



Strategic Plan 2009-12

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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.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

There has never been a time that Red River College was more important to the development of Manitoba than it is today. While worldwide, there is an uncertain economic climate; to-date within Manitoba the province is still enjoying growth. The combined effects of economic forces and demographic change mean that the demand for applied education continues to grow. These pressures mean that Red River College is challenged to provide current programming while finding new and innovative ways to anticipate and serve the needs of a dynamic population.

These larger forces served as a background to a review by the Board of Governors of the vision, mission, and goals of the College. The College's new vision and goals are shown on page five of this document. These changes reflect that we have a strong, dedicated Board of Governors providing policy, strategic guidance and oversight.

To act on this guidance, this planning document includes seven strategic initiatives.

These steps include but are not limited to, measures to increase student success, learning quality, and improve ways to reach potential students at their workplace. With demand for an expanded and educated workforce, Red River College will continue to build on its record of serving students from socially diverse backgrounds; by advancing Aboriginal education and assisting new immigrants become productive participants in Manitoba society. Based on the needs of employers for students that combine technical proficiency with organizational and leadership skills, the Strategic Plan includes developing academic degrees.

The spirit of innovation and improvement permeates the College. This year's strategic plan aims to harness that spirit enhancing the educational experience of students and reinforcing the reputation of our graduates and incorporating sustainability into College operations.

Education is work through people. To enhance this learning organization, the College is implementing the People Plan: a plan that envisions a strengthened relationship between Red River College, staff and instructors. We want our students to grow, staff and instructors engaged and employers satisfied. The People Plan outlines the steps to achieve this vision.

Additional facilities are critical to extending and enhancing the educational opportunities available to students. The College has established a capital campaign as part of its strategic initiatives to close this gap.

The strategic planning process is tied to budget preparation, financial management and the measurement of results. In a companion document, [Red River College Operational Plan 2009-2012](#), strategies and actions provide specific directions for all members of the College community. This plan is developed along with the budget. Each year we measure our performance to test how well we are doing in working towards achieving our goals and serving our mission.

The primary goal of the 2009 – 2012 Strategic Plan is to serve students, employers and the people of Manitoba.

RRC is going places; the Strategic Plan is the map.

*Jeff Zabudsky,
President*

CONTEXT

Red River College has a rolling three 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 three 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.

2008 PROCESS

In this year's planning process, the Board of Governors engaged in a review of the mission, vision, and goals of the College. The Board was engaged in a number of exercises to consider the College's situation, strengths and weaknesses, and ultimately what the College hopes to achieve.

After some review, the Board concluded that the College's mission statement should remain unchanged. As shown on pages five and six, the vision and goals were modified to take into account the changing landscape and what the College needs to do to serve the mission.

Vision

Red River College is renowned for providing accessible, innovative, applied learning and research in an advanced environment, creating skilled graduates to drive the Manitoba economy.

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

- **Provide high quality, advanced skill development that contributes to student success.**
- **Increase capacity and enrolment by providing accessible, responsive programs.**
- **Create a dynamic, safe and respectful learning and working environment.**
- **Develop enhanced infrastructures to support innovative advanced learning and applied research.**
- **Partner with the community at large and the Aboriginal and immigrant communities in particular to support and enhance the economic and social progress of Manitoba.**
- **Strengthen applied learning and research through partnerships to provide skilled graduates for the labour market.**

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.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

The mission of Red River College is “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.”

RRC acts as a gateway for many people into postsecondary education. The College is in the knowledge business and delivers comprehensive applied learning programming including preparatory, EAL, certificate, diploma, advanced diploma and joint baccalaureate education, as well as applied research. RRC has a long history of articulations and joint programs with Manitoba high schools and post-secondary education institutions. The College strives to enhance these links to support the ladder of educational opportunities for students.

The College is an open access institution which has seen substantial cumulative growth over the last number of years. However, overall college participation rates are very low in Manitoba compared to the rest of Canada, limiting economic benefits and social well-being. The College is implementing strategies to increase participation from all potential students. This includes sequential students (from high school), working with the Aboriginal community and in providing academic programs and culturally appropriate supports, supporting the educational needs of immigrants, and attracting International students. One measure of these efforts is the finding on a recent survey that neither parent of nearly 40% of regular full-time students had education beyond high school.

The College emphasizes 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 graduation.

Looking to the future, in 2007 the College adopted the Academic Plan which outlines a comprehensive approach to the delivery of academic programming extending excellence in teaching and learning at the College as well as expanding accessibility. Through the new Schools structure Red River College is beginning to introduce this new approach.

Through Applied Research and Commercialization office and the Centre for Applied Research in Sustainable Infrastructure (CARSI), which was opened in 2007, RRC pursues applied research in niche areas, including sustainable infrastructure, vehicle support, early childhood education, alternative energy and educational technology.

The College's key goals are congruent with and supportive of the Government of Manitoba's directions in developing an educated and skilled workforce for the province and initiating an innovation strategy. The College maintains a strong relationship with COPSE and the Province. Moreover, the Federal Government has a goal to increase post-secondary achievement rates and overcome the skills deficit. The College works cooperatively with the Federal Government to develop ways and means to support the applied learning and research activities of the College. RRC's key sectors are aligned with those of government for economic development. The College strives 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.

As an applied learning institution, RRC is reliant on technology to support its mission of education and to support corporate systems and maintain communications. The College has adopted an Information Technology Strategic Plan to guide future development and investments.

RRC’s strategic plan envisions a two-pronged approach – strategic initiatives which will take two to four years to implement and improvement priorities which can be implemented in one year or on-going basis. The strategic initiatives will have a pivotal role as their implementation provides the College with greater capabilities to achieve its objectives. But the College’s strategic plan cannot lose sight of the day-to-day programs and activities previously

outlined, which are required to successfully run the College. The improvement priorities strive to enhance key day-to-day educational processes. The strategic plan reflects the goals of the Academic Plan: 1) responsible growth, 2) Aboriginal outreach, 3) diversity and inclusiveness, 4) accessibility, 5) quality and innovation, and 6) polytechnic model of education.

Red River’s objectives emphasize student success, responsiveness, and quality.

Towards that end, the College intends to focus on these areas over the next three years:

Strategic Initiative	Strategy	Milestone
<p>Degrees</p> <p>In a Canada with a heightened interest in productivity, the world of work will need more graduates who can foster innovation. There is an increasing demand for more advanced technical learning credentials. One way RRC can help is to have more workers who have both technical skills and problem solving skills.</p> <p>The Degree extends the educational continuum from apprenticeship, certificate, and diploma. It provides another option for students and more choice for employers.</p>	<p>RRC will accelerate the policy outlined in the Academic Plan to introduce degrees. Paralleling efforts to meet regulatory requirements, the College will work with industry to further acceptance by employers.</p>	<p>The College submits a Degree program which gains regulatory acceptance.</p>
<p>People Plan</p> <p>The faculty and staff at RRC are the keys to overall success. Recently, the College introduced the People Plan, with the mission, <i>“To inspire and motivate current and future staff through exceptional people practices within an environment of respect, trust, and recognition. RRC provides its employees with the opportunity for personal and professional growth through a rewarding career”</i>. The Steering</p>	<p>To provide the People Plan with a target, the Steering Committee has been challenged to identify and develop strategies that will prepare the College to apply to become the first educational institution to be ranked as a top 50 employer.</p>	<p>The College submits one or more applications to be seen as a top 50 employer.</p>

Strategic Initiative	Strategy	Milestone
<p>Committee is to identify strategies to help the College develop and implement strategies to attract, retain and reward the best faculty and staff and become an employer of choice.</p>		
<p>Capital Campaign RRC has several building initiatives such as the Heavy Equipment Training Facility that are pressing right now. In order to accommodate students in a quality environment, the College requires substantial infusions of capital.</p>	<p>In order to accommodate these wide ranging needs, the College will undertake a major capital campaign. The capital campaign also gives RRC a chance to tell its story to stakeholders and potential stakeholders. The capital campaign also affords the College an opportunity to hear from industry about their current and future needs.</p>	<p>The College implements a detailed capital campaign plan and begins to collect funds.</p>
<p>Develop the RRC Value Proposition A value proposition describes, succinctly, how an organization will differentiate itself to its key stakeholders. For the organization and its staff, a value proposition answers the question, why should the stakeholder, “want to do business” with this organization. It helps set stakeholder expectations for their experience with an organization. But a value proposition is not just a 10 second speech; it becomes a way of helping the organization focus its efforts to become better.</p> <p>For RRC, a value proposition helps prospective students understand why the College is for them, for the organization it helps determine what needs to be done, and for prospective employers, it indicates what they should expect from RRC graduates.</p> <p>There are many reasons why stakeholders value RRC. Indeed, different stakeholders may value different elements. The challenge is to develop a concise value proposition, which can then be applied to a wide range of activities. A value proposition acts as a focus for all future activities.</p>	<p>RRC will assemble a working group to develop a coherent value statement that can be used across the organization.</p>	<p>The production of a statement that summarizes the unique benefits the College offers its stakeholders.</p>

Strategic Initiative	Strategy	Milestone
<p>Increase Student Success, Quality and Innovation</p> <p>In previous editions of the Strategic plan initially there were two strategic initiatives 1) Increase Quality and Innovation and 2) Increase student success at current levels of accessibility and quality. However, the two working groups found considerable overlap in their work. As a result the two initiatives were combined in 2008.</p> <p><i>Increase Quality and Innovation</i></p> <p>Red River College graduates are the number one ambassador for the College. Graduate assessment of their own experience, the results of external exams where appropriate, and how employers assess graduates define the quality of their education.</p> <p>The College uses a number of processes to design, maintain, and review the quality of its programs. The intent is twofold: increase the scope and depth of the feedback from quality measures (KPI) and increase the amount of organizational support for initiatives to improve quality given these measures. As indicated in the Academic Plan some of these initiatives are likely to involve innovations in academic programming. The additional information and resources should lead to an improved quality of education experience.</p> <p>To students and industry quality not only encompasses these quality measures but also time to completion. Students are eager to complete their studies as soon as possible and employers need graduates at a faster pace. It would be counterproductive however to improve time to completion if academic quality is eroded.</p>	<p>RRC will form a working group to develop an integrated quality assurance model. The group will consider academic programming, organizational practices and services to students. The task force will identify new and innovative approaches to be funded and implemented in academic programming, service delivery, and helping businesses and industry become more productive.</p>	<p>The College begins at least one of these initiatives to improve RRC's performance on these metrics.</p>

Strategic Initiative	Strategy	Milestone
<p><i>Increase Student Success, Quality and Innovation</i></p> <p>Overall, for RRC success incorporates two measures: a student gains a quality education and the student completes the program. This section will consider the question of completion. Red River College recognizes the cost to the student, the College, and to society of student attrition, premature departures from the program.</p> <p>As described in the Academic Plan, RRC has begun to use the Beatty-Guenter Retention Strategy Model as a means of guiding and balancing its support initiatives to improve student success. Over the past number of years, the College has taken a number of different approaches to improving student success. There is some evidence that with these efforts the College has improved the chances for a student to graduate. But these efforts have been school dependent and there is no process in place to effect the sharing of learnings.</p>	<p>RRC will put together a working group, to review the empirical evidence, and current practices and formulate a recommended comprehensive course of action.</p>	<p>The College will have a resourced formal College wide plan of action for implementation in the following year.</p>
<p>New ways to offer applied learning with work/industry</p> <p>Apprenticeship (in numbers) and contract training (in dollars) have been growing faster than regular programs. It is a sign of demand for training in the workplace today. The demand for workers exceeds supply and will get worse as baby boomers retire. There is a strong likelihood that the demand for training in the workplace of tomorrow is shifting. This will put more pressure on high school students to go directly into the workplace and make it harder for them to leave.</p> <p>At the same time while RRC has accommodated the demand, it has done so in a stop-and-start manner. This makes serving the workplace population more challenging and costly than it would first appear.</p> <p>Employers may also be short changing themselves. In the short run hiring students out of high school solves an immediate problem; but research shows that for employers the path to innovation requires a workforce with broader and deeper educational background.</p>	<p>RRC will review and develop a comprehensive program for serving the needs for education for those at work. This review will focus on identifying the permutations of relationship, location, and timing, which might be more successful for more employers and ultimately for students. The review will consider all schools. It is envisioned that the resulting design will meet the immediate and future needs of the work world while doing so in a more efficient manner.</p>	<p>The College adopts the plan.</p>

Strategic Initiative	Strategy	Milestone
<p>Red River College demonstrates strong connections to industry in a number of ways. Our curriculum development process is driven by industry need, our graduates are job-ready, our part-time students upgrade their skills while contributing in their workplaces, our apprentices contribute to the economy while learning new skills, and our contract training helps organizations become more productive. The challenge is to build a better way to serve education in the workplace, to respond to the immediate while contributing to on-going education.</p> <p>In order to accommodate industry, the College must develop a method that is responsive both in speed of development, scheduling, and flexible. For students, the programming needs to be integrative, so that training can act as a ladder to other programs. The worker can be trained for today and educated for tomorrow.</p>		
<p>Advance Aboriginal Education</p> <p>One of the goals in the Academic Plan is Aboriginal outreach. The School of Indigenous Education is very successful in addressing the needs of Aboriginal students across the College.</p> <p>However, at virtually every Strategic Planning Workshop, participants expressed a desire/recognition that more needs to be done to attract and help Aboriginal students succeed.</p> <p>Red River College will ensure its programs and services are designed to attract Aboriginal learners and assist them in their success.</p>	<p>The College will develop a comprehensive plan to provide guidance on how to increase participation and success of Aboriginal students across programs. The plan will take into account the marketing/communications, as well as organization requirements.</p>	<p>The College prepares a plan for review as part of next year's Strategic Plan.</p>

IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES

Through the consultation process, the Environmental Scan, and a number of surveys of students, staff, the general public, and employers there is a consistent observation that Red River College is held in high regard. One contributory view is the College constantly strives to improve. Often the scale of these changes is small, but cumulatively these improvements add up.

There are several characteristics of Red River College that are widely shared among students, staff, employers, and the general public earning a positive reputation. The College is known as a school which provides opportunity for students to gain employment, increase income and boost their careers, and the focus is on applied learning.

Based on the staff strategic planning workshops, a session with the Students' Association Executive and a review of employer survey results, improvements in the following key areas can enhance the College's strength and reputation.

1. Enhance the in-class experience of instruction

The College takes the learning process seriously from the selection and training of instructors, to procedures for monitoring quality. Nonetheless, the quality of the in-class experience was rarely flagged as a strength and on occasion was a source of weakness. The more critical evaluations of the in-class experience were not common. There are many ways to improve the in-class experience. The net result is an enhancement to student satisfaction and College reputation.

2. Enhance the In-Classroom Learning Environment

At a number of strategic planning workshops, the classroom environment was the subject of some discussion. The discussion ranged from the physical condition of the room, the appropriateness of the size, and the availability of the technological infrastructure. Particularly on the Notre Dame Campus, the state of classrooms is a distraction to instructors and students.

3. Foster sustainability

Across the continent, in public and private board rooms, there is a new appreciation for the need to make our economy and

society sustainable. Red River has its share of sustainability accomplishments but there is both a need and an opportunity for the College to pursue and extend environmental, social and economic sustainability through operations, education, training, and research and partnership development.

4. Collaborate on process

Two related themes emerged over the course of the workshops, communications and stress. In virtually every workshop, there was at least one participant who expressed a desire to reduce the number of "silos". It was not uncommon for participants to express frustration over the inadvertent demands placed upon them by other departments. While the People Plan will address some of the underlying concerns, there is a complimentary way to address these two topics. Process reviews have often proved productive for finding more effective ways of doing the work. Involving all stakeholders in the process review can both save time and reduce workload stresses.

EVALUATION AND MEASUREMENT

The **Operational Plan 2009-2012** 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.

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 work force.
- 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 College degrees.
- Need to plan for faculty and staff renewal in view of demographic changes.
- Increasing emphasis on accessible education.
- Increasing International presence of RRC and increasing international students at RRC.
- Expectations for 24/7 access, diversity in program and course delivery modes, ease of credit transfer and mobility, and service quality; all supported by a robust technological infrastructure.
- 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.
- 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.



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