



RELEVANT.



RESPONSIVE.



IN YOUR
COMMUNITY.

STRATEGIC PLAN
2010-2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

RELEVANT. RESPONSIVE. IN YOUR COMMUNITY.	2
INTRODUCTION	3
STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW	4
CONDITIONS OF SUCCESS	4
MANDATE	5
VISION & VALUES	6
BUSINESS MODEL PRINCIPLES	7
THE WORLD IN WHICH WE LIVE	9
A COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF THE FUTURE	11
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES, GOALS & PERFORMANCE MEASURES	13

RELEVANT. RESPONSIVE. IN YOUR COMMUNITY.

Through the delivery of high quality, relevant and student-focused education, NorQuest College opens doors for learners, for employers and for the communities it serves.

Responsive, targeted and specialized learning in the classroom, the home and the workplace through multiple technologies and techniques, opens doors to career opportunities and life success.

Access to personalized attention and support from experts in an extensive range of learning approaches, opens doors for any motivated person to acquire the education and skills they need to reach career goals that for many may once have been unattainable.



INTRODUCTION

Since becoming board governed in 1998, NorQuest College has experienced unprecedented growth in student population and in the range and diversity of programs offered. This growth is expected to continue unabated, as the College moves to meet the changing needs of students and the communities it serves.

Whether in times of a booming Alberta economy and plentiful employment or a period of global economic downturn, the demand for quality educational programs and services continues. NorQuest College must be prepared and positioned to meet that growth demand and the evolving requirements of the labour market, Alberta employers and most importantly, NorQuest students.

This strategic plan was developed to support the College in establishing priorities and making informed decisions that take advantage of the opportunities and address the challenges that are anticipated over the next 10 years. It sets the stage for detailed operational and budget planning, and subsequent actions and initiatives.

In setting clear direction for the future and charting the course to reach that desired future, NorQuest will foster necessary growth, broaden access to its programs and services, and create enhanced opportunities for learners to achieve their career and life goals and attain their full personal potential.

To realize that desired future NorQuest has established three strategic priorities to guide the College over the next 10 years. Those key strategic directions are:

- Enhanced presence in the communities NorQuest serves and the education sector
- Growth in learning opportunities and our ability to serve learners
- Diversification that reaches Albertans where they live and work

Through a focus on these strategic priorities NorQuest will meet the changing needs of students, employers and our communities, and fulfill our provincial mandate as a community college.

STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW

NorQuest's 10-year strategic plan is the culmination of discussions with employers, students, community partners, government, employees and the NorQuest Board of Governors over the past several years. It also incorporates an assessment of societal and economic environmental factors and conditions that have an impact on the College and its activities.

In 2009 the Board of Governors finalized the strategic plan and confirmed the overall directions and priorities for the College. While the strategic plan covers a 10-year timeframe, the board will revisit the plan every year to assess progress and refine or update directions to reflect changing environments or circumstances. Progress toward achievement of NorQuest's vision will be monitored using the performance measures outlined in this plan.

The NorQuest College strategic plan will be used to:

- Provide clear direction to the College about what is to be achieved
- Ensure College priorities and initiatives are aligned with achievement of common directions and goals
- Guide development of the College business plan and annual divisional operating plans and budgets

CONDITIONS OF SUCCESS

Success of this strategic plan ultimately depends on the dedication and efforts of NorQuest staff and on having in place policies, processes and procedures designed to support achievement of the goals and directions. To sustain a sound foundation for success the College will enhance and strengthen:

- Organizational capacity, including both fiscal and human resources
- Supportive infrastructure, including facilities, technology and information
- Evidence-based decision making
- Engaged and committed staff
- Effective and timely internal and external communications
- Efficient and effective organization policies and procedures and sound fiscal stewardship

MANDATE

NorQuest College is a board-governed public college operating under the authority of the *Alberta Post-Secondary Learning Act*.

- NorQuest provides high quality learning opportunities to prepare graduates for careers in business, industry, services and health care. The College also has particular expertise in academic upgrading, adult literacy and English as a second language education. Credentials granted by the College include certificates, diplomas and applied degrees.
- NorQuest offers unique educational opportunities in a supportive environment where learners from diverse cultural, educational and social backgrounds can achieve their personal and career goals and enhance the quality of their lives. The College provides flexible alternatives such as career laddering, recognition of prior learning, part-time career study and distance education. NorQuest programming is sensitive to the cultural experience of Aboriginal learners and learners for whom English is a second language. The College is a leader in meeting the needs of learners with disabilities.
- NorQuest delivers educational opportunities to people where they live and work. The College provides student access through its main campus in Edmonton and a network of campuses and learning sites in Alberta communities. It offers innovative distance education alternatives for students across Alberta, throughout Canada and around the world. Programs are also customized to meet specific needs in communities and workplaces.
- NorQuest is committed to enhancing teaching and learning through applied research. The College also strengthens its ability to meet the needs of its learners through partnerships with public and private education service providers, government departments, community agencies and employers.
- NorQuest contributes to a strong Alberta economy by helping to develop the skilled workforce that both public and private sector employers require. Graduates of NorQuest College are sought by employers for their knowledge and skills.

Mandate Approved by Alberta Education, February 2005

VISION & VALUES

THE STRATEGIC PLAN HAS AS ITS FOUNDATION THE VISION AND VALUES OF NORQUEST COLLEGE

VISION

NorQuest College is nationally recognized as an innovative, vibrant college with a uniquely inclusive and supportive environment that inspires:

- Passion for learning
- Education that empowers every learner
- Excellence and leadership in the work we do
- Commitment to strengthening communities

VALUES

NorQuest College values people, learning, our role in the education system, and the quality of the processes we use in reaching our goals.



BUSINESS MODEL PRINCIPLES

LEARNER CENTERED

- We anticipate, understand and respond to our learners' needs
- We deliver programs that provide value to learners' career goals
- We use processes that empower our learners

MARKET DRIVEN

- We anticipate and respond to market demand for our programs and services by developing business opportunities and influencing demand
- We proactively design and deliver programs and services that are relevant to both the workplace and to learners' career paths

EVIDENCE-BASED DECISIONS

- We make decisions based on data and information, such as financial data, market data, performance data, trends, impacts and relationship data
- We make decisions based on evaluation of risk, opportunity and viability
- We consider business opportunities that have various levels of risk and financial return

INTEGRATED ORGANIZATION

- We function as an integrated organization with shared goals, role clarity and accountability
- We create processes that often cross organization structure boundaries to achieve expected outcomes of the College
- We ensure the path to decisions is clear and accessible
- We ensure that integrated processes are transparent, so that each stakeholder in a process understands the roles of everyone in the process

ENTREPRENEURIAL

- We are alert to, and create, opportunities
- We are innovative and flexible in assembling the required resources to capitalize on an opportunity
- We strive for profitability where the opportunity exists, to help offset the cost of pursuing other important priorities for our communities and learners

QUALITY & CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- We define standards of quality and performance for all aspects of the College
- We define expected outcomes and then measure and report our performance against those targets
- We monitor our improvement and influence organizational behaviour through tools such as a balanced scorecard and performance feedback



THE WORLD IN WHICH WE LIVE

To adequately and appropriately meet the needs of our learners, the labour market and the communities we serve, NorQuest's programs, services and systems must reflect and respond to the internal and external environment in which it operates. This includes considering economic, social, technological, political and education trends in the development of priority College directions, programs and services. Factors having potential impact on NorQuest's short- and long-term situation include:

WORLD-WIDE ECONOMIC RECESSION

Though the global recession is likely to have less impact in Alberta than in most areas of Canada, there will still be, at least in the short-term, a slowdown of economic activity and job loss. Fewer job opportunities mean greater numbers of people returning to school to upgrade and to build skills and expertise. This is especially true for programs that address ongoing workforce shortages, such as those in the health care sector.

Long-term Provincial Government funding is likely to remain uncertain until current economic conditions improve. A greater demand for student financial aid can also be expected.

LONG-TERM ECONOMIC GROWTH IN ALBERTA

Despite the anticipated short-term economic slowdown in Alberta, significant population and job growth is predicted for both the Alberta and Edmonton region over the 10-year life of this strategic plan. Growing economies necessitate workers who are highly skilled and credentialed in fields aligned with growing sectors and changing workplace requirements.

Job growth also means more and better opportunities for less advantaged population groups, such as persons with disabilities, Aboriginals and immigrants, to be better represented in the education system and the labour force.

POPULATION DIVERSITY

As Alberta's population grows, and especially once the economy strengthens and labour force demand increases, the already inclusive Alberta population is anticipated to become even more diverse in the future, with a larger percentage of the population represented by new immigrants and Aboriginal Canadians. Diversity requires better access to culturally responsive post-secondary education programs tailored to meet specific and unique needs.

AGING POPULATION

Alberta and Canada's population is aging and a significant percentage of the workforce is approaching retirement. Replacing retiring workers will increase demand for trained/educated individuals. It will also present a challenge for NorQuest to attract and retain an adequate and appropriately skilled staff complement.

AGE OF TECHNOLOGY

Canadians are increasingly dependent on technology-based information and communication. Approximately 89% of Canadian students have home access to a computer linked to the Internet and 63% of Canadians over 15 years of age access the Internet daily. These numbers will continue to grow. The result is an increasing demand or need for online education programs and ongoing investments in essential software, hardware, training and course development to meet that demand.

Technology investments are also required to ensure that the administration of and delivery of NorQuest's programs and services is timely, effective and efficient.



AN EDUCATED WORKFORCE

Employers are seeking a more-educated workforce. In turn, the demand for career credentials is growing exponentially. As job demands become increasingly complex and technology-oriented, there is a corresponding increase in the level of knowledge and skill required by individuals to perform many roles.

The growing reliance on immigrants and population groups currently under-represented in the labour force, such as Aboriginals and persons with disabilities, is likely to continue. Strong foundational and English as a Second Language education programs will continue to be in demand as stepping stones toward career objectives.

AN INTEGRATED POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION SYSTEM

The Provincial Government and Albertans expect and demand that the province's post-secondary educators function as a single, fully integrated, collaborative and student-focused system – Campus Alberta – providing access to learning for all adults regardless of circumstances or educational backgrounds. As a full partner in Campus Alberta and one of 11 designated community colleges, NorQuest is responsible to work with post-secondary and community partners to ensure access to quality education opportunities from Jasper to Camrose and Drayton Valley to Whitecourt. Expanded responsibilities require NorQuest to better align its business and academic processes and systems with partners in the post-secondary sector.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Increasingly government and the public are holding educational institutions accountable for the responsible stewardship of public resources and for clear outcomes in directly or indirectly addressing priority social and community issues. This requires NorQuest to expand and enhance its community leadership and presence, and to clearly demonstrate the value it adds to the communities it serves.

A COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF THE FUTURE

As a full partner in Campus Alberta, NorQuest has been designated by the Government of Alberta as a community college. NorQuest will serve both rural and urban communities within our assigned region with high-quality education opportunities. NorQuest will provide programs and program delivery methods to support the needs of a diverse student population with a diverse range of career and learning needs and priorities.

Fulfilling NorQuest's role as a community college will be characterized by:

- Accessibility to quality education opportunities
- Teaching excellence
- Supportive and respectful learning environments
- Access to quality student services and supports as needed
- Responsiveness to community priorities
- Active and engaged community partners

NorQuest will build strong relationships and partnership with the communities it serves. The College will collaborate with other post-secondary institutions to create a student-centered, seamless, post-secondary system that enables students to easily identify and access educational opportunities and transfer from one institution to another. NorQuest will actively engage other learning institutions, individuals and communities in planning and delivering programming in the region for which we are stewards.

NorQuest will create, use and facilitate multiple delivery models that enable student access to learning in formats, at times and in locations that best meet their needs and circumstances.

NorQuest College will focus on four dimensions in its role as a community college:

- Career education
- Foundational education
- Regional stewardship
- Applied research

CAREER EDUCATION

NorQuest will provide a broad range of career offerings and programs and will serve a diverse profile of career-oriented learners. Diplomas, certificates and applied degrees will provide individuals with the advanced skills required to meet workforce needs and contribute to a globally competitive and knowledge-based economy.

FOUNDATIONAL EDUCATION

NorQuest will provide opportunities for any motivated Albertan to acquire the education and skills they need to reach their career and life goals.

NorQuest will build on its recognized expertise in foundational education in literacy, academic upgrading, language acquisition and employment preparation. The College will focus on readying individuals for the growing complexity of workplace demands. NorQuest will adapt and respond to students' needs and in particular continue to support the unique needs of immigrants, Aboriginals and persons with disabilities in their efforts to contribute to their communities and the economy.

REGIONAL STEWARDSHIP

As part of Campus Alberta, NorQuest is responsible to steward the region from Jasper to Camrose and Drayton Valley to Whitecourt. As a regional steward, NorQuest will work with community-based adult learning partners to meet literacy and foundational learning needs and to ensure access to the full spectrum of Campus Alberta learning opportunities in both urban and rural areas across the region.

APPLIED RESEARCH

NorQuest will enhance its teaching and learning by engaging faculty in applied research. The College will foster engagement in scholarship and evidence-based research that generates innovative solutions to meet learner and employer needs and to support community sustainability. Priority areas for applied research will be led through NorQuest's identified Centres for Excellence in:

- Aboriginal Learning
- Continuing Care Education
- Intercultural Education
- Learning Supports
- Print Media

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES, GOALS AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

NorQuest has established three strategic priorities and supporting goals for the next 10 years. These strategic priorities and their supporting goals will provide a clear focus for the future and a solid foundation for College business and operational planning, budgeting and action.

2010-2020 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. ENHANCED PRESENCE
2. GROWTH
3. DIVERSIFICATION



STRATEGIC PRIORITY: ENHANCED PRESENCE

Broad recognition of the quality of a NorQuest education is critical to success. Enhancing knowledge and understanding of the excellence of NorQuest's offerings will contribute to NorQuest credentials, programs and services being increasingly sought after by learners. It will also contribute to attracting skilled and innovative educators with a passion for teaching.

NorQuest will build and nurture strategic relationships and partnerships with community organizations, businesses, educational institutions and governments to address community needs and advance opportunities to increase access to quality education. The College will take care to understand the needs and priorities of its communities and proactively respond. When appropriate, NorQuest will work with partners and governments to develop solutions and shape policy.

Enhanced presence in the communities NorQuest serves, as well as the post-secondary sector, will enable the College to secure the community, financial and government support needed to ensure every student has an excellent educational experience. Recognizing the impact of NorQuest's expertise, individuals, businesses, communities and NorQuest alumni are inclined to take advantage of opportunities to support NorQuest directions.

WHAT WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED

- Community, business, government and post-secondary leaders know NorQuest and seek its opinion, involvement and partnership
- NorQuest is recognized as a leading community college in Alberta and Canada
- NorQuest alumni demonstrate support for the College and its directions
- Learners enthusiastically seek NorQuest credentials, programs and services
- Faculty and staff live NorQuest values and deliver on its brand promise
- Faculty and staff actively contribute to NorQuest success and enhance the College's commitment to innovation and excellence

HOW SUCCESS WILL BE MEASURED

- Greater government, employer, community and alumni understanding, support and involvement
- Increased demand for NorQuest program offerings
- Enhanced employee engagement and commitment
- More and improved media coverage of NorQuest
- Increased successful collaborations with community, employer and stakeholder partners
- Ability to attract and retain employees



STRATEGIC PRIORITY: GROWTH

Through entrepreneurial thinking, strengthened organizational capacity and planned growth that anticipates and responds to the needs and desires of NorQuest's communities, the College will build and sustain high quality offerings and reach out to meet the needs of learners.

NorQuest will grow and shape itself to meet the changing needs of the varied communities it serves. The range of programs it offers and the range and number of learners it serves will also grow. NorQuest will build the comprehensiveness and sophistication of its systems, structures and processes to reflect its responsibilities as a leading community college.

Emphasis will be on increased access to quality education opportunities, building depth and strength in career and foundational education and developing an incubator for innovation through applied research, while serving an increasing number of learners within its stewardship region and beyond. Importance will be placed on creating environments and instituting practices and methods that advance teaching, learning and student success.

WHAT WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED

- Build depth and strength in programs in all mandated areas of expertise
- Increase access to foundational and post-secondary learning opportunities in the region
- Create learning environments that meet the expectations and needs of next generation post-secondary students
- Identify and address under-served educational needs
- Build sound and efficient systems, processes and structures that facilitate creative, responsive and inclusive education and expand access to quality educational opportunities
- Expand capacity for innovation through centres for excellence and applied research

HOW SUCCESS WILL BE MEASURED

- Student success
- Growth in the number of learners served
- Strength and range of programs serving each of the mandated areas of expertise
- Quality of facilities, learning environments, teaching approaches/methodologies and supporting technologies
- Impact of applied research on the effectiveness of educational methods and the discovery of improved workplace processes and approaches
- Recognition of NorQuest as "exceptional" by accrediting and evaluating entities



STRATEGIC PRIORITY: DIVERSIFICATION

Diversity of program and service offerings, educational methods, and funding and revenue sources will allow NorQuest to respond effectively to the implications of economic fluctuations and quickly changing workforce demands. Embracing diversity also means access to quality educational opportunities for every motivated individual to learn regardless of his/her knowledge, age, language, skills or location.

NorQuest will offer a wider range of programs in a wider range of sectors to a wider range of communities. The College will maintain its strong foundational education offerings, and build on its provincially-recognized health career curriculum and growing expertise in human services, business and industry. New and expanded programs will reflect and serve the needs of individuals, workplaces and communities within NorQuest's stewardship region, across Alberta and in other parts of Canada or the world. Technology will be increasingly vital to expanding access to NorQuest's programs and expertise.

Building on a strong foundation, the College will intensify its focus on education leading to careers and on recruiting students interested in attaining career credentials. NorQuest will sustain its recognized expertise in supporting students with unique learning needs, disabilities, cultural and language challenges, and other groups under-represented in post-secondary education. Innovation stimulated by applied research, synergy derived from collaboration and NorQuest's Centres for Excellence will drive diversification.

WHAT WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED

- Diversify NorQuest's areas of program expertise to reflect market conditions and demands
- Attract and serve a greater number of students seeking career credentials
- Expand and enhance education delivery models and methods
- Attract faculty and staff who reflect the diversity of students NorQuest serves
- Expand public and private sources of funding support
- Increase community and business partnerships in the development and delivery of NorQuest programs and services

HOW SUCCESS WILL BE MEASURED

- Diversity of learner profiles
- Range of career credentials offered and granted
- Variety of educational delivery methods and access points
- Learner satisfaction with educational opportunities, service and supports
- Community/stakeholder satisfaction with access to quality educational opportunities
- Mix of funding and revenue sources
- Productivity of regional program delivery partnerships





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Printed in Canada – June 2009
9186-001-01.09

