

## **NATIVE STUDIES AT BRANDON: A HISTORY, AND MORE**

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In the academic world, rarely does a department appear on the scene "fully-grown", developed in its programs and courses. Most often, it is a slow growth, an evolution from some allied or complementary area, spearheaded by the enthusiasm, energy and expertise of an individual with a vision or mission. Brandon University falls into this latter category.

It was in September 1970 that Dr. Sam Corrigan appeared on the scene in the Department of Sociology. Appointed earlier in the year as the co-ordinator of a project funded by the Department of Youth and Education, Province of Manitoba, and known as the Special Mature Student Project (SMSPP), Corrigan was a social anthropologist who had taken his master's at UBC and his doctorate at Cambridge. His field-work and dissertation concerned the Sioux around the Qu'appelle Valley in Saskatchewan. With his advent appeared the first course in anthropology at Brandon.

Corrigan's arrival at Brandon had not been accidental. Dr. Lloyd Dulmage, president of Brandon University, had been at the University of Manitoba where the two had met. Furthermore, the Faculty of Education at Brandon had been involved for some time in the training of Native teachers in Manitoba through PENT and there were some native students on campus. Dr. Corrigan's interest in native people and their culture found fertile ground, and he wasted little time in introducing a course entitled Contemporary Native Peoples in Canada to Arts Faculty Council and Senate. Approval was given on January 19, 1970, and the course offered for the first time that germ. It was received enthusiastically and was successful in every way.

It is important to note that the Faculty of Education, in 1971-72, was offering four three-credit hour courses that were of interest to Native students: 24:170 and 24:171 Introduction to the Cree Language (parts I and II), 24:360 Education of the Canadian Indian and Metis Child, and 24:361 Strategies for Teaching the Canadian Indian and Metis Child. Within the Faculties of Arts and Science, there were other courses offered which touched on native "things" in the Departments of History (eg. History of Canada from 1534 and The Canadian North). Geography (eg. Cultural Geography) and Religion (eg. Primitive Religion and Religion in North America).

In May of 1971 the new Department of Sociology and Anthropology proposed to Arts Faculty Council and to the Curriculum and Academic Standards Committee of Senate a minor in Indian Studies and the introduction of six new three-credit hour courses. The minor, which was approved by Senate, required the successful completion of fifteen credit hours; of these three credit hours were to be selected from the Ethnography courses (of the northwest coast, of the plains, of boreal Canada, of the arctic), and twelve from the Cree I and II, the history of native people and contemporary native people of Canada, native law, literature, organizations, education, art, music and a Topics course in native research. In addition, the Department of Sociology and Anthropology also offered a non-credit film course called "Peoples of the World", open to all students, and screening a biweekly series of films in Anthropology and other social studies. These films included "Netsilik Eskimo" and "Okan, Sun Dance of the Blackfoot" among others. Notwithstanding the fact that six of the above-named courses were not offered in 1972-73 and the courses in Cree language were crosslisted with Education, Indian Studies had at last gained a fairly firm foothold.

The 1973-74 academic year saw further advances being made with the introduction of two courses on the Sauteaux language and a comparative course in language structure (Structure of Cree and Sauteaux), cross-listed, of course, with the Faculty of Education. The language courses, both Cree and Sauteaux, were proving to be very popular and much in demand, both on- and off-campus, drawing interested persons from as far away as Toronto, so much so that, under the direction of Dr. Paul Voorhis, the resident linguist, Brandon undertook to develop both audio and written textual

materials for use both on campus and elsewhere. Working closely with native language speaking students, Dr. Voorhis conceived and wrote "A Saulteaux Phrase Book" and "A Cree Phrase Book", both of which have been in use for some time and will be ready for publication in the near future. Furthermore, some of these materials are being used in the Manitoba School System. It is interesting to note that, at one point in time, all of the Native texts used in Cree and Saulteaux communities had been prepared by students and faculty of Brandon University.

Conscious of the fact that students of native ancestry were reaching a point where they could contribute even more to planning the academic development of Native Studies within the University, a number of faculty and administrators encouraged students to attend major conferences on an active participation basis, including a major one held at Trent University in the fall of 1972. Throughout the following year several meetings were held to discuss curriculum, programs, the possibility of establishing a department and associated areas of interest including the funding of research and qualifications of personnel in the field. These sessions eventually led the Brandon University Native Students to prepare a proposal which was submitted to the President of the University for consideration. Thus, came the naming of a special Presidential Advisory Committee late in 1973 eventually called the Ad Hoc Committee on Native Studies and Native Education.

This Committee, which included representatives of Brandon University (faculty, administration, projects and students), the MIB (Manitoba Indian Brotherhood) and the MMF (Manitoba Metis Federation), was charged with the development of a comprehensive review of Native Studies at Brandon University, with the search for a director of Native Studies (the "director" eventually to become the "Head" or "Chairman" of a department), and with the development of a major in Native Studies and the establishment of a Department of Native Studies.

The political pressures of these native groups, including the native student organization at the University of Manitoba and the Native Education Branch of the provincial Department of Education, during the 1973-74 and 1974-75 academic years brought about a meeting in Winnipeg at which all of these groups were represented. But not before a large and important meeting was held in Brandon

at the Western Manitoba Centennial Auditorium at which it was decided to ask for a "Department" and all that meant in academic bureaucracy (minimum of master's for qualified faculty, Arts Faculty Council, Senate, etc., approval of all courses, budget) rather than an "institute" or other such body that could be a "part" of the university (eg. contracting for courses) and still be "apart" from the university and able to offer courses of a non-academic nature in arts and crafts. The pressure placed upon the Universities Grants Commission by the native organizations and communities, by the students and by the universities (by all three Manitoba Universities although the University of Winnipeg had only been minimally involved in Native Studies) was such that permission was granted to establish a department of Native Studies at each of the universities. Nineteen seventy-four saw a department of Native Studies set up at the University of Manitoba; Brandon followed with one in 1975. In September 1975 a full-fledged "Department of Native Studies" went into operation offering two Minors (one in Native Studies, the other in Native Languages), the director as Department Chairman appointed for three years (Dr. Art Blue, doctorate in Psychology, was hired with tenure), and the Board of Governors promising to add to the Department's budget by allocating extra funds to pay the salary of the Chairman for three years. Moreover, the Library Committee allocated additional monies to the Department for journals and other acquisitions.

The coming of the Department and the incorporation of Native Studies into the regular academic structure of the University announced the introduction of a number of new courses in anticipation of the Major that would be coming the following year, courses in Sioux (Dakota), Inuit (Eskimo) and Chipewyan, in Cree and Saulteaux at an intermediate level, and in Linguistics. It is to be noted that all language courses were and continue to be cross-listed with the Languages Department, permitting the student enrolled to select whether language courses taken will be for Language or Native Studies credit. The Minor in Native Languages required a minimum of 15 credit hours (and a maximum of 30), at least 12 of which were to be taken from the language courses and at least three credit hours in linguistics or the Structure of Cree and Saulteaux courses.

In anticipation of the 1976-77 academic year, the first year with a departmental structure, a hoped-for Major and two Minors (Native

Studies and Native Languages), the Department prepared its recommendations for the Major in Native Studies. Of course, much work had been done by the Presidential Committee of 1973 (eventually disbanded in December 1976 after its terms of reference had been fulfilled) on the Major; and the Department, using the documents and the advice of the Committee, enunciated its philosophy of the full integration of Native Studies as a "discipline" that would study and impart knowledge of native culture, history and fine arts not only to persons of native ancestry but also to nonnatives. By "native" it is very clearly understood to include both Indian and Metis.

The requirements for the Major, as eventually approved by Senate, are in general the requirements of all Majors, that is, the successful completion of at least 30 credit hours (maximum is 45) for the three-year Bachelor of Arts degree. The specifics include (1) 6 credit hours of introductory native studies; (2) a competency in at least one native language or 6 credit hours in a language; (3) a minimum of 18 credit hours from the Native Studies courses (at least 6 credit hours at the 300 level).

These requirements also had an effect on the two Minors, making the two introductory native studies courses mandatory; in Native Studies, requiring competence or 6 credit hours in one native language, and, in Native languages, competence in two native languages.

A number of new courses were also introduced in order to "round out" the offerings of the Department, including Canada and the Native, Manitoba and the Native, Metis Organizations, Native Studies Research and Traditional Native Religions (team-taught with the Department of Religion and cross-listed). Of course, there was a need to cycle some courses particularly since the student needs had increased, as had the repertoire of departmental offerings while the number of faculty members had remained static at three.

Contained in the 1974 recommendations for the establishment of a department and Major were data concerning enrollment predictions for the coming years. Table I conveys the accuracy of these predictions. The averages would have been even higher if Spring and Summer Sessions courses had been included. All this within the context of a general slow-down of Grade 12 entries into universities within the Province of Manitoba. And, although A.S. Lussier, chair

	1975-76	1976-77	1977-78	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81
Fall Term	165	205	259	201	265	286
Winter Term	207	235	198	188	237	
Average	186	220	229	195	251	
Predictions of 1974	195	232	255	304	318	

TABLE I: ENROLLMENTS IN COURSES OFFERED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF NATIVE STUDIES

man of the Department, has indicated a stabilization in the offerings and their further refinement, he expects a continued rise in enrollments.

#### Aims and Goals:

In the Department's presentation for the Major are contained the following statements enunciating the purposes and benefits of such a program:

- 1) to allow students an opportunity to develop skills and competency in the area of Native Studies . . .
- 2) Benefits to native communities and Canadian society.
  - a) Individuals knowledgeable in Native Culture.
  - b) Development of understanding in other disciplines of the special nature of the area of Native Studies.

Furthermore, in Appendix B of the proposal there is an explanation of they above.

What we want is an education which will:

-- reinforce the Native identity,  
 -- provide the training necessary for making a good living in modern society."

The National Indian Brotherhood further clarified these goals when they stated:

-- so we modern Indians, want our children to learn that happiness and satisfaction come from:  
 -- pride in one's self  
 -- understanding one's fellow man, and,  
 -- living in harmony with nature."

(Indian Control of Indian Education 1972)

Within the context of the University, what is desired is to increase and impart knowledge both to native and non-native persons; and within the context of the native culture, to permit these persons to develop where the power of nature and of the spirit, justice, peace, humanitarianism and co-operation are of great importance (Blue, "Indian Values" 1977).

#### Enrollments:

There is no doubt that the establishment of the Department of Native Studies resulted, in part, from the growing awareness of native peoples of the erosion of their culture by the non-native world outside the reserves and settlements. The various media, but particularly the introduction of television to the North, have had a great deal of influence on the cultural face of the people, these changes being especially evident in Native youth and children. Most have abandoned the "old ways", so much so that many of the younger generation are unable to speak their own tongue. The political pressures exerted in Manitoba by the NIB, the MIB, the MMF, and the student groups have undoubtedly accelerated the process of emphasizing and, not only protecting, but also developing the Indian and Metis cultures. The universities must also have felt the need to respond to the needs and aspirations of all citizens of Manitoba, and they have willingly embarked on these programs. However, it also cannot be denied that the "doom-and-gloom" predictions of continued falling enrollments have had some influence on the pursuit for Native Studies programs.

For those who have been intimately involved with the establishment of the Department of Native Studies at Brandon and with the Major and Minors, it is of great interest to view the enrollment expectations of 1974 with hindsight, and to compare these figures with departments of comparable size (comparable in the number of budget line positions) and/or of complementary disciplines. It is to be noted that "Enrollments" include all students registered in courses offered by the Department on- and off-campus, day and evening, with no regard to the degree being pursued. Furthermore, the figures represent the average enrollments in the Fall and Winter Terms, except for 1980-1981 where only the Fall Term figures were available.

DEPARTMENT	1975-76	1976-77	1977-78	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81
Native Studies	186	220	229	195	265	334
English	204	272	312	265	243	237
History	392	352	331	321	333	261
Languages	108	123	151	176	176	147
Religion	207	216	221	150	187	136
sociology/ Anthropology	519	496	355	366	428	449

TABLE II: ENROLLMENTS: A COMPARISON

The following chart compares the number of teaching members in these various departments, and represents all persons teaching courses both on- and off-campus during the Fall and Winter Terms, that is, all full-time, part-time, joint-appointment and sessional teachers. It does not, however, differentiate between a full-time member of the Department teaching a regular load and one teaching overload.

DEPARTMENT	1975-76	1976-77	1977-78	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81
Native Studies	3.6	5	3	3	5.3	6
(No. of Budget Line Positions)	(2)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)
English	3	3.6	3.3	3.3	3.6	4
History	5	7	5	5	6	5
Languages	4	3.6	4	4	3.3	4.6
Religion	3	3.3	3	2.3	3	3.3
Sociology/ Anthropology	7	8.6	7	5.6	7	8

TABLE III: SIZE OF DEPARTMENT: A COMPARISON OF FACULTY

Of course, in order to complete the comparison, the following charts present the Department of Native Studies and the others according to the number of graduates (Fall Convocation, generally fewer;; Spring Convocation, larger) who complete their degree requirements with a Major and/or Minor in Native Studies.

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Fall	Oct. 1976		Oct. 1977		Oct. 1978		Oct. 1979		Oct. 1980	
	Major	Minor								
Native Studies	0	0	1	1	2	0	5	0	1	1
English	2	2	0	1	1	2	1	1	0	2
History	2	2	4	2	2	1	4	3	0	2
Languages	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	2	0
Religion	3	3	2	0	1	4	1	4	1	4
Soc/Anthro	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1
Total B.A. Grads	29		21		13		27		16	

(Numbers of graduates is approximate [others may have been added to the list after Senate Approval but prior to Convocation])

TABLE; IV: COMPARISON OF FALL GRADUATES: MAJORS AND MINORS

Spring	May 1976		May 1977		May 1978		May 1979		April 1980	
	Major	Minor	Major	Minor	Major	Minor	Major	Minor	Major	Minor
Native Studies	0	0	0	2	1	0	4	1	3	2
English	6	5	5	4	11	3	8	5	11	9
History	8	6	16	5	9	6	9	9	13	10
Languages	0	3	2	1	3	1	1	3	3	1
Religion	2	2	7	8	0	1	0	6	0	7
Anthro	1	0	1	0	3	1	4	0	2	0
Total B.A. Grads	52		72		61		56		71	

TABLE: V: COMPARISON OF SPRING GRADUATES: MAJORS AND MINORS

This information confirms very clearly how completely integrated the Department of Native Studies is within the fabric of the University.

It is also interesting to note at this point that in 1974 the native student population represented approximately 16% of the total

student body. The prediction made was that in 1980 it would be 27%. In the estimation of Dr. A. Blue of the Department the figure stands at slightly more than 25%. There is no way of arriving at an exact figure as the University cannot request indication of ethnic origin.

There is no doubt that a great impetus for Native Studies and for the eventual establishment of the Department, the Major and the two Minors came from the native students and the communities from which they came. In the earlier 70's these students, for the most part, were to be found in a number of special projects, projects that were designed, in the main, to prepare native teachers who would, it was hoped, return to their communities after certification and graduation. These projects -- PENT, IMPACTE and WCP -- made continued requests for and greatly supported Native Studies courses for their students, and BUNTEP (Brandon University Northern Teacher Education Project) continues this support.

Having developed Native Studies for both native and non-native students, an examination of the past six years shows that in 1974 and 1975 Native Studies courses contained approximately 80% native students, falling to less than 50% in 1977-78 and rising to slightly above 50% in 1980-81. The experience in other institutions has been quite the contrary, with non-native students forming by far the larger proportion of the classes.

#### Languages:

The introduction of the Minor in Native Languages in 1975 was a clear indication that the teaching of native languages would constitute an important part of the activities of the Department of Native Studies -- and it has. Not only is the Department prepared and equipped to teach Cree, Saulteaux, Sioux (Dakota), Chipewyan and Inuit (Eskimo) at the introductory level, but under the skilful direction of its linguist, Dr. Paul Voorhis, it is offering Cree and Saulteaux at an intermediate level, as well as the structure of those two languages, linguistics syllabics and native orthographies. Dr. Voorhis and some of his students have prepared tapes for use in language labs both in on- and off-campus locations, and they have designed and prepared, and are using a "free Phrase Book" and a Saulteaux Phrase Book". There is no doubt that as the courses develop and the need for more texts increases as well as for

collections of readings, reference works and reprints, the activity in this area will become even greater.

#### Metis French:

The introduction of language competency into the Native Studies programs in 1976 created an unexpected difficulty. The ability to speak and to understand at least one native language or to complete successfully at least six credit hours in a language was made mandatory for all students graduating with a Major or Minor in Native Studies. The situation with Cree, Saulteaux, Sioux, Chipewyan and Inuit was fairly straightforward however, the Department did receive a request from a French-speaking Metis student to permit him to meet that specific departmental requirement with his French

Consultations and discussions were held with the French members of the Department of Classical and Modern Languages, with the French Cultural attache in Winnipeg, M. Rene Luquet, as well as with a visiting professor of languages from the Sorbonne who was, at that time, involved in a study of the variations of the French language as spoken inside and outside its borders. The result of all this activity was agreement by all that the French as spoken by the Manitoba Metis could be used to meet the requirement of "a native language" within the Department of Native Studies. French, as spoken in Manitoba, was now recognized to be a native language as far as the Major and the Minor were concerned!

#### Native Law:

Although the course on native law had been introduced in 1972 and had been "on the books" since then, it was not offered for some time. Of course, the difficulties were many, including that of finding qualified native instructors and that of developing the course content, of gathering together the readings both required and recommended because very little had been developed. Once these difficulties were overcome and a suitable instructor, a young recently-graduated lawyer, "found", the course was offered, and it proved to be both popular and successful.

It had also been the intention and desire of the Department, as part of its philosophical approach to native education at the post-secondary level, to offer some of its upper level Native Studies courses in one of the native languages of the five native "groupings"

in Manitoba (Cree, Saulteaux, Sioux, Chipewyan and Inuit). The Cree-speaking people were most numerous, so that it came as no surprise that the first non-language course selected to be taught in a native language would be taught in Cree. And as Native Law had proved to be of particular interest to BUNTEP students and some others in the communities, this course was selected. A further incentive to offer law was, of course, the availability of a Brandon Graduate who was in his last year of law at the University of Manitoba. Thus, Native Law was offered in Cree at Oxford House at a time that proved convenient to BUNTEP students as well as to members of the general community. It was successful mainly because of the interest and abilities of Allan Ross and the relevance of the course material. It is the intention of the Department to offer other courses in languages other than English. In fact the 1980-81 Brandon University calendar includes both English and French course descriptions for the introductory native studies courses, for The Metis, History of the Indians in Canada, The American Indian, and the Metis Seminar with the express purpose of interesting Frenchspeaking Manitobans in these courses. Hopefully, with the cooperation of College de St. Boniface, the University of Manitoba, the superintendents and the school divisions themselves, the coming year will see this happen in a number of communities.

#### The Future:

What the future holds is somewhat unclear. There is no doubt in our minds at Brandon that the interest in Native Studies will continue and increase over the next few years. More and more requests are being made for language and non-language courses off-campus. To meet these apparent needs the University will have to consider allocating greater funds to this area and permit the appointment of additional persons in the Department. The dialogue with the chiefs and band councils, as with other representative native organizations, will have to be continued and even increased. Conferences on Native Studies local and national, and similar to the one called for the Fall of 1981 and the Metis Historical Conference held at Brandon in the Spring of 1977, will have to be held, ideas exchanged, curricula compared, governments involved, funds found in order to expand the activities.

It is our hope that what has happened to Brandon over the many years, and how it all has come about will be useful to others who

may be in the process or will be establishing programs in Native Studies. It has been a satisfying experience, and one that will spread, for Native Studies is here to stay.

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