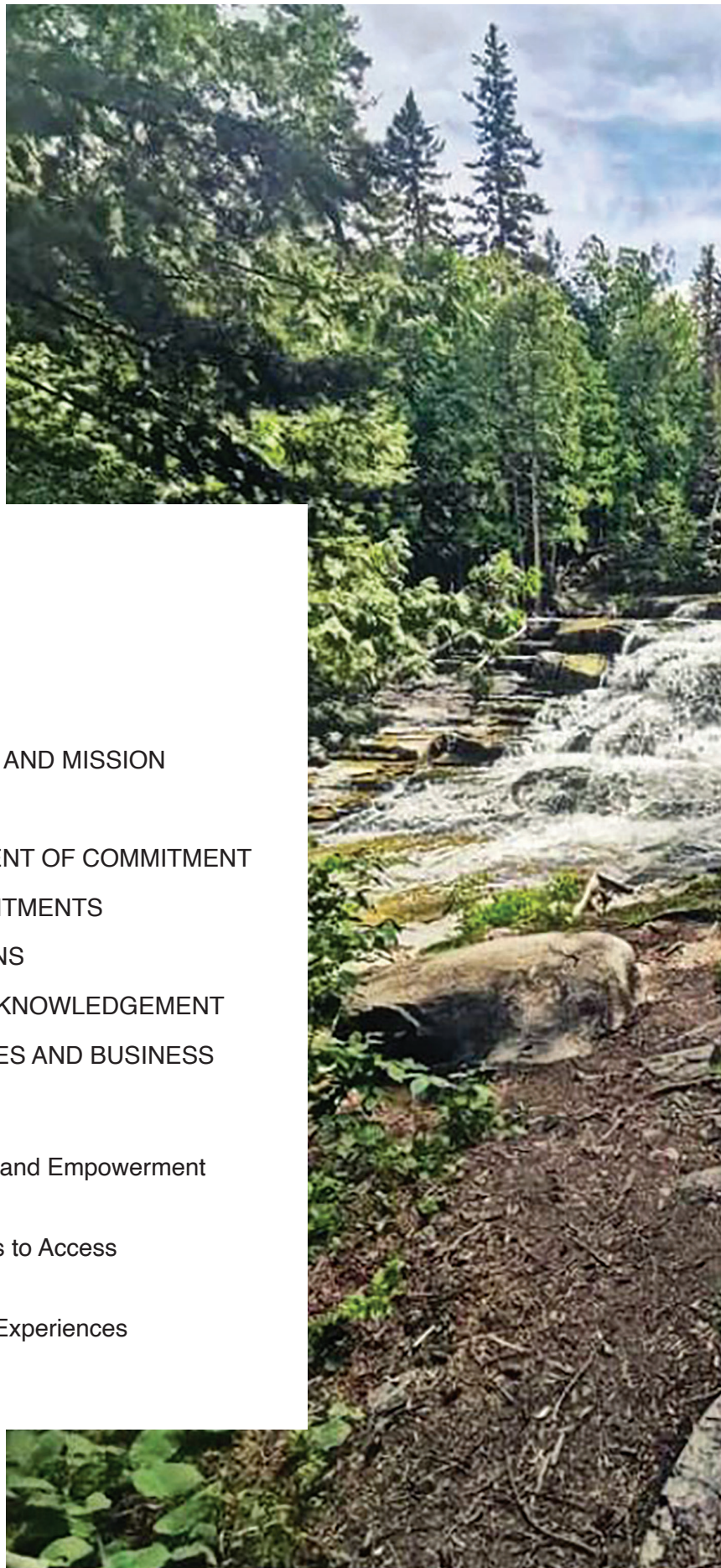




BUSINESS PLAN

FOR
NORTHERN COLLEGE
2021-2022



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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.



INTRODUCTION

The Business Plan for Northern College's 2021-22 Academic year is developed with many changes, including a new President for the full academic year, a new Strategic Plan successfully launched, and ongoing innovative and adaptive learning with the unpredictable global pandemic.

Having achieved success in many aspects of its operations over the past year despite the arrival of Covid-19, Northern College's business planning cycle coincides with increased uncertainty and change in the post-secondary sector, which may result in necessary adjustments in-year to adapt and stay ahead of trends as well as capitalize on opportunities.

Allocation of resources to initiatives with the greatest return on investment, helping to build community, and inviting marginalized groups to the table to be heard, are increasingly important. Truth and Reconciliation as it relates to Indigenous rights holders along with skills development and micro credentials are priorities. Key to all of these are equity, diversity, inclusion, and access. Continuing to pay close attention to changes in our environment will serve us well, as we keep our nimble and responsive approaches well focused.

As we look ahead, we do so with the excitement challenges bring – one that harnesses the great efforts and dedication of our people, the maximizing of resources, and the creating of increased efficiencies. We know working this plan will infuse the organization with the tireless energy and passion needed to respond quickly to new circumstances in a continually shifting landscape.

The alignment of synergies for this small and mighty organization will result in maximized growth and potential resulting in optimal performance, all of which serves the region and province well.

We embrace this moment at a unique time in our history with renewed spirit and the can-do attitude that has served us well in the past. Those same values and commitments set to grow our region and our institution in a time of mutually beneficial collaboration and innovation, builds pride from within as we create and implement rewarding northern learning experiences.

Our commitment to learners is unchanged and unwavering and that commitment before us helps us to support learners still to arrive, both now and well into the future.

COLLEGE VISION AND MISSION

In October and November of 2020, the Board of Governors began an exercise to determine revisions to the College's Vision, Mission, Motto, Guiding Principles, and Commitments, in alignment with the timing and renewal of the organization's Strategic Planning process. These statements were shared with the Northern College Indigenous Council on Education (NCICE), who then reviewed, revised, and added to them through an Indigenous lens.

The perspective of the new Strategic Directions served as the foundation of the refreshed institutional statements and are incorporated into the organization'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**

INDIGENOUS LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge the lands of the Ojibway, Cree, Algonquin and Metis Peoples that our campuses occupy. The First Nation communities now located on these lands include Beaverhouse, Flying Post, Wahgoshig, Taykwa Tagamou, Mattagami, Matachewan, Temagami, Timiskaming, Moose Cree, Fort Albany, Kashechewan, Attawapiskat and Weenusk.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND BUSINESS PLAN ACTIONS

STRATEGIC DIRECTION Indigenous Education and Empowerment

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

Objective 1.1

Northern College will fully engage Indigenous communities.

Access Centres have been instrumental in expanded training and educational opportunities as well as in-community learning for Indigenous learners. Because of this, Northern College will increase regional (and potentially beyond) Access Centre points that provide essential infrastructure and facilities to enhance and support access to training and education.

To achieve this, organizational teams will identify additional Access Centre locations to support increased access to education, further engaging Indigenous learners and communities. Once new Access Centre locations are identified and prioritized, enrolment can be enhanced by developing locations that include the infrastructure needed for community-based learning.



Objective 1.2

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

To expand and build upon its support for Indigenous initiatives and learners, as well as further the mandates and deliverables of the national Truth and Reconciliation report on post-secondary education, as well as support our CIGan declaration of support for advancing the education of Indigenous learners, Northern College will offer an Indigenous Culture and Awareness asynchronous and interactive micro credential to Northern College employees and students.

This College-wide online, asynchronous Indigenous Culture and Awareness General Education course will be developed both for students and as a professional development (PD) opportunity for Northern College faculty and staff, available by Winter of 2021. In this way, Northern College will include programs of study that recognize all aspects of the Indigenous learner, their environment and their future success, and allow Northern College to improve our recruitment and retention of Indigenous students within Treaty 9.

Objective 1.3

Northern College will demonstrate inclusiveness with Indigenous students.

This year, the College will install a Sacred Garden operated with Indigenous community partners in cooperation with the College's Indigenous Services and Initiatives office. The creation of this peaceful, spiritual and communal space, with exemplary plantings including medicines, will help to support learners and teachers in an environment that is both welcoming and healing. The establishment of such a space further supports the long-term development of community relationships with Indigenous rights holders as well as supports a greater number of enrolments of Indigenous learners, increasing ratios of Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners.

The College will supply land for the garden, a water supply, and an appropriately secured shed for garden tools. Community partners are anticipated to assist with the sourcing of materials and labour to bring the project to life as well as maintain it into the future. The project is a pilot with preliminary community conversations having elicited strong support. The idea for the garden is that of an Algoma University BSW faculty member who approached the College as a partner and is interested in taking a lead in engaging College programming and learners with the garden for its creation and maintenance, support and usage.



Objective 1.4

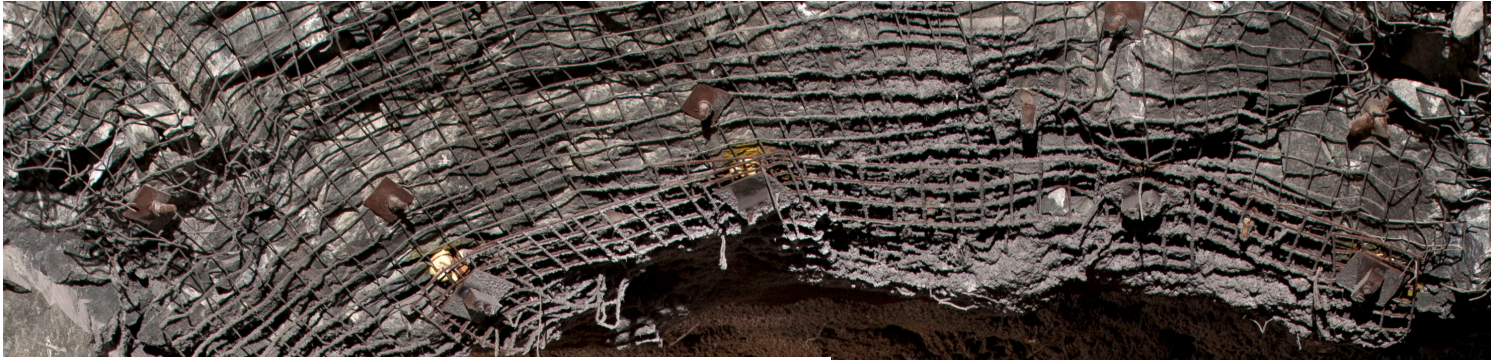
Northern College will respond proactively to change and the changing environment in a collective manner.

Hiring skilled trades in rural communities can be challenging at the best of times, but the need for talent in this field is of increased importance in northern Indigenous communities with housing and other construction and infrastructure needs well overdue. To this end, Northern College will install ventilation and other amenities in an established Trades Lab with a focus on carpentry at the Moose Factory Access Centre.

Responding proactively to change and improvements needed in the North, particularly in Indigenous communities, this impressive project reflects the timely investment of the College to facilitate growing enrolments as the Moosonee region gears up for significant construction for infrastructure – with one (Kashechewan) or two (Moose Cree) whole-community relocations.

Along with the development and enhancement of the shop space, the acquisition of certain lab equipment and tools is also in order, including lathes, sanders, saws, a planer, computers and software. This will allow for increased learning in skilled trades on-site and in-community, further growing and supporting this region of the province – the College's northern-most, ocean-front campus location.





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.

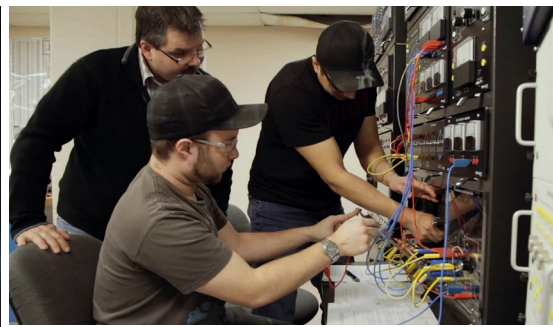
Financial resources directly impact the success of students. Research shows that learners who have increased access to financial support during their studies increase their chances of post-secondary educational completion. To this end, the College distributes over a half million dollars of scholarships, bursaries, and awards to its learners each year.

To distribute these funds, an online software application is used. This year's plan sees the replacement of the outdated platform to a current and responsive application system to increase access, improve user experience, and enhance student satisfaction. Success will be determined by having a new system implemented

that will enhance the learner's success through additional financial support, as well as increase their student experience with a versatile and modern platform to use when applying for scholarships.

Considerable physical enhancements to the College will also be undertaken over the next academic year at Northern to increase learner success. The College is constructing an addition onto the north end of the Haileybury Campus Veterinary Sciences Centre building to expand upon the necropsy room – increasing ventilation, lab sections, freezer space, and storage needs. The expansion builds upon the program area's proven success in the well-regarded Vet Tech and Wildlife Rehab programs.

At the Timmins campus, the Innovation Hub will continue to see a considerable investment as the College builds upon its awareness of this important area of the institution. Developing a growing clientele, utilizing new state-of-the-art facilities, and expanding research capabilities within Northern College's Innovation Hub will all see further growth in the 2021-22 academic year. Supporting and developing the regional economy by assisting companies with business improvement research and development while training our students to be highly qualified workers will be central to growing Northern Ontario.



Objective 2.2

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

Seeing the positive impact of being a College with little or no wait times for mental health supports for students, the College is developing a ‘Student Support’ strategy within the next year that includes a standardized intake form that allows Northern College advisors to triage the support a student requires in order to succeed – whether it relates to their personal, technical, and academic success, or overall wellness.

This project will provide centralized, online services originating from one of the institution’s campuses, create a standardized intake form, include a project process map, and update

relevant policies/procedures. It will also include training advisors, tutors and technical support teams that contribute to a College-wide student support and development framework and process to effectively triage a student’s challenges while offering appropriate interventions to assist learners in a timely and efficient manner to ensure academic success.

College-wide, standardized student success frameworks and processes of this type allow for available interventions to continue along with greater supports for students facing a growing number of wide-ranging challenges due to the pandemic and other societal issues. In this way, higher student satisfaction, skills and competencies, along with an increase in graduation rates outlined in the College’s provincial strategic mandate performance metrics are more likely achieved.



Objective 2.3

Northern College will prepare students to respond to the rapid and ever-changing economy.

A key player in the regional economy, the College continues to invest in long-range plans for development through the creation of an updated master plan for each of its four locations. This comprehensive document will see a College-wide, multi-campus approach to space utilization and assessment, with a focus on the learners, along with deliverables including consultant procurement, a preliminary report, and a final report. In response to the emerging changes in society, the College is investing in the planning and development of future learning spaces based on trends as well as known programming so that it can continue to be best-in-class in program delivery in Ontario, if not the country.

Objective 2.4

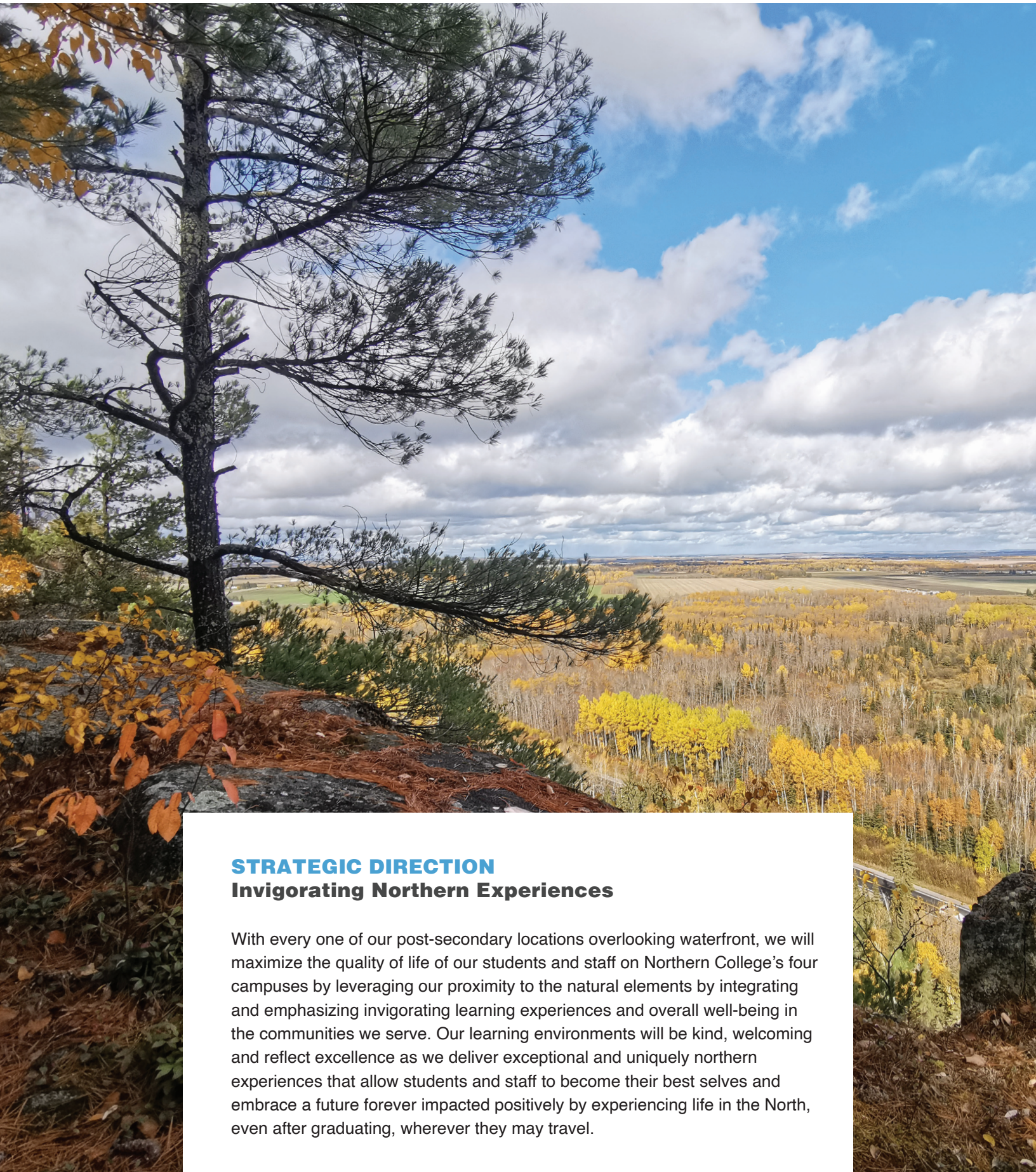
Northern College will focus on an invigorated effort to enhance communication and enrich relationships to create a stronger, more effective team.

In a vastly increased digitized world, websites are critical pieces of outreach to prospective and current learners, employees, and community partners. To support College growth, brand and enrolment, the organization will redesign the outdated College website to be more engaging, updated and interactive. This increase in the engagement and profile of the College will allow for enhanced communication and enrich relationships to create a stronger, more effective learning experience.

An impactful, intuitive user web experience with result in shorter loading times, heighten the organization's presence, and be reflective of Northern as a progressive, appealing College of choice for learners. In doing so, a greater number of learners, partners and supporters of the College will support its growth, expansion and renewal.

Along with this, creating or acquiring software that allows for online payments increases the convenience and preference of those wanting to donate monies to projects, programs or learners through scholarships and other financial incentives. This would prepare the organization for giving campaigns before cultivation of those relationships is in the active phase of donor relations.





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.

Distinguishing ourselves from what is offered at every other College in Ontario is of great benefit to Northern College. The organization's brand promise involves positioning the College as a Northern Destination, further strengthened by providing ways in which this value proposition is more readily available to those learning and working here.

As a result of harnessing its location, Northern College is set to deepen the Northern Experience for those studying and working in Northeastern Ontario. Partnerships with workforce partners on fun and engaging events increase collaborations that can further grow the possibility of placements and integrated work experience learning for students.

This is being done to increase enrolment, student satisfaction, and performance outcomes as it relates to studying in the North. It also increases options for students and staff using equipment focused on outdoor enjoyment, and reduces stress as a result of a greater number of healthy supports and mechanisms in place, resulting in a higher quality of life for all who seek us out for learning or employment.

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 the Northern Ontario, and the global environment and offer solutions.

With the successful Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot Program (RNIP) implementation, a growing number of international students are learning at and graduating from Northern College, Collège Boréal, and the Université de Hearst – all post-secondary providers in the region. As part of our ability to grow Northeastern Ontario, the College seeks to assist those students who are applying for their permanent residency.

To do so, the College will explore creating an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Centre. This will allow the organization to administer this recognized test, mandatory for global learners. Currently, the closest test centre is in Sudbury. The creation of a closer test centre geographically, in Timmins, would enhance the College, its learners, as well as communities in this region, as we support newcomers to meet our workforce needs.





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.

Colleges are known to have close connections to employers and workplaces – this is intrinsic in the product and programs we deliver. In recognizing this, Northern College seeks to improve graduate employment rates through increasing various touch-points including Employment Services, to support students. Developing practices such as this to connect learners with Employment Services before they graduate not only lessens the anxiety around finding work during or after graduation, it enhances student experiences and success as learners become increasingly familiar and connected with the wide array of supports and opportunities available to them.

With a high rate of employment satisfaction in key performance indicators historically, integrating services and supports such as these from multiple departments in a cohesive manner ensures Northern College graduates are matched with employers who seek their skills and innovative approaches, further growing and strengthening the work force.

Objective 3.4

Northern College will be more collaborative internally and externally to the benefit of the college, its students and its staff.

Delivering the best customer service available continues to be a goal of Northern College. Small enough to be nimble and responsive, our friendly and efficient customer service makes a noticeable difference as we deliver post-secondary, contract training, in-community delivery, and innovative research and education. It also allows us to be our best selves and ensure that those learning and partnering with us become this way, as well.

To greater formalize our response times and superior interactions, the College is developing and costing an individual, online coach/mentor model which would reflect equity and diversity best practices, as well as meet the unique learning needs for Indigenous, international, non-direct and direct entry students.

This College-wide individualized Student Coach/Mentor strategy supports a ‘new’ student in resolving academic and non-academic issues from program application through to receiving Alumni services. In this way, a holistic support and customer service system with seamless, wraparound supports throughout the organization can be implemented, resulting in increased student satisfaction and success. It also serves as a competitive advantage in the Ontario post-secondary education sector, formalizing our already friendly, personalized, and helpful service and approach.



CONCLUSION

The undertaking and completion of the College's Business Plan will bring the organization one step closer to its 2025 strategic destination.

In its first year of the Strategic Plan, the actions to be taken within this plan are occurring during a rapidly changing external environment. Despite these changes, the solid engagement of employees and community partners, along with the determination and pride of students and graduates, sets up the organization for success in order to fulfill its commitment to learners and the workforce that awaits them.

Northern communities are resilient: we have faced many challenges in the past and will continue to do so. However, as we work together to build upon the solid foundation we have created in the post-secondary and training sector over the past five decades, we know that we continue to increase our strong and purposeful presence in the Ontario college system.

As we begin the initiatives outlined in this plan, we do so with a passion for student learning, innovation, excellence and access. This is the support and direction we all need in a time of great uncertainty.


We continue to succeed and change lives for the better through the work we do as a College, and remain a cornerstone of the communities we serve.

Our love for this region shows through all we do, and the growing of our presence as a post-secondary and contract training educator of choice for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners throughout the province, the country, and the world, has no end in sight.

**PROUD TO BE NORTHERN.
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