



COLLÈGE  
AURORA  
COLLEGE

*2020-2023*  
**STRENGTHENING  
THE FOUNDATION AND  
PLANNING FOR CHANGE**

*AURORA COLLEGE 3-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN*

# VISION

Through the transformation of Aurora College into a polytechnic university, we will establish a university in the North and for the North that creates equitable opportunities for residents across the Northwest Territories to reach their full potential.



# MISSION

Demonstrate leadership in the delivery of relevant and meaningful education and research rooted in strong connections to Northern land, tradition, community and people.





# VALUES



## RESPECT

We care for one another and foster relationships based on trust, respect and fairness. We respect others and the land, water, air and animals.



## INCLUSIVENESS AND DIVERSITY

We foster a culture of equity and inclusion that celebrates different ways of being, knowing and doing.



## INNOVATION

We inspire and nurture innovative thinking, continuous discovery and creative expression.



## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

We hold ourselves to high standards of ethical behaviour and take responsibility for our actions. We recognize and protect the right of the individual to search for knowledge, wherever knowledge is to be found.



# OVERVIEW

**Aurora College is a public college in the Northwest Territories (NWT) and is mandated to deliver a broad spectrum of adult and post-secondary education programs to meet the needs of individuals, communities and the labour market at three campuses and through a network of 21 community learning centres.**

This includes the delivery of certificate, college and university-level programs, and granting of prescribed university degrees and applied bachelor's degrees by university partners. As the research division of Aurora College, the mandate of the Aurora Research Institute (ARI) is to improve the quality of life for NWT residents by applying scientific, technological and Indigenous knowledge to solve Northern problems and advance social and economic goals.

The Aurora College Foundational Review took place from 2017-2018 and concluded with the *Government Response to the Findings and Recommendations of the Aurora College Foundational Review* (Government Response). The Government Response agreed with the recommendation that addressing current gaps in performance and realizing untapped opportunities requires the transformation of Aurora College into a polytechnic university.

It proposed that such a transformation would lead to the delivery of world-class programming and transform the College into a destination university in the North and for the North. More Northerners will be able to develop the skills needed for the Northern jobs of the future, and will be able to do so in the NWT. We are committed to doing this work to advance the process of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, based on recognition of rights, respect, cooperation and partnership.

The path forward for Aurora College continues to be grounded in the commitments made in the Government Response and the timelines and critical milestones in the transformation are further articulated in the *Aurora College Transformation Implementation Plan* (to be released in Fall 2020).

The *Aurora College Transformation Implementation Plan* outlines three phases to help ensure changes occur in the right order and at the right time. We are currently in Phase

1 of the transformation process, focused on strengthening the foundation of Aurora College and planning for change.

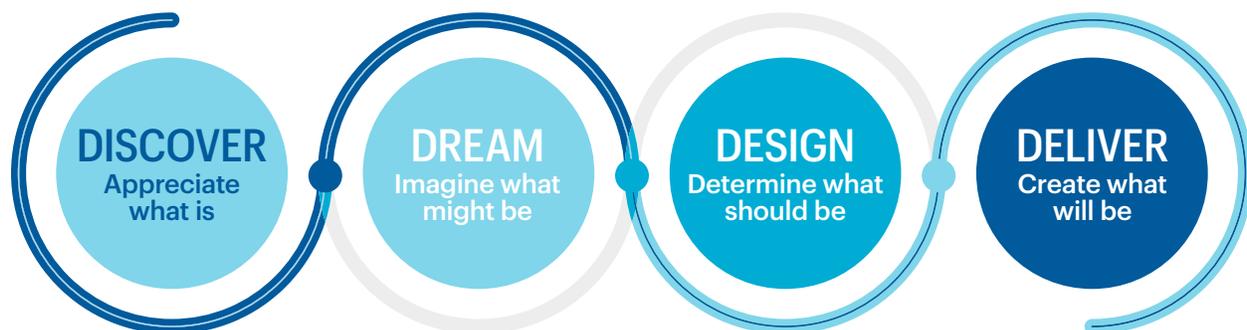
*The Aurora College 3-Year Strategic Plan (Strategic Plan)* provides an approach to strengthening the foundation in Phase 1 and sets the context for key transformational changes that will be implemented in Phase 2. The Strategic Plan also reflects the role of Aurora College in implementing the overall vision presented in the Government of the Northwest Territories' (GNWT) *Post-Secondary Education Strategic Framework 2019-2029*, namely that every resident of the NWT has an equitable opportunity to reach their full potential by obtaining a post-secondary education from institutions that are student-centered, accessible, high quality, relevant and accountable. In this way, the Strategic Plan bridges the NWT-wide vision for the post-secondary education system with the GNWT's commitment to transform Aurora College into a polytechnic university.

# STRATEGIC PLANNING ENGAGEMENTS

In preparing the Strategic Plan, we engaged communities across the NWT.

The Aurora College team and students at all campuses and community learning centres played a central role in shaping the Strategic Plan. Engagements were also held with several Indigenous and community leaders, businesses, industry organizations, non-governmental organizations, affiliated academic institutions and members of the public. Each had the opportunity to participate in the strategic planning process by sharing their experiences and aspirations for the College.

During the strategic planning engagements, participants were asked to:



It is important to acknowledge that where we are now in the process of transforming Aurora College into a polytechnic university builds on four years of prior engagement. These engagements have been an

essential part of wide-ranging work to strengthen the post-secondary education system in the NWT and advance priorities, such as establishing a polytechnic university.

Recognizing that the Strategic Plan is a starting point for transformational change, we will continue engaging both internally and externally throughout this process.

# STRATEGIC PILLARS

Four strategic pillars set the direction for Aurora College and represent the primary areas of activity for the next three years.

Woven throughout each of these pillars is our unwavering commitment to provide high-quality education in a welcoming and inclusive environment; an environment that supports academic success as well as personal well-being. Increasingly,

success in education and research will go hand-in-hand as the institution moves closer to becoming a polytechnic university.

These pillars are interconnected, with work in one area mutually supporting

work in each of the other areas. They establish a broad frame for strategic priorities and outcomes that will define the path toward a strong foundation for transformational change to a polytechnic university.







# ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

We will enhance our understanding of how learning takes place inside and outside of the classroom and respond with plans to strengthen institutional supports. This will include steps to foster the expansion of research and strengthen the relationship between research and teaching.

## PRIORITIES

- Foster innovation and resourcefulness.
- Support and nurture the interdependent relationships between teaching and learning (knowledge dissemination) and research (knowledge creation).
- Incorporate and respect Indigenous, traditional and local knowledge into our teaching and research
- Respond to multiple ways of being, knowing and doing in teaching and research.
- Enhance teaching through professional development, continuous learning and self-reflection.
- Ensure assessment and evaluation techniques allow learners to demonstrate what they know and what they have learned in a variety of ways.

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Work in the area of academic and research excellence will modernize policies and procedures to reflect best practices. This will include significant work to adapt those practices to suit the learning needs of Northern residents. They will also result in changes to the organizational structure to enhance support for teaching, learning and the integration of research. These units would be guided by an Academic Plan and Research Plan that support multiple ways of learning and knowing.

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# LEARNING CENTRED

We are dedicated to providing learners with programs and services that are adaptive and can be tailored to help students meet their academic and personal goals.

We are focused on empowering learners so they have the confidence necessary to be successful during their studies and beyond.

We recognize that the majority of Aurora College students are Indigenous and we remain committed to creating a culturally meaningful environment where Indigenous students can grow and

succeed. Ensuring student success and inclusion in post-secondary education is key to the NWT's competitiveness and economic growth.



## PRIORITIES

- Recruit, develop and retain a College team that is skilled, knowledgeable and caring.
- Strengthen the relationships between applied learning and applied research.
- Strengthen and expand a holistic set of student supports.
- Maintain small classroom sizes and ensure faculty are accessible.
- Ensure student supports are consistent across campuses and community learning centres.
- Ensure student services and supports provide equitable and meaningful opportunities for Indigenous students.



Work to strengthen Aurora College as a learning-centred institution will result in tangible improvements to the student experience and improved student outcomes. Success will rely on a new process of continuous quality improvement which will be supported through the review of all programs and services. Aurora College will also develop and implement a strategic enrolment management plan to guide changes at all stages of the student lifecycle, from recruitment to graduation and beyond. Underlying these improvements will be systems of monitoring, evaluating and reporting changes to the learning environment.



# CONNECTIONS

We will focus on establishing, strengthening and supporting co-investment partnerships with the Government of the Northwest Territories, Indigenous governments, communities, industry, non-governmental organizations and other academic institutions.

We recognize the importance of working closely and collaboratively with our co-investment partners to create new opportunities for our learners and to advance Northern research priorities.

This may include contributions of knowledge in all its forms,

expertise, human resources, facilities, equipment or funding. This includes contributions that are reflective of local culture and traditional histories.

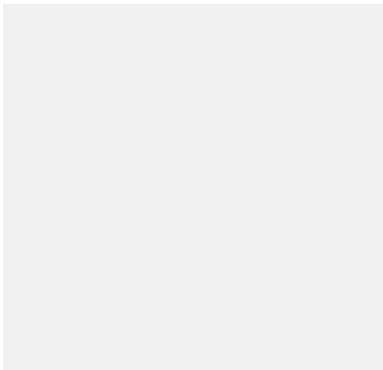
We will also work to ensure meaningful and relevant connections to the people

of the NWT. We will connect in a way that aligns with Northern interests and values, while also helping to ensure an effective, efficient and sustainable institution.

## PRIORITIES

- Be open, welcoming and demonstrate respect for land, tradition, community and people.
- Take a holistic approach to student support that acknowledges the importance of strong connections to community, culture and family.
- Establish external connections, building partnerships that strengthen learning experiences and highlight the value of attending Aurora College.
- Work with Indigenous governments and communities to increase student enrolment, lower attrition rates and create opportunities for applied learning in a Northern context.
- Expand the scope of learning opportunities for NWT residents through partnerships with post-secondary education institutions.
- Work with JK-12 education bodies to strengthen student pathways to post-secondary education.
- Incorporate industry knowledge and experience into teaching and research program design.
- Establish partnerships that build research capacity around Northern research priorities.

The renewal of existing co-investment partnerships and establishment of new co-investment partnerships through formal agreements will extend the reach of Aurora College and strengthen its position as the centre of the territory's post-secondary education system. It will also result in strategic, operational and cultural changes within Aurora College that make it more reflective of the people and communities it serves and responsive to their evolving social and economic needs, including the needs of employers.





# ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

We are committed to being open and accountable, and recognize the need for integrated planning, operational excellence and continuous quality improvement. We will provide stakeholders and the public with detailed and transparent results of Aurora College's progress and performance.

## PRIORITIES

- Ensure changes under the Strategic Plan support an effective, efficient and sustainable institution.
- Ensure Aurora College campuses and community learning centres function in a coordinated and coherent manner.
- Ensure a student-centred approach across the institution.
- Ensure resource needs are understood and addressed.
- Integrate steps toward continuous quality improvement in institutional policies and processes.
- Empower and support faculty in their teaching, applied research and service to the institution.
- Ensure the Aurora College Team maintain the awareness, knowledge and skills to effectively support improvements to the institution.

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Work to improve organizational effectiveness will result in a transparent, comprehensive and ongoing system of monitoring and reporting institutional performance. Underlying this will be a clear understanding of operational needs and costs as they relate to programs, services and research supports.

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# REPORTING SUCCESS

This Strategic Plan is an important step in advancing the transformation of Aurora College into a polytechnic university.

It will assist us in understanding priorities and create a clear role for the Aurora College team in strengthening the foundation and planning for change. We are committed to establishing an effective, efficient and sustainable polytechnic university that will benefit generations of Northerners. Together with the GNWT, and in collaboration with our stakeholders and partners, we

will provide new and exciting opportunities to engage in quality post-secondary education programming and research in the NWT.

We recognize that transparency is the key to maintaining confidence and trust. For each of the next three years, we will report on progress we make in strengthening the foundation through the Aurora College

Corporate Plan and Annual Report.

As all work to strengthen the College and plan for change is part of the overall transformation, the details of our work will also be featured as part of monthly and quarterly transformation updates to the public that can be found at:  
[www.ece.gov.nt.ca/en/ACTransformation](http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/en/ACTransformation)



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