

SCENARIOS FOR NORTHERN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

N Northern
COLLEGE

2023/24



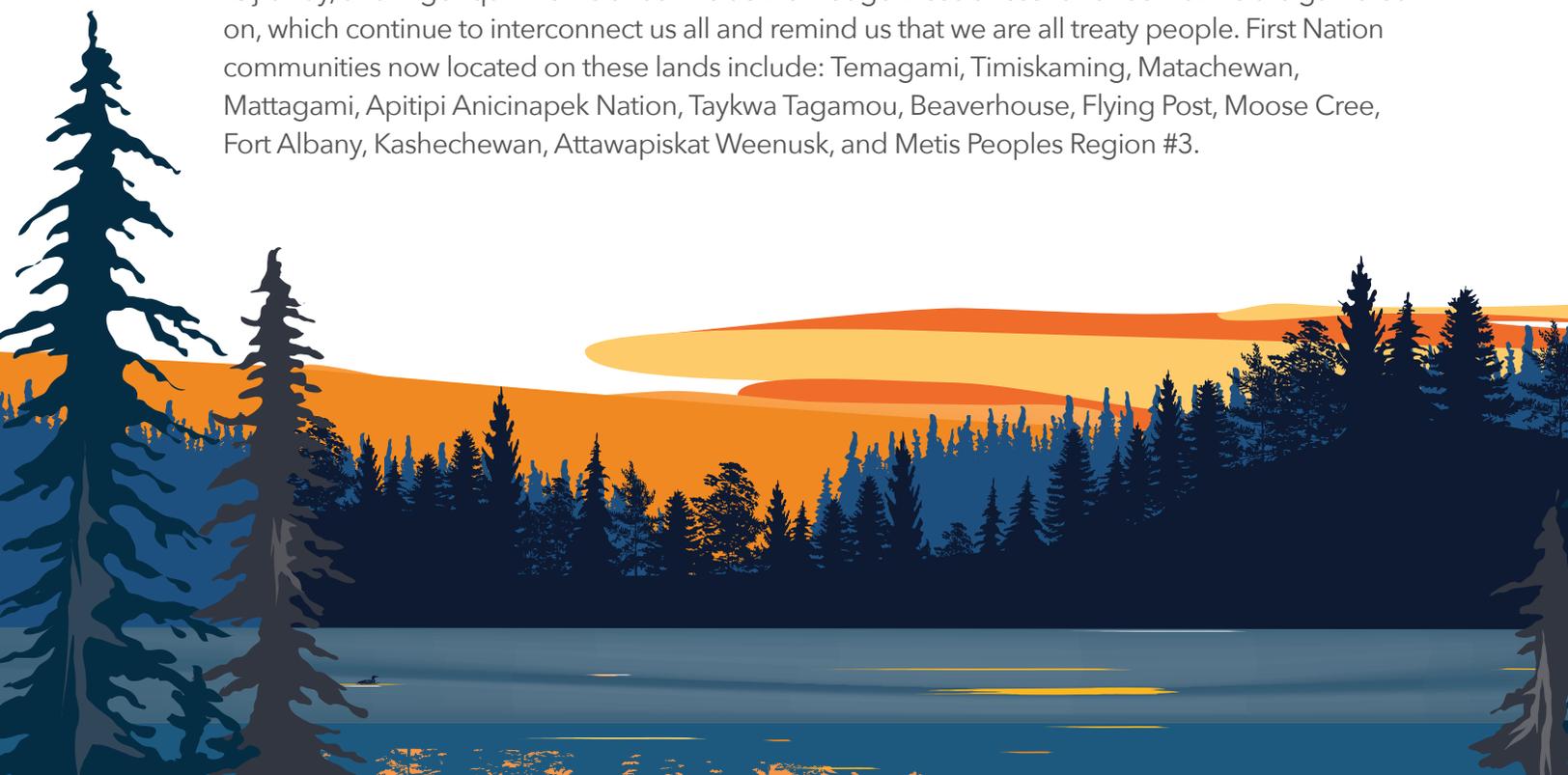
Approved by the Board of Governors
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	4
College Vision & Mission	5
Indigenous Statement of Commitment	5
Institutional Commitments	6
Strategic Directions	7
Strategic Objectives & Business Plan Actions	8
Indigenous Education & Empowerment	9
Innovative Approaches to Access	10
Invigorating Northern Experiences	12
Conclusion	14

TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge 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, Apitipi Anicinapek Nation, Taykwa Tagamou, Beaverhouse, Flying Post, Moose Cree, Fort Albany, Kashechewan, Attawapiskat Weenusk, and Metis Peoples Region #3.



INTRODUCTION

Education is fundamentally about growth, improvement and innovation. These are the cornerstones of learning as an abstract, as a practice and as an institution. Drawing on this understanding, Northern College is embarking on a journey of continuous improvement, once again placing itself on the cutting edge of learning innovation.

With the height of the COVID-19 pandemic behind us along with the associated restrictions and many of the challenges it presented, Northern College is moving forward with renewed focus on accessible education - meeting learners where they live to help them grow and succeed.

As an institution in a sparsely populated corner of Northern Ontario, the lessons learned during the pandemic have been actioned into increased services and supports for learners seeking an education in more remote areas of our region, especially the communities along the James Bay Coast.

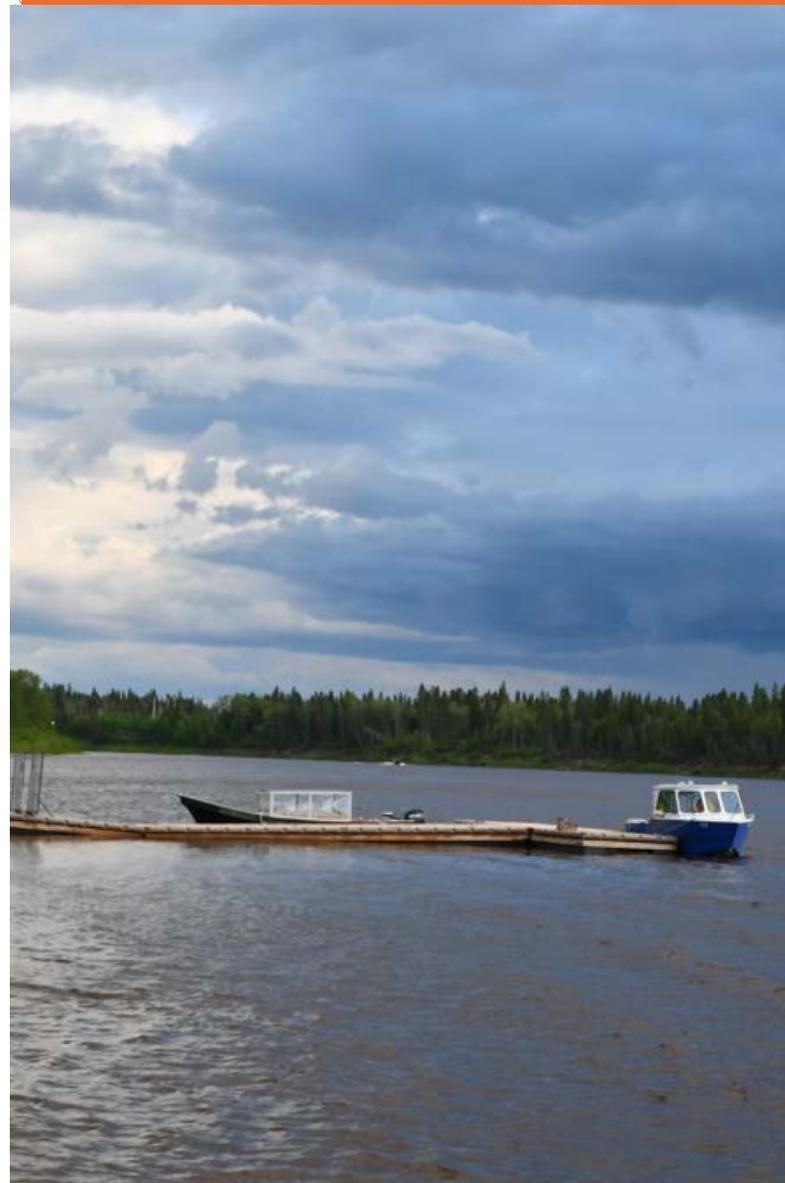
Enshrined in Northern's Strategic Plan are three key areas of focus that are specifically designed to cater to this newest generation of aspirational, digital, distance learners from a variety of backgrounds, social understandings and perspectives. Within its innovative approaches to educational access, Northern College seeks to incorporate programming and program delivery that is agile, flexible, innovative and modern, and in alignment with emerging societal change to meet the needs of a growing number of learners and employers.

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 change.

These friendships make the world a better place to be, both personally and professionally, and provide connections that deepen 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 and industrial landscape.

What truly allows Northern to stand out 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 & MISSION

The Strategic Directions of Northern College are foundational to the action items included in this year's Business Plan.

Mission

Empowerment through learning to build a better world.

Vision

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

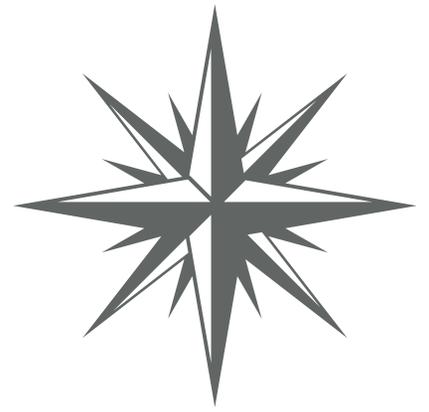
At Northern College we will:

- 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-centred by establishing:**



**INDIGENOUS EDUCATION
AND EMPOWERMENT**

**INNOVATIVE
APPROACHES TO ACCESS**

**INVIGORATING
NORTHERN EXPERIENCES**

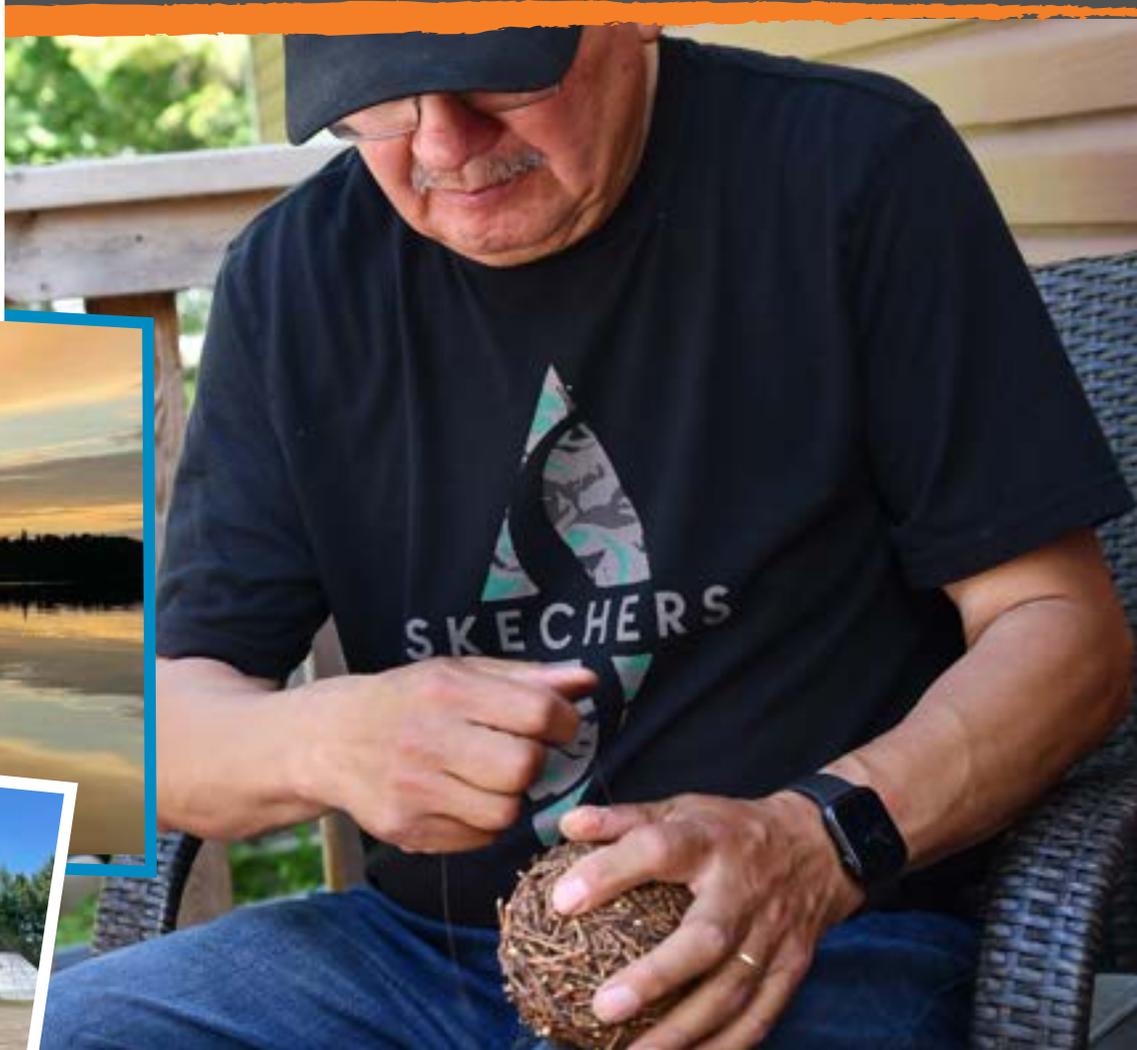


Strategic Objectives & Business Plan Actions

Very much rooted in the culture and history of Ontario's northeast, Northern College recognizes the disparity and the trauma caused by a lengthy national history of inequality and injustice toward Indigenous peoples of Canada and is addressing the long-term impacts of this colonization upon the organization and its learners.

To do so, Northern is continuing to actively seek to identify and dismantle the existence of racism systematically and operationally as it arises and take steps to decolonize the organization at every opportunity.

Working closely with students, faculty and partners, the College ensures conversations are cultivating the need for change, practices - from hiring and recruitment to retention and honouring lived experience - is inclusive and acknowledges the context of our country's colonial history so that justice is acted upon in policy and procedure, creating real opportunities for change.



Strategic Direction One: Indigenous Education and Empowerment

Objective 1.1

As a colonial institution, we are mindful of our responsibility to live up to our commitments under the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRCC) and to the Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICAN) Indigenous Education Protocols.

To that end, we aim to develop and disseminate formal communication protocols that will guide us as we work together with Indigenous communities, groups and rights holders in the most respectful way possible based on the needs of those in community.

Objective 1.2

With Indigenous Learning Outcomes (ILOs) introduced at the course level in 2022 for baseline mapping, further education is required to ensure that all faculty, and especially those who write course outlines, understand the ILOs and are better able to assess and plan for these outcomes to be incorporated across the College's programming and offerings.

Objective 1.3

Graduate satisfaction has always been measured at Northern College and is critical to the institution's commitment to and guiding principle of continuous improvement. It will be key to measure such satisfaction through an Indigenous lens in addition to other quantifiable and intuitive ways. This will provide an opportunity to factor in, using the perspectives of lived experience, the insights of Indigenous students at Northern.

Objective 1.4

Culture is preserved and transmitted through language and art. Stories can be conveyed through art in ways that reach us even more deeply than words alone. This initiative will provide a venue for Indigenous artists to be invited and welcomed to Northern to share their culture and stories in both temporary and more permanent ways. This initiative will provide the College with the ability to honour the many talented Indigenous artists in our region, while generating a greater understanding of Indigenous cultures by placing them at the heart of the conversations and actions they ignite.



Strategic Direction Two: Innovative Approaches to Access

At Northern, we acknowledge the barriers to learning that impact students every day.

We acknowledge that these barriers are unique to each individual and are to be approached as such.

Northern is committed to reducing barriers to learning and accessing education 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 with lower barriers so that students from diverse backgrounds and identities wanting to improve their lives can do so with support and encouragement, strengthening the workplace with equitable, diverse, and inclusive leading practices.

Objective 2.1

Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) gives Northern the ability to manage enrollments and enrollment data across the institution, as well as growing the institution through increased student success and positive student outcomes. A digital SEM tool that is both intuitive and responsive will allow the organization to consider the behaviours of applicants, make strategic decisions regarding program offerings, and help guide us in knowing when and where student support resources are most needed to retain our learners and help them succeed.



Objective 2.2

Feedback Fruits is a suite of fully integrated digital teaching tools that helps reinforce concepts taught to learners, foster student engagement in their learning, and allow faculty to focus their attention on teaching and providing feedback that will be more impactful and timelier for students and their success. Use of this engagement tool is a pilot program that, if successful, will be expanded upon in future years for greater reach and impact.

Objective 2.3

Simulation has been an excellent tool to encourage and reinforce learning when used in the teaching and reinforcement of skills at Northern. With continued and significant advances in hardware and software, simulation has markedly expanded its utility, finding a place in almost every program at the College. This business plan objective will allow Northern to set targets across the organization for the incorporation of simulation technologies and techniques for programs while providing world class experiences that translate into applied work experience offered in the classroom, lab and shop area, including online applications.



Invigorating Northern Experiences

Every one of Northern College's post-secondary locations is rooted in the life-enhancing natural beauty of northeastern Ontario, featuring waterfront views and clean and clear northern air. As a result, the College will maximize the quality of life of students and staff living working here by leveraging the proximity to the natural elements while emphasizing invigorating learning experiences and overall well-being in the communities and spaces it serves.

Our learning environment are kind, welcoming, and reflect excellence as we deliver exceptional and uniquely northern experiences that allow learners to become their best selves and embrace a future positively impacted by having experienced life in the North, even after graduating, wherever they may travel.

Objective 3.1

Our connection to our natural environment is important for both body and mind. There is a tremendous wealth of knowledge that can be gained by venturing out, in whichever season, to experience all that our surroundings can teach us.

We believe that the experience of being a student at Northern would be best served by including the experience of being outdoors and learning from the land. To this end, we will develop micro credentials that entice and reward students for taking advantage of all that a Northern College education has to offer, both in the classroom and in the nature that surrounds us.



Objective 3.2

The coastal communities in the northern reaches of Ontario share not only the same labour force and training needs that we see in larger centres, but also have unique needs specific to the micro-economies in remote areas. Northern is well positioned to engage with these communities in the support and development of programming that addresses the specific needs of those in the North.

Objective 3.3

International students continue to be an important part of the overall growth and future of Northern College. The journey of an international student can look very different from those who have grown up closer to home in their local communities.

It is our duty to support international students in their successful transition to life and learning in our Northern College region. To do this effectively, we will work to better understand our capacity to support students arriving to study with us, identifying any gaps that may exist to impede their success, and develop intuitive and responsive processes to improve their unique student and work experience while adapting to life in the Canadian North.

Objective 3.4

Academic delivery across multiple campuses has always been a challenging and rewarding endeavour, one that Northern has taken pride in doing well for decades.

We are there for students, and it shows.

With the enhancement of digital tools and remote delivery platforms, student-centred supports and learning opportunities have become increasingly complex. The College is at a stage in its growth where it can look at all functions, including Academic, Registrarial, International, local campus, and Student Services through a holistic service delivery lens.

Identifying vital connections for the cohesive functioning and collaboration of all of these departments and areas of service and learning ensures that staffing is deployed optimally for the future growth of students, and the sustainability and responsiveness of the organization.



Conclusion

We embrace each academic year as a new opportunity for growth, refinement and improvement on where we have been, and where we wish to go. This is why we take on new challenges that include both a unique and heady mix of industry-leading education. We enhance what happens in the classroom and on-line with one-of-a-kind experiences in a learning and living environment that instills a unique sense of belonging and connection for all of those involved.

Here at Northern, we know this combination appeals to a growing number of learners who include those wishing to study close to home as well as those willing to travel here and around the world to gain a first-class education.

As we look to constantly infuse the kinds of practices that provide the most accessible education available to students of any age, background, location or social standing, we know that we are doing the right thing by including everyone who wants to better themselves and their lives through learning.

Equity isn't just a word or an idea to us. It is a cornerstone of the education we deliver.

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

And we intend to make that into a reality for them.





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