



History Program
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“The Development of Native Studies at Canadian Universities Four Programs, Four Provinces, Four Decades,”

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ABSTRACT

This study traces the development of Native Studies at Canadian universities from its ivory tower origins through its gradual descent to the grass roots by examining four programs which emerged in four different decades in four different provinces. The unique characteristics of the programs and the circumstances which led to these differences, namely, the times in which each program was established, the location of the program, the program's structure, and the level of involvement of the First Nations in each university are explored.

The study demonstrates that since Native Studies first burst upon the academic scene in the late sixties, the programs have steadily increased their responsiveness to First Nations' needs by expanding the curriculum, increasing the participation of Native students and instructors, reaching out to the communities, and involving First Nations people as cultural consultants and throughout the universities' governing bodies. Through a series of interviews with those involved in the programs and an examination of university records, the differences in the origins of the four programs and the unique ways in which each program has approached Native Studies are revealed.