facing First Nations post-secondary education have included concerns about colonization, assimilation and racism, as well as political disagreements about the interpretation of Canada's treaties. This case study has served to confirm the significance and the impact of these issues within the context of a particular First Nations community college, and furthermore has attempted to explore and identify the nature and extent of these and other issues in respect to program development and implementation. Documents recently released (1997) by the Federal Government acknowledge their complicity in policies of assimilation. These policies and related practices, whether applied intentionally or out of ignorance, have obviously not been imaginary. Moreover, recent apologies issued by the Government of Canada suggest a willingness to move beyond former practices toward a more constructive and socially and economically healthy future for First Nations. Can those charged with the responsibility for implementing government policy do so effectively? Future success in this area, according to research respondents, can be achieved. But, success can only be achieved through programs which are constructed to incorporate collaboration and participation in decision making in meaningful, rather than token, ways.

Education leaders at Red Crow Community College, including members of the Board of Governors and administration, clearly articulated their concerns about social, cultural, political and economic issues in respect to the survival and continuation of the College and its programs. They also demonstrated both the College's and their own individual values, beliefs and assumptions about post-secondary education for First Nations. It is important that decision makers and planners of post-secondary education programs should have a clear understanding of these factors and their interrelated impact as they strive to create, transmit and embed cultural and educational goals that will

influence and shape the nature of the College and its programs. It is also essential that their planning activities be linked to a well designed and thoughtful action plan that allows for the stipulation of what Red Crow Community College is intended to be, while providing for the emergence of individual, group and community values and beliefs. The congruence, or potential lack thereof, of these cultural manifestations impacts on the fit between what exists and what is expected of post-secondary education in this community. The implications for educational decision makers centers on their ability to understand and work toward creating a dynamic post-secondary educational institution wherein the leadership processes and organizational and physical structures can accommodate various community influences and educational needs. In striving to do so educational leaders at Red Crow Community College must, at the same time, attempt to preserve the integrity of Blackfoot culture and College functions while simultaneously preparing the College to effectively bridge the gaps that exist between their institution and mainstream institutions.

This process of bridging can perhaps be facilitated by articulating clear definitions for the various facets of culture such as those identified by Leavitt (1995) and Stairs (1995). Furthermore, curriculum development to explore the implementation of a Native cultural base might serve the dual purposes of preserving Blackfoot culture while at the same time bridging the gap with mainstream institutions. So far, mainstream institutions have indicated a willingness to accept courses and programs from Red Crow Community College for transfer credit. It is possible that Red Crow College may be reluctant to move toward a more comprehensive Native cultural base, for their teaching and learning practices, for fear of putting transfer credit into jeopardy. Perhaps the time has arrived to take the risk and move the programs of the College into a uniquely Blackfoot cultural curriculum model.

Members of the Board of Governors and the administration charged with the responsibility of articulating a vision for the College and moving the College toward that future need to continue the processes that have been established of encouraging and accepting meaningful input from community members, the elders and prospective students. A great deal has been done at Red Crow Community College to empower students and

community members and to establish effective communication processes between the College and the Blood community. It would appear important that these mechanisms for involvement should be maintained and strengthened in order to ensure individual, group and community participation in setting the goals for future post-secondary educational programs on the Blood reserve.

Red Crow Community College is rich in localized ceremonies, rites, rituals, stories myths, values and beliefs. Newcomers to the institution, for example, are soon told about the ghost of the nun who is reported to roam the corridors of the building. Rituals, ceremonies and myths all serve to create an important sense of identity and boundary. Many of the educational rituals at the College reveal the basic rhythms of daily educational life. In addition, Red Crow Community College maintains a very strong sense of its history. This provides a very meaningful opportunity for the College to expand on and maximize its sense of community as well as its role as a protector and advocate of traditional Blackfoot culture.

At the culmination of the dispute between the federal government and First Nations in 1988, and 1989, concerning responsibilities and obligations in regard to the provision of funding support for post-secondary education students, it became clear that in the end the Federal Government was not willing to recognize support for post-secondary education as a treaty right. Decision making authority was not transferred to First Nations with regard to program eligibility, and the government upheld its prerogative to utilize First Nations policy input according to governmental discretion. As a consequence of the decisions made at that time there was no alteration of the fundamental political relationship between First Nations and the Canadian government. As noted earlier, some gains were made in terms of a shift away from unilateral to bilateral processes of consultation in regard to policy issues. Since that time it would appear that as a consequence of the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People and the recommendations contained therein, as well as the more recent recommendations of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, this relationship may be changing in very significant ways. Of major importance among these changes is a

commitment on behalf of the Department of Indian Affairs to take positive and constructive action to resolve long standing issues between the Federal Government and First Nations. Among the policies of the Department are a stated commitment to a renewed partnership with First Nations and a commitment to strengthening Aboriginal governance, which would include supporting First Nations in their efforts to create effective and accountable governments. In addition, the Department of Indian Affairs has stated a commitment to developing a new fiscal relationship with First Nations in order to achieve greater stability and accountability as well as autonomy and self-reliance.

The possibility of working in partnership with the federal government and the Department of Indian Affairs has very strong implications for First Nations post-secondary education. If indeed a partnership can evolve instead of the historical adversarial relationship, then it would appear that First Nations educational programs are on the verge of a major step forward. Both the Royal Commission and the Government of Canada appear willing to recognize the inherent right of self-government for First Nations. This would seem to imply very strong support for the concept of a tribally controlled community college such as Red Crow. Furthermore, progress in this area could indicate the possibility of improved financial support and acceptance of the College's attempts at achieving greater credibility, autonomy and accreditation. It would also seem to suggest the possibility of acknowledgment and acceptance of the First Nations Accreditation Board as a meaningful avenue for the approval of First Nations post-secondary education programs. Should this become the case, then it may not be necessary for First Nations post-secondary education programs to negotiate accreditation through provincial governments. Based on Alberta Provincial Government planning documents, which were analyzed in Chapter 5, and current educational policy decisions at Red Crow Community College, this eventuality would appear to be unlikely. While a great deal of effort needs to continue in order to resolve questions concerning credibility and accreditation, Federal Government acceptance of the autonomy of First Nations colleges vis-a-vis provincial colleges and institutions could only serve to strengthen the position of tribal colleges in local negotiations and agreements.

The need for a heightened awareness of and sensitivity to Blackfoot culture and First Nations post-secondary education concerns and issues appears to hold important implications for the recruitment and selection of instructors. The data gathered would also seem to suggest that in terms of instructor qualities and skills, there appear to be some characteristics which transcend cultural expectations. Feedback from student evaluations suggests that the characteristics of instructors which First Nations students deem to be important and helpful are very similar, if not the same as those characteristics and qualities which would be expected of instructors in any post-secondary education system, regardless of its cultural connectedness. This would seem to imply a need to place at least equal weight on teaching abilities and qualities, in the recruitment of potential instructors, as that placed on cultural awareness. What might well be lacking, among instructors from both cultures, is familiarity with a curriculum which incorporates a Native cultural base, and an understanding of how this can be used to transform the classroom. In the future a significant amount of curriculum development may be needed in this area.

The implications for curriculum, including teaching and learning activities structured for the classroom, would suggest that First Nations post-secondary education administrators need to allocate more resources for culturally relevant programs and learning activities. In addition, classroom instructors also need to consider ways in which they can incorporate culturally relevant learning. It would appear on the basis of this research project, at least, that it is highly unlikely that mainstream post-secondary education programs are going to be redeveloped or remodeled in major ways to fit within a First Nations cultural context. However, there are many examples where classroom instructors have been able to modify, without resistance, course content and learning opportunities. In some instances it may be as simple as encouraging greater sensitivity and awareness among instructors. In an interview with a geography instructor teaching at the College, for example, when he was asked if he was planning field trips for his students during the summer to observe and discuss local geography, he admitted that he had not given it any thought. Red Crow Community College is within sight of majestic mountains and within walking distance of several rivers and streams. To the west there are foothills,

to the east there are prairies. All of these have been essential to the history of the Blood tribe and are significant to the spirituality of the Blackfoot people. It would be a terrible shame if learning about geography only consisted of examining the geography contained within a textbook. Opportunities to link education with meaningful community and cultural experiences abound if instructors can be open to the possibility. Adding such activities to the curriculum content would be an example of Native cultural inclusion. Teaching this content in a manner consistent with traditional ways of knowing would be an example of moving beyond inclusion toward the development of a Native cultural base.

The results of this research also raise many implications for student learning support while they are engaged in their post-secondary education courses and programs. While the College continues to provide significant upgrading and university preparation programs, it would appear that there also needs to be continuation of these opportunities while students engage in Arts and Science university transfer level courses. The processes of supporting basic learning skills and helping students to be effective learners needs to be extended throughout their educational experience at Red Crow Community College. Once students enter into university and college level courses and programs, there should not be an assumption that they now have all the learning skills they will need for academic survival. The data has made it very clear that there are numerous issues - personal crises, learning difficulties, time management problems - with which students may need help. The College administration could not only provide resources in the form of counselling and workshops, but perhaps could also look at eliminating some of the barriers and problems that are inherent in fixed semester and fixed entrance and exit program requirements. There would appear to be a strong rationale for moving away from sixteen week semesters, two-year programs, rigid grading systems and inflexible graduation requirements. It would appear to be very appropriate to examine ways in which these predominantly mainstream society expectations could be modified in order that the demands of learning become more manageable for First Nations students. Certainly, First Nations students appear to be less bound by the demands of time limited programs. In many instances, while students may not complete a program within the traditionally

specified time frame of one or two years, a large majority of students have demonstrated their desire, willingness and ability to complete their programs of study over a longer time frame. It would appear that when students complete a program of study could be less important than the fact that First Nations students demonstrate the desire and motivation to complete a program at any point in the future. In one very extreme instance a Blackfoot student returned to Mount Royal College to complete the last semester of her studies in Social Work after an eighteen year absence from the College. Fortunately, for her, College officials were willing to be flexible and saw their role as facilitators rather than as gatekeepers with the result that she was allowed to finish the program and to graduate. It appears that the important point is not how long it took her to complete the program, but rather how long this student maintained her commitment to eventual completion. Perhaps by moving away from the mainstream confinements of strict time limitations and accepting the greater need for long term student support and encouragement, more students can be facilitated in the process of completing their education.

Research Project Limitations

Among the limitations previously identified in this project were; the amount of time available to complete the study, the extent of access to documents, the availability and willingness of interviewees to participate openly and freely in discussions, and the extent to which the Arts & Science/University Transfer program is representative of planning for First Nations post-secondary education programs. A further limitation was the extensive amount of travel between Calgary and Standoff, further complicated by winter storms and icy road conditions. An additional important factor to consider is that analysis of the many documents included in this study was limited by the conceptualization skills and the administrative background and experience of the researcher. Attempts to define issues and concerns have been dependent on this researchers ability to exercise creative judgement and insight. In addition to decisions made about the amount of travel and time on-site, it was deemed, for practical purposes, necessary to limit the number of

interviews to approximately ten. As well, the number of student focus group discussions conducted by the researcher was limited to two. The number of days spent at the College comprised an average of one day per week for approximately four months. Given the interpretive nature of this case study it might have been advantageous for the researcher to actually live and work at the College during this time. Being a member of the College community would no doubt have provided observations and insights not otherwise available to a researcher periodically "dropping in" from Calgary.

To some extent participation on the comprehensive evaluation team provided a helpful opportunity for the researcher to engage in participant observation of decision making and planing activities. On the other hand, it may also have led to confusion concerning the role of the researcher. Role confusion may, in fact, be a potential limitation endemic to all forms of research based on participant observation.

In addition, another of the major limitations to this study may have been the cultural differences between the researcher and the community and its College. The researcher's background in mainstream educational administration, for example, led to a decision to seek members of the Board of Governors and College administration as key informants. It is possible that significant members of the community may have been overlooked because of assumptions based on the researcher's background. Elders are represented on the Board of Governors and Elders participated in the planning retreat facilitated by the researcher. It may have been a significant limitation to this project, however, that some elders were not specifically and individually interviewed. It is also possible that cultural nuances may have been missed or misunderstood by the researcher as a consequence of an identification with mainstream Euro-American culture.

Suggestions For Further Research

This study has built on previous research which has examined the historical significance of the struggle of First Nations to secure education for their people and the turmoil created by unilateral Federal Government policy decision making. Current social, political, economic and cultural influences acting on First Nations post-secondary

education have been identified and described. Conceptual organizers such as; the Social Process model of policy making (Downey, 1988); force field analysis (Kettner, Daley & Nichols, 1985), and the various conceptions of curriculum identified by Eisner and Vallance (1974) further elaborated on by Connelly, Dukacz and Quinlan (1980), have proved to be very helpful tools to bring order to the complex data which was gathered. While their work is admittedly dated and lacking a cultural focus, it was found to be particularly helpful in defining educational intentions for self-actualization (healing, personal development) and social reconstruction (community and economic development). The more recent work of Leavitt (1995) and Stairs (1995) has served as a helpful complement to the works of these writers in offering a framework for understanding and examining cultural issues in educational settings. In addition, the case study methodology used within a qualitative framework appears to have been a very helpful mechanism for achieving the goals of a descriptive and interpretive study such as this.

One of the strengths of the data collection procedures of this study was the use of multiple sources of data and multiple methods to examine them. The significant level of consistency among data gathered in this manner encourages a high degree of confidence in the reliability of the results obtained. The use of focus groups to obtain student input was a positive benefit because it allowed the researcher to hear individual viewpoints at the same time as being able to asses the interaction among group members. A second recording device or an additional observer/recorder in the classroom would have been helpful in enabling the researcher to focus more effectively on conversations. The use of the questionnaire survey was very limiting as it had originally been designed for another purpose. It would have been more effective to design a new survey and administer it in a more representative manner throughout the College. The documents available for analysis were numerous, readily available, and provided an abundance of information.

Many questions emerge from this project which might be examined in future research. In spite of the potentially harmful effects of policies of colonization and assimilation on First Nations education over a period of many generations post-secondary education continues to survive and may in fact be even more vibrant now than it has ever

been in the past. The resistance to assimilation would seem to indicate an inherent strength among Aboriginal people. What is the source of this strength? Does it relate to identifiable factors within Aboriginal cultures? Is it a function of Aboriginal spirituality? Is this strength abetted and nurtured by unique characteristics within Canadian culture? If identified, can this source of strength be incorporated into First Nations education programs?

Because this study represents one instance of First Nations post-secondary education in a particular community, it is not possible to generalize from the results. In order to understand the nature of forces and influences acting upon other First Nations post-secondary education programs, it would be helpful to conduct research which would examine similar factors acting upon post-secondary education among First Nations throughout Canada. How many, and of what type are they? What are their goals and objectives, and how are they structured to accomplish what functions?

This study has identified four major themes, namely; the continuing influence of past experiences, the struggle for cultural survival, striving for autonomy and credibility, and the struggle for economic support and program funding, as central to post-secondary education on the Blood reserve. It would be very helpful to explore these themes further by replicating this study in a different First Nations community. Such a study could provide important corroboration to assist other post-secondary education decision makers in setting priorities and planning the development and delivery of their programs. Similarly, it would also be helpful to conduct a comparative study of two reasonably matched First Nations post-secondary education programs. Have similar programs evolved? To what extent are programs and the resources and mechanisms for developing and delivering those programs similar or different? It might also be very helpful to return to Red Crow Community College after a period of five or ten years to replicate this study on site. Given the intervening time frame, how will goals and objectives, programs and services, and structures and functions have changed over time? What are the influences leading to these changes, and what can this tell us about the nature of education?

In relation to the broader educational community, this study has uncovered suggestions that mainstream colleges and universities may carry on practices of "institutionalized racism", and that government planning for post-secondary education may represent "neo-colonization". These concepts need to be carefully explored and examined. To what extent and in what ways are they experienced by First Nations students? What are the practices currently engaged in by mainstream colleges and universities that contribute to the use of these labels? Are racism and colonization ingrained in higher education, or are the perceptions faulty? What might organizations do to counteract either the perceptions or the realities of institutionalized racism and neo-colonization? What might First Nations educators do to facilitate this process?

In respect to First Nations students and their participation in post-secondary education, it would prove very helpful to continue research into the role of instructors and the significance of different teaching styles. Some preferred qualities and characteristics of instructors and students have been identified through this study. A more concentrated examination of these qualities would assist instructors in planning effectively for classroom teaching and learning. Administrators would also be assisted in the selection and screening of faculty, and the evaluation of instruction could be facilitated by a clearer understanding of those qualities which facilitate learning among First Nations students. Related to this, quantitative data would be very useful regarding post-secondary education student completion rates and timelines, the extent to which First Nations students experience interruptions of their course of studies, and the factors generally affecting program completion. Follow-up studies, specifically of the graduates of Red Crow Community College, could provide meaningful information about the appropriateness and relative success of programs and learning activities.

Other areas open to exploration might include; a comparative study of tribally controlled and non-tribally controlled post-secondary education programs, an in depth policy analysis of education policies currently being developed by the Department of Indian affairs and Northern Development, and an examination of the impact of federal

support for autonomous First Nations post-secondary education on provincial departments of higher education.

Final Reflections

Among the potential benefits of this project are that the results may help post-secondary education planners from different cultures to further clarify their goals and objectives for program development and implementation in First Nation communities. The data demonstrates that it is possible for educators to develop a greater sensitivity to First Nations community values and learning needs. In addition, heightened awareness of different learning styles and appreciation for First Nations traditional teaching methods could go a long way toward building bridges between the two cultures and achieving more effective learning opportunities. Within First Nations there is a strong emphasis on education as a means rather than an end in itself in that the overall goals for education are primarily viewed as self-actualization and an opportunity for social reconstruction. "Our goal is to assist the people to become self-sufficient so that they are better able to contribute to the health and well-being of their communities." Respondents in this project have expressed concerns that the content of some of the existing courses may not be culturally relevant. It is clear that intended learning outcomes for post-secondary education programs must be developed and agreed upon in a collaborative way in order to avoid this apparent deficit. In many educational planning situations needs are assessed by canvassing community members. It is important to the relevance and ultimate success of learning, in First Nations, that they should continue to reflect maximum opportunity for community input.

First Nation policy documents contained many suggestions for how people should interact and the values that should govern their relationships with one another. "We will act with integrity under all circumstances." "We will build an environment of individual trust and respect." It is important that post-secondary education provided on-site by non-Native institutions should be guided by an awareness of these community values and emphasize them throughout the curriculum. Based on the literature review, document

analysis and interviews conducted, it appears quite reasonable to conclude that there is a need for post-secondary education programs to be available in First Nations communities. The negative effects of colonization, severe social problems and a sincere desire to move toward healing their community, support the importance of this initiative. The data also appears to support the conclusion that there are major advantages for educators to be from, and familiar with, First Nations culture. Another advantage of the post-secondary education programs chosen so far, is that they have provided an opportunity for personal development, and may have taught some of the skills of effective crisis intervention. It is also important that educators working among First Nations be aware of traditional concepts of spirituality and holistic learning.

The data also indicates that a meaningful role can exist for dominant society post-secondary education institutions in the on-site delivery of First Nations programs. Key informants and students have not indicated a desire for mutually exclusive post-secondary educational systems. On the contrary, data obtained from student surveys, in particular, indicates a strong student intention to continue in higher education in programs located off the blood reserve. A relatively large number of graduates have enrolled in Bachelor's degree programs and increasing numbers of students are enrolling in graduate studies at both the masters and doctoral degree levels. The intention is clearly not to reject mainstream higher education, but rather the apparent covert nudge toward assimilation which it unwittingly encourages. Based on very strong positive feedback from students, it can be concluded that the post-secondary education programs provided for them to date have generally been consistent with their learning aspirations. In addition, their education may have provided an effective bridge to other higher education opportunities particularly in social work and education. What notably has been lacking is a Native cultural base which would incorporate traditional concepts of spirituality and a holistic approach to teaching and learning. The challenge remains to continue to provide further educational opportunities in ways which will be less destructive to the students' culture. Because of the small size and limited budgets of many reserves, it is also important to note that successful collaborative and cooperative educational initiatives

between mainstream institutions and First Nations educational programs is not only possible, but potentially mutually beneficial.

While some participants interviewed in this study were guarded concerning the future for First Nations post-secondary education, one informant was highly optimistic. Based on his observations over the past thirty-five years he enthusiastically stated, "I'm very optimistic. Extremely optimistic because I've watched the evolution since 1964, and seeing the changes over the past years have been just absolutely phenomenal. Nothing short of phenomenal." There have indeed been many changes, but there also appears to be much to be done in the future.

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APPENDIX A

Letter of Permission

January 23, 1997

Marie Smallface Marule, President

Red Crow Community College

P.O. Box 1258

Cardston, Alberta

Dear Marie;

As a doctoral student in the Graduate Division of Educational Research at the University of Calgary, I am seeking your support and permission to conduct my dissertation research at Red Crow Community College.

· The title of my research project is "Clarifying the Forces Which Shape and Direct Native Post-Secondary Education", and my purpose is to develop an understanding of the factors which are currently influencing the development of Native post-secondary education programs offered in Native communities. Using the case study method, through direct observations, interviews, and document analysis, this project will attempt to identify and describe those factors (social, cultural, economic, and political) which are influencing the current choice of programs, and the manner in which they are being developed and implemented at Red Crow College.

I have selected Red Crow College as the site for this case study because: the College has a proven track record for delivering Native post-secondary education programs during the past decade, the working relationship between myself and members of Red Crow College for the past six years has been both constructive and productive, and, I have some personal knowledge of and familiarity with students, staff, and instructors who have participated in programs there. In my opinion, this site offers as advantages: a sufficient number of sources of information and continuity over time of

data, stable educational leadership, and a strong commitment to Native post-secondary education.

The research method that I will be using will involve interviews with members of the Board of Directors, administration, staff, and instructors who have taught at the College. I also hope to hold focus group discussions with students currently attending the College.

The intent of my project is to develop an understanding of the meaning of Native adult education from the perspective of those engaged in its development and delivery.

Among the potential benefits of this project for Red Crow College is the possibility that the results will help Native post-secondary education planners to further clarify their goals and objectives for program development and implementation. In addition, this exploration into the meaning of educational programs for Native people may contribute to both short and long-term educational planning. It is also hoped that participation in the project and dissemination of the results both to the academic community and to members of the Blood community may serve to enhance the image of Red Crow Community College, its staff, and its students.

Your cooperation and support for this research project would be most helpful to me. In addition to the copy of my proposal submitted to you earlier, I would be pleased to meet with you at your convenience to discuss any questions or concerns you might have. I wish to reassure you that I will make every effort to preserve the integrity of Red Crow Community College and its programs. The identities of students and participants will be kept strictly confidential, and the results of my research will be made available to you periodically throughout the project for feedback. A copy of the final report will also be provided for you after the project has been completed.

I can be contacted by telephone either at home at 251-7670, or through my 'voice mail' messaging system at Mount Royal College at 240-8974. My research supervisor, Dr. Richard Hirabayashi, can be contacted at the University of Calgary at 220-5676. The telephone number for the office of the Chair of the Education Joint Research Ethics

Committee is 220-5626, and the phone number of the office of the Vice-President (Research) is 220-3381.

Sincerely Yours,

Emmett Hogan

Doctoral Candidate

Graduate Division of Educational Research

APPENDIX B

Interview Consent Form

FIRST NATIONS POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Research Interview Consent Form

This form confirms the consent of _____ to participate in the research project titled: **CLARIFYING THE FORCES WHICH SHAPE AND DIRECT FIRST NATIONS POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION,** conducted by Emmett Hogan under the supervision of Dr. Richard Hirabayashi in the Graduate Division of Educational Research at the University of Calgary.

The purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of the factors which are currently influencing the development of Native post-secondary education programs offered in Native communities in Alberta.

I agree to participate in this project by:

- discussing concerns or questions I have about the project with the researcher
- participating in a minimum of one hour of tape recorded interviews
- providing feedback about the accuracy of information contained in transcriptions.

I understand and agree that:

My participation is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from this research at any time without penalty, and that the researcher has a corresponding right to end my participation in this research at any time.

All data will be kept in a secure place inaccessible to others, and it will be disposed of by being shredded within three years or when the project has been completed. Audio tapes will be erased when the research is completed and computer discs and files will be deleted.

Confidentiality will be assured by not discussing specific data with anyone other than participants in the project itself and members of the researcher's supervisory committee. Where information is being shared with appropriate participants and/or supervisory committee members, coded identities or pseudonyms will be used to ensure anonymity.

Participants will be offered an opportunity to review a transcript of their interview(s) and also an opportunity to review and provide feedback on a draft of pertinent chapters before they go into the final report.

Every effort will be made to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of participants. Should participation become stressful or lead to severe anxiety, participants will be encouraged to withdraw from the study and will be assisted by the researcher in pursuing a referral to an appropriate counselling service.

I understand that the results of this research may be used for publication and presentation to academic/scientific groups. I do not object to this additional use of the research data,

and give Emmett Hogan permission to use this data in the preparation of journal articles and professional development workshops or seminars.

I have been informed, about the purpose and methodology of this research project, the nature of my involvement, and any possible risks to which I may be exposed by virtue of my participation.

Signature of participant _____

Date _____

Restrictions:

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX C

Sample Interview Questions

INTERVIEW GUIDE - BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Based on your experience as a member of the Board of Governors, and on your observations of Red Crow Community College and its programs and services, please comment on the following questions.

1. Financial Performance:
   a. In your opinion, has the College been able to meet its operational expenditures with operational revenues generated in the same year?
   b. To what extent are the sources of revenue diverse and independent?
   c. What are the financial needs of the College for facilities and equipment, and what are the priorities for these needs?

2. Student Selection and Enrolment:
   a. What future pressures do their appear to be for increased or decreased enrolment?
   b. Do you feel that new facilities and equipment will be needed to accommodate shifts in enrolment?
   c. Based on your discussions and observations, what is the image of the College in the community?
   d. How effective are the College's recruitment materials and activities in stimulating applications?

3. Governance and Management:
   a. Generally, in what areas of decision making does the Board participate?
   b. How do faculty and students participate in decision making?
   c. Do staff/faculty personnel policies appear to be adequately developed and communicated?

d. What programs does the institution have for staff/faculty career development and promotion?

e. Does the institution appear to have an effective long-range or strategic planning process?

f. Based on your observations, do College administrators and managers appear to work together effectively as a team?

4. Public/Community Service:

a. What unmet educational needs do there appear to be in your community?

b. Beyond education, are there community service activities conducted by members of the faculty and staff?

c. Other than its educational programs, how does the College contribute to community service?

d. What is the relationship between the College and the Kainaiwa Tribal Administration?

5. Support Services, Physical Plant, and Equipment?

a. How adequate is the library or learning resource centre?

b. How adequate is academic computer support? Are computer hardware, software, and network systems up-to-date?

c. In your opinion, what equipment should the College have that it is currently lacking?

6. Other

Comment on any other areas of concern or issues which you feel may be of importance to understanding Red Crow College, its goals and objectives and its programs and services.

<u>INTERVIEW GUIDE - INSTRUCTORS</u>

1. Teaching and Learning

   a. Tell me about your most successful experiences this year.

   b. Tell about some of the teaching and learning strategies you are using.

   c. Tell how you are addressing the diverse student needs of the students in your classroom.

   d. Tell about your role in teaching and cooperative planning.

   e. Tell about an innovation you have tried in your classroom

   f. Consider evaluation of students.

      i. How do you assess and evaluate?

      ii. How do you track and monitor growth?

   g. What evidence is there that your planning reflects your understanding of curriculum?

   h. What would it be like to be a student in your class?

2. Communication

   a. If a new teacher was to join your staff, how would you make the person feel welcome?

   b. Tell about your most effective ways of communicating with the community?

3. Extra-curricular Involvement

   a. Share how you are involved in extra-curricular activities and on committees.

4. Personal/Professional Growth

a. What are you doing or what do you plan to do to enhance your professional development?

b. What do you see as the most exciting thing happening in the area of education today?

c. What are your personal beliefs about teaching and learning?

5. Self-Assessment

a. What makes you a successful teacher?

b. How do you achieve balance in your life?

6. Other Comments

a. Is there anything you want to share that hasn't been addressed in these questions?

INTERVIEW GUIDE - KEY INFORMANTS

(The following are intended as general areas for exploration, rather than as specific interview questions. Participants will be encouraged to explore and elaborate on related subjects as they emerge during the interview.)

1. Briefly describe your background and the nature of your current involvement with First Nations post-secondary education.

2. For how long and in what capacity have you been involved with Red Crow Community College?

3. What do you see as the goals and purposes for adult post-secondary education at Red Crow College?

4. What are the mechanisms and/or procedures used to determine the learning needs of potential students?

5. How well do you feel the purposes for post-secondary education are being met by Red Crow College?

6. What do you see as the nature of the relationship between Red Crow College and:
   - the Federal government
   - the Provincial government
   - Treaty 7 Tribal Administration Education Office
   - the American Indian Higher Education Consortium
   - First Nations Adult and Higher Education Consortium
   - First Nations Accreditation Board

7. What do you see as the current obstacles and/or issues facing post-secondary education at Red Crow Community College?

8. How much hope do you have for the future and what do you see as future directions or prospects for Red Crow College?

APPENDIX D

Student Focus Group Discussion Guide

STUDENT FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

WARM UP EXPECTATIONS:

1. What were your reasons for selecting the program you are in?

2. What were your expectations on entering the program? How have they changed to this point?

3. To what extent has the program met or not met your expectations?

SKILL/KNOWLEDGE/EMPLOYMENT EXPECTATIONS:

1. In your opinion, what skills and abilities do you are gaining in the program? (probe and compile list of skills)

2. Do you feel these skills will prepare you for further education or employment or completion of a program?

GENERAL ASSESSMENT:

1. What aspects of the program are positive?

2. What aspects of the program are negative?

3. What suggestions do you have for improving the program?

FUTURE GOALS:

A. Future Plans

1. What kind of position do you expect to get when you graduate?

2. Do you plan to continue your education in the field?

B. Professional Development

1. Would you like to see any continuing education, upgrading, or speciality training for Red crow graduates? In what areas?

2. Do you see any trends in the field that might affect the educational requirements for Red Crow graduates in the future? Any trends that should be included in continuing education?
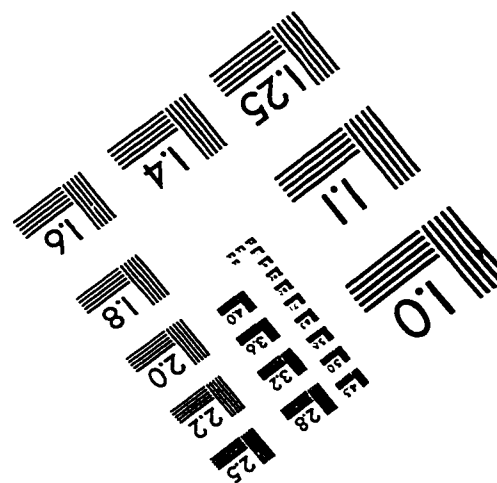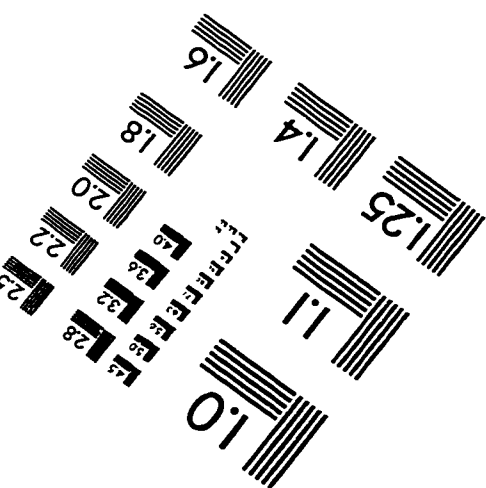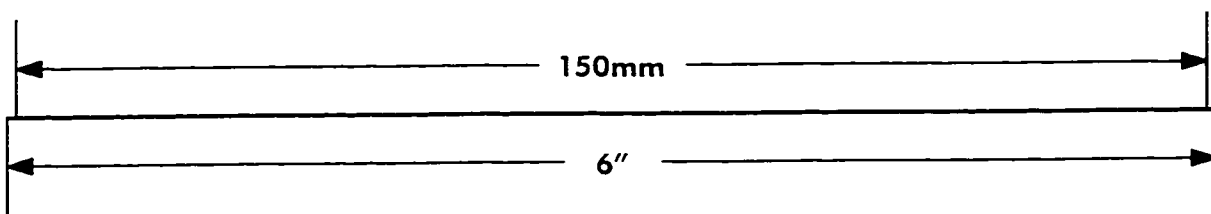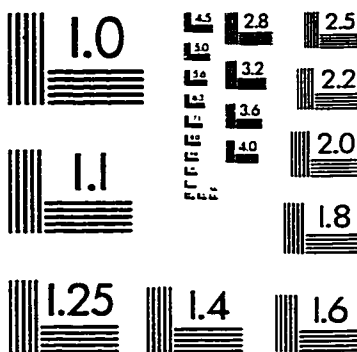
APPENDIX E

Student Survey

RED CROW COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ARTS & SCIENCE/UNIVERSITY TRANSFER PROGRAM

STUDENT SURVEY

The purpose of this survey is to gather feedback from students at Red Crow College about the nature of their learning experiences. It is important to receive input directly from students about those aspects of their education which they considered to be either positive or negative so that this information can be used in planning future educational activities.

(Please answer each of the following in the space provided. If additional space is needed you may use the back side of the page.)

1.   What aspect of the Arts & Science program do you consider to have been of most value to you?

2.   Please describe any aspects of the program that you feel have been very frustrating or difficult for you.

3.   What suggestions would you have for strengthening this program in the future?

4.   Has the teaching/learning in this program met your expectations? Been less than you expected? Better than you expected?

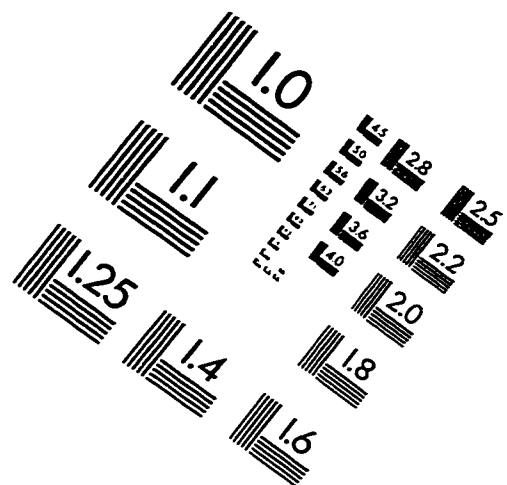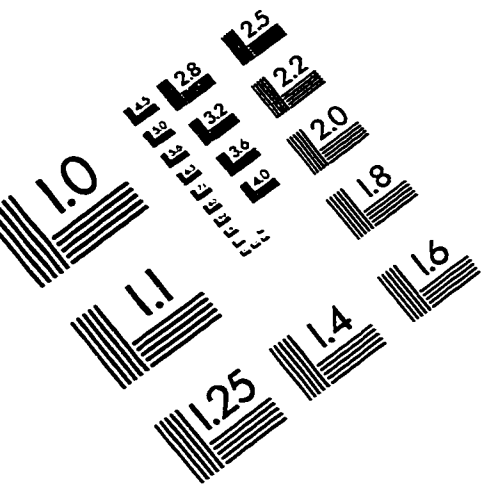5.   Have the learning activities in your courses generally been relevant and appropriate?

6.   What are your plans after you graduate? Further education? Employment?

6.   Other additional comments?

Thank you for your cooperation in completing this feedback Form.

IMAGE EVALUATION
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