



Northern Environmental and Conservation Sciences:

An example of a College- University partnership in the north



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Yukon College:

- Main campus is in Whitehorse, plus 12 community campuses
- The only post-secondary institution in Yukon
- ~1200 students in credit programs
- Becomes Yukon University in May 2020 (first university north of 60 in Canada)

B.Sc. in Northern Environmental and Conservation Sciences (ENCS): what is it?

- Joint degree program between Yukon College and University of Alberta - established in January 2010
- Partnership between YC School of Science, U of Alberta Faculties of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences (ALES) and Native Studies
- Built on existing B.Sc. ENCS program at U of A
- Northern program is the “Northern Systems Major” of the ENCS degree
- Reflects the Yukon’s unique environmental, cultural, and social realities, engages students to address complex environmental and social issues affecting the north



Bachelor of Science in Northern Environmental and Conservation Sciences – why is it?

- Goal: To offer students in northern Canada increased access to advanced post-secondary science programming in or near to their home communities
- Developed partly at the request of local government agencies (federal, territorial, First Nations) – need for local degree completion option; first cohort focused on these students



Why a partnership with U of Alberta?

- YC did not want a strict “science” degree – also wanted focus on indigenous self-governance context of the north
- U of A has a 5-yr joint degree program in Environmental & Conservation Sciences and Native Studies - provided an excellent model for what YC wanted



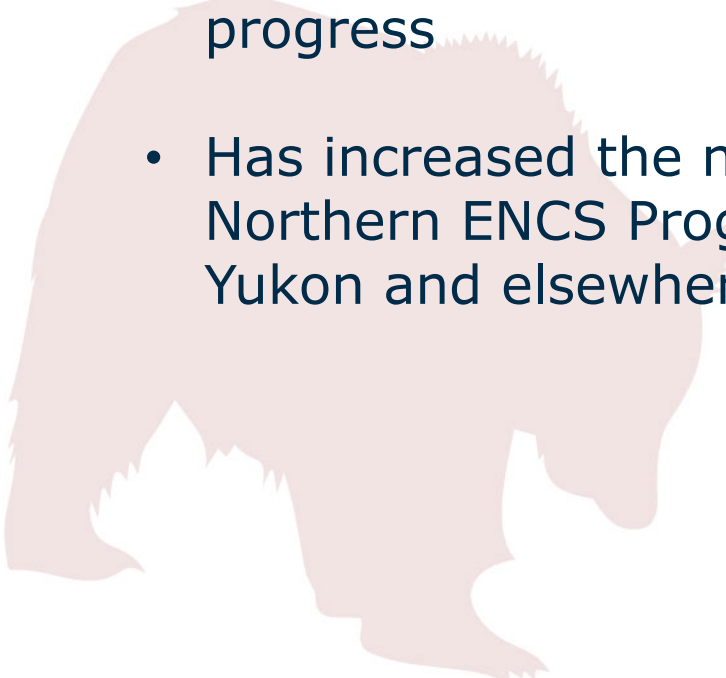
Program Format

- “2+2” model – two years in a science-based diploma program, then two years in the Northern ENCS degree program
- Students complete years 1 & 2 at YC or elsewhere, then apply to U of A for transfer.
- All coursework is completed at YC in Whitehorse (some can be completed by webconference from community campuses)
- Receive a U of A B.Sc. in Environmental & Conservation Sciences, with a major in Northern Systems



Program Format, cont'd

- YC developed a new diploma, “Northern Science - ENCS Stream” as a dedicated, streamlined pathway into the ENCS degree program
 - Offers optimal transferability
 - Official block transfer agreement with U of A in progress
 - Has increased the number of students coming into the Northern ENCS Program from high school (both from Yukon and elsewhere).



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Program Overview – multi-disciplinary:

Establishing Foundations

- Wildlife Ecology and Management
- Adaptation to Northern Environments
- Experimental Design and Analysis
- Research Methods in Indigenous Studies
- Critical Thinking and Communication
- Ecology of Northern Landscapes



Understanding Context

- Environmental Policy
- Environmental and Resource Economics
- Public Participation and Conflict Resolution
- Circumpolar Studies



Applying Knowledge

- Topics in Northern Resource Management
- Environmental Assessment
- Climate Change and the North
- Land-use Planning in the North
- Endangered Species



Tuition and Fees

- Students pay tuition and off-campus student fees to U of A, and student fees to YC
- Operated on cost-recovery basis
- Students have computing and library privileges at both institutions



Coordination and Instruction

- Director, Dr. Fiona Schmiegelow, first U of A professor appointed outside of Alberta
- Coordinator, Dr. Kathryn Aitken, YC faculty member; adjunct professor U of A
- U of A faculty by webconference
- YC faculty
- Sessional instructors



Coordination and Instruction

- Collaborative Teaching Agreement
- “Cross-listed” courses
- Joint course syllabi – template example:



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[U OF A COURSE NUMBER] / [YC COURSE NUMBER]

[U OF A COURSE NAME] / [YC COURSE NAME]

In [Fall/Winter] [YEAR], [YC COURSE NUMBER], [*YC Course Name*], is being offered at Yukon College concurrent with the University of Alberta's [U OF A COURSE NUMBER], [*U of A Course Name*], as part of the Northern Environmental and Conservation Sciences, B.Sc. Program. All students registered in [YC COURSE NUMBER] or [U OF A COURSE NUMBER] must adhere to requirements outlined in this course syllabus. University of Alberta students must also be aware of, and adhere to, the University's Code of Student Behaviour, referenced in the outline; Yukon College students must be aware of, and adhere to, Yukon College's Academic Regulations, also referenced in the outline.

Steering Committee

- Joint committee with 16 members
- U of A Deans, YC Deans and Chair; U of A and YC Registrars; Program Director, Program Coordinator; U of A ALES Student Services
- Attempt to meet 2x per year by videoconference



Challenges

- Enrollment numbers – very small by U of A standards BUT YC students tend to be well-funded
- Mixture of part time and full time students; lack of cohesive cohorts and huge variation in academic backgrounds so there is much diversity in program stages among students
- Physical distance from U of A and general logistics of program coordination, delivery
- Remote delivery of courses – Yukon Internet can be an issue, technology issues



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Successes

- First graduate in May 2013 - the first B.Sc. degree conferred north of 60° in Canada!
- YC acknowledged on U of A degree parchment
- 40 graduates as of 2019
 - 5 have continued to grad school
 - Most are now working in government (First Nation, territorial, federal), consulting, industry



Successes and new initiatives

- “Semester in the North” program for Edmonton-based ENCS students to come to YC for courses
- Increased # of Yukon-based field schools for local and Outside students:
 - “Northern Exposures” fall and winter courses during Reading Breaks
 - “A River Runs Through It” August field school – Yukon and Stewart Rivers
- Increasing enrollment from outside Yukon – minimal program promotion but now have students from NWT, QC, ON, BC, etc.



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Program information:
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Thank you!
Questions?