



ONE STUDENT AT A TIME

Strategic Plan 2023 to 2026



NORTHERN LAKES
COLLEGE

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Northern Lakes College

has the singular ***vision***

to provide the most ***accessible***
educational ***opportunities.***

No matter where you are,

you can ***start here*** and
go anywhere.

Let us inspire your ***new***

beginnings and help create

your ***endless possibilities.***



NORTHERN LAKES
COLLEGE

Northern Lakes College respectfully acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 8 territory and Métis Nation of Alberta Regions 1, 4, 5, and 6, traditional lands of First Nations and Métis Peoples. We recognize the 15 First Nations and four Métis Settlements located throughout our service region.



Message from the Board Chair and President & CEO

Counting our Success One Student at a Time

The Northern Lakes College Strategic Plan, *One Student at a Time*, provides our ambitious goals for the next three years. The goals identified in *One Student at a Time* will guide our planning and decision-making.

Northern Lakes College continues to prioritize accessibility to meet the changing landscape of education, the needs of learners, the evolving economy, and the goals of Alberta 2030: Building Skills for Jobs.

As a provider of community-based education, Northern Lakes College understands the importance of reaching each and every individual, no matter how remote or rural their location. That is why we count our success one student at a time.

The College's Supported Distance Learning (SDL) model ensures access for those who are upskilling or reskilling and allows students to pursue their post-secondary goals while remaining in the community, saving students and families money, and making education more accessible.

Our Northern Lakes College values, which support our mission and vision, serve as the foundation for the strategic direction outlined in *One Student at a Time*.

With the most accessible programs in Alberta, Northern Lakes College provides the training and educational opportunities Albertans need to participate in our growing provincial economy.



Barry Sharkawi
Board Chair



Dr. Glenn Mitchell
President & CEO

Our Mission

With respect for cultures and the needs of communities, Northern Lakes College provides quality educational programs and services which enable adults to continue their education, to improve their employment opportunities, and to enhance their quality of life.

Our Vision

Northern Lakes College will be recognized as a first-choice community-based college with the most accessible programs and services in Alberta.



Values-based Strategic Direction

The Northern Lakes College strategic direction is values-based and established using our six institutional values as guideposts.



Our Values

To achieve our mission and vision, we share values that guide our practices and behaviours.



Accessibility

Students and employees will succeed in their learning, employment, and personal endeavours when provided with accessible and effective educational services and supports.



Collaboration

Working together with community, business, and educational partners is fundamental to the success of our learners and our College.



Community

Students and the College receive support from the community. Community capacity grows from the success of students. Engagement with community stakeholders contributes to increased access, quality, and sustainability.



Excellence

Learners will participate and succeed through fair, reliable services and relevant, timely, and credible programs.



Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning is essential to the growth of students, employees, families, communities, and organizations.



Respect

Adults are entitled to learning services that respect their culture, abilities, and circumstances. Northern Lakes College celebrates diversity and values the celebration of Indigenous history, cultures, and languages.

Northern Lakes College and Alberta 2030: Building Skills for Jobs

Alberta 2030: Building Skills for Jobs sets the path for the Alberta post-secondary sector to rise to the occasion and transform the province's higher education system. Ensuring that the supply of highly skilled workers is available to fulfill the requirements of the existing and emerging workforce is at the heart of the strategy.

Ensuring Albertans have access to the programs and services required to develop the skills, abilities, competencies, and knowledge to participate not only in today's job market, but also the job market of the future, supports the goal of a prosperous Alberta.

Northern Lakes College believes that accessibility is a key ingredient to fulfilling the Alberta 2030: Building Skills for Jobs strategy. Our innovative Supported Distance Learning (SDL) model ensures programs and services are accessible to students everywhere. Our students do not have to relocate to pursue their post-secondary goals. They do not have to move away from familial or community support systems. For many students, this accessibility is the difference between participating in post-secondary education or not.

The Alberta 2030 Vision*

Alberta's world-class post-secondary system will equip Albertans with the skills, knowledge and competencies they need to succeed in their lifelong pursuits.

The system will be highly responsive to labour market needs and, through innovative programming and excellence in research, contribute to the betterment of an innovative and prosperous Alberta.

Key Goals*

1. Improve access and student experience

Ensure all Albertans have access to high quality post-secondary opportunities and that the student experience is coordinated and integrated.

2. Develop skills for jobs

Ensure every student has the skills, knowledge and competencies to enjoy fulfilling lives and careers and that they have greater transparency around labour market outcomes.

3. Support innovation and commercialization

Contribute to Alberta's innovation capacity by supporting post-secondary research and strengthening its commercialization potential to create new knowledge, develop future skills and diversify the economy.

4. Strengthen internationalization

Become a leading destination for top talent to drive the growth of skills, ideas and innovations locally and globally.

5. Improve sustainability and affordability

Provide institutions greater flexibility to generate own-source revenue and strengthen student aid.

6. Strengthen system governance

Modernize governance of the system to increase collaboration and drive outcomes.

*Source: <https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-2030-building-skills-for-jobs.aspx>

Accessible, Community-based Education

Northern Lakes College is a community-based institution committed to meeting the changing landscape of education and the needs of learners. We want to ensure programs and services are accessible to students everywhere. The College has developed its own innovative Supported Distance Learning (SDL) model specifically designed to meet the challenge of providing an array of post-secondary learning opportunities directly in communities, enabling students to live at home while furthering their education. Our Northern Lakes College delivery model ensures programs and services are accessible to students in rural and remote locations, and offers them the flexibility to learn from anywhere, including their own home or their home campus, as long as they are connected to the internet.

NLC students do not have to relocate to pursue their post-secondary goals. They do not have to move away from family or community support systems. Even when learning from home, Northern Lakes College provides students with educational supports including access to counselling, library, and career services. High-speed internet connection is available on campus for those without access at home. Supported Distance Learning provides learners with instructor-led, online classrooms that enable live interaction with their instructor and other students.

Alternatively, students can choose to listen to the recorded classes at a later time, if work or family commitments prevent them from participating in

the live classes. Northern Lakes College is about more than online learning; it's about meeting the needs of students, wherever they are.

Our Supported Distance Learning model enables Northern Lakes College to offer programming in small, rural communities where there may be only one or two students in a program. Our classrooms are built virtually, eliminating the need to have 12 to 15 students at a specific location. Students participate in online classes with their peers from throughout the service region, across the province, the country, and in various parts of the world. Providing access to education in our service region and throughout rural Alberta is particularly important in meeting rural labour force needs. Our model is designed to support students who need to balance school, work, family, and other components of their busy lives.

"Northern Lakes College is deeply committed to our stewardship region, and the long-standing relationships with the four (4) Métis Settlements, 15 First Nations, and many municipalities in the region. The College is committed to operations and programming grounded in deep respect for Indigenous learners and communities, and to providing opportunities that enable all students to continue their education, improve their employment opportunities, and enhance their quality of life, without having to leave their home region," comments President & CEO, Dr. Glenn Mitchell.

Northern Lakes College contributes to community development, leadership capacity, and vibrant communities through a unique partnership with a network of local Community Education Committees (CECs). Each community with an NLC campus has a CEC, and these committees ensure that local residents have access to the education and training suitable to their needs and goals. Committee members also promote and share College programs and news. The CECs and the College work together to meet the unique needs of communities and their learners.

NLC collaborates with business, industry, and other post-secondary institutions to ensure the training needs of students and communities are met. This has resulted in a broad mix of programming including Academic Upgrading, Apprenticeship Trades, Business and Administrative Studies, Health and Human Service Careers, Pre-employment Trades, Resource Technology, and University Studies. An array of programming is also offered through Community Adult Learning Programs, Continuing Education & Corporate Training, and Dual Credit for high school students. NLC also works with the University of Calgary to provide the Bachelor of Social Work and Community-Based Bachelor of Education degrees.

“NLC seeks to provide the most accessible, community-based learning opportunities and to find collaborative ways to support the provincial goal of increased participation in post-secondary education,” comments Dr. Mitchell. He adds, “this dedication to accessibility is why, at Northern Lakes College, we count our success one student at a time.”

All Albertans deserve access to high-quality post-secondary opportunities, regardless of the community in which they live. Through such access, students are empowered to acquire the skills, knowledge and competencies needed to succeed in their lifelong pursuits. That is why a key goal of the Alberta 2030: Building Skills for Jobs strategy is to improve access and student experience. Northern Lakes College is a vital partner in achieving this goal. As evidenced by the college’s Supported Distance Learning model and its work with Community Education Committees, the college’s contributions to relevant, community-based education are truly commendable. These efforts improve the lives and livelihoods of Albertans, and are foundational to an inclusive, prosperous province.

- The Honourable Demetrios Nicolaides, Minister of Advanced Education



What accessibility looks like at NLC

Students and employees will succeed in their learning, employment, and personal endeavours when provided with accessible and effective educational services and supports.



Marilyn's story

When Marilyn moved to Peace River to provide a better educational experience for her teenaged children, she certainly didn't plan on resuming student life herself. A graduate of the Northern Lakes College Office Administration Certificate program, Marilyn had been working as a payroll clerk for a trucking company. However, once her children were settled and enrolled in their new school, Marilyn knew she had to find her own place within their new community. She reached out to her sisters for advice, and they encouraged her to consider building on her Office Administration Certificate. Both had found success through the Northern Lakes College Practical Nurse program.

"They said their programs had been really accessible and that they believed in me. So, I did it."

– Marilyn Orr, Business Administration Alumni

ACCESSIBILITY





Strategic Direction Supporting Accessibility

Northern Lakes College will increase access to programs and services via Supported Distance Learning.

Key Objectives

1. Accessible, community-based learning opportunities will be inherent in the design of Northern Lakes College programs and services. Supported Distance Learning will maximize accessibility for rural, remote, and underrepresented learners, ensuring equitable access to educational, reskilling, and upskilling opportunities.
2. Innovative and flexible delivery modes will complement Supported Distance Learning and provide enhanced access to our learners, such as the use of the Mobile Trades Labs or program offerings to specific cohorts of students.
3. Student-centred services will be easily accessible to Northern Lakes College students, including online applications, library services, awards, tutoring, learning accommodations and learner support, home-based placement testing, wellness initiatives, educational counselling, Elders-in-Residence program, and a Chaplaincy.
4. Foundational Learning opportunities, which are a cornerstone to equitable and inclusive access to higher education and meaningful participation in the province's economic future, will be accessible to all those who seek them.
5. Northern Lakes College will ensure access to Indigenous content and learning opportunities, including Indigenous studies courses, a micro-credential, culturally-relevant content, and physical and digital library resources.
6. New programs will be delivered or existing programming expanded to meet the emerging needs of the economy and provide upskilling opportunities, including certificates, diplomas, micro-credentials, bridging programs, apprenticeships, pre-employment programs, and continuing education & corporate training.



What collaboration looks like at NLC

Working together with community, business, and educational partners is fundamental to the success of our learners and our College.



Erin's story

Born and raised in Slave Lake, Erin graduated from Roland Michener Secondary School in June 2018. She elected to enrol in the University Studies program at Northern Lakes College because she wanted to stay in her home community, close to the support of her family and friends. Erin continued to work part-time at the local day care throughout her studies, managing to save money while attending university. After completing the first two years toward her degree through University Studies at Northern Lakes College, Erin continued into the Community-Based Bachelor of Education program through the NLC partnership with the University of Calgary. She graduated in June 2022 and is now teaching in her hometown.

"I did not have to move or change my lifestyle. I am happy that I did not have to face some of the challenges that my friends who did move away from home had to face. I would absolutely make the same decision today to stay home and study locally at Northern Lakes College!" – Erin Mitchell, University Studies Alumni, and graduate of the Community-Based Bachelor of Education partnership with University of Calgary

COLLABORATION





Strategic Direction Supporting Collaboration

NLC will collaborate with CampusAlberta partners, Community Adult Learning Programs, and other organizations to enhance access to programs.

Key Objectives

1. Through CampusAlberta partnerships, Northern Lakes College will offer programs to meet labour market demand, including new programs and pathways, and offering programming in new locations such as Drayton Valley, Hinton, Taber, and Whitecourt.
2. Northern Lakes College will seek opportunities to offer cohort-based offerings of online Early Learning programs to Alberta childcare centres.
3. Accessibility to Community Adult Learning Programs (CALP) will include the operation of approved CALP locations, providing space for other CALPs within campuses, where requested, and partnering with CALPs to offer programs such as Life Skills.
4. Access to industry-specific training will be secured through partnerships with industry-based organizations, including the Woodland Operations Learning Foundation (WOLF), for forestry-related training, Fleet Safety International, for the development of Class 1 driver training, and PEMAC (Plant Engineering and Maintenance Association of Canada), for asset and maintenance management training.



What community looks like at NLC

Students and the College receive support from the community. Community capacity grows from the success of students. Engagement with community stakeholders contributes to increased access, quality, and sustainability.



Kenneth's story

Kenneth's interest in the skilled trades started at the age of 12 when he attended a trades camp for children hosted by Northern Lakes College. It was welding that made the biggest impression on Kenneth. After attending the camp, he signed up for the Dual Credit program offered at Northern Lakes College as soon as he entered high school. In this program, he was able to earn 21 credits toward his high school diploma while gaining welding apprenticeship hours.

"I went to a few welding shops and asked if they would let me apprentice. One place let me fill my program hours and I did well enough that they hired me after the program ended. Eventually, I got my journeyman ticket with the same shop. I have three younger sisters, and I've been strongly recommending NLC to them. I just want to be a good mentor to others in my community. I want to do what I can to encourage others." – Kenneth Halcrow, Welder Apprenticeship Alumni

COMMUNITY





Strategic Direction Supporting Community

The College will strengthen community, business, and industry partnerships to ensure programs and services support the labour market.

Key Objectives

1. Northern Lakes College will support Community Education Committees to identify educational needs in their communities and increase access to non-credit programming to increase employability and build community capacity.
2. Customized training opportunities will be identified through engaged regional stewardship, relationships, and partnerships with local business and industry.
3. Program Advisory Committees (PACs) will ensure program content aligns with current labour market requirements through active engagement of PACs in all Business, Health Careers, and Human Service Careers programs, and the establishment of a PAC for Pre-Employment programs.
4. Northern Lakes College will renew or replace facilities to provide learners with the learning environment necessary to develop the skills required for the labour market, including new campus construction and facility renewal projects.



What excellence looks like at NLC

Learners will participate and succeed through fair, reliable services and relevant, timely, and credible programs.



Elizabeth's story

When Elizabeth Gedcke's youngest son began kindergarten, she told herself it was her time. Excited, nervous, and hesitant were just some of the feelings Elizabeth experienced. For some, thinking of returning to school would be a daunting task but this busy mom of three had a dream of working in healthcare, so she started searching. Elizabeth began researching post-secondary institutions in Alberta and found that many did not have a clear path for someone without a high school diploma. She was excited when she discovered that Northern Lakes College offered just that: a path as unique as her needs. "I loved that NLC was a 'come as you are' type of school. NLC took me as I was," Elizabeth explains.

"I feel at home at NLC. There are so many people with unique backgrounds. I am not the only one that didn't finish high school or the only one with children. At NLC, my classmates come from a full spectrum of life experiences. The beauty of NLC is that you don't have to have a specific educational background to get in. Come as you are, and you can succeed." – Elizabeth Gedcke, Student

EXCELLENCE





Strategic Direction Supporting Excellence

NLC will enhance learner experiences through quality academic programs and services.

Key Objectives

1. The student experience and quality of service will be enhanced through the work of the President's Advisory Team, Deans' Council, Educational Technology Committee, and the Strategic Enrolment Management Committee, with a focus on services, supports, and managing enrolments to meet the learning needs of all learners.
2. Some recruitment and admission processes will be automated, where possible, to ensure a seamless, efficient, and student-focused applicant to student transition.
3. Establishment of a new Strategic Enrolment Plan and Academic Plan will support the achievement of optimum enrolments and guide the development of quality academic programs and services to meet the needs of learners and the upskilling and reskilling required to participate in the evolving economy.
4. Work Integrated Learning (WIL) opportunities are available in Business, Health Careers, Human Service Careers, Pre-Employment programs, and will be available in new programs, where appropriate.
5. NLC will maintain effective and efficient processes with controls to generate timely and accurate financial, facility, enrolment, and health & safety reporting.
6. Northern Lakes College will ensure relevant and robust academic quality assurance of all curriculum, through regularly-scheduled reviews of curriculum to ensure adherence to academic quality standards; regular curriculum development, redesign, and revision; and working with accreditation and regulatory bodies.
7. The work of the Education Technology Committee, and membership in the Northern System Collaboration Committee, will guide the review and selection of learning management systems and platforms to ensure learning and teaching needs are met.
8. NLC will review and update guidance documents on gender-based violence and sexual violence on campus to align with national best practices, such as a trauma-informed and survivor-driven approach. The College will consult with students and departments across the institution and participate in the provincial Gender-Based Violence Survey.



What lifelong learning looks like at NLC

Lifelong learning is essential to the growth of students, employees, families, communities, and organizations.



Jocelyn's story

Jocelyn has proven that those who believe in themselves are capable of anything. Originally from Saskatchewan, Jocelyn did not always know what path she wanted to pursue. She managed a restaurant in Edmonton before deciding to go back to school, but worried her high school grades might prevent her from pursuing a post-secondary education. Through an internet search, Jocelyn learned about Northern Lakes College, and was thrilled by the possibility of attending university-level courses through Supported Distance Learning, despite her urban home base. A working mother of two, Jocelyn credits the program for its flexibility and for the relationships she made with other students, despite the distance.

"We are given the opportunity to form relationships in a new way, and I think it's almost sometimes in a deeper way. Supported Distance Learning can offer an equal opportunity for students no matter where they come from. We all get to hear each other's stories either through discussion forums or in introductions or even just hearing them speak in class. It's quite amazing, and I really enjoyed it." – Jocelyn Scott, 2020 Valedictorian and Alumni

LIFELONG LEARNING





Strategic Direction Supporting Lifelong Learning

The College will provide opportunities throughout the learning continuum for students, employees, and community members.

Key Objectives

1. NLC will offer access to a comprehensive menu of programming, from a spectrum of Foundational Learning programs, to opportunities to engage in certificate and diploma-granting programs, continuing education and corporate training, and access to degrees through CampusAlberta partnerships.
2. NLC will enhance employee professional development opportunities, including informal sessions, newsletters, the *Instructional Skills Workshop*, and online courses on teaching and learning.
3. The College will provide student and employee opportunities to participate in mental health and wellness initiatives.
4. The College will seek opportunities to engage with secondary school-aged learners to ease the transition from high school to college, and to ensure students are focused on and ready for higher learning and the workforce, supporting the Alberta 2030: Building Skills for Jobs initiative to develop a skilled and competitive workforce.
5. Northern Lakes College will host training to provide employees with the knowledge and strategies to build awareness of equity, diversity, and inclusion across the organization, including courses such as *Respect in the Workplace* and *Inclusion at Work*.
6. The NLC Continuing Education & Corporate Training department will offer courses and certificates providing upskilling, reskilling, and skill development for career enhancement and to meet the needs of the labour market.



What respect looks like at NLC

Adults are entitled to learning services that respect their culture, abilities, and circumstances. Northern Lakes College celebrates diversity and values the celebration of Indigenous history, cultures, and languages.



Janine's story

A member of the Bigstone Cree Nation, Janine was born and raised in Wabasca. The main reason Janine chose NLC was its proximity to home; a key, Janine believes, in empowering many Indigenous and rural students.

"Being able to study close to home gives students that sense of family and security. We need to be able to travel home from school that same day to care for those who depend on us. Many of our people don't want to leave the reserve, but education is part of moving a person forward. It helps you further yourself, and then you bring that education back to your people." – Janine Nanimahoo, Alumni

RESPECT





Strategic Direction Supporting Respect

Northern Lakes College will celebrate equity, diversity, and inclusion and increase cultural awareness through programs and services.

Key Objectives

1. Northern Lakes College will engage in learning and celebrating culture, including Métis Week, National Day for Truth & Reconciliation, and the Elders-in-Residence program. The College will provide opportunities for employees to train and engage in diversity, inclusivity, and sensitivity. The College will provide opportunities to learn and understand equity, diversity, and inclusion through educational events and offerings.
2. NLC will ensure access to Indigenous learning resources and language programming, and integration of Indigenous topics into curricula and culturally relevant content in programs, including Indigenous Days in the Social Work Diploma, an Indigenous Studies specialization in University Studies, an Indigenous Administration micro-credential, Indigenous Studies certificate and diploma, and implementation of the BEL 301 Cree Language course.
3. To foster equity, diversity, and inclusion, and in support of reconciliation, the College will maintain an Indigenous Advisory Council to work toward implementation of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action* relevant to post-secondary institutions.
4. The NLC Library will provide access to physical and online resources that increase knowledge of and promote equity, diversity, and inclusion.
5. With a commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion, and to assist with the labour shortage, NLC will increase international student enrolment.



Counting our success one student at a time.



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