



BUSINESS PLAN

FOR
NORTHERN COLLEGE
2022-2023

Approved by the Board of Governors
May 10, 2022

northerncollege.ca



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TERRITORY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We begin by acknowledging that we are on the traditional and territorial lands of the Cree, Oji-Cree, Ojibway, and Algonquin homelands. We acknowledge these ancestral lands that we are gathered on, which continue to interconnect us all and remind us that we are all treaty people. First Nation communities now located on these lands include: Temagami, Timiskaming, Matachewan, Mattagami, Wahgoshig, Taykwa Tagamou, Beaverhouse, Flying Post, Moose Cree, Fort Albany, Kashechewan, Attawapiskat Weenusk, and Metis Peoples Region #3.

INTRODUCTION

In a continued effort to place itself on the cutting edge of learning innovation, Northern College gives special focus to access to education and meeting learners where they live, including Indigenous learners who have previously experienced barriers to access living in remote communities.

Having weathered the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic, Northern College, alongside every other place of learning around the world, has faced considerable challenges but has overcome these with new learnings and goals for the future.

The lessons learned during this period of trial, error and shifting priorities have served to place our institution on a better footing to meet the growing demand for student-focused services, accessibility, and ease of access. All of this is to be delivered in and among northern landscapes.

Enshrined in Northern's Strategic Plan are three key areas of focus that are specifically designed to cater to this newest generation of aspirational, digital, distance learners from a variety of backgrounds, social understandings and perspectives.

Within its innovative approaches to educational access, Northern College seeks to incorporate programming and program delivery that is agile, flexible, innovative and modern, and in alignment with emerging societal change.

By embracing what brings people together from all walks of life, Northern continues to concentrate on creating open and supportive learning environments that allow students from anywhere in the world to meet, connect and cultivate lasting friendships as we move forward together. These friendships make the world a better place to be, both personally and professionally, and provide connections that deepen both learning and well-being.

In the following pages, we outline how we will stay relevant so we stand out to prospective learners, and position ourselves to better serve the shifting needs of the modern educational landscape.

What truly allows Northern to stand on its own is how we deliver on our commitment to learners with a deep-seated and profound attention to inclusion, understanding and kindness as we undertake the goals and actions outlined here.

COLLEGE VISION AND MISSION

The Strategic Directions of Northern College serve as the foundation for action items included in the year's Business Plan:

VISION

Empowerment through learning to build a better world.

MISSION

Building community across the North through partnerships and excellence in education.

MOTTO

Proud to be North.
Proud to be Northern.





GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Learning for empowerment
- Accessibility for learners
- Diversity and inclusion for a progressive organizational culture
- Career opportunities through innovative education and transferable skill development
- Relevant applied experiences
- Value for investment
- Support for lifelong learning
- Continuous improvement
- Intentional communications
- Transparency

INDIGENOUS STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

In aspiring to become the college of choice for Indigenous learners, we shall integrate the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Indigenous Education Protocols developed by Colleges and Institutes Canada; and we shall conduct ourselves with the spirit of Indigenous Peoples' Teachings.





INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENTS

At Northern College we will:

- Support, nurture and celebrate the contributions and accomplishments of learners and employees
- Connect our learners and communities through the application of accessible and innovative technology
- Foster and encourage a friendly, caring and respectful organizational culture
- Establish an organizational culture that reflects the diversity of our communities
- Work respectfully, in collaboration with Indigenous peoples and communities
- Pursue partnerships and entrepreneurial opportunities to better serve community
- Enhance the quality and access to college education through global initiatives
- Engage in applied research in the pursuit of northern development and continuous improvement
- Use our natural and built environments observing conservation and sustainable practices
- Practice ethical decision making that engenders trust while safeguarding the College
- Be open, consultative and accountable
- Act with personal responsibility and integrity
- Exceed expectations



STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

We will be courageous and steadfast in being truly student-centered by establishing:

INDIGENOUS EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT
INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO ACCESS
INVIGORATING NORTHERN EXPERIENCES



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND BUSINESS PLAN ACTIONS

STRATEGIC DIRECTION Indigenous Education and Empowerment

Northern College recognizes the disparity caused by a lengthy national history of inequality and injustice toward Indigenous peoples of Canada and will address the long-term impacts of this colonization upon the organization and its learners. To do so, the College will actively seek to identify and dismantle the existence of racism systematically and operationally as it arises, and will take steps to decolonize the organization at every turn.





Objective 1.1

Northern College will fully engage Indigenous communities.

Northern College continues to strive to be the college of choice for Indigenous learners. It recognizes that truly serving and holding space for Indigenous Communities requires a heightened sensibility and sense of awareness from its entire College team.

Northern College will therefore pilot flexible delivery training regarding Indigeneity awareness, Truth and Reconciliation Commission directives, and decolonization for all of its full-time employees. Furthermore, the College will complete an audit of each of its existing relationships with Indigenous Communities, and from this learning, hopes not only to nourish existing partnerships, but to also engage new potential Indigenous partners.

Objective 1.2

Northern College will include programs of study that recognize all aspects of the Indigenous learner, their environment, and their future success.

Building a Strong Fire is the title of a collaboration between Indigenous leaders

and knowledge holders, the Indigenous Quality Assurance Steering Committee, and six Ontario colleges, including Northern College. It contains the Indigenous Quality Assurance Standards for Ontario colleges. These standards address quality assurance at both the institutional and program levels, with the goal of helping colleges engage with Indigenous visions, priorities and needs in education.

In order to deepen its welcome of Indigenous learners, Northern College will ensure that the standards outlined in *Building a Strong Fire* are utilized to evaluate quality assurance in a large portion of its programming. The College will also standardize the design and integration of Indigenous context within course outline templates, from which it will remove any outdated language references.

The Building a Strong Fire framework will equally inspire staff performance objectives, as well as a college-wide, asynchronous Indigenous Culture and Awareness General Education Course for students, faculty and staff.

Objective 1.3

Northern College will respond proactively to change and the changing environment in a collective manner.

Northern College recognizes the importance of ensuring that learning spaces serve Indigenous learners and reflect Indigenous ideologies. In order to ensure that Indigenous visions of education are reflected in its physical learning environments, Northern College will implement an environmental standard for its instructional spaces. This standard will see to the tailoring of space and infrastructure to more closely align with Indigenous learning best practices.



STRATEGIC DIRECTION **Innovative Approaches to Access**

We acknowledge the barriers to learning that exist and the privilege of those decision-makers not experiencing such barriers as we reduce and eliminate these very real challenges by engaging in honest and open discussion about both policy and operations that either support or further inhibit learners. We will deliver best-in-class programs that entice students from diverse backgrounds and identities wanting to improve their lives.



Objective 2.1

Northern College will enhance the learner's success through focused initiatives.

Student success, which sees accountable learners prepared for the constantly evolving labour force, is central to College efforts. This year, in order to integrate improvement models into existing operations to support student success, the College aims to focus on better understanding the barriers which impede it. This will include auditing the Student Support Framework in order to identify factors impacting retention and completion rates, as well as auditing student losses, so that a strategy to reengage disengaged or withdrawn students can be developed.

Objective 2.2

Northern College will be creative and innovative in its programming (content/delivery/methodology) in response to the emerging changes in society.

Within its innovative approaches to educational access, Northern College seeks to incorporate programming and program delivery that is agile, flexible, innovative and modern, and in alignment with emerging societal change. As we strive to equip our graduates with an understanding of their responsibility as citizens of a global community, we look to the cultural mores of the modern Industrial world, where sustainability and corporate responsibility are of paramount importance.

It, therefore, seems fitting to incorporate Social Responsibility Metrics into the College's annual program review process as well as its new program development



framework. For many programs, this will mean an increase in flexible and innovative learning opportunities, with work-integrated learning that ultimately contributes to a better world.

In terms of program development, the College will further explore the availability of micro-credentials, accelerated programs, and other emerging educational formats. The bridging of the gap that can occur between micro-credentials and diplomas, certificates or degrees and the potential solution presented by new educational pathways will also be an area of focus.

Objective 2.3

Northern College will focus on an invigorated effort to enhance communication and enrich relationships to create a stronger, more effective team.

Northern College acknowledges that the learning environment, as it relates to student success, does not stop at the classroom door but encompasses an institution's workplace culture as well. In order to continue nourishing a healthful workplace culture, the College will identify a sustainable platform or system which will serve as a central internal hub for employee communication and relationship building.



STRATEGIC DIRECTION **Invigorating Northern Experiences**

With every one of our post-secondary locations overlooking waterfront, we will maximize the quality of life of our students and staff on Northern College's four campuses by leveraging our proximity to the natural elements by integrating and emphasizing invigorating learning experiences and overall well-being in the communities we serve.

Our learning environments will be kind, welcoming, and reflect excellence as we deliver exceptional and uniquely northern experiences that allow students and staff to become their best selves and embrace a future forever impacted positively by experiencing life in the North, even after graduating, wherever they may travel.



Objective 3.1

Northern College will leverage its proximity to the natural elements by integrating invigorating learning experiences and overall well-being for students and employees.

Each of Northern College's campuses borders on natural landscapes, thus presenting ample opportunities by which to integrate student learning with experiences in the natural world. This year, Northern College will be increasing the number of student activities and experiences at each of its campuses, allowing for greater access to the natural environment. This "non-program programming" will offer opportunities to expand the College's outdoor activities, and in the process, foster new community partner collaborations. This initiative also has the potential to inspire other initiatives centered on similar themes

Objective 3.2

Northern College will be creative and innovative in programming (content/delivery/methodology) and prepare students to respond to the present and emerging changes in Northern Ontario, and the global environment and offer solutions.

Student activities and learning projects at each campus will also be increased, specifically to promote environmentally sustainable practices. The College seeks to expand such programming in its coastal communities, as well as to incorporate Indigenous culture and land-based teaching and learning, and language within these activities.

Objective 3.3

Northern College will prepare students to enjoy a northern experience enriched through programs and services intended to enhance the lifestyle of those who live in the north.

In order to further engage students in their northern experiences, Northern College will implement a "Northern Experiences" General Education Elective. Blending land-based teaching by Indigenous elders, traditional ecological knowledge and scientific knowledge, this elective will recognize extracurricular learning as well as supplemental reflection and assessment. It will expand student exposure to community and regional natural beauty as well as encourage students to encounter new recreational assets and cultural organizations.

The creation of such new shared experiences amongst communities and students, both domestic and international, will not only provide opportunities to recognize the natural benefits of a northern experience, but will also enhance internationalization at each of the College's campuses.





CONCLUSION

At Northern College, we believe we offer a unique and heady mix of industry-leading education and one-of-a-kind experiences that appeal to students both close to home and a world away.

We are committed to education: to teaching lessons worth learning and to learning from those lessons as an institution. We seek to cement the kinds of practices that provide the most accessible education available to students of any age, background, location or social standing.

Equity isn't just a word, or an idea.

Equity is the cornerstone of education.

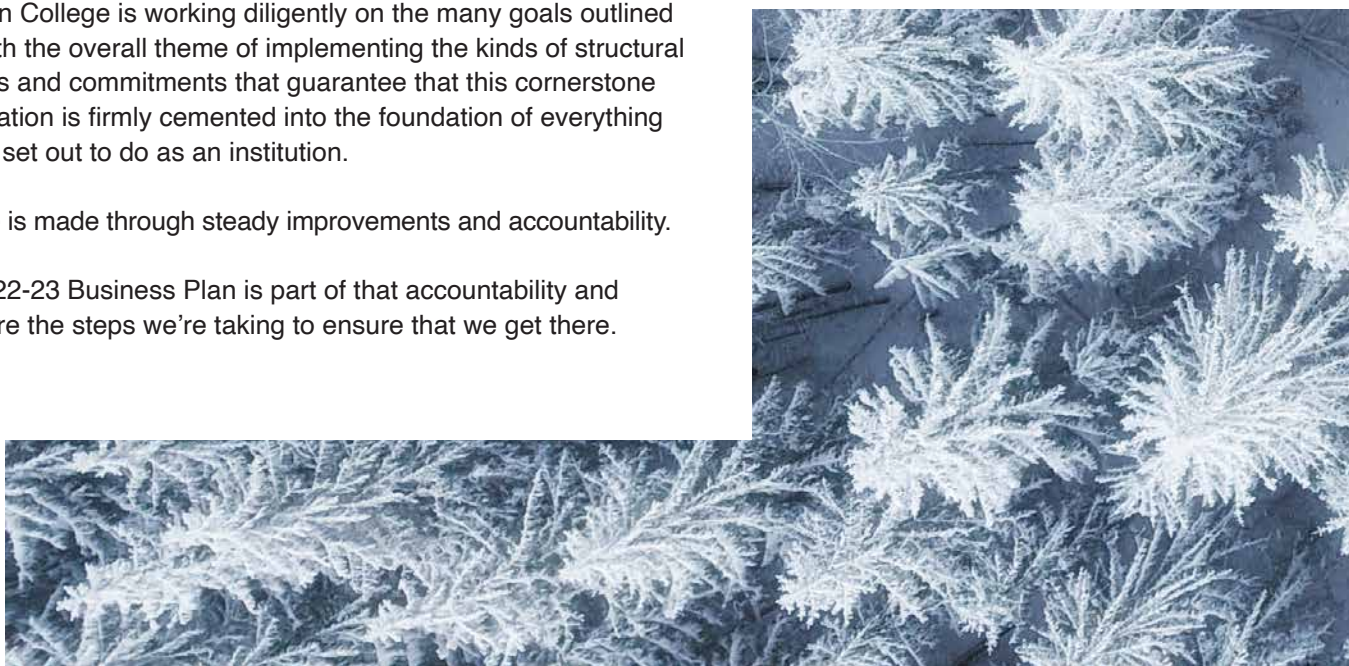
It is the belief that anyone, if given the right opportunity, access and attitude, can achieve anything they set their mind to.

Education provides the power to make dreams tangible. It is our role as an educational institution to ensure that we give students the tools to seize that power.

Northern College is working diligently on the many goals outlined here with the overall theme of implementing the kinds of structural changes and commitments that guarantee that this cornerstone of education is firmly cemented into the foundation of everything that we set out to do as an institution.

Change is made through steady improvements and accountability.





The 2022-23 Business Plan is part of that accountability and these are the steps we're taking to ensure that we get there.





**PROUD TO BE
NORTH.
PROUD TO BE
NORTHERN.**

PROUD TO BE PROUD.
PROUD TO BE PROUDHERN.

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We wish to thank Anna Sawicki, Northern College employee and outdoor enthusiast, for many landscape photos of the region included in this document.