

**TOWARD AN INTEGRATED, COMMUNITY-BASED,
PARTNERSHIP MODEL OF NATIVE DEVELOPMENT
AND TRAINING: A CASE STUDY IN PROCESS**

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ABSTRACT/RESUME

The critical problems encountered, successes achieved and current efforts to overcome the inhibitors to the institutionalizing of a more effective basis for providing academic research and training support to Native developmental needs are reviewed. In an effort to combat the socio-culturally cooptive ideology of the established academic tradition, the authors argue for pre-developmental assessment and a community-based partnership model.

On examine les problèmes graves qui se sont posés, les succès remportés et les efforts actuels pour surmonter les obstacles à institutionnaliser des conditions plus efficaces pour l'adaptation des recherches universitaires et de l'appui d'apprentissage aux besoins de développement des autochtones. Dans l'effort de combattre l'idéologie socio-culturellement peu adéquate de la tradition universitaire, les auteurs veulent une évaluation de la situation avant le développement et un modèle de développement basé sur l'association avec la communauté.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to summarize our experience in two fields of activity. The first relates to the need for wider academic recognition of the special character of Native socio-economic developmental requirements and the kind of Native community-based models that are required if the substitution of one form of dependency for another is to be avoided. The second relates to the equally pressing need to create Native training programmes that not only directly involve Native trainees in the alternative model building process, but ensure that they maintain a close linkage with their communities of origin.

Needless to say, the shared jurisdiction (and power) requisites associated with this community-based partnership approach offer something of a challenge to academe's long-standing institutional autonomy norms. As a consequence, the discussion also touches upon some of the problems encountered in "legitimizing" the community-based partnership concept.

Although these experiences have been built upon a number of specific Native development research, application and training projects, our discussion is synoptic of the essential understandings. For those wishing more detail, some selected off-prints of the documentation referenced in this paper are available.

THE PROBLEM

Community-based economic development initiatives have long been recognized as the surest means of attaining the kind of independence from the past "paternalism" that so negatively characterized the relationship between the Native and mainstream societies. But a decade of experience in helping to facilitate such development has clearly demonstrated to the authors that a great deal of unique "pre-developmental" background research and training is required before Native economic initiatives are likely to achieve their goals.

There are several reasons for this. First, there are the cumulative effects of neglect. In particular there is a dearth of specific developmental planning and management training opportunities available to Native people in forms that are sensitive to their experiences and needs. Second, as the Reaver Report points out (1979), as vital as *universally* applicable planning and managerial skills are to the success of any economic developmental initiative, the *particular* characteristics of Native culture, as well as the diversity of "states of readiness" that currently exist within the disbursed Native constituency, require some quite unique consultative and evaluation processes. In particular, it is critically important that process models are developed that ensure equity between "insider" and "outsider" knowledge frames; that these processes involve the whole community in acquiring a sense of "ownership" of the determination process; and that local community-based criteria are utilized in "social impact" and "economic feasibility" assessments (Lockhart, 1982).

While both the universal technical and particular cultural requisites associated with Native development needs are well understood within Native

Studies faculties, there has been a notable lack of success in achieving wider academic recognition of the very real differences between Native and mainstream developmental needs and wants. This is especially applicable to the majority of professional planning and management departments. Yet an increasing number of these are responding to the incentives provided by D.I.A. and even Native organizations themselves to provide "special" technical training programmes for Native development and management trainees. As a consequence, Native trainees, if they return to their communities at all, are often at a loss as to how to integrate their new technical understandings with their cultural traditions. 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 focused 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 (see, for example, McCaskill, 198S).

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 has been virtually no effort made to provide incentives for those mainstream agents who 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 is concentrated.

One response to this general lack of Native need sensitivity within the academic mainstream has been for some Native organizations to set up their own separate training facilities where cultural factors are included with imported technical training. However, as desirable as this may be from other perspectives, it must be recognized that in the absence of significant research, documentation and dissemination capability, such "independence" may only ensure a continuing "dependence" upon mainstream technical models that contain culturally negating elements. Nor does this go-it-alone approach offer any potential for influencing mainstream understandings in ways that would help facilitate a wider acceptance and understanding of independent Native development initiatives. It would therefore seem important to any strategy aimed at providing self-reliant Native development to ensure that key elements of the higher education system, including its research and new knowledge dispensing capabilities, are brought into an equitable and cooperative partnership with Native developmental interests.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE COMMUNITY-BASED PARTNERSHIP

Given the long-standing "independence" traditions of the University and the more recent emergence among some Native organizations for exclusive control, our partnership concept is by no means a self-evident solution to

Native developmental needs. Indeed, in pursuing our partnership model, we have been consciously aware of the contradictions it implies. For example, as academics who have chosen to swim in the more politically turbulent waters associated with contentious contemporary social issues rather than wading in the back-eddies of abstract generalizations, we are not unmindful of the debt we owe to a system that resists (though not always successfully) the direct involvement of those not primarily committed to the values academic freedom. However, we are also acutely aware of the effect that dominant cultural assumptions exert upon the majority of those who enjoy academic freedom privileges. For what interpretation can be placed upon the academic phrase "conventional wisdom" other than the uncritical acceptance of established intellectual prejudice? In this regard, academe is no different from any other mainstream institution. But the currently popular notion of "compensatory" practices with respect to disadvantaged groups is predicated upon guaranteeing a sufficient alternative "presence" to render visible established institutional prejudice. Thus, from the traditional academic concern for maintaining "arms-length" relationships with the wider society, the sharing of basic research and curricular decision-making with certain obviously disadvantaged constituencies appears to us less a threat to academic freedom than a desirable counterbalance to intellectual complacency. (It is also worth noting that one increasingly acceptable response to the severe cuts made to traditional "arms-length" research funding has been the active pursuit by academics of research "partnerships" with well endowed representatives of the mainstream economic system.)

From the Native interest perspective, there is bound to be some distrust over partnership arrangements with an institution that has been so central in providing the conceptual rationales and administrative training through which the conditions of dependency were in the first instance imposed. Yet these same academic institutions also have provided the critical frameworks as well as much of the hard data which have rendered the old forms of repression no longer tenable. It will therefore matter a great deal how much, and in what ways, Native interests are represented within the University as to whether, on balance, the resources of this institution work for or against their emerging independence.

This need for a strong Native presence is nowhere more evident than in those academic disciplines where the conventional development and management wisdom assumes that the *mobility* of both capital and labour is more important than the continuity of community life. This placing of economic opportunism over social continuity and geographic stability has been particularly characteristic of Canada's Northern frontier developments, where externally promoted projects have often been short-term in concept and itinerant in their labour-force practice. Such "development" has only served to marginalize once vital Native communities by destroying or undercutting their traditional economic base without providing viable alternatives.

Although the majority of Native people, even in the remote North, do not advocate "primitivism" in the sense that they too want to share in selected benefits of more modern forms of economic development, they have over-

whelmingly rejected the socially destabilizing approach that characterizes the boom-bust-and-move-on hinterland development philosophy. In particular, Native people maintain a tenacious commitment to community as the vital source of their cultural identity as a people and as the only viable context within which the more inclusive "human development", as distinct from the narrow concept of "economic development", can take place. Further, this commitment to hereditary community is likely to increase as a consequence of the declining employment opportunities available in the socially mobile urban centres and as aboriginal land and resource access claims are ultimately settled within a framework of expanding self-determination and re-patriation. As a consequence, a wider academic recognition of the importance of community-based socio-economic development planning and implementation models would appear to be crucial to the pre-developmental needs associated with contemporary Native aspirations. Some of these alternatives have previously been discussed by Lockhart (1985).

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRE-DEVELOPMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The history of Native economic development assistance plans strongly attests to the dangers in utilizing *only* conventional economic feasibility criteria in the planning, organization and management of community-based Native projects. Also required for successful development is an understanding of the impact of any proposed project upon the community's social and political processes. For without a reasonably good "cultural fit" at the outset, or a viable strategy whereby mutual socio-technical adaptive mechanisms may be phased into the development plan in the right sequence, the risk of rejection by members of the community, leading to economic non-viability is high - irrespective of the more conventional economic feasibility indicators.

As a consequence, the widely perceived need of Native people to lessen dependency on, and control by, outside agencies in the economic life of their communities requires special pre-developmental assessment techniques. Such an assessment should be particularly sensitive to the underlying sources of past developmental failures as well as successes. There is a particular need for measurement tools capable of assessing in advance the degree and kind of community participation that is possible and probable in any developmental proposal as well as the potential willingness among outside "stakeholders" to accept such participation.

Important also to pre-developmental assessment is a sensitivity to political and social, as well as economic, developmental needs. For without parallel, or in some cases compensatory, effort in these key "human developmental" areas, narrowly focused economic planning, even if it succeeds in its own terms, may increase rather than decrease Native cultural assimilation and/or dependency.

Pre-development assessment should also include some thoughtful and creative analysis of the most appropriate work design and organization of new enterprises from the perspective of traditional patterns. The mainstream industrial ethos' universal application of the one person, one job within set

time allocations is neither necessary nor necessarily an optimal arrangement for many kinds of work activity as the few industrial experiments in job enlargement, job sharing, variable hours and take-home work have demonstrated. In the context of developing "modern" cash economy enterprises within "traditional" economy cultures, the building in from the outset of variable and diversified individual participation often spells the difference between success and failure in both economic and social terms.

Similarly, early consideration must be given to the distribution of responsibilities and benefits. The more that a culturally sensitive social assessment reveals the community social processes to be based upon traditional collective reciprocity norms, the more important it is to ensure the widest distribution of "ownership", not just in a legal sense but also in terms of decision-making involvements.

The question of how "profits" are to be disposed of needs also to be considered early if later social and political problems are to be avoided. Certainly community-based development needs to consider other rationales beside the conventional textbook business firm options. For example, several of the Native development projects the authors have been associated with utilized the economic surplus from newer cash economy enterprise to revitalize run-down traditional activity. While these traditional economic activities never returned "profits", and therefore would by conventional economic assessment be considered unworthy for "reinvestment", the social regeneration "benefits" to band members who were otherwise caught up in very individually and socially costly activities was beyond conventional benefit-cost measures. Blisshen et al (1979) provide a more complete account of research specifically undertaken to identify community-based pre-developmental impact assessment criteria.

OPERATIONALIZATION: THE TRENT UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE

Given the above discussion, it seems self-evident that many of the conventional academic norms and most of the academic practices mitigate against such a broadly integrative, community-based partnership model. The convention that fragments holistic knowledge needs into mutually exclusive "disciplines"; the norms that separate research from instruction except at the highest post-graduate level; the prejudice that views only academically certified knowledge as trustworthy; the status distance crutches required by those faculty members who isolate themselves from wider social involvements; and the vestiges of an elite tradition that views minority university participation as a right-of-passage by which otherwise lost souls are offered salvation from the assumed "cultural deprivation" of family and community - all mitigate against operationalizing such an action research, action learning model.

Similarly, anyone familiar with the highly bureaucratized agency system which until recently maintained a complete, but also completely fragmented, jurisdiction over Native-related opportunity funding would not anticipate much support for such an integrated approach. Indeed, one of the problems associated with the transfer of Native entitlement and service administration from govern-

ment to Band level is the extent to which Native administrators themselves become committed to the same bureaucratic fragmentation as a perceived necessity for maintaining the flow of funding. As a consequence of this, plus the "band aid" demands on limited discretionary budgets, significant material support from Native organization sources could not be expected, at least until the concept is well demonstrated.

These pragmatic inhibitors notwithstanding, a group of Trent faculty from the Native Studies Department, the Administrative and Policy Studies Programme and the Frost Centre for Canadian Heritage and Development Studies (Marlene Castellano, Ian Chapman, Alexander Lockhart, and Don McCaskill) prepared a proposal entitled "An Integrative Approach to Native Socio-Economic Development Planning, Evaluation and Training Programmes". While this proposal is too detailed for presentation here, its basic outline has been reproduced in an Appendix.

Without prior consultation this proposal asked for the impossible, i.e. approvals, fundings, commitments and participations from a wide range of institutions, associations and agencies all of which had some relevant jurisdiction but none of which normally collaborate and most of which have specific strictures against joint ventures. Nevertheless, we argued for a "consortium" approach to the three year seed funding which totalled close to one million dollars.

The bureaucratic agency responses were quite predictable. Lower level functionaries were clearly intimidated and took evasive action. Higher authority was generally positive over the concept but either argued for dismemberment, thus destroying its essential value, or begged time to try to facilitate inter-agency cooperation. To date, no such facilitation has occurred.

On the academic funding agency side, the response was equally predictable. This had been clearly signalled the previous year when we had sought a much smaller "pilot" funding (*circa* \$50,000) from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. In this instance our hopes were predicated upon meeting the criteria established by the Council's "Task Force on Native Community-Based Research".

The history of this "adventure" into the world of Native research needs by the nation's primary social science funding agency is itself relevant to our current discussion. Having become increasingly aware that the conventional academic funding norms did not meet the needs of those anxious to explore community-based alternatives, the Council took the positive step of establishing and funding a Task Force to investigate and recommend a remedy. This Task Force travelled extensively, soliciting both Native community and interested academic opinions. Expectations ran high after the Task Force completed its draft report and held a national conference at which all the contributors met for a collective review. As a consequence, the final report's analysis of the problem and ameliorative recommendations - which argued strongly for an integrated approach within a partnership model - were widely applauded amongst the Native constituency. The Council's response was to approve a request to its sponsor governmental department for a *separate* (and

not very large) funding that would be added onto, and not become a part of, the established research funding programme. Given such a frail commitment, it was not surprising that the governmental sponsor decided to shelve the request indefinitely. This left our pilot proposal in limbo, for, as the Council informed us, its community-based character most certainly rendered it ineligible within the normal research grant category.

We were, however, much more successful in convincing our own University's administration of both the academic and community-service merits of the proposal. Although there are certain distinctive features about Trent University that might predispose it toward such a project (e.g., its long-established commitment to inter-disciplinary programmes), the administration's prior involvement in the Native Studies Department's "partnership" initiative described in the above noted McCaskill (1985) reference was undoubtedly a critical factor in allaying traditional academic concerns.

As a consequence, the University's own institutional fund-raising resources were brought into play in helping to achieve independent funding. As of this writing, The Donner Canadian foundation, with matching funds from a private donor, has subscribed over \$600,000. Although this amount falls short of the original budget, it is quite adequate to ensure the project's beginning in the forthcoming (1986-87) academic year.

A CONCLUDING COMMENT

If there is a wider lesson to be learned from the Trent University experience, it is that despite the growing acceptance of the concept of Native self-determination, the institutional inertia that seeks to either *assimilate* or *isolate* Native development is not less pervasive within academe than elsewhere. Indeed, to a very significant degree, the established academic tradition is committed to a socio-culturally cooptive ideology. Essentially, it is simply assumed that those who come must be socialized, if they have not already been so equipped, into the dominant culture's, upper-middle strata view of the world. To the extent that this does not suit everyone who comes, provision is sometimes made for special programmes that support alternative views, but which also tend to be sufficiently insular to have very little influence upon the core disciplines where "operational" knowledge is generated and dispensed.

From the perspective of any discriminated against minority, the trick would seem to be to demand a sufficiently special programme to avoid being assimilated but also to insist upon sufficient integration into the mainstream to ensure access to, and influence over the way operational knowledge is generated and dispensed.

The model presented here emphasizes "partnership" in the area of control over Native relevant research and curriculum as a means of avoiding assimilation; and "integration" in the area of knowledge sharing between Native Studies and mainstream faculties as a means of overcoming ghettoization. This strategy is predicated upon the belief that if Native Studies Departments/Programmes are to avoid becoming unintended agents of either assimilation or isolation, then

they must seek ways of building bridges to mainstream knowledge sources within their host institution on behalf of their client constituency. Such bridges must ensure that the intellectual and cultural traffic flows both ways. This is crucial not only because the acceptance of a one-way flow from the mainstream to the "needy" is the very epitome of colonial paternalism, but because it is abundantly evident that the mainstream of so called "Western culture" is itself in desperate need of revitalization and renewal. While it would be putting too large a burden upon an already severely pressed culture to expect Native people to lead a wider cultural revolution, it is surely not asking too much of the Nation's universities to meet Native people half way in their efforts to achieve their own renaissance.

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APPENDIX

THE PROPOSAL IN OUTLINE

The proposal has three components that inter-relate and operate concurrently over a three year funding period:

Research and Documentation

A research and documentation project aimed at providing a relevant and accessible set of tested Native community-based pre-developmental assessment and planning tools which have been demonstrated to be successful in the terms discussed above. The project would include the preparation of specific support materials useful in furthering these community-based economic development processes as well as documentation of the pre-requisites necessary for viable application. This component would broaden the base of the already established and tested models of economic development and would consolidate such crucial understandings into an integrated whole in forms which spoke directly to the economic development needs of Native communities.

Outreach, Facilitation and Demonstration

As a way of both field testing the research documentation and support material packaging and of providing some immediate "pay offs" in the form of real assistance to Native client groups and an ongoing "demonstration" of its commitment to new economic development approaches that are designed to avoid the pitfalls of the past, the research group would take on a limited number of actual facilitation projects in Native communities. In addition to replicating and extending the established facilitative approaches, this component would include an ongoing monitoring capacity that would extend through, and then on its own volition, beyond the three year funding period. The value of such monitoring is two fold. First, government and private agencies with an interest in supporting Native economic development will get early and continuing indicators of progress including "live" demonstrations of potential value to groups participating in similar ventures. Second, it is only through regular long-term monitoring that real knowledge of downstream values is accumulated and rendered systematically understandable so that mistakes are not repeated and successful approaches are not lost. In addition to the projects selected for research-based intervention, other comparable projects could be provided with similar monitoring as a 'control' for comparative evaluation purposes. The community projects selected as sites for outreach and facilitation could be referred to the proposal group by N.E.D.P. or other supporting agencies, or alternatively the research team could negotiate appropriate participation from its own quite extensive Native community network.

Both the Research and Demonstration Projects will be overseen by a Research Team composed of members of the Native community, the Research and Project Director and Research and Demonstration Project Associates. Its responsibilities will include setting project goals, training and supervising research assistants, co-ordinating field activities and publishing research results.

Training and Education Programme

Given that the successful application of this pre-developmental preparatory

approach is dependent upon the availability of facilitators with both inherent "understandings" of particular Native situations and trained skills in economic development and management, it is important that as the approach demonstrates to potential users its ability to take into account the particular "understandings", it also be able to provide the required training so that its advantages may be more widely utilized.

Within the limitations imposed by commitments to wider academic obligations, the Native Studies Department and the Administrative and Policy programme at Trent University have been providing such training at the diploma and first degree levels while a major component of Trent's interdisciplinary Frost Centre for Canadian Heritage and Development Studies has been fostering the basic research and post-graduate level programmes in this area. These collaborative programmes have also been active in building bridges to other relevant institutions, as well as involving a number of independent workers in the field, including and especially Native leaders and elders. While this pioneering work has born considerable fruit, the critical density required to achieve a sustained momentum has been hard to achieve within the current higher educational support constraints. As a consequence, much more rapid and effective progress could be made if additional instructional and field supervision resources could be made available at the institutional level as an extension of the research and facilitating functions.

The proposal therefore includes a request for resources that would permit the integration of those involved in the first two components with the further development and implementation of economic development and management training from diploma to post-graduate levels. It is this component that would ensure the continued expansion of the human resources required to act as pre-developmental facilitators as well as those who could continue to refine and document the overall approach.

The following is a preliminary summary of the Native Management and development Programme to be offered at Trent University beginning in 1985:

Outline of Academic Programming

The academic programmes are designed to accommodate the needs of two types of students. First, individuals now working in the field of Native economic development or management and who are unable to interrupt their careers to attend university of training programmes full-time but who wish to upgrade their skills and knowledge in this area, and second, individuals who wish to enrol in an integrated full-time programme of studies. With these two types of individuals in mind the programmes will be delivered at Trent University in Peterborough, at the Anigawincig Institute and at selected Native communities on a part-time basis.

There will be four related academic levels in which students can enrol. Each is designed in recognition of the diversity of academic backgrounds with which Native people approach study in this area. They are inter-connected in that graduates from one programme will be eligible for admission into the next

higher level. The initial design phase of the training and education component of the Project will be supervised by a curriculum Team composed of the Programme co-ordinator and curriculum consultant. Its responsibilities will include liaison with the Native community, selecting appropriate off-campus instruction sites and overseeing Programme planning and curriculum development.

Briefly, the proposed programmes are as follows:

1. Workshop and Short Courses

Non credit or pre-university.

Provided on contract to community groups.

Topics to include: - community needs assessment

- proposal writing

- planning for economic development

Delivered by the Anigawincigig Institute, a non-profit corporation associated with Trent University.

2. Diploma Programme - Native Management and Development Studies

New programme but similar in structure to existing Native Studies Diploma Programme.

Two-year, eight-course university programme.

Full-time, four courses each year selected from Native Studies and Administrative and Policy Studies programmes. The four courses to include one special academic skill development course and three university courses.

Part-time, off campus - various courses offered in selected Native communities leading to Diploma over a fixed period of time.

Admission open to students with Ontario Grade 12 (Grade 11 after 1987) and "mature students" with appropriate backgrounds.

3. Three Year Undergraduate Degree Programme - Bachelor of Arts (Native Management and Development Studies emphasis)

Three year, fifteen course-credit, ordinary degree programme.

Core courses now offered in Native Studies and Administrative and Policy studies.

Additional specialized courses to be developed.

Offered at Trent to full and part-time students and to part-time

students in selected Native communities.

Students admitted in programme under Trent University academic regulations.

4. Four Year Honours Degree Programme - Bachelor of Administrative Studies (Native Management and Development Studies emphasis)

Same as 3. above except a four-year twenty-course credit, honours programme.

5. Graduate Programme - Master of Arts in Canadian Heritage and Development Studies (Native Studies Emphasis)

Qualified students admitted on the basis of their background experience and interest in specifically relevant Native community-based developmental research.

Combined course and applied research leading to thesis.

Two year to completion expectation.

Applied skills emphasized.

Governing Structure

A fundamental assumption regarding the design and implementation of all three components of the project is that accountability to the Native community is essential. Native representatives need to be involved in all facets of decision making from the establishment of project goals through to the governing of the ongoing projects and academic training programmes. Their expertise and experience are necessary to ensure that the research and training are consistent with Native economic and cultural priorities and involve the use of Native resource persons and facilities to the fullest extent possible. In this way, the norm of Native "ownership" of the project will be established from the outset.

In addition, the project must place the highest priority on the provision of quality research and training as measured by both Native community and non-Native academic, industry or agency standards. For these reasons it is especially important that educators with expertise in Native education, economic development and management studies be involved in the development and delivery of the training programmes and that these programmes be recognized as accredited institute or university programmes.

These concerns suggest that a central feature of the three components of the project be the establishment of a close working relationship between representatives of the Native community and educators from Trent University as partners in this educational venture. Such a partnership has been successful in

the past in administering a course in Native Economic Development and Small Business Management at Trent (See McCaskill, 1983) and is presently being used as a model for the governance of the Anigawincigig Institute for Native Training, Research and Development.

The Board of Directors will be administratively accountable to Trent University but responsible for reflecting the priorities of the Native community. In this partnership between an educational institution and the Native community it is essential to recognize that the research projects and training programmes can only succeed through maintaining responsiveness to the needs of the Native community, congruence with the priorities of both partners and recognition for delivering excellent research and education.

The responsibilities of the Board of Directors shall be :

1. To formulate policy and oversee the development and implementation of the three components of the Project
2. To meet regularly to review activity reports from the Research and Demonstration Project Director and Management and Development Studies Co-ordinator
3. To maintain liaison with Native communities and organizations with respect to Project activities
4. To maintain links with Trent University to ensure that Project activities are consistent with university policies and standards
5. To monitor the disbursement of project funds in accordance with the guidelines established by the granting agencies and the management practices of Trent University.