



**Institutional Vision and Mission,
Proposed Mandate Statement
and Priority Objectives**

To:

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

From:

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Part 1: Northern College – Proposed Mandate Statement

Northern College is committed to the economic success and well being of our communities by maximizing educational access, engagement, retention and choice. We help learners succeed by providing current and relevant signature programs that focus on applied learning to meet the needs of our learners, communities and employers. We do this by integrating innovative delivery methods with a comprehensive suite of student supports, success strategies and authentic learning opportunities. Multiple program entry points, flexible delivery and collaborative arrangements between educational institutions and industry partners ensure relevant, timely programming for each learner, while maximizing opportunities for sustainability, all for the betterment of the student experience.

Our success as a hub of education, training, innovation and transformation in northeastern Ontario is driven by Northern College's four priority objectives: Accessible Education, Signature Programs, the Northern Experience and Aboriginal Perspectives.

Note: This strategic mandate agreement has been informed by Northern College's 2013-2016 Strategic Plan, which was approved by the Board of Governors on September 14, 2012. The strategic plan was shaped by extensive input from over one thousand internal and external college stakeholders. Together, we developed four strategic directions, or priority goals, to set the principles for all college endeavours for the duration of the plan. The insights of our communities are essential to building on our success as a hub of education, training, innovation and positive change in northeastern Ontario.

Part 2: Northern College – Vision and Mission

Northern College's vision is "success for all through learning and partnerships." Our Mission is "to ensure quality, accessible education through innovative programs, services and partnerships for the benefit of our northern communities."

Through our priority objectives of Accessible Education, Signature Programs, the Northern Experience and Aboriginal Perspectives, the college will continue to establish a pre-eminent leadership position in post-secondary education that is fluidly responsive to the needs of our students, the regional labour market, and the greater community. We are very pleased to note that within each of its priority objectives, the college addresses all of the components of differentiation identified in the Ontario Differentiation Policy Framework dated November 2013.

Our success as a post-secondary institution is measured by the success of our learners, our communities and our staff.

Part 3: Northern College – Priority Objectives

PRIORITY #1: ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION

Access takes on a number of definitions and forms within the realm of post-secondary education. Northern College is committed to continuously address potential barriers and find innovative methods to minimize hurdles, roadblocks or limitations students may encounter inhibiting their

participation in a college education—or success in their program. Our objective of providing accessible education has the broadest scope and applications, and accordingly overlaps with the other priorities of “Signature Programs, Northern Experience and Aboriginal Perspectives.”

Northern College’s flexibility was born of necessity due to our location and in reaction to the socio-economic realities of our communities. We are a nimble and responsive organization with close ties to the community and industry. Our ability to facilitate consultation and strategic planning has allowed us to develop pathways and modular learning structures with a variety of entry and exit points. This flexibility has allowed us to target and support new markets of students who would not otherwise have sought to pursue higher education and training. Further government support for the development of student services, especially for distance learners, will allow us to continue providing post-secondary and corporate training education to people experiencing hurdles to more traditional delivery methods, while increasing student retention and completion rates.

The achievements of our access-based objectives will present a modest 5% increase in certificate level enrollment, which we project will translate into a subsequent 2% increase in two-year diploma program enrolment over the next three years.

Geographical access – mitigating barriers

Northern College has forged a strong partnership with Contact North | Contact Nord to expand distance-learning offerings. Contact North | Contact Nord is a vital business partner as we collaborate to extend the reach of Northern College to communities across the province that may not have a main or regional college campus, thereby serving students that may otherwise not have access to post-secondary education opportunities.

Northern College is also proud of the partnerships it has developed with First Nations organizations and will continue to establish community-based training programs and work collaboratively with other PSE institutions across the province to expand access and provide more educational program opportunities in northeastern Ontario. As an example, all six northern Ontario colleges have signed a joint memorandum of understanding to foster greater collaboration to achieve this outcome. This MoU has already seen the co-delivery of Northern College’s Mining Engineering Technician program at Confederation College.

Technology continues to create new opportunities for supporting post-secondary learners, particularly in distance learning. Technology-enabled learning and experiential learning opportunities are driving a shift in the post-secondary education system, which holds particular promise for northeastern Ontario, where distance and low population density have been barriers to conventional classroom-based models. Online learning and distance education offer flexibility and provide more choices for students both in terms of approaches to learning and innovative use of technology. Northern College will achieve the strategic priority of accessible education by setting ambitious goals for online blended and mobile learning. Online learning helps Northern College to accommodate more students, improve learning outcomes, and provide more flexible access in a way that better controls costs. Online students take more responsibility for their own learning, work more collaboratively, learn to find, integrate and evaluate information. Northern College has developed well-established expertise and strengths in blended technology-enabled learning, offering a combination of distance learning and brief intensive sessions on campus. The content and structure of these programs are flexible, adjusting to the needs and demands of our students and

their unique culture and communities. Northern College's multi-modal approach to delivery of distance education will continue to be a growth objective and we anticipate compounded 2% annual growth in this area over the next 3 years.

Access supported by learning assistance

We are cognisant that programming is not the only barrier to accessing education; non-academic learner services such as housing, bursaries, work placements and community referrals play a significant role in enabling our students to attain their goals. By offering a range of programs, program entry points, admission structures and enhanced support services we create new avenues to address issues that may otherwise present challenges for individuals who wish to pursue higher education. Through investigating opportunities to develop new training and education models, we position ourselves to better meet a broader spectrum of learner and industry needs.

To ensure our staff is continuously growing their professional skillset, Northern College has implemented the Learning Excellence Innovation Department (LEID), which includes an online interactive professional development resource. The primary goal of this department is to foster relationships and provide tools that empower all employees to create richer learning environments. Northern College strives to incorporate the most relevant, pedagogically-sound tools for both faculty and students to help build understanding, enrich the learning experience, and support our goal of providing accessible education for all our communities

Most recently Northern College has reorganized its Information Technology Services Department, Distance Learning and Learning Excellence Innovation Department (LEID) under a single directorship to further assist in the identification and realization of efficiencies. Northern can now establish a sustainable process for instructional and program design improvements across all campuses through technology-enabled learning and can assume projects to increase quality and improve learning outcomes in College development and delivery of both online and on-ground programs. These expanded services directly address our long-standing commitment to improving accessibility and consistency of course instruction. They will facilitate better educational outcomes for students, particularly those with non-conventional educational backgrounds and learning styles and will better equip faculty to incorporate experiential learning opportunities that complement and enhance both online and on-ground course curriculum. This is essential if we are to deliver superior instructional and content quality for our signature programs which in turn are contributing to our financial viability and sustainability. Superior instructional and content quality will give Northern a competitive edge in achieving our goal to provide a unique 'Northern Experience' and will help our professors improve learning outcomes and delivery for online and on-ground learning outcomes for Aboriginal students, which make up a significant percentage of our learners. The inclusion of Information Technology Services in support of the learning enterprise will assist to consolidate multiple data bases to collect individual learner progress data and expand and enhance our catalogue of automated and self-serve processes for learners (and employees).

Northern College intends to make a significant investment to transition to the next level of performance in online and on-ground learning to improve student success and support services. We are already focused heavily in this area, primarily to ensure distance learners have the complete

Northern Experience despite their potentially remote location. We consider the costs associated with technology-enabled delivery methods, namely changing the model of learning which technology enables; this will entail redesigning courses and programs rather than merely adding technology to existing activities, providing professional development to our staff and upgrading our technology infrastructure to harness the power of our innovative capacity.

Through the use of technology-enabled teaching and learning and increasing our contract training offerings, we are planning for increases in post-secondary, corporate training and part-time students, in collaboration with other institutions through curriculum sharing and shared instructional delivery and improved pathways to further increase productivity and access. Another collaborative opportunity arising from the northern colleges MoU illustrative of this point is the Northern College/Cambrian College Heavy Duty Equipment Operator training program.

Accessing further education through collaboration

Northern College has developed partnerships with a number of Ontario universities in order to present students with the opportunity of furthering their education and credentials within a variety of sectors. Currently in place are agreements with both Laurentian and Algoma Universities, offering Bachelor's undergraduate degree programs in Nursing, Social Work, and Community and Economic Development onsite at Northern College's Timmins campus.

Future agreements between Northern College and a number of other Ontario universities are currently being explored across different fields of study. We are presently in discussions with Queen's University to deliver a mining-focused engineering program which would build on the existing two-year Mining Technician program and enable world-wide access to a mining-related engineering degree. This would be an efficiency measure for both institutions, in addition to creating significantly greater access and a broader range of pathways and improved student mobility options. Success in this initiative will yield a modest increase in mining enrollment of 6% within 3 years of the program's availability.

However, we are very encouraged by the discussions with the Provincial government concerning differentiation that would enable Ontario colleges to establish three year degree programs, especially given our expertise and history of excellence in signature programs and the absence of a brick and mortar English Language university in our catchment area. It would be our desire to capitalize on this potential change in policy in the area of technology programs and health sciences. Northern College's interest in three year degrees is to be seen as complementary to a resolution passed by City of Timmins municipal council and inquiries made to MTCU by the Timmins Economic Development Corporation to petition the Province for one of three new university campuses.

Additional government policy tools designed to facilitate articulation agreements, with full credential recognition, would be beneficial in furthering Northern College's desire to build practical, non-bureaucratic pathways and enhance student mobility.

PRIORITY #2: SIGNATURE PROGRAMS

Northern College serves a comprehensive mandate which is the expressed desire of our communities and as befits a sparse, regionally dispersed population with few major centres. However we have through the course of time excelled in several areas—points of differentiation which we now refer to as signature programs. Approximately 60% of our full-time post-secondary students are now enrolled in suites of programs related to or derived from our signature programs. For example, Northern’s signature Mining Engineering Technician program by virtue of its strengths and assets has enabled the college to develop other unique, hard to imitate advantages that have been leveraged into a suite of best-in-class but related mining programs ranging from the Aboriginal community-based Mining Essentials, the community-based Surface Diamond Driller Assistant program, to the Underground Hard Rock Miner Common Core program.

Northern College is steadily building a reputation as a world class provider of selected programs that leverage the strengths and assets of each campus and our community partners while continuing to respond to the specific education and training needs of our northern communities.

Northern College is leveraging its strong brand in key program disciplines to foster international partnerships to provide instructional program delivery off-shore. This strategy will assist us to recruit international students for diploma completion opportunities in Ontario.

We will achieve objectives set out in the strategic focus on signature programs by identifying key program offerings and competitive advantages at campuses; focusing on strategic enrolment management; establishing signature programs for each campus that align with the respective brand story; and positioning signature programs to highlight program relevance and reinforce program and college positioning.

Northern College is a highly respected community and regional partner and plays a strong role in promoting economic, social and cultural development in Northeastern Ontario. Over the past few years the college has updated infrastructure, technology and programming to further enhance Northern College’s reputation both regionally and globally. Further development and promotion of signature programs among potential students and employers will contribute to increased brand awareness both within and outside of our catchment area as well as internationally. Northern’s signature programs span areas such as apprenticeship, trades and technology, animal and human health and wellness sciences, welding, mining, environmental technology and emergency services, the idea being developed upon unique characteristics of the campus and the community.

Our signature Practical Nursing program reaches students in communities throughout the north through a combination of onsite and distance learning. A blended delivery format provides access to other related health programs including a nursing degree program for students in selected rural and remote communities. Together with our community and regional health facilities, Northern College insures sufficient nursing graduates are available to adequately staff our health care agencies, providing approximately 50% of nurses in our catchment area. We anticipate the submission of more requests for collaborative, multi-college programs in order to streamline administrative and operational costs. New program development requests at the certificate level will be in support of community based, employer and learner needs while new program development requests at the

diploma and advanced diploma level will be in the area of our signature programs. Through continual consultation with our communities and program advisory committees, program requests will be informed by demand, particularly those expressed by employers and industry.

Hampering our ability to fully meet student demand in several of our signature programs and consequently achieve economies of scale is the need for capital investments in a health sciences expansion, an integrated emergency services building and a wildlife centre.

Collaborative and creative relationships with other Ontario post-secondary institutions will allow for greater innovation and productivity. Northern College already operates under an efficient model of shared common resources among campuses, helping to mitigate some of the issues that arise when offering programs in low population density areas. Given the current fiscal reality in Ontario, there are opportunities to further explore efficient and sustainable programming and improve student mobility with other institutions, freeing up resources for further program enhancement and innovation. To this end, Northern College has signed a memorandum of understanding for collaboration with Confederation, Boreal and Fleming, in addition to a similar MoU amongst the six northern colleges. Collaborative relationships with other post-secondary institutions provide ongoing opportunities to share best practices and discuss solutions for improving weak enrolment in particular programs. Through this sharing of ideas, what works and what does not, we are working toward a better bottom line for program content, capacity and productivity.

Northern College is primarily a teaching institution, however we recognize the importance of applied research, and where opportunity arises we provide our students with access to this form of learning enrichment. Through the Northern Office for Applied Research and Innovation (NOARI), Northern College promotes its signature programs and highlights its reputation as a leader in trades and technology by participating in government funded programs such as Colleges Ontario Network for Industry Innovation (CONII), fostering quality relationships among regional small and mid-sized enterprises (SMEs), the college, and our students. This network allows for open dialogue with regards to program development to ensure Northern College is actively listening, reacting, and anticipating industry needs. Applied research supports entrepreneurial efforts in northeastern Ontario and encourages the regional retention of our graduates and the growth of SMEs.

The School of Veterinary Sciences is a shining example of combining applied research with one of the programs developed from our signature Veterinary Technician program which draws students from all over Ontario and throughout Canada. This collection of varied credential programs has achieved a reputation for excellence, attracting companies who are currently undertaking applied research projects designed to improve animal health while also ultimately adding innovative skilled jobs to Ontario's economy.

Institutional consortium applied research work, which includes industry and other educational institutions, in our Electrical Engineering Technician signature program highlights Northern's emphasis on building strategic partnerships that boost innovation and productivity for the partners and allied organizations involved, while providing innovative learning opportunities for our students.

Our partnership with the Materials Joining and Innovation Center (MaJIC) at our Kirkland Lake campus highlights the value to our signature Welding Engineering Technology program and to growing companies unable to carry out research and innovation projects on their own. Several projects, both current and in the early stages of development, are directly or indirectly linked to the Mining sector and to the 100-year-old Haileybury School of Mines and Northern College's celebrated signature Mining Engineering Technician program.

The newly formed and funded Productivity and Innovation Centre, led by the Timmins Economic Development Corporation and Northern College, along with parent organization NEOnet, is now located at the Timmins campus of Northern College. This co-location with our own NOARI, the Northern Office of Applied Research and Innovation, will create synergies and provide greater opportunities for future research work of particular benefit to small and medium sized companies who lack the resources to carry out these projects on their own, in addition to fostering a climate of entrepreneurship and new business start-ups.

With just three years of substantial research project work funded by NSERC, CONII and others to our credit (and still growing), NOARI is proving to be a valued contributor to the applied research landscape in Northeastern Ontario and beyond, while Northern College is graduating students who have the productivity and innovation skills so necessary for the growth of our economy.

PRIORITY #3: THE NORTHERN EXPERIENCE

At Northern College we are committed to offering a suite of distinctive educational products and services that no other college can offer quite as well. Our goal is to help learners achieve their full potential by providing unique academic, social and real-world experiences in an environment that embraces continuous improvement and ongoing quality management. The Northern Experience is about giving students an opportunity to customize their education with personalized attention, work experience, flexible learning solutions and a range of social engagement opportunities.

Student engagement within the college and community makes a critical contribution to academic satisfaction, retention and success. Northern College offers small class sizes, leading edge curricula, and a range of innovative work placement opportunities, including our growing applied research program which complements our focus on individual learner success.

The college will realize goals stemming from the Northern Experience objective by implementing a quality measurement program; refining and implementing a capital improvement plan; integrating more placement and applied research opportunities; launching and supporting a Northern College branding and identification strategy; expanding on social and engagement opportunities for learners.

The six northern colleges are working collaboratively to establish a *Study North* initiative with incentives and supports that will entice students from the GTA to register for programs at a northern college and thereby improve sustainability while making efficient use of excess capacity in our institutions. To assist Northern College in achieving this goal, we propose policy tools to incent students to study in northeastern Ontario. In addition, a northern tuition tax credit would not only serve to encourage students from our catchment area to stay and attend northern PSE institutions,

but also attract students from southern Ontario. A policy of this nature would complement existing policy tools such as the Canada Student Loan forgiveness for northern and rural communities, stated in the 2011 Economic Action Plan. *Study North* and the introduction of policy tools would assist in rebalancing issues of capacity in Ontario's colleges: excess capacity in the North due to years of declining population; and insufficient capacity in GTA colleges due to the area's growing population.

Further contributing to the Northern Experience, Northern College will see the development of two programs unique to northern Ontario that will serve the needs of the Aboriginal population and natural resource sector. In yet another example of collaboration, Northern College, Confederation College, College Boreal and Fleming College have signed a memorandum of understanding resulting in convergence of effort and resources, finding innovative ways to better provide programs and services to our learners and communities, and achieving a measure of improved productivity.

Achievement of this priority objective will positively impact both total enrolment and enrolment mix, thereby helping sustain what could otherwise be low enrolment programs.

PRIORITY #4: ABORIGINAL PERSPECTIVES

We appreciate and respect the Aboriginal worldview and its contribution to contemporary thinking. We facilitate opportunities in which different perspectives are presented, valued and understood so that all of our learners, faculty and staff are prepared for an increasingly diverse workplace.

Northern College's catchment area includes over 80 communities in the Cochrane and Timiskaming Districts of Northern Ontario, including 18 First Nations. While the general concern in Northern Ontario has been the apparent shrinking of the youth population, recent census data shows relative stability in the region. Aboriginals represent more than 10% of the population in Cochrane and Timiskaming, compared to the provincial average of 2%. Based on a younger average age and higher-than-average birthrate, this substantial demographic trend presents industry and education providers with a tremendous opportunity, both to build regional capacity and to address the looming workforce shortage. Due to upcoming major changes in the demographic landscape of Northern Ontario, increased enrolment will likely come from Aboriginal students.

Aboriginal learners face a range of social, cultural, financial and geographic barriers to post-secondary education. Northern College recognizes these barriers and is determined to break them down. The college is committed to facilitating a responsible and respectful learning environment that enhances Aboriginal learners' retention, success and ~~their~~ readiness for the labour market.

More than ever before, the contemporary workplace is characterized by diversity. To address this opportunity, Northern College is committed to helping learners and staff understand how cultural differences can be mobilized for the benefit of the individual, the workplace, and society as a whole. Incorporating Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge (ATK) in college curricula will benefit Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students alike by fostering an inclusive environment in which participants are encouraged to question traditional assumptions, develop critical thinking skills and application to complex issues, such as discussions of environmental and community sustainability. Segregation of

different cultural educational concepts is an antiquated approach and does not speak to the ever increasing need for diversity and understanding in our Ontario's growing creative economy.

In collaboration with the Aboriginal Council on Education, Elders and community leaders, Northern College will continue to implement a number of student support and success tools designed to attract and retain Aboriginal learners, supporting them at every stage in post-secondary educational attainment. Northern College encourages students and staff to engage our Elders on Campus. The Elders are welcome to sharing their experiences, knowledge and wisdom. Elders value education, support students in their educational success, and inspire an enriched environment of cultural understanding and diversity.

A permanent, 700-square foot tipi located at the Timmins Campus was constructed and officially opened in March 2013. Designed in the likeness of a traditional tipi and for year-round use, this new venue is a place where both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, faculty, staff and communities can come together and learn from one another's cultures, values and traditions. Our Kirkland Lake, Haileybury and Moosonee campuses each have a portable tipi ensuring that at each of our campuses, we can build a more culturally vibrant college community.

By drawing upon the wisdom of Aboriginal peoples, Northern College is responding to the needs, choices and directions of Aboriginal peoples and their communities; in turn, the college meets this demand by making a breadth of programming and credentials available through flexible program offerings and technology-enabled, blended delivery.

We are dedicated to creating and sustaining a respectful, inclusive, accessible, and culturally sensitive environment by carrying out our responsibility to enhance awareness and understanding, encourage and nurture partnerships with First Nations and facilitate the continued success of Aboriginal learners. The effectiveness of such efforts is supported and measured through the various strategies outlined in MTCU's Aboriginal Postsecondary Education and Training Policy Framework and Northern College's Post-secondary Education and Training (PSET) Action Plan.

Our overarching goal is to not only increase the number of Aboriginal learners in our post-secondary and training programs, but to ensure these students are supported through a respectful and responsive environment and are adequately prepared to participate in a dynamically changing labour force as highly skilled and competitive contributors to Ontario's economy.

Part 4: Northern College Institution-Specific Metrics

Jobs, Innovation and Economic Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of employers per program engaged/partnering with the college. 2. Program Advisory partnerships.
Teaching and Learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Percentage of faculty with Universal Instructional Design credential. 2. Employer Satisfaction. 3. Success in certification exams or professional designation exams.
Student Population	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Overall graduation rate in identified under-represented groups. 2. Percentage of students who are indirect entrants (excluding those with some PSE). 3. Remote point of origin.
Program Offerings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Percentage of students served that are not funded through GPOG. 2. Enrolment in niche programs as a percentage of institutional enrolment. 3. Percentage of students who move from access programs into postsecondary education.
Applied Research	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Percentage of programs engaged in Applied Research.
Institutional Collaboration to Support Student Mobility	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of students enrolled in collaborative partnerships with PSE institutions (domestic). 2. Number of programs offered through joint program delivery.



Institutional Program Strengths and Strategic Areas of Focus

Current Areas of Program Strength

Please identify up to 10 areas of program strength for your institution. Please describe the rationale used to select these programs. This information will assist in establishing current programming strengths and areas of expertise.

Institutional Program Strengths (maximum 10)		
Program Area	Total Full-time Headcount (Eligible) (2012-13)	Rationale
Veterinary Sciences area	222	Based on our strategic plan (to which over 1,000 people have had input), these programs leverage the strengths, partnerships and assets of each campus while continuing to respond to the specific education and training needs of our northern communities.
Mining area	58	
Welding area	27	
Electrical area	75	
Wellness and Health Sciences area	159	From our corporate growth plan, this area may repackage both existing and new programs. MTCU reports “unsatisfied demand”, employment ranges from 54-96%.
Environmental Sciences area		This program area may repackage both existing and new programs. Northern College is on the boundary between the Algonquin and Boreal Forest First Nations have expressed an interest. New partnerships have recently been developed and agriculture is moving north. Water is important to both communities and to the mining industry.

Proposed Areas of Program Strength

Within the context of limited enrolment growth, please identify 3-5 program areas that will be a strategic focus in the next three years. Please be specific when describing your rationale for focusing on these areas.

Programs for Growth or to be Established (maximum 5)				
Program Area	Total Full-time Headcount (Eligible) # (2016-17)	Target Total Full-time Headcount (Eligible) as a proportion of institutional Total Full-Time Headcount (Eligible)	Planned New or Expanded Programs (including credential level)	Rationale
Veterinary Sciences area	310	20%		Veterinary Sciences and Wellness and Health Sciences represent an important part of our strategic plan. Both areas are currently capped due to physical capacity and placement capacity. Rooms will be repurposed and placement capacity will be renegotiated
Wellness and Health Sciences area	200	13%		
Mining area	90	6%		Canada is the largest exporter of minerals and our area is considered to be one of the largest potential mineral resources areas. Future hiring considerations have been determined to be “quite considerable”. There is currently a skills shortage for miners and mining engineers. Also part of our strategic plan.
Technology/Trades area	330	22%		This program area represents an important part of our Strategic Plan. The northeast is experiencing a skill shortage. The college has new labs and equipment in trade areas.