

**Written Submission for the Pre-Budget
Consultations in Advance of the Upcoming
Federal Budget**

By: First Nations Technical Institute (FNTI)



August 2020



Recommendations

- **Recommendation 1:** That the government provide funding in the amount of \$30.24million for the construction of a carbon-neutral education and administration facility in Tyendinaga, Ontario that will expand post-secondary student enrolment at FNTI by two to three times over the next 5-10 years.



Submission

About FNTI

FNTI is an Indigenous-owned and governed post-secondary institute with 35 years of rich history delivering programming rooted in Indigenous ways of knowing. Our community-driven approach coupled with our intense program delivery method allow our Indigenous learners to maintain connections to family and community while they study and prepare for their future careers.

FNTI is a not-for-profit, registered charitable organization, recognized in legislation under the Indigenous Institutes Act in Ontario and accredited under Ontario's Indigenous Advanced Education and Skills Council (IAESC) to confer certificate, diploma and degree credentials. FNTI is also an accredited institute by the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC), and, is a member of Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan). FNTI has over 4,000 graduates with certificate, diploma and degree credentials issued in partnership with recognized Ontario colleges and universities.

Recommendation 1: That the government provide funding in the amount of \$30.24 million for the construction of a carbon-neutral education and administration facility in Tyendinaga, Ontario that will expand Indigenous post-secondary student enrolment at FNTI by two to three times over the next 5-10 years.

Background

For 35 years, FNTI has provided impactful education and training for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit communities. However, the current administrative and academic facilities cannot sustain the increased growth in enrollment of Indigenous learners and do not meet COVID-19 safety requirements. We are seeking the total cost to construct a new building from the Federal Government. The current funding mechanisms for Indigenous post-secondary institutes does not enable opportunities for the construction and improvements to FNTI's current campus. As such there is an urgent need to develop an appropriate funding stream that will allow the Institute to continue to build the next generation of Indigenous leaders.

This proposal presents a vision for an enhanced and fully-developed campus for one of Ontario's most successful Indigenous post-secondary institutes. With improved facilities, FNTI could better meet the educational needs of the learners and communities we serve. The architectural design will turn the page on the history of Indigenous learning infrastructure by establishing a state-of-the-art, net-zero facility to serve First Nation, Métis, and Inuit learning needs and expand FNTI's capacity to fulfill its broader role of capacity-building throughout Indigenous communities in Ontario. Since 2018 we have had a 93% graduation rate and a 98% employment rate. Amidst the COVID-19 outbreak, we successfully transitioned all of our students to online learning while maintaining full enrollment. However, we are unable to safely return staff and students to our current facility.

Current Facilities

The current Education and Administration Facility lacks the space for new programming and increased learner participation. The building does not meet minimum standards for the delivery of post-secondary education in Canada. It lacks proper heating, air-conditioning, ventilation systems, proper water



filtration and a proper sewer/septic system. The north and south modular units are serviced by two separate central air and heating systems. The central modular unit, housing the classrooms, is served by window air-conditioning and heated by baseboard heating. As a result, we are unable to have students return safely to campus amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Given the age and state of the existing facility, it is not practical or financially feasible to undertake what would amount to several million dollars in upgrades for a building that is already in need of a total overhaul.

The total space in this building is 7,000 square feet, constructed of a modular wood frame with a concrete block foundation and the exterior is vinyl siding and a flat roof. The office area interior is finished with painted gypsum board with a combination of hardwood, VCT and carpeted floor. Lighting is provided by fluorescent and incandescent light fixtures. Heating is provided by a propane forced air furnace and electric.

Current classrooms can accommodate a maximum of 15 learners. Due to demand and high enrolment numbers several programs must be taught off-site. The academic team does not have adequate space and there is insufficient room for a library, learner lounge, staff lounge or any dedicated learner services and counselling space. Unfortunately, the current building doesn't measure up to learners' expectations of PSE Institutes, even though FNTI programming meets and exceeds the standards demonstrated at other PSE Institutes. Despite facility challenges, FNTI has created a strong set of high-quality programs that prepare learners for employment, further education and to be strong contributors in their respective communities.

Student Outcomes

The new building will enable FNTI to expand our services and contributions to our community and Indigenous youth across Canada. The proposed net-zero campus is a shovel-ready project that will allow us to enhance our programming to better meet Indigenous community aspirations and to extend our reach to serve more Indigenous communities throughout Ontario and other parts of Canada. The two-floor 53,099 sq. ft. proposed facility will be used for classrooms, student support, cultural activities and administrative space. This proposed project will provide socio-economic benefits and advanced skill development for Indigenous learners from across Ontario and Canada. It will allow FNTI to expand its capacity to serve a broader range of Indigenous educational and community capacity-building roles in its local region and throughout Canada.

The current lack of educational facilities limits FNTI's capacity to offer any of the elements of a PSE learning experience commonly found in other learning Institutes. It should also be noted that due to limited space, it is difficult to accommodate traditional or cultural experiences and practices such as learning and healing circles. We would be able to offer ancillary services commonly available at other PSE Institutes in Ontario, significantly improving our students' experience. These would include: a computer lab, library and learning commons; innovation in cultural and social entrepreneurship; a social purpose entrepreneurship and enterprise incubation centre; and facilities for community and corporate training.

Sustainability

The new facility will be carbon neutral as we have planned for several sustainability measures. Greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the construction will be offset by sequestering atmospheric carbon in materials used. The building will be energy efficient through techniques such as locating windows strategically to minimize cooling demand and using ground-source heat pumps that reduce electricity demand for heating and cooling loads and avoid combustion boilers. Additionally, the plan is to utilize renewable energy sources, specifically energy from solar panels. Other sustainability elements include the schematic design utilizing biological components to support sustainable goals in a number of ways. These include the exterior landscape incorporating food production elements, micro-climate, diverse habitat, and the reintroduction of native plants.

Employment

FNTI is one of the region's largest employers, currently staffing 118 people. Through construction of the new building we will temporarily employ approximately 50 people at peak construction periods and once the building is completed, we will be able to employ an additional 35 people permanently. Over the last several decades, our Institute has successfully trained new generations of Indigenous leaders and entrepreneurs across vital fields like healthcare, aviation, and public administration and governance. Our increasing enrollment through this new facility will enable us to produce even more graduates annually to work as leaders in their communities.

Conclusion

The Government of Canada can support Indigenous peoples through improving their educational opportunities. As a preeminent Indigenous Institute of higher learning and serving Indigenous peoples from all across Canada, FNTI is well placed to help shape the career paths of a new generation.

Our graduates include elected officials, senior pilots, healthcare professionals, social service workers, media and arts professionals, business leaders, and a host of other success stories. These individuals are shaping laws in our country, flying essential goods and passengers into rural and isolated communities which students grew up in, and during this time of COVID-19, offering invaluable front line support in their communities, among many other things. With the construction of our new facility, FNTI can adapt for COVID-19 and expand to meet the growing needs of Canada's future Indigenous student population.

We are proud to have the support of community leaders from all levels of government and political backgrounds. We invite you to come see firsthand the transformational education we continue to offer and the compelling stories of students and graduates who are now leaders in their fields.