



# Strategic Plan 2012-15

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## **Board of Governors**

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

Richard Lennon, Chair

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Andrew Clarke

Elvira Finnigan

Alex Haas

Ron Koslowsky

Ruth Lindsey-Armstrong

Wanda McGorum

Bruce North

Maureen Prendiville

Don Robertson

Stephanie Forsyth, President and CEO

## President's Message

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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 backdrop to the development of the College's new Strategic Plan. This Plan is the culmination of ten months of data gathering, consultation, and development by the College community and the Board of Governors. It follows a process of reflecting on the past Plan, interviews with our external stakeholders conducted arms length by a research organization, and extensive consultations with College staff. After 14 workshops and on-line survey nearly half of full-time staff has provided input into this Plan.

Over the last ten years the College has seen considerable growth and development. The College has been able to accommodate many of the "asks" of our stakeholders while still helping our students change their life opportunities. The College is proud of its contribution to the economic and social well-being of Manitoba. We recognize there's much more to be done to help industry and to raise incomes. This Plan is intended to simultaneously strengthen our internal capabilities while serving the current and emerging needs of the Province.

This Plan focuses the College on four themes:

- A. Fuel Manitoba's economic growth and community development
- B. Lead Aboriginal Achievement
- C. Strengthen Student Achievement
- D. Improve the College's triple bottom line: People, Planet, Profits

### **A. Fuel Manitoba's economic growth and community development**

Due to the pressures of globalization and, impending demographic changes our economy faces challenges attracting, retaining, and retraining the work force and many face relentless stress to increase productivity and innovation. Red River is in the business of educating, training, and supporting technology transfer. Moreover, our practice is to work through partnerships with industry and the community. Working with community organizations enhances our efforts to reach out to under-represented groups and those struggling to access a post-secondary education.

### **B. Lead Aboriginal Achievement**

As is widely recognized, Canada's Aboriginal population has a much younger age profile than is true for Canada as a whole. Red River supports Aboriginal people as they strive to achieve their post-secondary educational goals.

It is widely acknowledged that First Nations, Inuit and Métis people confront persistent barriers that hamper their learning opportunities. What is less frequently acknowledged is that these barriers stem from the absence of Indigenous knowledge and praxis in the college setting. While the College has made many improvements – there is much more to be done. We must

look not only to changes within curricula and teaching methodologies, but to all facets of the College. The College intends to strengthen our relationship with Aboriginal people as we seek to collectively define a new way forward.

### **C. Strengthen student achievement**

The College prides itself in being an accessible institution. Sadly, not all students succeed. But attrition costs students, the College, the economy, and the Government. Thanks to the efforts of instructors and Student Services supports, retention are improving. But given the needs of the economy more must be done. The College will take measures to improve success rates by supporting teaching excellence and improving the student experience from access to beyond graduation, referred herein as Strategic Enrolment Management.

### **D. Improve the College's triple bottom line: People, Planet, Profits**

Manitoba faces a different type of global pressure – climate change. The College, already recognized as one of Canada's Greenest Employers seeks to extend its contribution towards sustainability. Sustainability encompasses three ideas – taking measures that contribute to the viability of the institution (“Profit”), contribute to the environment (“Planet”), and taking measures that contribute to social and economic well being (“People”). The College will seek to contribute to sustainability along all three lines.

In order to address these four themes, this Planning document includes nine strategic initiatives. For the details about these initiatives and associated actions please see the description on page 25.

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.

The strategic planning process is tied to budget preparation, financial management and the measurement of results. Each year we measure our performance to test how well we are doing in working towards achieving our goals and serving our mission.

Strategic Plan 2012 – 2015 is a very ambitious Plan, which will require considerable effort on the part of many at all of the College campuses. But at the workshops many staff made it clear that they were up to the challenge. The very experience of seeking to implement these initiatives will help transform the institution to one that better serves students, employers and the people of Manitoba.

## Context

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***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.

## **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

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- 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

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*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.

## How the plan was developed

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Red River College (RRC) offers a full spectrum of credentials, including apprenticeship training, certificates, diplomas, and select degrees. All these programs share the common thread of being programs in applied learning - developed with and in support of industry. RRC is an accessible institution, operating on a first-qualified, first-admitted basis. By adhering to its accessible heritage, the College contributes to spreading the economic and social benefits of education to all Manitobans.

For many years the College has operated under a rolling strategic plan, one that describes its intentions over the next three to five years. These intentions are reviewed annually to maintain relevancy.

This plan was developed following research, consultation, and reflection with many people over a one-year period. In October 2010, the Board of Governors reviewed an environmental scan which examined external and internal trends and patterns in the data. This scan was also shared with President's Council.

The College hired the research firm Prairie Research Associates (PRA) to conduct interviews with external stakeholders. While the information gathered was primarily quite positive, the interviews did identify some areas where the College could improve. This information was shared with both the Board of Governors and President's Council.

The College also engaged the College community through 14 workshops. President Stephanie Forsyth and other members of the executive attended these workshops, along with staff from all schools and departments. In addition to holding workshops at the Notre Dame and Exchange District Campuses, workshops were also held at the regional campuses in

Steinbach, Winkler and Portage la Prairie. A separate session was also held with the executive of the Students' Association. In total about 262 people attended.

All staff were invited to share their views via a confidential online questionnaire, with a total of 415 staff participating. Some staff participated in both workshops and the survey; taking into account these multiple contributions, about 46% of staff contributed to this plan.

A summary of the workshops and the staff survey were shared with the Board of Governors and President's Council.

Based on the comments and suggestions at the workshops and on the survey, it was clear that many staff were engaged by the process and have a desire to continue the conversation and provide their insights. Both the Board and President's Council wish to acknowledge the many suggestions and the desire on the part of a significant number of staff to contribute to future planning and implementation. Both bodies have agreed that once the new plan is finalized, the more detailed information will be shared with the appropriate strategic initiative committees. Moreover, staff will be invited to sit on or contribute to each of these initiatives.

Based on the information - and on their own experiences and connections to the larger community - the Board identified four strategic themes. In turn, President's Council identified strategic initiatives to address these four priorities. Typically an initiative has several components, call strategic actions. By addressing these priorities, much of what government, industry, community groups, staff, and students identified as concerns will be addressed.

In any institution strategic plans are an evolving practice. Our current practices for managing initiatives include having a VP responsible for each initiative, having milestones for each initiative, and having the VP make periodic reports to both the Board and President's Council. Moreover, there are formal links between the plan and the College budget. Overall, these practices have served the College well. The College has achieved much of what it set out to do in the last strategic plan. Nonetheless we would like to extract more value from the planning efforts.

Based on the College's experiences over the last few plans, our view of managing the plan has also evolved. This plan will add

several features: each strategic initiative will have a budget, and where appropriate the strategic themes, initiatives or actions will have measurable goals. Strategic initiatives will also have dedicated resources (funds and/or staff) so that there will be less managing of projects "off the sides of the desk" and in some cases providing additional supports in the way of research or writing. The strategic envelope/project management funds will be used to smooth this work flow. Also, to provide on-going feedback, a dashboard will be developed that provides monitoring of both goal level measures, and where appropriate, process measures. As noted earlier, staff showed an eagerness to engage in discussion; it's the intention of this plan to capitalize on this interest by building in to each of the strategic initiatives a staff component so that more staff will have an opportunity to participate. To further the organizational learning from our efforts to implement this plan, and to help prepare for future plans, it is further intended that RRC will conduct a lessons learned review upon completion of each strategic action.

## Background to the plan

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After a period of consultation with staff, Presidents Council, and the Board of Governors, the current plan came into force in January 2008. Since then, and in line with the strategic initiatives (noted in bold) and improvement plans set out in the plan, the College has:

- Secured permission from the Council of Post-secondary Education (COPSE) to introduce two degree programs. Red River saw its first intake of Bachelor of Nursing and Bachelor of Technology Construction Management students in the fall of 2010. (**Degrees**)
- RRC acquired the Union Bank Tower Building in 2009, and has raised \$3 million or 76% of the private goal, for what has become the Paterson GlobalFoods Institute. (**Capital Campaign**)
- In November 2010, the College was awarded a Top 25 Manitoba Employer for 2011. And in April 2011 and recently earned the same designation for 2012. Red River College was named one of Canada's 50 Greenest Employers for 2011 by Mediacorp Canada Inc. (**People Plan**)
- The College has seen an improvement in its retention.<sup>1</sup> (**Increase Student Success, Quality, and Innovation**)
- In July 2011, Delta Consulting completed a report for the College on Work Based Education. In addition, the College has made modest simplifications to the contract

training approval process. (**New ways to offer applied learning with work/industry**)

- In June 2010, the report, **Advancing Aboriginal Education – Red River College's Indigenous Education and Research Strategic Plan**, was submitted. (**Advance Aboriginal Education**)

As referenced in a previous section, this plan is shaped by both external factors and internal observations.

### Demographics:

Manitoba's population is aging, which will result in declining numbers of youth and working age people participating in post-secondary learning, meeting labour market needs, and supporting growing numbers of older, retired Manitobans. There are two populations that help offset this trend: Aboriginal peoples and new immigrants. The former reflects the higher birthrates and the latter a testimony to the success of Provincial policy. These population effects are so strong that Manitoba is aging at a slower rate than most other provinces in Canada.

While it has improved in recent years, Manitoba has the second lowest high school completion rate, which given the relationship between post-secondary education and incomes, would suggest the Province is performing below its potential.

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<sup>1</sup> Along with other post-secondary institutions in the Province, RRC has participated in two Early Leavers Surveys. In the first study in 2006, the College submitted 799 former students for interview. In the 2010 study, using the same criteria, the College submitted 642 names – a decline of 20 percent in the number submitted, not taking into account 27% College growth in the interval for the same class of students.

Further, those segments of Manitoba's population showing the strongest population growth are also those with the lowest levels of educational attainment and labour market participation rate.<sup>2</sup>

### **Economy:**

Aggregate demand in the economy remains strong, and the Province has weathered the downturn better than many. But the looming issue for the economy as a whole is productivity and innovation. While in some studies, Manitoba has tended to lag, the most recent study by Canadian Living Standards,<sup>3</sup> has shown that Manitoba has improved. Nonetheless, in aggregate, productivity lags. Productivity is the secret ingredient that allows incomes and social well-being to rise without putting negative pressures on the economy.

Industry remains strong, but challenged - not just by current dollar, but by globalization. Based on the research with external stakeholders, RRC is viewed favourably for contribution to applied education, training and research. But our external stakeholders mentioned the demographics and a number identified the need to improve the post-secondary attainment for Aboriginals and re-integration into the workforce of immigrants, restoring the income earning

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<sup>2</sup> There are many studies that point to this conclusion, for example, Statistics Canada, (2009). "First Nations people: Selected findings of the 2006 Census" Canadian Social Trends, May.

<sup>3</sup> de Avillez, R. and Ross, C. (2011) A Synthesis of the CSLS Provincial Productivity Reports, 1997-2007. The Centre For The Study Of Living Standards, CSLS Research Report 2011-03.

capacity of many who have come to Canada with skills from their home country.

Another worldwide phenomenon is environmental degradation, typically expressed in terms of global warming - a plight that can be ignored only at our own peril. Given that most industries are also turning their attention to the topic, we would be doing a disservice to students if they are not exposed to the thinking, practices and habits that contribute to a more sustainable world.

### **Consultations:**

As described earlier, a number of external stakeholders were interviewed about their views towards the College. Moreover, many of the staff who participated were involved in workshops or surveys about the strategic plan. Participants offered many ideas and insights, which ultimately give rise to four intertwined clusters related to supporting the economy, engaging with Indigenous learners, enhancing student success, and championing sustainability. Since many of the observations made by staff could be assigned to more than one cluster, synopses of the observations are offered below.

Internal discussions revealed a pride in the role of the College in applied education and the contribution of graduates to the economy. Staff noted the importance and success of the organic connections between the College and employers and community groups. These connections are the cornerstone of many of the College's programs. At some workshops,

participants advocated that more needed to be done to build on these connections for both academic programming as well as the possibilities of applied research.

Another topic that emerged from a number of workshops was the importance of engaging with Aboriginal learners, both before learners became College students and while at the College. This approach to engagement encompasses both the academic and cultural perspectives. Interviews with external stakeholders reinforced the view that a comprehensive approach is important.

Whether in workshops or in the surveys, staff showed they take pride in RRC's focus on applied learning within an accessible framework. But at a number of workshops, some staff recognized that some students require more supports to complete a program. RRC has increased supports to students over the years. Indeed, thanks to the efforts of instructional staff and Student Services staff, there has been an improvement in the retention rate. But there is room to grow.

Many staff expressed the belief that there are more students who are not at an appropriate level of academic proficiency, which in turn inhibits the educational experience. Nonetheless, improving retention and graduation rates will help address concerns of industry. These challenges might at first blush seem to be more operational than strategic. But when operational considerations impact on strategic goals - like

quality or success, or meeting the needs of industry - these concerns become elevated to strategic.

Staff noted that current facilities limit capacities for growth, or may not be the most appropriate for current educational programming, or just generally do not maximize the learning opportunities. Staff made these comments about facilities in every location, sometimes for different reasons, but these comments applied to the Exchange District Campus (EDC), regional campuses, and especially Notre Dame Campus (NDC).

Often in the context of discussions about facilities, but sometimes in other contexts, staff offered support for sustainability in terms of current infrastructure, practices at the College, and educational opportunities. Sustainability was seen as referring to the economic viability of the College.

Another idea that frequently arose at workshops was the need to maintain technological currency. The College offers many high tech programs, but technology suffers from rapid technological obsolescence, which makes it challenging for instructors to stay current for industry. The College not only uses technology in instruction, we also use it to keep our own processes effective. Here, there is sometimes a tension between the selection of technology that makes the College thrive and the technology necessary for instruction. Interestingly, the challenge of maintaining technological currency was also a concern for some of our external stakeholders.

Staff noted, the College has grown but some of its practices and processes may not have kept up, and as a result, RRC may not be as responsive or as timely as external stakeholders require. For example staff involved with contract training and applied research mentioned the challenges of serving industry. This topic emerged at some of the workshops, but also with some external stakeholders.

Another theme which emerged from internal workshops reflects communications. The College has grown in terms of number of programs, staff, and locations. While the College has taken a number of measures to improve internal communications, based on the comments made in a number of workshops the current internal communications protocols were not keeping up with the needs.

The College has seen considerable growth and change over the last few years. It is important to consolidate these gains in order to support further expansion. While much goes on at RRC, of necessity, this plan concentrates on identifying requisite changes. The next section outlines the strategic plan, the themes, initiatives, and actions to address these concerns. As previously noted, most of the plan will be implemented in a project management framework. But it is the day to day efforts by staff and instructors which result in the College enjoying a strong positive reputation with students and external stakeholders. This work proceeds while this plan with staff cooperation and involvement where appropriate strives to make things better.

## **Strategic Themes:**

In recognition of the College's mission, the Board of Governors identified four strategic themes:

- A. Fuel Manitoba's economic growth and community development
- B. Lead Aboriginal Achievement
- C. Strengthen student achievement
- D. Improve the College's triple bottom line: People, Planet, Profits

In turn, President's Council developed nine strategic initiatives. These strategic initiatives give rise to distinct strategic actions. The initiatives and actions are described in the context of the strategic themes.



## ***A. Fuel Manitoba's economic growth and community development***

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Industry feels the pressures of globalization, a high Canadian dollar, a more competitive environment, and a need to integrate quality and responsiveness. Even those industries that serve domestic markets feel the pressure of more competition, tempering economic growth. All industries face challenges attracting, retaining, and retraining their work force; all face the challenges of increasing productivity and innovation.

As noted economist W. Baumol has observed, “Economic models of growth have in recent years determined that knowledge, human capital (education and skills), and innovation play a larger role in propelling the economy than they did in previous eras.”<sup>4</sup>

Red River College is in the business of educating, training, and supporting technology transfer. We offer a variety of services: COPSE approved programs, Continuing and Distance Education courses, Apprenticeship training, Contract training, Community Based initiatives, Co-operative arrangements, Internships, Clinical placements, Technological cooperatives, and Applied Research. Moreover, Information, Communications and Technology (ICT) is central to most programs offered.

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<sup>4</sup> Schramm, C., and Baumol W.J. “Foreword” in *Handbook of Service Science* (2010) Maglio, P., Kieliszewski, C., Spohrer, J. (editors) Springer, New York.

An integrated perspective of education and ICT are required, because researchers have found that training and technology not only go hand in hand, but vary with the individual workplace – not the industry.<sup>5</sup>

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, and all levels of government and labour to advance the goals of the College.

The Provincial government has an active interest in developing and maintaining a skilled labour force; encouraging and supporting local, national, and international trade opportunities; providing Manitobans with an accessible, affordable and high quality post-secondary and adult learning system; fostering an environment favourable for sustainable economic growth, job creation and quality of life for Manitobans by enhancing the innovative capacity of all participants in the economy. RRC can contribute to all of these Provincial goals. Moreover, the College will support the Province in

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<sup>5</sup> “...we investigate factors related to the incidence and intensity of training. The study focuses on whether training incidence and training intensity are more closely associated with the technological competencies of specific workplaces than with membership in ICT- and science-based industry environments. The study finds that training incidence depends more on the technological competencies exhibited by individual workplaces. Among workplaces that decide to train, these technological competencies are also important determinants of the intensity of training.” Chowhan, J. (2005) *Who Trains? High-tech Industries or High-tech Workplaces?* Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 11-622-MIE — No. 006.

providing a health care system that is current, accessible and responsive to the needs of all Manitobans, and to support programs aimed at improving high school graduation rates and increasing access to post-secondary **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**education for disadvantaged and low-income students.

This includes 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.

The challenge is to keep our services in sync and to anticipate the needs of the economy.

1. **Strategic Initiative:** Enhance the connections between academic programs and applied research activities with community and workforce development needs.

This initiative gives rise to the following **strategic actions**:

- a. Update Academic Plan 2020 to enhance connections with community and workforce development needs.
- b. Increase applied research & innovation.
- c. Apply the strategic council model of industry consultation to selected sectors.

- d. Attract international students to enrich the workplace and to support workforce development.
- e. Develop a comprehensive External Relations/ Communications Plan to enhance awareness, reputation, partnerships and linkages with key stakeholders
- f. Build on the participation of Regional Campuses to enrich the connections with community and workforce development.

## ***B. Lead Aboriginal Achievement***

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As is widely recognized, Canada's Aboriginal population has a much younger age profile than is true for Canada as a whole. Red River College supports Aboriginal people as they strive to achieve their post-secondary educational goals.

Aboriginal people face barriers in their quest for post-secondary education. Some of these include but are not limited to obstacles in choosing, gaining entrance, transitioning into, staying in, and graduating, as well as transitioning to employment or to further education. In many cases the barriers are interconnected. It is widely acknowledged that First Nations, Inuit and Métis people confront persistent barriers that hamper their learning opportunities. These barriers are far more difficult to overcome than those facing non-Aboriginal Canadians.<sup>6</sup> While the College has made many improvements, there is much more to be done.

### **Supporting the educational needs of Aboriginal peoples**

Probe Research conducted a study, "Indigenous Voices" with Aboriginal peoples both on and off the reserve in 2009. In response to an open-ended question, Red River College was among the most frequently mentioned institutions.

After the salience question, respondents were asked if they thought that any post-secondary institutions were making a special effort to serve the educational needs of Aboriginal people. Overall, 72% said yes. The high positive rating reflects

the efforts of all Manitoba post-secondary institutions. Among those who indicated that post-secondary schools were making a special effort, RRC was among the most frequently mentioned.

The survey results suggest that Aboriginal people recognize that post-secondary institutions are making an effort to change. But much more needs to be done.

RRC's School of Indigenous Education (SIE) has initiated, promoted, and advocated many changes to the College. The School provides programs and supports for many Aboriginal learners within SIE. The School has acted as a resource in advising, supporting, and teaching throughout RRC (staff and students), and with the external community. The School has also advocated use of the medicine wheel as a tool to support holistic curriculum development. But the School can't do it alone.

Addressing the needs of Aboriginal people is a College-wide initiative in which all departments will be challenged to participate. The College may review academic programs, hiring policies, practices, decision-making processes, architectural designs and physical learning spaces to name a few dimensions.

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<sup>6</sup> School of Indigenous Education, Community Forum Final Report  
Thursday May 15, 2008

- 2. Strategic Initiative:** Transform the culture and environment of the College to acknowledge and respect the Aboriginal worldview and enhance Aboriginal student participation and success.

indigenous methodologies for teaching and learning within a college environment

This initiative gives rise to the following **strategic action:**

- a. Develop a comprehensive College-wide plan to promote greater understanding and integration of the Aboriginal worldview throughout the College.

- 3. Strategic Initiative:** Enhance the education and training practices of the College so as to engage and incorporate the perspectives of Aboriginal communities in Manitoba

This initiative gives rise to the following **strategic actions:**

*As part of Strategic Enrolment Management, develop student retention and success strategies for Aboriginal learners.*

- b. Design and maintain an information management system to inventory and track College-wide initiatives and programs to assess the Aboriginal Achievement strategy.
- c. Develop and inform curricula emphasizing Aboriginal teaching and learning methods. (See Support Teaching excellence)
- d. Establish expertise within the School of Learning Innovation, expertise for the research and study of

### ***C. Strengthen Student Achievement***

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The College prides itself on being an accessible institution. To some degree prospective students are recognizing the opportunity that this presents to them. However, given their diverse backgrounds, prior educational attainment, and the variability of educational opportunities, some students are in the position of seeking access to programs for which they do not meet prerequisites or are not sufficiently prepared. The College needs to develop better methods of helping students make this transition. Moreover, the transition can be improved by taking an evidence-based approach to the setting of admission prerequisites and practices. As noted earlier, thanks to the efforts of instructors and Student Services supports, retention appears to be improving. But attrition costs students, the College, the economy, and the Government. So we all have a strong incentive to further improve the retention and graduation rates.

The College is in the knowledge business and delivers comprehensive applied learning. In promoting excellence in teaching and learning, it is essential that instructors stay current with new knowledge, instructional methods, and technologies that affect the educational process. Effective teaching likewise requires faculty to know about students and the diverse cultures from which they originated and in which they live.

While there are many factors that can influence student retention, most researchers acknowledge that the instructor and the instructor-student relationship is probably the most important factor affecting student success.

#### **4. Strategic Initiative: Support Teaching Excellence**

This initiative gives rise to the following **strategic actions**:

- a. Develop strategies for supporting teaching excellence for full and part-time faculty.
- b. Establish a Teaching Commons as part of an overarching plan to develop a learning college (community).
- c. Advance a comprehensive instructor development program that includes pre-CAE, revised, and updated CAE and post CAE.
- d. Renew College-wide Learning Outcomes to support the strategic plan.

#### **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. The challenge for the College is to find the capacity to include international students in programming without limiting spaces for Manitoba students.

- 5. Strategic Initiative:** Prepare RRC students to compete and succeed in the global economy

This initiative gives rise to the following **strategic actions**:

- a. Promote international learning experiences for domestic students and staff.
- b. Prepare students to manage diversity in the workplace by embedding equity competencies in all our programs.

- 6. Strategic Initiative:** Develop a comprehensive Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) plan which would span the total experience from awareness through graduation, employment and alumni membership

This initiative gives rise to the following **strategic actions**:

- a. Advance the understanding of ‘student readiness’ through the development of :
  - appropriate testing/assessment processes and;
  - remedial programs.
- b. Evaluate elements of educational programming to identify measures that will contribute to improved learning retention and graduation.
- c. Develop an enrolment growth strategy that leverages provincial and international markets.

#### ***D. Improve the College's triple bottom line: People, Planet, Profits***

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Sustainability encompasses three ideas: taking measures that contribute to the viability of the institution (“Profit”), contribute to the environment (“Planet”), and taking measures that contribute to social and economic well being (“People”).

At RRC, opportunities for improving the institution’s operations (“People”) relate to improving communications, leadership, and processes. While the People Plan Committee continues to work on policies and programs to meet the needs of employees for the College, two topics offer substantial leverage for the College: communications and leadership.

As indicated in the workshops, despite improvements that have been achieved over the last three years, internal communications is not as effective as is desired. Delays in communications or the spread of important institutional knowledge inhibits the ability of different parts of the College community to work together, which in turn impedes our ability to attend to the needs of our students or industry. The College needs to strengthen the sharing of information across the College.

Not all managers are leaders and not all leaders are managers, but a characteristic of organizational life is the contribution of people we call leaders. There are, of course, many ways that people choose to work with one another. Over the coming years the College wishes to make sure that an appropriate form of leadership – consistent with the needs of the College - is in place.

Over the course of the workshops the theme of sustainability struck home in a number of ways. Due to the cumulative growth of the College over the last five to seven years, processes have become more complex, and perhaps less responsive. Another theme that emerged in many workshops was that some processes seem to be quite time consuming – tying up resources, and delaying response times.

It is tempting to view the solution to productivity as either a matter of process improvement; for example, in the spirit of LEAN manufacturing, or to see the productivity solution simply in terms of technology or innovation. But the simple addition of technology may not be sufficient.

To remain a viable organization in the face of conflicting pressures, the College needs to improve its technology and its processes and there is research to show these two factors go hand in hand. As a recent study has shown, “There is a growing literature showing that simply investing in new technologies is unlikely to provide a competitive advantage; and the full benefits of new technologies are only realized when these are used together with new workplace organizations including training.”<sup>7</sup> In order for RRC to get the most out of its technological investments, there is a need for changes in the workplace.

Simply put, technology should not be viewed in a vacuum. *“Canadian firms have actively engaged in organizational changes in the areas of production and efficiency practices, human resource management (HRM) practices, and*

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<sup>7</sup> Boothby, D., Dufour, A., and Tang, J (2007). Technology Adoption, Training, and Productivity Performance Industry Canada Working Paper 2007-07.

*product/service quality-related practices. These practices along with ICT use are found to be related to better firm performance.”*<sup>8</sup>

As noted earlier, Canada faces a productivity gap. Productivity is about working better or smarter - not harder. Much of the research on this gap points to institutional effects – the confluence of organization, technology and innovation. For example, "The slowdown in labour productivity after 2000 was almost entirely accounted for by the factors that determine multifactor growth — technology, innovation, firm

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<sup>8</sup> Surendra Gera, S., and Gu, W. (2004). The Effect of Organizational Innovational and Information Technology on Firm Performance, unabridged version, Statistics Canada. The authors note:

“This paper examines the issue of whether investment in information and communication technology (ICT), combined with organizational changes and worker skills contribute to better performance in Canadian firms. We find that Canadian firms have actively engaged in organizational changes in the areas of production and efficiency practices, human resource management (HRM) practices, and product/service quality-related practices. These practices, along with ICT use, are found to be related to better firm performance. We find that while ICT is productive on its own, it is more productive in firms that combine high levels of ICT with high levels of organizational change. The firms that combine ICT with organizational changes have a high incidence of productivity improvement and have high rates of innovation. These findings seem to suggest that to be successful, firms typically need to adopt ICT as part of a ‘system’ or ‘cluster’ of mutually-reinforcing organizational approaches. We also find that ICT and human capital are complements in the service sectors. The firms that combine high levels of ICT and high levels of worker skills have better firm performance.”

organization, scale and capacity utilization effects.”<sup>9</sup> The College as an institution must also grapple with this challenge.

This research along with the information from the external scan and workshop suggestions leads to the following approach.

## **7. Strategic Initiative: People**

Improve the work environment (leadership, planning, processes, communication, and collaboration).

This initiative gives rise to the following **strategic actions**:

- a. Promote College-wide understanding of a comprehensive definition of ‘sustainability’ that includes social, economic and environmental dimensions.
- b. Develop a strategy for College involvement in community outreach.
- c. Engage in a review and restructuring of processes to improve responsiveness and organizational performance.
- d. Foster leadership capabilities at RRC by incorporating a competency framework into the leadership development initiatives.
- e. Expand and support the use of ‘Service-Learning’ in College programs (See Renew College Wide Learning Outcomes).

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<sup>9</sup> Baldwin, J., and Gu, W. (2009). Productivity Performance in Canada, 1961 to 2008: An Update on Long-term Trends. Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 15-206-X — No. 025.



(“**Service-Learning** is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and communities.” National Service-Learning Clearinghouse)

- f. Develop an internally focused & comprehensive communications plan.
- g. Develop College-wide technology plan

### **8. Strategic Initiative: Planet**

As acknowledged to be one of Canada’s Greenest Employers for 2011, the College has taken an active pride in sustainability for some time. Now we want to take it to the next level by completing the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS).

RRC has a proud history of service to Manitoba, but to continue this tradition as we move through the 21<sup>st</sup> century, our Notre Dame and regional campuses must be rejuvenated and revitalized. As well the continued growth of the Exchange District campus requires careful planning.

Campus planning at RRC must incorporate a vision of the educational needs of our students today and into the future. Driven by the mission of the College, the learning environments we create must serve the needs of Aboriginal students and a growing immigrant population and at the same time must be technologically accessible, sophisticated and encouraging of social interaction. They must enhance live-ability, build community, and express our goal of increased

sustainability, while also incorporating an understanding of our impact on one of our immediate neighbours, and our desire to promote greater college-community connections.

Prior to IT Governance, the College prepared a comprehensive Information Technology Strategic Plan to guide future development and investment. It is time to update this plan. 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-campus connections. RRC also continues to implement a comprehensive integrated corporate information system.

Technology has a dual role for RRC: as an institution, there is a need for technology that improves processes and capabilities – and to do so in a manner that is cost effective. As an educational institution, the College needs to be constantly experimenting with leading edge technologies. The former role tends to favour standardization and consolidation; the latter role, variety and self-contained systems. A technology plan must find a way to balance these competing pressures.

Based on the festering concerns about facilities, the College needs to develop a long-term multi-campus master plan to support the fundamental goals of accessibility, diversity, and

inclusiveness; Aboriginal outreach; and quality and innovation outlined in the Academic Plan 2006 – 2020.

Education is constantly changing. To maximize effectiveness and adaption to a changing environment, education should not be viewed as limited to what happens in the classroom. The new plan will make the total College an educational experience.

This initiative gives rise to the following **strategic actions**:

- a. Undertake Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System™ (STARS)
- b. Develop a College-wide plan to improve RRC's sustainability strategic plan.
- c. Implement a plan to improve RRC's sustainability. (See 7.c.)
- d. Develop Campus Master Plan

#### **9. Strategic Initiative: Profits.**

This initiative gives rise to the following **strategic actions**:

- a. Develop a plan to increase college capacity by increasing international student enrolment.
- b. Increase the Financial sustainability of the College.
- c. Seek the ownership of the Notre Dame Campus site.

## 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.

## Summary

Theme	Strategic Initiative	Strategic Action	Measure/Milestone
<b>Fuel Manitoba's economic growth and community development</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Favourability rating on Manitoba Business Leaders Index</li> <li>• Percentage of students employed in area trained</li> <li>• Corporate training volumes</li> <li>• Grant revenues from sources other than COPSE</li> <li>• Applied research volumes</li> <li>• Employer Satisfaction</li> <li>• Partnerships with community service providers</li> </ul>
	Enhance the connections between academic programs and applied research activities with community and workforce development needs.		

Theme	Strategic Initiative	Strategic Action	Measure/Milestone
		a. Update <u>Academic Plan 2020</u> to enhance connections with community and workforce development needs.	
		b. Increase applied research & innovation	
		c. Apply the strategic council model of industry consultation to selected sectors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic councils.</li> </ul>
		d. Attract international students to enrich the workplace and to support workforce development.	
		e. Develop a comprehensive External Relations/ Communications Plan to enhance awareness, reputation, partnerships and linkages with key stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit External Relations/Communications Plan</li> </ul>
		f. Build on the participation of Regional Campuses to enrich the connections with community and workforce development.	
<b>Lead Aboriginal Achievement</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aboriginal enrolment</li> <li>• Aboriginal retention diploma</li> <li>• Aboriginal retention certificate.</li> </ul>
	Transform the culture and environment of the College to acknowledge and respect the Aboriginal worldview and enhance Aboriginal student participation and success.		
		a. Develop a comprehensive college-wide plan to promote greater understanding and integration of the Aboriginal worldview throughout the College.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit Plan that advances understanding of the institutional changes needed to appropriately engage Aboriginal people in the College and outline clear targets/milestones</li> <li>• Initiate implementation of the Plan</li> <li>• Increase educational opportunities for staff on Aboriginal culture, worldview and barriers to education</li> </ul>

Theme	Strategic Initiative	Strategic Action	Measure/Milestone
	Enhance the education and training practices of the College so as to engage, and incorporate the perspectives of, Aboriginal communities in Manitoba		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of programs that can demonstrate they have changed curricula to emphasize Aboriginal teaching methodologies</li> <li>• Percentage of programs that have incorporated Aboriginal perspectives into their curriculum.</li> </ul>
		As part of Strategic Enrolment Management, develop student retention and success strategies for Aboriginal learners.	
		a. Design and maintain an information management system to inventory and track college wide initiatives and programs to assess the Aboriginal Achievement strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement information system</li> </ul>
		b. Develop and inform curricula emphasizing Aboriginal teaching and learning methods. (See Support Teaching excellence)	
		c. Establish within the School of Learning Innovation, expertise for the research and study of indigenous methodologies for teaching and learning within a college environment.	
<b>Strengthen Student Achievement</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retention rate for certificate programs</li> <li>• Retention rate for diploma programs</li> <li>• On time graduation rate diploma</li> <li>• On time graduation rate certificate</li> <li>• Diploma year one completion rate</li> <li>• Instruction ratings on the Student Evaluation of Program Survey</li> </ul>

Theme	Strategic Initiative	Strategic Action	Measure/Milestone
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International student enrolment</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicator of Overall Satisfaction with Instructor (Overall Student Evaluation of Instruction)</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase graduate satisfaction</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student satisfaction on Student Evaluation of Program Survey (SEPS)</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alumni dinner participation</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of programs engaged in Service Learning</li> </ul>
	Support Teaching Excellence		
		a. Develop strategies for supporting teaching excellence for full and part-time faculty.	
		b. Establish a Teaching Commons as part of an overarching plan to develop a learning college (community)	
		c. Advance a comprehensive instructor development program that includes pre-CAE, revised and updated CAE and post CAE	
		d. Renew College Wide Learning Outcomes to support the strategic plan.	
	Prepare RRC students to compete and succeed in the global economy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create domestic student and staff exchange and study/work-abroad opportunities</li> <li>• Incorporate global competencies in RRC programs</li> </ul>
		a. Promote international learning experiences for domestic students and staff.	

Theme	Strategic Initiative	Strategic Action	Measure/Milestone
		b. Prepare students to manage diversity in the workplace by embedding equity competencies in all our programs.	
	Develop a comprehensive Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) plan which would span the total experience from awareness through graduation, employment and alumni membership.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit SEM Plan</li> <li>• Establish clear pathways from admission to graduation.</li> </ul>
		a. Advance the understanding of ‘student readiness’ through the development of : - appropriate testing/assessment processes and; remedial programs.	
		b. Evaluate elements of educational programming to identify measures that will contribute to improved learning, retention and graduation.	
		c. Develop an enrolment growth strategy that leverages provincial and international markets.	
<b>Improve the College's triple bottom line: People, Planet, Profits</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainability awareness</li> </ul>
	PEOPLE		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff satisfaction with RRC</li> <li>• Staff engagement</li> <li>• Turnaround time on key processes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Finance, budget, and, administrative processes</li> <li>➤ HR practices &amp; processes</li> <li>➤ Timetabling and scheduling</li> <li>➤ Program renewal</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Chair satisfaction with processes – index importance (lower is better)</li> </ul>



Theme	Strategic Initiative	Strategic Action	Measure/Milestone
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff self assessment about being kept informed about College developments.</li> <li>• Top employer status</li> <li>• Provide strategic leadership for learning (Staff survey)</li> <li>• Promote inquiry and dialogue (Staff survey)</li> </ul>
		a. Promote College-wide understanding of a comprehensive definition of 'Sustainability' that includes social, economic and environmental dimensions.	
		b. Develop a strategy for College involvement in community outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inventory College involvement in community outreach activities</li> </ul>
		c. Engage in a review and restructuring of processes to improve responsiveness and organizational performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review committees and working groups within the College &amp; identify redundancies; clarify decision-making processes, roles &amp; functions</li> <li>• Implement streamlined processes and procedures to enhance College productivity and performance</li> </ul>
		d. Foster leadership capabilities at RRC by incorporating a competency framework into the leadership development initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit a Leadership Development program for leaders at various levels within the College.</li> <li>• Linkages are made within a comprehensive human resources management strategy (People Plan), including, e.g. Onboarding, performance management, succession planning program.</li> </ul>
		e. Expand and support the use of 'Service-Learning' in College programs (See Renew College Wide Learning Outcomes).	

Theme	Strategic Initiative	Strategic Action	Measure/Milestone
		<p>(“<b>Service-Learning</b> is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.” National Service-Learning Clearinghouse)</p>	
		f. Develop an internally focused & comprehensive communications plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit Internal Communications Plan</li> </ul>
		g. Develop College-wide Technology plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit Technology Plan</li> </ul>
	PLANET		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental foot print</li> </ul>
		a. Undertake Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System™ (STARS)	
		b. Develop a College-wide plan to improve RRC’s sustainability	
		c. Implement a plan to improve RRC’s sustainability. (See 7.c.)	
		d. Develop Campus Master Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit Campus Master Plan by 02/13</li> <li>• Implement Campus Master Plan</li> </ul>
	PROFITS (Financial viability)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of funds internally generated</li> <li>• Generate profit from Campus Services by 2014</li> <li>• Donations (capital &amp; operations)</li> <li>• Establish Student Opportunity Endowment Fund</li> <li>• See process improvement</li> <li>• Increase Provincial Base Funding</li> </ul>
		a. Develop a plan to increase College capacity by increasing international student enrolment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit International Education Plan with clear targets/milestones</li> <li>• Implement International Education Plan</li> </ul>

Theme	Strategic Initiative	Strategic Action	Measure/Milestone
		b. Increase the Financial sustainability of the College	
		c. Seek the ownership of the NDC site	