

# Northwest Community College Strategic Plan



**NORTHWEST**  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

# NWCC Strategic Planning

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NWCC is proud of the involvement of students, communities, businesses, organizations, individuals, First Nations and employees in the development of this Strategic Plan. From January 2004 until June 2005 we worked with many groups and individuals who helped formulate every part of the Strategic Plan.

Our stakeholders provided feedback first about a long-term vision for the College and the issues and current realities they believed we faced. By June 2004 they saw the outcomes of the facilitated consultation sessions, and continued to provide comments to focus the work toward a set of Strategic Directions.

**We worked with many groups and individuals who helped formulate every part of the Strategic Plan.**

Many organizations and individuals provided research and analysis, both directly for the College, and as data to inform the development of the Strategic Plan. The College Board of Governors, First Nations Council, Education Planning Council, and other groups and committees provided valuable input and direction to the development of the Strategic Plan. A College based Strategic Planning Task group guided the development of the consultations, research and analysis, Strategic Directions and the final Strategic Plan.

**We are committed to ongoing consultation and involvement in all of our operations.**

The Strategic Plan is complete, but we are committed to ongoing consultation and involvement in all of our operations. This is part of the process of working with our stakeholders to meet the needs of our students and our region.

## Vision

At Northwest Community College we have a passion for educational leadership. We foster excellence in instruction and learning in a unique and spectacular environment.

## Mission

Northwest Community College provides quality learning experiences that help prepare our students for successful, positive futures. We celebrate the diversity of our northern and First Nations populations and reflect this diversity in our programs, services and our workforce. We approach every interaction with respect and integrity and collaborate with our partners to meet the unique educational needs of our communities.





# Values and Operating Principles

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We are respectful in every interaction and in our personal and professional behaviour. We are an ethical institution that acts with integrity. We work toward growth, continual learning and collaboration with students, communities and each other.

We honour the culture and tradition of First Nations communities on whose territory we operate. We will work to resolve historical injustices and inequities and continue an ongoing dialogue free of racism.

## **Accountability —**

We establish and achieve College objectives that are cost-effective and open to public review.

## **A Student-centred College —**

We operate programs, courses, and services focussed on meeting the learning, developmental and employment needs of the learners we serve.

## **Student Success —**

We commit to removing barriers to student success. We will provide services, programs, and resources to foster success.

## **Respect —**

We treat each person in a fair and equitable fashion, acknowledging and valuing his or her perspectives and diversity. We do not tolerate discrimination on the basis of race, age, colour, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital or family status, financial status, physical, mental or learning disability, gender or sexual orientation.

## **Cooperation —**

We commit to working cooperatively and in good faith with our internal and external communities.

**We treat each person in a fair and equitable fashion, acknowledging and valuing his or her perspectives and diversity.**

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### **First Nations Heritage and Cultural Competency —**

We commit to reducing systemic barriers such as racism, and ensuring that our courses and programs demonstrate an integrated inclusion of First Nations culture and knowledge.

### **Openness to Change —**

We provide relevant, current and innovative programs and services and respond to changes in society and the needs of our learners.

### **Accessibility —**

We commit to addressing barriers and providing fair and equitable access to learning opportunities and services throughout the region.

### **Empowerment of Communities —**

We commit to the decentralization of learning opportunities and recognizing the role of communities we serve in determining their educational priorities.

**We honour the culture and tradition of First Nations communities on whose territory we operate.**

### **Empowerment of Employees —**

We commit to have our employees actively participate in the decision-making processes at the College.

### **Empowerment of Students —**

We recognize and encourage the active involvement of students in the development and improvement of College programs and services.

**Innovation —** We encourage and support creativity and innovation in the development of initiatives that address opportunities for constructive change.

**Sustainability —** We conduct our business in an environmentally responsible manner and include sound resource practices such as waste reduction, recycling and energy conservation

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Our Strategic Plan focuses on five key theme areas we believe to be the most important to our mission of providing quality learning experiences for students in the richly diverse region of northwestern British Columbia.

<b>1</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>page 5</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Educational and Program Excellence</b>	<b>page 8</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Employees</b>	<b>page 12</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Community Partnerships</b>	<b>page 15</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Institutional Planning, Growth and Evaluation</b>	<b>page 16</b>

# 1 Students

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Our students are unique. 50% of the population of First Nations communities is under the age of 25, and 40% of the region’s population is First Nations. The average age of our credit program students is 29.8 years, 64% are female; most live below the poverty line. Many students are not ready for the post-secondary education system and struggle with the basic skills required to be successful in a college environment.

The culture, beauty and lifestyle afforded by our region motivates many of our students to apply their education and learning to careers in the northwest. This is a growing focus for us — developing a skilled workforce with a desire to contribute to our regional economy.

## 1.1 Strategic Direction: Support Student Retention

Given the challenges our students face, we will expand student support services and retention. We will work with our students and improve educational outcomes and:

- enhance support for literacy and numeracy, computer, Internet and study skills;
- recognize the diverse needs of our student population.

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## 1.2 Increase Transfer Opportunities for Students

We create opportunities for lifelong learning by ensuring our programs ladder seamlessly within the College and by maximizing articulation and transfer agreements with other post-secondary institutions. Students receive timely and accurate information about program portability and transferability.

## 1.3 Strategic Direction: Provide Support and Services Appropriate for First Nations Students

We work with First Nations communities and students to improve our cultural understanding, to enhance First Nations student recruitment, retention and success and:

- provide a fair, equitable, inclusive, accessible and culturally sensitive environment;
- identify barriers to learning and develop strategies to address these barriers in course, program and educational planning;
- maintain a safe, welcoming and supportive environment for successful education that recognizes the diverse needs of students.

**The culture, beauty and lifestyle afforded by our region motivates many of our students to apply their education and learning to careers in the northwest.**

**This is a growing focus for us — developing a skilled workforce with a desire to contribute to our regional economy.**

## 1.4 Strategic Direction: Enhancing Student Participation

We actively seek feedback and evaluation from students about all aspects of the learning environment. Our students are involved in the operation of the College through Advisory Committees, Education Council, the College Board, and participation on task forces. The activities enhance the quality of learning and instruction at our College.



### **1.5 Strategic Direction: Seek Solutions to the Challenges of Student Funding**

We find innovative ways to reduce funding barriers to student success, including additional measures and programs to increase available funding for our programs. We use traditional fundraising as well as other cooperative ventures with business, industry, government, organizations and communities to reduce the financial barriers our students face. We actively lobby governments to increase student financial assistance.

### **1.6 Strategic Direction: Create Opportunities for Community-based and Applied Learning**

We provide community-based cooperative and work experience opportunities to enhance students' learning experience and potential for employment.

### **1.7 Strategic Direction: Create a Welcome and Supportive Environment for Students**

We provide all students with a safe and welcoming environment, and provide expanded and rewarding learning opportunities. We provide support for the Student Association and foster initiatives that create a vibrant and active student culture at each campus.

## 2 Educational and Program Excellence

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Educational program excellence is critical to Northwest Community College's ability to achieve its mission. We recognize it is at the heart of what we do, and requires flexibility to changing regional needs and opportunities. We operate in a unique geographic and cultural context.

### Challenges Specific to our Region

Literacy and education levels of the region we serve are substantially lower than the provincial average, indicating a need for educational programming that provides opportunities for learners to enter our institution at various levels.

The size, scope and geography of the region make it challenging for many citizens to access post-secondary education in its traditional forms, and reinforce the need for distributed learning.

First Nations communities throughout our region have many unique needs and opportunities for customized educational programs. Some First Nations communities throughout the region are actively developing their own training and education resources. There are opportunities to include First Nations culture and content in all our programs. Many private and public institutions and organizations are competing with the College to provide programs to First Nations. We have established many First Nations partnerships and relationships and recognize the opportunity to work further with First Nations to develop curriculum relevancy in programs and courses.

### Our Approach to Educational Planning

We ensure that our educational program development continues to:

- address specific education needs in our region;
- lead to employment opportunities in the region;
- have a business plan that demonstrates sustainability;
- include appropriate and advantageous partnerships, with particular attention to First Nations communities.

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## 2.1 Strategic Direction: Identify and Respond to Education and Community Needs

- Maintain high quality and high standards for students and faculty so that our programs and instruction represent the best possible education.
- Design curricula that meet specific employment needs and provide employability skills and knowledge to enable students to work in a global context.
- Establish partnerships with other institutions or organizations that can provide programs for which the College does not have the required expertise or resources.
- Expand specialized certification programs by partnering with external accredited agencies. These programs may be developed at many levels: from post diploma or post-baccalaureate levels to those that require no formal education credential for admission.
- Support the development of small and medium enterprises.
- Offer programs such as entrepreneurial training to help meet the emerging needs of learners and communities.



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## **2.2 Strategic Direction: Collaborate with First Nations to Develop Custom Programs**

We work with First Nations to develop programs and services that recognize the history and culture of First Nations individuals and communities. We will broaden our curriculum to reflect the relevance and value of First Nations culture in all our courses and programs. We actively seek to integrate and support aboriginal knowledge and experience in the curriculum. In partnership with our First Nations Council, we will initiate a cross-disciplinary endeavour to incorporate First Nations perspectives, traditional knowledge and philosophy in all course materials. Our offerings recognize the unique training and learning needs of First Nations students and of various First Nations organizations within the region; with the objective of increasing the participation, retention and completion rates of First Nations learners.

## **2.3 Strategic Direction: Establish Community Partnerships to Develop Courses and Programs**

We build and enhance partnerships with other organizations and develop an adaptable mix of courses and programs that provide student access to a variety of delivery modes and schedules. We embrace technology to identify distributed learning and course development that supports individuals in remote and rural communities.



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## **2.4 Strategic Direction: Enhance Literacy and Other Fundamental Skills**

We increase the flexible and integrated delivery of fundamental skills so that students can obtain basic skills while completing their academic and career program. We develop and enhance programs that help students improve literacy and other essential skills. We work with School Districts and other organizations to jointly meet the needs of this diverse group of learners.

**First Nations communities throughout our region have many unique needs and opportunities for customized educational programs.**

## **2.5 Strategic Direction: Access our Natural Classroom**

We offer courses and programs using new and innovative modes of delivery that build on our natural resources. By capitalizing on our environment we can enhance our course offerings in the “natural classroom” taking advantage of our unique geography and ecology.

## **2.6 Strategic Direction: Enhance Our Continuing Education Delivery**

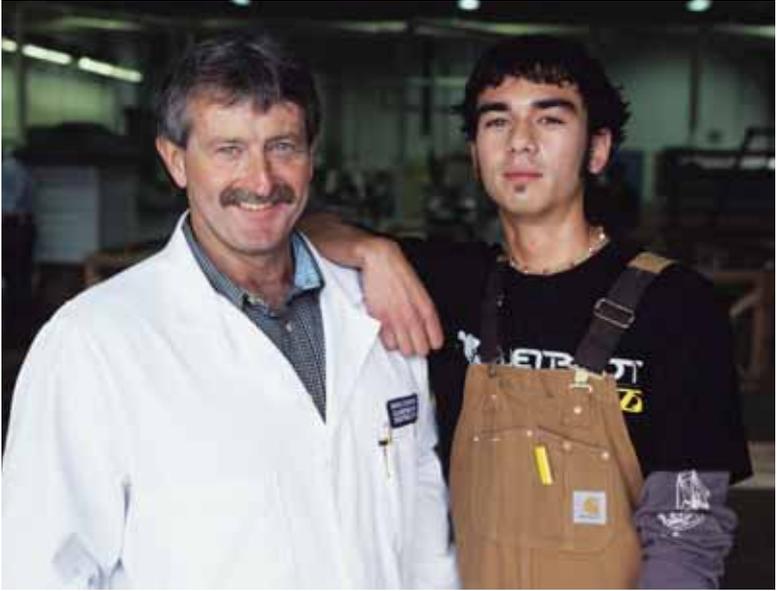
We develop and adapt professional development and continuing education courses and programs and have addressed many community economic needs. We develop and maintain flexible and adaptable continuing education offerings.

## **2.7 Strategic Direction: Increase Capacity Using Technology in Educational Delivery**

The College supports faculty to adopt the use of educational technology for distributed learning through ongoing professional development, infrastructure enhancement and technical assistance. We will increase capacity in instructional design and curriculum development, including the use of appropriate educational technology.

# 3 Employees

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Our employees are dedicated, committed to our students and their communities, and have expressed great commonality in their desire to have NWCC succeed and prosper. We will develop a high quality professional development program to encourage employees to strengthen their skills, keep up-to-date with changing trends and technology, and enhance their ability to work in other areas of the College. The quality of the program will attract new employees to the College.

We have campuses throughout the region, in many sites, some with both part- and full-time employees. This heightens the need for precise communications.

We support an inclusive and equal workplace that recognizes the rights of all employees. We will enhance adherence to human rights and employment equity provisions in our workplace.

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### 3.1 Strategic Direction: Enhancing Internal Communications

We will build on our current internal communications processes to ensure clear lines of communication are developed that enable a more inclusive and timely flow of information to all employees at all levels of the college. The inclusiveness of these communication processes ensure that all staff at all college campuses receive information and have clear channels of communication from which to engage in college dialogue. The end result will be a more informed college community, a stronger collegial atmosphere of the college, a more effective and inclusive decision-making process, and an enhancement in college-wide enrolment management and operational activities.

### 3.2 Strategic Direction: Support Education and Professional Development for Employees

The College commits to excellence in program and professional development by ensuring that every employee has the opportunity for continuous development and is provided with:

- The training necessary to maintain currency in their field or job while learning emerging technology;
- The ability to treat each person in a fair and equitable fashion, acknowledging and valuing their perspectives and diversity;
- The skills and information required to foster and enhance a student-centred approach and maintain excellence in instruction;
- The opportunity for training to enhance career development, progress and succession planning;
- The means to participate in international opportunities.

**Our employees are dedicated, committed to our students and their communities, and have expressed great commonality in their desire to have NWCC succeed and prosper.**

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### **3.3 Strategic Direction: Promote and Protect Human Rights and Employment Equity**

The College will develop and implement an Employment Equity Plan and additional Human Rights provisions.

### **3.4 Strategic Direction: Increase the Number of First Nations Employees to Mirror an Appropriate Representation of the Population of the Region**

We will build a workforce that adequately reflects the diverse population of the communities we serve. We will implement and monitor recruitment and retention activities targeting First Nations employees.

### **3.5 Strategic Direction: Sustain Positive Relationships with the Bargaining Units**

We acknowledge the organizational role of the bargaining units in providing organizational leaders. We involve our three unions in College planning and activities.

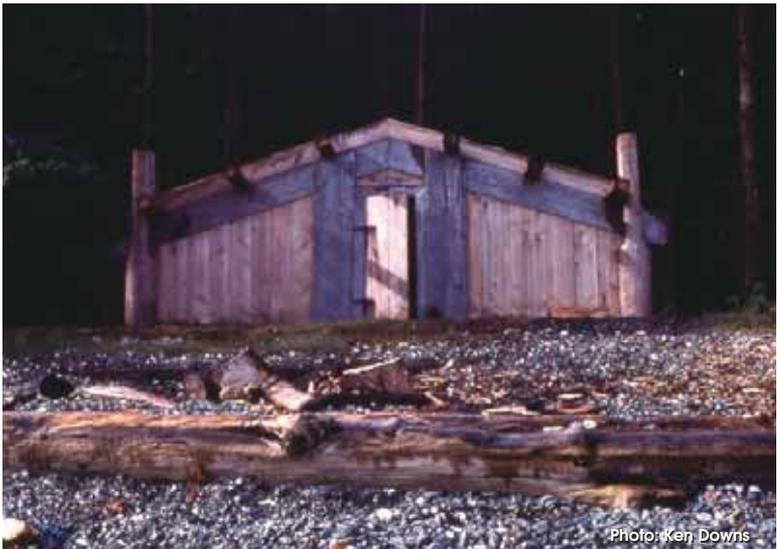


Photo: Ken Downs

# 4 Community Partnerships

We work extensively with our communities in social, economic and community development initiatives for which education is critically important. We establish a variety of partnerships with First Nations organizations, communities and other education institutions. These partnerships help provide learners with access to relevant education and training opportunities throughout the region.

## 4.1 Strategic Direction: Develop First Nations Partnerships

We work collaboratively with First Nations councils and communities to:

- assess needs, and develop and deliver courses and programs in First Nations communities;
- enhance First Nations culturally appropriate content across all program disciplines;
- initiate design and delivery of new and existing programs and services;
- utilize their resource and knowledge base to enhance programs.

**We work extensively with our communities in social, economic and community development initiatives for which education is critically important.**

## 4.2 Strategic Direction: Expand Community Partnerships

We expand our community partnerships. We involve communities and their members in planning and program development by building and maintaining partnerships with businesses; community organizations and individuals; local and regional government agencies.

## 4.3 Strategic Direction: Seek Education Partnerships

We develop partnerships with other public secondary and post-secondary institutions, provincially, nationally and internationally, to increase the educational offerings available to our students and to share expertise.

# 5 Institutional Planning, Growth and Evaluation

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Limited resources and financial constraints present unique challenges to rural and remote community colleges. Funding from the Provincial government has decreased, as student needs and support required have exponentially increased. These constraints are magnified in the northwest given the economic decline and population out-migration.

In rural areas, the College plays a very central role in the health of the community. Many learners from the northern regions would prefer to attend college in our region. Consequently, in the past few years the College has pursued a much more aggressive positioning and marketing program in the region. There are a number of opportunities to be realized in continuing this initiative.

- Attract students with the post-secondary institution of choice.
- Enhance credibility, awareness and recognition of the value of an education at NWCC which will lead to additional enrolments.
- Benefit graduates by providing a high quality education that gives exemplary education and work experience.
- Increase our market share and find opportunities to market the advantages of small campus and community life to potential College employees.
- Help other post-secondary institutions and employers recognize the quality of education completed by NWCC graduates.

## 5.1 Strategic Direction: Marketing and Promotions

We will enhance our marketing, promotion and name recognition programs in order to:

- profile and build the reputation and success of our students;
- enhance our reputation and image;
- develop name recognition of our College;
- engage business, agency, education and community organizations in helping us market the College and the region;
- publish our Strategic Plan and its outcomes.

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## 5.2 Strategic Direction: Implement a Fundraising Program

We will develop a fundraising plan and process. This process increases funding for program development, student bursaries and scholarships, and capital projects.

## 5.3 Strategic Direction: Identify alternate funding sources

We will develop alternate sources of revenue and create high quality programs and services that meet emerging markets such as: contracts, continuing education offerings and projects.

## 5.4 Strategic Direction: Develop Technical Support and Infrastructure

We will develop and build technical support and infrastructure that is vital to our operation.

## 5.5 Strategic Direction: Multi-year planning

We plan on a multi-year basis in the following areas:

- Technology
- Finance
- Program delivery and development
- Marketing and Internal Communications
- Human Resources
- Enrolment management

## 5.6 Strategic Direction: Evaluation and Accountability

Throughout the term of the Strategic Plan, we ensure regular monitoring and evaluation of all activities. The Institutional Services Plan 2004/05 – 2006/07 includes key criteria and performance measures. We ensure that the Strategic Plan and the resulting operational plans include performance measures and evaluation and accountability processes.

**In rural areas, the College plays a very central role in the health of the community.**

# Campus Locations

## HAIDA GWAI

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138 Bay Street  
P.O. Box 67  
Queen Charlotte City, BC  
V0T 1S0

Tel: (250) 559-8222  
Fax: (250) 559-8219

## HAZELTON

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4815 Swannell Drive  
P.O. Box 338  
Hazelton, BC  
V0J 1Y0

Tel: (250) 842-5291  
Fax: (250) 842-5813

## HOUSTON

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3221 - 14th Street, West  
P.O. Box 1277  
Houston BC  
V0J 1Z0

Tel: (250) 845-7266  
Fax: (250) 845-5629

## KITIMAT

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606 Mountainview Square  
Kitimat, BC  
V8C 2N2

Tel: (250) 632-4766  
Fax: (250) 632-5069

## MASSET

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1730 Hodges Avenue  
P.O. Box 559  
Masset, Haida Gwaii, BC  
V0T 1M0

Tel: (250) 626-3670  
Fax: (250) 626-3680

## NASS VALLEY

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Wilp Wilko'oskwhl Nisga'a  
5130 Skateen Avenue  
P.O. Box 219  
New Aiyansh, BC  
V0J 1A0

Tel: (250) 633-2292  
Fax: (250) 633-2463

## PRINCE RUPERT

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353 Fifth Street  
Prince Rupert, BC  
V8J 3L6

Tel: (250) 624-6054  
Fax: (250) 624-3923

## SMITHERS

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3966 - 2nd Avenue  
Smithers, BC  
V0J 2N0

Tel: (250) 847-4461  
Fax: (250) 847-4568

## STEWART

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317A Fifth Avenue  
P.O. Box 919  
Stewart, BC  
V0T 1W0

Tel: (250) 636-9184  
Fax: (250) 636-2770

## TERRACE

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5331 McConnell Avenue  
Terrace, BC  
V8G 4X2

Tel: (250) 635-6511  
Fax: (250) 638-5432

## Contact Us

CALL TOLL-FREE:

**1.877.277.2288**

E-MAIL:

[info@nwcc.bc.ca](mailto:info@nwcc.bc.ca)

WEB SITE:

[www.nwcc.bc.ca](http://www.nwcc.bc.ca)