

NORQUEST 2030: WE ARE WHO WE INCLUDE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Our Story	2
Our Purpose and Values	4
What Success Looks Like	6
The Strategic Context	8
Outcomes	
Learner	12
People	16
Connection	20
Investment	22
Transformation	26
Endnotes	29

MESSAGE FROM BOARD CHAIR AND PRESIDENT

NorQuest College has always been shaped by the people and communities we serve. Our alignment between people and place defines our capacity for social, economic, and cultural impact beyond our campus.

NorQuest 2030: We are who we include will unite NorQuest with the communities we aim to serve. We will accomplish this goal, in part, by continuing to deliver workforce-relevant education. Our strategic plan holds this commitment at its core, but we unabashedly declare that we will do, and we will be, more.

In every way, this plan is about you, whether you are a learner, an employee, or an external partner of NorQuest College. We are eager to have you read about lifelong learner Patricia, about program chair Sithara, and about Sherri, CEO of Women's Executive Network. We hope that you will see yourself and the people you know in their examples, because our strategy is for, and about, you.

NorQuest College sits on traditional Treaty 6 territory, and that treaty is a symbol of peace and friendship. The land we inhabit has been home to numerous and diverse Indigenous Peoples including the Cree, Dene, Blackfoot, Saulteaux, Nakota Sioux, Inuit, and Métis. Each day we recommit to building the trust that moves us forward on the path to reconciliation. While we have seen tremendous success in serving and supporting a diverse community, we recognize and address the reality that not everyone has found a home in post-secondary.

We are about to take up the unique opportunity and challenge to make NorQuest a space for those who may have hesitated. We will attract different audiences to make their place at NorQuest obvious; for learners, for employees, for industry partners, and all other stakeholders who may be unaware of what they can do at NorQuest, and what NorQuest can do for them. We are intentionally inviting all communities, organizations, and others to share our vision and partner with us through this plan.



Carla Madra, CPA, CA
Chair, Board of Governors



Carolyn Campbell
President & CEO



At NorQuest, our strength and our difference come from who is included.

People—learners, instructors, staff, partners—increasingly choose us because they love that we’re building a different kind of college here. This is an extraordinary place devoted to changing lives, fulfilling dreams, and creating belonging for everyone.

We make no secret about our aspirations to grow; to make exceptional economic and social impact on the communities we serve; and to closely align with Alberta’s needs as industry, government, and education all surge forward again, together. When we are at our best, NorQuest connects people from all walks of life to help solve some of society’s most challenging problems.

The key to all of it is who we include and how we include them.

It starts with our invitation to students.

We welcome learners to NorQuest with kindness and compassion. When they walk through our doors, we meet them where they are. That will never change.

A relentless focus on meeting students where they are, creating systemic change, and being responsive supports higher post-secondary participation rates, drives our Indigenization Strategy, *Wahkôhtowin*, and brings to life our efforts toward building a truly anti-racist, equitable, diverse, and inclusive college.

An emphasis on these things isn’t only the right thing to do, it’s essential to our difference and reputation.

When we are who we include, we open up enormous potential for growth in new learners of all ages and backgrounds, and in graduates with sharp, workforce-ready expertise. We’re a college of communities building the shortest, most accessible line not only between learning and work but also between scarcity and growth—in individuals’ lives and throughout entire industries.

When we are who we include, we’re a place of connection; a hub for business leaders and innovation; a catalyst for research that’s focused on society’s biggest challenges; and a vital partner to government, industry, and our community.

When we are who we include, when we show the world that this is a place where everyone can be successful, when we compete on experience, our crucial audiences understand our value and how we’re different.

And we continue to lead by example and demonstrate that kindness, compassion, and equity can drive meaningful change in students’ lives, academic excellence, the productivity of an economy, and the resurgence of an entire province.

This is our quest.

This is how we transform.

This is how we make a difference.

Purpose

At NorQuest, we transform lives. And when we do that, we transform communities, we transform the world, we transform the future. We create a true global community—a place of belonging—right here at NorQuest.

The question we ask in everything we do is “How will this change lives for the better?”

We are on a quest.
We are difference makers.
We are NorQuesters.



Values

- lead from where you are
- we > they
- be compassionate
- be dependable
- find ways forward
- have honest conversations
- work at play & play at work
- be boldly curious & intentionally courageous
- start small & think BIG

Our strategic aspiration

At NorQuest, we aspire to be a place where people come to transform their lives and find a place to belong. A place where we help make the aspirational attainable, and where there is a path for every learner who comes to us.

We will realize this aspiration by being “your community college” and helping all learners grow, and working with them to empower positive change in their lives, their communities, and our economy. We will lift as we climb, combining drive with social change; reflecting equity, diversity, and inclusion at all levels; and creating personalized learning pathways for our learners. We will support this by focusing on being a valued partner and cultivating trusted relationships with the workforce, industry, governments, and communities.

If what we do today starts with students, what we hope to achieve tomorrow must start there too.

We have it within our power to break down entrenched barriers in our system, and genuinely make learners of all ages and circumstances understand that they belong at NorQuest.

Institutions often ask applicants to navigate complex structures and complicated processes, creating unnecessary challenges that stand between learners and opportunity. This process is far from intuitive for prospective learners, and it needs to be transformed to anticipate learners’ needs and inspire confidence.

We intend to flip this old paradigm on its head and ensure we’re the ones doing the hard work to include everyone who might choose us. This is an essential shift we can and *must* make to reach out to prospective learners in a powerful new way.

Our future work also requires a shift, or rather an acceleration, in our thinking. This allows us to substantially build on our Indigenization Strategy and our commitment to decolonization.

Post-secondary schools around the world are wrestling with a “What now?” sort-of inertia in their Indigenization strategies. We can’t be content to just acknowledge the need to change. We must plan to change and deliver on that plan.

Indigenous leaders at NorQuest are building and testing ground-breaking models and decolonial possibilities in higher education. This includes an intentional reimagining of certificate and diploma programs explicitly linked to the legacy areas outlined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. It reflects a purposeful resurgence in land-based learning, language revitalization, and how Indigenous fine arts programming can be a beautiful and stirring engine of renewal and reconciliation.

This will be decolonization in action, and it will advance in step with our efforts to include students in a profound anti-racism process; fund Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) spaces and supports; and integrate equity, diversity, and inclusion principles into our core organizational structures.

All of this will give us the space and momentum to engage new investors—partners, funders, and charitable givers—attracted to and inspired by NorQuest’s goals around social impact, inclusion, and Indigenization. And we’ll sharpen and deepen our outreach to our alumni through the story we tell and the inspiration we provoke, so when they think of NorQuest, they proudly regard us as “My school, my college.”

More goodwill and revenue from these sources means we can amplify our impact throughout NorQuest, and ensure we’ll always be able to invest in care and attention for our learners, no matter what’s happening in the economy or a budget cycle.

Closer to home, we must re-engineer our business processes so our operations align with our aspirations to be welcoming, uplifting, and energized by a greater social purpose. Our extraordinary ambition needs an extraordinary foundation underpinning it.

We must plan to seamlessly serve substantially more learners by 2030 in new and revamped physical and online spaces, and explore game-changing ideas like a purpose-built health sciences centre focused on Alberta’s exploding need for long-term-care expertise and services.

If we do all of this, we’ll have truly built a place where learners find transformation and belonging, and a clear and well-designed path for every one of their aspirations.

We’ll have built a NorQuest that says to anyone yearning to change their lives through education: “This is the safest, surest place to be to decide what you want to be next.”

The conditions and assumptions guiding our planning

NorQuest is about constantly seeking better ways, better ideas, better solutions, and being fearless about acting in ways that help us transform lives through the power of education.

We're also a place that considers context and important trends before we jump in and act. At NorQuest, we don't sit back and wait for the future to happen to us. We plan for it.

We know the disruption that has changed post-secondary education will only accelerate.

Competition from businesses outside the higher education sector will grow more targeted and fierce. The COVID-19 pandemic has heightened our expectations of virtual learning and has untethered the workplace from usual constraints of time and place. During the pandemic, 1.7 billion learners worldwide faced complete or partial school closures.¹ In Canada, 92 per cent of post-secondary students had some or all of their courses moved online.² Moreover, 59 per cent of Canadian employees started working remotely with 63 per cent wanting to remain working remotely for half or more of their time post-pandemic.³ Employers aren't only adapting to that seismic shift; with one third of employees currently lacking skills required in their roles, their need to keep the skills of their employees current has never been more urgent.⁴ These factors plus numerous others place exceptional demands on NorQuest to stay relevant and to be extraordinarily thoughtful about what relevance might mean in 10 months or 10 years.

Every decision we make must consider the changing profile of post-secondary learners. From 2013–14 to 2017–18, the proportion of international learners has increased from 6.5 per cent to 8 per cent. In that same period, the proportion of Indigenous students only increased from 3.8 per cent to 4.9 per cent,⁵ despite Indigenous persons aged 15 to 34 being the fastest growing segment of Canadian society.⁶ We are also seeing more and more adult learners participating in higher education.

Students and their families are bearing more cost and debt as tuition increases across our sector. Over the past decade, domestic undergraduate tuition fees in Alberta have increased by 11 per cent and, across Canada, by 28 per cent.⁷ But that doesn't mean learners' appetite for what we offer is dropping; in fact, more people of all ages and backgrounds aspire to learn, reskill, and upskill.

The role of post-secondary institutions is expanding as employers and employees are adapting to the increased rate of change in the workplace. More people are looking to attend higher education more frequently, necessitating a reimagining of our credentials and program models (e.g., growth of micro-credentials, laddering/stacking, non-credit). In 2019, over two thirds of Canadian post-secondary institutions offered some form of micro-credential to enable flexible, short-term, focused (re)training.⁸ And when co-developed and implemented in partnership with industry, research shows these credentials are effective in improving learners' workforce readiness.⁹

However, as more people are looking to participate in higher education more frequently, class and racial disparities in access, success, and outcomes are becoming increasingly evident. Those from BIPOC communities are less likely than their white peers to pursue post-secondary education and are more likely to be unemployed. To ensure equity of access, post-secondary institutions must take the necessary steps to support overcoming these disparities and structural inequalities by means such as providing technology to low-income students, decolonizing the curriculum, providing increased holistic mental health supports for learners, and providing specific supports for historically disadvantaged communities. Across the board, there is the growing expectation that organizations operate ethically and advance the social good while simultaneously pursuing financial growth.¹⁰

In this environment, technology becomes a facilitator of access to education but also a barrier for many populations, including rural communities and persons from lower socio-economic brackets. As of 2020, one third of Canadians only had access to low-speed internet, while another 6 per cent had no access at all.¹¹ Moreover, 500,000 Canadians relied exclusively on their phones to ensure digital access. At NorQuest alone, 24 per cent of our learners use their smartphone for their online learning.¹² Post-secondary institutions are having to use new technology to expand their reach while also ensuring that how they rely on the technology doesn't continue to perpetuate social inequalities in accessing education.

In the short term, learners will come to us burdened with layered social and emotional effects emerging from the pandemic. One survey of Canadians found that 63.8 per cent of youth aged 15 to 24, 61.9 per cent of youth aged 24 to 34, and 60.3 per cent of

persons aged 35 to 44 rated their mental health as 'poor' due to the pandemic.¹³

Even before the pandemic, we know our students dealt too often with anxiety and stress, depression, and academic concerns. International students faced unique and challenging situations during the pandemic, first as students sometimes trapped in host countries once studies completed, and following, as students living abroad while trying to fully participate in technology-mediated educational programming. In 2020 alone, 250,000 fewer study permits were issued compared to the year prior,¹⁴ despite post-secondary institutional and governmental efforts to minimize the disruption in international students' learning.

We know international students will continue to look to Canada to prepare them for their careers, and our award-winning programs and commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion will keep us at the forefront of learners' decisions. In the classroom, we have an extraordinary opportunity to learn from Indigenous worldviews, perspectives, and teachings to support our growing province, support and build economies, and guide our climate back to health.

Whatever the context, NorQuest is well situated to respond nimbly and successfully.

We're closely connected with communities, industry, and all levels of government with our reputation as collaborative and eager to solve the province's challenges. This includes being closely aligned with the Government of Alberta's focus on building skills for jobs, and ensuring current and future generations have the skills and knowledge they need to succeed. Examples of this alignment include focusing on improving access to education, ensuring our learners are employment ready and "future proofed," and increasing operational efficiency through data-sharing and system-wide collaboration to ensure a strong public social return on investment for higher education.

Maybe most crucially, the ability to adapt and to seek that better solution is at the core of who we are at NorQuest. The power of our culture and our purpose is our biggest asset, arming us against a changing and uncertain future.

Outcomes

LEARNER

PEOPLE

CONNECTION

INVESTMENT

TRANSFORMATION



Learner

NorQuest is the first choice for an inclusive and seamless educational experience.



Our first outcome is to be learners' first choice for an inclusive and seamless learning experience. We will do this by expanding and enhancing our services and supports, courses, and research to best serve our learners and position them for success.

We will transform the NorQuest learner experience, and the processes and technology surrounding it, and implement strategies involving learner attraction, Indigenization, internationalization, and a reimagining of higher education.

Those who don't know us—not yet—will come to understand what our most enthusiastic graduates and industry partners have known for years: NorQuest promises a life-changing experience and the best place to enter in-demand careers or start a lifelong journey in education.

The key to serving learners is consistency in the quality of our services, and flexibility and clarity throughout our college.

Sometimes, the NorQuest learner experience already resembles the ideal we have in mind: to be efficient, helpful, enjoyable, and safe. When learners feel this today, it's because of the efforts of dedicated NorQuesters who have found ways to transcend the constraints of existing processes and technology. We have to elevate the latter, building tools and infrastructure that allow us to do whatever we can to support and make it easy for learners.

That will be true transformation, positioning NorQuest as a college that's easy to be part of and unthinkable to leave. All of it will be powered by the kindness and compassion that we aim to be known for, and our commitment to anti-racism and equity, diversity, and inclusion.

In the classroom, we have an extraordinary opportunity to weave Indigenous worldviews, perspectives, and teachings into ideas for growing our province, strengthening our economy, and helping our climate back to health.

We will continue to focus on programs that are the most relevant to the job market and communities, delivered in ways that are modern and flexible, and that provide enhanced opportunities for our learners that they can't get elsewhere, such as work-integrated learning and applied research opportunities.

NorQuest is where learners will co-create content with instructors who are armed with robust and recent industry experience. It's where students will find a safe place to learn how to navigate difficult situations. It's where learners and faculty will together mine open data and open science to exponentially increase their impacts in the classroom and in the real world.

Too many people in this province face life's challenges without a college education. Albertans, and learners from around the world, deserve fulfilling careers, the ability to provide for their families, self-confidence, and self-worth. Our focus on the learner will unlock the potential of a whole province for all of our distinct communities.

Strategic Direction

Expand and enhance our services, offerings, and research to best serve our learners and position them for success.

Key Objectives

- 1 Attract and retain learners by transforming the learner experience, anticipating learners' needs, improving accessibility, and supporting mental health and wellness.
- 2 Increase program flexibility and diversity, and implement Reimagine Higher Education, which addresses game-changers such as connected teaching, learning communities, and assessment.
- 3 Integrate Indigenous knowledge and wisdom into all aspects of college life, and facilitate a mutual understanding, respect, and learning between Indigenous Peoples and others.
- 4 Prepare each learner for the changing workforce through the NorQuest Skills of Distinction: Inclusion, Resilience, and New Ways of Thinking.
- 5 Solve real-world problems for industry and communities, and provide work-integrated learning opportunities for our learners through advancing applied research.
- 6 Internationalize NorQuest to create opportunities for all students, faculty, and staff to engage in global issues, mobility opportunities, and strong partnerships for recruitment.

Measures

- 1 Increase the total number of learners served by 50 per cent.
- 2 90 per cent of learners are satisfied with the overall quality of education they received at NorQuest.

Meet Patricia Gladue: NorQuester, lifelong learner, social work superstar

When Patricia Gladue was 17, she walked into NorQuest for the first time, shrinking from the fear of everything that could go wrong.

"I was so scared," Patricia says. "It was so big. There were so many people. Would I get lost? Would they understand a teen mom with three-year-old twin boys?"

"I'd run away from my parents. I'd been living on my own for a long time. I never graduated high school. How could this place—how could *any* place—be for me?"

But as Patricia navigated NorQuest's halls that first day, something happened—something a little magical. An instructor called out: "Hi!" Then another. Someone else showed Patricia, originally from Kikino Métis Settlement south of Lac La Biche, where the Indigenous prayer room was on the sixth floor.

Some days, Patricia hid in that prayer room between her academic upgrading classes; but over the days and months, her confidence grew as something more positive and uplifting replaced those initial fears.

"It was kindness, really. That's how I'd sum it up. Just a place where people could fit in, no matter where they were from or what they were going through."

Patricia is 33 now. Those tiny twins are strapping 19-year-olds. And she has been a part of NorQuest ever since, as a learner and also an employee running the RBC Indigenous Mentorship Program out of the Indigenous Student Centre.

Along the way, Patricia finished her academic upgrading and completed all the prerequisites for NorQuest's Social Work diploma program. She'll graduate with that diploma in 2022 and then move to the degree program at the University of Calgary.

A champion in humility, it's hard to pin Patricia down on what she's more proud of. Her academic journey? Or the support and mentorship she's given hundreds of Indigenous students?

She deflects any hint of praise back to NorQuest.

"NorQuest has given me and others like me a voice, through the mentorship program and through the Indigenous Student Centre. That's what's important. It has been welcoming from the very first day, and nothing's changed. If anything, it has become more inclusive, more mindful of what that means," she says.

Though she'll trade NorQuest's brand of red for the University of Calgary's slightly deeper shade, Patricia doesn't hesitate when she's asked which school she'll consider to be *her* school.

"NorQuest will always be home. I've known people here for 17 years. I'll always be a part of it, and it will always be a part of me."

People

NorQuest is a purpose-driven employer of choice.



When organizations cultivate and sustain great cultures, they are stronger and more adaptable, drive growth, and attract and retain the best talent.

At NorQuest, we also concentrate on culture because we elevate our learners and our community when our people are doing their best, most gratifying work.

Today, our culture is shaped by the philosophical—our overarching purpose, our nine “Qs,” or values that guide how we behave—and our commitments to anti-racism, and to equity, diversity, and inclusion.

It’s also shaped by the practical changes to our processes and systems that we’ve made and intend to make.

By innovating and continuing to refine the way we recognize and value our individual and group achievements, we’ll keep building an organization that honours difference-makers and leaders who add value to each other, and to learners, whatever their title or scope of responsibility.

We’ll also work to create a culture of continuous learning, one that aligns with our Qs and our purpose, and enables us to grow and develop NorQuesters in profoundly powerful ways.

To truly transform lives, to create a true place of belonging, we must always strive to create psychological safety here, to listen deeply and say what we feel.

Showing this side of NorQuest to the world will create an indispensable foundation that ignites all our work as we move forward, together, toward our aspiration for 2030.

Strategic Direction

Create an adaptive and inclusive organization.

Key Objectives

- 1 Attract, grow, and develop team members through a people-first approach that sparks innovation and continuous learning.
- 2 Support and ensure a safe, welcoming, supportive, and flexible workplace and learning environment.
- 3 Fulfil our commitment to becoming an inclusive, anti-racist, and decolonized organization through an ongoing focus on racial equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Measures

- 1 Exceed top quartile engagement among Canadian post-secondary institutions by 10 per cent.
- 2 Achieve Level 5 best practices in the Foundational categories on the *Global Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Benchmarks*.¹⁵

**Meet Sithara Fernando:
Program chair, trailblazer,
second-generation
NorQuester**

When Sithara Fernando's parents immigrated to Edmonton from Sri Lanka in the 1980s, her mother heard the all-too-common refrain from her new home's prospective employers: "We're sorry, but your education in that country doesn't count in this country."

Sithara's mother yearned for a change, a kickstart, a transformation for her and her family. And she found it at Alberta Vocational Centre, NorQuest's precursor.

"I was just little then," Sithara says now, "but I remember the difference it made when she went into nursing. She wanted to do this, to forge her own path in what was very much a non-traditional way then. It stuck with me, in my imagination, the impact this place had in the lives of our family."

NorQuest re-entered Sithara's imagination recently, when she transitioned from being a wildlife biologist in Fort McMurray's oil patch to a teaching position in NorQuest's Environment program, within the Faculty of Business, Environment, and Technology.

Sithara is now the program chair, and she sees the arc that defined the decades-old memory of her mother repeated time after time today.

"The people who are impacted by what we do as a college? That's really magical. Our learners have this hyper-focus through a two-year diploma, and then they're launched into the world," she says. "They leave NorQuest as different people than when they arrived.

Doors open for them, and they can choose whether they want to walk through, just as my mother did."

Sithara is leading the program at a critical time. It's about to launch NorQuest's first field-school, a six-week hands-on jaunt in the Hinton bush. It's also launching a new Energy Management stream, a Western-Canadian first that teaches learners how to solve everyday energy-related challenges in homes and in the workplace.

Sithara's own yearning to change learners' lives could have been fulfilled at any post-secondary institution. But all sorts of intangibles drew her back to NorQuest, including her mother's story, the college's welcoming reputation, and its commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion.

"I'm a lesbian and a person of colour, and so I live at the intersection of a bunch of different things. The biggest thing about NorQuest is that it is not scared to lean into discomfort. Do we have work to do on equity and diversity? Of course," Sithara says.

"But we do not shy away from it. Not only is there time and space to reflect on these issues, but there's an expectation that we deal with them in real time in the classroom. We have the conversation, we try to understand our biases, and that's when powerful things can start to happen."

Connection

NorQuest is a values-driven partner in advancing societal and economic growth.

NorQuest is electric every day with the buzz of meaningful connections. We see learners connecting with each other and faculty, employers connecting with a new crop of talented graduates, and a surrounding community that is connected to NorQuest in thousands of subtle ways.

To truly gain the trust of those we serve, we must deepen our connection to industry and communities; broaden our appeal and branch into new educational directions; and connect more meaningfully with organizations, communities, and leaders that share our values. This includes working closely with Indigenous communities, national bodies, and other post-secondary institutions.

We've learned what it means to meaningfully connect with industry need. It starts with anticipating what industry requires from us, perhaps even before they can articulate it themselves.

We consult with leaders, identify opportunities, lead the effort locally or join national partners, and apply our research. Then, we design curriculum from formal courses to non-credentialed professional development opportunities that equip workers with the skills they need, and that industry and communities want.

In the recent past, we've branched into areas like energy management, environmental technology, and machine learning. In the future, we will focus on the emerging sectors and careers that will drive the future of work and of our province. Those who know us best understand NorQuest is actively widening our lane, expanding who we serve, and working to redefine what it means to be your community college; now it's time to let the world know.

And it's also time to be deliberate about the partners and groups with whom we choose to connect. We will increase our value and our impact when we join forces with organizations that share our values and our commitment to changing lives and our community for the better.

Strategic Direction

Advance our place as a trusted and growth-oriented post-secondary institution.

Key Objectives

- 1 Transform the NorQuest brand to broaden its appeal, attract more learners and align with the college's renewed strategic focus, and elevate public perception of colleges as critical drivers of economic growth.
- 2 Become a leader in work-integrated learning to give our learners and industry partners economic advantages.
- 3 Work with socially responsible organizations and partners, and promote values of inclusion to increase our impact and make a significant, meaningful, and positive effect on communities.
- 4 Work with international partners to build NorQuest's brand in key markets for increased competitiveness and sustainable growth.

Measures

- 1 Achieve a combined learner, employee, and stakeholder net-promoter score that increases annually.
- 2 See 100 per cent of approved programs have work-integrated learning as part of the program.

Investment

NorQuest is adaptable, sustainable, and has the resources to develop and offer solutions and create stronger communities.

A renewed focus on investment means a different set of questions must guide our work.

How can we diversify what we offer and who we can attract? How can we grow our revenue so NorQuest becomes more adaptable and sustainable? And how can we sharpen external investment, fundraising, alumni relations, research, and business enterprises to help us meet these goals?

Tackling economic and societal problems together with community partners can influence them to join our efforts through common projects, donations, federal grant dollars, or an individual's own philanthropy. We are already seeing how more focused, intentional, purposeful campaigns like our 1000 Women: A Million Possibilities movement will remove barriers for women learners and encourage them to do great things in science, technology, engineering, and math careers.

If we do this 10—or 100—times over in the coming years, we'll ensure learners have the skills employers seek, move the needle on pressing social challenges, align and reinforce our brand, and engage our ambassadors and allies in a fundamentally more intense and practical way.

There is a pragmatic reason to renew our investment focus, too; when we influence the community to join us in greater numbers, we'll diversify our revenue, be more sustainable, and be better equipped to support our learners and our community in whatever future funding environment we encounter.

In the classroom, we'll magnify our impact by removing barriers to access, and by welcoming a more diverse array of students and partners from around the world.

Our award-winning internationalization efforts will continue to target markets like India, while growing our presence in diverse new markets from Kenya to Peru to the Philippines. Learners there, like the ones closer to home, hunger for workforce-relevant education, and an organization that prizes diversity and creates a true place of belonging.



Strategic Direction

Diversify revenue and grow funding streams to support learners and communities.

Key Objectives

- 1 Develop and offer solutions for learners, community partners, and the workforce by increasing external investment in NorQuest through efforts such as community-based fundraising, micro campaigns, and alumni and corporate engagement.
- 2 Grow funding streams for applied research activity and capacity.
- 3 Attract international students from primary and secondary markets for increased diversification, sustainability, and an enhanced experience.
- 4 Grow and diversify revenue streams and profitability by forming strategic partnerships, leveraging technology, and creating new business models.

Measure

- 1 Increase self-generated revenue to \$33 million.

Meet Sherri Stevens: CEO, partner, admirer, champion for equity and diversity

As the CEO of WXN, shorthand for Women's Executive Network, and Canada's eminent source of research and advocacy for full gender and diversity participation in Canadian leadership, Sherri Stevens often seeks partners to amplify and boost her mission.

But not just any partners. It's easy for organizations to say the right things about their commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion. It's quite another for partners to live those values in the expertise they develop and the structures they create.

Sherri found the latter sort of partner at NorQuest and our Colbourne Institute for Inclusive Leadership.

"I still remember our first Zoom call 18 months ago with [Colbourne Principal] Dr. Lori Campbell," Sherri says now.

"Of course, we were immediately impressed that NorQuest has a whole organization committed to inclusion. But beyond that, Lori's expertise, the breadth of research NorQuest has done, the amazing ideas, the talent and experience, it all just sort of shined through on that first call. And it was an easy decision to work together."

NorQuest contributed research and expertise to WXN's annual report card, which tracks organizational practices and measures how well corporate Canada is advancing equity, inclusion, and diversity in its leadership ranks. NorQuest's role was to dig beyond statistics to provide insights into how women negotiate their own identities within the constraints and opportunities of their organizations.

The research appeared alongside contributions from Western University in WXN's report, released in May 2021. WXN uses the research to sharpen its own advocacy and to persuade and prompt Canadian organizations of all kinds to eliminate barriers traditionally experienced by women leaders.

"We needed to find someone who found this interesting and who could work with us, as a true collaborator, to really build this out. And that was NorQuest," Sherri said. "The spirit of give and take, the constant refinement, those are hallmarks of a great partner."

Sherri said she never doubted whether an institution like NorQuest could contribute and add value on a critical, national project. After all, Sherri herself is a community college grad, from Seneca College in Toronto.

"I didn't go to university. I went to community college because I wanted to learn and I was hungry to start adding value in my work as soon as I could," the CEO says.

"It's no surprise to me when a place like NorQuest adds value in all kinds of ways. I've been there. I've lived it."

Transformation

NorQuest leverages technology and resources to maximize service delivery, amplify our impact, and support learners.

Where our other outcomes contemplate how NorQuest will transform learners' lives, NorQuesters' careers, and our relationships with industry and investment partners, "transformation" is about the physical spaces, work processes, and digital realities that underpin so much of what we do.

Even before the rapid changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, we knew that learners craved more flexibility in how they learned. This need will drive us to build physical classrooms that incorporate more flexibility and technology, and robust digital platforms that allow students to go online to learn when and where it suits them best.

We'll digitize our processes and our content to be more efficient and accessible, but transformation is also about lifting all learners so they have capability and confidence to embrace new technologies as they emerge. We'll ensure everyone who might be interested in us is included, wherever new technology takes them, and us.

On campus, we'll grow not just for growth's sake, but to help solve a particular Albertan challenge, the lowest post-secondary participation rates in Canada, which are observed most acutely in underrepresented BIPOC groups. More space also means more opportunity for revenue, and more chances to align purposefully with the social and workforce needs of the province.



Strategic Direction

Leverage our technology and resources.

Key Objectives

- 1 Realize strategic campus-growth opportunities and evolve business enterprises.
- 2 Enhance business intelligence, predictive analytics, machine learning, and enterprise resource planning to maximize return on our investment.
- 3 Expand digital literacy and access, and leverage technology and data-sharing to support college and learner growth.

Measures

- 1 Staff agree that they have the technology, tools, and information to meet the needs of the people they serve.
- 2 Learners agree that they have the technology, tools, and information they need for learning.

¹The World Bank, "Lessons For Education during the COVID-19 crisis," Understanding Poverty (June 22, 2020).

²Statistics Canada, "COVID-19 Pandemic: Academic impacts on postsecondary students in Canada," StatCan COVID-19: Data to Insights for a Better Canada (May 14, 2020).

³PwC Canada, "Employees and employers adjust to a new world of work in the COVID-19 era," Canadian workforce of the future survey (2020).

⁴Hanover Research, Upskilling and Reskilling Trend Analysis (2021).

⁵Post-secondary Learner Enrolment Reporting System. Quoted in Alberta Advanced Education, Alberta 2030: Building Skills for Jobs, 10-year strategy for post-secondary education (Edmonton: Government of Alberta, 2021).

⁶Dr. Robert Murray et al., Alberta Colleges Economic Recovery Task Force: Final Recommendations (2020).

⁷Statistics Canada, Table 37-10-0045-01 Canadian and international tuition fees by level of study (2021).

⁸eCampus Ontario, Is the Future Micro? Unbundling learning for flexibility & access (2021).

⁹Academica Group, Taking the pulse of work-integrated learning in Canada (2020).

¹⁰Adam Gamoran, "The Future of Higher Education is Social Impact," Stanford Social Innovation Review (2018).

¹¹Statistics Canada, Access to the Internet in Canada, 2020 (2021).

¹²NorQuest College, NorQuest Student Pulse Check: February (2021).

¹³Mental Health Commission of Canada, Lockdown Life: Mental Health Impacts of COVID-19 on Youth in Canada, (2021).

¹⁴Meti Basiri, ApplyBoard, ApplyInsights: The Impact of COVID-19 on the International Student Market in Canada, (2021).

¹⁵Nene Molefi, Julie O'Mara, Alan Richter, "Global Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Benchmarks, Standards for Organizations Around the World," (2021).

