



BUSINESS PLAN

2025- 2026

Approved by the Board of Governors
May 13, 2025



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	4
College Mission and Vision	5
College Values	6
Strategic Goals	7
Strategic Goal A: Strengthen ties with the Indigenous community	8
Strategic Goal B: Be the destination of choice for students and employees	11
Strategic Goal C: Modernize operations and infrastructure	15
Strategic Goal D: Expand Industry Partnerships	17
Strategic Goal E: Strengthen Community and Sense of Belonging	20
Conclusion	22

TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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 Métis Peoples Region #3.

INTRODUCTION

In the year to come, Northern College will continue to exercise agility, creativity and fiscal responsibility in its operations, prioritizing the student experience and responding to partner needs to flourish in an increasingly competitive post-secondary education market.

These priorities were framed by valued partners within our organization as well as business, industry, and community partners served by Northern throughout our history. An enshrined approach to continuous improvement and ongoing consultation has been foundational to Northern's long-term success. The 2025-2026 Business Plan reflects our institution's continued commitment to service and success through viable and sustainable operations.

Guided by five strategic goals founded on our purpose and values, Northern College seeks to strengthen its relationships with Indigenous communities, aspires to become the destination of choice for students and employees, aims to modernize its operations and infrastructure, strives to expand industry partnerships and desires to bolster student and partner engagement in cultivating a strong sense of community and belonging.

COLLEGE MISSION AND VISION

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.



COLLEGE VALUES

Inclusive

We apply inclusive practices for learning, inside and outside the classroom.

We are committed to the growth and development of students and employees.

We honour people and recognize them as our greatest asset.

Innovative

We adapt and develop creative educational programs in response to an evolving environment.

We embrace change: technological, educational and social.

We welcome diverse perspectives and ideas that propel the College forward.



Present

We prioritize presence in, and active engagement with, the communities we serve.

We purposefully collaborate within our organization and with partners.

Impactful

We offer authentic experiences linked to opportunities that result in meaningful impact.

We measure the outcomes of our actions and are accountable for what we do.

STRATEGIC GOALS

Northern College provides educational programs and services at its campuses in Haileybury, Kirkland Lake, Moosonee, and Timmins, as well as through various modalities and partnerships. We are committed to delivering an exceptional educational experience through all our offerings; these include post-secondary programs, continuing education opportunities, training, college preparation, apprenticeships, and micro-credentials. We remain steadfast in our pursuit of excellence while recognizing that the needs of our students, communities and partners continue to evolve as do the post-secondary sector and Ontario's North. With this in mind, we have re-focused our strategic direction to reflect our changing context.

Our five strategic goals express a purpose, to empower students and communities by providing leading edge education, training and work-integrated learning opportunities, rooted in the Northern experience. Foundational to Northern College's Business Plan objectives, these strategic goals emphasize the strengthening of our ties with Indigenous communities in the region, the expansion and enhancement of our partnerships to support experiential learning and community growth, the modernization of our operations and infrastructure, the selection of Northern College as the preferred choice for students and employees, and the cultivation of connectedness within our College community. While these endeavours will be carried out over multiple years, the Business Plan initiatives detailed in the following pages represent our goals for 2025-2026.



Strategic Goal A:

STRENGTHEN TIES WITH THE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY

Northern College's campuses are located on the traditional and territorial lands of the Cree, Oji-Cree, Ojibway and Algonquin homelands. Our proximity to the Indigenous communities now located on these lands provides us with opportunities to build strong partnerships and offer programs, services and supports which are responsive to community needs. Aspiring to be the

college of choice for Indigenous peoples, Northern College is committed to being a receptive and engaged partner. We aim to maintain and build relationships with the Indigenous communities in the region, increase Indigenous student enrolment based on self-identification, and improve the retention and graduation rates of Indigenous students.

**OBJECTIVE 1:
INCREASE INDIGENOUS ENROLMENT
(BASED ON SELF-IDENTIFICATION),
INCLUSIVE OF ON-CAMPUS AND IN-
COMMUNITY PROGRAMS.**

A-1.1 Develop and release information to educate students on the meaning and benefits of self-identification.

When a student chooses to self-identify as Indigenous, access to culturally informed student supports can be more readily facilitated by the College. Indigenous students may not always be aware of the meaning of self-identification and of how it can benefit and enrich their educational journey. For this reason, Indigenous leaders at Northern College will work to provide students with information and education on self-identification.

**OBJECTIVE 2:
INCREASE THE RETENTION RATE AND
THE GRADUATION RATE OF INDIGENOUS
STUDENTS.**

A-2.1 and A-2.2 Increase and enhance support services for prospective, current and graduating Indigenous students.

Understanding the key supports Northern College offers to Indigenous students is critical to ensuring consistency and equity in access to services. With this in mind, we will complete a college-wide audit recognizing current strengths and weaknesses in the provision of Indigenous student support services as well as identifying best practices from the post-secondary education sector for future improvement. Student success, as it is fostered through strong, consistent Indigenous student supports, will be reflected in improved Indigenous student retention and graduation rates.

To enhance its financial support services, Northern College will comprehend and analyze



current funding requirements for Indigenous students. The information gathered through this analysis is essential for the provision of effective financial assistance support services to Indigenous students and ensures that our Financial Aid Officers have the proper information to support Indigenous learners. Recommendations for improvement at an institutional level will be made with the aim of supporting our organization’s recruitment and retention efforts.

**OBJECTIVE 3:
MAINTAIN AND CONTINUE TO BUILD PARTNERSHIPS AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES IN THE REGION.**

A-1.2, A-3.1 and A-3.2 Visit First Nation communities to strengthen relationships, understand community needs, generate awareness of academic/training programs and gather student enrolment information.

Northern College will commit to being present, as per our organizational values, visiting First Nation communities throughout the year to strengthen relationships and improve recruitment, financial aid, academic and personal support services for Indigenous learners. We will look to communicate our support of Indigenous communities not only through the education and training we offer, but also by attending and supporting community events. Northern College will complete an environmental scan of all First Nation communities within its catchment area to gather information on community member enrolment in post-secondary education, preferred recruitment practices, and reoccurring barriers. An Indigenous community engagement plan developed in alignment with the Northern College Indigenous Council on Education and Northern College’s Indigenous Engagement Protocols and Procedures will facilitate college staff visits to First Nation community events.





Strategic Goal B:

BE THE DESTINATION OF CHOICE FOR STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES

Northern College plays a key role in the attraction and retention of youth and talent in Northern Ontario. Striving to be the college of choice for students pursuing careers in key industries within our region and endeavouring to be the workplace of choice for employees, we aim to increase

our student enrolment and pursue the advancement of a healthy workplace culture. Our organization will further develop its recruitment and retention efforts, supported by our Strategic Enrolment Management and Marketing Plan.

**OBJECTIVE 1:
INCREASE STUDENT ENROLMENT.**

B-1.1 Identify and analyze factors that support domestic student recruitment in alignment with Northern College’s Strategic Enrolment Management and Marketing (SEMM) Plan.

Many factors impact a direct and non-direct domestic learner’s decision to study at a particular post-secondary education institution. By conducting primary and qualitative research through the analysis of the Ontario College Admission Services (OCAS) data, social media, comparative program analysis, surveys, and focus groups, the College will identify priorities for student recruitment. These recommendations will support the implementation of our Strategic Enrolment Management and Marketing (SEMM) Plan.

B-1.3 and B-1.5 Develop recruitment activities and programs to increase domestic student enrolment with the support of school boards, community partners and industry.

Increasing the enrolment of diverse direct entry students is crucial for fostering an inclusive educational environment. Northern College aims to enhance the diversity of our dual credit programming, ensuring that students from various backgrounds have access to advanced educational opportunities. Promoting articulation agreements and pathways in collaboration with public education and community organizations will create seamless transitions for students and will facilitate their academic and career progression. It will also increase opportunities for students to further their education. We will engage younger students early, offering summer programming which connects them to target programs, inspiring them to pursue higher education.



To support its recruitment strategies, Northern College will develop a condensed and detailed version of an organizational narrative for use by all college staff. The creation of this narrative is foundational in equipping all staff to succinctly communicate and promote the College's values, purpose, and strengths, to support student recruitment.

B-1.6 Develop and launch recruitment campaigns for continuing education/training programs targeting graduates.

The online learning market is saturated with professional development and continuing education opportunities. It is therefore crucial that we determine what our local and regional communities require in terms of continuing education to ensure that our offerings meet their needs. Northern College will engage with its Program Advisory Committees and alumni as well as with industry leaders, local community service organizations, and First Nations communities to assess the needs for upskilling in the workforce and identify opportunities for collaboration. We will conduct an external review of market needs, identifying the gaps in our current offerings and the programs which are of potential interest to repeat students. An internal review will pinpoint opportunities for the repurposing of existing courses into professional development programs, certificates, and micro-credentials.

B-1.7 Develop and launch recruitment



programs for international students.

Partner agents are close to prospective students and their families and often have significant influence over their institution selection. To strengthen collaboration with partner agents, Northern College will conduct virtual agent training sessions, helping agents to understand the College's admission cycle, requirements, and communities. These sessions will establish an ongoing communication mechanism between agents and Northern's team and will also introduce agent incentives and student scholarships.

Digital branding and social media marketing play an increasingly vital role in international student recruitment. Creating a new name and brand for 'Northern International' will support the launch of digital campaigns on the international market, allowing Northern College to reach a wider audience, engage directly with prospective students, and build a strong, recognizable brand and digital presence in target markets.

Many prospective international students are unfamiliar with our institution and community. Word of mouth plays a critical role in student recruitment in source countries. For these reasons, Northern College will develop an International Student Ambassador Program, in which current international students share their experiences with prospective students from their region.





Strategic Goal C:

MODERNIZE OPERATIONS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

At the center of several evolving landscapes, Northern College embraces change. The modernization of our operations and infrastructure contributes to a culture of continuous improvement and adaptability. Enhancements leading to operational

efficiencies and innovative solutions reflective of industry trends contribute to improving the student experience. Within this scope, Northern College's initial focus will be the modernization of our corporate and operational policies and procedures.

OBJECTIVE 1: MODERNIZE CORPORATE AND OPERATIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.

C-1.1, C-1.2 and C-1.3 Ensure the regular ongoing review and updating of policies and procedures.

A consistent, efficient, transparent and accessible system for organizational policy and procedure management and maintenance is required to support the College’s core business and reduce risk. By establishing a repository and collaborative mechanism to manage and maintain organizational policies and procedures, Northern College aims to develop and review the framework supporting policy and procedure ownership, naming convention, retention protocol, templates, record-keeping, and reporting.

The review of our current policies and procedures was a recommendation received through Northern College’s recent College Quality Assurance Audit Process (CQAAP), and the Standards of Practice for International Education Quality Assurance Audit (SPIEQAA). The identification of policies and procedures requiring development or updates is an essential practice to maintain compliance, mitigate risk, and ensure quality in the conduct of all College business. Northern College will complete a review of its current policies and procedures to identify required updates. We will also conduct a gap analysis to inform the development of new policies and procedures. A plan to complete the recommended policy and procedure updates as well as to develop any new governance documents will be created.





Strategic Goal D:

EXPAND INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS

Northern College's partnerships with industry are integral to our organization's impactful contributions to the economic growth and sustainability of Northern Ontario. By aligning our offerings with industry needs, we cultivate mutually beneficial partnerships which serve our

learners and communities alike. We will maintain and grow these partnerships through purposeful applied research projects, connecting industry to academic program areas, and increasing programming in target industries.

OBJECTIVE 1: CREATE AND LAUNCH APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECTS ALIGNED TO ACADEMIC PROGRAM AREAS.

D-1.1 and D-1.2 Evaluate applied research projects and align these to appropriate funding sources.

A structured research selection framework is critical to ensuring that Northern College strategically allocates resources to projects with the highest impact on academic programs, industry needs, and economic growth. Establishing a standardized framework for evaluating and prioritizing applied research projects based on faculty expertise, industry demand, and institutional strategy will create a transparent and data-driven approach to project selection. Streamlining our approach will ensure that research efforts align with institutional strengths and external funding opportunities, enhancing Northern College’s ability to expand applied research, support faculty, and create sustainable industry partnerships.

External funding is required for Northern College to expand its applied research capacity and sustain meaningful industry collaborations. The development and implementation of a structured funding strategy and pipeline to support applied research initiatives will lead to enhanced faculty research opportunities, the creation of student engagement pathways, and opportunities for innovative research-driven solutions. Identifying and creating a repository of external grants, institutional and industry partnerships, and government funding sources will reduce our organization’s reliance on internal budgets for research expansion while maximizing funding success. Ensuring sustainable funding strengthens Northern College’s commitment to academic excellence, industry engagement, and regional economic development.



OBJECTIVE 2: INCREASE TARGET INDUSTRY PARTNER PROGRAMMING.

D-2.1 Identify and launch training offerings with a focus on health and safety.

Renewable training opportunities in the health and safety sector have the potential to build the capacity of Northern College's academic departments, better equip their future graduates for the workforce, and support partnership development through increased opportunities for re-certification. Northern College will expand its offerings by identifying additional industry renewable training opportunities. We will procure service contracts with established delivery programs for legislated and approved training, allowing our organization to provide renewable legislated training for in-demand courses within the health and safety sector. Additionally, Northern College will develop an in-house health and safety training program for submission to the authoritative bodies.





Strategic Goal E:

STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY AND SENSE OF BELONGING

A society that is increasingly fragmented, distracted, and lonely can present substantial barriers to student success, alumni engagement and workplace wellbeing. At Northern College, we recognize that people are at the heart of all we do. It is therefore imperative that we nurture a culture of

meaningful connectivity in which students, alumni, partners, and employees are inspired to collaborate and thrive. Northern College will focus on improving the engagement and sense of belonging amongst students and partners and expand our active alumni base.

OBJECTIVE 1: IMPROVE ENGAGEMENT AND SENSE OF BELONGING AMONGST STUDENTS AND PARTNERS.

E-1.1 and E1.2 Evaluate the current level of student and partner engagement.

We will unify our efforts across all campuses as well as in the communities that we serve to create meaningful connections for students and partners. An environmental scan will be completed to evaluate the level of student and partner engagement with Northern College. A plan to implement the resulting recommendations for improvement will be developed. Northern College’s commitment to this goal will help ensure that students and partners feel respected, supported, and safe.

OBJECTIVE 3: EXPAND THE ACTIVE ALUMNI BASE.

E-3.1 Assess the state, and potential for growth, of the alumni base and associated financial contributions.

A growing and active alumni base would enhance the feeling of connectedness amongst all partners in the Northern College community, providing opportunities for mentorship, internships, and placements. Donations from alumni can provide important funding for scholarships, research programs, and capital projects, helping to enhance the overall quality of our educational services and facilities. Northern College will complete an audit of its alumni base, identifying gaps and recommending areas for improvement. From this analysis, we will develop a plan to grow alumni membership and increase alumni donations.



CONCLUSION

Each year presents Northern College with the opportunity to analyze and reflect on the current state of the higher education sector and to adopt changes which are critical to the fulfillment of its operational mandates. Rooted in an informed understanding of the needs of its students, staff, and partners, this commitment to continuous improvement allows for the thoughtful growth and development of our institution.

While Northern College's five strategic goals frame the Business Plan and provide direction for the coming years, this document represents only a portion of the work being done to modernize and prepare our organization for the future. Building and strengthening collaborative relationships through open communication will continue to be critical in addressing student needs, a fluid job market, and a dynamic post-secondary education sector.

Ultimately, Northern College will continue to be led by its greatest assets, its students, staff and partners, as it moves toward a brilliant future.







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