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# **Gaining Momentum**

Great Plains College is an institution committed to being a leader in post-secondary and labour market development in Saskatchewan. Over the past number of years, the college has strived to become a responsive, innovative and results-oriented institution committed to meeting the needs of learners, employers and communities in Saskatchewan.

Over the next three years, the college will continue to enhance its performance and relationships with stakeholders through enhanced services to students and increased understanding of incoming student needs, increased student retention, external investment and partnerships, targeted programs that meet regional needs and maximize program capacity, and finally,

through our staff's strengths. Our slogan "Education with ENERGY" reflects the tireless effort each and every member of the college commits to moving programming and services forward.

This strategic plan reflects what students, staff and the board believe is important to meet the needs of students, industry and our communities. This input has enabled us to develop a plan we can be proud of, that sets priorities, moving the college forward in our four key strategic directions.

A sincere thank you to all who helped create this plan and ultimately, our future. We look forward to working to achieve our goals and attain our vision.







# Great Plains College Vision, Mission, Values & Strategic Directions

#### **Vision**

Economic prosperity and quality of life through education and training.

#### **Mission**

To focus our energy and innovation on building careers, partnerships and communities.

#### **Values**

#### Accessible

The college's programs and services are accessible to learners in ways that overcome barriers of time, location, and personal circumstances.

#### **Ambitious**

The college values excellence in service and a quality experience for students. The college strives to be known for excellence in programming that addresses the needs of industry and students.

#### **Collaborative**

The college supports and engages in authentic partnerships to advance the opportunities for the students, employers, and communities it serves

#### **Innovative**

The college demonstrates an individualized approach to learning that considers the needs, skills, and experiences of the student, and the particular requirements of employers. The college is agile in its response to changing community, public policy and labour market needs.

#### Responsive

The college responds to economic and social change and adapts its programs to meet the needs of employers, the labour market, individuals, communities, and public policy direction throughout the region.

#### **Supportive**

The college recognizes and respects a diversity of needs, cultures, values, and contributions in all of its stakeholder groups. It strives to provide a supportive and stimulating environment for students and employees.



# **Background**

Great Plains College is one of several Saskatchewan colleges in the provincial Regional College system. The college's region includes 115,000 people and more than 100,000 square kilometers which spans the western part of the province. There are multiple campuses and program centres in various communities, and approximately 400 full-time and 4,600 part-time and casual students are served annually.

A decentralized campus region system, consisting of three campuses and subsidiary program and training centres, has been established to provide a broad array of programs in western Saskatchewan and enable the college to help learners, communities and regional industry grow. This three-region campus model includes: Kindersley, Swift Current and Warman Campus Regions. Within these regions, program centres are located in Biggar, Outlook, Rosetown, Maple Creek, Nekaneet and Gravelbourg.

In addition to a quality classroom experience, the college provides numerous student supports, tutoring arrangements and exam invigilation services.

Customized training for business and industry has become an effective way for employers to meet their training needs locally. In working to address the training needs of the region's employers, many custom programs have been created. Industries such as Oil and Gas, Health, Agriculture, Hospitality and Retail and Service are supported through Great Plains College.

As a dynamic organization, Great Plains College aims to provide training programs at the forefront of industry through the use of modern infrastructure and technical expertise to ensure the skills its students acquire meet the demands of the labour market.









# Development of the Strategic Plan for Great Plains College

Led by the board and senior management, the Great Plains College strategic plan was created through a process that started in November 2011 and completed in January 2012. The goal of this strategic planning process was the identification of focus areas which would guide the development of strategic directions for Great Plains College through to the 2014-15 operating year.

The strategic planning process included consultation with a variety of stakeholders including board, staff and students. This consultation process was completed through the use of a variety of tools including an environmental scan, surveys, working groups and a college-wide staff consultation conference. Through this process, the dedication and commitment for the Great Plains College students, programs, faculty and communities was evident and important to the development of the strategy.

It is important to note that through the development of this plan, the focus was on Great Plains College as a single entity, rather than individual campus regions or areas they encompass. The plan proposes college-wide goals and actions that take advantage of its distributed strength while also recognizing the opportunities and challenges of its changing regional environments.

Ultimately, the development of the strategic plan was successful in defining four areas of focus for the college over the next three years. Broadly defined, the strategic directions within the strategic plan will address: a focus on the student, a focus on industry and community needs and a focus on staff.

## **Success Factors**

To successfully meet the needs of students, employers and communities in the Great Plains College service area, the strategic direction of the college addresses the changing environment within which it operates. Programs, services and priorities of Great Plains College respond to and reflect the trends in economic growth, innovation, demographics and accountability in Saskatchewan.

#### **Economic Growth**

Great Plains College covers an area of more than 100,000 square kilometers in western Saskatchewan. Unlike many regions of Canada and the world, this area has seen significant economic growth in recent years. Agriculture employs the largest percentage of people in the area with Oil and Gas seeing the largest increase. Other sectors such as Retail and Food-Accommodation, Healthcare and trades such as Construction, Electrician and Welding all employ a significant number of people within the region and continually struggle to find qualified workers.

#### **Innovation**

Developments in technology that affect education, business and community are occurring every day in Saskatchewan and around the world. These developments provide opportunities for Great Plains College to invest in program delivery, community engagement and college administration to improve the student experience. Additionally, Great Plains College must foster an internal appetite for innovation and support communities in their efforts to capitalize on technology and innovation. Specialized areas of development including alternative energy generation and environmentally responsible construction represent areas of training Great Plains College could capitalize on.

### **Demographics**

The workforce in Saskatchewan and the Great Plains College service area is aging at a rate which will see critical skill shortages in key areas of economic growth in the future. Coupled with the present and expected economic growth, the demand for skilled workers is going to continue to grow.

## **Accountability**

More requirements for enhanced accountability of public resources are being placed upon publically-funded institutions. The requirement for clear outcomes and measurements creates a need for improvement in institutional processes and an opportunity for publically funded organizations to be diligent in the alignment of human and financial resources with stakeholder needs.







# **Strategic Directions & Goals**

### **OPTIMIZE STUDENT SUCCESS**

## Goals to move forward over the next three years:

- Improve student retention through increased understanding of student needs
- Enrich student life and learning experiences

#### First steps:

- Conduct a review of current services for students
- Assess the needs of students

• Increase student activities at program centre and campus locations



Great Plains College works hard to optimize student success. Ultimately, the success of the college is reflective of the success of its students. The college is committed to understanding student needs, thus improving student retention and enriching student life and learning experiences.

To better serve incoming students, the college will work to understand their needs through research and implementation of best practices. In particular, the college will focus on better understanding the needs of First Nations, New Canadian, and Hutterite students. Understanding "Generation Y" and specifically the integration of technology into the daily lives of students is also a priority.

Key initiatives included within this strategic plan include the fostering of stronger community relationships to support improved counseling and better access to housing. As a long-term goal, the college may investigate student housing needs and create a strategy to address those needs.

In addition, an analysis of the Athletics review and an assessment of current services for students will be undertaken in an effort to enrich student experience at the college.







#### IN THREE YEARS, SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE:

Student success is defined, student needs are identified and addressed through best practices, and the number of graduates has increased.

# PROVIDE PROGRAM GROWTH THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS & INVESTMENTS

#### Goals to move forward over the next three years:

• Develop partnerships that connect to employability and program growth

 Increase external investments to assist with funding of institutional operation and program capacity

#### First steps:

- Develop a community and employer engagement strategy to assess training needs
- Engage all levels of government in growth and expansion efforts
- Establish and maintain relationships with educational institutions

- Raise funds to align with institutional planning and program development
- Develop and build an active alumni group



Growth and expansion are the increase and improvement of partnerships, investment and operation within the existing three-campus region model of Great Plains College. It does not imply increased costs or footprint. Through the enhancement of the college's ability to develop programming that specifically addresses business and industry needs and that can be supported through partnerships and investment, Great Plains College will help to better meet the needs of employers.

Great Plains College will embark on a targeted external investment strategy that provides potential investors a clear understanding of the benefits associated with their involvement. An increase in external investment reduces reliance on provincial funding and facilitates an increased scholarship base, development of better

facilities, and provides equipment and technology that will improve the learning experience. The external investment strategy will be focused a value proposition proposed by Great Plains College: an investment in programming and infrastructure is an investment in the future of industry and community in Saskatchewan.

Through partnership with other institutions, employers, rural municipalities, alumni and organizations, Great Plains College will maximize the results for those served by the college. The relationships that the college has built with the ministry, other educational institutions, industry and communities will be fostered to create stability in funding and programming while allowing for innovation.







#### IN THREE YEARS, SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE:

Increased business partnerships, strong relationships with other educational institutions and investment in programs.

# DELIVER EDUCATION & TRAINING TO SUPPORT REGIONAL LABOUR MARKET DEVELOPMENT

#### **Goals to move forward over the next three years:**

- Deliver quality programs to meet regional needs and maximize program capacity
- Increase engagement with potential learners
- Amplify awareness of program offerings through marketing and communication

#### First steps:

- Review quality assurance processes for programs
- Establish and regularly review a three-year program plan
- Expand programming using a cost-recovery model
- Build on existing programs and maximize opportunities in alternate energy programming
- Implementation of Customer Relationship Management program

- Invest in technology and create an internal culture of innovation to enhance program delivery
- Support community and partner efforts to bring broadband technology to the college service area
- Develop comprehensive marketing and communication strategies

Great Plains College will ambitiously pursue new opportunities that can have a profound impact in the economy and labour market. The college recognizes that at the heart of its mandate is supporting regional sustainability. As a result, the college will focus on offering an array of high quality programs and services which support areas of economic and labour market growth.

With a broad program array that is responsive to industry as a whole it is important that a single and consistent Great Plains College brand is widely recognized in all sectors and that student success is recognized. As such, ongoing efforts will be made to communicate and market

Great Plains College stories and programs. The distinct Energy Training Centre (ETC) brand will be rolled up into the Great Plains College brand and the college will continue to be a leader in anticipating and responding to the needs of the energy sector.

Through investments in technology and the support for innovative regional projects, Great Plains College will enhance program delivery and better serve industry needs. All of these efforts will be undertaken with the expectation of improving enrolments, shaping programming for the future, and creating excitement about the college to potential students of all ages.







#### IN THREE YEARS, SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE:

Amplified awareness of college programs, positive community reputation and increased enrolment.

#### **VALUE EMPLOYEES**

#### Goals to move forward over the next three years:

- Promote a collaborative, supportive, and unified work environment
- Encourage professional growth

#### First steps:

- Establish processes to facilitate discussion of college needs and priorities
- Continue to organize an annual staff gathering and long-service awards event
- Strengthen the professional development policy
- Enhance internal communication
- Develop and implement employee work plans designed to operationalize the Great Plains College business plan and capture training and succession planning opportunities



Great Plains College staff is experienced, innovative, and valued. The college will reinforce this message and create an environment that allows staff to maximize their potential by leveraging individual and collective strengths. Activities and opportunities that reinforce the value of all staff will continue to be developed. The college is committed to reviewing committee structures and membership to ensure that employee participation maximizes internal resources and provides opportunities for staff to meaningfully contribute to the strategic direction of the college.

A stronger internal understanding of professional development and growth will ensure that training provides capacity and opportunities that best meet student and organizational needs. The college's investment in people will provide return through increased productivity and innovation, and a collaborative, supportive and unified work environment.







#### IN THREE YEARS, SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE:

Increased student success, enhanced productivity and innovation and a unified work environment.



# **Moving Forward**

The intent of this strategic plan is not only to provide a focus for overall initiatives of the Great Plains College, but also to drive the college forward. The directions, goals and first steps are to be interwoven through the college's spokes—namely, its campuses, program centres, and specific departments—right down to the hub of individual employees. This will be achieved through the development and implementation of work plans and by linking these work plans to other key planning processes within the college, such as operational, budget, and capital planning.

A Strategic Plan is only useful if it can come alive and exist as a living document and framework for decision making and action for employees of an organization. The college is comprised of a passionate and dedicated group of people that will not hesitate to take action to advance the college to further meet student, industry and community needs.





# **Glossary of Terms**

**Investment:** contribution of money or in kind contribution such as equipment

or expertise to gain profitable returns, as interest, income, or appreciation in value.

**Stakeholder:** a person or group that has an investment or interest in the operations or impact

of Great Plains College,

Ministry: Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration – Government of Saskatchewan

**Advocate:** person or organization that directly or indirectly supports the operations or reputation

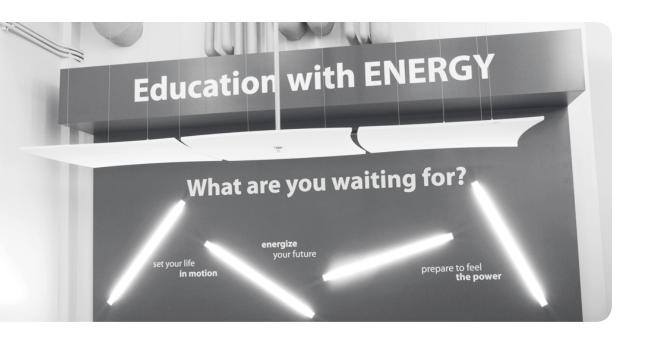
of Great Plains College

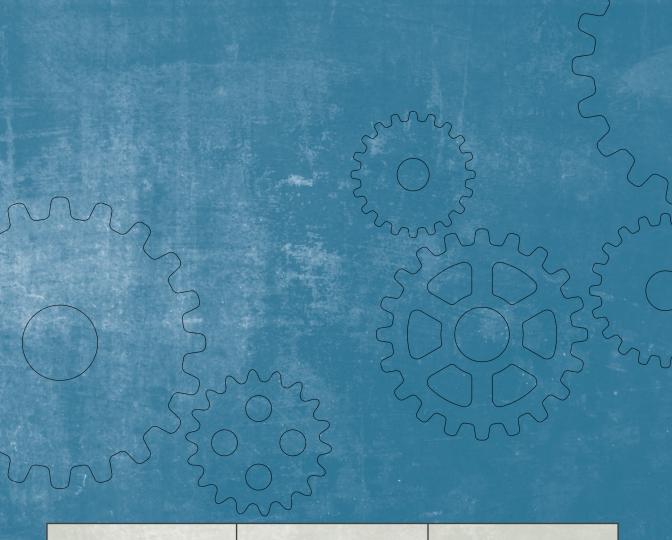
**Resources:** available funding, physical assets, intellectual property, and human capability and

capacity at Great Plains College

**Partnerships:** an association with another group that results in mutual benefit for the group

and Great Plains College





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