



strategic project overview

FOR CURRENTLY FUNDED INITIATIVES

PROJECT TITLE

Expanding Supporting Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement (SAGE) Across the Institution

PRIMARY CORE AREA

Transformative Learning

ASSOCIATED STRATEGY

Strategy 15: Student Experience

SECONDARY CORE AREA (if applicable)

People and Places - Strategy 1: Great People

PROJECT LEAD

Office of Indigenous Education

KEY CONTACT

Dr. Jan Hare

PROJECT SPONSOR

Associate Dean, Indigenous Education (Faculty of Education)
Dean, Faculty of Graduate + Postdoctoral Studies

PILOT/CHANGE PROJECT

Change Project

WEBSITE

N/A

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Faculty of Education (FoE) established and supported the highly successful Indigenous graduate student initiative, Supporting Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement (SAGE), for the last 12 years. SAGE was modelled on the MAI (Maori and Indigenous Graduate Program) and led by Drs. Graham Smith (while a visiting scholar in the FoE) and Jo-ann Archibald. SAGE provides peer and faculty mentorship, as well as research training, aimed at retention, persistence and successful completion of graduate studies through cultural affirmation and linking student academic graduate research with Indigenous perspectives, methodologies and mentors. The focus has been on Indigenous PhD students due to current infrastructure, human resources and funding available to this initiative. Activities and experiences that form this initiative include workshops, orientations, SAGE-Saturdays, writing retreats, dissertation supports and an Indigenous Graduate Student Studies annual conference. Each year, this initiative has been led by Faculty mentor, Dr. Jan Hare (Associate Dean, Indigenous Education), and implemented with the role of a SAGE Graduate Student Coordinator. The Faculty of Education has a strong history of Indigenous community-based Masters programs. The FoE has supported four cohort groups of Indigenous Masters of Education (MEd) students, and is in discussions with two communities to begin two more MEd cohorts. These students seek pathways to further graduate studies in Doctor of Education (EdD) and PhD programs.

This project seeks to establish and mentor a critical mass of Indigenous graduate students by extending the SAGE initiative beyond the FoE in two ways. The first will be to expand the SAGE initiative across UBC faculties/programs by working in partnership with the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (G+PS). This will extend the goals of SAGE to all Indigenous graduate learners at master's, doctoral and postdoctoral levels of study. The goals of SAGE include i) increasing the number of Indigenous graduate students; ii) providing mentoring through peer and faculty relationships; iii) developing research capacity among Indigenous graduate students; iv) preparing students for professions in Indigenous contexts (e.g. community, post-secondary, private sector); v) creating networking opportunities within and beyond the institution; and vi) creating safe and culturally-relevant environments for students to share experiences, ideas, research and challenges. In collaboration with G+PS, the expansion will include:

- Review and refinement of SAGE goals for relevance to master's, EdD student and postdoctoral fellow (PDF) participation in SAGE as a university-wide mentoring initiative (e.g. create SAGE blog/website, national/international exchanges, creating pods/clusters for study, offer high-level graduate seminars, assist with scholarship applications, strengthen support systems for Indigenous graduate students, interface with Public Scholars Initiative);
- Conduct institutional scan of supports/services for Indigenous graduate students and PDFs;
- Consult with visiting Maori scholars on university-wide shift (Sept. 11th panel presentation and meeting);
- Establish and support an Indigenous faculty mentor role to lead SAGE at the institutional level;
- Organize student development activities and experiences for newly-enrolled and current Indigenous graduate students and PDFs that focus on holism, relevance, as well as engaging Indigenous graduate students in interdisciplinary research and innovative projects, particularly knowledge exchange and social entrepreneurship;
- Hire Indigenous Graduate SAGE Student Coordinator to support activities (e.g. graduate student) to work with a faculty mentor;
- Organize staff/faculty workshops aimed at enhancing knowledge and skills related to supporting Indigenous graduate student retention, persistence and successful completion;
- Host annual Indigenous Graduate Student Symposium Conference;
- Gather and assess data related to Indigenous graduate student participation;
- Cultivate an alumni network of Indigenous graduate students through SAGE.

The second part of the expansion will build on the work of the Aboriginal Transitions: Undergraduate to Graduate (AT: U2G) Phase 1 Report funded by and prepared for the Ministry of Advanced Education and Training (Archibald, Pidgeon, & Hawkey, 2010). This report examined the critical components that would support a transition framework for Indigenous undergraduate students to consider, prepare and apply for graduate studies. With the growing number of Indigenous students entering a wider range of undergraduate programs across UBC Vancouver, graduate studies must be promoted as another pathway towards increasing Indigenous people's participation in the social, cultural and economic life of their communities, province and global society (B.C. Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework and Action plan: 2020 Vision for the Future). Yet, it must be understood that Indigenous student needs differ from that of mainstream students in terms of the experiences with post-secondary institutions (e.g. access, racism, familiarity, preparedness). This second expansion will emphasize mentoring of SAGE undergraduates, along with SAGE, and will work with other resources of the institution to support

recruitment. The FoE and G+PS will drive a second phase of the AT: U2G report through:

- Establishing relationships with UBC’s undergraduate research initiative to promote and engage in research assistantships;
- Liaise and support recruitment activities that include orientation to graduate studies, introduction to Indigenous research methodologies, expectations for scholarship applications, factors in selecting and applying to graduate programs, planning for graduate education and identifying research supervisors;
- Create mentoring activities between SAGE graduate students and SAGE undergraduate students;
- Hire a SAGE undergraduate student assistant to support mentoring activities;
- Host workshops for staff/faculty in units/programs that address access, admission and retention barriers for Indigenous graduate students with a focus on mentoring within disciplines, as well as units/programs.

While this partnership initiative advances strategies 1 and 15 of the UBC Strategic Plan, it also attends to the 2018 Indigenous Strategic Plan, which emphasizes student experience (i.e. strengthening undergraduate and graduate communities and experience) and student services, student recruitment and financial aid (i.e. develop specialized programs based on work-integrated learning and career mentorship for Indigenous graduate and undergraduate students and ensure that multiple pathways to entry are maintained and expanded).

With appropriate institutional reforms that include the expansion of SAGE to a university-wide initiative, Indigenous students will have greater opportunities for success. This form of mentoring has proven successful in New Zealand. In Canada, other universities have drawn from UBC’s SAGE model (e.g. Queen’s University, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education). SAGE has also created inter-university relationships in B.C. with Simon Fraser University and University of Northern B.C. As a university-wide initiative, SAGE can begin to address the many barriers that exist for Indigenous students and create new pathways for Indigenous learners.

FUNDING	Year	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
	Strategic Funds	24,400	37,900	27,900
	Other Funding	-	-	-

IMPLEMENTATION AREA		
	Forestry	Science
	Law	Management
	Sauder School of Business	Arts
	Engineering	Creative and Critical Studies
	Health & Social Development	Irving K Barber School of Arts & Sciences
	Education	Applied Science

HOW DOES THIS PROJECT SUPPORT THE THEMES?

- Collaboration:** Brings together students and faculty from across disciplines/programs.
- Inclusion:** Supports access, success and representation of historically underserved, marginalized and excluded populations. Focuses on research and teaching with its attention to Indigenous methodologies.
- Innovation:** Supports students in acquiring skills and competencies necessary for achieving success in research, knowledge mobilization and community engagement (e.g. Indigenous students addressing key challenges in Indigenous communities and advancing Indigenous priorities through research).

WHAT WILL BE DIFFERENT AS A RESULT OF THIS PROJECT?

Indigenous students and PDFs will feel more supported and have an enhanced sense of belonging; there will be an increase in Indigenous student enrolment, retention and research; mentoring of Indigenous graduate and undergraduate students will be improved; Indigenous methodologies, knowledge mobilization and entrepreneurship will be enhanced; faculty and staff at the university will have an improved understanding of Indigenous culture and ways of learning, and an alumni network will be cultivated through graduates participating in SAGE. Relationships and collaborations can occur between recruitment initiatives and roles will be established through SAGE.

WHAT ARE OUR KEY METRICS? HOW WILL WE KNOW IF WE ARE SUCCESSFUL?

Key metrics include:

- Number of Indigenous students participating in SAGE (beyond the Faculty of Education) at master's, doctoral and postdoctoral levels of study;
- Number of faculties/units participating and supporting SAGE and SAGE-U2G;
- Number of faculty/staff participating in events, supervision;
- Number of years students stay in their graduate programs;
- Number of students recruited from undergraduate programs within the university and from outside UBC;
- Recruitment strategies for Indigenous students to graduate studies.

How do we know we are successful:

- Increase in recruitment and retention of Indigenous graduate students;
- Increase in number of internal and external awards received by students;
- Participation by faculty;
- Faculty/unit responsiveness to Indigenous graduate student needs;
- Environmental scan results;
- Alumni network and contacts established.

**IF A PILOT, HOW WILL
THE RESULTS OF THE PILOT
BE USED?**

N/A

What will happen if the pilot is unsuccessful? If successful, how will the pilot result in sustainable change?