Strategic Plan
2006 - 2011

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Board of Governors

The Red River College Board of Governors sets the strategic directions for the College through the Strategic Plan.

As part of their oversight, the Board has confirmed a set of guiding principles for the College as it advances its vision and mission into the future:

Guiding Principles

• Achieve Financial Stability.
• Be a Centre of Excellence.
• Have linkages with high schools and universities.
• Have community learning centres.
• Offer advanced credentials.
• Be well-known and recognized.
• Be a post-secondary educational institution of choice.
• Be accessible to all.
• Be flexible in responding to changing needs.
• Be an employer of choice.

• Deliver comprehensive programming.
• Be a key partner in economic development.
• Offer multi-modal education.
• Be a leader in Aboriginal education.
• Be a leader in life-long learning.
• Be a leader in international education.

Red River College Board of Governors

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Going Places.
Red River College is “Going Places.” And so are our students, graduates and alumni. Through key benchmark quality measures – such as our student satisfaction rates, our graduate employment and satisfaction rates, the large number of accredited programs and our apprenticeship Red Seal pass rates – the college makes it mark as the leader in Canada. We have grown remarkably over the last five years, providing more learning opportunities for Manitobans. And they recognize this growth and value the College’s initiatives. But there is more to be done.

We have more students and more facilities yet we are at capacity and also have wait lists in many programs. Education is at the heart of our society and economy. The demand will continue to grow for post-secondary education in the near future. Parents and their children have high aspirations for attending post-secondary education, recognizing the importance of knowledge in the changing world. Adults already in the workplace need retraining and additional education to remain current with new technologies and to enhance their skills. At RRC we intend to be at the leading edge of applied learning in Canada into the future, delivering further opportunities for students.

This plan incorporates the vision and mission of our Board of Governors and the principles they have identified to pilot the College into the future. We have a strong, dedicated Board of Governors providing policy, strategic guidance and oversight.

We know the future is bright for the College, as for Manitoba. A future that will see the College continuing to help learners achieve their aspirations through expanded academic programming and research, improved facilities, student life initiatives, growing partnerships, financial strength and ongoing service to Manitobans.

The plan will guide the growth and development of RRC over the next five years. As our college advances in national leadership in applied learning and research, our strategic plan will provide focus and direction for our work. The vision and mission expressed in this plan provide the foundation for all of our strategies and activities. The values express our beliefs and standards for decision-making and action. The goals and objectives report the future focus of the College. The areas of strategic focus identify the priorities.

In a companion document, Red River College Operational Plan 2006-2011, strategies and actions provide specific directions for all members of the College community. Every year we also measure our performance to test how well we are doing in working towards our vision of the future. The annual strategic planning process itself is tied directly to budget preparation, financial management and the measurement of results.

Red River College is leading the way in transforming 21st Century college education and innovation.
**Context**

Red River College has a rolling five-year Strategic Plan.

The Plan is reviewed and renewed annually to ensure continuing relevancy. It is the fundamental basis for decision-making and sets the framework for all efforts at all levels of the institution.

The College recognizes the accelerating nature of change and the need to adapt and respond quickly. The College has adopted a consultative and data based strategic planning process to guide it into the future. Our process strives to be inclusive, flexible and adaptive.

Each year we:

- Identify and respond to the key trends that will have the greatest impact on us over the next five years;
- Revisit the vision, mission, goals and objectives;
- Articulate College-wide strategies and actions to achieve the vision, mission, and commitment (in the College’s Operational Plan); and
- Facilitate divisional and departmental operational plans, actions, evaluation and accountability, consistent with this plan.

Through this process we strive to encourage strategic thinking at all levels in the College and link the plan to the real world. While the document is a valuable tool for all of us, the planning process is even more valuable.

**2005 Process**

The review process for 2005 consisted of a comprehensive environmental scan and a Board of Governors Planning Session focusing on the long term future of the College.

The Scan identified and analyzed internal and external trends affecting the College.

The internal review included:
- Enrolments trends and projections,
- Revenue and expenditure trends,
- Financial challenges,
- Student characteristics,
- Graduate outcomes,
- RRC image in the community,
- Facilities & equipment, including health & safety,
- Student Support,
- Climate and culture, and
- Technology and systems.

The external scan included:
- Demography,
- The economy,
- Labour market trends,
- Public policy,
- Social/community trends,
- Technology, and
- Education and training trends.

The Scan was used as the basis for review and discussion of the opportunities for RRC into the future. A key new direction for RRC is the development of a growth strategy articulated in the Defining our future to 2010 and beyond document.

The 2006-2011 Strategic Plan is based and builds on the previous plans of the College.
Vision

Red River College is the leader in applied learning and innovation.

Mission

To enable students to build a career, enhance quality of life, and contribute to Manitoba’s economic and social prosperity through exceptional applied education and research.
Goals

Learning Quality:
The College is committed to providing a high quality learning experience to facilitate student success.

Growth:
Red River College will increase enrolments and participation rates in the college system by creating new, responsive programs, improving current programs and introducing innovative delivery methods to reduce barriers and facilitate access to education and training for Manitobans and meet the challenges of a changing economy.

Dynamic and Respectful Learning Environment:
The College will provide a safe, healthy workplace and a learning-centred environment that promotes peak performance and allows employees and students to participate and grow, respectful of each other and the diversity of the community and society.

Infrastructure Enhancement:
The College will provide a vibrant learning environment through the development and enhancement of its infrastructure including the facilities, equipment, systems and technology supporting the teaching and learning process.

Financial Strength:
The College will ensure the financial strength of the organization through government funding, fundraising and the development of business opportunities that advance the vision of the College.

Community:
The College will support and enhance the progress of Manitoba and its diverse, multicultural and Aboriginal heritage through public and community service arising from its learning focus and broad array of applied arts, science and technology programs.
Objectives

1. Deliver high quality programs and services that focus on the learner.

2. Increase student success.

3. Increase program offerings and ensure that programs and the mix of programming responds to the diverse and changing needs of Manitobans and the workplace.

4. Provide optimal accessibility to programs and services.

5. Recognize, strengthen and reward the capabilities and contributions of employees and support a respectful workplace.

6. Integrate information technology in the delivery, operation and management of all College programs and services.

7. Provide a safe and well-maintained environment for working and learning.

8. Continue the College’s participation in global education.

9. Strengthen collaboration and partnerships.

10. Achieve financial strength and stability by employing college resources strategically and developing diversified revenue sources.

11. Enhance the image and commitment of the College among staff, students, alumni and the external community.

12. Enhance the learning-centred focus, innovative and technologically advancing aspects of the College.
A Statement of Values

Advancing our vision and mission can only be fully accomplished through a clear statement of values.

Learning.
We cherish learning and have clear and high standards for learning for all members of the college community.

Respect.
We believe in honouring the worth of others by demonstrating fairness, courtesy and compassion.

Inclusiveness.
We believe in fostering a diverse community and striving for greater inclusiveness.

Integrity.
We maintain at all times the highest level of honesty, communication, cooperation and credibility in relationships and fulfilling our commitments, including managing the resources entrusted to us.

Healthy environment.
We believe in promoting creativity, wellness and flexibility through a safe and sustainable learning environment.

Contribution to Community.
We serve the broader needs of the people of our community and strive to involve the community and contribute to the enhancement of the overall quality of life.
Areas of Strategic Focus

This Strategic Plan addresses the wide range of programs and services in the College’s portfolio.

Within that range, the College will focus on:

Defining our Future.
Manitoba is on the move. Recent population and economic growth promise a bright future for the province. In partnership with the provincial government, Red River College has accomplished much over the past five years to build this promise. The natural next step in the growth of RRC is its development into a college of advanced applied learning. This means positioning the college to grow to more 12,000 full-time regular students to meet the need for an educated and skilled workforce to advance Manitoba. A key direction for the College is to engage the community, alumni, government, and business and industry in realizing a new vision to 2010 and beyond to ensure a vibrant and expanding RRC - as the leader in applied learning and innovation.

Expanding capacity.
RRC’s September 2005 enrolments increased by 4%. In Regular programs over 94% of spaces were filled. The College is virtually at capacity, even with significant growth over the last six years. Many RRC programs have strong wait lists. It is imperative to ensure that there are enough college spaces for all students who wish to take applied learning to gain the education and skills they need to be successful in a changing economic environment. This will require significant and ongoing investments in new programming; in educational technology; in new classroom, laboratory and specialized spaces; and in renewing and expanding infrastructure. Expanding capacity will also involve development of new applied credentials to meet the needs expressed by industry and business. It will require investments in financial supports for students through financial aid and scholarships. For the College, more investments will be needed to support applied research and the indirect costs of such research. All of this is tied to maintaining and enhancing the quality of applied education.

Student and graduate success.
Helping students achieve their educational goals is at the core of the mandate of RRC. The College will emphasize exceptional and relevant academic programming, strong services and student support initiatives, and a safe environment to achieve high retention and graduation rates and high rates of employment, earnings, citizen engagement and continued education after graduating.

Excellence in teaching and learning.
The College is in the knowledge business and delivers comprehensive applied learning programming including preparatory, ESL, certificate, diploma, advanced diploma and joint baccalaureate education, as well as applied research. In promoting excellence in teaching and learning, it is essential that instructors stay current with new knowledge, instructional methods, and technologies that affect the andragogical process. Effective teaching likewise requires faculty to know about students and the diverse cultures from which they originated and in which they live. The College will review its academic expansion strategy and develop a new Academic Plan. It will study academic delivery mechanisms to improve access to regular programs, including reviewing registration processes, working towards more on-line courses, having multiple modes of delivery, more flexible scheduling, and more community based and workplace programming. This focus includes a strong quality assurance initiative for academic programming. The College will also focus on the establishment of centres of program excellence.
Accessibility to college education.
RRC acts as a gateway for many people into post-secondary education. In a recent survey, neither parent of nearly 40% of Regular full-time students had education beyond high school. RRC provides opportunities for many students to advance their potential to participate more fully in the economic and social progress of the province. The College will continue to be an open access college and will focus on providing multiple modes of opportunities for learners to access applied learning. RRC will work to remove financial, geographic, academic, informational and historical (language, ability and cultural) barriers to entrance.

Increasing participation in college education.
The College has a strong record of enrolment growth over the last several years. In 1998-99 enrolments in Regular full-time programs were 5,245 compared with 7,800 in 2003-04, an increase of 49%. In 1998-99 enrolments in apprenticeships were 1,350 compared with 1,916 in 2003-04, an increase of 42%. During the same time period, registrations in distance education increased by approximately 194%. Yet overall college participation rates are very low (second lowest in Canada) in Manitoba. RRC has lower enrolment rates from sequential students (from high school) than in other provinces. The College will develop strategies to increase participation from all potential students.

Advancing the need for more investments in college education in Manitoba.
The Province of Manitoba has made significant investments in college education and now there are more programs, facilities and enrolments. However, there is still the need for more capacity. There are high aspirations for achieving post-secondary education in all segments of the population in Manitoba. Life-long learning is a requirement for continued participation in the workforce. The number of learners is growing and the diversity of learners is increasing. To work towards a 21st Century workforce where 70% of jobs will require post-secondary education, more college spaces for learners will be needed. Future college learning will require strategic investments in the areas of staffing, operations, physical plant, capital, quality programming and applied research. RRC will advance the requirement for a more fully comprehensive college to continue the growth of college education to increase participation rates and advance economic growth in the province.

Valuing and supporting faculty and staff.
The faculty and staff at RRC are the keys to overall success. The College will develop and implement strategies to attract, retain and reward the best faculty and staff and become an employer of choice. Opportunities for organizational and professional development will be provided. RRC will maintain a healthy, respectful and safe environment, deliver leadership and management training, and prepare succession plans.

Achieving financial sustainability.
RRC continues to face considerable cost pressures. Over the last several years the College adopted a number of one-time methods to avoid major changes to programs and services. The shortfall between revenue and expenses continued and grew through the years. Now the College has reached a point with one-time solutions that will no longer work. RRC will work towards a long-term strategy for managing the financial future. This includes advocating the needs of the College to government, partnership development and a progressive tuition policy, which allows for a predictable and sustainable flow of revenue. Currently, Manitoba colleges have the lowest tuition in Canada. Manitoba college graduates have the lowest incidence of education debt and the lowest level of debt.

Advocating an evolving tuition strategy to COPSE and the Province of Manitoba.
Predictable revenues from tuition fees need to play an important part of RRC’s financial stability to maintain quality. For a sustainable and stable financial future, Red River College needs to have a diversified and well-balanced set of revenue sources. Our direct work with clients in customized training and partnerships will help, but an essential element is a progressive and predictable tuition policy. RRC will advance the critical financial situation of the College and the value of
the College to government decision makers to secure support for a long-term tuition strategy that will enhance financial sustainability. Currently, RRC is defining its future to meet the changing needs of students, the economy and Manitoba. A key aspect of this is a discussion on an evolving tuition policy. There are several prospects for the future. One is to initiate discussions with the provincial government regarding the removal of the 10% rebate to students and directing the funds to colleges and universities. A second prospect is to investigate new modes of student payment for education debts, such as scaled payments to earnings. Another prospect introduces debt remission for work in particular fields or with non-profit agencies, or for graduates who stay and work in the province. Finally, study could be given to directing a portion of increased tuition revenue to entry scholarships and grants to students in need.

**Advancing Aboriginal education.**
Currently, 13.8% of Manitoba’s population is Aboriginal. This is projected to increase to 18.4% by 2017. The Aboriginal population has a median age 16 years younger than the non-Aboriginal population. Educational attainment is less than the non-Aboriginal population at this time, but First Nations high school students have high aspirations for achieving post-secondary education. The proportion of children (0-14), who are Aboriginal, will be 31% in 2017 and the proportion of young Adults (20-29) 23.5%. Soon Aboriginal people will compose twenty-five percent of the workforce of Manitoba. The future prosperity of Manitoba will rely on a highly educated and skilled Aboriginal population. RRC has a long history in working with the Aboriginal community and in providing academic programs and culturally appropriate supports. Aboriginal students comprise 16% of the college’s regular programs -- a number that exceeds the Aboriginal population of Winnipeg (8%) and Manitoba (14%). Indeed, Statistics Canada recently reported the results of the 2002 National Survey of 2000 graduates for Manitoba and found that 16% were of Aboriginal descent. The College will continue a focus on excellence in Aboriginal Education linked to the aspirations and leadership of the Aboriginal community and the needs of the labour market.

**Building applied research and commercialization.**
RRC will contribute to the innovation and commercialization of research agendas of both the Provincial and Federal governments. Recently the College achieved Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) eligibility and was awarded one of only six projects across Canada through NSERC’s College and Community Innovation Pilot Program. RRC will leverage these recent successes, along with the Centre for Applied Research in Sustainable Infrastructure (CARSII) project and the newly established Applied Research and Commercialization office to increase innovation funding through such sources as the Canadian Foundation for Innovation (CFI), NSERC, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), the Canadian Institute for Health Research (CIHR) and others. RRC will pursue applied research in niche areas, including sustainable infrastructure, advanced manufacturing, bio-sciences, human care services, alternative energy and educational technology. Initiatives will include professional development strategies for staff to increase applied research capacity and the embedding of applied research into educational programming.

**Granting applied degrees.**
Students and employers in specific fields have advocated for applied degrees due to changes in technology and the requirement for a more highly skilled and innovative workforce. RRC will respond to this need by developing a strategy to grant applied degrees. Applied degrees are granted by community colleges and technical institutes and focus on advanced study and career preparation in areas where there is demonstrated market demand for occupational programming longer than a two year diploma, but which is qualitatively different from the types and objectives of learning in a university setting. This step will provide a full range of applied credentials for Manitobans, from apprenticeships to certificates, to diplomas, advanced diplomas, joint degrees and applied degrees.
Solidifying Partnerships and Development.
Strategic partnerships are critical for the successful delivery of quality programming in quality facilities with quality equipment linked to community needs and learner outcomes. The College will emphasize fostering a wide diversity of strategic partnerships and links with all sectors including industry, community, alumni, all levels of government and labour to advance the goals of the College. This will also support and sustain fundraising capability.

Supporting the educational needs of immigrants.
Population growth in Manitoba is being driven in large part through immigration, which means that economic growth is also being driven by immigration. In 2004, nearly 7,500 immigrants came to Manitoba. The provincial government’s goal is to have 10,000 immigrants arrive in Manitoba annually. There are several ways the college will support this including working with the Province to design and deliver programs that will allow immigrants to use the skills they bring to Manitoba in employment. RRC will also ensure there is an environment at the college conducive to immigrant educational success.

Attracting International students.
The College will develop and implement more aggressive International student recruitment activities. As the economy and education continues to globalize, International Education will play a key role in promoting the worldwide image of the College and in opening new markets for programming. By attracting more International Students the College will also achieve a more diversified community of students to improve learning for all students.

Maintaining strong relations with the Province of Manitoba.
The College’s key goals are congruent with and supportive of the Government of Manitoba’s directions in developing an educated and skilled workforce and initiating an innovation strategy. RRC will work to maintain a strong relationship with COPSE and the Province. It will leverage provincial funding wherever possible and continue to advocate for increased funding, including more funding for support services.

Building partnerships with the Federal Government.
The College will work cooperatively with the Federal Government to develop ways and means to support the applied learning and research activities of the College. RRC’s major activities fit with the goals of the Federal Government to increase post-secondary achievement rates and overcome the skills deficit, to advance innovation, to increase Aboriginal education, and to support immigrant resettlement. The College will advocate for support for its initiatives in these key areas.

Enhancing the image and recognition of the College.
RRC is recognized and valued by Manitobans as evidenced by recent surveys. The College will build on this solid foundation an integrated marketing and recruitment strategy to increase awareness of the value of applied learning among parents, teachers, counsellors, decision makers and youth. The goal is to increase participation of sequential students (so in the future RRC will be a post-secondary education destination-of-choice for high school students), Aboriginal students and other underrepresented groups, as well as to advance the overall image of the College.

Investing strategically in technology and systems.
The College will prepare a comprehensive Information Technology Strategic Plan to guide future development and investments. As an applied learning institution, RRC is reliant on technology to support its mission of education and to support corporate systems and maintain communications. Investments for information and communication technologies are critical for RRC success. This involves systems renewal and a strategy for e-learning, e-commerce and e-business initiatives. An overall strategy includes infrastructure, technical support, curriculum and faculty support, ever-greening strategies and cross campuses connections. RRC will also continue to implement the comprehensive integrated corporate information system.
Strengthening links with high schools and universities.
RRC has a long history of articulations and joint programs with Manitoba high schools and post-secondary educational institutions. The College will focus on enhancing these links to support the laddering of educational opportunities for students.

Developing an Academic Plan and a Campuses Master Plan.
The current academic plan needs to be renewed and revised in light of significant program and enrolments growth. Moreover, the last five years has seen the square footage of the College increase by 32%. Enrolments increased at about the same pace. Construction continues at RRC with the building of the applied research facility for sustainable infrastructure. In addition, there are several buildings initiatives underway at various stages, such as the Heavy Equipment Training Facility, a residence, and a Culinary Institute. The College will focus on developing a long-term multi-campus master plan to provide continuing directions for facility development and renewal. Elements will include a future focus, risk assessment, environmental sustainability and workplace safety and personal safety.

Assuring quality and accountability.
RRC has grown but has also maintained a matchless standard of quality within the college sector in Canada. RRC’s key performance-indicator standards of student and graduate satisfaction and graduate employment are consistently at the top in Canada. Our apprentices lead the country in pass rates. Students expect and deserve value and RRC delivers this value through quality academic programs, quality student services and quality amenities. Indeed, a recent entering student survey indicated that students are keenly aware of the College’s key performance indicators and use them in their post-secondary institution choice process. The College is committed to improving our quality by measuring our efforts and outcomes, as well as to publishing the findings. As part of our commitment to quality, we will undertake a self-assessment as part of our involvement with the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business Progressive Aboriginal Relations (PAR) program. We will also continue to measure the success of our students and graduates, and measure employers’ attitudes toward our graduates. RRC also anticipates increased accountability requirements from COPSE, in addition to the Five Year Review.

Reinforcing skilled trades training.
There is a current critical shortage in the skilled trades and it is anticipated that this will worsen in the future. RRC has core strength in apprentice trades. The College will continue its commitment to provide skills training and plan for and advocate for additional facilities and equipment. Attracting women and Aboriginal people into the trades will be an aspect of this. RRC will reinforce its links with industry and high schools to support this focus.

Strengthening the College’s role in life-long learning.
Canada’s and Manitoba’s population is aging, due in part to the maturing of the “Baby Boom” generation. This portion of the population will be seeking new learning opportunities in the future. In addition, the knowledge economy will require continuous educational upgrading as technology and business processes advance. RRC has a strong presence in continuing education, e-learning and in regional education delivery to meet the needs of adult learners. The College will focus on strategies to reinforce its educational programming to meet the life-long learning needs of the future.

Supporting economic and social development.
Colleges are partners in federal, provincial and city economic development initiatives. RRC’s key strategic program sectors are aligned with those of the provincial government for economic development. RRC will continue to be responsive to the labour market needs of Manitoba and work with all levels of government, industry, business, labour and the community to foster an environment conducive to economic growth and prosperity.
Evaluation and Measurement

The Operational Plan 2006-2011 provides explicit strategies and actions for each of the Strategic Plan’s Objectives. The Operational Plan is the detailed document that describes how to achieve the Strategic Plan.

Every year progress on the strategies and action statements in the Operational Plan is reviewed and documented.

This allows the College to measure success and alter planned actions where external or internal events dictate.

A companion document, Progress in Achieving the Vision 2005, provides an overview of achievements in 2005. The report provides a qualitative and quantitative overview of the activities across the College in all departments to advance the vision and mission. It is one of several documents that help measure the performance of Red River College.
**Major Trends**

Some of the major forces that are and will continue to affect the College are:

- Increasing need for capacity growth in college post-secondary education in Manitoba to accommodate accelerating demand.
- Need to provide opportunities for a growing, young Aboriginal population with high aspirations for post-secondary education in the province.
- Anticipated need to attract and retain immigrants to the Province of Manitoba.
- Existing and growing shortages in the skilled workforce.
- Increasing need for post-secondary education and training for the knowledge economy.
- Growing aspirations for post-secondary education in all segments of the Canadian and Manitoba population.
- Need to increase the participation rates of young Manitobans (those from high schools) in College education to help develop a skilled workforce.
- Increasing need for life-long learning opportunities.
- Need to keep skilled and knowledgeable young people in Manitoba.
- Increasing role for colleges in applied research, innovation and commercialization.
- Increasing demand for more advanced technical learning credentials such as applied degrees.
- Need to plan for faculty and staff renewal in view of demographic changes.
- Increasing emphasis on accessible education.
- Increasing need for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) literacy.
- Increasing International presence of RRC and increasing international students at RRC.
- Accelerating demand for e-commerce college transactions from learners.
- Continuing movement towards program and service availability on a 24/7 basis.
- Increasing requirements for professional growth opportunities for faculty and staff.
- More accountability requirements from post-secondary education institutions for all constituencies.
- Increasing recognition of the value of partnerships among post-secondary education institutions and business, government, community agencies and labour.
- Increasing emphasis on seamless education through articulations across the education continuum to enhance the opportunities for learners.
- Increasing demand for and availability of e-learning opportunities for students.
- Greater student and staff mobility.
- Continuing cost pressures and revenue and funding challenges.
- Need to evolve tuition policy.
- Increasing competition from a broad range of education providers.
- Strength in Manitoba’s growing and diversified economy.