

LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY

THE UNIVERSITY THAT WASN'T:
THE UNIVERSITY OF CANADA NORTH, 1970 - 1985

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE
DIVISION OF ARTS AND SCIENCE IN CANDIDACY FOR THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

BY

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[doi: 10.13140/2.1.3043.2320](https://doi.org/10.13140/2.1.3043.2320) (issued by ResearchGate, 20 December 2014)

WHITEHORSE, YUKON

SUBMITTED FEBRUARY 1994
COMPLETED APRIL 1994
DEGREE GRANTED 23 NOVEMBER 1994

PDF version May 2000

Note that the page numbers in the PDF version of this document do not correspond to the submitted version of this thesis. Citations of this document should be to the PDF Edition, 2000.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to acknowledge the assistance of Yukon College, of the Dean of Academic Studies, Mr. Aron Senkpiel, and of Lakehead University Centre for Northern Studies for supporting this project, and of the Northern Sciences Training Program for grants that permitted travel to Inuvik and Yellowknife to examine archival materials and personal files of some of those involved and to conduct interviews.

The author would also like to acknowledge the assistance of Dr. Ernest Epp, Lakehead University, Department of History and Dr. Brent Slobodin, Yukon College, for their comments on earlier drafts of this thesis. She would especially like to thank Dr. W. R. Morrison for his guidance and for putting up with her odd ideas and interpretations these last few years.

Thanks are also due to Garth Graham (Ottawa), Richard Rohmer (Toronto), Arnold Edinburgh (Toronto), Dick Hill (Inuvik), Nellie Cournoyea (Yellowknife), Ron Veale (Whitehorse), W. Peter Adams (Peterborough), John Hoyt (Whitehorse), Frank Fingland (Whitehorse), Renée Alford (Whitehorse), YTG Department of Education and Julie Cruikshank (Vancouver) among others for sharing their files and/or their recollections of their UCN participation.

Thanks also to the staff of the Resource Centre at Yukon College, of the Yukon Archives and of the Northwest Territories Archives.

DEDICATION

For my mother, Charlotte Mary Keens Graham,
my sister, D. Victoria, my brother, Jeremy
and
In memory of my father, Alan Murray Graham,
and of my friend, Stephen S. Papazian;

Unconditional supporters all.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACND	Advisory Committee on Northern Development
ANSI	Association of Non-Status Indians (Yukon)
AUCC	Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada
CBC	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
COPE	Committee for Original Peoples' Entitlement
CYI	Council for Yukon Indians
DCF	Donner Canadian Foundation
DIAND	Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development
DNANR	Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources
ExCom	Executive Committee (Yukon Territorial Government)
GNWT	Government of the Northwest Territories
IBNWT	Indian Brotherhood of the Northwest Territories; the Dene Nation
NAC	National Archives of Canada
NANR	Northern Affairs and National Development, Department of
UCN	The University of Canada North
YA	Yukon Archives
YNB	Yukon Native Brotherhood
YTG	Yukon Territorial Government

INTRODUCTION

The creation of The University of Canada North, by federal letters patent in 1971, marks the beginning of a revealing episode in northern Canadian history that spans almost fifteen years. The brain-child of Toronto lawyer Richard Rohmer and thirty residents of the two territories, The University of Canada North (UCN) appeared to provide suitable and useful post-secondary education to all northerners regardless of ethnic background,¹ to control and contribute to northern research, and, by its very existence, to grant northern society a cachet of stability that it did not yet appear to have. The fact that it was initiated not by government, but by a group of interested individuals placed the UCN both in an emerging northern practice of attempting to find northern solutions to northern problems and in the growing northern rejection of its traditional colonial relationship with the South. The growing strength of the territorial governments and northern First Nations organisations was reflected in northern society by a popular sense of pride and an unwillingness to continue in the established colonial relationship with the federal government. This attitude resulted in an intense and widespread desire to wrest control of day-to-day living and governing from the distant hands of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Different groups in the North responded in different ways. The First Nations established organisations to address their concerns. Non-Aboriginal northerners responded by creating societies to provide local solutions and local voices to the insufficiencies they saw. The territorial governments expanded their jurisdictions through a series of transfer agreements with the federal government.

The UCN, too, was a response. The UCN founders, however, faced the difficult question of whose vision of the North would be institutionalized in the new university. There were no precedents for inter-ethnic discussion of the question. There were no guidelines for reaching a consensus on the shape and essence of northern society and culture. Thus, from its founding

¹ I use this term to refer generally to residents of the northern territories. There is a great deal of debate about what the term means exactly, to whom it applies, and whether there is some kind of unspoken residency requirement.

the UCN directors were faced with reconciling the many different opinions about the nature, form and purpose of their new institution.²

The planners first tried to cope with the problem by employing organisational measures. They recognized that the two territories were vastly different because of population composition and distribution, geography, governmental sophistication, general levels of educational attainment in the population and underlying social goals. Thus, from the start, they adopted an administrative structure for the UCN that would allow the directors and members in each territory to form separate divisions.³

The very social and political conditions, however, that led to the creation of The University of Canada North all too quickly became serious obstacles. The relative maturity of the two territorial governments, the interest of the federal government, the lack of consensus about the vision of northern society, and the growing Native activist movements ensured that the university did not become the kind of institution its founders had envisaged. The university ultimately became the victim of its organizers' own confusion about its role in northern society. This statement should not be taken as denigrating the efforts of the UCN supporters. The UCN would not have survived as long as it did without their continued advocacy. In truth, the story of the UCN is the story of many vitally-concerned individuals, some of whom I have had the pleasure of meeting. The organizers, however, were trying to create an institution that would respond to and embody a northern vision of the North while that vision was undergoing changes that were much greater than it was possible to discern at the time.

Contributing to and because of that changing vision, fundamental alterations in social relations were beginning to take place in the North in the 1970s. Those changes began to transfigure northern society and the relationships between the First Nations and the non-Aboriginal peoples, the people and the governments. By the end of the decade, the social reality that had engendered The University of Canada North was no longer so relevant or so pressing.

The actions of the organizers, too, contributed to the UCN's lack of success (if success

2 The problems arose because there were differing opinions about what sort of institution might conceivably meet all the needs and expectations of the majority of northern residents in all their manifest distinctions.

3 This is a source of some confusion and is discussed further in the text. The by-laws attached to the letters patent did not divide the UCN into two divisions. There was a provision for an Executive Committee of twelve members, two of which were to be the chair of the "Yukon Division" and the chair of the "Northwest Territories Division." In practice, the language led the officers to act as though each division was, in fact, autonomous.

be measured in buildings, classrooms, and faculty alone). Most were only able to devote their leisure time to the UCN. All had other obligations that needed their attention: family, employment, and other community efforts. While many had been to university, few had formal training or experience in operating a post-secondary institution. Equally implicated in the UCN's failure to thrive were the twin problems of lack of widespread, grass-root support for the project and the near impossibility of raising sufficient amounts of money to plan for the university's development and to offer any courses.

The successes of the university were modest but important nonetheless. The two divisions went their separate ways early in 1972. The Northwest Territories Division recognized that elementary and secondary education in that territory had to be improved to ensure a higher graduation rate of First Nations students before any planning for post-secondary education would be needed. The Yukon Division operated in entirely different circumstances. The possibility of constructing, staffing, and operating a Whitehorse Campus of the UCN was much greater. The division, however, was unable to raise money to commission a plan to develop the campus. It lowered its sights and focused on ways to offer university-level courses, public education and research. Thus, much of the story of the UCN is the story of the Yukon Division and much of the analysis in this thesis refers to the situation in the Yukon.

Today in the territories, the legacy of the University of Canada North remains. Both territories now have publicly-funded college systems, Arctic College⁴ and Yukon College, with satellite campuses in most of the communities. Both colleges have become members of the Association for Canadian Universities for Northern Studies. That organization is actively examining ways in which the northern colleges might play a greater role in the study of the North. Neither is a degree-granting institution at present, but Yukon College appears to have the potential to be the first. Yukon College brokers some degree programs, establishing a contract with a university to offer a specific degree program. To date this has proven an expensive but useful way of bringing degree programs – Master of Education, Master of Public Administration, Bachelor of Social Work, Bachelor of Education etc., – to the Yukon.

This thesis, using archival sources, government records, newspaper accounts, interviews, secondary sources and documents from the personal collections of people involved in the UCN,

⁴ Nunavut implementation schemes resulted in the division of Arctic College in 1994 to offer services separately to Nunavut and the Northwest Territories.

proposes to examine first the social, political and educational development of the territories. This will provide a sketch of the background against which The University of Canada North was conceived and established. This is followed by a discussion of previous attempts to establish a northern university, both by northerners and by others. An essentially narrative account then traces the development of the University of Canada North from 1970 to 1985, focusing on episodes of particular importance. A final chapter discusses, in general terms, the motivations of the various players, the difficulties that ultimately prevented The University of Canada North from achieving its aims and examines the role the UCN played both as an educational endeavour and as an indicator of the social and cultural changes in the Canadian North in the 1970s.

CHAPTER 1

SOCIAL PRECONDITIONS OF THE THE UNIVERSITY OF CANADA NORTH, 1965-1970

Any account of The University of Canada North must first be placed in the context of northern politics and society as they were between 1965 and 1970. This is important because The University of Canada North was much more than a failed attempt to establish a university. Its story is also a vehicle for examining the tensions, the difficulties and the dichotomies of an important period in northern Canadian history.

Territorial Society, 1965-1970

For the Canadian North, the late 1960s and 1970s were years of profound change. The two territories had governments that were gradually expanding their jurisdictions through devolution of federal programs. Developers began to focus their attention on the region. Since the 1950s, the North had been touted as the nation's storehouse of wealth. In the late 1960s, the discovery of oil and gas deposits in Alaska added a new impetus to all forms of northern development. This urgency led to proposals for mega-projects, the most famous of which were the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline proposal and the Hydro-Quebec development. Questions about the environmental and social effects of the former led to the appointment of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry. Justice Thomas Berger's inquiry showed Canadians clearly that northern residents, aboriginals and Non-aboriginals alike, felt their ways of life were personally satisfying and worth protecting from the effects of mega-development.

In the 1960s and through the 1970s Canadians were desperately concerned with discovering a national identity. It seemed vital to our national wellness to know exactly what a Canadian was and what it meant to be a Canadian. A similar identity crisis was occurring in the North. On the one hand, encouraged by the myth of national wealth, most Canadians were

coming to see that the North was more than just a cold, dark, isolated place where only the socially dysfunctional, the greedy, the adventurous, and the aboriginal lived. It was a national storehouse of wealth. On the other, northerners, many of whom considered the North their home and homeland, began to realize that things were changing quickly and that a new North was emerging. Many were troubled by the change.

Developing government, expanding businesses and new mining and exploration ventures attracted different kinds of people to the North. By the late 1960s, government had supplanted mining and business as the most attractive force, which changed the face of the urban North. Young professionals saw Whitehorse and Yellowknife as likely places to begin careers, with excellent prospects for advancement. Their numbers were relatively small but their effect would become considerable. The gradual development of a small class of northern urban professionals added a new dimension to the social structure of the larger centres. These people brought southern-bred expectations about quality of life and level of services that could not, at least initially, be easily met. Some embraced the rough "frontier life" with relish, others suffered it. The result was that new forms of northern identity began to be constructed; the newly-arrived needed a way to justify their immigration to and residence in the isolated communities of the territorial North. The residents needed a way to understand the changes. This account of The University of Canada North sheds light on the difficulties a small group of northerners faced when they tried to institutionalise their vision of the northern identity and northern society.

It would be incorrect to suggest that, in 1970, the social situation was identical in both territories. The two territories were and continue to be fundamentally different. Despite the ease with which people talk about "The Canadian North" meaning the entire territorial North it was not until the mid-1980s that political development had propelled social development in the larger communities only to anything like an equal level. Even today comparisons between the two territories must be drawn with the utmost care.

Despite fundamental differences in the social and physical development of the two capitals, the arrival of the government-employed cadre of workers and their families, their attendant physicians, lawyers, accountants and business people, affected Whitehorse and Yellowknife in similar ways. Their desire for nice places to live, shop and play energized the construction, the service, and the social industries and encouraged additional migration. Their numbers were fairly considerable. In Whitehorse in 1966, after a decline of 5.2 percent since

1961, the population of the city stood at 4,771. It had risen 136.4 percent by 1971, to 11,277.¹ The average annual net migration rate was 28.9 per thousand for the same period, showing that most of this population growth was the result of movement into the territory.² In Yellowknife, the population rose only 19 percent between 1961 and 1966. The territorial government was installed in the city in 1967. Census figures show the population increased 56.8 percent between 1966 and 1971, from 3,741 to 5,867.³ The combined territorial net migration was -1251 between 1961 and 1966 but was +3,355 in the five years between 1966 and 1971.⁴ The development that resulted from this growth generally took place without much involvement of the First Nations inhabitants. Under the *Indian Act*, their social status and political power was negligible. Some newcomers ignored them, others became their advocates.

By 1970, the two capitals had sloughed off much of their frontier aspect. A tourist, Edward McCourt, wrote, in 1968, that Whitehorse "hardly lives up to the promise of its location and name."⁵ The image he had of Whitehorse was of

a rugged frontier community swarming with prospectors and miners, trappers and sporting girls. . . , where every man is as good as his neighbour, and suburbia, the service club, and the Home and School Association have not yet combined to ensnare and crush the ebullient human spirit.⁶

He was disappointed to discover that there was "no more evidence of the frontier spirit than is to be found in Moose Jaw or Medicine Hat."⁷ Jim Lotz, author of a book on development in the Yukon, wrote that in 1969,

The city and its surrounding areas are still a terrible mess – a scatter of settlements rather than a unity. Bus service was initiated throughout the area, but lasted only three months. But some consolidation has begun, and the worst of the shacks are disappearing; Whitehorse is sprucing itself up, becoming aware of its importance. . . . The city has a splendid site; it *could* be a good place to live in. Whitehorse is a well-administered city, and while it is not without its problems,

1 Bureau of Statistics, *Yukon Statistical Profile* (Whitehorse: Executive Council Office, n.d.), Table 2.4 "Yukon Population Figures, by Census Years, Yukon and Communities, (1901-1981)."

2 *Yukon Statistical Profile*, Table 3.4, "Average Annual Net Migration Rate Per Thousand."

3 Government of the Northwest Territories, Bureau of Statistics, "Census population, by Region and Community, 1961-1991."

4 Industry Trade and Commerce, *Canada Year Book 1974: An Annual Review of Economics, Social and Political Developments in Canada* (Ottawa: Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce, 1973), Table 4.5, 161.

5 Edward McCourt, *The Yukon and Northwest Territories, The Traveller's Canada* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1969), 28.

6 *Ibid.*

7 *Ibid.*

these are being tackled at the local level with vigour.⁸

Yellowknife, too, was changing. Since 1947, when the New Town site was laid out in response to the opening of the Giant Yellowknife Mine, it had been developing slowly. A hydro-electric power station on the Snare River gave the city a secure supply of electricity.⁹ By 1961 3,141 people lived in the city. Its location on the Canadian Shield meant it was possible to erect multi-storied buildings that were not feasible in Whitehorse. The first office tower, the Cunningham Building, was four storeys high. It became the offices of the new territorial government in 1967.¹⁰ In 1969, McCourt described Yellowknife as an "up-and-coming chamber-of-commerce-oriented" community.¹¹ It became an incorporated city in 1970 and its first highrise apartment building was finished in 1972.¹²

Thus, by 1970, northern society had reached a new stage. More non-Natives were moving to the territories to work for the various levels of government. The Native populations of both territories were becoming politically active. The Indian Brotherhood of the Northwest Territories, the Committee for Original People's Entitlement (COPE) and the Yukon Native Brotherhood were formed in these years and began to fight for redress on a variety of issues government policy, land claims, and education of vital concern to them. Even greater changes would occur in the ensuing decade.

Despite the founders' desire to remedy the near total lack of northern post-secondary education opportunities, The University of Canada North must not be interpreted solely as an educational venture. It should also be viewed as an expression of social consciousness, that is, of a recognition by northern residents that their part of Canada was worthy of closer scrutiny by its inhabitants and not solely by outside experts and researchers. The creation of The University of Canada North demonstrates that at least a small group of northern residents thought there were important issues that needed examination and vital questions that needed answering.

8 Jim Lotz, *Northern Realities: Canada-U.S. Exploitation of the Canadian North* (Chicago: Follett, 1971), 226.

9 Outcrop Ltd., *Northwest Territories Data Book: A Complete Information Guide to the Northwest Territories and its Communities, 1990/91* (Yellowknife: Outcrop, The Northern Publishers, Limited, 1990), 226.

10 Erik Watt, *Yellowknife: How a City Grew* (Yellowknife: Outcrop Ltd., The Northern Publishers, 1990), 70.

11 McCourt, *The Yukon and The Northwest Territories*, 127.

12 Watt, *Yellowknife*, 68.

The Territorial Governments

The following narrative provides an overview of the political milieu from which the University of Canada North emerged.

The Northwest Territories

The development of the government of the Northwest Territories (NWT) began in 1869 when the federal government passed the *Temporary Government Act*. The *Manitoba Act* of the following year contained new and permanent provisions for the government of North-West Territories. Refinements were made in 1875 when the *Manitoba Act* was amended and the *North-West Territories Act* passed. The Act established Battleford as the seat of government and created a Territorial Council with five appointed members. Provision was made for elected representatives when population levels rose sufficiently.¹³ By 1887 the population had increased to such levels that the federal government created a legislative assembly called the Territorial Council, headed by the Commissioner, with twenty-two elected members and three appointed legal advisors. Further amendments to the Act, in 1897, created an executive council that gave the territory province-like powers over specific legislative areas.

When the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan were created in 1905, the territory was reduced to its 1870 constitutional status. In 1905 the comptroller of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, Lieutenant-Colonel Fred White was named commissioner.¹⁴ An arrangement allowed for an appointed council of four members to which no one was appointed until 1921. In 1919, W. M. Corey, the Deputy-Minister of the Department of the Interior (the department then responsible for the Yukon and the Northwest Territories) succeeded White as Commissioner. For the next 44 years, the tradition held; it was not until 1963 that the positions were again separated. Until 1921 the Commissioner single-handedly held the powers of Lieutenant-Governor, Executive Council and Assembly.¹⁵ The work was not that onerous: no

¹³ The Act stipulated that would be when any area of 1,000 sq. mi. had at least 1,000 male British subjects over the age of 21.

¹⁴ Mark O. Dickerson, *Whose North?: Political Change , Political Development and Self-Government in the Northwest Territories* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1992), 29.

¹⁵ Gordon Robertson, *Northern Provinces: A Mistaken Goal* (Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1985), 3.

legislation was passed between 1905 and 1920.¹⁶ In reaction to a potential for oil exploration, a council was constituted in 1921. It was composed of six members, all of whom were senior civil servants in the departments responsible for various aspects of northern administration.¹⁷

Between 1930 and the late 1940s, the council increased its activity, primarily due to the beginning of mining ventures in the Yellowknife region, and later the regulation of American military activities in the eastern part of the territory. In 1939 the local administrative district of Yellowknife was created. In 1946 the first territorial resident, J. G. McNiven of Yellowknife, was appointed to the council.

Significant changes were made to the *Northwest Territories Act* during the 1950s. In 1951 the council was enlarged to eight members, three of whom were to be elected from the western part of the territory. Council meetings were to be held at least twice annually and one meeting had to be held in the territory. The following year saw the establishment of territorial courts and provisions for justices of the peace and police magistrates. In 1954 the electoral district boundaries were redrawn, creating four ridings, and in 1960 three members of the general public were appointed to the council.

The geographical imbalance in population and development in the Northwest Territories led to a suggestion, advanced in 1961, that the territory be divided in two to permit the western portion to have resident self-government. The proposal was earnestly debated at the federal level and the question reached the House of Commons in 1963 as Bills C-83 and C-84, the former creating the Mackenzie Territory and the latter the Nunassiatq Territory. In the months between the first and second readings, opposition was raised to the bills and they were sent to the Standing Committee on Mines, Forests and Waters for review.¹⁸ The bills were so delayed by the Standing Committee that they were not presented to the House before Parliament rose and so died on the Order Paper.

In April 1963, the newly-elected Pearson government established an advisory commission to report on the whole question of government in the Northwest Territories and appointed Dean A. W. R. Carrothers of the University of Western Ontario its chair. In his report, Carrothers

16 Northern Affairs and National Development, *The Northwest Territories Today: A Reference Paper for the Advisory Commission on the Development of Government in the Northwest Territories* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1965), 80.

17 *Ibid.*, and Dickerson, *Whose North?*, 30.

18 NANR, *The Northwest Territories Today*, 82.

advised against any form of administrative division of the territory. More importantly, the commission recommended a course of action that would grant the NWT powers of self-government.

In 1967, in response to the Carrothers report, the federal government transferred the seat of NWT government to Yellowknife. It devolved responsibility for education, small business, public works, social assistance and local government to the fledgling Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT).¹⁹ The GNWT delayed transfer of authority for education until 1969 and 1970 partly because it lacked employees.²⁰

By 1970, the GNWT apparatus was beginning to take shape. That year was designated as the territorial Centennial Year. Events related to the theme of "Territorial Unity" were held all over the territory. The NWT received a great deal of publicity when the Queen and Prince Philip paid an official visit and the first Arctic Winter Games were held in Yellowknife. Yet, despite the enthusiastic celebrations, there were realities to be faced: The federal government still firmly controlled the territory. It would not be for another four years that all members of the territorial council were elected and another sixteen before the Northwest Territories achieved a degree of responsible self-government.

The Yukon

The Yukon was elevated from the status of district of the North-West Territories²¹ to territory by the federal government in 1898 in response to the unwillingness of the North-West Territory's Regina government to share liquor tax revenues. Ottawa felt it should realize any profits of the gold rush as it was paying for the policing and administration of the district. Regina thought that any revenues should belong to it as Dawson City and the Klondike gold fields lay within the boundaries of the Yukon District of the North-West Territories. Ottawa disagreed and passed the *Yukon Act* in 1898 (assented to on 13 June 1898), creating a new territory with most of the same powers as the N-WT and governed by a federally-appointed commissioner

¹⁹ Gurston Dacks, "Political and Constitutional Development in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories: The Influence of Devolution" in *The Northern Review*, No. 5 (Summer 1990), 114.

²⁰ In the mid-1960s the territorial public service consisted of only the staff of the territorial liquor distribution structure and a tiny number of contract employees.

²¹ It had been created a district by Order-in-Council No. 2640 on 2 October 1895 and further established as a Judicial District 16 August 1897 by the Governor in Council.

and council.

The Commissioner-in-Council was allowed to pass ordinances affecting the regulation of local matters. In August 1898, the Act was amended to permit the election of two members out of six to the council. In May 1902 the *Yukon Act* was further amended to increase elected representation to five. In July 1908 the council was expanded to ten members all of whom were elected.²² After 1912, with declining gold revenues, a need for austerity forced the federal government to trim the size of the territorial government. In 1918, in the face of serious post-war inflation, the office of Commissioner was, for reasons of economy, amalgamated with that of Gold Commissioner. All local affairs were then handled by only three officials, the superintendent of public works, the superintendent of schools (also the principal of the Dawson school and the high school teacher) and the treasurer (who also had a portfolio of other titles and functions). Government representation in Whitehorse and Mayo was in the person of the agent who sold liquor in the community.

Through the "Lean Years," the situation remained more or less unchanged. In 1942, however, the territory was overwhelmed by the arrival of the 30,000 or so military and civilian builders of the Alcan (Alaska) Highway. During the construction, the territorial government was forced to expand its staff and to move temporarily many of its offices to Whitehorse. In 1948 the position of Commissioner was revived as chief executive officer of the Yukon. After the completion of the highway and the end of the war many of those who had come North remained. The population of Whitehorse jumped from 754 in 1941 to 2,594 in 1951.²³

In the 1950s, as the Yukon's population continued to grow, the government expanded. The method for funding the territorial government changed. Negotiated financial grants from the federal government gave the territory greater control over its financial affairs and discussions were soon underway to transfer the responsibility for welfare. Government business was, however, hampered by a reliance on river transport. In 1950, the seat of the territorial government was still at Dawson City. In 1951 DIAND approved the relocation of the government to Whitehorse, which was finally completed in March 1953. Until then, much of the territorial government's growth was in fact a reactivation and testing of the old structures, which soon

²² Steven Smyth, *The Yukon's Constitutional Foundation, Volume I: The Yukon Chronology* (Whitehorse: Northern Directories Ltd., 1991), 7-9.

²³ *Yukon Statistical Profile*, Table 2.4, "Yukon Population Figures, by Census Years, Yukon and Communities, (1901-1981)."

proved inadequate in the face of the increasing population.

By the late 1960s, the territorial government had been granted new areas of responsibility. A vocational school and correctional facilities had been built and a regional library system created. New government departments had been established to handle tourism and municipal development. Negotiations had begun with the federal government to transfer responsibility for such matters as justice, health care, and fresh-water fisheries along with the funds to support them. In 1966 the territorial Council passed an Autonomy Motion urging the federal government to implement a plan that would lead to provincial status within twelve years and control of Crown lands more immediately.²⁴ In response to this territorial agitation, the federal government authorized the formation of an Executive Committee that gave elected officials a role in overseeing the administration of government departments.

By 1970, the Yukon Territorial Government (YTG) had gained a modicum of control over territorial affairs and was poised for greater developments. The Commissioner continued to be appointed, though in the 1960s a precedent was set when two Yukon residents were consecutively appointed to the position.²⁵

In 1971, then, the territorial governments were at somewhat different levels of maturity yet there were some similarities between them. The federal government transfer payments were increasingly essential to both governments. In 1971, revenues from the territories amounted to only about 45% of total expenditures²⁶ and much of this money – tax revenue from alcohol sales for instance – came from the incomes that depended on federal transfer payments to individuals rather than directly to the Yukon Territorial Government (YTG).

Education in the Canadian North

The story of education in Canada's North begins in the nineteenth century with the missionary activities of the Protestant and Roman Catholic churches. Later, local schools were established at the sites of mines and trading posts. The final stage of this evolution is the assumption of control over education and the provision of facilities by various levels of

²⁴ There were also other demands. See Steven Smyth, *The Yukon's Constitutional Foundations, Volume 1*, 34.

²⁵ In 1967 the Territorial Council defeated a motion calling for the voters of the Yukon to elect the Commissioner.

²⁶ DIAND, *A Northern Political and Economic Framework* (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1988), 13.

government.²⁷

The *North-West Territories Act* of 1875 granted the territory authority over the education of non-Native school-age children. The federal government, under the provisions of the *British North America Act* and the *Indian Act*, was responsible for the education of Natives. As the *Yukon Act* was largely a copy of the *North-West Territories Act*, it too controlled non-Native education from its creation. In practice, though, the territories lacked the financial resources to provide much of an education system. Until World War II the Yukon was able to do little more than provide a modest public school system and an even more modest separate school system paid for from tax revenues and through arrangements with the federal government. The Northwest Territories did not have resident government until 1967 and was unable to assume total responsibility for education until 1970.

The Northwest Territories

Until the 1950s, there was no coherent system of education in the Northwest Territories. With the seat of territorial government at Ottawa and a small non-Native population, education was generally left in the hands of the missionaries. Local public schools were established in the late 1930s in Fort Smith and Yellowknife, where small mining communities had sprung up.²⁸ With regards to Natives, the policy of the Department of Indian Affairs was "to provide token education to Indians at minimum cost."²⁹ Until the end of the Depression, the churches, assisted by grants from the government, were the sole providers of education in the territory. Their efforts were inspired by a goal of assimilation and directed at teaching Indians vocational and agricultural skills. Much of this education was carried out in residential schools, where students were isolated from their families and their culture. The residential system did not reach every child of school age and in many areas, day schools were established to provide an opportunity for children and adults to acquire rudimentary English language and arithmetical skills.

The federal government began to acknowledge its responsibilities towards Indians and Inuit more completely during World War II. American military projects in the North exposed, to the nation and to the world, the desperate social and medical conditions of some northern

27 "Education in Canada's Northern Territories" ([ca. 1970]), 1.

28 *Ibid.*, 40.

29 Robert E. Johns, "History of Administration of Schools, N.W.T." (*musk-ox*, 18, 1976), 42.

Natives. The government's solution was to plan "to bring Native northerners to a position of being able to participate in the coming industrialization of the North."³⁰ Programmes were launched to improve Native standards of living by concentrating them in new settlements and providing medical care, welfare and Mothers' Allowance payments, and education.

By 1950, education in the Northwest Territories was under the control of some eight different authorities: "mission, the Federal Government, the Territorial Government, municipal groups, private citizens' groups and mining companies, were operating schools at various points."³¹ In 1952, the Department of Resources and Development was renamed the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources (NANR) and was made responsible for northern development in all its aspects. It established the Eskimo Affairs Committee to investigate the participation of Inuit in development. Its Sub-Committee on Eskimo Education decided, "that the Inuit should no longer be permitted to remain illiterate."³² As a result the NANR approved "a number of school and educational initiatives."³³

A major integrated federal school program was introduced to the Northwest Territories in 1955.³⁴ For reasons of efficiency, a decision was made that "the Federal Government, through the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, would operate the entire school system on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories."³⁵ Schools and student residences were built, first in the Mackenzie, and then across the territory to replace the church schools, though the churches were contracted to operate the student residences. In 1956 all mission school teachers became federal employees. The government aimed to have the infrastructure in place to provide education to all school-aged children by 1970.³⁶ By 1957 vocational training was being provided to Natives above school age, often as a substitute for

30 Morris Zaslow, *The Northward Expansion of Canada, 1914-1967* (Toronto: McClellan and Stewart, 1988), 311.

31 "Education in Canada's Northern Territories," 42.

32 R. J. Diubaldo, "You Can't Keep the Native Native" in Ken Coates and William R. Morrison, eds., *For Purposes of Dominion: Essays in Honour of Morris Zaslow* (North York, Ont.: Captus University Publications, 1989), 173.

33 *Ibid.*

34 National Archives of Canada (hereafter NAC), Records of the Northern Affairs Program, RG 85, Acc. 1989-90/233, Box 21, DIAND, "Senior Education Staff Conference, 1967, Summary of Proceedings."

35 "Education in Canada's Northern Territories," 44.

36 NANR, *The Northwest Territories Today*, 68.

basic education.³⁷

There were problems with this system. The curriculum and much of the teaching material was initially imported directly from Alberta.³⁸ By the early 1960s, the government was attempting to use more culturally-relevant teaching materials but only at the elementary level.³⁹ The curricula for secondary students were "closely related to those of the adjacent provinces in order to maintain a comparable graduating standard."⁴⁰ Despite the welter of curricula, the government thought the results encouraging:

The comparatively new school system has already had tremendous impact on the native peoples in the Territories and it has made the North a much more attractive place in which to live. Even now, the average native is staying longer in school and is attaining a level of education far beyond what was possible a few years ago.⁴¹

The program, however, was expensive. In 1963 the NWT education program alone cost 118.8 percent of total territorial revenues and the following year that figure had risen to 145.5 percent.⁴²

In 1967, arrangements were made for the creation of a Northwest Territories government and the transfer of some federal powers to it. While some jurisdictional transfers began almost immediately, the new government delayed the take-over of Western Arctic education until 1 April 1969. Control of Eastern Arctic education was transferred the following year. The transfer did not solve all the long-standing problems. There was uncertainty about the new government's educational policy. In addition, local involvement in education remained quite limited: Yellowknife had the only school board until 1985 and communities outside the capital had to rely on education committees that reported to regional councils that, in turn, provided recommendations to the government.⁴³

37 Bernie Hughes points out in his MA thesis, "Adult Education and Northern Development" (UBC, 1987), 27, that "the educators' knowledge of linguistics, language development in children, and second language acquisition was minimal; however sincere the educators in the 1940s, 50s, and 60s were, they still did not appreciate, nor fully comprehend the language and culture issue. Consequently, native students adults and youth were streamed into vocational programs as a convenient alternative to providing appropriate language instruction in English."

38 NAC, Records of the Northern Affairs Program, RG 85, Acc. 1989-90/233, Box 21, file "Educ N, Education in the North," Report of D.R. MacNeill, Native Liaison Section, 17/4/1978.

39 "Education in Canada's Northern Territories," 59-60.

40 NANR, *The Northwest Territories Today*, 70; see also "Education in Canada's Northern Territories," 59.

41 NANR, *The Northwest Territories Today*, 70.

42 *Ibid.*, 132.

43 Kenneth Coates and Judith Powell, *The Modern North: People, Politics and the Rejection of Colonialism* (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1989), 134.

The Yukon

The education situation in the Yukon was different in some ways and similar in others. As in the NWT, the Yukon had been nominally responsible for the education of all school age citizens within its boundaries since the passage of the *Yukon Act* in 1898.⁴⁴ Again, as in the NWT, in reality, due to the provisions of the *Indian Act*, there was a division of responsibility and the federal government left Native education in the hands of the churches.⁴⁵ Though, as a result of the gold rush, the Yukon was more economically developed territory, the federal government believed that the Yukon had no real future and "did not want to train Yukon Indians for social roles that did not exist, especially when traditional hunting and subsistence economy remained healthy."⁴⁶ The education of the non-Native children was provided by the territory through a flexible system of partial assistance and complete funding, depending upon the number of students enrolled in each school.⁴⁷

Through the "Lean Years," from 1906 to 1940, the territorial public school system operated on a shoestring. Almstrom notes that in Whitehorse

meagre facilities were supplemented in a number of ways. For example, former pupils tell of the generosity of townspeople and teachers who lent books from their personal libraries and pay tribute to the encouragement given to the girls in the home economics' classes by certain ladies of the community who opened their homes so that the girls might learn to cook and entertain.⁴⁸

Generally, though, because of the financial constraints, education in the Yukon concentrated on academic subjects. Any additional "curriculum enrichment," such as sewing, cooking, or

44 The *Yukon Act* of 1898 granted broad and general powers to the Governor-in-Council: "Subject to the provisions of this Act, the Governor in Council may make ordinances for the peace, order and good government of the territory. . . ." (Sect. 8). Countering the apparent expansiveness of the legislation, the Act permitted the federal government to disallow any legislation within a period of two years.

45 Much has been written on the education of Indians in the Yukon. For example, see: Jon Pierce, "Federal Indian Policy in the Yukon," paper prepared for KWIYA, The Joint Commission on Indian Education and Training, 1987 (Whitehorse: KWIYA, 1987); Marjorie E. Almstrom, *A Century of Schooling: Education in the Yukon, 1861-1961* (Whitehorse: Privately printed, 1991); Edward Lester Bullen, "A Historical Study of the Education of the Indians of Teslin, Yukon Territory" (Unpublished MA Thesis, University of Alberta, 1968); Nelson Ireland, "Indian Education in Yukon: A Matter of Policy" (Unpublished MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 1988); and Kenneth S. Coates, "A Very Imperfect Means of Education: Indian Day Schools in the Yukon Territory, 1890-1955" in *Indian Education in Canada: Volume I, The Legacy*, Jean Berman, Yvonne Hebert and Don Askill, editors (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986), 132-149.

46 Pierce, "Federal Indian Education Policy in the Yukon," 16-17.

47 Almstrom, *A Century of Schooling*, Chapters V, VI, and VII.

48 *Ibid.*, 120.

carpentry, had to be "provided through the generosity of concerned parents."⁴⁹ Almstrom points out that such education was not much different from that being offered in small communities elsewhere in Canada during these years.⁵⁰ As in the Northwest Territories, the Yukon education system had adopted a southern curriculum, in its case that of British Columbia.⁵¹ Partly for reasons of economy, integration of Native students began to be encouraged in the late 1940s and became the territory's unofficial policy by 1964.⁵²

The construction of the Alaska Highway "propelled the Yukon into the twentieth century."⁵³ Education became a much more important issue. Schools sprang up wherever there was a concentration of non-Natives, at highway maintenance camps and at mines. At the same time the federal government began to transfer of responsibility for the delivery of all primary and secondary education in the territory. Thus, after the early 1950s, the federal government gradually withdrew its support of the church-operated residential schools.⁵⁴ It began delegating its responsibility for Indian education to the territorial government⁵⁵ under a series of formal tuition agreements that included cost-sharing of capital costs.⁵⁶ By 1967 all schools in the Yukon were under the control of the Yukon Department of Education, though much of the funding for them still came directly from the federal government.⁵⁷

Yukon Natives, like those in the Northwest Territories, found much of what was being taught in the schools of little real use and, indeed, culturally damaging. Many, from personal experience, thought the entire school system was "irrelevant and unresponsive."⁵⁸ Part of the problem was that, for a variety of social and cultural reasons, Native parents had generally been unable to gain a loud enough voice on the school committees and councils to effect a change in the curriculum. Where school committees existed, Native parents often felt unwelcome at

49 *Ibid.*, 121.

50 *Ibid.*

51 In earlier years, however, the secondary school curriculum model had been that of Ontario. *Ibid.*, 87.

52 Ireland, "Indian Education in Yukon," 18, 20.

53 Pierce, "Indian Education Policy in the Yukon," 30.

54 "Education in Canada's Northern Territories," 9.

55 Ireland, "Indian Education in the Yukon," 22.

56 Pierce, "Indian Education Policy in the Yukon," 38.

57 "Education in Canada's Northern Territories,"; also Pierce, "Indian Education Policy in the Yukon," 30.

58 Coates and Powell, 138.

the meetings. Cross-cultural misunderstandings and different codes of public behaviour also made it difficult for Natives to participate.

Providing For Post-Secondary Education

Despite its constitutional responsibilities in the territorial North, the federal government's support for northern post-secondary education had generally been confined to guaranteeing student loans and funding vocational training. The division of jurisdiction laid down by the *British North America Act, 1867*, places education in the hands of the provinces. The acts that created the Yukon and the Northwest Territories gave jurisdiction over education to the territorial governments. Their tiny populations, however, effectively limited the provision of education in the territories to the primary and secondary levels.

In the early 1960s, vocational schools with a narrow range of training options were established at Fort Smith and Whitehorse. They were created to offer pre-employment trades training, specific skills development (truck and equipment driving), upgrading for adults, and classes in selected trades that would lead to apprentice status but not to inter-provincial journeyman certification. The federal government assisted these through vocational training agreements with the territorial governments. University-level courses were not available and students who wished to pursue higher education attended universities outside the territories.

Recognising the impossibility of offering the range and depth of courses comparable to southern institutions, the territorial governments offered a unique scheme that provided funding to eligible students to cover the cost of tuition and books, living, transportation and miscellaneous expenses.

The Northwest Territories government offered both bursaries and grants.⁵⁹ The 1971 eligibility requirements for a \$1500 bursary were a two-year residency, or a resident out of school for over three years or a resident seeking a degree at the Bachelor's level or beyond at an Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada member institution. Eligibility requirements for the grant were more stringent. The student had to be a dependent child of an NWT resident, have "three months residency immediately prior to the commencement of the next semester of the university," and must not been out of school for a period longer than

⁵⁹ There seems to be no consensus on why the GNWT offered this benefit to NWT residents. It may be that it was offered as an inducement to workers with families to move north.

three years. The grant covered

tuition fees, transportation to and from the place of residence in the N.W.T., books, supplies, and board and lodging for persons enrolled in a degree course in an institution which is a member of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada

and was renewable for up to four years.⁶⁰ Similar grants were available from the Yukon Government. In 1967 (First Session) the Legislative Council passed *An Ordinance To Provide for the Making of Grants to University and Vocational Students*. It provided students with a grant of approximately \$1,100 to defray the costs of transportation, books, and board.⁶¹ The government enacted the ordinance for three reasons. First, a funding agreement it had with the federal government for vocational training was soon to expire. A new arrangement granted the territory a per capita amount for "continuing education." Some of the money, it was thought, "should be used to assist students to attend universities, institutes of technology, community college, and schools of nursing."⁶² Second, students attending the Whitehorse Vocational and Technical Training Centre were receiving allowances of between \$35 to \$90 per week under the federal *Training Allowance Act*, 1966. University students, in contrast, were given territorial assistance only for transportation to and from school. This arrangement was clearly "financially biased in favour of students taking vocational training." This, the commissioner suggested, was not encouraging high school students to go on to university.⁶³ Third, the Northwest Territories arrangement was superior. While the Yukon Government was not going to match the NWT grants, it did feel that it could not be any less generous with university students than it was being with vocational students.⁶⁴

Into the mid-1960s, almost all the high school graduates who took advantage of these programs were non-Aboriginal. For them it was a very satisfactory arrangement because many

60 Garth Graham personal files, Guelph, Ontario, [file 7] "Flo Whyard." Government of the Northwest Territories, "Meeting the Challenge through Education Grants," October, 1971. Used with permission. Mr. Graham's files have been subsequently donated to the Yukon Archives (1994). References here are to the files of the collection examined prior to its donation.

61 Chapter 5, 1967 (First Session). May also be cited as the *Students Grants Ordinance*. The regulations that fixed the amount of the grant, the residency conditions and eligibility were changed as conditions warranted it. These figures apply to 1967-8. Yukon Archives (hereafter YA), The University of Canada North Records (hereafter UCN Records), COR 0321, file 1, "Students Grant Ordinance, Administrator's Order 1967-110, 24 July 1967."

62 Yukon Territorial Government, Sessional Paper No. 46-1967, 1.

63 *Ibid.*

64 *Ibid.*, 2.

keenly wanted some inexpensive way of leaving the North.⁶⁵ Many Yukon students went to the University of Alaska, where a formal arrangement between the state and the territories permitted students from the Yukon and the Northwest Territories to attend at the Alaska-resident tuition rate.⁶⁶

New attention to the resource potential of the North, however, soon caused some to consider the feasibility of offering university programming in the North. In 1967, Arthur Laing, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) addressed the delegates of the First National Northern Research Conference. He proposed that a southern university should examine the feasibility of offering correspondence courses.⁶⁷ In the same year, as part of its bid to become territorial capital,⁶⁸ Jim Lotz suggested that a university be organised at Fort Smith.⁶⁹ The escalation of interest in northern research, encouraged by the discovery of oil and gas deposits at several places off the Arctic coast in the Beaufort Sea, and the federal government's goal to improve quality of life in the North, provoked other suggestions for a northern university. A university located in the North would be valuable. It would have a vested interest in the North, would attract academics and students with northern interests and would provide higher education to qualified northerners. The idea was good but it remained only that. Foundations, governments and the southern universities were unwilling to undertake the task of turning the idea into a reality. The expense seemed prohibitive and unnecessary.

This, then, was the social background against which and out of which The University of Canada North was conceived. In a changing political and social landscape, the North's tiny population struggled to create a modern, full-service society in the region. They worked to advance the North, to enhance its services, to improve its inter-cultural relations and to modernise its society. Many thought the answer lay in economic development. More mines,

⁶⁵ Many non-Native young people in Whitehorse in the late 1960s were inclined to believe that the Yukon was a backwater and that nothing exciting ever happened there. Many anxiously awaited graduation and applied to university merely to leave the territory. One assumes that similar attitudes prevailed in the Northwest Territories.

⁶⁶ Immigration and student visa requirements were not affected by the agreement.

⁶⁷ YA, Hoyt Collection, MSS 216, file 6. "Text of speech, 'Research in the Unknown Land,' given by Hon. A. Laing to First National Northern Research Conference, at University of Saskatchewan, 30 October 1967."

⁶⁸ It had been the administrative centre for the District of Mackenzie since 1906.

⁶⁹ YA, UCN Records, COR 0321, file 1, "Discussion Paper: A University for Fort Smith, NWT." The conclusion read: "I am convinced. . . of the need for and the value of a northern university. Such a university, at Fort Smith, would, in time, attract students and staff from all over the world. I am convinced that much of the future of the north lies in developing the area as a vast outdoor laboratory where processes can be understood, [and] studied. . . for the benefit of all mankind," 11.

more people, more economic activity would generate the kind of benefits that would lead to a stable, but uniquely northern, society. A small group thought part of the solution would be to establish a northern university.

CHAPTER 2

THE PROMISE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE NORTH: VARIOUS PROPOSALS FOR A NORTHERN UNIVERSITY

The plan to found The University of Canada North was not the first to be bruited about the North. The idea had surfaced in the Yukon as early as 1960.⁷⁰ Through the 1960s, academics and entrepreneurs, with an eye to development and related research, considered a university an important element in northern economic development. A short (and incomplete) list of previous proposals for a university includes Fort Smith's university on the Slave River, the Mackenzie Institute in Inuvik, the "Yukon University" in Whitehorse, the "Klondike College" in Dawson, the "Slave Institute" at Hay River, "Tuk U" at Tuktoyaktuk, and the "Baffin Institute" at Frobisher Bay (now Iqaluit).⁷¹ At least three of these proposals, the Klondike College, the Fort Smith university, and the Mackenzie Institute originated in the North. One, the Mackenzie Institute, operated classes and presented public lectures, though not for credit.

This chapter examines five of the early plans for a northern university. The discussion points out the common themes of economic development and nationalism and shows that The University of Canada North was not such a unique undertaking. Its originality lies primarily in the inter-territorial nature of the organization, its founders' expressed commitment to the self-determination of the northern First Nations and their articulation of the varied needs the university was to meet.

70 YA, UCN Records, COR 0321, file 2. Commissioner J. Smith to Rolf Hougen, 25 November, 1970: "We spoke on the subject of a University of Yukon by phone a few days ago. . . . This is not a new thought, indeed, I was involved in a potential site selection in 1960 with Commissioner Collins." Of course, there may have been other, earlier proposals.

71 *Ibid.*, file 8, R. M. Hill. "Concepts of a University in Canada North," Conference literature, November 1971. This list is not entirely accurate. The Klondike College was to be a teacher training college located in Whitehorse and the Yukon University was planned for Dawson. In addition, little evidence has been found for some of these proposals and the cleverly-named Tuk U may have only existed on tee-shirts sold at souvenir outlets.

The University of the North at Dawson City

Alan Innes-Taylor and Iris Warner, both of Dawson City, prepared an early university proposal. Innes-Taylor, who wrote the proposal in May 1964, suggested a "University of the North" at Dawson City. Innes-Taylor was a longtime Yukon resident; Warner had moved to the territory in 1959. Both were concerned about the future of Dawson City. Mining had declined and tourism was not yet sufficient to keep the town alive. The 1962 Dawson City Festival, a grand attempt to arrest the city's social and physical decay by fixing up certain historic buildings and promoting the town as a tourist destination, had been disappointing.⁷²

In April 1964, Warner wrote to Bill Dempsey, then the Executive Assistant to the Director of the North York Board of Education in Ontario.⁷³ Warner had outlined a plan to establish a university at Dawson. In a letter to Warner, Dempsey said he had consulted "some people at the University of Toronto" and sent her his thoughts on costs of staff, faculty and facilities. He concluded:

I admire your ambition in considering the possibility of establishing a University at Dawson City. Although I have mentioned some of the difficulties nothing is insurmountable, if there is a group of people who are determined to organize a new venture. The first courses offered might be quite limited but as interest grew additional ones could be provided. The biggest obstacle is that of money.⁷⁴

In June Dempsey again wrote to Warner. He informed her that he had discussed her idea with Walter Dinsdale, Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, and suggested that she write to the minister directly.

Warner's letter to Dinsdale explained her and Innes-Taylor's rationale for establishing a university at Dawson City: it would keep young people north of 60. It would halt the "ridiculous imbalance of too-young and too-old which now exists."⁷⁵ The proposed university would offer

courses which are of value to northern development in aviation, radio, engineering, and

⁷² Richard Stuart, "Recycling Used Boom Towns: Dawson and Tourism," *The Northern Review* 6 (Winter 1990), 121.

⁷³ Dempsey had been the Executive Assistant to Hon. Walter Dinsdale, Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources. He and his wife had met Warner and Innes-Taylor during the Dawson City Festival, which he had been detailed to oversee. He was fired in late 1962 after it was discovered that he had unintentionally embarrassed the department by soliciting support for the festival on departmental letterhead. Frank Finland, personal communication, June 1993.

⁷⁴ YA, Iris Warner Collection, MSS 58, 82/245, f. 185. Bill Dempsey to Iris Warner, 21 May 1964.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, Iris Warner to Hon., Walter Dinsdale, 15 June 1964.

telecommunications, for eventual use in the arctic; in archive work for future work with the National Museum in Ottawa [which carries] on extensive field work in the north, in the Yukon and certainly around Dawson. . . ; studies of permafrost should be expected to originate here; of polar sea-ice navigation; of arctic cookery and agriculture. There is no end to the scope all of value to the country, and to the student who could conceivably expect immediate employment in unique and uncrowded fields.⁷⁶

Dawson, she maintained would be the ideal location because it

is a fine agricultural area, with nearby mining location, and is under survey for a hundred reasons each offering fields of study to elaborate on classroom activities, it has several D.O.T. [Department of Transport] and C.N.T. [Canadian Northern Telecommunications] positions and is an aircraft jumping-off place, with future hiring potential.⁷⁷

Dawson also had a couple of unused buildings suitable for the university and its residence: the old territorial administration building and the Commissioner's residence.

Dinsdale was only cautiously positive about the plan; the "subject . . . should be discussed by the Territorial Council."⁷⁸ He noted there had been several recent proposals for a University of the North:

The Roman Catholic Church is anxious to establish a northern University at Fort Smith. Another proposal has been forthcoming from Churchill where the local citizens are sponsoring a plan to have a northern University set up in the buildings made available by the withdrawal of the Armed Forces from that northern port.⁷⁹

emphasised that any approach to Northern Affairs on the subject would have to be made through the Commissioner, Gordon I. Cameron, and that she should discuss the idea with him. In closing, Dinsdale assured Warner that he would "give all possible support" to the plan.

In his two-page proposal, Innes-Taylor concocted a rather splendid vision of the "University of the North." He thought that the institution would serve to "gather together the adventurous youth of Canada to train for the development of the vast Northern Empire." The institution would "contribute to the cultural and economic growth of Canada."⁸⁰ This proposal repeats a theme that runs through most of the suggestions for a northern university, including the University of Canada North: a northern university would contribute greatly to northern development.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, Walter Dinsdale to Iris Warner, 25 June 1964.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* The Churchill university proposal was spearheaded by a local newspaper publisher, Ernie Senior. In 1968 he predicted a university would be in place within three years.

⁸⁰ YA, UCN Records, COR 0321, file 1. "Proposal for a 'University of the North,'" May, 1964.

The Mackenzie Institute at Inuvik

The Mackenzie Institute, while not exactly a university and whose existence was not exactly limited to paper, was a northern initiative that nevertheless deserves mention. This Inuvik institution was created under the NWT Societies Ordinance in April 1968. Its purpose was "to offer academic, practical, and cultural programs."⁸¹ The founders were Elijah Menarik, John Pascal, Victor Allen, Tom Butters, Richard Hill, and Agnes Semmler.⁸² The idea had been raised at an adult education committee meeting where someone had suggested that such an organization would expand local educational opportunities.⁸³ An advertising flyer explained that the Institute was established "to assist in fulfilling the aspirations of resident northerners and in effectively developing northern resources."⁸⁴ It was to do this by operating

under the frontier concept of satisfying today's needs with available means. Resources within the region are exploited and related to the community lifeways. Local persons are hired for Institute staff positions where possible. . . .Academic courses are offered to meet the needs and interests of the northern residents without limiting the possibility of individuals to attend other schools or universities.⁸⁵

The Institute intended to offer residents of the Western Arctic "total education so [they] can take their rightful place in the social, cultural and economic developments as citizens of the North, Canada and the World."⁸⁶ It did not have dedicated buildings, but operated out of whatever classrooms were available. Its most successful program was a series of ten public lectures on various aspects of the Mackenzie Delta, including geology, history, economy, industry, peoples and environment, offered in Fall 1968. The Institute apparently remained active until some time in 1972.

An Arctic University in the Canadian North

Southern academics raised the issue of a northern university as well. Professor W. Peter

81 Graham personal files, [file 7] "Flo Whyard." Mackenzie Institute promotional flyer. Used with permission.

82 YA, Iris Warner Collection, MSS 56, 82/245, f. 121, "Mackenzie Institute Council Objectives and By-Laws." Butters, Hill and Semmler would later be founding applicants for The University of Canada North.

83 *Ibid.*, Iris Warner, MS Notes on back of a Mackenzie Institute flyer.

84 *Ibid.*, Richard M. Hill, "Mackenzie Institute A New Northern Educational Institution," October 1968.

85 *Ibid.*

86 *Ibid.*

Adams of the Department of Geography at Trent University had been interested in the issue since 1969. He corresponded widely about his ideas for an Arctic University in the Canadian North and circulated copies of the letters. On 18 November 1969 he wrote to Jean Chrétien, Minister of DIAND,⁸⁷ saying that he thought the "time [was] ripe" for the creation of a northern university. Adams' interest stemmed, in part, from his own research experiences in the North. It also came from seeing the positive economic effects the new Trent University was having on Peterborough, Ontario. Adams believed a university would have a "stabilizing effect" on northern society. It would also "attract desirable 'settlers'" and would "promote that desirable feeling of permanence in the North." Adams noted that the tiny northern population would be unable to support the university alone. The university, however, should specialize in northern topics, which "a wide spectrum of students from across the country and abroad" would likely find appealing.⁸⁸ Chrétien responded that

a Northern University has been proposed and examined on a number of occasions in the past, but because of changing conditions we re-examine the idea from time to time, and your letter provided an occasion for such a re-examination.

A northern university appears impractical at this time. . . . Wherever a university were located in the North, much of the northern population would be closer to existing university institutions elsewhere. There is considerable difficulty in organizing a good secondary school system in the North and the costs per student are roughly double those of southern Canada. A university would face greater problems.⁸⁹

Chrétien felt, too, that the government's program of encouraging northern research through grants, construction of specific facilities and other arrangements with various government departments was "the best method to follow at this time." If there were any future reason to introduce higher education to the North, then "this might best be done by building on such existing institutions as the Inuvik Research Laboratory or the [University of Saskatchewan's] Institute of Northern Studies . . . at Rankin Inlet, N.W.T."⁹⁰

Adams pursued the idea for over a year. In late January, Dr. R. L. Shields, YTG

⁸⁷ Chrétien succeeded Arthur Laing as Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development on 6 July, 1968 and held the position until 7 August, 1974.

⁸⁸ W. P. Adams personal files, Peterborough, Ontario (hereafter cited as Adams personal files), W. P. Adams to Hon., J. Chrétien, 18 November 1969. Used with permission.

⁸⁹ Richard M. Hill personal files, Inuvik, NWT (hereafter Hill personal files), Jean Chrétien, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to W. P. Adams, Department of Geography, Trent University, 18 November, 1969. Used with permission.

⁹⁰ Adams personal files, file "Arctic U Correspondence," Jean Chrétien to W. P. Adams, 14 January 1970. Used with permission.

Superintendent of Education wrote to Professor Adams to support the northern university idea. Shields said that he had seen copies of the Adams/Chrétien correspondence. He was interested in the notion of a northern university. He stressed that any university *for* the North ought to be located *in* the North, at Yellowknife or Whitehorse. The university had to be "in an area that affords ease of communication, excellent living services, and be readily accessible for the study of the North." Shields suggested that they continue their correspondence and asked Adams to outline both the costs of the university and the social role the institution might play.⁹¹

In early February 1970 Adams answered Shields' letter. Adams agreed that a northern university would have to be in a town and, in addition, not grafted onto an existing field station. He then commented on Chrétien's statements:

I do not agree with Mr. Chretien's assumption that a University would only become a valid project for the North when it can be supported by students drawn from the North. I see the University as having an important service function in the Arctic but drawing large numbers of students from outside, and having functions which are not strictly involved with the education of undergraduates. The expense of such a University will in part be justified by its general healthy effect on growth in the North.⁹²

Initially, Adams thought, the university might only be a title or an umbrella for an association of existing facilities and institutions. It would then become, in part, the base for research co-ordination. In a response to a Lakehead University questionnaire on northern research, Adams stated that

the main problem of research in such areas, particularly for year-round research, is that of continuity. . . .I feel very strongly that this state of affairs will continue until a University is established which is located in the North and which has a definite commitment to problems in the entire subarctic-arctic area.⁹³

Adam's proposed university would broker or offer a variety of programs including correspondence courses, visiting lecturers, high school extension programming and community services. These programs would be essential. The institution's success "would depend largely on its fulfilling a 'normal' university's role as well as [having] the extra 'arctic' features."⁹⁴

Adams' point was that a northern university should be an integral part of the

91 *Ibid.*, R. L. Shields to W. P. Adams, 22 January 1970. Used with permission.

92 *Ibid.*, W. P. Adams to R. L. Shields, 10 February 1970. Used with permission.

93 *Ibid.*, "Questionnaire: Canadian Subarctic, Section C." Copy of comments submitted with questionnaire. 30 July 1970. Used with permission. Emphasis in the original.

94 *Ibid.* These refer to the research co-ordination, extension and community development services.

government's general northern development policy:

Establishing the N.W.T. government in Yellowknife was such a step and the location of a national university in the Arctic could be another. A decision along these lines could have implications for the economy, and sovereignty of the North as well as for its education system in the broadest possible sense. . . .⁹⁵

Yet DIAND was not listening. It seemed to insist on (and persist in) seeing the issue of a northern university entirely in a financial light. A northern university would necessarily be expensive and it was, to DIAND thinking, an unnecessary luxury. The rationale continued to be that there were too few people and potential students in the North to warrant a university. DIAND was not willing to undertake founding a northern university simply as a national flag-waving exercise. Fixated on the dismal economics of the idea, DIAND also refused to consider a northern university as a likely regional economic development project.

The University of The Air

Several professors at the University of Western Ontario turned their sights to the North in late 1969. Phoebe Nahanni of Fort Simpson, NWT, a Dene student, had suggested the establishment of a university of the North in a seminar held at the university.⁹⁶ An informal working group subsequently discussed the idea. In April, Dr. J. F. Hart of Western's Computer Science Department, wrote a paper, later published in *Northian: The Journal of the Society for Indian and Northern Education*, titled "A University of the North."⁹⁷ In it he suggested post-secondary education could be feasible in the North "if use is made of the modern communications technologies." The advantage of such an approach would be that "it could be directed by northerners and involve them at all stages." Hart noted that

the real issue in the North is to avoid the mistakes of the past toward the native peoples. For this reason emphasis must be placed at the outset on the idea that the cultures of the original peoples of Canada should form an integral element in the composition of the University.⁹⁸

He also thought it was unwise to bring a southern-style university to the North. "Not only would it encounter financial difficulties," he wrote, "but it is questionable whether the institution would

95 *Ibid.*, W. P. Adams to Mr. Hugh Faulkner, MP, 4 August 1970. Used with permission.

96 YA, UCN Records, COR 0321, file 1. "Progress Report on a 'University of the North' Concept, October, 1970."

97 J. F. Hart, "Proposal for a University of the North," *Northian* 7(3) (Summer 1970), 14-16.

98 J. F. Hart, "A University of the North," unpublished draft paper. 22 April 1970, 2.

be able to serve the real needs of the scattered population of the North."⁹⁹ New communications technology would obviate the need to assemble students for classes.

Though the "university of the air" was possible from the technological standpoint, Hart advised against rushing into the project. It should be accomplished slowly. Initially, arrangements could be made with the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) to permit northern students to take a maximum of seven microwave network courses. Students, however, would have to complete their degree work at a southern university, which would actually grant the degree. Only after the "university of the air" had proved itself a success could it seek a charter. Hart thought that might occur about five years after the start of classes.¹⁰⁰

A Northern University

In early 1970, Jim Lotz, Associate Director of the Canadian Centre for Research in Anthropology at St. Paul University in Ottawa, published *Northern Realities: The Future of Northern Development in Canada*.¹⁰¹ The book drew on Lotz's northern experiences while working as a social scientist in the Yukon. In it, he analysed national feelings about Arctic sovereignty and northern development. *Northern Realities* urged that northern development consider the well-being of the region's residents and not merely the desires of corporations. His proposals for the "sane and rational" development of the North encompassed government, planning, conservation and education.

Lotz declared that his interest in the idea of a northern university had been sparked by "the request of a group of Yukoners to examine the possibility."¹⁰² "A northern university," wrote Lotz, "seems to me to be one of the last chances for a sane and rational approach to northern and national development."¹⁰³ Besides offering classes, Lotz envisaged his proposed northern university as a clearing house for northern research. He believed that limited distribution of

⁹⁹ YA, UCN Records, COR 0321, file 2, Don Simpson to John Gilles, Supervisor, Information Systems, White Pass and Yukon Route, n.d.

¹⁰⁰ Funding would come from the government. The university would be run by the students themselves but all the main computer and administrative facilities were to remain at southern institutions. *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ (Toronto: New Press, 1970). References in the text are to the American edition of the book, published with a slightly different title, *Northern Realities: Canada-U.S. Exploitation of the Canadian North* (Chicago: Follett Publishing Co., 1971).

¹⁰² Lotz, *Northern Realities*, 246. It is uncertain to whom, or to which group, he was referring.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 240.

research results had previously hampered northern development and hoped that a northern university would serve as a kind of "watchdog . . . evaluating the processes of development."¹⁰⁴ In addition, a northern university would overcome what he saw as a dangerous trend in northern research. He felt that academics had become mere clients of government and of Native groups funded by government. A northern university would cultivate its own researchers and provide a countervailing force to government and its hired researchers.¹⁰⁵ There were other gains to be had as well. Lotz, much like Innes-Taylor and Adams, believed that a northern university was urgent for national and northern reasons:

A university is a national status symbol. Canada does not yet have a national university, as Australia has. If Canada is a northern nation, the national university should be a northern one, focused around the themes of northern-ness.¹⁰⁶

At the time, Lotz was so committed to the idea of a northern university that he "offered a few hundred dollars to support a conference on a University of the North."¹⁰⁷

Education, National Interest and Northern Development

Three of these five northern university proposals, by Warner and Innes-Taylor, by Adams, and by Lotz, are thematically similar. They clearly link the activities of a northern university to Canadian patriotism and southern visions of northern development rather than to the psychological and educational needs of northerners. They seem to value the North more for having something special to offer non-northerners. Their universities are for Canada first and northerners second.

The university proposed by Hart was apparently conceived to be for northerners first and for Canada only incidentally. It would make university-level courses available in remote areas. Its creators acknowledged that Native northerners must be involved with the planning. They did not, however, seem to realize that Native northerners were, for the most part, unprepared to take university-level courses. In addition, there are elements of a southern bias to the proposal. In one instance Hart maintained that all contracts associated with starting the

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 246.

¹⁰⁵ Jim Lotz, "Northerners Should Educate Southerners, Not Vice-Versa," *Whitehorse Star*, 11 January 1979.

¹⁰⁶ Lotz, *Northern Realities*, 247.

¹⁰⁷ YA, UCN Records, COR 0321, file 1. "Progress Report on a 'University of the North' Concept, October 1970."

University of the Air should be let in the South. Hart's proposed university adopts many features of the "open university" idea first pioneered in Britain. He and the Western group concentrated on the means of delivering post-secondary programming to anyone who wanted it. It goes the furthest towards meeting the needs of the individual but it lacks the one crucial feature that makes a northern university so necessary. The electronic university does not foster an actual community of scholars who, beyond their teaching duties, publicly engage in discussion and research, providing, as Lotz put it, a "countervailing force to government."

Hill's Mackenzie Institute contains both aims, national recognition of the North and continuing education for northerners. Its modest success stemmed from the narrow focus of its offerings and from its local support. It was not expensive and it was not intended as a major undertaking. Linked through Hill to the Inuvik Research Laboratory, it had access to imported expertise. Visiting researchers could be asked to conduct public lectures. But the Mackenzie Institute was not a university. It did not offer credit courses and aimed not to obstruct any student who wished to pursue higher education elsewhere.

These proposals illustrate several motives for establishing a northern university. For three of them, the impetus came from outside the region and from a desire to contribute to and to benefit from northern development. In this period, much thinking about Canada's North was based on the perception of the region as a storehouse of national wealth. Many northerners accepted that vision, hoping to reap personal benefit from new mining and oil and gas development. The other two proposals approached the issue from the other side. They were concerned about the potential effects of development and wished to ensure that northern residents were equipped to partake in it. They did not want the jobs to be filled by transient southerners.

A northern university was plainly desired in this period and by a variety of people. In southern Canada, new universities were being established in every province. The North was the only region of the country without an academic centre. The need was obviously there. The will and the financing just as obviously were not.

CHAPTER 3

UCN, FROM IDEA TO REALITY: JULY 1970 TO MARCH 1971

The University of Canada North was, then, not the first proposal for a northern university. It represents, though, the first time people had actively worked to realize the dream of creating a trans-territorial post-secondary institution. The UCN project was unique in that it was undertaken by a diverse group of private northern citizens in both territories.

Most social, economic and political institutions in the Canadian North have traditionally been either imported directly from southern Canada or adapted from southern models. This has been due primarily to the circumstances of the settlement of non-aboriginal Canadians in the North and of the necessary imposition of government and other control and service structures. Federal government control of the territories has produced administrative arrangements that are southern in style, structure and philosophy; until very recently there were few northern institutions.¹ Any organisations thought to be genuinely northern were typically local creations, limited in scope, and rarely attracted national attention. In general, they were formed to address a particular local need. Even those that claimed to have the approval and support of the territorial governments, like the Yukon Research and Development Institute or the Mackenzie Institute, had finite existences. The University of Canada North was to be different.

With The University of Canada North, a small group of people undertook to create a university that would be northern in philosophy and approach.² The UCN would encourage northern social values and allow students to acquire knowledge that was required for life and work in the North. It would provide a supportive environment to satisfy the educational and psychological needs of students of different cultural backgrounds. It was also to be a centre for

¹ It may, of course, be argued that there are no uniquely northern institutions, only northern adaptations.

² It was possible the UCN would have a typical "Western" university structure.

northern research. The founders sincerely desired to create a university that would make higher education available for anyone who wanted it. The directors, however, were initially caught up in the enthusiastic pursuit of an ideal northern institution. They underestimated their own inexperience and, more importantly, the amount of time, thought, money and effort that starting a new university was going to take. They also underestimated the importance of government and public good-will and support.

The story of the University of Canada North is rife with ironies. However, there are two particularly great ironies. The first is that it was conceived as a uniquely *northern* institution by all of its founders and is still considered to be so by those who remember their involvement with it. Yet the founders chose to establish a university, an institution that developed in European culture and that was essentially as foreign to northern Natives as was government, health care, welfare and education. The second is that the idea and early impetus came not from a resident of the North but from Richard Rohmer, a Toronto lawyer with rather predictable motives. Like Warner and Innes-Taylor, Adams, Hill and Lotz, Rohmer was convinced that a northern university would be of great benefit to the development of the North and that development of the North would be of great benefit to Canada.

Rohmer, Mid-Canada Development and a Northern University

Rohmer had first become interested in the development of northern Canada in 1967. Needing an election platform in a brief flirt with federal politics,³ he focused on northern development. He began by assuming that the Canadian Subarctic was "one million square miles of wealth" ready for development.⁴ Rohmer proposed that a railway, running east-to-west through the Subarctic, would expose vast areas of hitherto undeveloped land. Regional cities and ports, connected by new roads and new communications technology, could then be built to exploit the hinterlands.⁵ He formed the Mid-Canada Development Foundation to finance and foster discussion and research. Acres Research and Planning Limited was commissioned to explore the idea. The Acres report, *Mid-Canada Development Corridor: A Concept*,⁶ provided

³ He withdrew his candidacy before the election.

⁴ Title of Chapter 2. Richard Rohmer, *The Green North* (Toronto: Maclean-Hunter, 1970), 31.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 13-16.

⁶ (Toronto: Acres Research and Planning Limited, 1967).

the basis for organizing the Mid-Canada Development Conference. The conference, run as two sessions a year apart,⁷

emerge[d] from the conviction that only with a policy and a plan can intelligent and rational development of Canada's habitable Mid-North take place, and then only when the development of the Mid-North becomes Canada's National Plan.⁸

Rohmer's interest in a northern university thus stemmed from his work with the Mid-Canada Development Concept and conference.

In early July, Rohmer was on a trip to Inuvik, NWT. He had a copy of Jim Lotz's book, *Northern Realities* with him, as he intended to write a review of it for the *Globe and Mail* on the plane. The book prompted Rohmer to begin to plan the development of a northern university.⁹ In his review of the book, published in the *Globe's* 1 August "Books" section, Rohmer called Lotz's idea of a northern university "compelling." Despite Lotz's criticism of Rohmer's Mid-Canada Development scheme ("the objectives of which," said Rohmer, "he clearly does not understand"), Rohmer declared Lotz's approach "much more practical and can be translated into reality."¹⁰ He found Lotz's arguments so compelling he immediately "wrote a three-page memorandum as to how one would proceed to organize such a university."¹¹

Rohmer's organizational memo called for regional colleges in Inuvik, Whitehorse and Yellowknife. Each college would specialize in "certain disciplines relevant to the north."¹² The choice of disciplines included ecology, forestry,¹³ mining, communication, agriculture,¹⁴ transportation, languages and culture. Rohmer expected that each campus would also be assigned a traditional professional school such as dentistry, medicine, law or engineering. The administrative headquarters would be in Inuvik because it lay at the hub of air routes from

7 August 1969-1970.

8 Richard Rohmer personal files, Toronto, Ontario (hereafter Rohmer personal files), Mid-Canada Development Corridor Conference flyer, 20 August 1969.

9 "First Northern University Near Reality," *Campus*, January 1972, 20-21.

10 "The North Wasn't All Left for Cain," 1 August 1970.

11 *Ibid.*

12 Rohmer personal files, "UCN Organizational Memorandum, 1970." Used with permission.

13 Forestry was probably intended for the Whitehorse campus as there is a small industry in the south-east Yukon.

14 There were experimental agricultural stations located at both Haines Junction, Yukon and Fort Smith, NWT and agriculture had been successful in various parts of the Yukon from the gold rush on.

Edmonton and Vancouver and it was "neutral," that is, not a territorial capital.¹⁵ Other sections of the memo dealt with site selection, building design and other physical matters.

While in Inuvik, Rohmer assembled five area residents who represented a variety of interests, Richard M. Hill, Wally Firth, Agnes Semmler, Tom Butters, and Nellie Cournoyea, and discussed the memo with them.¹⁶ At that meeting, on 6 July 1970, they adopted Rohmer's plan and agreed to form the University of Canada North Society¹⁷

to promote and organize the establishment of a Territorial University with colleges at Inuvik, Whitehorse and Yellowknife to be named The University of Canada North which will:

- a) serve the people of the Northwest Territories and the Yukon Territory;
- b) provide the central co-ordinating base for research on the social and physical sciences in relation to the North.¹⁸

Due to the informal nature of the meeting, there were no minutes taken, so there is no evidence how the goals of the society were defined. It is, however, notable that research should figure so prominently. By the early 1970s northern dissatisfaction with the conduct of research in the North was reaching critical levels. Northerners had begun to explore ways of becoming more involved with northern research. Southern researchers were also beginning to recognize the uncoordinated character of northern research. DIAND was aware of the problem as was the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC). As further evidence of this, both Adams and Lotz (both researchers) had included the conduct and co-ordination of research as major elements of their northern university proposals. The 1970s would also witness calls by both northern residents and southern organizations for research co-ordinating centres in the North.

The University of Canada North Society was expected to have a short existence. It would be dissolved as soon as the University became a legal entity.¹⁹ Even before the society was formed, the Inuvik group began work on the organization of the new university. The participants

15 Rohmer personal files, "UCN Organizational Memorandum, 1970." Used with permission.

16 Hill was Mayor of Inuvik, founder of the Mackenzie Institute, director of the Inuvik Research Laboratory, municipal politician and local entrepreneur. Firth was involved with the Committee on Original Peoples' Entitlement (COPE). Semmler was the first president of COPE. Butters was founder of the Inuvik *Drum* and a municipal politician who later became the MLA for the region. Cournoyea was an announcer/operator with the Inuvik CBC Radio affiliate, CHAK, and later its manager.

17 Rohmer personal files, Richard Rohmer to David H. Searle, 15 July 1970. Used with permission.

18 *Ibid.*, "Organizational Memorandum, 1970," 3. Used with permission.

19 *Ibid.*

decided that the University's Board of Directors would have thirty members, ten each from the three regions. Each region would be responsible for the siting, design, construction, development and operation of its own college. The full board would have authority over curricula, engagement of teaching staff, and raising and allocation of capital and operating funds. The society would hire a consultant (who would later be named President) to advise the board on all aspects of establishing the university.²⁰

The planned university was to have buildings; in that sense it would be unlike Adams' university, beginning as an association of existing institutions and the antithesis of Western's "University of the Air." That the founders agreed to this suggests that they also subscribed to Rohmer's planned curriculum. This entire approach would later prove unworkable for a variety of reasons including insufficient financial support and differing visions of the purpose of the university.

Upon returning to Toronto, Rohmer wrote, on 15 July 1970, to David H. Searle, a barrister and solicitor, in Yellowknife.²¹ He asked Searle whether "you and your associates would see fit to gather. . . ten significant people from the Yellowknife and region community to serve on the Board of the Society." Rohmer also cautioned him to keep his activities as quiet as possible:

bearing in mind that in our society it is not the function of Government to create universities (also bearing in mind that the Government of the Territories tends to be somewhat paternalistic) it is respectfully suggested that we keep the formation of the Society with a minimum visibility publicity wise until we are set with the group in Yellowknife and the group in Whitehorse. At that time we should be able to file for the creation of the Society.²²

Rohmer told Searle he would contact Rolf Hougen, a leading Whitehorse businessman and the Chair of the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce's Yukon Research and Development Institute.²³

²⁰ The person was to advise the Board on "the suitability of potential sites, the development of campus sites, the allotment of curricula, course and special disciplines among the colleges, the engagement of staff including the Principal of each constituent college, the general administration of the university, the engagement of consultants for the development of Stage I for the university and each of its colleges, and the raising of capital and operating funds." *Ibid.*, 4.

²¹ Rohmer personal files, Richard Rohmer to David H. Searle, 15 July 1970. Searle was an MLA in the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly at the time and was later the Speaker of the House of the NWT.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Garth Graham, one of UCN's Yukon founding directors, described the YRDI in a 1991 interview as "a sort of think-tank. . . that was Rohmer's point of contact." G. Graham interview, 23 December 1991, Guelph, Ontario. The YRDI was formed out of the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce Committee of Research, Planning and Development. Its primary goal was to conduct research, planning and development for the economic benefit of Whitehorse and the Yukon. Rohmer had been in touch with Hougen and the YRDI in relation to the activities of the Mid-Canada Development

Rohmer wanted Hougen to "head up that end, obtain the required number of people and have a preliminary selection of a suitable site."²⁴

Rohmer telephoned Rolf Hougen and on 21 July 1970, having secured Hougen's interest and agreement, sent him copies of the application for incorporation of the Northwest Territories University of Canada North Society, the proposed by-laws and the organizational memorandum. He wanted Hougen to register a Yukon UCN society identical to the NWT society. The two would then agree to "work jointly along the line of the organizational memorandum."²⁵ Rohmer offered the Mid-Canada Development Foundation as a "participating catalyst" and suggested the Foundation could share its contacts with UCN "in the fundraising effort which must follow."²⁶ The foundation, however, would not actively finance the UCN.

While the northern residents assembled the "significant people" to begin the work of founding the societies, Rohmer canvassed various acquaintances for their reaction to the idea. David Morgan²⁷ of Confederation College in Thunder Bay, Ontario warned Rohmer that colleges should be "unique not a copy of our stereotyped universities across the country."²⁸ Others viewed the UCN proposal with complete disbelief, arguing that the population in the North was too small for a northern university to be viable. Most comment, however, was muted by a wait-and-see attitude and the business of founding the UCN continued enthusiastically.

On 10 September there was another UCN meeting this time held in Yellowknife. Those who attended were primarily Northwest Territories residents; only one person was present from the Yukon. They confirmed that a university ought to be formed. They also agreed to call it The University of Canada North. In what appears to have been a unilateral undertaking, Rohmer had prepared a draft application to incorporate The University of Canada North as a non-profit corporation under Part II of the federal *Companies Act*. The draft, along with a set of proposed

Conference. Rolf Hougen, personal communication, September 1993.

24 Rohmer personal files, Richard Rohmer to David H. Searle, 15 July 1970. Used with permission.

25 YA, UCN Records, COR 0321, file 2. Richard Rohmer to Rolf Hougen, 21 July 1970.

26 *Ibid.*

27 Morgan was active in the conversion of Lakehead College to Lakehead University and had been involved with the Mid-Canada Development conference session held there in 1969. In 1971 he was working at the new "Con" College. His experience was useful to the UCN directors.

28 Rohmer personal files, David Morgan to Richard Rohmer, 27 July 1970. Used with permission.

by-laws, was circulated for comment.²⁹

The incorporation of the university raised a legal question about jurisdiction. A legal opinion by a colleague was submitted to Rohmer in late September. The opinion surveyed the legal options for the UCN's creation. The federal government certainly had the power to charter a university in the North. Territorial legislation offered another possible avenue:

the Commissioner in Council may grant a charter under Section 13(r) or 13(w). Obviously these two heads of jurisdiction never contemplated a university but would likely give the Commissioner in Council the power. A third alternative would be for the Governor in Council to designate the creation of universities as a further head of jurisdiction under 13(y).³⁰

Rohmer thought it better to create the UCN by incorporation than by legislation. He was concerned that neither the federal nor the territorial governments had seriously considered a northern university before and might not agree to permit one. Requesting territorial legislation, therefore, had the potential to jeopardize the entire UCN project.

Another matter that required attention was securing land for the three colleges. For the NWT founders, securing grants of land for the colleges was relatively easy. Land for the Inuvik campus appeared to have been up someone's sleeve. By 10 July Dick Hill had arranged for the town council to set aside a large parcel of land for the Inuvik college. On a map Hill submitted along with his comments on Rohmer's status report the reserved lands were labelled the "Mackenzie Institute Campus of UCN."³¹ Hill had probably arranged for the land to be set aside for the Mackenzie Institute³² and had merely transferred it to The University of Canada North. A site for the Yellowknife campus had been found by mid-October. Norman Byrne, an alderman involved with the UCN, told Rohmer he would "register the proposed project with the City and obtain approval in principle. An area. . . has been reserved as University lands."³³ Land for proposed Whitehorse college was less easy to locate. Rolf Hougen was apparently unsuccessful in his attempt to lease unused Crown property. The interim Yukon Board directed a committee

²⁹ *Ibid.*, "Memorandum, 30 September 1970, Re: University of Canada North Meeting at Yellowknife, 10 September 1970." Used with permission.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, "Memorandum Re: UCN." Legal Opinion by "RJS," 21 September 1970. Used with permission. There is no indication who R.J.S. was or which law firm he was with. He was referring to the *NWT Act*. The corresponding *Yukon Act* sections are 16(r) [education], (w) [expenditure of territorial funds] and (x) [all matters of a local or private nature in the territory]. The order is the same.

³¹ *Ibid.*, "Status Report," n.d. Used with permission.

³² The Mackenzie Institute is discussed in chapter 2. See page 26.

³³ Rohmer personal files, "Status Report, 14 October 1970." Used with permission.

of three to look into acquiring a site. At the same meeting, a director reported that land was available.³⁴ A parcel in the north-east area of the downtown had been set aside for the UCN. Evidently the grant was later rescinded, because, in 1972, the Yukon Board directed its chairman to try once again to have land set aside for the college.³⁵

Work on the preparation of the UCN incorporation application continued, though now on four fronts. In addition to the representatives from Inuvik and Yellowknife, the September organizational meeting in Yellowknife had attracted a fair number of interested people from Fort Smith, NWT. There is no indication how the news of the UCN reached Fort Smith. Fort Smith was still smarting from the federal government's 1967 choice of Yellowknife as the capital of the territory. (It had been the administrative centre for the NWT for many years.) Residents and boosters had felt that Fort Smith had all the necessary amenities, including a vocational training school, to be the capital. It is not, then, surprising that they were anxious not to be left out of the UCN plan. There were enough Fort Smith supporters that the allocation of directors was changed from ten from each region to fifteen from each territory—fifteen from the Yukon and five each from Yellowknife, Fort Smith and Inuvik.³⁶ Richard Rohmer would be the one Director-at-Large. Each territorial society was asked to assemble the required number of directors and to sign the preliminary application documents. The Yukon Society's documents were delayed somewhat as the principals thought it "desirable to have incorporators from parts of the Yukon other than Whitehorse."³⁷

In the meantime, news of the northern university idea was spreading by letter and word of mouth because no formal announcement had yet been made to the press. Reactions were again mixed. Hougen mentioned the plan to the Yukon Commissioner, James Smith. Shortly after the conversation, Smith wrote Hougen "to confirm support for such a venture even though we agree it could be some years off."³⁸ C. H. Macdonald, an Administrative Assistant with Anvil

³⁴ Graham personal files, [file 3] "UCN 1974-," "Minutes of a meeting of the Directors of the Yukon Division of the University of Canada North held in the City Hall, Whitehorse on the [29 March 1971] at 7:30 p.m." Used with permission.

³⁵ YA, UCN Records, COR 0321, file 4, "Minutes of Directors Meeting, Thursday, May 4, 1972."

³⁶ *Ibid.*, file 2, "Memorandum of Advice re Completion of Application for Incorporation and By-Laws for the UCN."

³⁷ *Ibid.*, Robert Byron to Richard Rohmer, 5 November 1971.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, James Smith to Rolf Hougen, 25 November 1970.

Mining Corporation had received a letter from Robert Byron,³⁹ one of the Yukon incorporators, announcing the project. Macdonald seemed dubious of the UCN's financial ability to provide adequately for individual students. He thought there was no need for the UCN. The system of territorial support for students pursuing higher education outside the territory was good enough. He reiterated the argument that a university needed a certain minimum level of enrolment to survive and a northern university would never be able to attract sufficient students. His letter continued with a suggestion and a warning:

I believe that a program of this type should proceed in an orderly fashion starting with a regional college in one of the larger northern centres when there is sufficient population to make it a viable entity and that unless the proper ground work is done a university started prematurely would prove disastrous.⁴⁰

In spite of Macdonald's critical but, as it turned out, prophetic comment, reaction in the North was cautiously positive but planning for the new university had remained fairly private and details had still not been made public.

Technical and legal details of the application required attention. On 18 December Rohmer met with the Acting Director of Corporations "to sort out the wording of the application."⁴¹ The Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs then requested an outline of the background of the UCN. Rohmer provided it in the form of a "Memorandum Re: The Incorporation of the UCN" that contained the rationale for the creation of the UCN and a projection of the costs of the first year's operation of the university.

The Incorporation Documents

The incorporation documents reveal only some of the confusion the founders felt about the UCN. On the surface, they appeared to have thought the whole thing out carefully. They appeared to have a goal and a purpose for the UCN firmly in mind. Some of the material in the incorporation application suggests otherwise. The preamble, resolutions and objects of the corporation are often contradictory. They show that the founders were sincere in having the UCN meet the post-secondary needs of northerners. Those needs, however, were so broadly conceived there was really little chance of bringing the university to fruition. The UCN, as the

³⁹ Byron was City Development Officer for the City of Whitehorse.

⁴⁰ Rohmer personal files, C. H. Macdonald to Robert Byron, 1 December 1970. Used with permission.

⁴¹ YA, UCN Records, COR 0321, file 2, Richard Rohmer to Robert Byron, 21 December 1970.

incorporation documents have it, offered no real solution to the post-secondary education requirements of northern people. The following discussion of the content of the incorporation documents shows that the initial conception of the UCN was of a traditional university and a unique northern institution only insofar as it was established by northerners, located north of 60°, and many of its students were to be First Nations.

The long preamble is a series of twenty-two statements that describe the problems that The University of Canada North was to address and remedy. Specific paragraphs show that the founders, a number of whom were First Nations, intended the University to encourage northern development and to improve the social condition of Native northerners.⁴² The first three paragraphs stated that northern Canada was relatively undeveloped, that "wise use of tax dollars could provide unlimited opportunities for Northerners," and that "Canada should begin to think big about the Development of the North." Sixteen of the remaining nineteen statements focused on the government's chronic mishandling of the problems of First Nations people in the North. A selection of the statements highlight the emphasis the founders placed on the development needs of the northern First Nations as a rationale for creating the university:

WHEREAS, The Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development recently stated that Canada must pay attention to the special educational needs of Native People, and,

WHEREAS, The present educational programs in Northern Canada represent one of the world's greatest failures as it relates to Native People, and,

...

WHEREAS, In Northern Canada our Native People have suffered social, educational and cultural genocide since the arrival of the Whiteman, and,

WHEREAS, The present and proposed educational programs in the North are completely irrelevant to the native People, and,

WHEREAS, Participation in the political, social and educational life of the north so far has been denied Native residents, and,

...

WHEREAS, The experience of other nationalities and groups throughout the world would seem to prove that a people must possess a cultural, educational and intellectual centre of its own in order to survive and advance, and

WHEREAS, If Northern Canadians are to preserve their identity a Native controlled university would seem a necessity [*sic*]. . . .⁴³

It is uncertain how much discussion there was of these statements in the months leading to the submission of the application for letters patent. The evidence suggests that Rohmer wrote the

⁴² This opinion comes as a bit of a surprise as the documents relating to the initial meetings do not report that the founders had worked on the wording of the preamble or that there was a consensus about the stated direction of UCN beyond the need to establish a northern university.

⁴³ YA, UCN Records, COR 0321, file 2, "Application for letters patent," 1.

application himself. A draft of the application was circulated to all the founding members for comment. There is, however, no indication how much was altered because no annotated copies of the draft have been located. In addition, no record survives of any particular discussion surrounding the wording of either the preamble or any of the subsequent portions of the incorporation application. In practice, in the later history of the UCN, no reference is made to the contents of the application documents and the specific goals described in them did not form the basis for the subsequent work of the UCN in either territory. Certainly, the statement that the North needed a "Native controlled" university does not appear, given the later history of the UCN, to have had the force of law. The statement that "a people must possess a cultural, educational and intellectual centre of its own in order to survive and advance" appears, in the context of the preamble, to refer to the needs of northern First Nations. Taken out of context, however, it neatly summarizes the aim the directors actually had for the UCN. It was to be "a cultural, educational and intellectual centre" for all northerners, regardless of origin. The breadth of this goal, however, ultimately made it difficult to achieve.

The second part of the application listed eight resolutions that provide a slightly more focused picture of what Rohmer (and the founders) hoped to create. The University of Canada North would hold "as its first priority, the self-determination of the Native peoples who live north of sixty." It would serve as a "resource centre for the use of the Native People north of sixty." It would "train its students in leadership, community development and legislative process with programs for persons at all levels of previous education and for all age groups." Ironically, the resolutions also stated that the UCN would offer courses in "history, fine arts, music, literature, physical sciences, human sciences and White studies."⁴⁴ There was no suggestion or elaboration of how such courses might be useful to northern First Nations people.

The sixth resolution stated that UCN would

recruit the services of Mr. Richard Rohmer, Dr. André Renaud, Professor Walter Currie, Mrssrs. [sic] Dick Hill, Rolf Hougen and other persons who are willing to help make the University of Canada North a credit to all of Canada and to all Canadians.⁴⁵

The seventh resolution stated that the Constitution of the university be amended at the 1972 Annual General Meeting to provide that nineteen of the Board of Directors and eight of the

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 2. There was nothing in the document to suggest what was meant by "White Studies"; perhaps it was intended as a sort of anthropology course.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

Executive be "Northerners of Native Origin."⁴⁶

The application then went on to list the objects of the proposed corporation. This list plainly enumerated what the UCN was being created to do. Despite the previous mentions of the First Nations people, the objects do not refer to them at all. The UCN corporation was:

1. To promote and organize the establishment of a Territorial University with colleges at various places in the Yukon Territory and the Northwest Territories to be named THE UNIVERSITY OF CANADA NORTH which will:
 - (a) Serve the people of the Yukon Territory and the Northwest Territories, and
 - (b) Provide a central co-ordinating base for research in the social and physical sciences in relation to Mid-Canada and the Arctic.
2. To advance learning and disseminate knowledge, including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, to advance learning and disseminate knowledge respecting the social and physical sciences in relation to Mid-Canada and Arctic Regions.
3. To establish and maintain faculties, schools, institutes, departments, chairs and courses.
4. To seek legislation, to raise funds and to do all things necessary to give effect to the above purposes.⁴⁷

Thus, the University of Canada North, according to the incorporation documents, would have a political agenda, in that it supported self-determination of the First Nations. It was to function as a resource centre, as a training centre for anyone who wanted to learn politically-useful leadership skills, and as a school. It would offer traditional university-type courses in a variety of traditional disciplines offered in the traditional university style of "faculties, institutes, departments, chairs and courses." It might be intended to be a Native-controlled institution but the document stated that the corporation would recruit four specific non-aboriginal individuals to make the UCN a "credit to all of Canada and to all Canadians."⁴⁸ There was, therefore, from the beginning, contradictory visions of the UCN that would contribute substantially to the difficulty of establishing the new institution.

The by-laws attached to the incorporation application provide the regulation of the corporation's organisation. Among other arrangements, the by-laws specified that at the first general meeting thirty-one directors would be elected from the members (anyone over the age

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

of 18 who had paid a one dollar fee) of the corporation. Fifteen would be drawn from the Yukon Territory and five each from the Inuvik, Fort Smith and Yellowknife regions of the Northwest Territories. One would be a director at large.⁴⁹ The UCN Board of Directors' would then elect, for a term of one year, "a President (Chairman), two Vice-Presidents (Vice-Chairmen) being one each from the Yukon Territory and the Northwest Territories, a Secretary, a Treasurer and such other officers as are deemed necessary."⁵⁰

The by-laws also provided for (but did not require) the election of an Executive Committee "which shall have a Yukon Territory Division and a Northwest Territories Division. Each Division shall be comprised of six (6) members of the Board."⁵¹ In practice, the wording of this section of the by-laws led to the (illegal) establishment of two separate territorial divisions of the University, whose chairs (or territorial presidents) were the two vice-presidents of the Board of Directors. In a recent interview Rohmer stated that he had intended to create two separate but equal divisions to ensure each had territorial autonomy.⁵² The separation of the UCN into two divisions at the Executive Committee level was to permit the UCN in each territory to form different types of institutions if they needed to. In fact, the by-laws were never revised at a general meeting of both divisions, so the authority of the full Board of Directors of the UCN was never delegated to the Territorial Divisions of the Executive Committee. The demise of the Northwest Territories Division, in effect, rendered many of the actions of the longer-lived Yukon Division technically invalid.⁵³

Rohmer's December Memorandum was included with the application and described, less formally and more fully, the rationale for the creation of the UCN. The introduction stated that "the people of the major communities of the Northwest and Yukon territories⁵⁴ believe that there is a need to organize and create over a number of years The University of Canada North."⁵⁵

49 *Ibid.*, The University of Canada North By-Laws, Section 6 (1).

50 *Ibid.*, Section 6(4).

51 *Ibid.*, Section 10.

52 Richard Rohmer, interview, Toronto, Ontario, 22 August 1991.

53 Fortunately, the operations of the Yukon Division never reached the point where a close examination of the by-laws would lead to any legal liability or other awkwardness.

54 Yellowknife, Fort Smith, Inuvik, and Whitehorse.

55 YA, UCN Records, COR 0321, file 1, R. Rohmer, "Memorandum Re: The Incorporation of the UCN."

The next section described the applicants as "responsible, influential members of their respective communities." Rohmer claimed that

these people also believe that the University must be created by members of the general community of the Territories, not by other universities in Canada South and not by government. On the other hand they will seek co-operation and assistance from universities of Canada South and as well from the Government of Canada and from the Territorial Governments.⁵⁶

The Memorandum also outlined the planned start-up of the university. As Rohmer had suggested in his "Organizational Memorandum," its headquarters would be in Inuvik and an administrative centre would be built there in 1971. One of the first activities of the Board was to be to hire an Executive Director. This person would organise the construction of the first buildings, formulate academic goals, and prepare and execute a fundraising campaign. David Morgan, acting as an advisor to the incorporating members, estimated that, assuming fifty students, the UCN would require a first-year budget of about \$150,000 to "retain the Executive Director or acting President, to provide for all operating expenses and staffing."⁵⁷ The memo then optimistically declared that classes would start in the fall of 1972.⁵⁸

Incorporation and Reaction

The application for incorporation was filed with the federal Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs on 15 January 1971. The press release announcing the filing was carried by the Canadian Press wire service. As a result, news of the filing appeared in many major Canadian newspapers and sparked interest from both the private and public sectors. Gordon Lennard, Regional General Manager of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce in Edmonton, wrote to David Searle saying he thought that The University of Canada North was a "most ambitious and imaginative project."⁵⁹ He offered the University "any Alberta support including contact with our friends in the petroleum industry."⁶⁰ Another expression of interest came from G. C. Butler, Regional Director of Medical Services, Department of National Health and Welfare. In December 1970 Butler had suggested to the Director General of Medical Services that a

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Rohmer personal files, Gordon H. Lennard to David Searle, 19 January 1971. Used with permission.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

training program for dental nurses be set up in Inuvik. He told Searle in a letter that he could "see no reason why this could not be a part of the nucleus of a university."⁶¹ Butler thought the University might be allowed to use the money allocated to the Northwest Territories in the Health Resources Fund. The money was, after all, available to support northern medical research and training.

Officials of the Government of the Northwest Territories claimed they had not been informed of the UCN's plans for incorporation. The *News of the North*, reporting the event on the front page of its 21 January 1971 edition, declared that

the announcement landed with a dull thud on Territorial administration headquarters in Yellowknife.

Director of Education, Bernard Gillie, was taken by surprise and said in a subsequent interview that he regretted very much not having advance information or consultation on the proposal. In an area of such limited resources and people, he said, it is a pity that the various groups concerned with higher education could not get together.

Commissioner Hodgson appeared to have been caught equally unaware although he noted that the idea was not a new one. He noted that the establishment of a university is a costly venture and that there were alternative approaches which could have been considered along with that put forward in the application.⁶²

Mr. Gillie was not, in fact, being very accurate when he "regretted not having advance information" on the proposal. On 31 August 1970 W. Peter Adams had sent Gillie copies of his considerable correspondence concerning his idea of a university of the Arctic. Along with copies of various letters dating to 1969, was a copy of one from Richard Rohmer to Adams and a copy of Rohmer's 9 July 1970 UCN "Organizational Memorandum."⁶³ Gillie had replied to Adam on 16 October 1970:

My sincere thanks for the various letters and other material you have forwarded to me during recent months. I must apologize for the delay. . . , but I felt I should wait until I had an opportunity to consider the whole matter, and discuss it with senior members of the Territorial Government staff. As the result of these discussions and an interview with Mr. John Parker, Deputy Commissioner of the NWT, we have decided to prepare and present to the Territorial Council as soon as possible, a policy paper on this whole matter. . . .⁶⁴

Certainly, both territorial governments had been deliberately excluded from being informed

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, G. C. Butler to David Searle, 18 January 1971. Used with permission.

⁶² "Will Ivy Take Root in the North?," *News of the North*, Yellowknife, 21 January 1971.

⁶³ Adams annotated the copies of his correspondence showing what other materials were included. The letter to Gillie is annotated showing Gillie had received "Items 1-10." Rohmer's letter and memo were listed as item 10.

⁶⁴ Adams personal files, B. D. Gillie, Director of Education, GNWT to W. P. Adams, 16 October 1970. Used with permission.

officially of the planning of the university. Rohmer feared the project, owing to its grass-roots origin, might not win the approval of the territorial governments. That, however, had not prevented some officials from finding out about it in other ways.

The article continued with an outline of the organization and academic structure of the proposed university, most of which appears to have been based on Rohmer's December Memorandum. Gillie suggested that a meeting between the UCN and the GNWT would be a good idea. He also told the reporter that the GNWT had been dealing with several southern universities with courses and programs running in the territory. One of the government's greatest concerns was

that the announcement, without prior warning, may have upset relations with other universities with programs in the North. Some were considering increasing them and meetings have been scheduled, Mr. Gillie said.

Commissioner Hodgson told the News of the North he thought the better plan might have been to develop upwards from a community college. A university isn't an easy thing to start and finance, he cautioned.⁶⁵

The application also caused a stir at the federal level. By the beginning of February the application had been conditionally approved but was being delayed by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND). That Department was not sure if it was DIAND policy to permit the incorporation of a university in the North. It was within the legislated power of the Minister to prohibit the university but as education was a territorial matter it was not entirely appropriate for the Department to interfere.

Rohmer was annoyed by what he saw as obstruction of the incorporation by DIAND. In a letter to David Searle in Yellowknife, he said, "this is bad and furthermore I don't think it is proper for any government to make this kind of decision."⁶⁶ The result was only a minor delay and, despite DIAND's and the territorial governments' misgivings, the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs approved the UCN application on 17 March 1971 and issued letters patent incorporating "The University of Canada North" bearing the original filing date 15 January 1971. The University of Canada North had become a legal entity.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Rohmer personal files, Richard Rohmer to David Searle, 8 February 1971. Used with permission.

CHAPTER 4

PLANNING THE UCN: THE FIRST SEVEN MONTHS

Once the letters patent had been secured, The University of Canada North directors were faced with the task of turning the words in the document into reality. They met officially only three times between April and October, though they corresponded regularly. Individually and in groups, they wrestled with the problem of designing an institution that would fulfil their dream of a cultural, educational and intellectual centre for the Canadian North. Many of the directors had been to university but nevertheless appeared unclear how such institutions operated and how they came to hold their positions in society. They wanted the UCN to meet the needs of northerners but were unable to define just what those needs actually were. They knew they wanted a post-secondary school of some kind, one that would also carry out and coordinate research in the North, but they did not know what it might teach and how or to whom it would teach.

The Native organisations began to doubt the UCN would answer any of *their* needs because there was nothing concrete on which to base their assessments. They were also hampered by their own uncertainty about the needs of their constituents. The UCN's answer was plan to hold a conference, in conjunction with its first annual general meeting, to discuss the matter with education experts, northern residents and other interested people. This chapter traces the activities of The University of Canada North from April to the middle of November 1971. The events of the seven months show the difficulties the directors faced in making the UCN a reality.

The University of Canada North began organising in earnest when Rohmer was informed on 17 March that the letters patent had been issued. He telexed Rolf Hougen in Whitehorse two

days later to give him the news. The first Interim Executive Committee⁶⁷ meeting was scheduled for 6 April in Inuvik. In Whitehorse, the Yukon Division met on 29 March. Rolf Hougen chaired the meeting. He began by praising the work that Rohmer had done for the UCN, because "without his energies and enthusiasm the Directors would not be sitting down today speaking seriously on the subject of a university."⁶⁸ Six people were selected from among the Yukon directors to attend the Inuvik meeting. At the same time, a three-person committee was directed to look into securing land for the Whitehorse campus. One director reported that the Whitehorse Metropolitan Plan Steering Committee had "unanimously agreed on a site in the north-east corner of the Whitehorse valley in the area of Long Lake."⁶⁹

Further Reaction to the Incorporation of the UCN

The official incorporation of The University of Canada North provoked further public reaction both for and against the plan. Ted Horton, a former GNWT employee, wrote to Dick Hill calling the University of Canada North "some enormous hoax." He thought that the University was somehow anti-Canadian:

efforts of this type, parochial in outlook can only serve to help on [sic] building a ghetto in the north to segregate Canadians along boundary lines at a time when, if ever, a united Canada is needed.⁷⁰

Horton stated that, though he was now living in Edmonton, he was aware of developments in the North. "I am still concerned about the north and its development along sane lines. . . . Estrangement, division and segregation are not sane lines."⁷¹

The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) was also concerned about the North and its development. As early as 1967 the AUCC had "expressed concern about the

⁶⁷ The Executive Committee of the UCN was made up of six directors from each territory with one additional member. At the meetings held over the summer of 1971, the extra member was Richard Rohmer.

⁶⁸ Graham personal files, [file 3] "UCN 1974-," "Minutes of a meeting of the Directors of the Yukon Division of the University of Canada North," 29 March 1971. Used with permission.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* As mentioned before, this land was apparently later withdrawn. In 1972, the Yukon directors delegated Garth Graham to once again look into possible sites: Graham personal files, [file 7] "Flo Whyard," "UCN, Minutes of Directors Meeting, Thursday, May 4, 1972," 2. Used with permission.

⁷⁰ Hill personal files, Ted Horton to Dick Hill, 14 April 1971. Used with permission.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

involvement of universities in activities related to the north and its people."⁷² It had established a study group, the Commission on the University and the Canadian North, to investigate the state of post-secondary education, research and university activity in the North. The 1968 discovery of oil at Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, and the subsequent discovery of oil and gas deposits in the Beaufort Sea near Tuktoyaktuk had sparked a renewed interest in northern research but much that was being conducted was haphazard and uncoordinated.

At the 1970 AUCC annual general meeting in Winnipeg, the study commission reported that "the universities are an important resource in the development of the North."⁷³ The AUCC resolved to hold a conference on "The University and the Canadian North" the following spring at Resolute Bay, NWT. Northerners and university people would meet and discuss "the future development of higher education for northern people."⁷⁴

Early in 1971, the AUCC invited interested academics and government officials to attend a conference-planning meeting in Ottawa in early April. The announcement that the UCN had been granted letters patent caught that group by surprise. In a draft of a paper to be presented at the planning meeting, Dr. Graham Rowley, DIAND Scientific Advisor, declared that he thought "any idea of a university in the North is premature."⁷⁵ Responding to Rowley's request for comments on the document, Don Simpson, Assistant Director, Education Branch, agreed but only if the community-related functions of a university such as northern social development were being adequately provided by southern universities operating in the North.⁷⁶ Simpson, focusing on more practical concerns, thought that perhaps "the first phase in developing a university might well be the establishment of a community college, which could include some element of teacher education and health worker training."⁷⁷

⁷² Del Koenig, *Northern People and Higher Education: Realities and Possibilities*, Phase II of *The University and the Canadian North* (Ottawa: AUCC, 1975), 2.

⁷³ J. Holmes and J. Rondeau. *The University and Canadian Development, Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada*, (Ottawa: AUCC, 1970): 57, quoted in Koenig, *Northern People and Higher Education*, 2.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ GNWT Archives Accession #G88-004; History of Education Records; NWT Executive, History of Education Project, McPherson Collection, Box #6, file: University of the North (hereafter referred to as GNWTA, McPherson Collection), text of presentation to the *ad hoc* planning committee meeting on the Canadian North and its Education.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, D. W. Simpson to G. W. Rowley, "Comments on Universities and the Canadian North," 2 April 1971.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

The UCN issue was still current, when, on 3 April, the AUCC planning committee met to discuss holding the conference. The meeting began with a discussion of the type of conference that should be held. Northern post-secondary education, it was agreed, "should be a major topic of [the] conference" but that since the issue was still new, other topics should also be considered.⁷⁸ It was eventually decided that a conference, held in conjunction with the annual National Northern Research Conference, would likely be the most feasible and useful.

Discussion then turned to the UCN initiative. The university representatives at the meeting "emphasised that no university has proposed the establishment of a university in the North at this time, and that such a step would be premature." Jim Arvaluk, Baffin Island Administrator, noted that "if there were going to be a university in the North it must not be the same kind of university in the south."⁷⁹ He was firm that a northern university must be created in the North. Bernard Gillie, NWT Director of Education, said that he was concerned about potential consequences of the UCN and there were political implications to consider. The project had strong local support and, he thought "any views presented appearing to negate these views would meet with some northern opposition."⁸⁰ The group agreed that it was crucial that the southern universities

become involved in education planning, since entrepreneurs are entering this field, using extremely sophisticated public relations. It is important to bring together groups with an interest in northern education to present positive alternatives to the University of Canada, North plan.⁸¹

The fledgling UCN was soon to face other groups with doubts. Intimations of the problems surfaced almost immediately. On 6 April 1971 the Indian Brotherhood of the Northwest Territories (IBNWT) issued a press release, "University of Canada North No Local Involvement," to coincide with the first official meeting of the interim Executive Committee in Inuvik. The release accused the UCN founders of not consulting northerners. It stated that "many persons fear that the University is being created for and by outsiders without enough local participation." The Indian Brotherhood misconstrued Rohmer's involvement in the UCN and charged that the meeting was being run by the Mid-Canada Development Foundation. James

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, "Minutes of a meeting of *ad hoc* planning committee for proposed conference on the Canadian North and its Education." 3 April 1971.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

Washie, IBNWT president, was quoted as saying that "at no point since the inception have Indian people been invited to participate as equals." The release noted that Chief Elijah Smith of the Yukon Native Brotherhood had never heard of the UCN and that COPE was opposed "unless [the UCN] changes its attitude. Like the other two native groups, C.O.P.E. did not want to see the university go out of native hands."⁸² The Native organisations feared

an establishment of corporate donors, businessmen, and officials will take over and set standards for teachers, teaching methods, and courses which could discriminate against natives.⁸³

Washie called for immediate involvement of Native people because, he said, "without Indian participation from the beginning, Indians on the Board can only serve to justify the plans that were made without their say."⁸⁴ The UCN Interim Executive Committee meeting in Inuvik thus opened against a backdrop of mistrust and doubt. In fact, item four in the minutes was to be a "representation by Native people [to] the Board."

The First Interim Executive Committee Meeting, Inuvik

Richard Rohmer began the first Executive Committee meeting with an account of the incorporation of the UCN. He reported that DIAND had "no comment" on any policy it may or may not have regarding establishing post-secondary institutions in the North. The agenda shows they planned to discuss such concrete matters as budget, fund-raising, academic goals, buildings and campus locations, staffing, interim administration facilities, terms of reference for the President, and potential liaisons with universities in Canada South.⁸⁵ It was soon apparent that the executive was unprepared to make any decisions on such matters. Given the group's uncertainty, Rohmer suggested that they start by discussing "in general terms, some of the notes on the agenda, get the feeling of the situation, [and] determine where to go from here."⁸⁶

Before the round-table discussions began, the committee briefly reviewed the application

⁸² YA, UCN Records, COR 0322, file 12, Indian Brotherhood of the Northwest Territories, press release, "UCN No Local Involvement," 6 April 1971.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Graham personal files, [file 1] "UCN 1970-1973," "The First Executive Committee Meeting of the Board of Directors of the UCN, 6 April 1971, Inuvik." Used with permission.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, "Minutes of the First Executive Committee Meeting of the Board of Directors of the UCN, 6 April 1971, Inuvik," 1-2. Used with permission.

by the recently-formed IBNWT "requesting representation on the Board and stating there should be fifty percent native representation." Rohmer said he thought that "what we do next is strictly up to the people here and others who may join us. This is a start. There will be all kinds of approaches. . . and all will have various ideas."⁸⁷ Discussions on the application were postponed until the representative of the Brotherhood joined them to give his presentation later in the meeting.

The UCN executive began to wrestle with the question of what form the new university was going to take. Each executive member was asked to give a "summary of their own reactions and suggestions."⁸⁸ Robert Spence was concerned that the UCN might restrict choice for university-bound northerners. He also wondered if the UCN would attract southern students interested in specialized courses. Paul Kaeser felt that local interest and conditions should be considered when planning the offerings at the various colleges. He suggested the mining course be centred in Yellowknife, oil technology at Inuvik, and agriculture, forestry and education at Fort Smith. Father Charles Gilles was excited by the prospect of the university. He thought the UCN was in the vanguard of national interest in the North:

Here we are at the last frontier, planning for the organization of a university for these regions, to provide educational facilities for the pupils of our secondary schools. . . . The interest of the whole Country is focused on the north now. . . scientific and intellectual, political and social as well as from a cultural point of view.⁸⁹

He was certain that in a few years northern students would be ready to take advantage of the UCN.

Art Pearson thought they should first decide on the purpose of the UCN. He seemed to have had second thoughts:

Why do we want a university of the north? There is nothing wrong with the post-secondary education available to northerners now. Our students are getting some tremendous financial support and this is good. I don't believe they should go to a university in the town where they were raised. Are we talking about a technical college, some kind of community college. . . or a real university which would give cultural, social stimulus to the entire north. . . a centre of academic freedom which would speak out on the problems of the north? This is its real value.⁹⁰

Robert Byron raised the issue of the difficulty of establishing an organisation that would be able

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

to "bring these things about." Rolf Hougen thought the UCN would mainly attract students from elsewhere. He also said the Yukon directors were worried that a northern university would lead to the discontinuation of the territorial educational bursary and grant programs. Another Yukon director, R. E. (Buzz) Hudson, thought the way to start was through research: "We could achieve," he said, "some acceptance or accreditation in the field of graduate work, attract graduates here."

Richard (Dick) Hill of Inuvik stated the problem that was really facing the executive:

What is a university? Everyone has a different definition. We are a frontier situation with a total population of 50,000 people. We need northern adaptation, 50% of our people are indigenous we have to adapt conditions to northerners. There are financial and practical aspects. The way to move is in research, as for example, did the University of Alaska, which was in the north, for the north and by northerners. There will be a great deal of reliance on the south, but direction from within the north. The most realistic way to arrive is through research. . . .

Other problems relate to funds. The normal Canadian university gets 80% of its funds from the public body; here we don't have the capability of raising such funds.

With the small northern population of only 50,000 there is the likelihood that not more than five students will want the same course at the same time. We must rely on the south for larger sized classes, but be careful that southern financing doesn't become detrimental to northern students.⁹¹

Agnes Semmler, a Dene from Inuvik, said that northern Native parents wanted their children to attend a northern university "so as not to forget their own culture, language etc."⁹² She admitted, though, that she did not know what students wanted. The other directors probably agreed.

Rohmer summarized the directors' comments and presented his own ideas, some of which were substantially different from those expressed in the December Memorandum:

So far, no one denies the need for a university. There is a strong belief that research is a basic aim. . . . we hope for participation by the native people at these meetings. Our major thrust must concern their interests.

Respecting funding we look to the traditional sources, private enterprise. And there is nothing to prevent us, if we put together a budget and program, from approaching the usual corporations for grants. . . . We can invite them to undertake long term participation because it will be attractive as a visible investment. Their contributions disappear in large universities in the south. . . .

It will take a long time, and we must get the best possible advice from academics, on the administrative side. . . . we will be looking for people to take part, and hire someone as president to put it all together for us. The documents to date are merely a starting point. There may be

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 6.

substantial changes needed or a different nature of representation on the Board.⁹³

What emerged from the discussion was the realisation that none was prepared to found the university immediately. The vision was lovely but the practical and philosophical aspects were overwhelming. Most hoped that more thought and consultation would clarify the problems.

The executive directors then turned to the issue of Native representation on the Board. James Washie then joined the meeting and presented a point-by-point response to Rohmer's July 1970 Organizational Memorandum that was essentially an elaboration of the objections raised in the press release. The memo had been prepared before the Fort Smith contingent had become part of the UCN. Some of Washie's concerns were therefore invalid; there would, in fact, be a college in the upper Mackenzie area where the majority of the Dene lived.

Washie thought the university was not going to meet the needs of the Native people. The structure proposed in the original Organizational Memorandum, would likely result in the regional UCN boards in the NWT being dominated by non-natives in Yellowknife and by Inuit in Inuvik. That domination would allow those people to control curricula at the colleges. Thus, the organisation and courses would, he said, prevent Indians participating "as equals," and would "discriminate against Indian interests."⁹⁴ He was particularly concerned that the headquarters of the university were to be in Inuvik because that would place it farthest from the area inhabited by the Dene.

Rohmer denied the possibility of insufficient Native contribution to the creation of the UCN. He stated that the original memo should be considered as only a rough plan, "a work sheet. . . , something to gather the people together." He dismissed it as "not [being] worth a damn, it has all sorts of insufficiencies."⁹⁵ He said the matter of the university's organisation and direction was in the hands of the members present. Washie pointed out that

nobody questions the need for a University of Canada North. . . such an institution would benefit the overall population of the Territories . . . but we have a concern regarding native participation. We have contacted the Yukon Indian Brotherhood and they have similar feelings at this point.

He hoped there would be time for the UCN and the Native organisations to meet before the September meeting to "coordinate the ideas of the native organisations and start off on the right

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

⁹⁴ YA, UCN Records, COR 0321, file 1, "The University of Canada North and the Indian people of the Northwest Territories."

⁹⁵ Graham personal files, [file 1] "UCN 1970-1973," "Minutes of the First Executive Committee Meeting of the Board of Directors of the UCN, 6 April 1971, Inuvik," 8.

foot, participating from the very beginning, [so] we will have an institution supported by everybody."⁹⁶

Other directors stressed Rohmer's position. Buzz Hudson drew a distinction between representation and participation. He told Washie that while participation was important, representation was

another thing. Anyone elected to this Board is not representing anything more than his own personal interest in this project. Byron is not representing the City of Whitehorse, Father Gilles is not representing the Church; he is here as an interested person. Once we are composed as representatives of other background groups and only here to fulfil our duty to another organization, the result is that interest in the University itself dissipates. We must represent only [our own] interests and not pressure groups like the Church, or for me, the Bar Association, or the Indian Brotherhood or any others. . . . These people are here because they were able to come.⁹⁷

Washie was also assured the interim directors were working in a strictly informal way until the first annual general meeting. Major decisions about the UCN would be made then. Any member could attend that meeting and have the same "input into future direction that [the directors] have."⁹⁸ The directors gave Washie a copy of the by-laws and the incorporation documents but warned him that the by-laws could be changed at the annual general meeting. Hill suggested that the Brotherhood prepare a submission on its ideas for the UCN for the general meeting. As an initial solution to the problem of perceived exclusivity, the directors proposed that once membership cards had been printed, they would be advertised widely in both territories.

The meeting continued with discussion on other matters. Budget discussions were hampered by the recognition that the university's goals were not yet determined. Graham stressed that the Committee could not agree on what a university should be. Hudson suggested that looking at the origins of the University of Alaska might provide some answers. Rohmer said some Lakehead representatives were keenly interested in the UCN because of their recent experience of starting a university. The executive committee did agree that they wanted "researchers. . . [to] come and live here. . . while they carry out northern research projects."⁹⁹

Hougen suggested that the UCN hold a full-scale conference to precede the annual

⁹⁶ YA, UCN Records, COR 0321, file 1, "The University of Canada North and the Indian People of the Northwest Territories."

⁹⁷ Graham personal files, [file 1] "UCN 1970-1973," "Minutes of the First Executive Committee Meeting of the Board of Directors of the UCN, 6 April 1971, Inuvik," 10.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

general meeting.¹⁰⁰ He thought that representatives from University of Western Ontario, Lakehead University, University of Alaska and the University of Calgary's Boreal Institute might have useful contributions to make. The other directors thought it a good idea. Hill felt it should be limited to one hundred participants. He suggested that the AUCC and representatives from the territorial education departments might also want to attend. Washie mentioned that some teachers from the school at Rae-Edzo, NWT, had gone to Arizona to consult Native educators at the Navajo College. Graham said that the Yukon Territorial Government (YTG) was going to want to see an outline for the structure of the UCN. He thought that such an outline could be prepared by the conference date. The others agreed particularly because "there was bound to be a confrontation because of the basic philosophy, as stated by Mr. Rohmer 'Governments do not create universities.'"¹⁰¹ The directors agreed unanimously to hold a symposium before the annual general meeting.

The directors also examined the matter of establishing relations with the territorial Departments of Education. They agreed to coordinate their approaches once the minutes of the meeting were available. One director was appointed to apply for charitable organisation status.

The minutes of that first meeting are extensive. They reveal the board was struggling with the scope of the task they had undertaken. They seemed overwhelmed by the larger issues. Rohmer's presence at the meeting served to steady many of the members. His summaries of the discussions appeared to simplify things for the rest of the board. Obstacles, however, remained. There was no real agreement about the direction the university would take. There was no substantial understanding of what a university was. Yet the board had been able to make a start. They had managed to make some small decisions. The interim board positions had been filled. Rohmer was elected the chairman, Father Gilles the treasurer. Hougen and Hill became the two territorial vice-chairmen; election of a secretary and an auditor was deferred. They had agreed on the design of the membership cards and had decided to have them and some letterhead printed and they had agreed to meet with Native organisations and the territorial education departments. It was a small beginning.

100 The by-laws stated the annual general meeting had to be held the third Tuesday in September.

101 *Ibid.*, 15-16.

Further First Nations' Reaction

Shortly after the Inuvik meeting, the Yukon Native Brotherhood, lacking details on the UCN, wrote to Jim Lotz to see if he had any information. John Hoyt, a non-Native consultant working with the Brotherhood, told Lotz that the Brotherhood was "under pressure to take sides in this issue and are completely in the dark."¹⁰² Hoyt wanted to know how close the UCN was to Lotz's idea of a northern university. Lotz replied that he had nothing to do with the UCN and suggested that Rohmer was backing the UCN idea because he had purchased a residential lot in Inuvik and "stands to gain from any university there."¹⁰³ He said it was "a waste of time to fight Roehmer [*sic*]" and suggested that, if Hoyt were interested in the idea of a northern university, he should contact either Don Simpson at University of Western Ontario who was involved with Hart on the University of the Air proposal or the AUCC.

The discussions at the Inuvik meeting also caused the Yukon Division some concern. In May, the Yukon Division met in Whitehorse to discuss a report on the Inuvik meeting. The Division Board agreed that it would continue with discussions to establish The University of Canada North but that "the [Yukon] Division should preserve its independency of action."¹⁰⁴ This is the first instance of this sentiment being raised; it is a theme that reoccurs throughout the first several years of the UCN's existence.

Early in June Rohmer responded to a critical letter from Chief Elijah Smith of the Yukon Native Brotherhood.¹⁰⁵ Rohmer was stung by Smith's criticisms of the UCN and of himself. He reminded Smith that he was not just another Toronto person, that he was a member of the Bar of the NWT, spent a good deal of time in Inuvik and had arranged for a Toronto radio station, CHUM, to help a group in Tuktoyaktuk set up a small station there. He stressed that he had done everything possible to ensure Native participation in the creation of the University of Canada North. He invited the YNB to sell UCN membership cards to its members so "the original people of the Territories will be able to nominate directors and participate in the election of the directors to whatever extent they consider appropriate."¹⁰⁶ Rohmer closed the letter saying in

102 YA, UCN Records, COR 0322, file 17, John P. Hoyt to Jim Lotz, 13 April 1971.

103 *Ibid.*, Jim Lotz to John P. Hoyt, 16 April 1971.

104 YA, UCN Records, COR 0321, file 3, "Minutes of the Meeting of the Yukon Division, 18 May 1971."

105 The Smith letter has not been located. One can guess the content from Rohmer's response.

106 YA, UCN Records, COR 0321, file 3, "Minutes of the Meeting of the Yukon Division, 18 May 1971."

contrast to the optimism expressed in the December Memorandum, that classes would begin in the fall of 1972

it will take a very long period of time to get the University going, to raise money and to 'open the doors'. Before any of these things can be done the full participation of all people of the Territories, both original and white must be encouraged.¹⁰⁷

He then invited Smith to attend the June meeting in Yellowknife and offered to arrange a Pacific Western Airlines pass for him.¹⁰⁸ Smith declined the pass and the invitation¹⁰⁹ but explained that "the criticism voiced by the Yukon Native Brotherhood was due primarily to lack of information on our part at that time."¹¹⁰

The Second Interim Executive Committee Meeting, Yellowknife

The second Interim Executive Committee meeting was held on 17 June in Yellowknife.¹¹¹ Further to the Yukon Division Board meeting, Rolf Hougen, as the Yukon Vice-Chairman, asked to be put in the record

as reserving the right at some future date to [re]consider their [the Yukon Division's] position as participants in the University of Canada North, their feeling being that the Yukon's desire for autonomy is such that they might have to consider alternatives to further participation.¹¹²

Rohmer announced that several private sponsors had made funds available to support the work of the Board. He said he did not expect much difficulty raising enough to cover the expenses of the Inuvik conference. Much of the rest of the meeting was devoted to the discussion of planning the conference. Hougen and Hill were requested to prepare a draft program. The directors also discussed UCN's position on the subject of "government participation or assistance." Again the directors agreed that "relevant agencies should be kept fully informed

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, COR 0322, file 12, Richard Rohmer to Elijah Smith, 7 June 1971.

¹⁰⁸ The company had agreed to provide a small number of free flights to UCN directors travelling back and forth on business.

¹⁰⁹ YA, UCN Records, COR 0322, file 12, Elijah Smith to Richard Rohmer, 14 June 1971.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Elijah Smith to Richard Rohmer, 17 June 1971.

¹¹¹ Those Directors at the second meeting were: Nellie Cournoyea (Inuvik), Richard Hill (Inuvik), R. E. Hudson (Whitehorse), Paul Kaeser (Fort Smith), H. Nethersole (Fort Smith), Art Pearson (Whitehorse), Richard Rohmer (Toronto), Dr. Aubrey Tanner (Whitehorse), C. Taylor (Whitehorse), Robert Spence (Yellowknife), Mark de Weerd (Yellowknife). Observers included: James Washie (Indian Brotherhood of the Northwest Territories), Addy Tobac (Tree of Peace, Yellowknife), Phoebe Nahanni (Tree of Peace, Yellowknife), S. Hume (reporter, *Edmonton Journal*), C. Alexander (publisher, *News of the North*), and S. Hook (Station CFYK, CBC).

¹¹² Graham personal files, [file 2] "UCN July 21, 1970 to Oct. 11, 1973," "Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the University of Canada North, Yellowknife," 1. Used with permission.

but that no financial assistance should be accepted from government at this stage."¹¹³ Informal discussion after the meeting resulted in the date of the proposed conference being set for November.

The First Nations Inuvik Meeting

First Nations organisations were still unclear what the UCN might mean to them and how they should address the issue. A group of people, representing three territorial Native organisations (IBNWT, YNB, and COPE), met in Inuvik on 12-13 July to discuss their organisations' position with regard to the University of Canada North.¹¹⁴ Their talk revolved primarily around the political implications of the UCN and the issue of northern education in general. The minutes show that the three groups were uncertain about how to cope with the UCN. This is probably due to the fact that the UCN had no idea where it was going. In addition, the lack of solid information about the UCN was exacerbated by the fact that none of the organisations the delegates represented was yet three years old and all three were being forced to address a broad range of social and political issues.¹¹⁵ An observer might have thought it odd that a group of people with little or no experience of university should be discussing whether to support one or not. Yet in 1971, for the First Nations of the Canadian North, it was not odd; it was politically necessary.

The YNB representatives, Oliver Jim, Jr. and Mike Smith, were present primarily to find out more about the UCN. They wanted to know how the UCN had been started. They were told, inaccurately, that the "Mackenzie Institute thought of the Idea."¹¹⁶ Agnes Semmler, also a UCN founding director, opened the meeting with her thoughts on post-secondary education:

What we really have to make up our minds about is whether the young people want a University; a University in the north or are they satisfied in going south to train. That's one of the main things you have to think about. If we do have a University, maybe our native kids will stay in the north, take courses in the north. And anything that isn't offered by the University of Canada North, like

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ Those at the meeting were: Raymond Yakeleya (Fort Norman), Harold Cook (Fort Good Hope), Addy Tobac (Inuvik), Agnes Semmler (Inuvik), Nellie Cournoyea (Inuvik), Alestine Andre (Inuvik), Jean Mackenzie (Yellowknife), Oliver Jim, Jr. (Whitehorse), Mike Smith (Whitehorse).

¹¹⁵ "There is so much to be done, so much by so few people." YA, UCN Records, COR 0322, file 12, Nellie Cournoyea to Oliver Jim, Jr., 26 August 1971.

¹¹⁶ Graham personal files, [file 2] "UCN July 21, 1970 to Oct. 11, 1973," "University of Canada North Organizational Delegates Meeting," 12-13 July 1971. Used with permission.

lawyer's or doctor's degree, they can go south to train. But do we need a university in the north?

The big majority of these kids that train in the south stay there and contribute their education to the south. But in reality, the kids that go south shouldn't stay there, they should come home and train their own people. The only time the kids can make anything of themselves and brighten the future of the native people of the north is to come back home and train their own people. If you have a university in the north, maybe 2 or 3, they would be home and able to train their own people.¹¹⁷

Jean Mackenzie of Yellowknife suggested that a northern university might be useful as many of the Native students who go south to the city do not succeed. Addy Tobac wondered what would be taught in a northern university. Ray Yakeleya thought some northern people should teach at the UCN. Oliver Jim suggested asking high school students what they would like to study.

The group was particularly frustrated because no one understood the power and decision-making structures of a university. They decided they also needed more information about the organisational structure of the UCN. They debated whether any of them would attend the next directors' meeting, scheduled for August in Whitehorse. They agreed that they wanted to work to ensure that Native people had majority representation on the UCN board. Nellie Cournoyea said that the Yukon Native Brotherhood was not sure "if [UCN] will work for them. It appears they would like to talk to their people."¹¹⁸ Mike Smith replied that for the YNB, it was a question of relevance. "If it is relevant, we certainly would go all out to get in on this University of the North, and that's what we're discussing."¹¹⁹

The difficulty, for the delegates, was deciding, while lacking good information, whether Native organisations were going to work for representation on the UCN Board. Withdrawing from the project did not appear to be a possible solution. MacKenzie argued against it, at least for the time being:

This isn't a question of pulling out, it's making a stand right now and deciding how far we are willing to go to make sure your views are heard. You can easily let it slide and let those thirty seats be filled by chance. Or you can make sure that the native people are represented. In the Northwest Territories if we don't get a majority we'll pull out. The native people are the majority, so why shouldn't they have the majority of seats?¹²⁰

117 Graham personal files, [file 2] "UCN July 21, 1970 to Oct. 11, 1973," "University of Canada North, Organizational Delegates Meeting, Inuvik, July 12-13, 1971," 1. Used with permission.

118 *Ibid.*, 2.

119 *Ibid.*

120 *Ibid.*

The crux of the matter was the delegates' fear that the UCN was going to turn out to be yet another southern institution.¹²¹ The discussions continued in a second meeting the following day. The delegates agreed to work on ensuring that Native people in both territories would have seats on the Board of Directors. They also agreed, on behalf of their respective organisations, to write down and exchange their ideas about the UCN.¹²²

In the weeks following the meeting, the YNB debated whether or not to support the UCN. In a memo to Dave Joe, YNB consultant John Hoyt wrote that he thought, but was not entirely sure, it had been decided at a meeting before Smith and Jim went to Inuvik

that [because] so few native students were qualifying for University entrance in the Yukon at the present time. . . it is felt that efforts of the native people in the educational field towards reform should be concentrated on an up-grading of the present elementary and secondary school systems. If this is the feeling then for heaven's sake let us make the point, make it strong and make it clear. . . .¹²³

The situation, however, was actually not so clear for the YNB. It was caught in a difficult situation. It saw that it had to at least attempt to participate in the UCN because if the university succeeded and the YNB had withdrawn it would be difficult for the YNB to regain lost face with its members and its lost voice on the UCN Board. If the university succeeded with YNB presence, then YNB had backed the right horse, so to speak. If the university failed and the YNB supported it, then it would have been a dreadful waste of the organisation's valuable time and extremely limited resources. If the YNB did not become involved and the UCN failed, then the YNB would gain for having been wise enough to see the shape of the future. It was an unpleasant predicament and there were no obvious answers.

The Third Interim Executive Committee Meeting

The third UCN interim Executive Committee meeting was held on 19 August, this time in Whitehorse. The minutes show that the directors had taken to calling the University of Canada North, UCANORTH.¹²⁴ Rohmer opened the meeting by outlining "the origin of the name

¹²¹ In this context, "southern" means non-Native or imposed. The point is that, in this era, many First Nations people had become fed-up with the colonial attitude of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. The Native organizations were actively examining ways to gain control of land, social programs, education and the like.

¹²² YA, UCN Records, COR 0322, file 14, "Report on University of Canada North Meeting with Delegates from Northwest Territories, July 12/13, 1971, by Mike Smith and Oliver Jim Jr."

¹²³ *Ibid.*, file 12, John Hoyt to Dave Joe, Acting Consultant, 30 July 1971.

¹²⁴ The name only remained current for a couple of years.

UCANORTH [in] a meeting with Marshall McLuhan."¹²⁵ After discussion about membership cards and the procedures for electing directors, the directors heard a presentation from the YNB. Many attending the meeting¹²⁶ must have had a case of *déjà vu* when a letter signed by Elijah Smith, Chief of the YNB was presented by Brotherhood spokesmen, Oliver Jim and John Hoyt. Jim said that while the UCN idea was a good one, "it would not meet the needs of the Indian people, and therefore, they were going to withdraw from UCANORTH."¹²⁷ Smith wrote, "to us, the university would only be an extension of the present system. A system which does not meet the needs of the Indian people, the original residents of this land."¹²⁸ The directors responded quickly to the criticism. Charles Taylor said he had been to two meetings that had had no representation from Indian people of the Yukon. He pointed out that the UCN was distinct and separate from the YTG Department of Education and he hoped the Indians would help to determine the UCN's shape and purpose.¹²⁹ Agnes Semmler said she thought the letter was "very narrow-minded, seeing no further than tomorrow or next year when they should be looking to the future."¹³⁰ Hougen said the Brotherhood was wrong to assume that the UCN would be an extension of the present system. Rohmer emphasized that the Inuvik Conference was being held to get advice on how to put the university together and to find out what northerners thought the "concept of the University of Canada North should be."¹³¹ The First Nations could make an enormous contribution to the process if they wished to. He hoped they would.

Turning to discussion of the planned conference, Rohmer informed the executive directors that he had successfully solicited corporate donations from Rothman's, Shell and Gulf

125 Graham personal files, [file 1] "UCN 1970-1973," "Minutes of the Third Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of UCANORTH, Whitehorse," 1. Used with permission. The minutes do not state why Rohmer talked to McLuhan or what the reasons were for the name.

126 Attending were: Renée Alford, H. E. Boyd, Dr. W. Buchan, Robert Byron, Wally Firth, Fr. Charles Gilles, Garth Graham, Dick Hill, Rolf Hougen, R. E. Hudson, Harry Johannes, Art Pearson, Richard Rohmer, Agnes Semmler, Addy Tobac, Aubrey Tanner, Charles Taylor, and Flo Whyard. Observers from the YNB included Oliver Jim, John Hoyt, R. Sam and David Joe.

127 Graham personal files, [file 1] "UCN 1970-1973," "Minutes of the Third Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of UCANORTH, Whitehorse, 19th Day of August, 1971," 2. Used with permission.

128 YA, UCN Records, COR 0321, file 6, Elijah Smith to Richard Rohmer, 18 August 1971.

129 *Ibid.*

130 Graham personal files, [file 1] "UCN 1970-1973," "Minutes of the Third Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of UCANORTH, Whitehorse, 19th Day of August, 1971," 2. Used with permission.

131 *Ibid.*, 3

and that he had approached Hudson's Bay, Imperial Oil and the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce as well. He was confident there would be no difficulty raising the necessary funds. Rohmer also reported he had met officials of the AUCC. His impression was the association had a "monopoly on the education system in Canada" but was "insufficiently organized" to come to the conference.¹³² In fact, Dr. W. J. Waines, an Associate Director of the AUCC, did attend.¹³³

At the close of the meeting, Hougén thanked Jim and Hoyt for giving the board their views. He said he hoped that by being in on the directors' meeting they would "see the Directors had no developed concept of the university." He reiterated Rohmer's invitation for the YNB to send representatives to the Inuvik conference. He emphasised that "the native people can contribute much" to the direction the university would take.¹³⁴

Despite the Board's assurances, the Native organisations continued to be sceptical of the UCN. YNB representative, Oliver Jim, Jr., sent Nellie Cournoyea an account of the Whitehorse Executive Directors' meeting. He told her the bulk of the discussion at the meeting had been about the annual meeting and conference. He specifically noted "there were no Indian delegates invited to attend [the conference]." He reported that the YNB's position on the UCN had come under attack by "virtually all parties," though he also conceded there had been some support for the YNB view. He asked Cournoyea not to jump to conclusions because "we really haven't taken a negative stand on this matter."¹³⁵ Cournoyea replied that she had seen a copy of Smith's letter and thought maybe the misunderstanding had arisen from the vague reference to "a system." She did not think the context explained what system Smith meant. Cournoyea thought action on the UCN should be delayed until 1974. That would allow time for the Native organisations to "gather ideas on how and what the University should [do]." She felt all the organisations were under too much pressure to right all the wrongs immediately and that there were too few people to do the work: "I understand your problems on priorities as well. All the things that must be done are overwhelming we must play for time I guess some way."¹³⁶

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ John Hallward, ed., *Concepts Conference: The University of Canada North, Inuvik, Northwest Territories* (Toronto: UCN, 1972), 8.

¹³⁴ Graham personal files, [file 1] "UCN 1970-1973," "Minutes of the Third Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of UCANORTH, Whitehorse, 19th Day of August, 1971," 3. Used with permission.

¹³⁵ YA, UCN Records, COR 0322, file 12, Oliver Jim to Nellie Cournoyea, 23 August 1971.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

Towards the Concepts Conference

With the Inuvik Conference planned for mid-November, Dick Hill and Rolf Hougen, the two Divisional UCN chairs, dedicated themselves, through much of the fall, to planning the conference program. They had been appointed to organise the conference agenda. Hill's first draft was completed on July 29, 1971¹³⁷ and was circulated to the directors in August. Hill and Hougen refined it almost daily during September and October.¹³⁸ Rohmer and Hougen worked on locating and inviting experts from across Canada and from several circumpolar nations. Rohmer was able to draw on the contacts he had made through the Mid-Canada Development Conference. Native groups were invited to have representatives attend the conference but they evinced a growing reluctance to become involved in discussions on the creation of what would likely be little more than a "stereo-type" southern, White university.¹³⁹ Some Native activists urged the planners to invite people

who *know* Indian people and recognize their potential and abilities and who, besides, have had *practical* experience in higher education with Native students and who are presently involved in new planning.¹⁴⁰

Elijah Smith suggested that Hougen and Rohmer invite Native education experts from the innovative Native American school, Navajo College, in Arizona.¹⁴¹ Hougen and Rohmer initially appeared, to the COPE and to the YNB, to have disregarded this request. Several telexes between those two organisations show the First Nations' mounting frustration. Ultimately only one American Native educator, Thomas Atcitty, was able to accept the UCN invitation. YNB representatives consented to attend, intending to "determine after the conference whether or not UCN can be relevant and meet the needs of the Yukon Indian people."¹⁴²

In Ottawa, the DIAND was still wondering whether the territories really needed a

¹³⁷ Graham personal files, [file 1] "UCN 1970-1973," "Minutes of the Third Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of UCANORTH, Whitehorse, 19th Day of August, 1971" 2. Used with permission.

¹³⁸ YA, UCN Records, COR 0321, file 8. The file contents consist of eighty items letters, telexes and drafts of the conference agenda sent back and forth between Whitehorse and Inuvik during the fall of 1971.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, file 7, Elijah Smith to Richard Rohmer, 30 September 1971.

¹⁴⁰ YA, UCN Records, COR 0322, file 12, Peggy [Robbins] to Barbara [Cleall], Indian-Eskimo Association, 5 September 1971. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁴¹ YA, UCN Records, COR 0321, file 6, Elijah Smith to Richard Rohmer, 14 September 1971.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, COR 0322, file 12, John Hoyt to Indian-Eskimo Association, Ontario, 18 October 1971.

privately-established university. L.A.C.O. Hunt,¹⁴³ Executive Secretary of the interdepartmental Advisory Committee on Northern Development (ACND), noted, in a report to the Committee, that federal statutes did not prohibit the establishment of a private school using private funds. His tone suggested that he was not delighted with the UCN project: "Unless each Council enacts legislation to control post-secondary education, there is little that could be done to prevent anyone from establishing an institution of higher learning."¹⁴⁴ Hunt was concerned that UCN activities might "not be compatible with the views of the legislative Councils"¹⁴⁵ and that, without proper legislative controls, there would be no way to prevent UCN (or organisations like it) from doing as it pleased. He trusted that private funding "could not operate this institution indefinitely"¹⁴⁶ and that when and if government were asked for assistance it would be able to exert some control. With that in mind, he thought that territorial legislation should be enacted

spelling out how post-secondary education can be conducted under their respective jurisdictions before these private organizations become too enmeshed in supplying a service to the public which is by federal statute clearly a responsibility of the territorial governments.¹⁴⁷

Don Simpson, Assistant Director, Education Branch, DIAND, was asked to comment on the document. For the most part he agreed with Hunt. He thought that legislation should "control and rationalize the establishment of universities and other post-secondary type institutions so that they would indeed provide a service to the northern residents."¹⁴⁸ Ironically, he was concerned that the UCN "not become some type of political 'football,'" as indeed it was. Simpson thought that southern universities were providing adequate education and research services. He realized that southern universities performed less well in the area of sustained community services and thought this weakness gave northern residents a good argument for a northern university. To anticipate public objection to the activities of southern universities in the North, he proposed that legislation should be framed that would "rationalize the services being provided

143 Leonard Arthur Charles Orga Hunt emigrated to Canada in 1928 as an apprentice to the Hudson Bay Company but resigned in 1938. In 1950 he returned to the North as government administrator at Aklavik, NWT. He then went on to Ottawa, then to the United Nations in New York. He later returned to Ottawa to become the Executive Secretary of the Advisory Committee on Northern Development.

144 GNWTA, Norman McPherson Collection, Box #6, file: University of the North, L.A.C.O. Hunt, "Memorandum to the Advisory Committee on Northern Development, Draft document XND-73," August, 1971, 1.

145 *Ibid.*, 5.

146 *Ibid.*

147 *Ibid.*

148 *Ibid.*, D.W. Simpson to L.A.C.O. Hunt, "Northern University," 13 September 1971.

so that not only is costly duplication avoided but that all areas are ensured of adequate services."¹⁴⁹

In early October 1971, the Yukon Division held a meeting in Whitehorse at which concern was raised about the degree to which the Division was organisationally tied to the Northwest Territories Division. At the meeting, the chairman remarked

that the Yukon Division has always taken the position that if it became apparent the best interests of the Yukon lay on a course separate than that now being taken in conjunction with the N.W.T. then action would be taken by the Yukon to develop its concepts.¹⁵⁰

The Division directors feared if Northwest Territories Native representatives on the Executive Committee were in the majority, they might compel the Yukon side to compromise its vision for the Whitehorse Campus of the UCN.

By November planning for the Inuvik "Concepts Conference," as it came to be called, was almost complete. A press release on the conference was issued on 8 November. Dick Hill was quoted as saying that "the aim [of the UCN] is to pioneer a new form of educational institution appropriate to northern needs where purpose is all important and northerners, especially the original people are fully involved."¹⁵¹ The organisers were busy with last minute details and any friction between the two divisions seems to have diminished in the face of the conference.

The northern public was giving some thought to the idea of the UCN. The Whitehorse *Star* reprinted an article by David Judge on the UCN, which had originally appeared in the July 1971 issue of *Canadian University and College*, "Vision of a University." It outlined the history of the UCN and raised a few questions:

If it can be proved viable in terms of numbers of northern students needing university education, what will northern youth prefer; to stay or go elsewhere for their studies? Which is more desirable for the north?¹⁵²

Larry Carlyle, a recent university graduate living in Whitehorse, outlined his thoughts on the subject in a letter to the *Star's* editor. He said he believed that a small university would be

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.* Simpson's suggestion included asking the AUCC to help frame the legislation. This is revealing of the government's attitude towards UCN, for the AUCC was opposed to the UCN and as we have seen, DIAND had been working quite closely with AUCC on the northern education conference.

¹⁵⁰ YA, UCN Records, COR 0321, file 6, "Minutes of the General Meeting of the Yukon Division of UCANORTH," 6 October, 1971.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, file 8. Press release, 8 November 1971.

¹⁵² David Judge, "Vision of University," *Whitehorse Star*, 18 November 1971.

feasible and that a majority of northern students would prefer to stay in the North. He believed that the financial saving would be attractive and that the social difficulties northern students often experience at large universities could be avoided. He thought a UCN would be desirable if there would be a broad range of courses and qualified faculty:

There is no doubt that a University of Canada North is desirable. A university in the North would raise the general level of higher education of all people here. It would allow northern businesses to get their supervisory personnel here rather than "outside."¹⁵³

Carlyle concluded his letter by congratulating the directors of the UCN and wishing them luck in their endeavour.

The directors were being swamped with conflicting ideas for the University. They had a hard job ahead of them to make the UCN a single cultural, intellectual and educational centre out of the desires of the various northern interest groups. More and more they hoped the Concepts Conference would clarify the issue for them. They needed the conference delegates to give them the answer. As it turned out, some did not want to hear it.

153 Larry W. Carlyle, Letter to the Editor, *Whitehorse Star* 25 November 1971.

CHAPTER 5

RE-EXAMINING THE UCN IDEA: THE CONCEPTS CONFERENCE, INUVIK, NOVEMBER 1971

The Concepts Conference was conceived and structured as a weekend of workshops and plenary discussions. On the Monday following, The University of Canada North would hold its first annual general meeting followed by the Executive Committee meeting. The conference itself was intended to clarify the "precise role the University should fill" because the directors were unable (or reluctant) to do so themselves.¹⁵⁴ The first annual general meeting would follow so members could adopt any useful proposal that arose from the conference discussions.

The Conference Format

The conference was to be a working weekend. Dick Hill had prepared a package to introduce the participants to the aims, goals and style of the conference. Introductory material sketched the evolution of the UCN concept and explained that the directors had agreed there was a place for a northern university, but that "no action should be taken until the appropriate needs and opportunities for a university type education facility in the North were thoroughly studied and clearly stated."¹⁵⁵ The conference was to provide a forum to do just that. Hill's document claimed the directors had received many suggestions for the form of the new university:

Some see it as [a] centre for native culture or as a source of information on how to operate in the North. Others see the university as a research centre or as a specialty campus with students from all over the world coming to learn about the North.¹⁵⁶

154 Hallward, ed., *Concepts Conference*, 4.

155 Adams personal files, file "UCANORTH Conf.," R. M. Hill, "Concepts of a University in Canada North," 1. Used with permission.

156 *Ibid.*

The organizers

proposed that the aims of the Conference should be:

1. To examine the need for a University of Canada North;
2. To examine the academic approach that should be taken, particularly with regard to the needs of the native people;
3. To examine the approach which should be taken to the development of a physical plant.¹⁵⁷

To facilitate a "broad, open discussion" the participants were organized into eight panels. There were to be no lectures *per se*. Each panel would discuss a particular topic with specialists and respondents. People not specifically chosen as either were encouraged to witness the opening statements and participate in the ensuing discussion. The specialists were to begin by presenting their thoughts on a specific aspect of the panel topic,¹⁵⁸ the respondents would comment and then the entire group would discuss the issue. Discussion was deemed central to the success of the conference and the participants were sternly reminded that they were "expected to take part in every discussion."¹⁵⁹

One hundred and twelve people took part in the Concepts Conference.¹⁶⁰ Twenty-one (18.8 %) were academics from Canada, the United States, Sweden and Norway. The rest were northerners representing a variety of interest groups. Many more, northerners and academics, representatives of the conference's sponsors and various officials, also attended the conference. Between thirty-two and forty (28.6 % to 35.7 %) were First Nations from the territories, Alaska, Arizona and southern Canada.

Some of the transportation between Inuvik and Edmonton was provided by Alberta Gas Trunk Line Company. It, and a commercial Pacific Western Airlines flight, brought the southern participants into Inuvik in the early afternoon on Friday 19 November. That evening, at the opening banquet, Nellie Cournoyea gave the keynote address on the "involvement of northern people in a northern university."¹⁶¹

Hill's introductory material lists the topics of the eight panels and under each heading

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ The specialists had been given a topic before the conference.

¹⁵⁹ Adams personal files, file "UCANORTH Conf.," R. M. Hill, "Concepts of a University in Canada North," 2. Used with permission.

¹⁶⁰ A list of participants is included in Appendix II.

¹⁶¹ The conference program has Agnes Semmler scheduled to give the address but, for unknown reasons, Cournoyea replaced her.

he had listed about ten questions designed to direct the discussions. The questions underscore the depths of the directors' uncertainty about what northerners needed or wanted in a post-secondary educational institution. It is possible, however, that the directors simply wanted to ensure as complete a discussion of the matter as possible. The substance of much of the panel discussions has been lost. The panel sessions were audio-recorded but the tapes have not been located; they were also broadcast live throughout the Mackenzie Delta by CBC television.¹⁶² The audio tapes were given to John Hallward of Toronto after the conference who used them to compile the proceedings.¹⁶³ Several participants took notes, which, along with the conference program, the published proceedings and Dick Hill's account that appeared in the Inuvik *Drum* have been used here to reconstruct some of the content of the panel discussions.¹⁶⁴

The Panel Discussions

Participants in Panel I were to address the question of the need for a University in Canada North:

The purpose of this panel is to discuss the real need for a university in the North from the viewpoint of the original people, northern communities, northern government, and northern industry. What is a university? Is a northern university relevant? . . . Is the time right for structuring a university? . . . Should there be a university in the North now, sometime in the future, or never?¹⁶⁵

The speakers for the panel were Roy L'Hommecourt (IBNWT, Yellowknife), Paul Kaeser (Mayor, Fort Smith), Ken McKinnon (Territorial Councillor, Whitehorse), Wilf Bean (Fort Simpson), and Jack Underhill (Imperial Oil, Toronto). The respondents were Garth Graham (Whitehorse), Tadit Francis (Chief, Fort McPherson) and Ruth Spence (YWCA, Yellowknife).

The speakers did not answer the panel questions. Three of the four felt post-secondary education in the territories ought to be focused on job training. Only one accepted the premise of a northern university but, even then, not entirely. L'Hommecourt thought a university was

162 "University Idea," *The Drum*, Inuvik, NWT, 24 November 1971.

163 They may have been returned to Dick Hill. He mentioned in a later letter that the editing was nearly complete. However, his reference may be to the film or video recordings. When interviewed, he did not say he had either audio or video recordings of the conference.

164 The conference proceedings excerpt portions of the participants' comments but do not place them in context of the particular panels. With the notes taken by W. Peter Adams, Garth Graham and Flo Whyard, and the panel reports prepared for *The Drum* by Dick Hill, however, some of the excerpts can be located in the discussions.

165 Adams personal files, file "UCANORTH Conf.," R. M. Hill, "Concepts of a University in Canada North," 2. Used with permission.

premature: there were too few high school graduates and no jobs available for the UCN's future graduates. Kaeser too, thought education ought to be related to northern job opportunities.¹⁶⁶ McKinnon agreed there was a need for academic post-secondary education but its form should not be a southern "transplant." He also thought that the two territories were going to have to go their own ways because their different education problems were going to require different solutions.¹⁶⁷ He thought the Yukon should have a junior college "so young people can take their first years of university in a northern setting."¹⁶⁸ Bean felt the north needed not an "educated elite" but technicians and builders. Underhill also thought that jobs and technical/ vocational training should be the first priority. A community college could be the next step.

The respondents were also divided. Francis said "we are all waiting for one another; who's going to move? I think we should have [a] UCN. Alaska has [one, as does] Russia. We should."¹⁶⁹ Graham felt the speakers had prejudged the case and they had not "coped with the question of need because they dealt with the practical rather than the impractical."¹⁷⁰ Graham was convinced a northern university would be of benefit to all northerners. He thought it would "help us know who we are."¹⁷¹ Spence thought that going away to southern schools gave northern students exposure to new things.¹⁷²

Dr. W. Peter Adams (Chair, Department of Geography, Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario) felt that there was such a multiplicity of wants and visions for the UCN that a university would be the only institution "capable of meeting such a variety of needs and fulfilling such a variety of functions." He also thought, as he had in the past, that a university "pitched deliberately at the national level could succeed. Then it would fulfil all of the needs expressed

166 Hallward, ed., *Concepts Conference*, 10.

167 Graham personal files, [file 1] "UCN 1970-73," MSS notes on Concepts Conference (hereafter Graham Concepts Conference notes), Graham personal files, [file 7] "Flo Whyard," Whyard, MSS notes on Concepts Conference (hereafter Whyard Concepts Conference notes), and Adams personal files, file "UCANORTH Conf.," Adams, MSS notes on Concepts Conference (hereafter Adams Concepts Conference notes). Used with permission.

168 Hallward, ed., *Concepts Conference*, 10.

169 Whyard Concepts Conference notes. Used with permission.

170 Graham Concepts Conference notes. Used with permission.

171 *Ibid.*

172 Whyard Concepts Conference notes and Adams Concepts Conference notes. Used with permission.

at this conference better than any other institution."¹⁷³

The First Nations position was less certain. Nellie Cournoyea, COPE spokesperson, asked, Will you institute ideas which are for your benefit or will you simply come and research us and go away and write fat books? . . . Token participation is not enough. Something imposed from above will not reach us.¹⁷⁴

The Native people had not yet decided to support the UCN and were at the Concepts Conference to make up their minds. Their experience told them that a university, like any number of other institutions established to benefit people, might only benefit its founders. Cournoyea and the others were still not convinced of the need for a University of Canada North.

Panel II, "Northern University Experience," acknowledged the presence of southern universities in the North. The panel was to discuss "current university experience in Canada North and in other comparable areas." Some of the suggested questions included

What university programs are in North now? What research is being carried out? Could a university in the North help or hinder these activities? . . . Is there enough university activity in the North now? Are these activities best coordinated by a new university in the North or by a southern organization?¹⁷⁵

Under the chairmanship of Rolf Hougen, five speakers, from Canada, Alaska, Norway and Sweden, outlined their experience of university activities in their parts of the circumpolar North. Dr. R. G. Williamson (Rankin Inlet, NWT; University of Saskatchewan) and Dr. John Stager (University of British Columbia) talked about the northern teaching and research work being done by southern Canadian universities. The universities were teaching northern studies courses whose curricula were designed for southern students. Research, much of it funded by the federal government, was shown to be unco-ordinated but a body called the National Northern Research Group had been established to remedy that problem. The problems were many. Stager emphasised that current northern research practices had alienated many northerners. Researchers must work to improve the quality and relevance of northern research by involving northern people.

Dr. Victor Fischer (University of Alaska College [Fairbanks]), Professor Karl-Gustav Paul (Umeå University, Sweden) and Professor Oernulv Vorren (Tromsø University, Norway) outlined

¹⁷³ Adams personal files, file "UCANORTH Conf.," MS text of an address to UCN Concepts Conference. Used with permission.

¹⁷⁴ Nellie Cournoyea, quoted in Hallward, ed., *Concepts Conference*, 11.

¹⁷⁵ Adams personal files, file "UCANORTH Conf.," R. M. Hill, "Concepts of a University in Canada North," 3. Used with permission.

their institutions' experience in the North. Without exception, each was located in a region with a greater population than that of the Canadian North. The University of Tromsø was not yet open but Professor Vorren was able to contribute useful suggestions on how the UCN should relate to government:

1. tell politicians how you are going to solve their problems;
2. tell them what you are going to do and get their consent;
3. good results force politicians to give more money;
4. the plan must have only a short lag between investment and results;
5. people must trust you.¹⁷⁶

He suggested the best way of approaching the UCN was to get going as soon as possible. The organisers should determine their minimum requirements and match them to existing buildings. The UCN should make the new university fit into society. Establishing a new institution provided an opportunity for thought and consideration. It must teach and research but most important of all, it must serve society and maintain a strict loyalty to that society. The university and society must trust each other.¹⁷⁷ Professor Paul explained that his university had contributed to a brain drain from the North; educated graduates could not find work in the region. The situation was less critical by 1970 and teaching professors were beginning to be less difficult to attract.

One of the respondents, Cliff Reid (Local President, United Steelworkers of America, Pine Point, NWT) thought the university would train workers for northern development and improve the "quality of living"¹⁷⁸ and that all negative thinking should cease and planning for the university should go ahead quickly. Another, Marshall Smith (Geologist, Whitehorse) was concerned about curricula. He wondered if the UCN would end up offering basic southern-university-type courses merely sporting a bit of tacked-on northern content.¹⁷⁹

Panel III asked participants for their ideas on the organisational structure for the UCN. The directors recognised that a northern university would need to relate to the needs and aspirations of northern residents. The main question for the panel was what kind of

¹⁷⁶ Graham Concepts Conference notes. Used with permission.

¹⁷⁷ Graham Concepts Conference notes, Whyard Concepts Conference notes and Adams Concepts Conference notes. Used with permission.

¹⁷⁸ "University of Canada North Conference," *The Drum*, 1 December 1971.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

organizational structure would be most likely to be responsive to northern needs.¹⁸⁰

Ron Hodgkinson (Executive Assistant to the Commissioner of the Yukon) began with a presentation on the UCN's possible relations with northern government. He pointed out that the territorial governments were not eligible for federal universities support. The UCN might well be in a precarious position because it "straddles political boundaries of two governments"¹⁸¹ and would need the approval of both.¹⁸² Lorne Johnston (Ontario Department of Colleges and Universities, Toronto) spoke on the possibilities for administering the UCN. Based on his experiences in Ontario, he suggested six principles to guide the UCN as it moved towards a new system of education:

1. try not to copy any existing system; pick the best one and incorporate sensitivity to public concerns;
2. the UCN should offer students a second chance at higher education;
3. it should provide for requalification;
4. it should make provisions for students to drop in/drop out;
5. it should accept life experience as education; and
6. it should operate year-round for extra flexibility.¹⁸³

Phoebe Nahanni, the student who had initially raised the northern university issue at the University of Western Ontario in 1969, addressed the UCN's involvement in the northern community. She insisted that most northern institutions were informed by non-Native cultural ideas to the detriment of the Native people.¹⁸⁴ Northern Native people should question the ideologies of those institutions for they presented a "one-way street" that leading directly to a foreign place.¹⁸⁵ "Native people," she said, "must have their own institution;"¹⁸⁶ a university must not "be forced on them."¹⁸⁷ She thought that "nothing new should be created but that the available skills should be channelled into existing structures such as the Tree of Peace

¹⁸⁰ Adams personal files, file "UCANORTH Conf.," R. M. Hill, "Concepts of a University in Canada North," 3. Used with permission.

¹⁸¹ Adams Concepts Conference notes. Used with permission.

¹⁸² Whyard Concepts Conference notes. Used with permission.

¹⁸³ Whyard Concepts Conference notes and Adams Concepts Conference notes. Used with permission.

¹⁸⁴ Graham Concepts Conference notes and Whyard Concepts Conference notes. Used with permission.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ Hallward, ed., *Concepts Conference*, 12.

¹⁸⁷ Adams Concepts Conference notes. Used with permission.

organization in Yellowknife."¹⁸⁸

Professor Walter O. Kupsch (University of Saskatchewan) talked about the UCN's relationships with other universities. He saw that the UCN could go in one of two ways: either as an independent institution or as one tied to an existing university. He preferred the latter: a formal connection would ease the problem of transferability of credits. Whichever route was chosen, Kupsch emphasised that quality was the key to anything the UCN hoped to do. Dr. William Waines (Associate Director, Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, Ottawa) addressed administrative structure. He explained how many of the AUCC members administered their institutions. He suggested that UCN decide first what it was going to do and then adapt the administration to achieve those goals. He acknowledged that an administrative structure capable of the required flexibility would necessarily be fairly complex.¹⁸⁹ The respondents' comments were only briefly noted. Charles Taylor (Whitehorse) thought UCN's inter-territorial links were an advantage. Fred North (Principal, Sir Alexander Mackenzie High School, Inuvik) thought the UCN should be entirely student-run.

Panel IV was devoted to discussion of the physical form of the UCN. Traditional university campuses are generally composed of many buildings constructed fairly closely together but would UCN need that kind of arrangement? Would it be a head office of some kind, effectively operating as a sort of organizational umbrella (as Adams originally suggested)? Participants were also asked if the open university concept would be useful to the UCN.¹⁹⁰

James Arvaluk (Director, Inuit Tapirisat, Iqaluit) explained how the informal Eskimo University¹⁹¹ at Frobisher Bay (Iqaluit) met two to three times a week in a borrowed building. Dr. Fred Terentiuk (Director, Department of Continuing Education, University of Calgary) advocated the UCN adopt the flexible "Open University" distance education model, obviating the immediate need for dedicated buildings. Thomas Atcity (Vice-president, Navajo Community College, Arizona) suggested the founders ask the people who would use the university what they wanted. Flo Whyard (Whitehorse) suggested that a number of resident northerners, mostly

188 "University of Canada North Conference," *The Drum*, 1 December 1971.

189 Graham Concepts Conference notes. Used with permission.

190 Adams personal files, file "UCANORTH Conf.," R. M. Hill, "Concepts of a University in Canada North," 3-4. Used with permission.

191 The Eskimo University was the name for an informal gathering of people interested in learning Inuit culture and Inuktitut. An elder was asked to instruct.

professionals, might be able to teach in the UCN.¹⁹² Nellie Cournoyea understood the term "facilities" in a more figurative sense. She said that the "real university of the North was in the oldtimers who taught the lore of the land and a special way of living."¹⁹³ She thought "the facilities needed are just the mobility to give anyone a chance to do their own thing."¹⁹⁴

The respondents seemed particularly affected by Cournoyea's presentation. Their comments echoed the themes she had raised: identity, control, empowerment, and cultural preservation. A consensus, however, was not reached about the facilities the UCN was going to need.¹⁹⁵

Panel V concerned the curricula for a University in Canada North. In the statement of assumptions guiding the discussions, the organizers appeared to be veering from their more recently-stated goal of having the UCN focus primarily on meeting (undefined) northern needs. "To be successful," they thought, "the University of Canada North must offer relevant programs serving the community, regional, territorial, and national needs." Many of the panel's suggested questions emphasised possible areas of academic specialisation and specifically directed discussion toward "effectively [involving] the Indian and Eskimo people of the North."¹⁹⁶

Professor Louis-Edmond Hamelin's (Laval University, Quebec City) presentation on possible northern specialty courses was explicit and focused:

The university should be developed around the things of the north: 1) native languages; 2) emerging problems related the people and the environment; 3) medicine. Important courses would be: 1) perma-frost engineering; 2) biogeography; 3) political science and economics; 4) Eskimology study of the history, language, habitat and cultural anthropology of the Eskimo people. There should be a study of Indian and Eskimo rights by historians and ethnographers rather than by lawyers. The lateness of Canada in this field is something to be ashamed of.

What is needed in this university is a high standard and quality based on a few subjects. We badly need cooperation between existing universities operating in the north.

We must communicate the need for a university in the north to the people of Canada. We cannot continue studying the north (from the outside).¹⁹⁷

192 Graham personal files, [file 7] "Flo Whyard," MS text of address to this panel. Used with permission.

193 "University of Canada North Conference," *The Drum*, 1 December 1971.

194 Hallward, ed., *Concepts Conference*, 11.

195 Graham Concepts Conference notes, Whyard Concepts Conference notes and Adams Concepts Conference notes. Used with permission.

196 Adams personal files, file "UCANORTH Conf.," R. M. Hill, "Concepts of a University in Canada North," 4. Used with permission.

197 Louis-Edmond Hamelin in Hallward, ed., *Concepts Conference*, 9-10.

The other speakers discussed the issues in more general ways. They emphasised the importance of a balanced presentation of course material; curricula should avoid a racial basis of organisation.¹⁹⁸ Mark Poudrier (Inter Universities Office, Le Pas, Manitoba) told how in Le Pas, 4-6 percent of the population had taken advantage of the adult education and extensions programs offered in the community. Tracking the demand for such courses provided the University of Manitoba with the data to judge the need for further post-secondary facilities. The consensus of the participants in this panel was that the university could teach anything people wanted to learn: "a university is an umbrella under which anybody's ideas can take root."¹⁹⁹ Terry Forth (NWT Continuing and Special Education, Inuvik) spoke about existing facilities that could be used immediately.²⁰⁰ Peter Adams (Trent University) addressed the question of attracting southern students to the UCN and Father Lemeur of Tuktoyaktuk stated that he hoped the UCN would forge links with the schools "so that the pupils will have a chance to learn directly."²⁰¹

The sixth panel was asked to consider the situation of northern research and the research opportunities of a northern university. It was recognized that much northern research was being conducted by southern organizations and universities, so some of the questions the UCN directors wanted the panel to consider were:

Could this research be carried out better by resident scientists attached to a northern university? Would the research be of a better quality with northern in-put? . . . Should the University of Canada North contain an Arctic Science City for specialized northern research? Are the research aspects of a university important for the University of Canada North?²⁰²

The speakers were asked to address specific aspects of northern research. Professor Walter Currie (Chair, Indian and Eskimo Studies, Trent University, Peterborough), who had been asked to speak on "Northern Culture and Involvement Programs," stated that "involvement" was an empty word for most Native people and that Native education in Canada had been a matter of cultural genocide. Northern involvement in northern research was imperative to reverse the

198 Graham Concepts Conference notes. Used with permission.

199 W. P. Adams in Graham Concepts Conference notes. Used with permission.

200 "University of Canada North Conference," *The Drum*, 8 December 1971.

201 *Ibid.*

202 Adams personal files, file "UCANORTH Conf.," R. M. Hill, "Concepts of a University in Canada North," 4-5. Used with permission.

damage.²⁰³ Jim Lotz (Cody International Institute, Nova Scotia) "described the needs for social research in the North and how northerners must participate in doing their own thing for their own good."²⁰⁴ Dr. Art Pearson (Canadian Wildlife Service, Edmonton) thought the UCN could provide an "academic community [assembled] around the university research structure that would provide [an] unbiased group" able to approach northern research with a less southern perspective.²⁰⁵ The consensus was that northern research would benefit greatly from having a local university involved. The criticisms of contemporary northern research were too loud to avoid and the UCN would offer a neat solution to many of them. Bob Christie (Geological Survey of Canada) outlined his northern research program and stated that "many of his native acquaintances in the North had the natural inquisitiveness to make them good researchers."²⁰⁶ Gerry Glassford (Physical Education Department, University of Alberta) talked about recreational research and cited the successful Territorial Experimental Cross-Country Ski program (TEST) as a good example of what could be accomplished.

The seventh panel was to focus on the people the UCN would likely serve. The participants were asked to discuss who (and how many) could be expected to come to the university and what special arrangements might be needed. Would the university attract students from elsewhere? How could northerners be "trained to participate?"²⁰⁷

The chair of the panel, Bertha Allen (Inuvik) thought that northern students would find a home-grown university a boon as northern students were often disadvantaged by southern academic standards and competition. She thought UCN entrance requirements should be based on intelligence rather than on southern academic standards.²⁰⁸ Bob Spence (Giant Yellowknife Mines) provided estimates of the number of northern students who might want to attend UCN. Subsequent discussion revealed that the panel could not come up with many answers to the questions because it did not know what UCN was going to be. The form and purpose would

²⁰³ Graham Concepts Conference notes, Adams Concepts Conference notes and Hallward, ed., *Concepts Conference*, 9.

²⁰⁴ "University of Canada North Conference," *The Drum*, 8 December 1971.

²⁰⁵ Hallward, ed., *Concepts Conference*, 9.

²⁰⁶ "University of Canada North Conference," *The Drum*, 8 December 1971.

²⁰⁷ Adams personal files, file "UCANORTH Conf.," R. M. Hill, "Concepts of a University in Canada North," 4-5. Used with permission.

²⁰⁸ Whyard Concepts Conference notes. Used with permission.

influence what kind of people attended UCN and where they would come from. The discussion in this panel also showed that many of the young people at the conference wanted a panel session of their own. A special Youth Panel was therefore arranged.

The Special Youth Panel was convened in the afternoon of the 21st. Flo Whyard, writing for the *Whitehorse Star* described the session:

Speakers included university and high school students and graduates from the Indian, Eskimo and white communities, chaired by Jennie Jack of Whitehorse. Gordon Duncan, Ron Chambers and Andy Joe were other Yukoners taking part. George Erasmus of the Tree of Peace told the gathering "most people here want to do something good for the Yukon and the Northwest Territories but if we build a university tomorrow, white people would come from the south, there would be a sprinkling of Indians. It's time to slow down for a minute, looking for the answer. We don't have Eskimo or Indian people here in the university because they don't have anything to do with the present education system. We must move to Eskimo and Indian thinking before we set up this university."²⁰⁹

Some students discussed their university experiences. Mike Smith stated that the non-Native post-secondary system had "screwed up our minds. [We] go Outside, come back and [we] don't fit in."²¹⁰ James Arvaluk told the panel that he had found out who he was, his identity, at university in Alaska. Noah Carpenter, a Sachs Harbour resident interning at a hospital in Edmonton, spoke of the need for youth to become more involved in current events.²¹¹

The UCN seemed a good opportunity for the northern students but only if they had some say in how it was going to be. Gordon Duncan insisted northerners must have control of the UCN, which he thought might best operate as a resource centre. Andy Joe agreed with him. Knute Hansen, a University of Alaska student from Aklavik, thought UCN should be a university for northern people first but open, as well, to people from the south.²¹² Arvaluk thought credit should be given for Native languages. Addy Tobac outlined some of the programs UCN could offer:

In the UCN History [there is a] definite need to record the history of native people; [a] definite need for geography of the Eastern and Western Arctic use travel to gain knowledge. Languages: we need Indian and Eskimo in schools right now. We need a good school of psychology and counselling services in communities and in schools. The north can contribute to Canadian culture.

209 Graham personal files, [file 7] "Flo Whyard," MS text of a news story. Used with permission. The Tree of Peace was an experimental Native folk school formed in Yellowknife on 26 June 1970 (see first Tree of Peace annual report in YA, UCN Records, COR 0321, file 3).

210 Whyard Concepts Conference notes. Used with permission.

211 "University of Canada North Conference," *The Drum*, 8 December 1971.

212 Adams Concepts Conference notes. Used with permission.

Politics should be one of the first things taught. . . . We need teachers to learn from us rather than teach us what they think we need to know. We're coming back, here, realizing that all the universities in the south can't make up for half of what our own people can teach us.²¹³

The student panel received quite a bit of attention from the media in the days and weeks after the conference. For many it was the most poignant part of the two days of talk.

Panel VIII focused on the gritty question of financing UCN. How much might it all cost? Who would pay? How much could students be expected to pay? UCN wanted to know how much support it could expect from government, industry and other funding sources.²¹⁴

Don Rickerd (President, Donner Canadian Foundation, Toronto) told the panel that the government was the only source of capital for major expenditures. UCN should "opt for a wide variety of approaches"²¹⁵ as it was possible to raise funds for modest programs from non-governmental sources. He cautioned that the ultimate problem might well be a shortage of people and ideas. He urged UCN supporters to take the initiative and, in that, the Donner Canadian Foundation could "provide encouragement"²¹⁶ but not direct funding. Jack Underhill (Corporate Frontier Coordinator, Imperial Oil, Toronto) stated that industry advocated and supported greater opportunities for advanced education. UCN, however, should not look to industry as a source of major financing. Most companies would be willing to cooperate as partners in certain projects but would not directly underwrite educational institutions; Imperial Oil, he said, would rather provide money for scholarships to fund people rather than contributing directly to the institutions.²¹⁷ B. C. Gillie (Department of Education, GNWT) told the panel that the NWT government was already spending \$30 million a year on education and costs per student exceeded \$1600 per year. He did not offer much encouragement and regretted that the UCN and the NWT Department of Education had not been involved together from the outset.²¹⁸

One respondent, Jake Harron (Inuvik), suggested that portions of northern oil royalties be contributed to higher education in the territories so that northern products could pay for

213 Addy Tobac quoted in Whyard Concepts Conference notes. Used with permission.

214 Adams personal files, file "UCANORTH Conf.," R. M. Hill, "Concepts of a University in Canada North," 5. Used with permission.

215 Graham Concepts Conference notes. Used with permission.

216 Whyard Concepts Conference notes. Used with permission.

217 Adams Concepts Conference notes and Graham Concepts Conference notes. Used with permission.

218 Adams Concepts Conference notes and Whyard Concepts Conference notes. Used with permission.

northern education.²¹⁹ Paul White (Yukon Airways, Whitehorse) proposed that the matter of aboriginal rights (i.e., land claims) be settled quickly and some of the "material rewards gained therefrom" be used to assist the "financing of higher education in and for northern Canada."²²⁰

The conference closed, on November 21, having raised many more questions than were answered. Political, moral and social issues had all surfaced during the discussions. The Concepts Conference had been a unique forum. It assembled people from across Canada and from elsewhere and gave northern people, particularly Native people, a chance to voice their concerns. The cause of UCN may not have exactly benefitted from the result. It was, however, the kind of discussion some of the founders hoped would become a permanent feature of any University of Canada North.

1971 Annual General Meeting and Directors' Meeting

The following day, UCN held its first Annual General Meeting (AGM). Hill thought that having the meeting immediately after the conference would allow "the full membership of The University of Canada North [to] hold the . . . election of directors, discussion of conference presentations and the drafting of a program for future action."²²¹ The uncertain results of the conference, however, limited the actions the directors and members could undertake immediately.

The members passed several resolutions.²²² The first was to ask the GNWT formally to include post-secondary education as a parameter in its incipient commission of inquiry into education in the Northwest Territories. The second directed the UCN executive to establish close liaisons with both territorial Departments of Education. The third, sponsored by Ron Chambers of Whitehorse, directed the Executive to confirm the eight resolutions that formed a part of the incorporation documents. Flo Whyard, UCN director and editor of the *Whitehorse Star*, reported on the meeting. She focused particularly on the third resolution and noted it was agreed that "the UCN constitution should be amended at the 1972 annual meeting to provide [that] sixteen of the thirty-one directors and eight of the twelve executive committee members be

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ Graham personal files, [file 1] "UCN 1970-1973," Paul White, proposal. Used with permission.

²²¹ YA, UCN Records, COR 0321, file 7, "Draft of University of Canada North, RMH, 24 September 1971."

²²² A complete list of members was not located.

northerners of native origin."²²³

Following the AGM, there was a Director's meeting. Several of the UCN executive positions were filled: Richard Rohmer, Chair; Rev. Fr. Charles Gilles, Treasurer; Dick Hill, NWT Chairman; Georges Erasmus, NWT Vice-Chairman; and Flo Whyard, Secretary. Directors were also elected. The Yukon executive positions were to be filled at a later meeting in Whitehorse.²²⁴ The NWT Division held its meeting immediately after the annual general meeting. The, primarily Native, directors agreed to try to meet in Yellowknife within three months "to begin definite programming for establishment of a University of Canada North."²²⁵ Dick Hill noted, with some pleasure, that the Concepts Conference marked the real beginning of UCN "because of the free exchange of ideas among educators, industry, northern residents and native peoples."²²⁶

Initial Public Assessment and Reaction

David N. Wilson of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Department of Educational Planning, wrote about The University of Canada North in 1972.²²⁷ He said that the "re-constitution" of the NWT directors was important because it led to "greater proportional representation for Indians, Eskimos and Metis than were included on the earlier, interim Board of Directors."²²⁸ The influence of COPE members, he thought, would ensure the UCN would "concentrate on local culture and the welfare and advancement of the original inhabitants of the Territories."²²⁹ Wilson, like many of the conference delegates, hoped UCN would take special

223 Graham personal files, [file 7] "Flo Whyard," "UCN names directors." Typescript of newspaper story. 2. Used with permission. In the letters patent application the figure for number of Native directors was nineteen, not sixteen.

224 A complete list of members is not available, but the Yukon Directors elected at the meeting were (of Whitehorse unless noted): Garth Graham, Renée Alford, Ken McKinnon, Aubrey Tanner, Jack Bredin, Mike Smith, Buzz Hudson, Flo Whyard, Andrew Joe, Rolf Hougen, Ron Chambers, Eric Wurmman, John Hoyt, Mike Stutter (Dawson), and Dixon Lutz (Watson Lake). Graham personal files, [file 7]. "Flo Whyard," "UCN names directors." Typescript of news story. Used with permission.

225 Graham personal files, [file 7] "Flo Whyard," "UCN names directors." Typescript of news story. Used with permission.

226 *Ibid.*

227 Wilson wrote two papers on the UCN for The Comparative and International Education Society of Canada's 1972 Annual Meeting but did not attend the Concepts Conference.

228 David N. Wilson, "University of Canada North: Promise For An Alternative University Structure" (unpublished paper prepared for The Comparative and International Education Society of Canada, 1972), 8.

229 *Ibid.* It appears Wilson uses the term "COPE" to mean politically-active First Nations people generally and not that organisation specifically.

care not to "replicate the alienation and de-culturation manifested, not only in 'southern' universities, but also at all levels of education experienced by Indian and Eskimo youth."²³⁰

The mixed hopes and visions that emerged from the Concepts Conference predictably fostered mixed reactions. The conference proceedings stated that the exercise had been useful and had provided some direction for UCN. The conference summary stated that a consensus had emerged, but it was not what the organizers had hoped for:

There is a widespread agreement that fresh evidence should be given to post-secondary or further education in the north and that, as a first step, a community college or its equivalent should be established in the Territories. At the outset it would have no degree-granting function and would be conceived in such a form as to meet the need of northern residents and in particular, of the native people. . . . It is also agreed that, regarding the Northwest Territories, the native people should have a major if not [a] controlling voice in deciding what is to be done and how.²³¹

Their envisioned university had been demoted to a community college.

The press was perceptive in its assessment of the conference. The *Native Press* of Yellowknife reported the results of the conference in cautiously positive terms, emphasising the hope the UCN might be a Native university: "the people agreed that we need a university and we will work to see that it is really suitable for native People and not just an imitation of Southern Colleges."²³² It reported that nine of the fifteen NWT Division Directors were Native.²³³ Its correspondent reported that the proceedings had been occasionally acrimonious owing to the vastly different concerns of the Native and non-Native delegates:

A lot of arguments surrounded the idea at first when he [Rohmer] was accused of trying to force his ideas of what the university should be on the people and not having anything but token Native representation on the Board.

All through the meeting, Native people were always asking if this university was really needed. Will it really be for us? These questions that were always coming up bothered some white people there and one lady tried to whitewash the Native People's attitude as childish.

Walter Currie, an Ojibway professor from Trent University in Ontario, crushed this very quickly by pointing out that Indians and Eskimos all over North America are worried about their

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

²³² *Native Press*, Yellowknife, 26 November 1971.

²³³ The NWT Directors were: Chief Tadit Francis (Fort MacPherson), Addy Tobac (Fort Good Hope), James Arvaluk (Frobisher [Iqaluit]), Dr. Noah Carpenter (Sachs Harbour), Richard Hill (Inuvik), George Erasmus (Yellowknife), Rosemary Thrasher (Providence), Phoebe Nahanni (Fort Simpson), Prof. R.G. Williamson (Rankin), Ches Russell (Rankin), Fr. Charles Gilles (Fort Smith), James Mason (Fort Smith), Cliff Reid (Pine Point), Rev. Turk McCollom (Hay River), and Mona Jacobs (Fort Smith). Richard Rohmer was elected Director-at-Large. Graham personal files, [file 7]. "Flo Whyard," "UCN names directors." Typescript of news story.

identity and losing the traditional ways.²³⁴

The editor of *The Drum* was negative but astute:

Even at a week away from the UCN conference it is difficult to determine whether the delegates laboured and brought forth a mouse, made a beginning or delivered the embryo of a northern university stillborn.

What is clear was that it was much too early to discuss 'ways and means.' . . .

What did happen at the University of Canada North conference? Where is the concept going?

The DRUM suggests the concept has been put back 10 to 15 years. Probably this is just as well for the concept as advanced was more vision than reality.

How fortunate the delegates never really got around to talking financing. They, at least, spared themselves the disappointment of discussing that painful but most important necessity.²³⁵

The correspondent for Yellowknife's *News of the North*, in contrast, was positively overwhelmed by the conference proceedings and what had been accomplished. The reporter wrote that

something great happened here over the weekend. . . . There is no way any participant can be truly objective in reporting what happened. It was a tremendous emotional experience. Most people came with preconceived ideas, but left shaken and confused. . . . many more meetings will be necessary, but something good something northern has been started.²³⁶

The *Whitehorse Star* was also positive. This may have been because its editor (and the reporter filing the story), Flo Whyard, was actively involved with UCN. Its Monday, 22 November edition proclaimed that The University of Canada North was a "'Unique Opportunity' in North for University."²³⁷ An article in its Thursday edition read "Northern University: You're Launched."

The article reported that:

Directors of the University of Canada North were given a mandate from the final conference meeting here Monday morning to proceed with further planning for 'an experimental program-in the light of the expressed needs of the native peoples.' . . .

Conference moderator Dick Hill said the meeting at Inuvik had been the true beginning of a university because of the free exchange of ideas among educators, industry, northern white residents and native peoples. He congratulated those who took part on their open-minded approach to the university concept.²³⁸

Some of the directors had apparently ignored the writing on the wall.

Arnold Edinborough, a Toronto-based freelance journalist who attended the conference as an observer for Rothman's, reported on the conference in the *Financial Post*. As an observer

²³⁴ *Native Press*, Yellowknife, 26 November 1971.

²³⁵ *The Drum*, Inuvik, NWT, "Publisher's Comment," 1 December 1971.

²³⁶ *News of the North*, "Northern University Moving Ahead," 25 November 1971.

²³⁷ *Whitehorse Star*, 22 November 1971.

²³⁸ *Whitehorse Star*, 25 November 1971, 36.

his vision was clearer, for he saw a deep and important difference of opinion at the conference that stemmed from the different racial balance in the two territories. Yukon supporters favoured a conventional university. The NWT First Nations delegates "wanted a university that would be a centre for study of the native cultures by the natives themselves."²³⁹ Edinborough concluded by speculating on the direction the UCN would realistically have to adopt to be successful:

A junior college in Whitehorse which could serve those who have not the qualifications to go south for a full university course and yet need a good post-secondary vocational education. An Institute of Indigenous Studies with one branch in Inuvik for the Indian Culture and one at Rankin Inlet for the Eskimo. . . , plus a research centre for the social and natural sciences at Yellowknife.²⁴⁰

Edinborough's assessment might well have been accurate had UCN evolved that far. The two territories were significantly different enough that a common approach to higher education was unlikely to work.

W. Peter Adams reported to his MP, Hugh Faulkner, after the conference. Adams called the weekend "a most enlightening experience." He also said he had received the impression that "the Yukon will likely 'go it alone' in this matter."²⁴¹ Faulkner wrote back saying that he had mentioned UCN to the DIAND minister. Though the department had been asked its opinion on the incorporation, its scientific advisor and assistant director of its education branch had discussed the subject at great length, a specialist from the department's Northern Science Research Group had been at the conference and the newspapers had carried stories about UCN, the minister told Faulkner "[we] apparently do not know anything about its aims and plans."²⁴²

CBC Yellowknife conducted a short interview with Georges Erasmus in early December that illustrated First Nations qualms about the UCN project and underlined the position Erasmus had taken at the conference. The interviewer said that Erasmus "feels there has to be more input from people right across the Territories and from all sections of the community before the university ideal will work."²⁴³ Erasmus then said that he thought the success of the

²³⁹ Arnold Edinborough, "Out of the dark, a northern university and native protest," *The Financial Post*, Vol. 65, 4 December 1971, 17.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁴¹ Adams personal files. "UCANORTH Conf.," W. P. Adams to Hugh Faulkner, MP, 23 November 1971. Used with permission.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, Hugh Faulkner, MP to W. P. Adams, 9 December 1971. Used with permission.

²⁴³ Hill personal files, CBC Yellowknife, transcript of "Mackenzie News" interview with Georges Erasmus, 2 December 1971. Used with permission.

UCN would depend on the people in the Territories. "We could start constructing the buildings and everything but I don't think this is what we want especially, but I haven't heard too many people saying things on it yet."²⁴⁴

By the end of 1971, The University of Canada North was no closer to reality than it had been a year earlier. Some thought had been given to its form and organization but the UCN concept seemed even more elusive than it had been the previous spring. The bold plan outlined in Rohmer's background report that classes would commence in the Fall of 1972 seemed impossible. Closer examination of the whole idea had shown UCN directors that establishing some kind of university was going to be a great deal more difficult than anyone had imagined. Garth Graham of the Yukon Division conceded in an interview, some twenty years later, that he thought some of the biggest obstacles the University of Canada North faced were the inexperience of its founders and their lack of unified vision. The Concepts Conference made that brutally clear.

244 *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 6
RETHINKING THE UCN:
DIFFERENT VISIONS, DIFFERENT PATHS, 1972-1975

The discussion at the Concepts Conference served to split opinion about the nature of the future UCN. Many who attended the conference came away convinced the UCN should be established as a community college, which could answer the North's need for technical and trades training. Some, too, were drawn to the college concept because they were reluctant to support the creation of an institution that might produce only overeducated, unemployable scholars. Others thought the UCN should be a Native cultural centre. A few continued to prefer the UCN be a university or "academy." They genuinely felt the North was ready for and needed an intellectual centre that could be "genuinely and forcefully critical of society."²⁴⁵ In their view, a true UCN would offer the opportunity to bridge the gap between Native and non-Native northerners by creating an environment conducive to discussing, questioning and resolving cross-cultural conflicts.²⁴⁶

Between 1972 and 1975, the UCN trans-territorial connections of the organization began to fray so that, by 1974, only the Yukon Division was active. The disintegration was partly due to the diverging opinions, mainly along territorial lines, about the form of the institution itself. Other, external, conditions also contributed. Over these four years, the UCN faced obstruction from the federal and the territorial governments, a lack of funding, and a decline in public support. The Yukon Division, disappointed in its plans to embark on a higher education study, undertook, instead, a variety of activities to establish, publicly and politically, its commitment to the Yukon and to its higher education needs.

²⁴⁵ Cyril S. Belshaw, *Towers Besieged: The Dilemma of the Creative University* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1974), 13.

²⁴⁶ Garth Graham, interview, Guelph, Ontario, 23 December 1991.

Rohmer's Revised UCN Concept

Richard Rohmer became ill before the Concepts Conference and was unable to attend. He was informed of the discussions after. He appeared to agree with the "overview consensus" that "fresh emphasis should be given to post secondary or further education in the north and that, as a first step, a community college or its equivalent should be established in the Territories."²⁴⁷ Though he did recognize the situation was not the same in the two territories, Rohmer now believed the way for the UCN to be a success would be

to create a Community College of the North which will be specially responsive to the peculiar needs of the native Indian and Eskimo in the NWT. As to the Yukon, a similar structure may well be appropriate, although I must confess I see the college in the Yukon being structured differently than the college in the Northwest Territories because of the differences in the people and the terrain.²⁴⁸

Thus abandoning his original concept for the UCN, boldly outlined in the incorporation documents, Rohmer began acting on his new beliefs and the recommendations of the Concepts Conference.

In late January 1972, Rohmer, acting as the Chairman of the UCN, had "extensive discussions" with Donald Mordell, President of Toronto's Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, about establishing a "formal link."²⁴⁹ Rohmer thought the UCN might benefit greatly from a connection with an established but innovative institution like Ryerson because twinning the two would provide the UCN with "guidance, assistance, expertise, and the encouraging spirit of genuine interest." Rohmer continued,

Ryerson would be the perfect. . . partner because of its historical background and orientation to the skills and needs of the people, because it is a degree granting organization and yet is not an old school university in the traditional, rigid sense. . . .

We urgently need an anchor in Canada South. . . .²⁵⁰

Rohmer's new vision was rejected by the Yukon Division. As a group, it continued to believe the UCN should be established as a university. There is no evidence for the NWT Division's reaction. It is unlikely, however, that it was ready to consider formal links with anyone beyond those it had constitutionally with the Yukon Division. It had other problems.

²⁴⁷ Hallward, *Concepts Conference*, 16.

²⁴⁸ Rohmer personal files, Richard Rohmer to Donald L. Mordell, President, Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, 4 February, 1972, 1. Used with permission.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

The NWT Division's College North Project

The NWT Division directors faced great difficulties because of the distances between Inuvik, Fort Smith and Yellowknife. Some directors were also involved with various First Nations political organisations, which limited the amount of energy they could spare for the UCN. In addition, the general failure of the elementary and secondary school system to graduate Native students meant that creation of a northern-based post-secondary institution was not perceived as an immediate necessity. The NWT directors, therefore, focused on developing a practical plan that would chart a course towards eventually establishing a territorial community college that could later become degree-granting.

Five of the NWT Division directors and Richard Rohmer met in mid-March 1972 in Inuvik to "set their immediate objective as a 'community college program' involving northerners."²⁵¹ It was a three-phase plan in which Phase I would be the "development of a plan for the organization of a community college program," Phase II, the "Community College Program," and Phase III the "University and Community College Program."²⁵² The directors also thought the "institution should provide academic enrichment plus continuing education and applied research in areas not covered by other organizations."²⁵³ A meeting was held in early April to examine the options for funding the research to complete Phase I. Soon after, Dick Hill wrote and submitted an application for funding from the federal Opportunities for Youth program.²⁵⁴ The application was rejected and the project languished for a year.²⁵⁵ The division, too, languished. Its energies were absorbed by other issues; it did not meet officially again.

In April 1973, a small group of people, some of whom had been at the Concepts Conference, did receive Opportunities for Youth funding from the federal government and took up the previously shelved College North project. They intended to complete Phase I. It involved

²⁵¹ The directors were George Erasmus, Mona Jacob, Fr. Charles Gilles, Addy Tobac and Dick Hill. The meeting was held over the weekend of 17-19 March 1972. "University of Canada North Moves Towards Community College," *The (Inuvik) Drum*, 24 March 1972. Also YA, UCN Records, COR 0321, file 4, Richard Rohmer to Garth Graham, 4 April 1972.

²⁵² YA, UCN Records, COR 0321, file 4, "Suggested Program for the Development of the University of Canada North in the Northwest Territories," n.d.

²⁵³ "UCN Moves Towards Community College," *The Drum*.

²⁵⁴ Hill personal files, Dick Hill to Robert G. Wray, Government of Canada, Edmonton, 4 April, 1972. Used with permission.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, ["College North Report," October 1973], 1. Used with permission.

first hiring a co-ordinator who would outline a primary study "to investigate the best ways of communicating the goals for a community college to the communities and recycling the ideas." Researchers would then be hired to carry out the primary study and contact individuals in the communities "to collect input for the organization plan." The last stage involved drafting a master plan for a community college program in the NWT.²⁵⁶

There is no firm evidence about who actually undertook the first phase of the NWT Division's community college program. It appears that it was not, at least not entirely, the UCN (Northwest Territories). A section of a preliminary paper, which outlined the project's expenditures, gave the rationale for the project but did not say exactly who had supported it. The budget documents mentioned only the individuals who would undertake the research. The final report said that

the people who had come up with the original plan for the project did not actually take part in it but after reviving the idea, handed it on to other interested people who had never actually been involved with the University of Canada North.²⁵⁷

The NWT Division initially supported these "other interested people." The evidence distinguishes between the UCN and the college program researchers. The final report says the University of Canada North "originally agreed to give financial support but shortly afterward withdrew *all support* because they did not feel that they would have enough control over how *their money* was being spent."²⁵⁸ The report must mean financial support only, for the NWT Division later presented the College North final report as evidence of its own activities and on 18 June 1973, Georges Erasmus, Chairman of the NWT Division, sent a letter to all NWT board members asking them for their assistance in collecting data. They were encouraged to canvass their own communities and to contribute to the project in any way they could.²⁵⁹ He also promised the report of the project would be presented to the NWT Division Board in September. Erasmus evidently considered the project to be a UCN one.

The GNWT Department of Education supported the project in principle but the territorial executive did not approve the co-ordinator's application for extra funding because it along

²⁵⁶ Graham personal files, [file 1] "UCN 1970-1973," "Planned Expenditures: University of Canada North Research Project, May 1 - Sept. 1 1973," 2. Used with permission.

²⁵⁷ Hill personal files ["College North Report," October 1973].

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 2, emphasis mine.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

with DIAND and the Yukon Territorial Government

felt that the aims of this project are premature as the possibility of a university is, as far as the government is concerned, still some years away and that when such a project is needed it should be carried out by the Department of Education itself.²⁶⁰

With the OFY money, the co-ordinator, Stan Dodman, was able to hire one researcher, two secretaries and ten field workers. The NWT Department of Education did contribute some money specifically directed towards the project's orientation workshop, which was held in Yellowknife on the 4-6 July 1973. The project was to have completed the first part of the three-phase plan, but it was soon discovered that "it would be impossible to come up with a complete and workable plan for a uniquely northern community college in the short time that was available [about 8-10 weeks]."²⁶¹ The plan, therefore, was modified

to gather information from the people of the Northwest Territories and from people involved in research and higher education in southern Canada and elsewhere. [The organizers] wished to make the people of the north aware of what post-secondary facilities are available to them at this time and also what possibilities there are for future facilities. From them [the organizers] hoped to discover whether or not [NWT residents] were completely satisfied with what is already available and if not, what type of facility they feel would best serve them. From the [people] contacted outside the north [the researchers] wanted any information that. . . might be helpful. . . .²⁶²

The office staff in Yellowknife co-ordinated the research and contacted southern universities, students who had attended universities in the South and in Alaska, and various northern organizations. The field workers visited many NWT communities, often hitching lifts on cargo and bush planes, interviewing people about what they wanted in the way of post-secondary education in their communities.

The interviews were completed by mid-August and the fieldworkers submitted their findings to Dodman, the co-ordinator, soon after. He and the researcher, Elaine Dodman, then prepared the final report.²⁶³ The report made fourteen recommendations, divided into two broad categories, the first that a community college be established, should a territorial plebiscite favour it, offering both college-level courses and the "first two years of university programs" and the second, that all vocational and academic curricula be evaluated for their cultural content and

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 3-4.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*

practical relevance.²⁶⁴ It stressed the college should emphasise programming in Native and Northern Studies and should "keep a library of the results of all research projects which are carried out in the north."²⁶⁵

Despite the confusion surrounding the identity of the organizations responsible for it, the College North project emphasises the fundamental difference in the approaches to higher education taken by the two divisions. These differences in population composition, historical development and geographical size partly account for the disintegration of the NWT Division. There was simply too little to build on and too much distance to span. Decades of relative neglect of the Native population meant that few were in a position to need or want the kind post-secondary education the University of Canada North appeared to offer. Non-Native students who might have benefitted from the UCN were generally anxious to leave the remote and under-serviced territory for their further education.²⁶⁶

The NWT Division faded away almost completely after the completion of the College North project. Its disintegration, however, had truly begun even before the Concepts Conference. Meetings of the NWT directors were difficult to convene and joint meetings with the Yukon directors were too expensive to hold regularly. Rolf Hougen complained to Rohmer that meetings between the two divisions were almost impossible to arrange. Rohmer replied that he thought that UCN had "come to the point where we should recognize that there is need for a meeting of both. . . groups only once a year at the annual meeting."²⁶⁷ The truth was that the divisions had little in common. Several of the NWT members later attended a two-day conference in Whitehorse but, despite the organizers' hopes, were not able to generate the impetus needed to strengthen the NWT Division or renew a united vision of the UCN.

The Yukon Higher Education Project

After the November 1971 Concepts Conference, the Yukon Division directors began to

²⁶⁴ It was also recommended that an attempt be made to have school curriculum materials written by northerners. The point was made that material produced for northern applications in the South often demonstrated a lack of understanding and knowledge about the North. For many of the respondents, this was inexcusable and easily corrected.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁶ This was certainly true in the Yukon and likely the case in the NWT where distances between communities exacerbated feeling of isolation.

²⁶⁷ YA, UCN Records, COR 0321, file 4, Richard Rohmer to Rolf Hougen, 22 February 1972.

work to turn their vision of the UCN into a reality. They rejected Rohmer's assessment that the UCN should employ the community college model, fearing their independence and vision would be compromised by such a move.²⁶⁸ In addition, Rohmer's new lesser vision of the UCN compelled the Yukon directors and members to question his dedication to the project. Some thought Rohmer was abandoning the UCN; he did not appear as committed to the concept as he had before the Concepts Conference.²⁶⁹ Indeed, he began to suggest that the northerners should take over all control and direction of the UCN. It may have been that his attentions were being drawn elsewhere. Rohmer had a highly visible and successful legal practice; he was often fully occupied and may have had little extra time for the university.

Rohmer's notions did not alter the Yukon directors' plans. They wanted an academy, a proper university and were prepared to invest time and energy in its creation. At a board meeting on 1 March 1972, the directors heard that "the conference at Inuvik had convinced many of those present they were not ready for a university at this stage."²⁷⁰ The Yukon members, however, supported a motion to seek funds to hire a "qualified staff person to start putting things together in the Yukon, prepare a position paper and get things rolling."²⁷¹ The directors approved a resolution calling "for the appointment of a senior staff member with potential presidential qualifications to organize and institute the functions of a University of Canada North, with duties to commence in September, 1972."²⁷²

Graham told Rohmer, two days after that meeting, that, while the Division was in "a fluctuating state. . . the Yukon group is eager to make some definite beginning."²⁷³ As part of that "definite beginning" Renée Alford and Rolf Hougen were asked to investigate an offer the University of Saskatchewan had made at the Concepts Conference "to assist UCANORTH planning."²⁷⁴ Acting on one of the resolutions of the Inuvik AGM, the Board agreed to inform

268 Graham personal files, [file 1] "UCN 1970-1973," "Minutes of a meeting of the Board of Directors, Yukon Division, University of Canada North, at Whitehorse, March first/72," 2. Used with permission.

269 Renée Alford, interview, Whitehorse, Yukon, 9 September 1993.

270 YA, UCN Records, COR 0321, file 4, "Minutes of the Yukon Division Meeting, 1 March 1972."

271 *Ibid.*

272 *Ibid.*

273 *Ibid.*, Garth Graham to Richard Rohmer, 3 March 1972.

274 *Ibid.*

the Department of Education of each meeting and invite an observer from the department to attend.

Discussions about the Yukon's UCN continued. At a meeting in early May, the Board was assured that the "twinning" with Ryerson, despite what Rohmer had said about a formal link, was to be an informal arrangement only. The directors again rejected the notion. They thought

the Yukon version of the University of Canada North should be a 'higher educational program' rather than a 'community college concept' as presented by the University of Canada North (North West Territories [*sic*]) in their master plan.²⁷⁵

They discussed a report on the NWT Division's "Proposed Community College program."²⁷⁶

Goaded to action, the Yukon Board passed a resolution

that a committee be formed to establish goals of a higher educational facility for the Yukon and to suggest programs for the development of such a facility, to enable the committee to draft applications for funds.²⁷⁷

A second resolution directed Graham to "proceed at once to negotiate to have land set aside to be designated as a site for the proposed post-secondary institution."²⁷⁸ The Yukon Native Brotherhood (YNB) reversed its earlier position, adopted about the time of the Concepts Conference, and agreed to become more involved with the UCN project. Elijah Smith told YNB members that four of the fifteen Yukon directors were Yukon Indians and, with more Native involvement, "there is a very good chance that the UCN will become a real Indian school with Indian teachers and Indian students."²⁷⁹

By the middle of May, the Yukon Division had drafted the goals of its "higher education program."²⁸⁰ Rohmer approached the Donner Canadian Foundation (DCF) in late May with an outline of the proposal, hoping to secure funding from that source. On 20 June, Graham submitted the Division's Yukon Higher Education Project funding application to the Secretary

²⁷⁵ Graham personal files, [file 7] "Flo Whyard," "Minutes of Directors Meeting, May 29, 1972," 1. Used with permission.

²⁷⁶ This was the three-phase College North proposal.

²⁷⁷ Graham personal files, [file 7] "Flo Whyard," "University of Canada North, Minutes of Directors Meeting, Thursday, May 4, 1972," 2. Emphasis in original. Used with permission. Duplicate in YA, COR 0321, file 4.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, "Goals of a higher education program for the Yukon Territory," 18 May 1972.

of State²⁸¹ and sent Rohmer a copy to present to the DCF.²⁸² The Higher Education Project was

1. To develop a plan for the establishment of a higher education program for Yukon.
2. To deliver information and ideas gathered, to the Directors of University of Canada North (Yukon).
3. To publicize the proposed program for higher education and seek support from industry, government, educators in the community and elsewhere, and from Yukon citizens in general.
4. To make an early start in the accumulation and analysis of information on the Yukon Territory and its communities with particular emphasis on human resources and needs. This information should be made readily available to all Yukoners and to any interested outsiders.
5. To provide a Northern Canadian Institution for the education of Yukoners, other Canadians and foreigners who choose to study in a northern environment. At the present time, many students are leaving Yukon to attend the University of Alaska.
6. To investigate all possible funding sources from the Yukon and Canadian Communities, industry, foundations and governments.²⁸³

The project would also assess Yukon needs and desires for post-secondary education and develop mechanisms to "co-ordinate the plans of the University of Canada North with those of the Territorial Department of Education and the Federal government."²⁸⁴ Expectations were high that the division would receive money from one or the other source. The Secretary of State acknowledged the application on 12 July.²⁸⁵ On 25 July, the Co-ordinator of the Citizenship Secretariat also acknowledged its receipt of the application.²⁸⁶

The business of the Division was next attended to in mid-October 1972, after a summer hiatus. Discussion first centred around the constitutional requirement for an annual meeting and election of officers to fill vacant positions.²⁸⁷ The directors then turned to local matters.

²⁸¹ Graham personal files, [file 1] "UCN 1970-1973," Garth Graham to Hon., G. Pelletier, Secretary of State, 20 June 1972 and attachments. Used with permission.

²⁸² The Donner Canadian Foundation subsequently turned down the application.

²⁸³ Graham personal files, [file 1] "UCN 1970-1973," Garth Graham to Hon. G. Pelletier, Secretary of State, 20 June 1972 and attachments. Used with permission.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁵ YA, UCN Records, COR 0321, file 5, Pierre Emond, Executive Assistant, Secretary of State to Garth Graham, 12 July 1972.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, Ilona Varjassy, Co-ordinator, Citizenship Secretariat to Garth Graham, 25 July 1972.

²⁸⁷ This by-laws problem would surface again and again over the life of the Yukon Division.

Wishing to begin research on courses the university could indeed offer, one committee was created to investigate the possibility of presenting teaching assistant training courses. Another was created to inquire into the use of video tape as an instructional tool.

At some point in the fall, Graham was advised, unofficially, that the Secretary of State had refused the Yukon Division's funding request.²⁸⁸ The directors were extremely disappointed. For a few, it marked the end of their association with the UCN. The failure to secure funding left some questioning the government's actions and motives and cynical about the chances for a small group of private individuals to introduce a new institution to the North when government was against it. Others simply began looking for other ways to get the UCN off the ground.

Other Directions for the Yukon Division

In early November, Richard Rohmer was, somewhat surprisingly perhaps in light of previous occurrences, awarded the NWT Commissioners Award for public service to the NWT in 1972. Commissioner Stuart M. Hodgson, apparently no longer offended by the secretive way the UCN had been organized nor fearful that its founding would jeopardize northern relations with southern universities, told a Canadian Club lunch in Toronto:

Mr. Rohmer has made, in my opinion, a great contribution in focusing attention of Southern people on the North with first the concept of the Mid-Canada Corridor, then Mid-Canada Development and from there to the University of the North.²⁸⁹

The recognition and the award did not improve the fortunes of the UCN in either territory. Holding an annual general meeting continued to be the most important task: failure to hold an AGM could result in the revocation of the UCN federal charter. No plans were made, however, for the 1972 annual meeting. There seemed to be nothing to meet about and there was no money.

In December, Rohmer informed Graham that the Concepts Conference proceedings had finally been published. He took the opportunity to voice again his opinion that the goal of a northern university was unlikely to gain enough support to succeed:

if [the proceedings'] findings are correct I think we should change the name of our organization to The Community College of the North and then press the Territorial Governments and the Federal Government to give us support. Without their investment I don't think we are going to

²⁸⁸ YA, UCN Records, COR 0321, file 5, Garth Graham to Richard Rohmer, n.d. (Probably before 6 December, 1972.) He was not informed officially until after 22 January 1973 (*Ibid.*, Jocelyn Nadon Maitre, Citizenship Secretariat to Garth Graham, 22 January 1973).

²⁸⁹ "Rohmer Wins NWT Public Service Award," *The Drum* [Inuvik, NWT], 4 January 1973.

be able to do very much.²⁹⁰

Rohmer's opinion was discussed again when the Yukon Division held its regular board meeting on 13 December. Despite the potential benefits of a name and focus change, the Yukon board again agreed that "it is wrong to change the name from UCN to Community College, that UCN will work eventually and the nucleus should keep going forward finding ways to accomplish something locally."²⁹¹ The remainder of the December meeting was devoted to planning a Native teacher training program. The 1970 Levirs Report on Education in the Yukon had pointed to the need. The directors debated whether the Division could put together a program outline to present to YTG, the Yukon Teachers Association, the Yukon Native Brotherhood, and the Yukon Association of Non-Status Indians. The question was not resolved and the Teacher Training Committee was asked to obtain further program information from universities in Alaska, Manitoba and Saskatchewan and report back to the directors.

Local conditions began making the work of the UCN more difficult. The political and social climate in the Yukon was becoming more turbulent. The YNB was preparing its land claim statement and popular sentiment was, for the most part, negative. The climate influenced one director to resign in frustration. In her resignation letter to Rohmer, Flo Whyard wrote that "there has been nothing very encouraging for UCN directors, either [in the NWT] or on the Yukon side."²⁹² She explained why she thought UCN was having problems:

The present unhappy situation between YNB and YANSI and the basic problem of land claim settlement certainly overshadows any other interests for our native people this year and we seem to be at the bottom of the totem pole regarding any encouragement from the Secretary of State's office for our UCN proposal of a Yukon study.²⁹³

Garth Graham, one of the directors most keen on an academy-type UCN, also recognized that things were not going to proceed quickly. In a letter to Michael P. J. Kennedy²⁹⁴ he outlined the UCN's most important problem and its potential solution:

Since the Inuvik conference the activities of the University have become more localized. The

290 YA, UCN Records, COR 0321, file 5, Richard Rohmer to Garth Graham, 6 December 1972.

291 Graham personal files, [file 7] "Flo Whyard," "Minutes of Yukon Board of Directors, Wednesday, December 13, 1972," 2. Used with permission.

292 *Ibid.*, Flo Whyard to Richard Rohmer, 26 January, 1973. Used with permission.

293 *Ibid.*

294 Kennedy was a PhD in Canadian Literature who had applied for a teaching position at the University in September 1972. He was therefore interested in the progress of the UCN.

Yukon and the NWT are each pursuing their own paths and neither is receiving much sympathy from the federal government – sympathy meaning money. For the immediate future it is not going to be a question of type of institution. If activities under the heading of UCN do continue they will be in the form of a series of separate experimental projects that can be operated using local resources.²⁹⁵

Maybe it was unrealistic of Graham to expect assistance from the federal government. The federal government had essentially, though unofficially, formulated its position with regard to the UCN in September 1971. It did not want the UCN to be the sole provider of post-secondary education in the territories and, judging from the difficulty Graham was having securing funding in 1972 and 1973, it had obviously not changed its mind.

Rohmer wrote to Graham in mid-March 1973, enunciating, in his letter, two of the difficulties facing the Yukon Division. The first was the continuing failure to hold the required annual meetings. Without them the federal government might revoke the institution's charter. It was vital that UCN retain its letters patent, for they supposedly represented the power to grant degrees.²⁹⁶ Rohmer insisted that "we should in no way give up our powers under the charter and should do all things necessary to maintain the charter in being."²⁹⁷ The second problem was funding. His initial conviction had been that the various governments should not be permitted to wrest control of the UCN from its founders (i.e., by dictating the disposition of government funds). Since the Concepts Conference, however, Rohmer had advocated a government-funded community college:

the principal point is that neither the Yukon nor the NWT side is going to achieve any success whatsoever unless the Federal Government is prepared to participate in and support financially its endeavours. This is no more than any Province does for any university within its confines. Without this support there can be no progress. Unfortunately, the decision is not made by Commissioner Smith or anyone in the Territories, but rather by Indian and Affairs and Northern Development in Ottawa which is a group somewhere back in the stone age and about as far removed from an understanding of the cultural growth of the Territories as the rest of this planet is from Mars.

While I have the greatest admiration for [Commissioner] Jim Smith and I do understand that "in law" the Territorial Government is responsible for "education", the decision to support the University or not will be made in Ottawa.

Therefore, if you are preparing a program or course of action, I suggest, respectfully, that

²⁹⁵ YA, UCN Records, COR 0321, file 5, Garth Graham to P.J. Kennedy, n.d. The material in the file is arranged in roughly chronological order, which implies this letter dates from January or February 1973.

²⁹⁶ In Canada, universities must have their programs accredited before they can grant degrees. In fact, the letters patent did not automatically bestow the power to confer degrees.

²⁹⁷ Graham personal files, [file 1] "UCN 1970-1973," Richard Rohmer to Garth Graham, 16 March 1973. Used with permission.

you make arrangements to attend upon the Minister. If you can arrange to have an appointment with him it will be a miracle.²⁹⁸

The struggle to find funding was proving a major obstacle to the, now more modest, aims of the UCN. The Yukon directors approached several funding agencies and rethought the programs the UCN might offer and reluctantly conceded that the goal of establishing a University was not going to be possible in either territory. The Yukon Division decided to "aim [its] sights. . . at something specific,"²⁹⁹ thinking support would be more forthcoming for programs with immediate and short-term benefits. The "specific" projects were the Teacher Training Program and "the establishment of a summer school in 1974." The summer school would hold "two credit courses in Whitehorse. . . and one northern orientation course that would be an initial step in the establishment of a university program."³⁰⁰

The December 1972 creation of the Teacher Training Committee and the April 1973 resolution marks the crucial shift in the Yukon directors' understanding of what would be possible. From this point on, the UCN (Yukon) altered its goals several times to protect the letters patent and to find way of offering post-secondary education in the Yukon.

The Yukon Division was also not blind to the other contributions it could make. In the spring of 1973 it prepared and submitted a brief on the YTG's proposed changes to the *School Ordinance*. The government intended, among other changes, to include three new paragraphs under Section 117 (2) that effectively gave the commissioner power to make regulations concerning post-secondary education. The UCN (Yukon) directors objected to a matter as serious as post-secondary education being regulated in this fashion. Submitting the brief brought the directors and the Department of Education into greater contact with each other. The relationship was not entirely amicable but it was a beginning. One director, Renée Alford, said in a recent interview that she thought the government was too concerned with consolidating its control of the territory to be willing to have Yukon post-secondary education in the hands of a private group.³⁰¹ That private group, however, felt it was addressing an important need and

298 *Ibid.*

299 *Ibid.*, [file 2] "UCN July 21, 1970 to Oct. 11, 1973," "A Brief Submitted to Mrs. Hilda Watson, Executive Committee Member, Yukon Department of Education, On Post-Secondary Education in the Yukon, In Response to the Policy Paper on Education, March, 1973, Prepared by the University of Canada North (Yukon)." Used with permission.

300 *Ibid.*

301 Renée Alford, interview, Whitehorse, Yukon, 9 September 1993.

felt the Yukon government was obstructing their endeavours.³⁰²

A New Yukon Division Directorship

At the June 1973 Yukon Division directors' meeting, two new members of UCN, Tony Penikett and Roy Obomsawin, were nominated for the position of Yukon Division Chair. Rolf Hougen, one of the original applicants and the first divisional chair, refused nomination. It was yet another sign of the new orientation the Yukon Division was adopting. The funding difficulties had shown the Directors that a traditional-style university was not going to be immediately possible. The changing Yukon directorship reflected that: those people who had supported the UCN idea primarily for its obvious economic benefits now realized the process was going to take too long. Their efforts would likely be spent more usefully on other, more feasible, projects. Only one of the 1973 Yukon Division Executive Garth Graham had been among the original applicants. Two or three of the Board members had been among the original group but, on the whole, a new group was leading the UCN in the Yukon. The new members were of a more socially liberal bent and saw the UCN, not as a collection of classrooms and faculty,³⁰³ but as an umbrella for short-term, locally-supported programs. They thought the UCN could bring higher education to the people of the Yukon. For many of them, a building, and its operation and maintenance, would only divert energy and attention from the programs and courses they wanted to offer. They wanted students taking courses; they did not want to waste their energy debating maintenance details.³⁰⁴

To begin the work of the UCN, committees were struck to examine the possibility of educational television or a "university of the air," and to look into offering a summer course in Resource Management.³⁰⁵ Another committee was formed to investigate ways to increase UCN membership and membership involvement. At a subsequent meeting, on 4 July, Tony Penikett was elected divisional chair and Ned Henry, a Native member of UCN, the Vice-Chair,

³⁰² This sentiment surfaces in all the interviews the author has had with UCN (Yukon) directors and executive. All clearly believe they could have been successful if it hadn't been for what appeared to be government obstruction of all their efforts.

³⁰³ This view is occasionally referred to as an "edifice complex."

³⁰⁴ John Hoyt, interview, Whitehorse, Yukon, 17 June 1993.

³⁰⁵ YA, UCN Records, COR 0321, file 5, "Minutes of a Board Meeting of the Yukon Division of the UCN," 11 June 1973 and YA, UCN Records, COR 322, file 9, "University of Canada North Action Conference and General Annual Meeting," 6-7 October 1973.

which effectively signalled the takeover of the UCN (Yukon Division) by a younger, less "establishment" group. While the new executive was determined to make something of the UCN, the old problems of meetings and money would continue to hamper their efforts.

The Yukon Division was busy during the summer of 1973. The Yukon Archives opened, and the UCN Yukon Division decided, in July, to place its corporate records on deposit. The Division's Education Committee continued planning the 1974 summer school program. It intended to offer two education courses, "Teaching English as a Second Language" and "Principles and Practices of Teaching in Indian and Northern Communities," and two anthropology courses, "Ethnohistory and History of the People of the Yukon," and "Contemporary Native People of the Yukon," in cooperation with the University of Saskatchewan. At the 4 July meeting, the new Resource Management Committee was asked to look into offering a fifth course – a six-week experimental non-credit course in resource management – particularly for First Nations people.³⁰⁶ Needing someone with a background in Native cultures, the Yukon Division invited Julie Cruikshank, an anthropology graduate student, to join the committee.³⁰⁷ She did and by November had prepared a solid case for the Resources Management course.

Cruikshank believed the UCN offered a unique opportunity to bring advanced education to all the people of the Yukon.³⁰⁸ Her own wish for the Resource Management training program was to integrate Native and non-Native knowledge and present it in a way that would benefit all the students. She visualized the course as

a learning process in both bush setting and classroom which would introduce students to traditional native knowledge in concert with academic and professional expertise. The aim would be to create a dialogue among older Indian people who have generations of expertise, academics with a different kind of experience, and local professionals involved in the day to day problems of resource management. With such a resource group, students of all ages could be introduced to concepts and questions underlying resource management.³⁰⁹

The directors were very excited about the plans and were eager to begin offering courses. This

306 Graham personal files, [file 1] "UCN 1970-1973," "Minutes of a Board Meeting of the Yukon Division of the University of Canada North held at the Whitehorse Library on Wednesday, July 4th, 1973 at 8:00 p.m." Used with permission.

307 The motion to invite Ms. Cruikshank was made at the 15 August 1973 meeting. Graham personal files, [file 1] "UCN 1970-1973," "Minutes of University of Canada Board of Directors, Wednesday, August 15, 1973." Used with permission.

308 Julie Cruikshank, personal communication, June 1993; also interview, 5 July 1993, Whitehorse, Yukon.

309 Graham personal files, [file 8] "[Parnell file] UCN Resource Man. Training," "Progress Report: Resource Management Training," 1-2. Used with permission.

was what they had hoped to do since they signed the incorporation application. It seemed that UCN, whose buildings were obviously still in the future, was, nevertheless, about to become a reality.

The other Yukon Division committees had also made some heartening progress: The Member Involvement Committee recommended the two Divisions hold a joint "action" meeting and annual general meeting to encourage interdivisional activity. A Steering Committee was formed to organise the meeting, which it chose to call the "Action" Conference, to be held in Whitehorse in October.

The Action Conference and Beyond

The Action Conference and Annual General Meeting was held in Whitehorse on Thanksgiving Weekend, 6-7 October 1973. Those present were primarily Yukon Division directors and members. Only one NWT director, Addy Tobac, and four members were able to come: COPE had generously sponsored the five NWT delegates. The meeting began in the morning on Saturday, 6 October. The Yukon Division presented a summary of its work towards offering the various summer courses. An NWT delegate outlined the College North project. Discussion then centred about the communications each Division had been establishing with their respective Departments of Education.³¹⁰ The Yukon Division committees working on the summer courses reported their progress. Renée Alford, chair of the Education Committee, previously the Teacher Training Committee, presented the rationale for its courses:

(Yukon-based education courses) would place Indian people in key positions in the system and give them an important status. They would draw on, and consequently stimulate, the resources of Indian culture. They would facilitate a "rapprochement" of Indians and Whites and work toward social integration (bilaterally, not unilaterally). Finally, they would provide another pole, or authority, in the field of Education, besides the Territorial Department of Education, and stimulate general development.³¹¹

She then outlined the plans for the 1974 Summer School. The meeting was then adjourned for the day.

The Action Conference continued on the following day. Addy Tobac read the College North report submitted by the NWT chair, Georges Erasmus. Discussion followed but neither

³¹⁰ Graham personal files, [file 1] "UCN 1970-1973," "UCN Action Conference and General Annual Meeting," 3. Used with permission.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

its substance nor the delegates' reactions was recorded in the minutes. After lunch the Board met in closed session. The minutes show that the divisions intended to renew their efforts and continue the work of the UCN. The UCN's bank account in Fort Smith was reserved for funds that, with approval of both boards, could be spent on joint projects. Resolutions were made to set up a constitution and by-law committee and to improve contact between the two divisions. Richard Rohmer had written a letter that was read at the meeting. He asked that

either the Chairman of the Yukon Division or the Chairman of the N.W.T. Division become the President of the University and that his counterpart become the Vice-President till the next annual general meeting.

In this way I can be moved out of the executive capacity and the administration of the affairs of the University be placed in the hands of you people in the north fully and effectively.

. . . If you people wish me to stay on the board I would be pleased to do so and of course to help in any way possible, but I think the time has come for me to move to the side.³¹²

Rohmer was not permitted to resign; he was acclaimed Chairman of the UCN for another year. The secretaries of the UCN, the Yukon and the NWT divisions were optimistically asked to establish better contacts with each other to improve liaisons between the divisions.

In spite of the confident tone of the Action conference, most delegates thought that without people willing to devote themselves to the full-time promotion of the UCN, little would be accomplished. The organisation simply did not have the resources to launch the university. The best that could be done in the Yukon was to approach the problem of higher education in a piecemeal fashion, providing short but useful continuing education courses. By late 1973, despite all the talk and all the effort, the Yukon Division had not yet offered a single course. The NWT Division hoped that the College North report would goad the GNWT into action, for UCN could not possibly mobilise the resources to establish a multi-campus community college there. The fact was that neither government was particularly interested although both were beginning to adopt a new approach to education to improve the system created earlier by the federal government.³¹³ Thus the improvement of primary and secondary education was still a priority in the Yukon and at the top of the list in the Northwest Territories.

John Hoyt of Whitehorse, a UCN member involved with the Yukon Native Brotherhood,

³¹² *Ibid.*, 15.

³¹³ The 1972 GNWT Department of Education policy on education stated that "the purpose of education is to provide for all people the opportunity for maximum development of their aptitudes, skills, and competencies along with an understanding and appreciation of the sum total of human experience." This was a radical departure from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development's policy. Department of Education, "Survey of Education," 1972, quoted in Johns, "History of Administration of Schools, N.W.T.," 43.

was elected Treasurer of UCN at the Action Conference. Father Charles Gilles of Fort Smith had held that position since the Concepts Conference. Hoyt's election shifted control of the UCN Executive westward to Whitehorse and Inuvik where Dick Hill was still the Secretary.³¹⁴ This shift is not at all surprising for the UCN had effectively ceased in the NWT despite the re-election of the incumbent NWT Directors at the Action Conference.³¹⁵ The reality was that there was little money and perhaps less hope.³¹⁶ The Yukon Division seemed to have a greater chance at succeeding, though success at this point would be measured in programming of any sort and not necessarily in terms of buildings and faculty. Local financial support continued in a rather desultory fashion: several Yukon companies and the City of Whitehorse had donated small sums to support the Action Conference.

The Yukon Division continued to work towards offering the summer courses. It invited Dr. André Renaud and a colleague, Dr. Nathan Kroman, to come to Whitehorse to assess the UCN situation. Both prepared short reports after their visit that recommended that the UCN increase its public relations because Dr. Renaud found that "the residents of Whitehorse are rather in the dark as to the nature and purposes of UCANORTH."³¹⁷ He suggested they also concentrate on offering specific credit courses, general interest non-credit courses and other public educational activities, and specific programs for isolated communities. He recommended that the directors consider hiring a full-time staff person, "someone sensitive and excited by the project, [and] familiar with university operations, particularly extension work."³¹⁸ Dr. Kroman's recommendations were similar though a bit vaguer:

U.C.N. should begin with an initial priority for learning rather than schooling and to do this should capitalize on the tremendous variability of human resources in the Yukon. In this concept, U.C.N. is not a school but rather an organization devoted to the promulgation of learning through whatever means it can find. . . . The function of the U.C.N. becomes that of a human services and human growth brokerage or middleman assuming the responsibility of bringing together

314 Hill had been re-elected, *in absentia*, at the Action Conference.

315 The election of the NWT Directors was primarily a fiction necessary to conform to federal legislation regarding corporations.

316 This may not be entirely true, as there are few records for the NWT Division. Conversations with some of those involved, however, support this statement. The social and political situation in the NWT operated to reduce the issue of post-secondary education to one of relatively minor importance.

317 André Renaud, "Conclusions, Recommendations, and Suggestions for the Development of the University of Canada North in the Yukon Territory" (unpublished paper prepared for the University of Canada North, Yukon, January 1974), 7.

318 *Ibid.*

those with learning needs and learning resources.³¹⁹

Kroman also recommended that the UCN hire an professional to open and run a UCN office. This, he thought, would "project an image that U.C.N. is here and here to stay."³²⁰ The Yukon directors were very excited by the two reports and completed a second application for funding from the Secretary of State for the higher education plan and the summer courses.

In mid-January 1974, the *Whitehorse Star* reported that UCN would be offering four college courses that summer.³²¹ The announcement was a bit premature as the Secretary of State, Citizenship Branch subsequently denied the Yukon Division's request for the funding for the Resource Management Training Course.³²² The Assistant Deputy Minister of DIAND informed Tony Penikett that, in contradiction to what the division had been led to believe,³²³ "it would be most unusual for this department to provide funds directly to assist a private organization to enter the education field."³²⁴ As a result, the courses were cancelled.

The federal and territorial governments seemed determined to block any attempt by the Yukon Division to offer courses and to force it to work with the territorial government by denying funding. In a letter to John Hoyt, Max Beck, Pacific Regional Director, Secretary of State, said that

we have now received a response from the Government of the Yukon to our request for their thoughts on your proposal for developing a University of Canada North. . . .

They feel, and we agree, that it is the responsibility of the jurisdiction in which the institution is to function to determine the need for such an institution if it is to be supported with public funds. Under these circumstances, we feel that to fund a private group to do essentially the same task as the territorial government has assumed, would be inappropriate. For this reason, I regret to inform you that your request for a grant has been rejected. We hope you will be able

319 N. Kroman, "Thoughts on University of Canada North" (unpublished paper prepared for the University of Canada North, Yukon, February 1974), 12.

320 *Ibid.*, 14.

321 "Four College Courses Offered for Summer in Whitehorse," *Whitehorse Star*, 14 January 1974.

322 The application was submitted in February 1974. A copy of a memo from the Native Citizens Program, sent to John Hoyt in July 1974, stated the NCP was "fairly impressed with the proposal" and "prepared to put \$5000 from the Development Fund into this project." This offer was apparently stymied by another department. Graham personal files, [file 3] "UCN 1974-," Tony Mandamin, Native Citizens Program to Lynn Foster, Field Representative, 5 July 1974. Used with permission.

323 YA, UCN Records, COR 0321, file 11, John Hoyt to B. Ostreys, 6 February 1974. Hoyt wrote ". . .you might be interested in an example of the tactics employed by DIAND to frustrate northerners who exhibit initiative. In October Digby [Hunt] met with us and agreed in principle to support this particular project."

324 *Ibid.*, A. D. Hunt, ADM, DIAND to Tony Penikett, 18 January 1974. One might wonder at Hunt's comments, for there is a long tradition of private colleges in Canadian higher education, though perhaps they are funded under some kind of special arrangement with the provincial governments, not the federal.

to work with the government in this valuable endeavour.³²⁵

In addition to the frustrations caused by the funding difficulties, the old problem of annual meetings returned to threaten the Yukon Division's plans. It was, under the UCN's by-laws, unconstitutional for the Yukon Division to operate independently of the NWT division. A legal opinion on the issue had been sought in early 1973, but the consulting lawyer upheld the by-laws.³²⁶ It was a critical issue, for if the UCN could not maintain its corporate identity, the Yukon Division might well come to an end. Rohmer thought that there might be a way to avoid having Annual General Meetings of the two Division by using a system of proxies. He said in a later interview that the filings were maintained until 1983, so whatever arrangement were made must have been adequate.³²⁷

In 1973 the Yukon Native Brotherhood published *Together Today For Our Children Tomorrow*. This document presented the Brotherhood's platform for a comprehensive land claim. Public reaction was generally negative, primarily because the non-Native community feared that its private real estate holdings might be threatened or expropriated by a Yukon Indian land claim. In the spring of 1973, several representatives of Yukon Indian groups approached the Yukon Division about the possibility of conducting a public information session on the Land Claims. Discussions on content and approach continued for almost a year. In mid-1974 the Yukon Division established a Seminars and Forums Committee to offer, not one, but a series of public seminars on the land claim. While the organising proceeded, the Division continued its efforts to convince the territorial government of the need for university-level post secondary education. There was indeed such a need; the vocational school in Whitehorse offered such courses as pre-employment trades training, heavy-equipment operation and academic upgrading but no university-level courses.

The reluctance of the Yukon government to establish university-level courses or to fund the UCN to do so left the Division in a position of stale-mate. John Hoyt became disillusioned and resigned as UCN Treasurer in January 1975. In his resignation letter to Tony Penikett he said that

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, Max Beck, Regional Director, Pacific Region, Department of the Secretary of State to John Hoyt, Director Yukon Division, 2 August 1974.

³²⁶ Reported in *ibid.*, "Minutes of UCN Special Director's Meeting," 27 August 1974.

³²⁷ Richard Rohmer, interview, Toronto, Ontario, 12 December 1991. Rohmer was not certain what those arrangements were. None of the other directors are sure either.

it has become increasingly apparent to me over the past two years that unless UCN Yukon Division is able to create a strong base of public support, its future will depend entirely upon the acceptance of its goals and objectives by the Territorial Government.³²⁸

He said the same thing to Rohmer, who replied that he agreed and that

not only should there be a re-organization, but as well, there should be a major attempt, and not by me, but by the people of the North to get the federal government to fund The University of Canada North, just as the provincial governments fund the Universities within their respective jurisdictions.³²⁹

The situation did not change greatly in the latter part of 1975. The Yukon Division was able to take advantage of a visit by Lloyd Barber, Indian Land Claims Commissioner for Canada, to present a single land claims information session in mid-February. It was to have been the first in a series but political exigencies prevented the CYI from supporting the UCN in running further sessions.³³⁰ In late May, Graham spoke about the UCN and northern education to a group of students from Seneca College, King City, Ontario. Otherwise there was no activity. The *Whitehorse Star* reported on 3 September that "University of Canada North Not Open." "The problem," Graham was quoted as saying,

is the same as with daycare or sewer and water lines money. So until some money can be found somewhere from private foundations or government the University of Canada North will remain just a concept. The UCN's continuation depends on the degree of interest by Yukon Indians, and the degree to which the YTG is prepared to help with any schemes.³³¹

Dick Hill sent Rohmer a copy of the article a week after it had appeared and told him that "there is little activity on the NWT side but I am optimistic that we can still move on it sometime."³³² As it turned out, Hill was being overly optimistic, certainly for the Northwest Territories Division, and only slightly less so for the Yukon Division.

328 YA, Hoyt Collection, MSS 225, file 13, John Hoyt to Tony Penikett, 8 January 1975.

329 Rohmer personal files, Richard Rohmer to John Hoyt, 4 February 1975. Used with permission. Copy also in YA, UCN Records, COR 321, file 11.

330 Graham personal files, [file 5] "YNB-UCN 1975+", Elijah Smith to Garth Graham, 24 March 1975. Used with permission.

331 Max Fraser, "University of Canada North Not Open" *Whitehorse Star*, 3 September 1975.

332 Hill personal files, Dick Hill to Richard Rohmer, 11 September 1975. Used with permission.

CHAPTER 7

DIVERSIFICATION AND DISSIPATION: 1976-1985

Lacking money, substantial public support and a concrete plan of action, the Yukon Division of UCN, the survivor of the grandiose scheme for a cultural, intellectual and educational centre for the North, continued to cast about for projects that would sustain and advance its vision. The disappointment of the forced cancellation of the 1974 summer courses and the lack of activity in 1975 continued to weigh heavily on the directors of the UCN Yukon Division. Many of them withdrew from the organisation, leaving only a handful to pursue the increasingly elusive university idea. The work of the UCN faltered. In the years from early 1976 to 1985, the UCN first diversified its operations, hoping to find a niche it could occupy successfully. As other territorial social organisations were established, which were able to meet some of the more important needs the UCN had been founded to address, the UCN began to dissipate as the people who had supported it turned their attention to other issues.

What little activity there was in the Yukon Division in 1976 involved pursuing the idea of presenting the information series on the Yukon Indian Land Claim. This was primarily because the UCN was not operating in a vacuum. Life continued. In 1976, the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly gained its first First Nations majority; the Council for Yukon Indians reached a tentative settlement of the Yukon land claim but its membership later rejected it; the Dene Nation filed its statement of claim with the federal government, announcing its intention to pursue land claims; the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry hearings (Berger Inquiry) ended in May. In addition, social relations were strained as the Yukon economy deteriorated. During the summer, the United Steelworkers of America locals at Cassiar, British Columbia, and Faro and Clinton Creek, Yukon Territory struck when a negotiated wage increase was rolled back by federal wage-and-price-control legislation. As the strike continued and the national economic situation worsened, people began to spend less, Yukon power rates were increased

and a general miasma of worry pervaded the territory. It was difficult to keep the desire for post-secondary education firmly in mind.

Diversification

Discussing a Land Claims Forum, 1976

Following the cancellation of the summer courses and the modest success of the February 1975 land claim seminar, there was little activity in the Yukon Division. Many of its directors resigned, leaving UCN in the hands of two committed individuals, Garth Graham and Ted Parnell. Parnell had apparently become involved with UCN early in 1976. He had been active with the Alberta Human Rights and Civil Liberties Association and had come to Whitehorse to conduct a workshop. Soon after, he decided to move to the territory.³³³ His interest in Native issues led him to investigate the possibility of the UCN acting as an "organizing and sponsoring agency" for the land claims information sessions.³³⁴ His negotiations were lengthy and trying. CYI and the YTG were both deeply concerned that the information sessions might be construed as public negotiation of the claim. They felt that "the forum should be viewed as an addition to and not as a replacement for information or consultation processes carried out by CYI or other negotiators."³³⁵

Both Graham and Parnell worked on getting permission and co-operation for the series. Nothing was accomplished over the summer. Graham met with Paul Birkel, Chair of the Council for Yukon Indians, in early October to discuss the matter. A letter summarising the substance of their conversation was presented to the CYI Board on 15 October. The Board decided it was "not ready to participate in a land claims information series."³³⁶ The earliest the CYI was willing to consider for such a project was late February or early March 1977. On 30 November, Graham chaired a meeting of the various agencies interested in the information series to begin detailed planning so a funding application could be prepared. Graham had obtained verbal support from

³³³ John Hoyt, interview, Whitehorse, Yukon, 17 June 1993. Parnell is not listed as a UCN Yukon Director in March 1975 and his UCN files, located in Graham's collection, date from early May, 1976.

³³⁴ Graham personal files, [file 5] "YNB-UCN 1975+," Ted Parnell to Willie Joe, 9 July 1976. Used with permission.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, Yukon Native Brotherhood to UCN, 2 August 1976. Used with permission.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, [file 11] "Land Claims Info Forum," Paul Birkel to Garth Graham, 5 November 1976. Used with permission.

officials in the office of the Secretary of State and was confident the application would be approved.³³⁷ Graham prepared the documents and submitted them early in February 1977.

Ted Parnell and the UCN Research Division

In 1977, northern development offered the Yukon Division a second direction. In May 1976, a consortium of companies, Foothills Pipe Lines Limited, Alberta Gas Trunk Line Company, Westcoast Transmission Company and Northwest Pipeline Corporation, had agreed to "sponsor a pipeline system to transport Alaskan gas to American markets via an overland route across Canada."³³⁸ The consortium filed its application with the National Energy Board and DIAND on 31 August 1976. A revised project application was subsequently filed on 28 February 1977. The application led to the appointment, on 19 April, of the Alaska Highway Pipeline Inquiry, chaired by Ken Lysyk, to investigate the potential effects of the project. The Inquiry panel was asked to submit its report to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development on 1 August 1977.³³⁹

Shortly after the appointment of the Lysyk Inquiry, the UCN Yukon Division acquired a Research Committee, later the Research Division.³⁴⁰ Graham said in a later interview that Ted Parnell created the Research Division singlehandedly. Parnell had simply announced to Graham that he wanted to use the University of Canada North as an umbrella for pipeline impact research. "I said fine," Graham related in an interview. Despite the lack of activity in the division,

I kept the board together for him as a reference and he went out saying I'm UCN. And I let him do it. I got a big kick out of that as all of a sudden there was a vast public presence; everybody knew about the UCN. That gave him enormous credibility and it was free! We just gave it to him and it had an impact. He raised funds in the name of UCN, in a separate account and did social science research for impact assessment for the Lysyk Inquiry. It was great fun!³⁴¹

The Research Division's first contract, signed the same day the research division rented an office,

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, Garth Graham to Agencies With an Interest in a Land Claims Public Information Series, 17 November 1976. Used with permission.

³³⁸ Kenneth M. Lysyk, Edith E. Bohmer and Willard L. Phelps, *Alaska Highway Pipeline Inquiry* (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1977), 22.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, 22, 155.

³⁴⁰ It was not formally established by the Yukon Division directors. First evidence for the research division is a cheque, drawn on a new account, for office rent, dated 2 May 1977. The cheques written to 16 May 1977 showed the payer being the "UCN Research Committee," after that it is the "UCN Research Division." Graham personal files, [file 25] "UCN Research Committee Finances 1977," cancelled cheques. Used with permission.

³⁴¹ Garth Graham, interview, Guelph, Ontario, 23 December 1991.

was with the Council for Yukon Indians "to conduct research relating to the Alaska Highway Pipeline Application."³⁴² The Research Division agreed to provide three case studies of effects of earlier Yukon and Alaska construction projects: the Alaska Highway, the Anvil Mine at Faro, and the Alyeska Pipeline in Alaska.³⁴³

By late May there were seven research associates involved in the project, working on the three, separate but related, pipeline impact studies. Other opportunities presented themselves. Parnell and Graham attended two meetings "under the chairmanship of the Territorial government Economic Research and Planning Unit, to develop a capacity to co-ordinate research efforts in Yukon."³⁴⁴ Parnell had been named the chair of a subcommittee that was to recommend a structure for research coordination.

At a UCN board meeting on 25 May, the issue of the Division's legal status once again became a concern "under the circumstances of funded projects and the existence of contracts with other agencies."³⁴⁵ Graham agreed to ask the Yukon's senator, Paul Lucier, to help clarify the situation. The directors agreed to work on rebuilding the board to the fifteen members required by the UCN constitution. (Four of current eight directors were at the meeting.)

In late June the Research Co-ordinating Committee was formed to work with the territorial government's Research and Planning Unit to establish a council to co-ordinate groups engaged in pipeline impact research.³⁴⁶ Discussions proceeded on the matter. The parties eventually agreed to an arrangement where the Council would operate as an autonomous division of the University of Canada North. Graham wrote to the Donner Canadian Foundation to see if it would be willing to assist the project. Graham envisioned that the Council would serve the territory's need for an "academic presence" and would likely become government-funded. He hoped the DCF would assist the Council initially so it could have "an experimental period

342 Graham personal files, [file 5] "YNB-UCN 1975+", "Letter of Agreement Between Council for Yukon Indians and University of Canada North (Yukon)," 2 May 1977. Used with permission.

343 They were published as The University of Canada North (Yukon), Research Division, *Yukon Case Studies: Alaska Highway and Ross River* (Whitehorse: The University of Canada North (Yukon), Research Division, 1977) and The University of Canada North (Yukon), Research Division, *The Trans-Alaska Oil Pipeline: Selected Socio-Economic Impacts* (The University of Canada North (Yukon), Research Division, 1977).

344 Graham personal files, [file 5] "YNB-UCN 1975+", "Minutes of UCN (Yukon) Board Meeting, 25 May, 1977." Used with permission.

345 *Ibid.*

346 YA, PAM 1977-128, "Minutes of the Research Coordinating Committee," 29 June 1977. There had been two previous meetings on the subject in February and May.

of operation in which the Territory and the community could evaluate the process without direct involvement."³⁴⁷ The president of the foundation wrote back asking for more details but there is no indication that the matter was pursued beyond that.³⁴⁸ In September "a contract was signed between the Economic Research and Planning Unit [YTG] and UCN for the Research Division to develop a detailed proposal for a Yukon Research Co-ordinating Council."³⁴⁹ Parnell worked on the proposal over the winter.

The Research Division also attempted another project. In its report, the Lysyk Inquiry had recommended

that a research program, to provide a data base for the assessment of social and economic impacts be initiated, It is our view that the data should be gathered by an independent group unrelated to any government or agency. . . . In our estimation, an independently funded and operated Yukon Impact Information Centre would have many advantages. . . . We recommend that the independent Yukon Impact Information Centre have a board of directors that reflects, in an equitable manner, the diversity and variety of Yukon society.³⁵⁰

In early October the Research Division submitted its proposal for an Impact Data Centre to Nigel Wilford, Senior Co-ordinator of DIAND's Northern Pipelines bureau.³⁵¹ Parnell urged Wilford to consider the UCN Research Division proposal as the Yukon, unlike Alaska, lacked a developed university and a resident academic community. He thought it vital that both be "encouraged immediately in the Yukon;"³⁵² a pipeline data information centre would be an important first step. The matter was later considered in the Yukon Legislative Assembly. The proposal, however, did not receive funding and the centre was never established.

347 Graham personal files, [file 11] "Land Claims Info Forum," Garth Graham to Donald S. Richerd [sic], 25 July 1977. Used with permission.

348 *Ibid.*, [file 12] "Centre for Yukon Studies," Donald S. Rickerd to Garth Graham, 3 August 1977 and 9 August 1977. Used with permission.

349 *Ibid.*, [file 12] "Centre for Yukon Studies, CYS-UCN," Doug Munroe to Ted Parnell, 9 September 1977 (used with permission) and YA, PAM 1977-179, "Summary of a Proposal for a Yukon Research Coordinating Council," 30 November 1977.

350 Lysyk, Bohmer and Phelps, *Alaska Highway Pipeline Inquiry*, 103, and The Alaska Highway Pipeline Panel, *Proceedings of the Yukon Workshop on Public Involvement in Pipeline Impact Management* (Winnipeg: The Alaska Highway Pipeline Panel, August 1978), 23-27.

351 YA, PAM 1977-336, "A Proposal for a Yukon Impact Data Centre," 30 September 1977.

352 Graham personal files, [file 4] "UCN Feb. 1974 to Dec. 1980," Ted Parnell to Nigel Wilford, 26 October 1977. Used with permission.

The Land Claims Information Forum, November 1977

In May the Division's application for Secretary of State funding for the Land Claims Forum and a co-ordinator to organise the series was approved but it was too late in the season to offer the public sessions: the population of year-round residents of Whitehorse declined sharply during the summer. The Division intended to go ahead with the Forum later in the year and a meeting was called on 4 July to discuss the general structure, processes, dates for the Forum and to begin the organising. The same day, Graham proudly informed Rohmer of the advances made by the Yukon Division:

the Yukon Division of the UCN is not only hanging on but is beginning to grow. Land Claims and the Lysyk Inquiry are focusing attention on our peculiar services. The public information forum has \$5,000, from a Secretary of State [grant], and promised support from the Council for Yukon Indians, Territorial Government and Local Federal Land Claims Negotiations Office. The pipeline impact projects are funded from various sources to approximately \$15,000.³⁵³

Rohmer wrote back saying he was pleased and added that Dr. Walter O. Kupsch, Professor of Geology at the University of Saskatchewan and a member of the Science Council of Canada, had been inquiring about the current status of UCN. "The Science Council has decided that it would be appropriate to support the creation of a University in the north," Rohmer told Graham.³⁵⁴

The *Whitehorse Star* reported on 9 July that "UCN Here Again." Janice Hamilton reported that "the Yukon's here again-gone again University of Canada North has once again surfaced, this time in a form that may prove to be more buoyant." Hamilton interviewed Graham who said that the

UCN has changed its focus and will concentrate more on learning, rather than teaching.

As an institution, UCN has no intention of teaching anybody in the sense of community colleges or teacher training. . . .

But UCN is involved in learning and the projects UCN is initiating are specifically useful in the sense of developing an informed public which has the ability to participate in policy debate and be involved in the issues that affect it.³⁵⁵

Graham was quoted as saying that he thought the UCN might be restructured. He mentioned that there were fifteen-member boards in both territories but that the two had not had a joint meeting since 1973. He said that the Yukon Division was again becoming active and that it was

353 Rohmer personal files, Garth Graham to Richard Rohmer, 4 July 1977. Used with permission.

354 *Ibid.*, Richard Rohmer to Garth Graham, 19 July 1977. Used with permission. Kupsch had also been present at the Concepts Conference.

355 Janice Hamilton, "UCN Here Again," *Whitehorse Star*, 8 July 1977, 9. Graham's sentiments mirror those promoted by Dr. A. Renaud and Dr. N. Kroman in their 1974 assessments of the UCN.

progressing with its own programs. "However," he said, "it is important to maintain these ties with the NWT although the needs of the two areas are so vastly different, in order for the university to keep its national charter."³⁵⁶

Organisation and preparation for the Land Claims Forum began in earnest in October. Bob Hornsey of Frontier College was introduced at a meeting of the Forum Advisory Committee on 3 October. He had been contracted by the UCN to coordinate the sessions. The members of the advisory committee outlined how they wanted the forum to be run:

There was group consensus that there be four forums, and one a week during the last four weeks of November. There should be guest speakers or panel discussions around specific themes and that group facilitators be available to conduct small group discussion around the themes presented.³⁵⁷

Two days later Hornsey had arranged space for the fora and had scheduled workshops for the group facilitators. The UCN directors discussed the content of the individual sessions at a meeting on the 12th. All seemed to be going well until the end of October. Politics then intervened. The directors held a special meeting to consider a request from YTG to postpone the Forums. Commissioner Art Pearson had requested it because of questions from the Executive Committee about the content and timing of the series. The territorial Executive Committee thought the topics had been altered without its knowledge and consent. The members also worried that the forums might provide a platform for Native politicians who were running in CYI elections, which were being held during the early part of November. The directors met and decided not to cancel the series. Graham wrote to Pearson explaining their position and concluded:

because we appreciate that your continued participation is important to this exercise, we earnestly request that you further consider the position you have taken. We are convinced that the Public Information Forums on Land Claims will play a part in helping the people of the Yukon talk together about common problems, that they are not a threat to racial harmony, and that it is necessary to trust people's desire for dialogue in order to have a healthy community.

Pearson responded promptly, noting with approval that further changes had been made to the program of which YTG had been unaware. He announced it had been decided that the YTG would continue to be involved with the project.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁷ Graham personal files, [file 5] "YNB-UCN 1975+," "Minutes of UCN Public Information Forum on Land Claims Advisory Committee Meeting, October 3, 1977." Used with permission.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, [file 6] "UCN 1978-1979-1980," A. M. Pearson to Garth Graham, 4 November 1977. Used with permission.

The Land Claims Forum public information series was held in Whitehorse on four Sunday evenings in November 1977. It is notable that this was one of the few UCN projects ever to receive both Secretary of State funding and (grudging) approval from the territorial government. In a later interview, Garth Graham said the seminars were an important step towards bridging what he saw as a deep social gulf between Natives and non-Natives in the Yukon in the 1970s. The seminars attracted "a consistent audience of people, more White than Native."³⁵⁹ A local columnist, John Lammers, commented after the third forum:

It is the first time that there is a discourse dealing with the truly important aspects of life in the Yukon and it should give us hope that the initiative is being taken by the Yukon's original people. Even where we may not agree with them on all counts it behooves us to listen carefully, in an atmosphere of friendship and cooperation, supportive of their goals.³⁶⁰

Graham thought the success of the Forum was in showing people that there could be some kind of "common ground." He thought that this, in itself, was "a big leap."³⁶¹ That big leap may have been the most memorable accomplishment of the University of Canada North.

Northward Looking: Renewed Interest in a Northern University

In August 1977, the Science Council of Canada reported in *Northward Looking: A Strategy and a Science Policy for Northern Development*, that "the relative role of Canadian universities in northern research and development has declined."³⁶² To counter this trend, the Council proposed the creation of an "unorthodox" northern university aimed at graduate and extension work.³⁶³ "The most immediate value of a University of the North would be to provide a focus for the development of northern research activities explicitly designed to solve northern problems."³⁶⁴ The Council thought that the presence of this unorthodox university "might stimulate the creation of a northern polytechnic college."³⁶⁵ It is ironic that an agency of the Canadian

359 Garth Graham, interview, Guelph, Ontario, 23 December 1991.

360 John Lammers, *Whitehorse Star*, 23 November 1977.

361 *Ibid.*

362 Science Council of Canada, *Northward Looking: A Strategy and Science Policy for Northern Development*, Report #26 (Ottawa: Science Council of Canada, 1977), 56.

363 *Ibid.*, 58.

364 *Ibid.*, 57.

365 *Ibid.*, 58.

federal government, the Science Council, should now promote an idea for which UCN had been fighting since 1971. Yet their visions were not entirely congruous. UCN was created as an institution if not entirely *by* northerners then most certainly *for* them. The Science Council's interest was focused more broadly on national concerns and needs northern research and development:

What is needed now is a relevant institution, with all the prestige that attaches to the word "University," and which provides a vehicle for formal communication with the intellectual resources of the rest of Canada. Few things could better serve northern aspirations than a University of the North. The whole of Canada would benefit.³⁶⁶

This passage proclaims a vision of the purpose of a northern university that is utterly unlike the one held by the founders of the UCN. Indeed, the Council's university was rather similar to the one proposed by Jim Lotz and Iris Warner and Alan Innes-Taylor.

The idea of a university in the North continued to circulate in Ottawa the following year. The first chair of the Science Advisory Council of the NWT (forerunner of the Science Institute of the Northwest Territories), Dr. O. M. Solandt, discussed the matter in positive terms with DIAND officials in May.³⁶⁷ Garth Graham, however, wrote to the Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau in September to protest the shabby treatment the UCN had been receiving from the government despite evident interest in establishing a university in the North. Graham wrote,

This letter is to draw your attention to a small group of Yukon citizens who have been actively pursuing the concept of a university in Canada's north since 1971. . . . With no particular support or endorsement we have done more than just maintain existence [*sic*]; we have carried out several public information activities and research projects which contribute to a body of local experience on exactly the issues with which the re-emerging debate on a northern university is pre-occupied. We are gaining the impression that our continued existence is considered by some to more of an embarrassment than an asset.³⁶⁸

Graham apparently received no response from Prime Minister Trudeau or from his office. However, Trevor Lloyd, Executive Director of ACUNS, was given a copy of a duplicate that Graham had also sent to Hugh Faulkner, who had become Minister of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in September 1977. Lloyd told Graham that "if you have not had a reply, rest assured that what you wrote was received and is being passed around where it can do most good."³⁶⁹ Lloyd was concerned about a northern university. He told Graham "the

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁷ YA, Hoyt Collection, MSS 216, file 6, H. Faulkner to Dr. O. M. Solandt, 3 May 1978.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, Garth Graham to Right Honourable Pierre E. Trudeau, 8 September 1978.

³⁶⁹ Graham personal files, [file 6] "UCN 1978-1979-1980," Trevor Lloyd to Garth Graham, 29 November 1978. Used with permission.

whole 'university of the north' idea scares me sometimes because of the real possibility that some government may want to build for itself a monument more lasting than brass in the form of a campus and the usual accoutrements."³⁷⁰

John Hoyt, the former UCN (Yukon) treasurer, was appointed special assistant to Hugh Faulkner in November 1978. When the news broke in the Yukon, several Whitehorse people contacted Hoyt, hoping to convince him to press their particular pet issues with the Minister. Hoyt later said,

I remember the announcement of my appointment on the radio on the 5:30 news that night. Within an hour, I had two calls, one inviting me to lunch the next day with Mr. [Rob] McCandless and Mr. [Ted] Parnell. The other [was] from Campbell of the Chamber of Mines, which was meeting that night. I met with the Chamber of Mines that night and then met with McCandless and Parnell.

McCandless opened that little lunch at the Travellodge [Hotel] by saying that now that I was going to Ottawa, I would be expected to do exactly as I was told by certain people here! . . . I said I don't take money from one and then work for someone else. However, once we got that out of the way, we spent the rest of the meeting planning how I could advance the cause of the UCN while I was in Ottawa.³⁷¹

Hoyt moved to Ottawa on 5 November 1977. He found Faulkner interested in the idea of a northern university and worked on providing the minister with more and relevant information. Hoyt had soon identified a group of about twenty people whom he thought might support the idea of establishing a northern university and invited them to a formal dinner-meeting at the Governor-General's residence in early or mid-January 1978. Hoyt said later that, for the meeting,

we brought in the head of Athabasca University, which was just starting out. . . . We had [John] Stager, of course, and we had some of the old-timers that had been on the NWT Council back in the 40s. There was an Admiral Someone and a Colonel Someone from Montreal everyone who'd ever been involved in education in the North plus a few people that I had plugged in. It was a fascinating evening. We spent about six hours. It was a powerful meeting. . . .³⁷²

Faulkner attended, as did Donat Savoie, Chief of the Northern Social Research Division. Savoie remarked after the meeting that Faulkner thought the issues of a university in the North and of post-secondary education there needed more study:

Comme nous le savons, le Ministre est extrêmement intéressé par ce sujet de l'éducation post-secondaire dans le Nord. Doit-on parler d'université nordique, de la création de collèges communautaires? Dans l'esprit du Ministre, il est devenu clair au cours de ce souper-causerie, qu'il est impérieux, avant d'entreprendre quelque initiative que ce soit, qu'on puisse définir le

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁷¹ John Hoyt, interview, Whitehorse, Yukon, 17 June 1993.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, Rob McCandless had been involved on the periphery of the UCN since at least 1973 and Ted Parnell has been introduced as the initiator of the Research Division.

concept d'éducation "post-secondaire" qu'il serait souhaitable d'implanter en milieu nordique.³⁷³

Some in the department seem to have disagreed. D. R. MacNeill of the Native Liaison Section of DIAND, commented in an April 1978 report that

it would appear from the . . . inventory of programs [included in the report] and courses currently available [in southern Canada] that there is currently little need for a university facility in the north, nor is there the demand for transporting students to southern universities.³⁷⁴

After the dinner, the Minister had asked his department to prepare an analysis of the northern post-secondary education situation. When the report was complete, the tiny numbers of students and the success of the territorial programs for supporting post-secondary students were given as reasons for supposing a northern university would be premature.³⁷⁵ Hoyt revealed, in an interview, that Faulkner had been personally very interested in the idea of a northern university and had, in fact, been willing for his department to fund the nucleus of one. At some point, after the dinner-meeting, Faulkner apparently "made available an offer of 5 million dollars to start a university up here [in the Yukon]."³⁷⁶ Moose Kerr, a former teacher in Aklavik, NWT, was sent to Whitehorse to scout out a location. One was found, where the Takhini Arena is currently located, and an offer was made to the territorial council.³⁷⁷ The territorial council would have to endorse the university, which was, in fact, to be "primarily a research institute," and DIAND would make the money available. "The YTG ExCom. . . just said no way are we taking a . . . penny with those kinds of conditions. And that was the end of it."³⁷⁸

In December the Science Council of Canada, Committee on Northern Development issued a discussion paper entitled "A Northern Resource Centre: A First Step Toward a University of the North" that elaborated on the northern university portion of the *Northward Looking* proposal. The Committee thought that

the Northern Resource Centre and eventually the University of the North should be seen, not as a place for conventional education, but rather as a national institution located in the North

373 National Archives of Canada (hereafter NAC), Records of the Northern Affairs Program, RG 85, Acc 1989-90/233, Box 21, file "Educ N," Donat Savoie, Chief, Northern Social Research Division to Frank Fingland, Director, Direction de la coordination et du développement social, 31 January 1978.

374 *Ibid.*, "Report of D. R. MacNeill, Native Liaison Section, 17/4/1978."

375 *Ibid.*, Arthur Kroeger, "Further Education in the North" (report prepared for the Minister), 12 June 1978.

376 John Hoyt, interview, Whitehorse, Yukon, 17 June 1993.

377 There is no substantiating evidence for this activity and the offer. Hoyt said the whole event never made the press.

378 John Hoyt, interview, Whitehorse, Yukon, 17 June 1993.

which would serve to enhance the progress of northern development through research and extension services.³⁷⁹

The Committee thought the best way to establish the Centre was to use "an incremental approach, building on existing and emerging structures."³⁸⁰ The talk had little effect on the University of Canada North besides irritating the directors with its narrow, colonial focus and limited vision.

Research and Films, 1978

Buoyed, however, by the success of the Land Claims Forum and the work of the Research Division, the Yukon directors tried to sustain that level of activity into 1978. In January Graham wrote to the Department of the Secretary of State to account for the Department's money spent on the Land Claims Forum and to request further funding to produce "written and audio-visual materials dealing with the content of the Forum series."³⁸¹ That funding, however, was denied. The Research Division won a small contract to distribute a National Film Board film in the territory. A few divisional directors' meetings were held and concern was raised at one in March that the YTG did not yet have a policy on higher education. Discussion also turned to "UCN's central unresolved issue – emphasis on research or on instruction."³⁸² One member, echoing Jim Lotz's concerns of 1970, stated there must be a research organisation in the North that was not tied to government. Graham reminded them "that [a] strong interest in both areas had always characterized the make-up of the Board."³⁸³ The discussion of emphasis was largely academic. There was little further activity.

Dissipation

Towards Yukon College, 1979-1985

The finale to the story of The University of Canada North is a tale of slow decay. During

³⁷⁹ Science Council Committee on Northern Development, *A Northern Resource Centre: A First Step Toward a University of the North, A Discussion Paper* (Ottawa: Science Council of Canada, 1978), 5. Emphasis in the original.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

³⁸¹ Rohmer personal files, Garth Graham to Gavin Perryman, Secretary of State, 26 January 1978. Used with permission.

³⁸² *Ibid.*, "Minutes of U.C.N. (Yukon) Board Meeting," 14 March 1978. Used with permission.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*

1979, Graham's activities were increasingly related to other interests, other issues. Ted Parnell, as the sole remaining member of the Research Division, undertook the majority of the UCN work. Peter Lyman, Assistant to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development asked for his suggestions regarding a university for northern Canada. Parnell's answer was thoughtful, considered, nine pages long and emphasised the research advantages.³⁸⁴ It did not lead to action. Ted Parnell was almost singlehandedly carrying on the work of the UCN research division but had not secured any paying projects. He corresponded with a number of people on the subjects of northern research and a northern university, hoping to get some kind of centre established to coordinate and engage in Yukon research. Parnell attended a seminar in Ottawa on Science and Research in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories on behalf of the UCN. He sent a memo, on 26 April 1979, to the remaining UCN Board of Directors outlining the proceedings. Parnell and Graham subsequently wrote to Ottawa to urge DIAND to support the creation of a Yukon Research Centre, recommended by Keith Greenaway, Senior Science Advisor, DIAND, in his paper presented at the seminar.³⁸⁵

In June a small team of researchers from the University of Alberta, commissioned by the YTG, held public meetings in the Yukon to determine adult education needs. Preliminary findings were reported in the *Northern Times* on 6 June 1979:

Dr. Ernie Ingram said that after talking with people throughout the Yukon and conducting interviews, the team had come up with a list of recommendations, the most important of which was the establishment of Yukon College.³⁸⁶

Some were still hoping for a university but an institution other than the UCN. The Whitehorse *Northern Times* ran an editorial that complained that "education in the Yukon doesn't seem to get the priority it deserves."³⁸⁷ The editorialist thought

The first priority should be the establishment of a university in the Yukon. Not a community college, but a full university. The Yukon is badly in need of an 'academic community,' the kind of group of professors and students who become a social and political force just as business, labor, and women's groups do.

³⁸⁴ Graham personal files, [file 16] "[Parnell file] Research Coordination," Ted Parnell to Peter Lyman, 30 January 1979. Used with permission.

³⁸⁵ Keith Greenaway, "A Framework for Scientific Activities in the Yukon and Northwest Territories" (unpublished discussion paper prepared for Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 11 April 1979). The paper also recommended the creation of a non-government corporation in the NWT that would be responsible for the four federal research centres there. This body came into being as the Science Institute of the NWT in 1984.

³⁸⁶ "Priority for College Located in the Yukon," *Northern Times*, 6 June 1979.

³⁸⁷ "University of Yukon," *Northern Times* 14 June 1979.

The creation of an academic community would not only encourage Yukon student to continue their education, both inside and out of the territory, it would also attract academics with an interest and an expertise in the north to spend more than a few weeks here. . . .

The idea of a university has been bandied about for years. So far nothing has been done, except for the sham which calls itself the University of Canada North and which seems to be little more than a vehicle for a few 'researchers' to back up their requests for funding.³⁸⁸

The "sham", however, was dying, killed by lack of public confidence, government support and the growing probability that a Yukon College was in the offing. The research division's office was closed at the end of June 1980.³⁸⁹ Its bank account had been closed earlier in the year, signalling the official, if not actual, end of the division.

In August Graham wrote to Catherine MacKinnon, of the Donner Canadian Foundation in response to a letter from her. In it Graham said that the UCN

is currently enjoying a quiet period. The only activity is within the 'Research Division' which largely consists of Ted Parnell. The board requires more leg-work than I can currently supply in order to bring it back to life. Much of what the U.C.N. might or might not become is now circumscribed by D.I.N.A. proposals for a Whitehorse Research Centre and by a Territorial Government post-secondary education study.

Over a year ago U.C.N. did hold a meeting of interested local groups on a proposed Yukon Research Co-ordinating Council. We had done the proposal on contract for the Yukon Government's Economic Research and Planning Unit. The committee of interested Researchers . . . has done nothing with the proposal. The key elements in failure seem to be the lack of leadership and divergent needs between the physical and social sciences.³⁹⁰

Graham's letter became a personal assessment of Yukon experience of The University of Canada North. While the extract is quite lengthy, it is of interest to this study:

Both Parnell and I believe that the Research Centre, on the other hand would be weaker in the social sciences and stronger in the physical sciences, at least initially. There will still be a strong need for a means of providing a Yukon focus to social science activities. In my opinion there has been passive resistance in Yukon to the establishment of anything resembling a social critic role or a "Centre for Yukon Studies." These concepts seemed to be viewed as inherently anti-development and therefore suspect.

For example, over the years I have watched a steady stream of professional people with a community development background and perspective grow frustrated and leave; in spite of interest from a broad spectrum of community organizations and agreement between the city and Yukon Government, no Whitehorse Impact Information Centre has come into existence; and the Yukon Advisory Council established under the pipeline act was allowed virtually no research support. I have no doubt whatever the fear these activities engender is also at the root of the Land Claims negotiations difficulties and the ever deepening polarization between native and white

388 *Ibid.*

389 Graham personal files, [file 6] "UCN 1978-1979-1980," Ted Parnell to Garth Graham, 23 May 1980. Used with permission.

390 *Ibid.*, [file 4] "UCN Feb. 1974 to Dec. 1980," Garth Graham to Catherine MacKinnon, Donner Canadian Foundation, 13 August 1979. Used with permission.

in the Yukon.

Perhaps the definitive symptom of this narrow social perspective was the paranoid suspicion that following the publication of the Berger report, "Berger people" would be infiltrating the Yukon. I don't suppose my standard retort that there really were such people and that they've been visiting here for years did much to allay anyone's fears.

In summary, no there have not been any developments in the past year. In writing to you and reflecting on the reasons, the degree of opposition and indifference I can see startles me. If U.C.N. continues to survive I think that a role in cross-cultural contact and social comment is essential.³⁹¹

Over the next two years Graham became increasingly consumed with his own work and with the federal government's proposed northern science policy. Ted Parnell had some involvement with discussions on the Symons Report on Science Activities in the North. In 1980, Dr. Echo Lidster asked Graham for his comments on a draft chapter on adult education in the North that discussed the University of Canada North.³⁹² Rohmer applied for revocation of charitable organisation status in October 1980³⁹³ and Revenue Canada confirmed the revocation in April 1981.³⁹⁴

Ted Parnell died early in 1982 and bequeathed one-eighth of his estate to the UCN.³⁹⁵ Rohmer confirmed to his executor, Peter Noble, that the UCN was still a viable entity and was able to accept the bequest.³⁹⁶ On 17 February, Rohmer wrote to Whitehorse lawyer John Anton suggesting that

if the bequest is of reasonable substance and Garth Graham and others are interested in giving the University of Canada North (Yukon) another push, it might be appropriate to see the corporate body continue. Otherwise I think it should be wound up and the bequest aborted.³⁹⁷

Rohmer apparently did not receive an answer to his letter and, in early October, wrote to Ron Veale, a Whitehorse lawyer who had been involved with the financial affairs of the Yukon Division since 1973. Rohmer told Veale that unless he heard from either him or Graham before the end of the month, the UCN would be wound up.³⁹⁸ Veale passed the message on to Graham. Graham had resigned his position as deputy-minister of the Department of Heritage and Cultural

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*

³⁹² There is no indication if the chapter was published.

³⁹³ Rohmer personal files, Richard Rohmer to Revenue Canada, 14 October 1980. Used with permission.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, Revenue Canada to Richard Rohmer, 9 April 1981. Used with permission.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, Peter Noble to Richard Rohmer, 25 January 1982. Used with permission.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, Richard Rohmer to Peter Noble, 2 February 1982. Used with permission.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, Richard Rohmer to John N. P. Anton, 17 February 1982. Used with permission.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, Richard Rohmer to Ron Veale, 6 October 1982. Used with permission.

Resources in June 1982 and was working with several Yukon bands.³⁹⁹ Graham phoned Rohmer in early November to ask Rohmer for a delay as he knew of some people who were still interested in the UCN.⁴⁰⁰ The Ontario lawyer representing the Parnell estate maintained contact with Rohmer, waiting to hear whether there would be any further UCN activity. In mid-1983, the Yukon Territorial Government passed the legislation that created the publicly-funded Yukon College. A university in Canada's North would have to wait.

Search for a UCN Successor, 1983-1985

Information about the final two-and-a-half years of UCN's corporate life is extremely sketchy and reveals that, by this time, the University really only existed on paper. In September 1983, Rohmer answered a letter from Christian De Laet of the University of Regina, who wanted to know if it would be possible to acquire the UCN charter. Rohmer replied that "at this stage, I do not intend to let the University of Canada North, or the charter, go, in that, as I indicated, it has been left a bequest of something in the range of \$30,000."⁴⁰¹ In January 1984 Ronald N. Siddall asked to discuss the status of UCN with Richard Rohmer.⁴⁰² On 15 March, Rohmer accepted the Parnell bequest on behalf of the UCN.⁴⁰³ He held it in his professional trust account, hoping someone would be able to use it, until sometime in 1985 when it was returned to the Parnell family for disbursement elsewhere.⁴⁰⁴ The last mention of UCN is in a letter Rohmer drafted in January 1985 hoping to interest some group in taking over the charter and using it to establish some form of Arctic Science Institute of graduate studies.⁴⁰⁵ There is no indication that the letter was sent.

Once its last supporters had withdrawn, The University of Canada North faded from popular memory. YTG had established Yukon College, thus offering some of the educational

399 Garth Graham, interview, Guelph, Ontario, 23 December 1991.

400 Rohmer personal files, Garth Graham to Richard Rohmer, 2 November 1982. Used with permission.

401 *Ibid.*, Richard Rohmer to Christian De Laet, University of Regina, 7 September 1983.

402 *Ibid.*, Ronald N. Siddall to Richard Rohmer, 17 January 1984. Used with permission. Whether the meeting occurred is uncertain.

403 *Ibid.*, "Release to Executor(s)," 15 March 1984. Used with permission.

404 Richard Rohmer, interview, Toronto, Ontario, 22 August 1991. Rohmer said that he thought the bequest had been donated to diabetes research at McMaster University.

405 At this point the letters patent were probably worthless.

opportunities the founders had wanted the UCN to provide. The college's board, with representatives of the major territorial interest groups, supposedly supplanted the need for an independent "watchdog." With the college's autonomy guaranteed from 1 January 1990, and the establishment there of the Northern Research Institute, there was no further need for a UCN. Yukon College would become the cultural, intellectual and educational centre the territory had needed since the 1960s.

CHAPTER 8

THE UNIVERSITY OF CANADA NORTH: INSTITUTION AND INDICATOR

The story of the UCN is an account of the dedication and the hard work undertaken by a tiny portion of the territorial population. That it managed to maintain corporate existence for some twelve years is merely further testimony to that effort. The most important features of the story, however, are the reasons why its founders tried to establish the UCN, what motivated the various players, and what the UCN experience can show us about northern society in the 1970s.

As early as 1970, there was a swelling realisation that Canada's North deserved more consideration from the federal government and from the rest of the country. Northern residents were becoming frustrated with the often inscrutable activities of southern researchers and civil servants. Northern non-Natives were concerned that the territorial governments' desire for greater autonomy, through devolution, constitutional development and provincial status, would lead to their interests being overlooked. Natives in the territories began to realise that past inequities, visited upon them by treaties, the *Indian Act*, and circumstance, were going to have to be rectified through political action. Many newcomers, arriving either to take up posts in the burgeoning territorial governments or to service those who did, brought certain expectations. They wanted some of the amenities they were used to in the South.

An indigenous scholarly capability was integral to the development of the North. They realised that the North, object of increasing resource exploitation, required such a capability, which would allow northerners the opportunity to participate in and possibly influence the course of northern development. A university seemed the best way of developing that influence. Some believed a northern university would attract students and academics with an interest in the North, encouraging a stability in northern society they thought it desperately needed. Non-Native transiency was, and remains, a major feature of life in Canada's North. The UCN would theoretically counter that trend, at least among researchers and northern high-school graduates.

Attracting people to the North and keeping them there would result in important economic benefits by broadening the tax base, increasing local expenditures, and decreasing the economic leakages associated with students going south to university. Alongside these reasons for supporting a northern university, there was the hope that scholarly debate about northern issues and academic study of its problems would begin to bridge the gap between Natives and non-Natives.

This variety of reasons for wanting a northern university led to a profound disagreement about the nature of the proposed UCN. Ideas for the UCN ranged from a Native-controlled cultural institute, to a community college, to a research-oriented academic university. The incorporation documents outlined a vision of a northern institution that, on paper at least, would focus on and perhaps address the needs of northern First Nations and, in addition, be a "cultural, intellectual and educational centre" for *all* northerners. The reality of northern society was that there were too many conflicting needs for such an all-encompassing institution to be possible.

Accounting for the reaction of various groups and individuals to the UCN is not easy. It is possible, though, to speculate on the matter, given the material presented in this thesis. Territorial government antipathy to the efforts of the UCN founders is also not easily accounted for. Some of the directors have said in interviews that they believed the territorial governments were either more concerned with improving elementary and secondary education or were preoccupied with increasing their autonomy. Some have suggested the territorial governments were unwilling to allow post-secondary education to fall into the hands of a non-governmental group. The need for an institution of post-secondary education certainly existed but the territorial governments had not yet reached the point where they had the time, the inclination, or the money to answer that need. The programs of grants, bursaries, loans and scholarships were a cheaper and more convenient way of providing for post-secondary education. This, though, created a problem, one that the founders noticed but did not articulate at the time. The awards programs only supported those students who had the appropriate academic qualifications to pursue post-secondary education. As a rule, they did not benefit the Native peoples. This served to deepen the gulf between them and the rest of northern society. It was this, in part, that the UCN founders had hoped to rectify.

The federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development was not convinced of the need for a northern university in the early seventies. The idea had circulated on and off

in the sixties but assessors, advisors and experts judged the population too small to warrant the expense. The North, they believed, was well-enough served by the activities of the southern universities. Incorporation of the UCN caused the department to consider the issue again. In 1971-72, the department was discussing the role of Canadian universities in the North with the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. That organisation had begun to examine university activity in the North because it recognized certain shortcomings in the contemporary practice of northern research. Both DIAND and the AUCC rejected the notion of a separate northern university as "premature" and unnecessary. Several of the UCN directors noted, in interviews, that they believed the southern universities were reluctant to support the UCN because they feared competition for limited research funding. It may have been that simple but then again it may not. The southern universities were facing a period of declining enrolment and may have honestly doubted the use of founding another Canadian university, no matter how specialised and beneficial it might be.

Later, in 1977, the Science Council of Canada advocated a northern university. The idea seemed particularly important in the Yukon as construction of the Alaska Highway pipeline appeared a real possibility. DIAND seemed willing to consider the issue and even offered to create a Yukon research centre. The territorial government refused the offer. DIAND apparently abandoned the idea of creating or supporting a northern university after that. It had done all it was going to do at the time.

The founders were unable to create a united vision of the UCN because of the variety of reasons they had for wanting a northern university. Early in the history of the UCN, two main visions of the structure of the UCN were developed (university and community college), primarily along territorial lines. In addition, there was a third, though less developed, vision that was to answer the Native desire for an institution for cultural preservation.

From the moment of its creation, the UCN thus faced a host of conflicting visions, northern and southern, governmental and academic, personal and political. The founders gradually became aware of most of them, which added considerably to the difficulty of establishing the UCN. The pressures they weathered during the first eighteen months were overcome by the Concepts Conference; it served to delay active opposition to the project. People, with an interest in seeing the UCN succeed or fail, waited to see what consensus would emerge from the conference. That no true consensus surfaced was a frustration to some and a relief to others.

The subsequent split into a pro-community college view in the Northwest Territories and a pro-academy view in the Yukon further diminished hopes of success. Without a united front, public- and private-sector support was almost impossible to garner.

The split itself is interesting, for it illustrates the vast differences between the two territories. The Northwest Territories, with its huge distances, its predominately Native population, its neophyte government and its relatively ineffective education system, was not ready for an indigenous (i.e., northern) post-secondary institution. The NWT directors realised this and adopted a plan to develop a community college system that would eventually become degree-granting. The Yukon directors, recognising their territory was more developed, had better transportation routes and a mainly non-Native population, initially desired an intellectual and educational centre to serve the non-Native population. They saw the UCN primarily as an economic development project. After mid-1973 that view changed, caused by the withdrawal of many of the original founders. The new directors first conceived of the UCN as a physical centre where both Natives and non-Natives could talk to each other, then as a vehicle for bringing further education to the people and the communities of the Yukon and finally as a agent for public education and Yukon research.

As an institution, the UCN failed. Its founders did not manage to establish a highly visible presence. It was not able to convince the public of its importance and its advantages. This was due to both fundraising difficulties and to the directors' own uncertainty about the structure and function of UCN. By not achieving a strong base of public support, the directors were not able to convince government of the need for a northern university. This allowed government to prevaricate, to toss funding requests back and forth from level to level and from department to department and, eventually, to deny support. Lacking government support subsequently limited opportunities to secure financial support from foundations, industry and individuals. Alone, the directors could really do little except maintain a modest profile, a small presence in the media and explore possibilities.

The directors believe, however, that what they *were* able to accomplish was useful and necessary. They were acutely aware that the North needed its own strengths, separate and not so influenced by civil servants in Ottawa. Yukon directors maintain that the presence of the UCN caused the territorial government to move ahead with the study that led to the creation of Yukon College. They have also said that UCN's research activities in the late 1970s were an important

contribution to the Yukon, as they demonstrated that locally-based researchers could conduct local investigations without causing irreparable rifts in Yukon society. The public information sessions on the Yukon land claim were deemed a success for they showed that Natives and non-Natives could meet and talk and could possibly reach a common understanding of their hopes and desires for Yukon society and politics. The directors believe that it was in these small successes that the proof lay that the Yukon, at least, needed an intellectual centre and that if one could be established, it would be of great benefit.

The UCN, thus, may be seen as an indicator of a new way of thinking about northern society, about rejecting the colonial relationship. The founders recognised, in a nebulous way, that a university would offer the North certain important gains. That they disagreed about what those were is understandable. That they chose to reject colonialism by trying to establish an indigenous, but essentially colonial institution, is ironic. Yet they had no choice. They had to argue for self-determination in language the colonizers understood. At the time, though, the directors were more than likely unaware of this irony. They joined together and followed Richard Rohmer's initial lead for personal reasons; they were not, to begin with at least, representatives of their racial or occupational groups. They all seemed to realise that an academic centre in the Canadian North, founded by northerners but with southern academic standards, would add an element of stability and a cachet of legitimacy to northern society that it did not have at the time but were not able to pursue the implication of that notion any further. Yet consciously or not, the UCN was one effort in the rejection of colonialism, which gradually occurred in most facets of northern life. It was less successful but no less ironic than others.

In this sense, then, the UCN can be seen as a microcosm, as an indicator of northern aspirations and of northern society. In this sense, too, the UCN was not exactly a failure but a valiant effort that did not succeed in the manner it was hoped. It did permit people to explore new ideas and contemplate great visions. While it did not become a physical reality, remaining a university that wasn't universal and wasn't even real, it did provoke the kind of social debate that universities are relied upon to prompt, becoming, in an odd way, a temporary northern university of the northern mind.

APPENDIX I
Letters Patent Application, 15 January 1971
and
Letters Patent, Recorded 19 March 1971

Please note that the original thesis included facsimiles of these documents.
The PDF version does not.

APPENDIX II
CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS

APPENDIX II

THE CONCEPTS CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS

Source: John Hallward, ed., *Concepts Conference*, 1972, 5-8.

Prof. W. Peter Adams, Chair, Department of Geography, Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario
Renée Alford, Whitehorse, Yukon
Bertha Allen, Inuvik, NWT
Victor Allen, Inuvik, NWT
Allistine Andre, CBC Inuvik, Inuvik, NWT
James Arvaluk, Director, Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, Frobisher Bay [Iqaluit], NWT
Thomas Atcitty, Vice President, Navajo Community College, Chinle, Arizona
Wilf Bean, Fort Simpson, NWT
Angeline Bevington, Fort Smith, NWT
Susan Burns, Whitehorse, Yukon
Bob Byron, City Manager, City of Whitehorse, Yukon
Dr. Noah Carpenter, Sachs Harbour, NWT
Agnes Carpenter, Sachs Harbour, NWT
Fred Carpenter, Sachs Harbour, NWT
Ron Chambers, Yukon Native Brotherhood, Whitehorse, Yukon
Charlie Charlo, Community Developer, Fort Rae, NWT
Audrey Christie, Calgary, Alberta
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Nellie Cournoyea, Director, CBC Station CHAK, Inuvik, NWT
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Arnold Edinborough, Toronto, Ontario
Robert H. Egan, Head of Student Orientation Services, University of Alaska, College [Fairbanks], Alaska
Yvonne Ellingson, Faro, Yukon
Georges Erasmus, Tree of Peace, Yellowknife, NWT

Andrew Erigaktuk, Aklavik, NWT
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F. J. Tadi Francis, Chief, Fort McPherson Band, Fort McPherson, NWT
Sarah Gardland, Aklavik, NWT
Father Charles Gilles, Roman Catholic Mission, Fort Smith, NWT
B. C. Gillie, Director, Department of Education, GNWT, Yellowknife, NWT
Dr. R. G. Glassford, Associate Chairman, Department of Physical Education, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta
Garth Graham, Librarian, Government of the Yukon, Whitehorse, Yukon
John Hallward, Montreal, Quebec
Dr. Louis-Edmond Hamelin, Directeur du Centre D'Études Nordiques, Université Laval, Québec, P.Q.
B. G. Hammond, Gulf Oil of Canada Ltd., Calgary, Alberta
Frank Hansen, Town Councillor, Inuvik, NWT
Knute Hansen, Aklavik, NWT, Student at the University of Alaska
Jake Harron, Inuvik, NWT
Ron Hodgkinson, Executive Assistant to the Commissioner, Government of the Yukon, Whitehorse, Yukon
Willy Hombert, Inuvik, NWT
Roly Horsefield, Producing Department Manager, Edmonton Division, Imperial Oil Ltd., Alberta
Rolf Hougen, Hougen's Ltd., Whitehorse, Yukon
John Hoyt, Yukon Native Brotherhood, Whitehorse, Yukon
Morris Issacs, Native Youth Association of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario
Jenny Jack, Student, Whitehorse, Yukon
Andrew Joe, Yukon Native Brotherhood, Whitehorse, Yukon
L. M. Johnston, Assistant Deputy Minister, Department of Colleges and Universities, Ontario
Paul Kaesar, Mayor, Town of Fort Smith, Fort Smith, NWT
Mary Kendi, Aklavik, NWT
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Shepherd Krech, Anthropologist, Fort McPherson, NWT
Dr. Walter O. Kupsch, Department of Geology, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
Bev Latham, Inuvik, NWT
Roy L'Hommecourt, Yellowknife, NWT
Father R. LeMeur, Roman Catholic Mission, Tuktoyaktuk, NWT
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 Andy Martin, Adult Education, Fort McPherson, NWT
 Donna Motherwell, Calgary, Alberta
 Phoebe Nahanni, Fort Simpson, NWT, Student at University of Western Ontario
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 Bob Nowosad, Canadian Reindeer Project, Inuvik, NWT
 Terry Orlick, Faculty of Physical Education, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta
 Prof. Karl-Gustav Paul, Vice Chancellor and Rector, Umeå University, Umeå, Sweden
 Jenny Paupanekis, Inuvik, NWT
 Dr. Art Pearson, Canadian Wildlife Service, Edmonton, Alberta
 Mark Poudrier, Inter Universities Office, Le Pas, Manitoba
 Rev. Ray Price, Yellowknife, NWT
 Cliff Reid, President, United Steelworkers of America Local at Pine Point, NWT
 Rev. Dr. André Renaud, Chairman, Indian and Northern Education Program, University of
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 Donald S. Rickerd, President, Donner Canadian Foundation, Toronto, Ontario
 Paul Robinson, Director of Curriculum Division, Department of Education, Government of the
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 Ches Russel, Rankin Inlet, NWT
 Harvey Scott, Faculty of Physical Education, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta
 Agnes Semmler, President, Committee of Original Peoples Entitlement, Inuvik, NWT
 Sarah Simon, Fort McPherson, NWT
 Marshall Smith, Geologist, Whitehorse, Yukon
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 Ruth Spence, Y.W.C.A. Director, Yellowknife, NWT
 Prof. John Stager, Assistant Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of British Columbia,
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 Mike Stutter, Yukon Councillor, Dawson City, Yukon
 Dr. Aubrey Tanner, Whitehorse, Yukon
 Charlie Taylor, Taylor and Drury Ltd., Whitehorse, Yukon
 Mary Teddy, Inuvik, NWT
 Dr. Fred Terentiuk, Director, Division of Continuing Education, University of Calgary, Alberta
 John Tetlich, Fort McPherson, NWT
 Ron Thody, Vice-Principal, Samuel Hearne Secondary School, Inuvik, NWT
 Rosemary Thrasher, Community Teacher, Fort Providence, NWT
 Addy Tobac, Fort Good Hope, NWT, Student at University of Calgary
 Lyle Trimble, NWT Councillor, Aklavik, NWT
 Jack C. Underhill, Corporate Frontier Coordinator, Imperial Oil Ltd., Toronto, Ontario
 Peter Van Loon, Chairman, Settlement Council, Fort McPherson, NWT

Prof. Oernulv Vorren, Tromsø University, Tromsø, Norway

Dr. W. J. Waines, Associate Director, Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada,
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Prof. R. G. Williamson, Anthropologist, University of Saskatchewan, Arctic Research and
Training Centre, Rankin Inlet, NWT

Mike Zubko, Inuvik, NWT

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