

EDWARDS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
University of Saskatchewan

Masters in Business Administration

MBA 860.2 Management in Contemporary Aboriginal Organizations

Instructor: Warren Weir

Prerequisites: None

Course Readings:

Visions of the Heart: Canadian Aboriginal Issues (2nd ed.), by David Long and Olive Patricia Dickason (2000), Harcourt Canada.

The Dynamics of Native Politics: The Alberta Métis Experience, by Joe Sawchuk (1998), Purich Publishing, Saskatoon.

Images of Organization (Updated ed.), by Gareth Morgan, Sage Publications.

Recommended:

- Menno Boldt, *Surviving as Indians*
- Walter Anderson, *The Future of the Self*
- Rupert Ross, *Dancing with a Ghost*
- Dr. Marie Battiste and James (Sa'ke'j) Youngblood Henderson
Protecting Indigenous Knowledge and Heritage: A Global Challenge

A list of selected readings and relevant Internet sites will be handed out when required. For a selection of relevant links to other Aboriginal sites and information relevant to this course, please consult Warren Weir's web site at <http://www.commerce.usask.ca/faculty/weir/default.htm>

Note: for a review of case studies and an examples of an acceptable case-study format, please see http://home.uleth.ca/man-bess/case/1999/shannon_lozinski.htm or http://home.uleth.ca/man-bess/case/1999/rachelle_brockman.htm or one of Warren's at: http://home.uleth.ca/man-bess/case/mahemigew_inc.htm

Introduction:

It is recognized that Aboriginal culture and values differ in many ways from those that exist and are practiced in mainstream Canadian society. It is also a fact that there has been an extraordinary rise in the formation and development of organizations within Aboriginal communities in Canada over the past 10 to 30 years. It is not surprising then, that in many of these organizations people are experiencing a clash of Aboriginal and mainstream culture and values. In an effort to overcome these differences, it is often unclear how Aboriginal organizations should operate, and in what ways Aboriginal and mainstream approaches may be mixed to ensure organizational success.

The underlying differences often create a great deal of confusion for those Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people who work in and manage these organizations. In addition, leaders and managers of Aboriginal organizations must find the answers to a number of general questions before they can get on with the job of offering services and developing products in an effective, efficient *and Aboriginal*, manner. These include:

- How should our organization be structured?
- What is our mission and vision?
- What are our organizational values and culture?
- How should the organization be managed?
- What sort of people should we hire?
- How should we make decisions?
- Who will make the important decisions?
- How will we define organizational effectiveness, efficiency, and success?
- How does what we do relate to the larger goal of self-government?

In addition, there are specific questions that are often regional or local in nature, such as:

- Is there a place for elders in our organization? If yes, what would they do?
- What Aboriginal traditions should become a part of our daily activities?
- What will be the role of non-aboriginal managers and workers?
- How and when do we interact with the larger Aboriginal community?
- Should we unionize?

The development and evolution of Aboriginal organizations in Canada is taking place within a dynamic political and social-cultural context, an example of which is the reconstruction and rebuilding of Aboriginal communities and institutions to further the goal of Aboriginal self-determination and governance within the Canadian federation. It is important to note that regardless of these developments and emerging questions, there is a strongly held desire that these organizations be managed and operated in a distinctly Aboriginal manner. Accordingly, there is much experimentation within the Aboriginal community to think through this overarching and difficult question: What makes an organization and its management 'Aboriginal'?

Course Description:

This course examines the practice within contemporary Aboriginal organizations in Canada. It examines this through organizational metaphor and culture. It examines the political and social context of Aboriginal organizations and identifies those issues that are unique to the practice of organizing and managing within the Aboriginal context.

Rules Regarding Student Academic Dishonesty:

Students are expected to have read and understood the rules regarding academic dishonesty which are posted on the University of Saskatchewan website at:

http://www.usask.ca/university_council/reports/09-27-99.shtml

Course Communication:

Students are encouraged to communicate with instructors and other students by email. All assignments should be handed in by email. Please send them as RTF or Word files.

Student Evaluation:

1. Case Study		
• 2-3 page proposal:		5 marks
• case study due, including oral presentation		30 marks
* 10 marks for oral presentation & 20 marks for paper		
2. Three Statements of Learning @ 5 marks each		15 marks
3. Active Contribution and Class Leadership		10 marks
4. Final Exam (handed out last day of class, due 7 days later)		40 marks

	TOTAL	100 MARKS

Notes on Student Evaluation:

- Case Study:** The major assignment requires you to write and analyze a situation or a case using the tools and frameworks provided by the course material, your review of the literature on culture, metaphor, management, organizational issues, and your own experience. The case must relate to Aboriginal management and/or organization, and you would benefit by selecting a situation with which you are familiar or have encountered. The case study should include: an introduction (with over view of relevant and current literature); a description of the situation or case; analysis; and, conclusion (15 pages double-spaced max). The proposal should outline your initial ideas for your case, and include an overview of some of the literature you have found as well as a schedule for completion.
- Statements of Learning:** Your 'Statements of Learning' will be 4 to 5 pages in length each (double-spaced), and should provide a personal reflection on your learning in the class to that point in time. The papers should answer the following questions: What have I learned? How will I use what I've learned in my work? What will I do differently (or the same) as a result of the learning to date? (Note: you will be asked for a summative statement of learning as part of our final exam, so keep notes throughout the course). On occasion, you may want to focus in on one particular idea or issue, and go with it.
- Active Contribution:** While participation is vitally important in this class, I am also interested in your contribution to the course and your contribution to the learning of your classmates. The contribution mark will take into account: regular attendance; participation; classroom leadership; and, in-class presentations (for example, you may be asked to lead the discussion, or present your thoughts on a current issue)
- Final Exam:** The final exam will be a take home exam. It will be handed out the last class, and will be due one week later.

Class Topics and Required Readings

- 1 Introduction and Overview of the course.
- 2 Organizational Metaphor, Eurocentrism, and the Aboriginal Organization
- 3 Aboriginal Organizations in Canada – Historical Development & Images of the Ideal Aboriginal Organization
- 4 Maintaining Aboriginal Control and Ownership
- 5 Integrating Aboriginal Culture and Tradition
- 6 Employing Aboriginal Managers and Staff
- 7 Ensuring the Essential Connection to Community, and Utilizing Aboriginal Architectural Designs
- 8 The Future for Aboriginal Organizations in Canada