INTRODUCTION to the SPECIAL ISSUE on
UNIVERSITIES AND SELF-DETERMINATION

In November 1985, the members of the Canadian Indian/Native Studies Association (CINSA) gathered at Trent University to consider "The Role of Universities in Native Self-Determination". Their discussions, unlike those of most academic meetings, were designed to take the form of a "working" conference in that they were purposely "product" oriented. Complex issues were not only to be treated in traditional fashion, through formal papers for further analysis or practical application, but specific recommendations were sought as well. Presenters concluded particular thematic sessions with concise suggestions on the role universities should adopt regarding self-determination. Finally, a plenary meeting, at which participants' suggestions were distributed, discussed and refined, produced a set of conference recommendations. These were presented, subsequently, to the executive of CINSA for consideration and action.

This volume, another product, presents a selection of the papers delivered at the conference. The papers were an essential part of the working process. Indeed, those published here have been chosen not only to exemplify the quality of the discussion but, more particularly, to illustrate the multitude of opportunities for university involvement in the Native community's further definition and actualization of self-determination.

One of the first patterns to emerge at the conference was the multi-dimensional nature of self-determination. To date, the concept has been most systematically defined in, and popularly understood to be the province of, legal literature. To that extent, its identity has been narrowly political. The reality, however, which is reflected in the papers, is that self-determination relates to at least three other distinct, though interrelated, spheres - the economic, social and cultural. History teaches that political and legal institutions are largely the effects and not the causes of the economic, social and cultural, which are perhaps more immediate, human activities. While it is true that the history of status Indians in Canada rests on both deliberate and accidental legal actions, such as the Indian Act, employing exclusively constitutional tools is not a promising strategy for status Indians and is much less so for non-status Indians, the Metis and Inuit. Contemporary political reality indicates that the attempt to reconstruct self-determination as a reality cannot be based indefinitely upon such legal frameworks. In this light, it becomes all the more important to pursue development in these three other dimensions.

The conference began that process auspiciously. Papers did indeed provide a description of a panorama of activities and aspirations in these other dimensions. From an economic perspective, presenters addressed the attempts by Native communities to take greater control over the development of material resources. Rees's discussion of community-controlled surveys related to the Norman Wells expansion and pipeline activities is an example. With Native

people increasingly controlling formal and informal educational institutions, as described by Johnston and Longboat, the development of "people" resources in the *social* area of self-determination is beginning to be addressed. Band in-service training programs, treated by Larose, is yet another example. Finally, intertwined with the foregoing two areas, as well as with the political/legal one, is the increasing capacity of Native people to revitalize value systems in order to ensure *cultural* survival.

Another theme addressed by the papers is the ongoing tension between local community initiatives and apparent cultural metropolitanism, the so-called Pan-Indian dynamic. This tension appears to be a useful concept in under-standing the nature of development. For example, in maintaining the value of a distinct local identity, it is often necessary to also exercise influence at regional and national levels, with a view to fitting within norms generally sup-ported by larger and more powerful organizations at such levels. Achieving local and national "fits" is not an easy task and the progress of self-determina-tion may well have been slowed by the lack of success in dealing positively with that tension. There is, then, an urgent need to create a "local" and "national" harmony which translates into a meaningful political presence.

Clearly, the metropolitan aspects of economic, social and cultural thrusts in self-determination have a lower profile than those in the political sphere. However, as the impact of self-determination in these other sectors becomes evident, stress will arise in the process of working out liaisons among Native groups with diverse economic, social and cultural circumstances which require more than local political decisions. National-level systems such as friendship and cultural-educational centres appear to have begun this process in the non-political sphere. For example, the Native Friendship Centre Program Goal Statement emphasizes " . . . supporting self-determined activities . . . which respects Native cultural distinctiveness". The success of such organizations as agents of self-determination remains to be judged.

Beyond a more sophisticated understanding of the nature of the concept of self-determination, the second focus of the conference was the search for an operational link between the universities and self-determination. Again, a review of the presentations indicates that there is no single role which Canadian universities might play. It is evident, however, that the presenters, with their particular disciplines and community engagements have seized upon a common philosophical thread of self-determination and have expressed particular facets of it.

In attempting to understand university's roles in this process, it is useful to speak of "modes" of university involvement in self-determination. Several such modes surfaced in papers and recommendations and include the university's role as:

1) Source of research
2) Developer of methods
3) Producer of helping systems
4) Trainer of skilled personnel

5)   Facilitator of community research activity
6)   Broker of relationships
7)   Clarifier of roles of non-Native resources
8)   Institutional base for Native agendas

The roles are listed in a deliberate order. They reflect a movement from a traditional concentration on the university's power and influence as an "established" institution to a much less common one - the university as an ally or a responsive service for Native communities.

1)   SOURCE OF RESEARCH

This role is obviously the most traditional one which the universities have undertaken and thus, with respect to Native issues, they have done so largely on their own initiative. As Rees stated succinctly at the conclusion of his paper:

> . . . the university's primary role in society is the generation and manipulation of knowledge for human well being (Rees, 1986: 154).

An important aspect of this role pertains to the purpose and use of the research and the commitment of the researcher to Native people. The papers point to an applied focus to much of the research and a clear commitment of universities to facilitate the movement toward self-determination. Rees clearly calls for such a commitment:

> Indeed, the ability to generate credible information and use it with confidence is a necessary prerequisite to independent thought for action by any people. These suggestions are therefore directed toward university people contemplating developing a research-oriented relationship with a Native organization. In essence, they advocate using the research project as a vehicle for confidence building and human resource development . . . (Rees, 1986: 154).

McNab also points out the advantages of traditional "in house" research by universities. Such activity can eliminate blocks which are caused by the conflicting procedures and priorities of government when it is the facilitator of the research *vis-a-vis* the communities. The implication, acknowledged as well in the papers of Boothroyd and Larose, is the need for scholars to promote this form of research capacity within the university. Furthermore, it is clear that universities should make more efforts to inform Native communities of the potential use of research in assisting in a variety of areas of their concerns.

2)   DEVELOPER OF METHODS

One of a university's strengths is its reflective power; its power to system-atically review actions and to improve them. One aspect of this is the improve-ment of methods, particularly those which have currency within the broader society and which have the capacity to support self-determination. The reality is that Native people "being in Rome", as it were, have to use "orthodox" measures in "engaged" situations, such as the courts of land claims. In that light, the university's capacity for methodological development can assist Native people's "adaptation" of western methods for their own benefit. Boothroyd's discussion on planning is relevant in this respect. McNab underlines the importance of the refinement of oral history methods in order to develop greater rapport in Native communities where the basis of land claims may lie in oral tradition. There appear to be many opportunities to exercise such a role in the arena of self-determination.

3)   PRODUCER OF HELPING SYSTEMS

Several writers advocated a more direct and active role by universities in community education and service. Ponting and Gibbins, in particular, noted the potential for expanded university activity and underlined its duty to move forward:

> Universities and colleges are funded from a tax base which in-directly derives from lands from which Indians were evicted. As such, they have an obligation, it could be argued, to provide some kind of return to Native people. That return could take the form of access, not only to expertise of the faculty, but also to the facili-ties of the institutions. As part of the community service function to which most universities and colleges at least pay lip-service, they could be pressed by Indians to provide interdisciplinary teams of faculty members to serve as unpaid consultants (Ponting and Gibbins, 1986: 60).

Another example of such a role is the work by Rees cited in the Norman Wells impact study. An interesting aspect was the use of the impact research for pragmatic educational ends. One of the objectives of the project was to develop a helping system:

> To enable the project team to develop and offer special training programs in development planning for Band Planners and Native leaders and other planners with special interests in the problems of northern and resource-based communities (Rees, 1986:144).

Boothroyd provides a detailed description of a course in which band members are trained in a relatively sophisticated stage of self-determination,

namely the community planning process. One of the most interesting parts of this methodology is the emphasis on the "meta-planning process". The terms refer to reflecting on the process of planning itself ("process planning") and not just on its substantive products such as health-care systems and educational programming. Very much in the reflective, strategic nature of this discussion of the role of universities, he says

> As one final comment on kinds of plans and planning, it can be noted here that process planning itself may issue from a "recta-planning process" where one plans how to carry out the planning process to produce a process plan (Boothroyd, 1986:29).

In the distinction between substantive and process planning, the latter involves a focus wherein one looks at, for example, the relationship between the private consultant and the local band.

As part of the "meta-process", an outside party such as a university can train a community to deal effectively with outside agents by reflection on the consultation process. In effect, this involves assisting community members to be competent clients, that is ensuring that they are maintaining control of the consultation process for their own goals. The rationale for an emphasis on process planning is that such a consulting process can be both exploitive and non-exploitive for the community. The author's intention, of course, is to strengthen the "consultant-handling" capabilities of Native communities.

Larose also gives a detailed example of how universities can co-plan helping systems. Here the importance of on-site training is stressed. Additionally, Larose emphasizes a related consideration, that of the lack of fit between learning system and learners. He goes on to note how the "sociological particularities", namely the nature of the "mature students" who are involved, and their daily routines can present problems for continued training. Larose proposes that an emphasis upon in-service, on-site approaches can overcome the problems. Off-campus courses may become a major element in the universities role. He cites several advantages: training relevant to the community; increased probability of pursuing degree-level study; access to information unique to universities; and finally custom-made training that extends university curricula beyond its often limited campus-based focus. In all such instances, the theme of "recta-planning" in the developing of helping systems will be crucial.

4) TRAINER OF SKILLED PERSONNEL

For sometime now. the training of professionals who work in communities has been a standard university function. There is, of course, room for improve-ment. There is a need, as McNab notes, to place more emphasis on recruiting persons with a *long-term* interest in Native matters. He maintains that his area of land claims research is typical of the problem of researchers undertaking Native-related research as just an entrée into other, more prestigious areas of study. Furthermore, there is a question as to how amenable universities are to

being major training agents for Native communities. It will probably depend upon how well institutional interests are served in the process.

5) FACILITATOR OF COMMUNITY RESEARCH ACTIVITY

A closely related role for universities is the potential ability to nurture rather than to lead the investigative process. This role, a facilitation function, is illustrated in Rees' article on Indian reaction to the Norman Wells oilfield project. Rees discusses the role of the School of Regional and Community Planning of the University of British Columbia. It undertook a study to provide

> . . . insights into the effectiveness of the federal planning, impact assessment, and monitoring programs in the north, as well as into the income, employment, and related social effects of industrialization of Native communities in the Mackenzie Valley (Rees, 1986:144).

Hedley's narrative about his university's involvement in facilitating research in the Walpole Band illustrates other facets of this important role for universities. One issue which he treats is limiting the development of hierarchical relationships between university personnel and Band members. His analysis shows how the collaboration between the university and community itself may become problematic. As he puts it, such relationships can become "antithetical to the reproduction of community-based research" if they simply reproduce externally-controlled hierarchical knowledge-producing systems. The maze of university allegiances and vested interests have had significant impact on the research process. He points out that the resolution of the problem is only possible through community control, but that this is often difficult to attain.

> The direct funding by the Band of a locally-based research unit is the ideal solution to achieving control over the research process. The initial funding for the cooperative program on Walpole Island is unique in that it facilitated the establishment and evolution of such a locally-based unit. It was also unique in that it allowed for the initiation of a multidisciplinary research program which drew exclusively on the resources of the University . . . The overall result is a greater access to the benefits derived from well-directed research and the breakdown, at least in part, of the hierarchical relationships in which research is so often embedded (Hedley, 1986: 100).

What is important here is that Walpole Island's experience was a step toward community-based research institutions.

Similarly, Rees notes the use of an "issues and methods workshop", the purpose of which was t o . . . "discuss and plan a jointly-managed socio-economic study between the University of British Columbia and the Dene communities."

The workshop served to

> Explain our interest and potential role in a joint monitoring re-
> search project . . . Introduce participants to basic concepts of
> research and planning at the community l e v e l... Discuss various
> approaches to the monitoring study, their strengths and weak-
> nesses, and their possible contribution to developing the type of
> information-base needed by Mackenzie Valley communities in
> their planning for future development(s) (Rees, 1986:148).

A final observation can be drawn from Hedley's experience with commun-
ity/university collaboration

> . . . it is clear that the presence of the research unit in the com-
> munity with established links with the university is advantageous.
> It provides both a window to the university and at the same time
> establishes a point of contact (Hedley, 1986: 100).

6) BROKER OF RELATIONSHIPS

Many conference participants identified a brokering role for universities,
a role whereby universities facilitate positive relationships among the various
players involved in Native issues: governments at all levels, private organizations,
corporations, Native organizations and the communities themselves. McNab
concentrates particularly on the community-government relationships in
historical research. He points out that universities may make a contribution by
helping to "write an honest history". Both governments and Native communi-
ties have considerable investments in "research facts" as so much may depend
upon them. Also with respect to such areas as land claims research and nego-
tiations, he notes that universities may provide a forum for attitudinal changes,
to " . . . overcome the mistrust and suspicion of all of the parties involved in the
process . . .", in which " . . . all of the information must be shared and an honest
attempt must be made to understand it and interpret it." Further, should
conflicts arise, the university could operate as a kind of arbitrator:

> There is room in the Indian Land Claims process for academic
> professionals to provide outside advice to the parties directly
> involved when there is a disagreement on the interpretation of the
> historical facts, i.e. through fact-finding or mediation. This
> "umpire" type function may become one of the most significant
> ways in which universities may have some impact on the land
> claims process (McNab, 1986:134).

Another brokering role, mentioned by McNab, involves a process of what
might be called "policy re-sensitization". He suggests that:

By establishing strategic areas of concern, universities could indicate to governments that issues facing Native people today are of greater significance than that which is usually attributed to them by government (Ibid. :137).

It is evident that McNab argues strongly for the university in this role, and that the role requires operation at several levels simultaneously.

7) CLARIFIER OF ROLES OF NON-NATIVE RESOURCES

A less obtrusive but yet important role might be one in which the university helps clarify the motives of "key players". Native organizations and communities, even in their search for self-determination, have become "target markets" for both public and private interests, consultants, private entrepreneurs, lawyers, academics, accountants, governments and other parties, in efforts to sell various goods and services, methodological approaches and management systems. In that light some participants proposed that universities might give advice on the nature and intentions of such parties. Jacobs articulately sets the stage for such a role:

> The alternative to having indigenous researchers in the community is to continue to rely on outside consultants. These people come with their own sets of values which, while (ideally) not influencing the methods of their science, will almost certainly affect their choice of what is important to study and probably as well their interpretation of the results. There will always be occasions when specialists will need to be consulted for particular purposes; however, if self-sufficiency in the management and development of land and resources is to be achieved, the central thrust of relevant research must be determined from within the community.

8) INSTITUTIONAL BASE FOR NATIVE AGENDAS

If one speaks of universities and certainly the broader society as penetrating Native communities, then another role for universities might be in reversing that process. In what ways can universities foster a real and influential presence of Native communities within the university itself? What might be the implications, for example, for such established traditions as academic freedom and university autonomy? This role then, particularly as it involves the university as an educator, may be problematic and one of the most potentially controversial.

Johnston and Longboat lay out the guiding principles for Indian control of education, stating that

> Today, Indian Nations are attempting to reassert their sovereign jurisdiction over a precious resource, the development of which is crucial if they are to secure their future as nations and as identi-

fiable and distinct peoples. That resource is, of course, their very own children (Johnston and Longboat, 1986:177).

Control of education will have to mean an extension of that jurisdiction in some fashion to encompass the education provided to Indian people at the University level. Universities must respond in the most positive and imaginative fashion - finding room for the community within the institution. One excellent example of this has been the development at Trent University of the Native Management and economic development Programme. In their paper on this programme, Lockhart and McCaskill attempt to clarify the philosophical foundation by which this particular role of the university can be strengthened. They succinctly state the problem and solution in the following manner:

> Given the strong knowledge-boundary maintaining character of most professional schools, it would seem that efforts to improve the linkage between technical training and cultural factors would be better focussed upon the creation of "interdisciplinary" programmes where technical and cultural components would be encouraged to become more mutually informed and where formal linkages are established with the Native organizational base from which trainees are recruited (Lockhart and McCaskill, 1986: 161).

It should be noted that the focus here is on a relatively specialized presence, in this case economic development, of Native communities in universities. The chief concern of the writers here is summed up as follows:

> Finally while fragmentary efforts have been made by various educational and training institutions to "inform" Native development facilitators about how to adapt to the mainstream culture's technical requisites, there have been virtually no efforts made to provide incentives for those mainstream agents which may become involved in Native development initiatives to adapt their thinking to Native needs. Again, this lack of balance in the mutual adaptation equation is particularly noticeable within the more established academic disciplines, including those in the social sciences where the resources for doing some of the most critically relevant research are concentrated (Ibid.:161).

In essence, the authors support this particular role for the university because it may be one of the few ways by which such a balance may be achieved. The Native Management and Economic Development Programme at Trent, therefore, in addition to on-campus teaching, includes several components directly involving the Native community; the governing of the Programme by a Council of Directors, the majority of which are Native people off-campus courses with curriculum specialized for Native communities; case studies; applied research

and demonstration projects, and the provision of consulting in Native communities. This final potential role of the university illustrates a point in which the power of that institution is least "top heavy". A movement towards this sort of role could provide an opportunity not only for partnership, but also for real control by Native communities of the resources through the provision of which universities could be most helpful. The degree to which Native groups will be able to make such inroads into the control of universities remains to be seen.

CONCLUSION

This volume is designed to explore ways in which universities can facilitate the development of Native self-determination in Canada. This introductory paper has argued for an expansion of the definition of self-determination beyond the legal/political to include the economic, social and cultural dimensions of the lives of Native people. It has also articulated eight "modes" of university involvement in self-determination as they have emerged from the papers included in this volume.

Both the range of the dimensions of self-determination, as well as the range of actual and potential university roles is impressive. In addition, there emerges a progressive pattern whereby the prospective roles of universities can be seen as more or less enhancing self-determination, each having implications for the future of Native autonomy. What is important, if the conference has been successful in achieving its central goal, is for members of university and Native communities to enter into a dialogue to discover areas of mutual interest and explore ways and means to engage in co-operative efforts of benefit to both groups. For universities, this will entail an expansion of their traditional academic role and will require a commitment to be flexible with regard to their functioning. For example, Native people must be allowed a role in the governance and programs involving universities if they are to truly contribute to self-determination. This implies a willingness by universities to share some of their decision-making authority and will, therefore, need to involve the senior university administration.

For Native organizations, this process implies a potential shift in perception of universities and their relevance to Native people. Perceptions of universities as elitist institutions not possessing resources useful to Native communities and possible feelings of hesitancy in working with "highly educated academics" will have to be overcome. Native people will have to become informed of the potential benefit of research as a tool for such activities as planning, program development, land claims, evaluation, and management if the relationships with universities are to be useful to assist them with their efforts to achieve self-determination. A new partnership will have to be forged.

It is clear from the papers in this volume that universities can play an imPortant role in helping to facilitate Native self-determination. But only, however, if there is the will on both sides. These papers explore the various issues which will allow this to occur. It will be an education for both communities, Native people and scholars, and will entail a willingness to change

established ways but there can be no doubting the importance of the endeavour. It is hoped that the conference and this volume will stimulate further discussion and action on this vital issue.

Gregory Conchelos   Department of Native Studies
Donald McCaskill   Trent University 1987
John Milloy