



Following the Path

The report examines how post-secondary institutions (PSIs) have adjusted their implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation 94 Calls to Action (TRC) from the perspectives of Building Brighter Future (BBF) Recipients enrolled from May 2020 and 2021.



Financial strain was a major barrier

73% agreed or strongly agreed that financial constraints were a challenge to their education.

On the Financial Anxiety Scale, BBF applicants averaged **29.9**, compared with **19.88** and **17.99** in two U.S. student studies.

Students who had received an Indspire bursary reported lower financial anxiety than those who had not.



Intensified mental health and obligation-related challenges

Strong agreement that:

- Mental health was a challenge to their education, rising from **29%** before the pandemic to **46%** during.
- Physical health was a challenge, rising from **12%** to **22%**.
- Interpersonal relationships were a challenge, rising from **12%** to **21%**.
- The stress of meeting all obligations was a challenge, rising from **31%** to **43%**.

89% reported increased mental health strain because of the pandemic.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Reduce financial strain
- Increase virtual mental health, academic, and cultural supports
- Self-determination over education, including Indigenous faculty, Indigenous knowledge, and meaningful involvement of Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community members in course content and delivery.

Our recommendations are intended to provide a clear vision for pathways forward to ensure that the progress of the TRC's Calls to Action can be implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic for the benefit of Indigenous post-secondary students.



Supports existed, but access and uptake remained limited

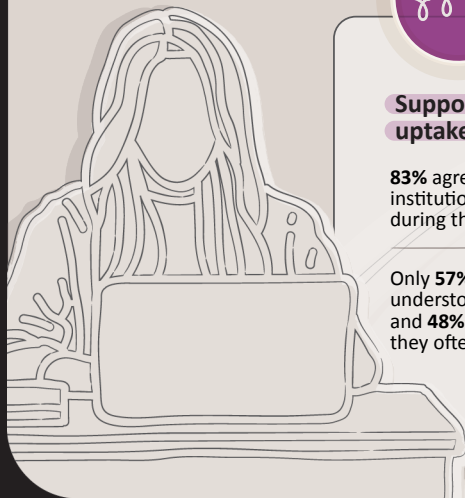
83% agreed or strongly agreed that their institution offered student support services during the pandemic.

Only **57%** agreed or strongly agreed that they understood how to access those supports, and **48%** disagreed or strongly disagreed that they often took advantage of them.



Cultural connection and Indigenous representation were deeply important

- Approx. **70%** agreed that accessing cultural supports was more difficult because of the pandemic.
- **84%** agreed there were fewer opportunities to attend cultural events than in previous years.
- **54%** were unsatisfied with the number of Indigenous Peoples teaching in their program.
- **83%** said they would do more courses, research, or assignments on Indigenous topics if more knowledgeable professors were available.



FOLLOWING THE PATH

