

A large, colorful, pixelated graphic that fills the lower two-thirds of the page. It consists of a grid of small squares in various colors including blue, green, yellow, red, purple, and grey, creating a mosaic effect.

**BUILDING
EDMONTON
REGION'S
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE**

NorQuest
COLLEGE



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Message from the Board Chair and President

NorQuest College is poised to make significant gains in fulfilling its role as the Edmonton region's community college during 2010-2014, despite fiscal constraints that will moderate the pace of progress during most of this period.

With a continued commitment to our strategic priorities of enhanced presence, growth and diversification, our plan is to build on the significant organizational capacity that has been created over the past three years. We will focus on leveraging our traditional strengths to enhance our academic capacity, allowing us to expand and diversify our offerings and transform NorQuest College into a comprehensive post-secondary college. With a roadmap in hand and priorities identified, we are confident that during the next four years we will prepare NorQuest to realize our full potential. At the end of the day, learners will find more career-centred program opportunities at the College, a clearer path for their studies – within NorQuest or leading to another institution – and a greater sense of a post-secondary learning environment.

The College has developed strategies to address the fiscal reality of 2009-2010 and the budgetary environment we expect in 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 as a result of the Government of Alberta's commitment to balance the provincial budget by 2012-2013. We will slow down our plans in the next two years, while maintaining our focus on our long-term goals in alignment with our strategic plan. Although demand for our programs continues to rise, we need to align enrolment projections with the available funding. We will pursue a strategy of diversifying our sources of revenue, and continue to implement cost-reductions and operational efficiencies. At the same time, we will continue to protect our services and supports to students, recognizing that these are critical to the success of many of our learners.

The College has wholly embraced the philosophy of Campus Alberta and is excited by the opportunities presented by our role as the regional steward for the Edmonton region. The College will continue to build partnerships at the local level to identify needs and priorities and to improve access for all to Campus Alberta. We will also advocate for resources to ensure the College's success as a regional steward.

We will continue to press ahead with our vision for a downtown campus that will support the college's growth and its future as a full-service community college. Our first priority is the construction of a new learning centre to accommodate the growing demand for programs, and enhance our presence as Edmonton's community college. The project will support program delivery across the entire NorQuest region. We are optimistic that within this business plan period the Alberta government will be in a position to approve such a project, and we will be ready to break ground when they are.

NorQuest College is an institution with a heart, and we will not lose sight of this as we steer through some challenging years ahead. We remain committed to offering high-quality educational programs, and to the uniquely supportive environment that is the hallmark of this College. That environment is one of the main reasons that 96 per cent of our graduates successfully move on to employment or further education or training. This business plan is about evolution, and it reflects a conscious decision to carefully keep intact the essence of who we are.

This business plan for four years commencing July 1, 2010 was prepared in accordance with the *Post-secondary Learning Act* and the *Government Accountability Act*.



W. Shilling

Dr. Wayne Shillington
President & CEO

Wendy Kinsella

Wendy Kinsella
Chair, Board of Governors

NorQuest – a Community College of the Future

NorQuest has fully embraced the principles of Campus Alberta whereby the post-secondary system works together to deliver seamless learning opportunities for Albertans. NorQuest's Strategic Plan lays out the priorities and strategies we are committed to in order to realize the College's potential as a community college.

Partnerships with communities in the region and other learning institutions will be the key to NorQuest's success. As a partner in Campus Alberta, NorQuest will collaborate with other post-secondary institutions to create a learner-centred, seamless post-secondary system that enables Albertans 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 Edmonton region.

It is a high priority for us that the College's programs and services be relevant and responsive to the needs of learners, employers and communities. NorQuest will provide programs and program delivery methods to support the needs of a diverse student population with a wide range of career and learning needs and priorities. NorQuest's areas of expertise have evolved into centres for excellence, enabling the College to show leadership in these areas provincially and nationally through applied research, helping drive innovation that benefits its communities.

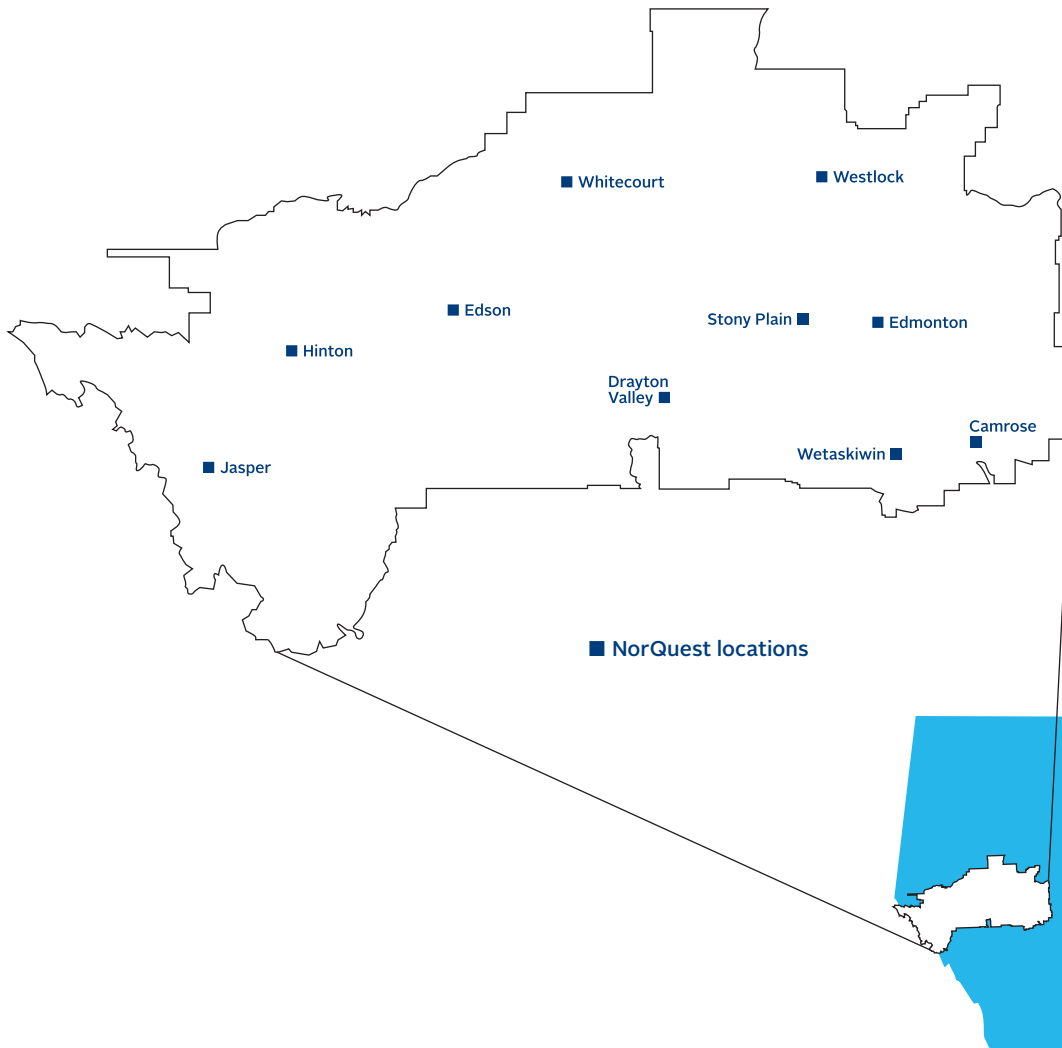
NorQuest's role as a community college will be characterized by:

- 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

Four dimensions will shape NorQuest's future as a comprehensive a community college:

- career education
- foundational education
- regional stewardship
- applied research

NorQuest Regional Stewardship Map



NORQUEST HAS 10,000 STUDENTS A YEAR

Career Education

NorQuest's post-secondary programming will expand to fulfil its mandate as a comprehensive community college. NorQuest will provide a broad range of career programs and will serve a diverse profile of career-oriented learners. Diplomas, certificates – and in the future, applied degrees – will provide individuals with the advanced skills required to meet workforce needs and contribute to a globally competitive knowledge-based economy. We are aligning NorQuest's current programming within the Alberta post-secondary system and have completed a roadmap to achieve the College's mandate and role within the system. Meanwhile, we have also initiated discussions with other post-secondary institutions in Alberta to explore laddering and collaborative program opportunities.

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, including 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, including in particular the unique needs of immigrants, Aboriginals and persons with disabilities in their efforts to contribute to their communities and the economy.

Regional Stewardship

As a community college, NorQuest is responsible for providing access to post-secondary education opportunities for nearly 1.3 million people living in rural and urban communities in its stewardship region. The Edmonton region encompasses communities from Camrose to the east and Jasper to the west, and Whitecourt in the north to Wetaskiwin in the south.

NorQuest will work with community-based adult learning partners to meet literacy and foundational learning needs, and with other post-secondary institutions to ensure access to the full spectrum of Campus Alberta learning opportunities in both urban and rural areas across the region.

Applied Research

In 2010, the Alberta government introduced Alberta Innovates, a new system to serve as a catalyst for innovation, investment and collaboration. In Budget 2010 there was acknowledgement and support for the contribution resulting from applied research activities to community and business sustainability and capacity building. There is also support at the federal level for applied research.

NorQuest will contribute to this growing role of applied research. NorQuest will provide research leadership at the provincial and national levels through its centres for excellence in:

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

This business plan identifies the strategies the College will implement to address these expectations between 2010 and 2014.

Trends Influencing NorQuest's Planning

The following trends are considered in the College 2010-2014 business plan:

Policy Environment

Alberta government policies and priorities constitute a significant force in NorQuest's environment as most of NorQuest's funding for operations and for students is dependent on provincial policies and strategies.

Campus Alberta

Through Campus Alberta, the Government of Alberta is promoting the development of a comprehensive, integrated, learner-centric network of institutions and services for all Albertans. It aims to increase learners' ease of entry into and movement within the advanced education system, create more flexible learning opportunities, and provide learners with the tools they need to succeed in their chosen learning pathway.

NorQuest has in fact been evolving for several years toward its role within Campus Alberta as a comprehensive community college. NorQuest's capacity to continue its development as a community college is dependent on:

- program approval and funding
- the mandate of other post-secondary institutions within the system
- its evolving role as a regional steward

Funding for institutions and learners

The 2010 Alberta government budget puts short-term constraints on the College:

- The Advanced Education and Technology (AET) budget plan shows decreased funding this year and next year, then a slight increase in 2012-2013. AET has been consistently supporting the College's expansion of post-secondary credentials through its Enrolment Planning Envelope (EPE) funding in recent years.
- Currently, nearly 70 per cent of NorQuest's students rely on the Alberta Employment and Immigration Alberta Works program to provide the funding they require to pursue their education. While the economic slowdown has increased demand, the funding available for Alberta Works grants to students was insufficient to meet demand in 2009 and has been reduced in the 2010 budget.
- The Alberta government's recent budget provided the health sector with increased funding for the next five years. The long-term trends indicate a strong demand for health-care workers and related services.
- Almost every ministry has policy documents and a section in their business plan to show support for the Government of Alberta's goal to improve the economic and social well-being of Aboriginal Albertans. Approximately one in five NorQuest students identify themselves as Aboriginal.

International students and new immigrants

The Alberta government has identified international students studying in Alberta as a target group to meet the need for skilled workers immigrating to Canada.

Alberta Advanced Education and Technology has developed an International Education Framework that:

- enhances Campus Alberta attractiveness for international students and provides more co-ordinated marketing overseas
- increases international student enrolment at Campus Alberta institutions
- clearly demonstrates that learning spaces for international students are structured on a cost-recovery basis and do not displace Albertans

It is anticipated that immigration rates to Canada will be maintained at current levels as the Canadian birthrate remains below the population replacement rate. Canada and Alberta have both acknowledged the need to improve the integration of skilled immigrants into the workforce. In recent years, the federal government has increased its investments in programs to support integration of new immigrants into the workforce.

Alberta Innovates

The Alberta government has launched an Alberta Innovates agenda to which Alberta post-secondary institutions are expected to contribute. While research has historically been the purview of universities, the intent of Alberta Innovates and the expectation of Advanced Education and Technology, places more of a responsibility on Alberta colleges and technical institutions to contribute to the achievement of the future knowledge economy in Alberta.

Through recent federal government research grant announcements, it appears that opportunities may exist on the national stage in relation to this agenda as well.

NorQuest will be expected to contribute to this growing role of research at universities and colleges through areas such as applied research, including the NorQuest centres for excellence.

60% OF NORQUEST STUDENTS ARE BORN OUTSIDE CANADA

Economic Trends

The state of the economy is a significant factor in many of the decisions that affect post-secondary education. Students make decisions based upon the availability of employment and their ability to make the necessary financial investments in post-secondary education.

Alberta Economy – Short-Term Perspective

In 2009 Alberta experienced the largest losses of employment of all the provinces and territories:

- employment losses in the current downturn were concentrated at the low end of the pay and tenure scale
- higher levels of education have been associated with more stable employment during economic downturns
- working-age men and women with a high school education or less experienced the greatest employment losses
- employment declined significantly for immigrants who landed within the last five years
- Aboriginal people aged 25 to 54 experienced employment losses at a rate double that of the non-Aboriginal population

All of these factors contributed to an unprecedented increase in applications to NorQuest. Unfortunately, most applicants were unable to access the government financial assistance they required to pursue their career education.

Long-Term Perspective

Recovery from the global economic crisis is expected to be well underway in 2010 with rising energy prices and stronger exports:

- Alberta's real economic growth is expected to return to about 3 per cent over the medium term
- Economic growth in Canada is expected to recover to 2.7 per cent in 2010
- Alberta's employment is forecast to recover moderately in 2010, but the unemployment rate is expected to remain above the levels in recent years due to continued growth in the labour force
- with the economic recovery gaining momentum, employment is projected to record solid growth between 2011 and 2013 and unemployment rates are expected to drop to 4.6 per cent by 2013
- The Government of Alberta does not expect large surpluses in the future, largely due to long-term depressed North American prices for natural gas

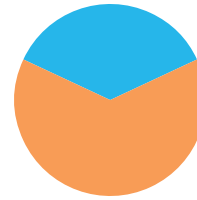
Social Trends: Demographics

The following demographic indicators are drawn from Advanced Education and Technology's Alberta Access Planning Framework:

Population

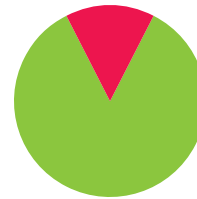
- Canada's and Alberta's populations are aging:
 - 37.5 per cent of Alberta's population in 2008 was over 45 years old
 - the proportion is forecast to rise to 41.3 per cent by 2018
- The population of the primary age group for post-secondary attendees (age 18-34 years):
 - is forecast to climb until 2013, reaching a provincial peak of 899,855 people before starting to decline around 2014
 - is expected to decline by 2.3 per cent in the Edmonton region between 2008 and 2018
- Despite the short-term rise in unemployment, the long-term workforce trend is unchanged
 - requiring increased participation from under-represented groups and skilled immigrants

NorQuest has one of the largest stewardship regions in the province in terms of geographic area (over 61,700 km²) and population (1.3 million). Nearly all the population in NorQuest's stewardship region lives near an existing campus or regional learning site.



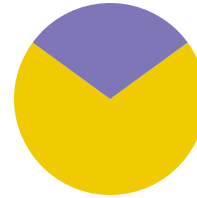
Alberta's Population Served

- NorQuest's Stewardship Region (1.3 million – 36%)
- Alberta – other (64%)



NorQuest Stewardship Region Breakdown

- Capital Region (1.1 million – 15%)
- Rural (85%)



Capital Region Breakdown

- City of Edmonton (77,000 – 30%)
- Other Capital Region communities (70%)

Post-Secondary Participation

Using a model of unchanged post-secondary participation rates, Alberta Advanced Education and Technology forecasts a system increase of approximately 15,500 FLEs to 2017-2018. Using a model of increasing participation rates, the enrolment increase would be approximately 25,000 FLEs to 2017-2018. Significant improvements in high school to post-secondary transition rates and student attraction and retention will be required to achieve the higher growth target. In the Edmonton region only 41.5 per cent currently transition from high school to post-secondary within four years while 61.3 per cent transition within six years.

The low participation rates among under-represented populations (Aboriginal people, low-income people, and people in rural areas) mean potential students are available if higher ratios of these students register in post-secondary programs. As a community college, NorQuest must ensure opportunities exist for increased post-secondary participation by these groups.

Over 40 per cent of Canadians have literacy skills less than Level 3; however, this population is among the least likely to seek post-secondary education. The top three most frequently cited challenges to participation in literacy programming in 2007 were:

- financial barriers (83%)
- other barriers, e.g., time, stress, family commitments (78%)
- distance barriers (77%)

A strong association exists between literacy skills and economic performance. There is also a clear relationship between literacy level and employability. The Government of Alberta has identified the importance of developing a knowledge economy for the province, and the knowledge-economy workforce requires a literacy standard above Level 3.

Technological and Environmental Trends

The sweeping technological and environmental changes today will change the skill-sets required in the future workforce, as well as the approach to work in general. Post-secondary institutions are charged with contributing new solutions and preparing individuals to take their place in the workforce and society.

Technology and Workforce of the Future (Knowledge Economy)

Technology is enabling multi-modal teaching, changing curricula and spawning rich forms of online research and collaboration. Online-collaboration tools, software that supports individually paced learning, and learning-management systems are among the communications technologies expected to improve access to learning over the next five years. While the importance of being on the leading edge of technology is increasing, post-secondary institutions struggle with rising costs of technology for teaching and learning as well as administration.

Corporate Social Responsibility

As a community college, NorQuest will have a strong corporate social responsibility strategy and will be a leader in transforming the communities it serves.

Institutional Context

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.



Mandate

NorQuest College is a board-governed public college operating as a Comprehensive Community Institution under the authority of the *Post-secondary Learning Act of Alberta*. With campuses and learning sites across the Edmonton region, NorQuest enhances access to educational opportunities through its role as regional steward.

NorQuest provides high-quality learning opportunities that prepare graduates for careers and further studies in business, industry, health sciences, human services, early learning and education, and information, communication and design technologies. A leader in enhancing access to post-secondary education, the College is widely recognized for its foundational learning opportunities in academic upgrading, adult literacy, employment readiness and English as a Second Language education. Credentials granted by the College include certificates, diplomas, and applied degrees.

NorQuest students experience unique educational opportunities in a vibrant and supportive environment that is responsive to changing learner needs and dedicated to learner access and success. Faculty and staff are committed to academic excellence and to enriching co-curricular student life opportunities. At NorQuest, learners from diverse educational, cultural, and social backgrounds can achieve their personal and career goals and enhance their lives. 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.

As a Comprehensive Community Institution with regional stewardship responsibilities, NorQuest engages community partners to meet literacy and foundational learning needs and ensures access to a full spectrum of post-secondary learning opportunities. In rural and urban communities throughout the region, the College opens pathways for lifelong learning.

NorQuest is an active partner in Campus Alberta, collaborating with other post-secondary institutions, governments, business, and community agencies to enhance educational opportunities, strengthen the Alberta knowledge economy, and address the economic, societal, and cultural needs for education regionally and provincially.

NorQuest delivers educational opportunities to people where they live and work. The College provides flexible alternatives in both credit and non-credit programming, including transfer credits, career laddering, recognition of prior learning, bridging, general studies, and part-time study. Workforce training is customized to meet specific needs in communities and workplaces. Through our partnership with eCampusAlberta and other innovative distributed learning alternatives, the College serves students across Alberta, throughout Canada and around the world.

NorQuest is committed to enhancing teaching and learning through applied research that informs its academic programming and builds capacity in the communities it serves. The College's centres for excellence are engaged nationally and locally with partners in business, industry, government and communities, to develop innovative solutions to social and technological challenges.

NorQuest College contributes to a strong Alberta economy by developing the skilled workforce that both public and private sector employers require. Educated in an environment that emphasizes critical thinking, experiential learning, technology integration and intercultural competence, graduates of NorQuest College are global citizens and valued contributors in their communities.

Business Model Principles

Learner Centred

- 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, 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





Our Relationship with Government

NorQuest College's directions and priorities are fully aligned with the Government of Alberta's vision for post-secondary education and quality of life in Alberta. NorQuest's plans for targeted growth and expansion are directly aligned with four of the five Government of Alberta priorities.

- NorQuest is renowned for equipping graduates with the advanced skills required in today's communities and workplaces.
 - NorQuest's expertise in English language and intercultural education, academic development, Aboriginal education, literacy and supports for persons with disabilities enables students to create pathways toward their chosen careers.
 - NorQuest contributes significantly to the Alberta government's target to double the number of licensed practical nurse graduates by 2012 and to advance the quality of continuing and supportive care for aging Albertans.
- NorQuest is active in Campus Alberta. Its programs are delivered regionally and province-wide to learners where they live and work. Programs and services that respond to the needs and priorities of residents, businesses and communities are NorQuest's focus. As one of Alberta's 11 community colleges, NorQuest in its regional stewardship role works with post-secondary partners to ensure access to quality educational opportunities in the Edmonton region.
 - Through applied research, NorQuest supports the Government of Alberta's innovation agenda. NorQuest has established centres for excellence in Print Media, Intercultural Education, Aboriginal Learning, Education for Continuing Care, and Learner Supports. The five centres integrate education and applied research activities to support innovation in the workplace as well as in the classroom.

Alberta Priority: Strong Communities

Promote strong and vibrant communities and reduce crime so Albertans feel safe:

- NorQuest graduates are well equipped to address skill and capacity demands in their communities and contribute to the economic and social sustainability of these communities.
- Program expansions in human services careers, including child care, Aboriginal community support and policing will contribute to career choices that support this priority.
- NorQuest provides educational access to all adult students who are motivated to learn, no matter what their challenges or barriers.
- The Centre for Excellence in Learner Supports provides specifically designed supports for students with disabilities, and advocates for inclusive and accessible workplaces and communities.
- NorQuest assists in community capacity-building and rural community sustainability through applied research and regional stewardship.

Alberta Priority: A Healthy Approach

Increase access to quality health care and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of health care service delivery:

- NorQuest is a Canadian leader in practical nurse education. Continued expansion of the program directly addresses the Alberta government's target to double the number of licensed practical nurse graduates in Alberta, adding 1,000 graduates by 2012.
- NorQuest's Centre for Excellence in Education for Continuing Care makes important contributions to improved and safer care for Alberta seniors. The centre designs, develops, implements and evaluates educational programming for the continuing care sector, supporting Alberta's Aging in the Right Place strategy and the desire to maximize independence and enhance quality of life.
- The Health Care Aide program is being delivered in workplaces and in rural communities.
- Other health programs – Pharmacy Technician, Physical Therapy Assistant, Therapeutic Recreation, Mental Health Rehabilitation – contribute to the growing team of health care professionals.

NORQUEST HAS OVER 500 STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Alberta Priority: Creating Opportunity

Enhance value-added activity, increase innovation and build a skilled workforce to improve the long-run sustainability of Alberta's economy:

- Alberta's strategy for Building and Educating Tomorrow's Workforce is supported by NorQuest's concerted efforts to graduate individuals with the advanced skills and attributes required in progressive workplaces and a global labour market.
- NorQuest works diligently to build a skilled workforce that supports Alberta communities by providing access to quality education opportunities that meet a range of career education priorities. NorQuest contributes qualified, credentialed workers to the health care, human services, business and industry sectors.
- Populations that are currently identified as under-represented in the Alberta labour force benefit from NorQuest's expertise in providing learning opportunities for those with unique needs and challenges, including Aboriginal people, persons with disabilities and new immigrants.
- NorQuest respects and honours its Aboriginal learners with a complete education that balances strong academic foundations with cultural sensitivity. The Centre for Excellence in Aboriginal Learning focuses on developing relationships with the Aboriginal community to facilitate provision of unique learning opportunities for Aboriginal learners, enabling them to achieve their academic and career potential. These initiatives contribute to the Government of Alberta's goal to increase the total off-reserve labour force of Alberta's Aboriginal people to 98,800 by 2016.

- Enabling new Canadians to fully contribute to the Alberta workforce and their communities is a priority for NorQuest through its Centre for Excellence in Intercultural Education. The Centre uses applied research to identify and create practical solutions to solve intercultural and immigrant integration challenges.
- NorQuest's Centre for Excellence in Print Media supports innovation in Western Canada's print industry by introducing new technologies and enabling businesses to become more competitive. Graduates serve as catalysts for change within organizations and ultimately within the industry. The Centre for Excellence in Print Media is an approved service provider under the new Innovation Voucher Pilot Program.

Alberta Priority: Building Tomorrow

Provide the roads, schools, hospitals and other public infrastructure to meet the needs of a growing economy and population:

- NorQuest has shown an average annual growth of more than 5 per cent since 2004 and although enrolment has dropped due to the current funding pressures in 2009-2010, it is expected to continue to increase at that rate in the long run. While student numbers are growing and NorQuest continues to make improvements, corresponding investments in infrastructure, learning environments, learning technologies and student services are not keeping pace with growth. To meet the longer-term needs of Albertans, NorQuest's Downtown Campus Development Project is proceeding toward the detailed design phase with expectations for bid documents to be ready in the first half of 2011. If the government approves this project, it is possible that the new building could be completed within this business planning period.

Strategic Priorities

Over the next decade, NorQuest College will be guided by three priority strategic directions: enhanced presence, growth and diversification.

Enhanced Presence

Broad recognition of the quality of a NorQuest education is critical to our continued 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 respond proactively. 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 in the post-secondary sector, will enhance the College's ability to secure the community, financial and government support needed to ensure every student has an excellent educational experience. When they recognize the difference NorQuest's expertise can make to them, individuals, businesses, communities and NorQuest alumni are inclined to take advantage of opportunities to support NorQuest directions.

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 will 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.

NorQuest will increase access to quality education opportunities, build depth and strength in career and foundational education, and develop an incubator for innovation through applied research, while serving an increasing number of learners within its stewardship region and beyond. The College will also create environments and institute practices and methods that advance teaching, learning and student success.



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 or her knowledge, age, language, skills or location.

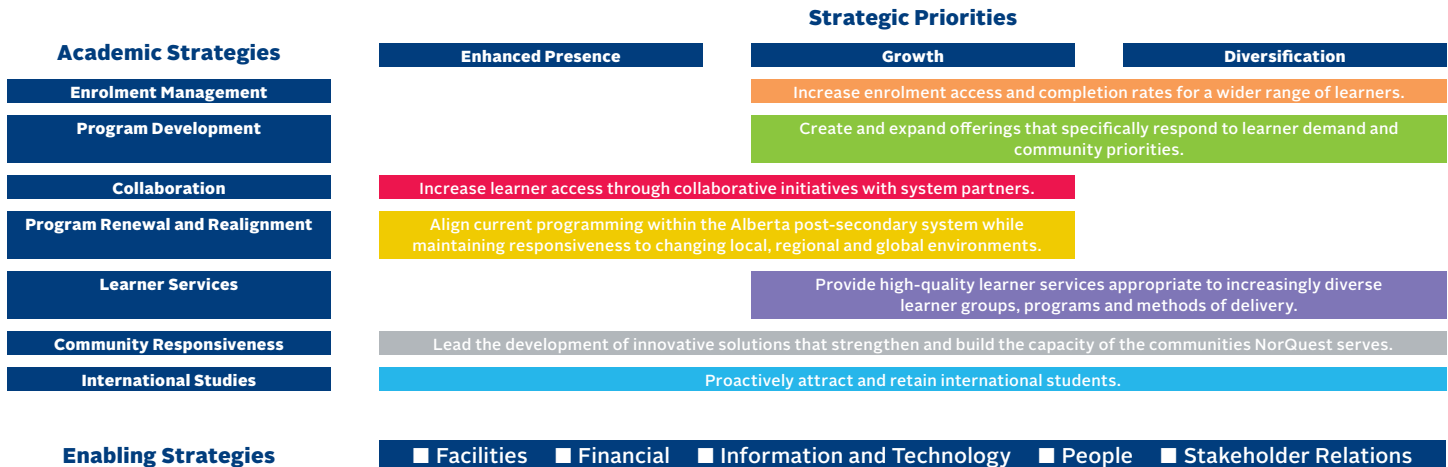
NorQuest will offer a wider range of programs in a wider range of sectors to a wider range of communities. The College will maintain its strong foundational education offerings and build on its provincially recognized health career curriculum and growing expertise in human services, business and industry. 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.

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. NorQuest will drive diversification through innovation stimulated by applied research, synergy derived from collaboration, and the College's own centres for excellence.



2010 – 2014 Academic and Enabling Strategies

To achieve its longer-term strategic priorities, NorQuest College will pursue the academic and enabling strategies outlined in the following two sections. All of these will guide our operations over the four-year term of this business plan.



Academic Strategies

Teaching and learning are the core of what NorQuest College does and therefore it is appropriate that our academic strategies are closely linked with our strategic priorities, as illustrated below:

Enrolment Management

Goal

Increase enrolment access and completion rates for a wider range of learners.

Measure

- Increase in completion rate.
- Increase in student retention rate.
- Achievement of enrolment targets.

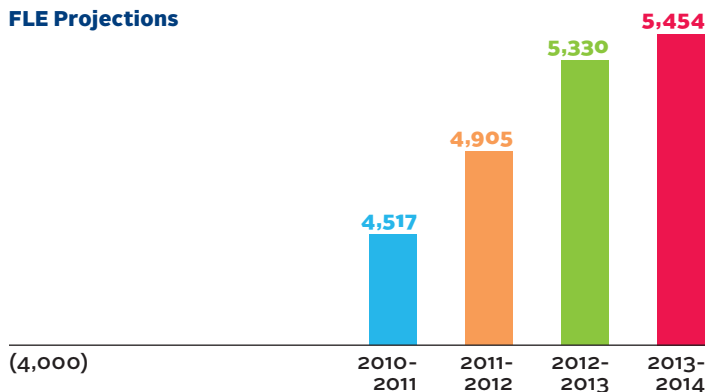
Overview

With an increasingly diverse population mix in Edmonton and the surrounding region, NorQuest's expertise will serve as an advantage as it becomes more essential to direct resources to meet the needs of learners and fulfil expectations in the marketplace. With multiple modes of delivery and open learner pathways, learners will have a full range of options to enable them to reach their educational and career goals. Relationship-building and recruitment and retention initiatives will further increase the College's learner completion rates.

Strategies

- Develop and implement a focused recruitment strategy.
- Develop and implement retention strategies.
- Strengthen expedited educational pathways for learners in foundational programs.
- Expand access to learning opportunities within NorQuest's stewardship region.

FLE Projections



In 2009-2010, the College saw a dramatic reduction of FLEs due to an unexpected cap on funding through the Skills Investment Plan. The 2010-2011 projection of 4,517 FLEs again reflects a decrease in the level of funding for students provided through that plan. The College will maintain the level of FLEs in foundational programs at the 2009-2010 level and will grow enrolment in post-secondary programs. The College will also focus on attracting more self-funded students and decreasing its reliance on government funding to maintain enrolment. In 2011-2012 and beyond, this focus and the expected return of government investment in post-secondary education should return enrolment levels to those seen in previous years.

Program Development

Goal

Create and expand offerings that specifically respond to learner demand and community priorities.

Measure

- Increase in student satisfaction rate.
- Increased student success.

Overview

With an increasingly diverse population mix in Edmonton, the region and the province, NorQuest's expertise in addressing varied needs will give us an advantage in meeting the changing needs of learners and fulfilling market expectations as we invest in new programming within the next four years. Program development will focus on new post-secondary certificates, diplomas and post-diploma specializations, as well as new pathways in foundational programming.

Strategies

- Refine the credit program approval process.
- Develop a strategy to build capacity for non-credit offerings.
- Develop programming to address gaps in learner pathways.
- Ensure NorQuest's diversity of learner profile is reflected in our curriculum and programming.
- Develop a strategy for distributed learning.

Program Renewal and Realignment

Goal

Align current programming within the Alberta post-secondary system while maintaining responsiveness to changing local, regional and global environments.

Measure

- Increase in student satisfaction rate.
- Increased student success.

Overview

Through a continuous quality assurance process for program life-cycle management – from integrated approval process to program evaluation review – programs at NorQuest College will be high quality and maintain currency and relevance in today's global environment. Aligning programs to the standard post-secondary credential framework means that alternative and flexible open learner pathways and laddering opportunities for learners become more accessible.

Strategies

- Align programs with a standard post-secondary credential framework.
- Implement a comprehensive evidence-based faculty development plan targeted to enhance quality of teaching and learning.
- Employ optimal technologies to enhance the teaching and learning experience.
- Develop an integrated and comprehensive program evaluation process to ensure programs remain relevant and viable.
- Develop distributed learning products, supports and services.

Collaboration

Goal

Increase learner access through collaborative initiatives with system partners.

Measure

- Increased learner pathways.
- Increased participation in eCampus.

Overview

NorQuest College will strengthen collaborative initiatives with system partners to respond to market-driven demand for programs and learning opportunities. Campus Alberta principles will be demonstrated as NorQuest continues to create flexible learning opportunities through eCampus, brokered programs, transfer arrangements, hybrid learning models and other options.

Strategies

- Lead the development of partnerships with other institutions to provide learners with laddering opportunities to further post-secondary study.
- Increase collaborative program offerings and applied research opportunities to leverage knowledge and resources.
- Collaborate with other post-secondary institutes to facilitate offerings to meet the needs of learners in their communities.

21% OF NORQUEST STUDENTS ARE OF ABORIGINAL ANCESTRY

Learner Services

Goal

Provide high-quality learner services appropriate to increasingly diverse learner groups, programs and methods of delivery.

Measure

- Increased student satisfaction rate with student services and learner supports.
- Increased student retention rate.

Overview

NorQuest recognizes that a learner-centred organization is a contributor to student success. With the presence of diverse learner groups and programs able to accommodate the range of learner styles, providing a high standard of integrated learner services and enhancing the student life experience will be key to increased student success. Universal design principles will be apparent throughout the student experience including student supports and student engagement activities.

Strategies

- Develop and implement an innovative approach to student services and supports that incorporates universal design, intercultural competence, information literacy and student empowerment principles.
- Enhance and expand student services to meet the needs of changing learner demographics and more closely align with post-secondary services.
- Enhance student engagement through implementation of student life strategy.

Community Responsiveness

Goal

Lead the development of innovative solutions that strengthen and build the capacity of the communities NorQuest serves.

Measure

- Increase in third party contract revenues.
- Increased faculty engagement in applied research.
- Increased participation within the Edmonton stewardship region.

Overview

Through applied research, innovative program delivery and design, entrepreneurial activity and capacity-building initiatives, NorQuest College will continue to build on its ability to serve its community of learners, in particular the comprehensive community institution stewardship region. The centres for excellence will further NorQuest's expertise in program development and response to workforce needs.

Strategies

- Collaborate with Community Adult Learning Councils, Regional Access Advisory Councils and Campus Alberta partners to increase learner opportunities in urban and rural areas.
- Lead the development of structures with community adult learning providers for increased foundational, transitioning, laddering and post-secondary opportunities.
- Support agencies serving immigrants and Aboriginal people to build educational capacity within their communities.
- Develop networks to support applied research.
- Support NorQuest's centres for excellence in research, innovation and sharing of resources.
- Increase entrepreneurial opportunities through third-party contracts with business partners and other organizations.

International Students

Goal

Proactively attract and retain international students.

Measure

- Achievement of international enrolment targets.
- Document number of international enquiries.

Overview

NorQuest College will proactively recruit and retain international students through collaborative initiatives within the Alberta post-secondary system and entrepreneurial activities with international partners and local business and industry.

Strategies

- Raise international awareness of NorQuest's programs through targeted marketing and recruitment efforts.
- Support processes for effective international student enrolment.
- Collaborate with other institutions in Alberta to facilitate effective transitions for international students within the education system.
- Explore and assess opportunities for partnerships with other post-secondary institutions around the world.

Enabling Strategies

The enabling strategies will achieve NorQuest's strategic priorities of enhanced presence, growth and diversification by supporting the academic strategies. People, physical environments, financial health, information and technology, and stakeholder relationships comprise the enabling strategies.

People

Goal

NorQuest College will be a people-centred organization that applies leading human resources practices as it fulfils its mandate in the post-secondary sector.

Measure

- Employee satisfaction and engagement.
- Employee attraction and retention.
- Assessment and achievement of desired leadership competencies.

Overview

People make NorQuest College successful. We recognize the importance of engaging our employees as we fulfil our mandate as a recognized post-secondary partner and leader in the education sector in Alberta. The College will foster a culture which reflects people-oriented values and which enables our employees to contribute their knowledge and expertise to shape the future of the College.

Strategies

- Develop capabilities and capacity to attract and retain the best people for the College.
- Streamline organizational structures to better provide services to students.

Physical Environments

Goal

NorQuest provides space, services and environments in which students and employees are inspired to succeed in our post-secondary community.

Measure

- Availability of physical environments to support learning and working requirements.
- Ability to support planned growth and process improvements.
- Ability to sustain operations while effectively supporting growth and development of College facilities.

Overview

Through the provision, operation and maintenance of buildings and building systems, the physical environments strategy supports the academic strategies by providing safe, effective learning and working environments. Across all its campuses in the NorQuest stewardship region, NorQuest will ensure that appropriate space is provided for both traditional and non-traditional teaching, working, student interaction and study space.

Strategies

- Secure space to meet planned growth and enrolment projections.
- Implement plans and initiatives to ensure NorQuest's business continuity and sustainability (social, ecological and economic).
- Implement plans and initiatives to address building system renewal and deferred maintenance.

Financial

Goal

NorQuest will achieve and maintain financial sustainability and fiduciary responsibility.

Measure

- Ratio of funding received from operating grants compared to other sources.
- Cost efficiencies achieved.
- Return on investment/sound financial information used to make business decisions.

Overview

NorQuest financial expertise supports the optimization of resources and processes to achieve our strategic goals. NorQuest will enhance financial reporting systems and financial analysis to proactively generate timely and accurate information that supports effective decision-making. NorQuest will also expand alternative funding sources and develop initiatives to reduce expenses.

Strategies

- Develop relevant financial models and financial analysis expertise for decision-making purposes.
- Ensure that growth is achieved through full funding.
- Diversify sources of revenue related to the core business.
- Implement evidence-based efficiency improvements.

Technology and Information Management

Goal

Technology and information management at NorQuest enables students and employees to achieve success and promotes teaching and learning in a post-secondary environment.

Measure

- Employee and student satisfaction with information and technology services.
- Increased efficiencies gained through the implementation of technology.
- Achievement of stability, security and capacity.

Overview

With improvements in information and technology stability, security and capacity, NorQuest can deliver the business and educational technology needed to meet the goals and objectives of the academic strategies; maintain current educational and business technology capabilities; and maximize the value of technology to the College.

Strategies

- Advance the use of technology in the delivery of instructor-student and employee collaboration.
- Leverage shared information technology services through partnerships and outsourcing.
- Strengthen our approach to information through improved consistency, security, accuracy and alignment to industry standards.
- Deliver strategic and operational plans for technology.

Stakeholder Relationships

Goal

As an essential member of Campus Alberta, NorQuest will develop and maintain effective and meaningful relationships with communities, industries, learners, other post-secondary institutions, and government to ensure the College is relevant and responsive to the needs of the communities we serve.

Measure

- Number and scale of partnerships and formal support from individuals, businesses and community organizations.
- Brand recognition indicators (e.g., reputation with employers).

Overview

NorQuest will become a key partner with all of the communities it serves. NorQuest will strengthen our positive reputation by connecting with the communities and labour markets that we support. We will reach out to people where they live, where they work, and within their cultural and socio-economic communities.

We will seek to understand the needs of our communities and respond with practical solutions. We will be considered as a key educational and community resource in meeting the needs of government, businesses, health providers and community organizations.

Strategies

- Increase the College's presence in the communities we serve.
- Develop and implement a regional stewardship model.
- Establish relationships in key sectors and communities in support of program development, learner needs and capacity development.
- Engage alumni to foster College development.

NorQuest Programs 2010-2011

Diploma

Business Administration
(brokered from Grande Prairie Regional College)

Digital Graphics Communications
(brokered from SAIT)

Mental Health Rehabilitation

Pharmacy Technician

Physical Therapy Assistant

Practical Nurse

Practical Nurse with an Aboriginal Focus

Practical Nurse Diploma for Internationally
Educated Nurses

Social Work

Therapeutic Recreation

Certificate

Aboriginal Community Support Worker

Aboriginal Policing and Security

Administrative Professional

Advanced Education in Orthopedics for LPNs

Building Service Worker

Facility Services and Management

Health Care Aide

Hospital Unit Clerk

Preparation For Employment or Further Education

Adult Upgrading

Aboriginal University/College Transition

Academic Upgrading Grades 7 to 12

Adult Literacy Grades 1 to 6

Ben Calf Robe Upgrading

Preparation for Academics, Careers or Employment

Employment Preparation

Apprenticeship Prep

Career Options for New Canadians

Day Home Provider

Job Opportunities for Building Success

Skills for Employment
(pending approval)

Transitional Vocational Program

English Language Training

Bridge to Health Care Aide

Bridge to Transit Operator

English as a Second Language (ESL) Intensive

ESL Bridge to Business Careers

Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)

Youth in Transition

Capital Plan

Edmonton Campus in the Longer Term

Essential to NorQuest College's long-term development strategy is the addition of a new learning centre at the Downtown Campus. This facility will allow the College to consolidate programs and meet future enrolment growth. The Downtown Campus Development Project includes new construction to accommodate enrolment growth, replace leased and outdated facilities, and refurbish two College-owned facilities built in 1961 and 1971.

In 2008, NorQuest worked with the Government of Alberta to prepare a Downtown Campus Development Project business case. The next phase of that planning, the development of a detailed design, will be completed during 2009-2010. NorQuest's project will be "shovel ready" when the project is prioritized for funding by the Alberta government.

Existing facilities are cramped and unable to accommodate further growth; some are not conducive to learning. Long-term facility capacity pressures include:

- High levels of future enrolment growth based on long-term demand for NorQuest programs and services.
- The need to meet post-secondary standards for core student spaces to study and interact.
- Exceptionally high levels of deferred maintenance for the owned facilities.
- Aging facilities and building systems. These are costly to operate and maintain. They impede both functionality and flexibility and are inefficient compared to modern teaching environments.

Edmonton Campus in the Shorter Term

NorQuest's facilities are dispersed in several leased locations throughout Edmonton. Dispersed facilities increase the cost of delivering equitable services to students in all our learning locations.

Compared to other Alberta post-secondary institutions, utilization of NorQuest facilities continues to be among the highest in the system. Until the planned new construction is completed, interim solutions and retrofit plans are being implemented to optimize space utilization and alleviate immediate space shortages. Of particular concern is a lack of space for students to gather and study. Plans to address immediate facility concerns include a retrofit project funded under the Government of Canada's Knowledge Infrastructure Program. When fully implemented in 2010-2011, this project will help meet near-term needs around space optimization and student study and interaction space.

NorQuest Stewardship Region

Within NorQuest's stewardship region, the College has leased facilities located in Wetaskiwin, Stony Plain, Drayton Valley, Hinton, Edson, Whitecourt, Jasper, Westlock and Camrose. In 2010, NorQuest assumed responsibilities for delivery of programs and services provided by the Yellowhead Region Educational Consortium and the Pembina Educational Consortium. Both consortia had a mix of in-house and externally supplied information technology services and long-term leased facilities in numerous communities throughout NorQuest's stewardship region. During the term of this business plan, NorQuest will work with its communities to review current information technology services and facility arrangements and develop plans to meet current and future needs.

NorQuest's "Virtual Campus"

Technology-mediated learning is rapidly expanding at NorQuest. eCampus Alberta is creating a virtual campus for NorQuest as well as for other Alberta post-secondary institutions. Student demand is growing not only for course delivery but for a full-service virtual campus, which requires development of online, interactive learning resources and the implementation of a support model for distance students.

Student participation in campus life contributes to a successful and satisfying educational experience. This is true for virtual-campus students as well as for those studying on campus. Student engagement with their learning environment can be facilitated and enhanced through the use of technology. Examples include online access to library services and resources, lecture notes and recordings, exam results and College chat-rooms, to provide additional avenues for students to connect to College life while on or off campus.

Information Technology

NorQuest maintains a financial reserve allocated for maintenance and renewal of the College's information technology infrastructure. Enhancements to PeopleSoft (the enterprise resource solution implemented in 2009 and 2010), information security requirements, updating and extension of voice services, normalization of accessibility to College systems by students and staff, and adoption/upgrade of application systems will require a corresponding investment in new services. Such services may include wireless connectivity, collaboration and business continuity, as well as the modernization of security systems, processes, databases, workstations, networks, servers and storage across all campuses. With the addition of responsibility for the stewardship region, NorQuest intends to provide the same integrated suite of information technology services and processes to the

regional learning sites. Unfortunately, high infrastructure maintenance and renewal costs mean that planned improvements will need to stretch over several years for both the existing campuses and regional learning sites. However, in order to facilitate the meaningful integration of the regions from NorQuest's perspective, an upfront incremental investment in key enabling information technology is required in 2010-2011.

Additionally, there is a need to consider the effect of increased distance learning on technology infrastructure requirements. Distance learning requires that the College consider the technology needs at regional locations as well as the ability to deliver courses that contain complex technologies such as video streaming, video conferencing, lecture capture, and other technologies that are in development.

Preservation and Restoration

Each year NorQuest College improves its capital infrastructure to address the impact of growth, augment functionality and reduce deferred maintenance. Government funding for facility maintenance continues to fall short of the amount needed to address mounting deferred maintenance needs. Moreover, funding for technology infrastructure must be allocated from the General Operations Grant or other College-generated revenue sources. NorQuest will continue to invest donated funds and grants to address these matters and to create quality infrastructure for effective teaching and learning in diverse delivery models.

Financial Plan

For 2010-2011, revenues decreased by \$4.7 million compared to the 2009-2010 budget. Two events occurred that forced us to revisit our 2010-2011 operational plans and adjust our operations accordingly. The first was the cap on the Alberta Works program that resulted in fewer foundational students this winter semester and for next year, resulting in a \$3.8 million reduction in tuition revenues. The other was the indication from the Alberta government that our grants will be at least \$1 million lower next year compared to 2009-2010.

To offset the revenue reductions, we were able to reduce expenses by about \$4.4 million. All divisions were asked to review their staffing plans; we also introduced the Workforce Adjustment Plan (early retirement program) in January 2010, and through a combination of these actions, costs were reduced by \$4.4 million. During the preparation of the 2010-2011 budget, all divisions were given expense targets and asked to reduce expenses. Salaries and benefits were reduced by \$3.9 million consisting of positions that were closed, implementation of an early retirement program, and reductions in faculty and staff due to reduced enrolments and funding. An additional \$1.1 million was found through reductions in budgets for supplies and services, professional development and offset by an increase in amortization of \$672,000.

NorQuest achieved these cost savings while integrating regional adult education sites and their staff and embracing our regional stewardship mandate. In addition, we honoured our labour relations agreements, and fulfilled our commitment to the post-secondary mandate and growing enrolments. The College is also absorbing cost pressures such as amortization and in-grid salary movement and increasing its post-secondary enrolment to meet commitments. Having fully embraced the comprehensive college mandate and with the commitment to its strategic plan, the College is moving forward with initiatives like post-secondary readiness and regional stewardship, and maintaining its investments in the future. It is also important to maintain the College's capital investments and assets.

As a result, NorQuest will manage the impact of reduced funding and will present a deficit of \$183,000 in its upcoming 2010-2011 operating budget, including regional stewardship.

Three-Year Financial Plan and Planning Assumptions

NorQuest College makes conservative assumptions in an effort to limit the impact of unpredictable circumstances and resource reallocation during the budget year.

The objectives of the 2010-2011 budget and three-year financial plan consider continued investment in curriculum development and sustainment initiatives, enrolment management, and capital assets. To offset the proposed deficit and the ongoing challenges of reduced funding, the College will be able to meet these objectives by utilizing its previously accumulated operating surpluses.



The 2010-2011 budget and three-year financial plan are based on the following assumptions:

- Total provincial operating grants decreased from 2009-2010 to 2010-2011.
- Growth in the PN program is sustainable and committed.
- Operating grants are not expected to increase in 2011-2012.
- Operating grants are expected to increase for 2012-2013 and 2013-2014.
- Tuition and fees have been established according to provincial guidelines and competitive constraints. Tuition and fees will increase by 1.5 per cent for each of 2010-2011 and the subsequent years.
- Enrolment is expected to remain constant beyond 2010-2011.
- Cash flow generated by operations must fully support operations and the renewal/sustainability of resources/assets, including reserves.
- Salaries reflect zero per cent COLA, and include annual step and performance increases.
- Targeted investment in projects for 2010-2011 is approximately \$2.7 million. Investment is allocated for:
 - development of technology to support disabled students
 - library collection
 - enhancement of the enterprise resource planning system
 - overall college technology renewal (evergreen strategy)
 - curriculum development
 - physical assets and infrastructure planning

Working with a deficit is not sustainable. In order to reduce the proposed deficit in the three-year financial plan, the College will develop a comprehensive plan to reduce our dependency on reserves and deficit budgets. Some of the initiatives that will be developed include:

- A Service Analysis Program to identify ways we can become more efficient and effective in our operations and reduce or eliminate our expenses.
- Optimize the program mix to ensure cost-effective and topical program offerings.
- Expand relationships with industry to further develop revenue-generating contracts.
- Review investment policy in order to optimize interest revenues.

2010 – 2014 Budget (\$'000)

	Budget		Budget Projections	
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Grants & Government Contributions	44,305	44,305	45,569	46,871
Tuition & Related Fees	15,368	15,599	15,833	16,070
Entrepreneurial Grants & Contracts	7,046	7,046	7,046	7,046
Other Sales, Services, Rental	2,754	2,809	2,865	2,922
Amortization of Deferred Capital Contributions	2,396	2,595	2,398	2,262
Investment Income	380	380	380	380
Donations & Contributions	639	639	639	639
Total Revenue	72,887	73,373	74,730	76,190
Salaries, Wages & Benefits	50,861	52,145	53,463	54,818
Professional Development	375	375	375	375
Utilities	848	865	882	900
Amortization Expense	4,961	5,308	5,268	4,895
Supplies & Services	16,026	16,025	16,037	16,064
Total Expense	73,071	74,718	76,025	77,052
Excess of Revenue over Expenses	(183)	(1,345)	(1,295)	(862)
Acquisition of Internally Funded Capital	(1,812)	(1,723)	(1,755)	(1,789)
Amortization Expense – Internally Funded	2,565	2,713	2,870	2,633
Appropriations to Reserves	(2,912)	(2,662)	(2,707)	(2,756)
Amount Expended	2,712	2,462	2,507	2,556
(Decrease) Increase in Unrestricted Net Assets	370	(555)	(380)	(218)
Opening Unrestricted Net Assets	2,806	3,176	2,621	2,241
Closing Unrestricted Net Assets	3,176	2,621	2,241	2,023
Internally Restricted Assets (Reserves)	3,700	3,900	4,100	4,300
Invested in Capital Assets	16,500	15,510	14,395	13,551
Endowment	2,547	2,547	2,547	2,547
Total Net Assets	25,923	24,578	23,283	22,421

Under NorQuest College's regional stewardship mandate, the Yellowhead Regional Educational Consortium and the Pembina Educational Consortium were merged into the College in 2009-2010. Employees were transitioned to the College on April 1, 2010 and assets on July 1, 2010. The 2010-2011 budget, and the budget projections for 2011-2012, 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 include revenues of \$3.76 million and expenses of \$3.94 million for former consortia operations.



NorQuest

COLLEGE





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