



Now More Than Ever

Nova Scotia Community College Strategic Plan

nsc**c**

Now more than ever

This is our moment. Now is the time to embrace a future that starts with this moment and is bound only by our potential. Nova Scotia is facing a time of unprecedented opportunity and unparalleled challenge as it sets its course for sustained economic growth and social prosperity.

We asked our community of stakeholders to help us envision a pathway to success in this setting. You offered us your best advice on where to focus our strategic actions going forward.

You encouraged us to hold fast to the richness of our past and yet look forward to a future where everyone in Nova Scotia can realize their potential and achieve success in their chosen careers. We listened, reflected and with that advice created four strategic priorities that will guide all that we do, every day.

1. Community Connections
2. Program Quality
3. Operational Excellence
4. Access to Success

This is the Strategic Plan for NSCC that we have created together. This plan will be the focus for our team of committed and caring employees who bring their best to the College each day to enhance the vitality and sustainability of our communities and the province itself.

Now more than ever, NSCC has a vital role to play in helping Nova Scotia imagine and realize its ideal future and we invite you to join us as we implement our plan.



Don Bureaux, President

Vision Statement

As a College, we are a community committed to the success and fulfillment of every student - in education, in career and in life. We believe the future of our province lies in the power of learning. When individuals transform their lives through learning, they have the power to transform their communities. As they transform their communities, they transform our province. It is within this context that we have set the following vision...

Transforming Nova Scotia
one learner at a time.

Mission Statement

NSCC's fundamental purpose as defined in our mission statement is concise and compelling. Our mission will provide us with clarity as we work to achieve our vision and thus, we will continue to commit ourselves to the mandate of...

Building Nova Scotia's economy
and quality of life through education
and innovation.

Values

At NSCC we care about each other and we care deeply about what we are here to do. These eight values are the fundamental driving forces within our organization. They rest at the core of what we do and how we do it. We hold ourselves accountable for the embodiment of these values in our work together every day.

Student Success:

We support and celebrate the success of our students as they undertake learning and pursue careers.

Employee Success:

We recognize and honour the vital importance of each other's contributions to the success of our students, the College and the communities we serve.

Accessibility:

We commit to opening pathways and providing equitable opportunities to access our programs and services.

Diversity & Inclusion:

We provide a learning environment that welcomes and embraces individuals from diverse communities and we take every opportunity to become more inclusive.

Safety:

We focus on creating a culture of safety and well-being within our entire NSCC community and beyond.

Innovation:

We believe there is always a better way and we will find it by inspiring openness, curiosity and creativity as a basis for excellence.

Sustainability:

We commit to the continuous development of the social, economic, cultural and environmental sustainability of the College and our community partners.

Public Accountability:

We work with integrity in every area of the College and believe we must be fundamentally accountable for the public's trust in all that we do.

Honouring our Past – Embracing our Future

Community is more than just a word at NSCC. It has been our focus since our beginning. We believe strong communities are key to the economic and social fabric of this province. This belief will continue to drive our work into the future. The aim of our work is clear.

We seek to strengthen all communities in Nova Scotia, through the learning we provide each and every student. Our roots can be traced to the early 1800's when the Mechanic Institutes were formed to teach the skills needed to build a strong economy. This work then grew in the areas of apprenticeship and vocational training to meet the labour needs of the industrial age and the economic growth following World War II.

As we approached the new millennium in the late 1990's, we began a period of rapid growth in terms of our programming, enrolment, infrastructure and staffing. We built a modern community college with a respected, relevant and recognized role in serving the 21st Century needs of Nova Scotia.

Now, more than ever, we need to maximize and leverage NSCC's ability to build Nova Scotia's economy and quality of life through the education and innovation we provide. This will be our imperative as our communities, organizations and businesses are facing significant change that will be defined by unprecedented opportunities and unparalleled challenges.

Unprecedented Opportunities

Our province now has an unprecedented opportunity to set the course for sustained economic growth and social prosperity. A new sense of confidence in Nova Scotia's future is taking hold as the province begins to emerge from the economic challenges of the past four years.

These new possibilities for growth are becoming more tangible. While Nova Scotians are welcoming big wins like the shipbuilding contract, we are also learning to recognize and support the potential of other opportunities.

Whether it is capitalizing on an emerging technology that can improve an individual business, or a budding entrepreneurial culture that can engage a whole region, there is evidence of new and emerging opportunities in every sector of Nova Scotia's economy.

From the 24,000+ small businesses that are the backbone of our economy to the very large organizations which employ thousands of Nova Scotians, all employers need access to a workforce with the skills and knowledge to help them capitalize on new and

increasingly global opportunities. To take advantage of these opportunities, employers in Nova Scotia will, more than ever, require their employees to have current, relevant and applied post-secondary skills. NSCC is uniquely positioned to help this happen by enhancing the involvement of employers in the design and evolution of our programs.

Unparalleled Challenges

Despite significant opportunities for economic growth, there will be challenging times ahead for our province.

In the next decade, Nova Scotia, like many Canadian provinces, will experience the merging of two major trends – a labour shortage caused by an aging population and a skills shortage caused by a changing economy. In short, “jobs without people and people without jobs”¹.

The impact of these trends will be particularly acute in Nova Scotia, where our working-age population will decline by 47,000² people over the next 10 years.

At the same time, the vast majority of new jobs will require workers with a post-secondary education and high skills levels². However, there are 200,000³ Nova Scotians who are not prepared for this reality and are in danger of being further marginalized as our economy moves into the future. Among Nova Scotians without the skills and literacy required to

participate in the economy, there are a disproportionately large number of people with disabilities or from Aboriginal and African-Nova Scotian communities who have faced barriers to post-secondary education in the past.

NSCC is positioned to help the province capitalize on what is before us by providing opportunities for Nova Scotians to equip themselves with the advanced skills to participate in our changing economy through a unique learning experience.

¹ Rick Miner, PhD. People without Jobs, Jobs without People, 2010

² Nova Scotia's Workforce Strategy, 2011

³ Statistics Canada Census, 2006

NSCC's Unique Learning Experience is our Core Strength

NSCC delivers a unique learning experience that sets us apart from other post-secondary institutions in Canada. For more than a decade we have focused on building a **portfolio learning experience** that gives our graduates a significant edge as they go forward in life.

College graduates require more than training for a specific set of skills in a single occupation. They need to be work-ready, with the cognitive, interpersonal, reflective and critical thinking skills that are so valued in today's demanding workplace. They will succeed in their working and learning careers because they have both the resilience of an entrepreneurial spirit and the practical problem-solving abilities of a truly innovative thinker.

The NSCC learning experience focuses on building practical knowledge, advanced skills and confidence by blending hands-on and theoretical learning with real workplace experience. By inspiring curiosity, critical thinking and reflection, we encourage learners to learn more about themselves and what they want to achieve in life. We encourage our learners to give back to the community through service learning and equip them to engage in a continuous learning process throughout their working lives.

In short, we educate the whole person, so that all of their resources are available to help them succeed in the life and career opportunities that lie ahead. NSCC's unique learning experience enables learners to confidently pursue their dreams and provides a meaningful source of added value in building the economic and social fabric of the province.

We will pursue four strategic priorities that will allow us to leverage this core strength, thereby helping the province reach a future where everyone in Nova Scotia can realize their potential. These priorities will define who we are and will guide what we do, every day.

1. Community Connections
2. Program Quality
3. Operational Excellence
4. Access to Success

Strategic Priority 1 | **Community Connections**

NSCC is committed to building and sustaining strong connections with our communities to ensure future prosperity and well-being.

Strategic Priority 1

The “community” in Community College is at the heart of why NSCC exists and what we strive to support and sustain.

We are an educational hub for the many rural and urban communities our campuses serve. We are committed to helping our communities thrive and prosper through service learning opportunities for students and employee participation in community organizations. By promoting diversity and inclusion, NSCC offers a nurturing environment for learning, living and

thriving locally. We value the importance of relationships, working closely with all levels of government, local communities and employers. These relationships are developed by inviting communities to participate in the daily lives of our campuses through activities, celebratory events and planning initiatives.

The future prosperity and well-being of communities will determine the overall strength of Nova Scotia’s economy and quality of life. Therefore, we will continue to strengthen and deepen connections with our communities so true innovation and entrepreneurship can flourish, contributing to the well-being of learners, families, communities and the province.

We will fulfill our commitment to communities through the following **Goals**:

- We will ensure we provide a nurturing environment for learning, living and thriving locally by embodying our values of diversity and inclusion.
- We will connect regularly with the citizens and communities that make up all of Nova Scotia, enabling us to better understand and address their learning needs and concerns while building more mutually beneficial partnerships.
- We will work to ensure the learning and applied research activities we provide enable communities to take full advantage of new opportunities for economic and social prosperity as they emerge.
- We will actively participate in the life of our communities so that together we can inspire innovation and entrepreneurial spirit, and contribute to our collective well-being and sustainability.

Strategic Priority 2 | **Program Quality**

NSCC is committed to graduating learners who possess leading edge skills and knowledge and who are immediately prepared to use their talents in their work and communities, continuing to learn and grow throughout their lives.

Strategic Priority 2

NSCC must deliver programs of exceptional quality to ensure that the skills, knowledge and abilities our graduates take with them into the workforce are highly valued in the economy.

We have always been committed to regular review and renewal of our programs to keep pace with the changing needs of employers, industry and best practices in post-secondary learning. We have made great investments in providing learning and professional development opportunities for our employees.

Now, it is time to build on our history of strong programming and commit to reaching that next level of quality.

We will fulfill our commitment to program quality through the following **Goals**:

- We will engage students in learning experiences that are of exceptional quality so they can excel in the work force.
- We will provide applied learning and research experiences that align with the innovation and technology needs of the economy.
- We will work closely with employers and industry in designing programs that meet their needs, helping build Nova Scotia's economy through a well-educated and highly-skilled work force.
- We will invest in the capabilities of our employees to enhance teaching and service delivery.

Strategic Priority 3 | **Operational Excellence**

NSCC is committed to providing an exceptional learning experience to every NSCC learner, in all the programs and services we provide.

Strategic Priority 3

NSCC will ensure that we are effective stewards of the resources with which we are entrusted. We have worked effectively over the past decade to build and grow a modern college with respected and relevant programs for Nova Scotia. In the process, we have been nimble and responsive in ensuring that the basic processes, systems and services are in place to serve the needs of learners as they navigate their learning journey with us.

An exceptional learning experience consists of more than what happens in our classrooms, shops and labs. It is the sum of **every** service, process and connection our students experience – from the time they begin to consider NSCC as a place to learn, through graduation and having successful careers – it is a journey of lifelong learning.

It is now time to take a comprehensive look at all our systems, processes and practices to ensure they are adding value to the whole learning experience of our students. We are a complex organization that spans the entire province, operating in unique communities each with their own opportunities and challenges. Therefore, as we continue to be an employer of choice, we will ensure our planning processes are rooted in deep collaboration. With shared accountabilities, we will recognize interdependencies across college functions. As an entire college community, we will work together with a continuous improvement mindset to ensure operational excellence.

We will fulfill our commitment to operational excellence through the following **Goals**:

- We will refine and improve our services, policies, and communication to ensure clear and effective business practices.
- We will design and renew our technology to enable innovation and excellence in all aspects of our work.
- We will build effective processes and planning tools that help us work nimbly and collaboratively across all functions of the College.
- We will invest in improving our safety practices throughout the College.
- We will invest in building leadership skills throughout NSCC.

Strategic Priority 4 | **Access to Success**

NSCC is committed to ensuring learners make the right program choices for them and are prepared for the successful achievement of their learning goals.

Strategic Priority 4

The future prosperity and well-being of the province depends upon many more people having the ability to acquire, and continuously upgrade, the skills and knowledge required to build prosperous lives and vibrant industries.

With more than 120 programs covering every sector of the economy, from entry level skills to highly advanced knowledge, learners have access to programs and courses designed to support their learning needs throughout their lives and at every stage of their careers.

The opportunities and challenges facing Nova Scotia over the next decade provide a clear focus for the work we will do as a college.

We will continue to provide a broad suite of relevant programs and increased flexibility in terms of access to these programs. We will enable as many people as possible to overcome the barriers and learning challenges that are keeping them from participating fully in Nova Scotia's workforce. We will work with our industry partners to strengthen the long-term viability of their enterprises by providing their workforce with access to lifelong learning opportunities in a manner that recognizes their unique operational realities.

We will undertake this work with the imperative of enhancing the support we offer to NSCC learners. This support will include an increased emphasis on engaging our students in choosing programs that are well suited to their interests, abilities and career opportunities as well as helping ensure they have the necessary academic readiness for successful post-secondary learning.

We will fulfill our Access to Success commitment through the following **Goals**:

- We will become a more welcoming and diverse college community.
- We will enhance and expand our learning pathways for Nova Scotians who are not academically prepared for success in pursuing a post-secondary credential.
- We will provide learners with tools to help them make the right program choices for their interests, abilities and career opportunities.
- We will help ensure every learner is prepared to meet the academic challenges of a modern community college.
- We will provide learning opportunities for Nova Scotians to continue acquiring leading edge skills and knowledge throughout their lives.

Thank You and Please Join Us in a New Way of Planning

This strategic plan is our third since becoming a Board-governed institution in 1996. Our first plan focused on building a modern community college. Our second focused on becoming recognized, relevant and respected as a leading post-secondary institution in Canada.

This plan was developed at a time defined by new opportunities and challenging realities. Nova Scotia needs a highly skilled and available workforce to achieve its future economic potential. This new plan focuses single-mindedly on how NSCC will rise to this challenge.

The environment in which NSCC operates is dynamic and requires us to adopt a new way of planning, one that is nimble and responsive. As a result, NSCC will move to a rolling plan, with annual review, reflection and adjustment. This iterative process will be founded on the principles of portfolio learning, where purposeful reflection will inform and guide the evolving plan over time.

We would like to thank the many people who contributed to the identification of the key themes that informed the development of the strategic priorities contained within this plan. You have truly shaped our future and your voices will continue to be heard as we adopt our new way of planning.

Welcome to our journey.

Now More Than Ever

Our Mission is building Nova Scotia's economy and quality of life through education and innovation.

Our Vision: Transforming Nova Scotia one learner at a time.

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Our Values:

- Student Success
- Employee Success
- Accessibility
- Diversity & Inclusion
- Safety
- Sustainability
- Innovation
- Public Accountability

Our Strategic Priorities:



OUR GOALS:

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