STRATEGIC PLAN 2003-2006

COLLEGE
OF THE
NORTH
ATLANTIC

Strategic Directions Inc. (SDI) has prepared this Strategic Plan for College of the North Atlantic (College) based upon information provided by the College and others. While SDI believes such information to be reliable, it cannot warrant it. The reader assumes responsibility for decisions made or actions taken based upon this Strategic Plan.

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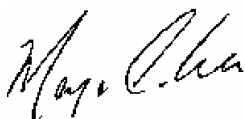
Letter from the Board Chair and the President

We are pleased to present College of the North Atlantic's Strategic Plan 2003 - 2006. The Plan was approved by the Board of Governors in January 2004, and represents the culmination of extensive consultation with our stakeholders, and in-depth discussion and debate by the Board of Governors and management of the College regarding the strategic directions of the College. The strategic directions and objectives highlight the College's ongoing commitment and dedication to provide quality training and education programming and support to its students.

The Strategic Plan is a key element of the College's accountability and continuous improvement framework. The framework also includes risk management initiatives, benchmarking with similar institutions, and monitoring college-wide key performance indicators. The strategic directions and objectives identified in the Strategic Plan align and guide the work of management, faculty and staff, and facilitate measurement of the performance of the College against its planned efforts. It has proven useful in strategically allocating resources in an environment of limited financial capacity.

The College will continue to play a significant role in the economic and social development of the province through its province-wide programming and campuses, its response to strategic consultation with industry and community development agencies, and the leadership and volunteer efforts of its employees.

The College continues to identify and evaluate opportunities to expand in the international education market, building on its success and lessons learned in Qatar, China, India and other countries. College of the North Atlantic Qatar now employs more than 150 managers, faculty and staff, many of them Newfoundlanders. Our relationship with the State of Qatar is flourishing, and we are advancing the objectives of the original project to offer world-class technology training and education to students in the Middle East.

Implementation of the Strategic Plan began in 2003 and continues to proceed successfully. To support the implementation of the Plan the College developed an enhanced organizational structure, which aligns key functions, policy and processes, and committees. A college-wide implementation team is working to establish operational priorities and spearhead new initiatives.

Moya Cahill
Board Chair

Pamela Walsh
President

1.0   Introduction

College of the North Atlantic's Strategic Plan 2003 – 2006 represents the results of an extensive strategic planning process, which began in 1999 with the establishment of a Strategic Framework by the Board of Governors. Since that time, a comprehensive consultation process gathered input from stakeholders, which the Board of Governors incorporated in the development of the strategic directions for the College. The College's management team has been extensively involved in discussions of the strategic directions and has identified an implementation process for the Plan.

2.0   Mission and Vision

2.1   Mission

College of the North Atlantic (CNA) is a leader in providing quality, accessible and relevant learning opportunities within the global community.

2.2   Vision

To fulfill its mission, the public College of Newfoundland and Labrador will continue to:

i.   Be recognized for satisfied, competent graduates whose skills meet industry's standards and respond to the broad range of labour market demands;

ii.   Research and deliver quality programs that are responsive to changing social, personal, and economic needs of learners through continuous review and modification of programs;

iii.   Be accountable for the effectiveness and efficiency of the operations of the College;

iv.   Enhance learning opportunities by implementing superior methods of instructional delivery;

v.   Be proactive in the social and economic development of the Province through the development of partnerships with communities, agencies and the private sector;

vi.   Enhance the capacity of the College and the Province through international initiatives;

vii.   Recognize and respect employees and their contributions to quality programs and services within a supportive environment; and

viii.   Offer a learning environment that respects, supports and empowers students.

3.0   Overview of College of the North Atlantic

3.1   History

While the history of adult education in Newfoundland and Labrador can be traced back more than 75 years, it is generally accepted the public college system in Newfoundland was started in 1963, when the provincial government opened vocational schools in 11 communities across the province and the College of Trades and Technology in St. John's.

Over the following decade, several other publicly funded vocational schools began operation,

making post-secondary education more accessible to the province's residents. However, the narrow scope of program offerings did not address the increasing training requirements of the provincial economy. Program offerings continued to diversify and in 1987 the province adopted the college concept. The 17 district vocational schools were reorganized into five public community colleges, later coming to be referred to as regional colleges.

College of the North Atlantic was established through an amalgamation of the five regional colleges in 1997; Cabot College, Labrador College, Eastern College, Central Regional Community College and Westviking College. Together these colleges formed the corner stone of College of the North Atlantic. The College continues to build on the substantial experience of the predecessor colleges in post-secondary education and their community involvement. The College's headquarters, including the President's office, is located in Stephenville, Newfoundland and Labrador.

3.2   Overview

College of the North Atlantic is amongst the largest post-secondary educational and skills training institutions in Canada, offering:

- Over 90 full-time programs and certificate programs in:
    - Applied Arts
    - Business Studies
    - Engineering Technology
    - Health Sciences
    - Industrial Education/Trades
    - Information Communications Technology
    - Natural Resources
    - Academic/General and Transfer Studies; and
- More than 300 part-time credit and non-credit courses, enabling people to pursue a diploma or certificate on a part-time basis.

College of the North Atlantic provides post-secondary education programs provincially, nationally and internationally through its:

- Seventeen campuses and a number of learning centres located in Newfoundland and Labrador;
- College of the North Atlantic – Qatar (CNA-Q) campus;
- Current co-operative agreements with universities in Canada, US and China; and
- Distance learning programs.

With an annual operating budget of approximately $90 million, College of the North Atlantic serves more than 10,000 students enrolled in full-time or part-time studies, contract training, apprenticeship programs, distributed and distance learning, and employs up to 1,300 staff during peak periods. Approximately 3,000 students graduate each year from the College's comprehensive, career-oriented certificate, diploma and post-diploma programs which range in duration from one to three years.[1]

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[1] College of the North Atlantic, Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, December 16, 2002, p. 3.

3.3 Governing Legislation and Organizational Structure

The governing legislation for College of the North Atlantic is College Act, 1996, Statutes of Newfoundland 1996, c.C-22-1.

The Board of Governors and the Chair of the Board, who is a member of the Board, are appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council. The Governors include representatives of industry, education, business, social agencies (e.g., women's, aboriginal and community based agencies), non-government organizations, the College's faculty and the executive body of the student association.

The College's President and Chief Executive Officer is appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council and reports to the Board of Governors.

4.0 Strategic Planning Process

4.1 Strategic Planning Responsibilities

The development of the College's strategic plan has been led by the Board of Governors. The Board and the President developed an initial strategic framework in October 1999 and have continued to evolve the strategic direction of the College through facilitated strategic planning sessions. This Strategic Plan assimilates and presents a comprehensive view of the results of the strategic planning process.

By legislation, the Board of Governors is responsible for setting the overall strategic direction of the College, and the President is responsible for formulating the specific objectives.

4.2 Strategic Planning Methodology

College of the North Atlantic has undertaken a number of strategic planning initiatives, the results of which are incorporated in the Plan. These initiatives have included:

  i. A series of facilitated strategic planning retreats for the Board and management;
  ii. Extensive external and internal consultation through facilitated meetings and an online survey; and
  iii. Completion of an extensive environmental scan.

As a public institution, and given its proactive role in the social and economic develop of the province, the College participates in the implementation of the province's Strategic Social Plan at various levels. College representatives participate with the Strategic Social Plan authorities and bring relevant issues forward to the College's strategic planning process.

5.0   College of the North Atlantic's Strengths

College of the North Atlantic has numerous strengths on which to build. The College is in a unique position as it is the province's only public college and is the only provincial institution with facilities in all regions of the province.

5.1   Strengths

College of the North Atlantic's strengths include:

i.   **Quality of programming and transferability and portability of credits**

Quality of Programming

The quality of programming delivered by the College was recognized by stakeholders during consultations[2], and is evidenced by:

- The high rate of successful placement of graduates in the workforce within a short period of time after graduation. A higher percentage of CNA graduates are securing full-time, high-paying positions in industry than university graduates. Eighty-six percent of CNA's three-year program graduates had full-time employment during the survey reference week for Careers Search 2002. Recent independent studies confirm the petroleum industry's regard for the College's programs, as graduates of the College's engineering, technologist and technician programs are considered to be qualified for entry-level positions in the industry.[3]

- Accreditation has been awarded to most of the College's programs in each of the industrial trades, health sciences and engineering technology sectors.[4] Accreditation is a recognized assurance of the quality of the programs based upon benchmarking with programs offered by other colleges nationally and internationally.

  In addition, nationally accredited co-operative education programs are available at various CNA campus locations.[5]

- College of the North Atlantic is the primary source of training in the province for health technology, engineering technology and medical services.[6]

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[2] Strategic Planning Consultations Executive Summary, p. 13.
[3] Labour Market Assessment of the Offshore Oil and Gas Industry Supply and Service Sector in Newfoundland and Labrador, Petroleum Industry Human Resources Committee and Newfoundland Ocean Industries Association, p. 35.
[4] College of the North Atlantic, Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, p. 4.
[5] Ibid., p. 8.
[6] College of the North Atlantic – Strategic Planning Retreat, September 20-21 and October 19, 2001, p. 13.

Transferability and Portability of Credits

Recognition of the high quality of the College's programs facilitates the establishment of credit transfer agreements with other educational institutions. These agreements offer a broad range of options to transfer credits between institutions, thus facilitating students' academic mobility. The transfer options include:

- The College-University Transfer Year (CUTY) program, offered in conjunction with Memorial University at select CNA campuses, enhances students' access to courses that earn both college and university credits;
- Articulation agreements with Memorial University and other colleges and universities in Canada and the United States permit transfer from college diploma to university degree. "These articulation agreements are a strength in marketing the College, as few of its private sector competitors have these agreements."[7] In other words, articulation agreements is one factor which differentiates the College from private schools;
- The Concurrent Studies program allows qualified high school students in their final year to access college courses;
- Adult Basic Education (ABE) graduates are eligible to apply for programs in colleges and universities; and
- Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) policy, "values the knowledge and skills earned through life/work experiences external to the College."[8] "Up to 75% of the course work required to complete a given certificate or diploma may be earned through the prior learning assessment process."[9]

Both the Concurrent Studies and CUTY options, as well as other agreements, illustrate the College's ability to forge alliances which effectively establish connectivity and provide seamless transitions through the education continuum in an integrated learning infrastructure.

ii. Role in economic and social development of communities

The College's campuses are a key resource fostering economic and social development in communities throughout the province. The College is able to bring together in the communities: technical and engineering expertise, international experience in education and industry, capital infrastructure such as "bricks and mortar" and communications technology, and relationships with key stakeholders in economic and social development of the province including industry.

Active Role of Faculty and Staff

Many faculty and staff of the College are advocates and facilitators for the economic and social development of the communities in which they live.

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[7] Environment Scan for Strategic Planning – College of the North Atlantic, p. 8.
[8] College of the North Atlantic, Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, p. 8.
[9] Ibid., p. 8.

"In some communities, the College's contribution extends to developing and incubating new businesses, assisting small and medium sized enterprises to develop prototypes, test and analyze products, and provide access to expert staff, new technologies, and state-of-the-art equipment."[10]

Applied Research and Innovation Network

The College's Applied Research initiative also contributes to economic and social development in communities. One example is the Geospatial Research Facility established at Corner Brook campus in 2003, which expands the research and innovation capacity in terrestrial resources sectors (i.e., forestry, wildlife) in Atlantic Canada.

While in the early stages of a long-term initiative to develop the College's applied research capability and capacity, the potential strategic benefits of applied research to the College and the regions in which the campuses are located are as follows:

- Builds new linkages and enhances the relevance of the College to the community. It offers opportunities for technology transfer to businesses in the communities;
- Informs teaching and learning, benefiting students and faculty College-wide;
- Enhances the national and international profile of the College and may result in new funding opportunities; and
- Develops new capabilities and skills with the College faculty, the benefits of which accrue to the entire system.

Centres of Excellence and Industry Relationships

"College of the North Atlantic has implemented a strategy of "Centres of Excellence" that concentrates a critical mass of resources in one "specialty center" where students have access to more equipment and expertise. The Centres of Excellence concept has enabled College of the North Atlantic to develop innovative public and private partnerships with international companies such as Sun Microsystems and Silicon Graphics to obtain modern equipment, software and facilities. Formalized training partnerships with companies such as Siemens, Halliburton and Schlumberger have also been a result of the "Centres of Excellence" model."[11] Centres of Excellence are located throughout the province. For example, the Centre of Excellence in mining is located in Labrador, engineering technology in St. John's, navigation in Gander and natural resources in Corner Brook.

Distributed Learning Capability/Technology Infrastructure

College of the North Atlantic's distributed learning capability and technology infrastructure are significant strengths. The network facilitates the College's continuing development as an effectively integrated provincial organization and links the College with national and international opportunities.

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[10] Ibid., p. 10.
[11] Environment Scan for Strategic Planning – College of the North Atlantic, pp. 6 & 7.

- The network is the only educational high-speed broadband network in the province with transfer rates ranging from 1,500 kb/s to 1 million kb/s. It connects all campuses across the province and incorporates multi-point video conferencing capability.[12] This video conferencing capability is widely used by government and community groups. The College makes extensive use of video conferencing to deliver professional development opportunities to College employees and to communicate with the Qatar campus. In some communities in the province, the College is the only source of broadband access;

- "CNA's @College Distributed Learning Centre is a Certified WebCT Institute – one of only six in Canada and its courses have been recognized with the WebCT Exemplary Course Award. College of the North Atlantic boasts the first Certified WebCT trainers in the country and leads the way in e-learning solutions in the global higher education market;"[13]

- The College offers more than 200 credit and non-credit courses and programs on-line. Distributed Learning Service (DLS) enrolment has increased by 50% per year from 1998-99 to 2002-03. An estimated 4,000 students (400 full-time equivalents) are expected to participate in learning opportunities in 2002-03;[14] and

- The College is recognized by other colleges as being advanced in terms of its distributed learning capabilities.[15]

iii. Contract training

College of the North Atlantic offers training programs to businesses and industry, utilizing existing programs' curriculum or custom designed curriculum. The College responds quickly to industry's requests for training.[16] Training has been developed for a variety of sectors, including oil and gas, business, health care and information technology. College of the North Atlantic delivers training either at the client site, at a College campus, via Distributed Learning, or any combination of these. The College provides training to more than 5,000 provincial, national and international trainees annually through its contract training initiatives.[17] Contract training is believed to be a significant opportunity for the College.

iv. Low tuition cost

CNA has lower tuition costs than other institutions in the province such as Memorial University. More than 60% of graduates of CNA's three-year programs had an accumulated average student loan that was 23% lower than more than 60% of Memorial University undergraduates.[18] CNA's tuition costs are less than half the cost of tuition at comparable sources in the province.[19]

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[12] Ibid., p. 14.
[13] College of the North Atlantic, Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, p. 14.
[14] Ibid., p. 13.
[15] College of the North Atlantic – Strategic Planning Retreat, September 20-21 and October 19, 2001, p. 13.
[16] Ibid., p. 13.
[17] College of the North Atlantic, Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, p. 8.
[18] Career Search 2002, Department of Youth Services and Post-Secondary Education, p. 12.
[19] Marketing Plan 2003-2004, College of the North Atlantic, "Micro Environmental Analysis", p. 3.

"The dissatisfaction of university graduates and private schools with their financial investment is far greater than that of public college graduates, as reflected in Career Search 2002."[20]

v. **Provincial, national and international market penetration**

CNA delivers programming to students located in the province, nationally and internationally. It achieves this:

- Province-wide through its 17 campuses and a number of learning centers. "This learning infrastructure is second to no other post-secondary institution in the province."[21] The College's enrolment of international students is increasing. To date the emphasis has been focused on attracting students from China;
- Internationally:
  - Through its campus in the Middle East state of Qatar. The contract between the College and the State of Qatar is the largest awarded to date to a Canadian educational institution.[22] College of the North Atlantic-Qatar has approximately 80 staff and a student enrolment of approximately 600; and
  - Through its agreements with other institutions, College of the North Atlantic programs are offered in other countries. For example, the College's Electronics Engineering program is offered in China, and has an enrolment of approximately 500 students.
- Provincially, nationally and internationally through its Distributed Learning capability.

College of the North Atlantic has significant experience in the international education market, as evidenced by the establishment of CNA-Q, success in China, and projects in India, Peru, Lebanon, Caribbean, Arabian Gulf States, Mexico and others through participation in the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC)/CCPP projects. The College has placed an increased focus on identifying international opportunities. There are many benefits to the College's active participation in the global education market. It:

- Contributes to the financial support of the College;
- Offers professional development and a wide scope of experience opportunities to management, faculty and staff;
- Attracts international students to the College; and
- Increases internationalization of the College's programs. In other words, curriculum reflects international perspectives, cultural diversity and inter-cultural communications.

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[20] College of the North Atlantic, Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, p. 12.
[21] Ibid., p. 12.
[22] Ibid., p. 16.

vi. **Human resources**

Through the stakeholder consultations, the following feedback and descriptions were offered regarding the people of the College:

- Board of Governors, faculty and staff of the College were described as "progressive and proactive";
- The Board of Governors is recognized for making a significant and positive contribution to the organization; and
- "Administration, staff and faculty are well-educated and skilled in their fields and have established strong linkages with stakeholders and/or associations in their communities."[23]

The College has established a good labour relations environment, and staff morale is rated as good.

vii. **Relationships**

The College has an established and good rapport with government.[24]

The College has been awarded varying amounts of funding support from the federal government in recent years to undertake projects, including:

- Those undertaken in rural areas which support economic development such as IT Incubation Centre (now DPSI) in Grand Falls, IT Development Centre at Burin campus, Geospatial Research Facility at Corner Brook campus;
- Those undertaken to promote student engagement and activities such as *Access for Success* and Industrial Adjustment Services Initiative; and
- Updating capital equipment (approximately $4 million in instructional equipment across many campuses).

CNA's working relationship with the provincial and federal governments is strategically important.

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[23] Marketing Plan 2003-2004, College of the North Atlantic, "Micro Environmental Analysis", p. 3.
[24] College of the North Atlantic – Strategic Planning Retreat, September 20-21 and October 19, 2001, p. 13.

6.0   College of the North Atlantic's Challenges

While a lot of progress has been made in integrating the five regional colleges, the College continues to address legacy systems, practices and organizational culture. There remain challenges in the areas of administration, co-ordination and communication.

6.1   Challenges

College of the North Atlantic has identified its challenges as the need to :

i.   **Improve services to students**

Develop a plan to improve support to students including:

- More proactive career counseling for current and potential students is required and will contribute to reduced attrition;
- Improved admissions process in terms of:
    - Making earlier offers to students;
    - Conducting timely, consistent follow-up and confirmation of students' intention to accept and offering options for students;
- Support for students' transition to the workforce (e.g., developing interviewing skills, résumé writing) and providing more opportunities for practical work experience during a student's program; and
- Identifying and supporting special needs students.

ii.   **Align and integrate new and revised work processes**

a.   **Manage the impacts of new strategic work processes**

A number of strategic projects such as Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and *Access for Success* have impacts College-wide on work processes, job responsibilities, competencies and information flow such as reporting requirements and timelines for activities. This will be a challenge for the organization to integrate;

b.   **Improve utilization of available technologies**

The technologies available to the College through its Distributed Learning Centre can effectively facilitate group work within the College for academic and administrative functions. These technologies are underutilized at present;

c.   **Improve administration systems**

The College's information, financial, human resources and administration (MIS) systems are outdated.[25] ERP will address this in part; and

d.   **Improve the efficiency of operations**

The College needs to be more diligent in benchmarking its performance, in part to identify areas where it can gain efficiencies. Also the College must focus on balancing/assessing its operational expenses with revenue potential, as it continues to earn more revenue from contract training and other initiatives. At

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[25] Ibid., p. 13.

present, the College has tuition revenue for a 10-month period but operating expenses for 12 months.[26]

iii. **Strengthen program capability**

a. **Improve the process to change program content**

There is a need to enhance communication during the program development cycle. The College recognizes that more resources are needed in program research, development and review.

There is a need to clarify the process of program development and establish a process for custom program development that is understood within the College;

b. **More flexibility to offer a wider range of program content**

If the College is able to offer applied degrees, it will be able to increase the number of international students and students from other provinces such as Alberta and Ontario; and

c. **Become more flexible in program delivery**

In response to changing student needs such as older students who are balancing course schedules with work, and increasing corporate training requirements, the College needs to be more flexible in course delivery. Flexibility in course delivery includes offering multiple entry and exit points for programs and providing an opportunity for students to complete entire diploma or certificate programs through distributed learning;

iv. **Internal communications**

There is College-wide recognition of the need to improve internal communications in terms of:

- Communication of decisions by decision-making bodies (e.g., Academic Council, Provincial Program Planning Team, Executive, Board of Governors), Functional Administrative Teams (e.g., Human Resources, Finance), School Teams, District Administrators/Executive and Campus Operational Teams;
- More effective information sharing among individuals and groups where knowledge of the information clearly impacts work function (adjacent responsibilities). Examples are information sharing among instructors, and between School Chairs and Campus Teams;
- More conscientious approach to targeting information distribution; and
- Utilization of communications technology, (i.e., e-mail, scheduling software).

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[26] Ibid., p. 13.

7.0   Strategic Issues

College of the North Atlantic is emerging as a distinct and unique entity, and is a more comprehensive college than the five predecessor regional colleges from which it was formed. Many activities such as the strategic planning process, development of the accountability framework, various human resources projects, establishment of the College's brand and targeted marketing efforts, focus on the College's growing international presence and student population, and distributed learning expertise are defining the new presence of College of the North Atlantic.

The following strategic issues were identified:

i. **Impact of changing demographics on student population and recruitment, and employee recruitment and retention**

The changing demographic profile of the province and Canada will impact the College's student population and therefore the College's post-secondary education programs. The College must adapt to demographic and labour market changes and respond to the training needs resulting from:

- An aging population and workforce;
- Rural-urban migration patterns. "Growth in the labour market tends to favour Newfoundland's urban economies. The challenge, in this context, is to provide a meaningful response to these new labour market demands without endangering the College's – and province's – commitment to improving Newfoundland and Labrador's rural economy";[27]
- Declining secondary school population. At this time, the College has not experienced a decline in high school graduate enrolment. It is believed there are opportunities to increase the number of high school graduates enrolling at the College;
- Significant labour shortage forecasts for the next 10 years. The College must be prepared to respond to greater demands for flexible programs. The likely outcomes of the shortage will be increased requirements to retrain the current workforce, to facilitate the higher entrance of diverse groups (e.g., women, aboriginals) as they are expected to account for a growing share of the labour force, and to meet the demand for increasing corporate training; and
- Need for increasing accessibility for:
    o Significant numbers of people who would like to take programs at the College, but who do not meet the entrance requirements or can not attend campus locations;
    o Students with physical and learning disabilities;
    o Women in non-traditional programs such as trades and technologies; and
    o Aboriginal peoples.

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[27] College of the North Atlantic, Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, p. 17.

Acquiring greater knowledge of the needs and learning requirements of these students is a strategic issue.

Student Recruitment

The province's changing demographics also present a number of challenges for the College from a student recruitment perspective. In the coming years, the number of high school graduates will decline significantly. This will have a greater and earlier impact on rural campuses as they are impacted not only by the effects of an aging population, but also by migration patterns within the province and outmigration.

There are varying internal and external challenges facing College of the North Atlantic, with respect to the provision of career counselling and related career information to high school students and graduates.

These challenges include external factors such as:

- Limited access to students while they are enrolled in high school because of the increasingly competitive nature of post-secondary education and the pressures on schools to maintain "time-on-task". The noted 'competitive environment' refers in particular to the number of public and private institutions, from within and outside the province, attempting to gain an audience with the same high school population;
- Lack of transitional planning; and
- Insufficient career counselling and development processes. "While most high schools employ guidance counsellors whose employment duties include career counselling, studies have shown that the majority of school counsellors do not have the necessary time or resources required to adequately perform this function. As a result, many students receive very little, if any, career counselling during high school and are left to make less than informed career decisions.

The educational component of the career development process is often underestimated, given its potential to assist students in making informed career decisions – decisions that will result in a better match between the students' career interests/aptitudes and opportunities available to them in the labour market. These, along with obvious geographic consideration, play a huge role in the challenge to bring information about career choices to prospective students."[28]

Impacts of the College's Human Resources Demographics

Many of College of the North Atlantic's employees will become eligible to retire over the next 10 years. During the period 2003 – 2007, 174 employees (approximately 17% of the permanent, full-time workforce) will be eligible to retire. The majority of these employees are faculty members. Seventeen of the potential retirees are management, which represents 30% of the College's current management team.

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[28] Ibid., p. 19.

Over the past several years, approximately 50% of the employees who are eligible to retire each year have retired. As a result, there is a growing cohort of employees who can retire, in addition to those becoming eligible to retire each year. The retirement of large numbers of faculty and managers may result in significant loss of institutional memory. Succession planning and recruitment challenges will likely be exacerbated by difficulties in recruiting replacements.

Recruitment and Retention of Qualified Staff and Faculty

Faculty salaries under the current faculty classification system are not competitive with:

- Private sector positions, which require the same trade or technology qualifications. For designated trades and technology positions, private sector salaries may be as much as two or three times more than the College's faculty salaries. Also there is a growing demand for experienced trades persons, one of the labour shortage areas that has been reported by the Conference Board of Canada; and
- Institutions in other provinces. Faculty salaries are significantly higher in other provinces including Nova Scotia. The College participated in a study conducted by KPMG in 2002 which benchmarked 11 Canadian colleges. The median cost was $62,148 per full-time equivalent instructor, while CNA's cost was $55,386 per full-time equivalent instructor.

These factors contribute to recruitment and retention issues for faculty positions. The College is experiencing a decline in the number of applicants for many positions, especially for management and senior staff positions, an increasing trend of unqualified or under qualified applicants from external recruitment efforts and longer recruitment periods.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit internally for management positions. For College faculty and staff a promotion to a management position often means:

- Additional responsibility and accountability;
- Additional workload;
- Loss of leave time; and
- A net loss or nominal increase in salary.

Relocation compensation is also impacting recruitment. In 2002, the College experienced an increasing number of "difficult to recruit" positions, as candidates declined offers due to insufficient relocation compensation. With 17 campuses in Newfoundland and Labrador this is an issue.

The benefits of a position with the College over industry are: a more attractive working day and week, less impact on job security of a changing market place, and attractive pension, leave, sick benefits and insurance coverage.

Institutional Wellness

Institutional wellness, how employers recognize the contribution of employees and respect their needs; is becoming more important. The College needs to pay attention to institutional wellness as it impacts retention of employees.

Professional Development

As noted earlier, the College conducted a large number of stakeholder consultations during the strategic planning process. For College employees the primary strategic issue is professional development. The specific concerns regarding professional development include:

- Inability to identify qualified instructors to temporarily replace faculty who wish to pursue professional development opportunities;
- Insufficient notice and communication of professional development opportunities;
- Lack of financial incentives to pursue many professional development opportunities (in particular industry experience);
- For many specialized faculty, the lack of professional development opportunities in Newfoundland and Labrador; and
- The lack of professional development opportunities for temporary staff.

ii. Aging physical plant and capital equipment and lack of capital funding

College of the North Atlantic has significant infrastructure issues and lacks the capital funding to address them.

Buildings

Many of the buildings used by the College were constructed in the 1960s and 1970s. The buildings are owned and maintained by the provincial government Department of Works, Services and Transportation, which is insufficiently funded to address the College's aging physical plant issue. Figure 1 provides detailed information on the number of buildings by year of construction.
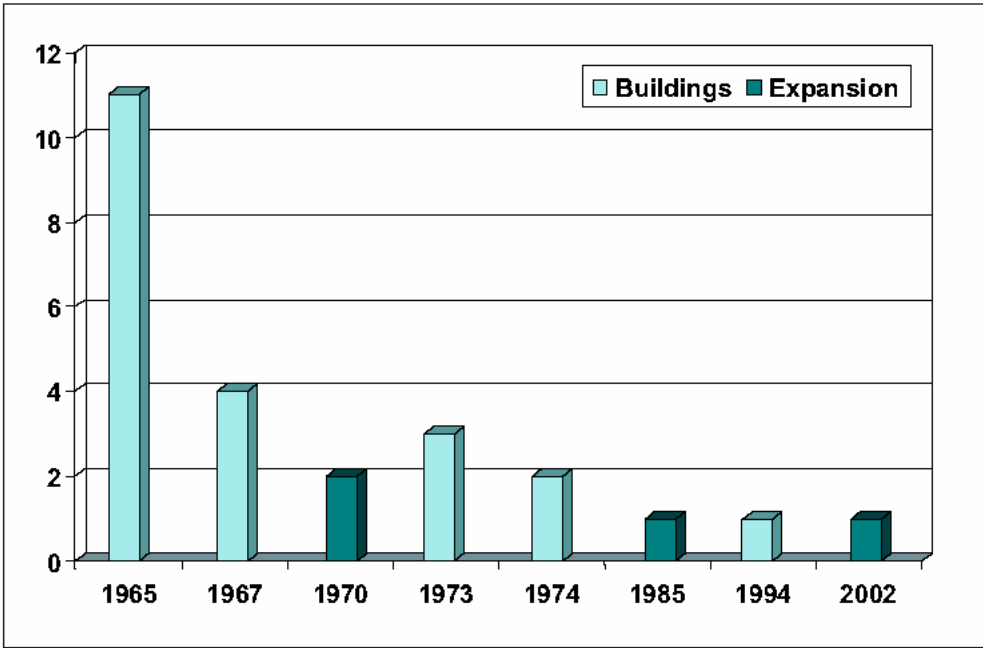
Figure 1 – Number of Buildings by Year of Construction

The categories and estimates of the capital expenditures for the building envelop for 2003/2004 total approximately $21.6 million, including:

- Required expansions to existing facilities in excess of $15.4 million. Some campuses lack adequate space to accommodate existing programs, which can lead to missed training opportunities;
- Renovations to existing facilities in excess of $1.1 million;
- Air quality improvements at a cost of $1.365 million;
- Building safety and accessibility improvements at a cost of approximately $360,000; and
- Environmental conditioning including renewal of Prince Philip Drive campus blocks A, B and C, and flooring and window replacements at various campuses totalling $3.38 million.

To provide a realistic context for these estimates, the College has estimated the total replacement cost of the buildings it currently occupies to be approximately $240 million.

Capital Equipment

Capital equipment is also aging and/or becoming obsolete. Replacing classroom furnishings, computer, laboratory and shop equipment costs an estimated $3.5 million annually. The College's current capital grant is $500,000 annually.

Political and Fiscal Environment in the Province

The College requires adequate funding for capital works and equipment replacement.

Recognizing the limited fiscal capacity of the province, the College's strategies to address its increasing requirement for capital and operating expenditures must be addressed at least in part through additional funding and revenue sources. From a fiscal perspective, College of the North Atlantic continues to operate within the constraints of:

- A tuition freeze which was implemented in 1998;
- Declining provincial grants to support operations; and
- Uncertainty regarding the likelihood of further restraint measures.

To address its capital requirements, College of the North Atlantic will:

- Improve its ability to access funding through the labour market agreements designed to support workforce training and development;
- Continue to work diligently with employers to raise awareness of their need to invest in workforce training;
- Continue to work with provincial and federal governments to raise their awareness of the role of public colleges in the growth of Canada's prosperity, and the necessity of investing in infrastructure and technology upgrades to sustain this growth; and
- Continue to seek public and private partnerships for the delivery of training.[29] As noted in an earlier section, the College has formalized training partnerships with companies such as Siemens, Halliburton and Schlumberger. These partnerships contribute to the acquisition of capital equipment required for training.

iii. Greater accountability

In the last several years, society has demanded greater accountability of government, public agencies and institutions. The provincial government has enhanced its accountability and strategic planning requirements. As a public college, CNA is held to the same standard of public accountability and must comply with the provincial government's requirements. The College's Board of Governors has established the development of an accountability and continuous improvement framework as a strategic project. Some of the elements of the framework to which the College is committed are:

- Improving risk management;
- Benchmarking college operations and efficiencies with similar organizations;
- Identifying College-wide key performance indicators. These indicators, which reflect the Strategic Directions identified in this Plan, include:
  - o Responsiveness to dynamic global market and community needs;

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[29] College of the North Atlantic, Strategic Planning Retreat – September 20/21 and October 19, 2001, p. 8.

- o Accessibility;
- o Strategic human resource development;
- o Resource management;
- o Enrolment, retention and graduation rates/student success;
- o Customer/stakeholder satisfaction;
- o Transferability of student credits and skills between the College and other institutions; and
- o Graduate employment and relevance to field of study.
  - Strengthening its formal evaluation of programs and services; and
  - Enhancing a formal performance appraisal/management system for management, faculty and staff.

iv. Increasing globalization

CNA has a track record of success in international markets, of which the campus in Qatar is an example. An established presence in the international market increases the opportunities for international partnerships, contract training and student recruitment. Program renewal and development conducted to bring international focus to the College's programs is clearly beneficial to local students, who must be prepared to participate in the global workforce.

The College's success in international projects enhances its credibility in the province, nationally and internationally.

v. Important role of College in socio-economic development of the province

College of the North Atlantic is expected to provide continued leadership in communities where it is physically located and there are increasing demands to play an active and proactive role in economic and social development and community capacity building. In rural communities in particular, the campus facility and employees are enablers for socio-economic development. This valuable role is one that must be factored into considerations of the sustainability of these campuses.

vi. Changing technology

The rapid pace of technological change, and its adoption by business and industry, compels the College to continue investing in technology to:

- Ensure program content is relevant;
- Meet greater demand and need for upgrading the existing workforce; and
- Meet growing demand to deliver programs via the Internet.[30]

vii. Marketing

The College recognizes the importance of improving the marketing of its post-secondary programs and capabilities, both domestically and internationally. The College has taken

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[30] Summary Report CNA Board of Governors Strategic Planning Retreat January 2003, p. 2.

steps to increase the focus and reach of its marketing activity. A number of areas requiring improvement were identified:

- The public image of the College to position it as a "first choice" institution in the province. Many stakeholders during community consultations indicated they are not knowledgeable about the scope and type of programs offered by the College. There is anecdotal evidence that the long history of some of the College's predecessor institutions as "trades schools" remains in the marketplace;
- Targeting high schools, through recruiting and marketing services to ensure that students and potential students are well informed about the educational programs and services available to them; and
- Identifying and targeting potential international markets.

Two desired results from increased marketing are increased student enrolment and contract training.

8.0 Opportunities and Threats

College of the North Atlantic identified a number of opportunities to obtain needed additional financial resources and to increase enrolment.

8.1 Opportunities

i. **Contract/corporate training market**

As noted in an earlier section, it is believed the contract/corporate training market represents a significant opportunity for the College and is essential to sustain the College at its current size;

ii. **International students**

International opportunities fall into several categories, the most important of which is recruitment of international students both for campus based and online programs. The other categories of opportunities are more global partnerships and education as an exportable commodity.

As examples, College of the North Atlantic participates in major educational reform projects in many developing countries: Peru, Jordan, Egypt, Malaysia, Vietnam and China. As well there are over 500 students currently registered with the College studying CNA's Electronics Engineering program in China. Over 30 Chinese students are studying at College of the North Atlantic in Newfoundland and Labrador.[31] More than 600 students are taking College programs in Qatar;

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[31] Environment Scan for Strategic Planning – College of the North Atlantic, p. 15.

iii. **Projected skill shortages**

The perception of community stakeholders is that there is an opportunity for the College to increase its enrolment due to the national projected skills shortages for trades and related skills. The College has responded to this opportunity.

College "employees felt they need to better understand the issue, as well as the ability of the College to reconfigure itself and its programs to train for these shortages, and the belief that the required shortages may not be so much in the area of individual skills, but rather in the acquisition of multiple and portable skills."[32]

iv. **Online learning**

The increase in technology in the marketplace and a greater acceptance of online learning have created new opportunities and demand for distributed learning.[33] Online learning is a highly competitive market, and it is necessary to provide support services to students, both counselling and academic. Because it is flexible and not bound by geography, it is a way for the College to reach out to non-traditional students/clients, who due to time, geography or work can not take a campus seat; and

v. **Student retention**

One of the focuses of the *Access for Success* program is to develop processes such as career counselling, academic advising, peer counselling and personal counselling which will contribute to the reduction of attrition, or in other words a higher rate of student retention and successful academic completion of programs. Retention ensures the College's resources are efficiently deployed. For example, in year three of a three year program the College is providing the same level of instruction. If there has been a high attrition rate, the College is not efficiently deploying its instructional resources.

8.2 Threats

The following threats were identified through the college-wide survey results:[34]

i. **Reduction in Federal and provincial government funding**

Competition for Federal and provincial dollars in a fiscally challenged environment raises the possibility that there could be a reduction in government grants to the College;

ii. **Continued outmigration from rural communities and the province**

Continued outmigration from rural communities may threaten the viability of some of the rural campuses over time. Outmigration from the province contributes to declining school enrolments and therefore the potential number of direct high school entry to the College. Lower levels of business activity in some rural communities has impacted the College overall (e.g., corporate training has been impacted by reduced business in rural areas);

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[32] Strategic Planning Consultations Executive Summary, p. 4.
[33] Environment Scan for Strategic Planning – College of the North Atlantic, p. 8.
[34] Strategic Planning Consultations Executive Summary, p. 13.

iii. **Demographic trends**

Significant demographic trends such as an aging population and workforce, lower fertility rates and declining births, rural-urban migration patterns and out-migration impact the prospective student population of the province;

iv. **Change in government**

Change in government may lead to changes such as change in the membership of the Board of Governors and the government's strategy for public education;

v. **Private schools**

Some private schools see the College as a threat and are looking to government for concessions that would allow them to realize a greater market share; and

vi. **Lack of funds for infrastructure, capital**

Lack of funds for maintenance and replacement of infrastructure and capital equipment will result in the continued deterioration of the College's physical capacity to deliver programs and damages the College's reputation with students and industry.

9.0 Strategic Directions/Goals and Objectives

The College's strategic directions provide the overall priorities for the College for the next three years. The specific objectives and activities identified for each strategic direction provide in detail what incremental results are expected (objectives) and how the objectives and therefore strategic direction will be achieved (activities). The objectives and activities leverage the strengths of the College, for example its quality programming, and uses them to advantage to participate in foreseeable opportunities such as the international education market. Other objectives and activities address the strategic issues and challenges facing the College.

9.1 Summary of Strategic Directions/Goals

College of the North Atlantic's strategic directions are:

- **Image**
  Enhance and promote CNA's positive image and reputation to build and maintain relationships that increase acceptance, endorsement and use of CNA's domestic and global capabilities;

- **Growth**
  Increase access and success to maximize the number of learners at CNA;

- **Innovation and Development**
  Build on capacity to support social and economic development through innovation, organizational development and partnership with community based agencies, business, industry and government; and

- **Quality and Accountability**
  Enhance responsiveness, efficiency, effectiveness and quality of the College.

9.2   Strategic Objectives

The following tables identify the objectives, actions, individuals responsible and timeframes for achievement of the College's strategic directions. These provide a comprehensive view of how each strategic direction will be achieved. As objectives are achieved through completion of the activities new objectives (i.e., next generation objectives) will be added by the College during its semi-annual review of the Strategic Plan. This ensures over time the Plan is kept up-to-date and the College is advancing toward achievement of its mission.

Strategic Direction 1

Image

Enhance and promote CNA's positive image and reputation to build and maintain relationships that increase acceptance, endorsement and use of CNA's domestic and global capabilities.

Objectives	Action	Timeframe
1.1 Promote the College as a "first choice" institution	1.1.1 Establish/renew CNA brand	2004
	1.1.2 Deliver quality programs	Ongoing
	1.1.3 Develop, implement and assess the annual marketing plan	Ongoing
	1.1.4 Develop and distribute professional information and promotional items (refer to current marketing plan)	Ongoing
	1.1.5 Improve the public's and other stakeholders awareness and knowledge of the College's programs, services, overall capacity and profile	Ongoing
	1.1.6 Seek external recognition through such processes as accreditation and promote it	Ongoing

		1.1.7	Develop relationships / partnerships that raise the profile of the College in the K-12 system (teachers, students, counsellors, and Boards)	2004 and ongoing
		1.1.8	Raise the profile of the College with parents of K-12 students	2004 and ongoing
		1.1.9	Identify and foster relationships with industry, institutions and funding partners	2004 and ongoing
		1.1.10	Strengthen role and participation with LMDA committees and REDBs	2004 and ongoing (LMDAs - Annual)
1.2	Work with government to ensure campuses and equipment are state of the art/modern	1.2.1	Work with government to increase funding for facilities and equipment (Important that the appearance of the facilities be modernized i.e., not the trades schools)	2004
		1.2.2	Develop a comprehensive plan for maintenance and improvement of infrastructure	2004
		1.2.3	Develop an equipment and technology improvement plan	2004

		1.2.4	Develop further understanding of government's perception of the College	2004	
		1.2.5	Continue to improve communication with Government (e.g., annual reports, Royal Commission submission, relationship with Department executive)	Ongoing	
1.3	Reward and recognize achievements of staff and students	1.3.1	Grow scholarship opportunities, bursaries	2004 and ongoing	
		1.3.2.	Identify appropriate communications / forums for staff recognition (i.e., the actual award, publicizing of same)	Ongoing	
1.4	Develop and establish an office of alumni and development	1.4.1	Identify resources required to support and establish alumni and development office	2004 and ongoing	
		1.4.2	Identify and establish programs and vehicles to build a College Alumni Association and secure corporate donations	2004 and ongoing	

Strategic Direction 2

Growth

Increase access and success to maximize the number of learners at CNA.

	Objectives		Action	Timeframe
2.1	Strengthen and practice effective enrolment management (Increase success and reduce attrition)	2.1.1	Implement faculty advisory system (*Access for Success Model* strategies)	2003 – 2004: pilot 2004: implement and ongoing
		2.1.2	Measure and analyse statistics	Ongoing
		2.1.3	Increase lateral transferability within similar programs	Ongoing
		2.1.4	Expand general studies options	2004 - 2005
		2.1.5	Increase opportunities for high school students at campuses	2004 and ongoing
		2.1.6	Investigate opportunities for increasing co-operative options and other practical education experience	2005
		2.1.7	Review admission requirements	September 2005

2.1.8	Align programs to meet industry needs	Ongoing
2.1.9	Increase access/success of special needs students, women and aboriginals	Ongoing
2.1.10	Increase human resources for special needs	Ongoing
2.1.11	Redesign programs to suit special needs students	Ongoing
2.1.12	Identify more ways to identify learning disabled students	Ongoing
2.1.13	Provide more information/options for undecided/decided students ▪ More links/exposure for high school students (pre-vocational program) ▪ Expand general studies options	2004 and ongoing
2.1.14	Focus on illiteracy: review College's role in delivery of ABE level 1	2004 and ongoing
2.1.15	Monitor acceptance of students	Annual

2.2	Enhance/diversify program offerings and delivery approaches	2.2.1	Rotate mix of programs regularly where and when required	Ongoing
		2.2.2	Expand use of Distance Learning (DL) opportunities - Promote DL "programs" not just DL courses - Take advantage of "advance placement" - Review semester structure	2004 and annual
		2.2.3	Review hours of operation to better align with different learner groups' needs	2004 - 2005
		2.2.4	Provide professional development regarding new instructional approaches	August 2004 and ongoing
		2.2.5	Develop more industry partnerships	2004 and ongoing
		2.2.6	Develop more partnerships, articulation and transfer agreements with other educational institutions	Ongoing
		2.2.7	Develop stronger relationships with K-12 system	2004 and ongoing

		2.2.8	Develop stronger relationships with other government agencies	Ongoing
		2.2.9	Continue to export educational programs and services and to recruit international students	Ongoing
		2.2.10	Develop and implement a business plan for international services and recruitment	Annual
		2.2.11	Identify alternate funding sources	Ongoing
		2.2.12	Broaden client base, particularly for smaller campuses	2004 and ongoing
2.3	Maintain/increase points of access to College	2.3.1	Develop resource allocation plan for small campuses	2004 and annual
		2.3.2	Increase learning access points	2004 and ongoing
		2.3.3	Enhance website to provide better access and information to prospective learners	2004 implementation
		2.3.4	Introduce different delivery models	Ongoing
		2.3.5	Encourage incremental use of campus buildings by other agencies	Ongoing

2.4	Make education more affordable	2.4.1	Increase the number and value of bursaries and scholarships	2004 and ongoing
		2.4.2	Expand Distance Learning	Ongoing
		2.4.3	Review the selection, acquisition and distribution of books and other education resources	2004 and ongoing
		2.4.4	Review cost of ancillary services such as accommodations, cafeterias, etc.	2004

Strategic Direction 3

Innovation and Development

Build on capacity to support social and economic development though innovation, organizational development and partnership with community-based agencies, business, industry and government.

Objectives	Action	Timeframe
3.1 Build partnerships	3.1.1 Identify new partnerships and build on existing partnerships (community groups, agencies, industry, aboriginal government, educational institutions, etc.)	Ongoing
	3.1.2 Partner with communities, corporations, other institutions and agencies to access resources including equipment, etc.	Ongoing
	3.1.3 Emphasize with government the strategic role the College plays in economic and social development in the province	Fall 2003 and ongoing
3.2 Establish Office of Applied Research	3.2.1 Implement the applied research agenda	February 2004 and ongoing

3.3	Develop a Human Resources Strategic Plan	3.3.1	Further develop the Succession Plan	March 2004
		3.3.2	Implement the Succession Plan (e.g., College Administrators Internship Program – implemented 2001 and ongoing)	September 2003 and ongoing
		3.3.3	Develop and implement an Employee Wellness Plan	April 2004 and ongoing
		3.3.4	Develop and implement a Professional Development Plan	September 2003 and ongoing
		3.3.5	Develop a Workplace Health and Safety Plan	December 2003 and ongoing
		3.3.6	Develop and implement performance assessment based on pre-established goals and clearly articulated expectations	September 2003 and ongoing
3.4	Refine/change the organizational structure to better support the achievement of the College's Strategic Directions	3.4.1	Conduct a series of management and Executive retreats to discuss organizational structure	January 2004
		3.4.2	Implement recommended changes to organizational structure	March - September 2004

3.5	Procure and implement a MIS/ERP service solution	3.5.1	Implement "Project Ice"	2004 - 2006
3.6	Develop and implement a communication plan	3.6.1	Enhance internal communications – newsletters, President's reports, on-line access to information, formal annual reports distributed	2004 and ongoing
3.7	Expand / diversify revenue base	3.7.1	Strengthen the Division of College Development	August 2003 and ongoing
		3.7.2	Finalize and implement business plan for International	Annual
		3.7.3	Undertake new business development and win new business	2004 and ongoing
		3.7.4	Develop and conduct fund-raising campaigns	2004 and annual

Strategic Direction 4

Quality and Accountability

Enhance responsiveness, efficiency, effectiveness and quality of the College.

Objectives	Action	Timeframe
4.1 Enable schools to be more responsive and proactive to industry needs	4.1.1 Assess the effectiveness of the Programs Division	2002 - 2003
	4.1.2 Identify and maximize resources for core programming to schools (e.g., program research, development, program renewal)	2003 - 2004
	4.1.3 Provide resources to schools to respond to market driven opportunities	2003 - 2004
	4.1.4 Assess the role and authority of School Chairs within the College structure	October 2003
	4.1.5 Clarify the role and authority of School Chairs and the structure of schools	2003 - 2004
	4.1.6 Meet regularly (Chairs) to discuss common issues	Ongoing

		4.1.7	Improve program review and approval process ▪ Implement accelerated program review process for programs ▪ Major/minor revisions	Ongoing
		4.1.8	Conduct data analysis on programs relative to current level of responsiveness to the labour market	2004
		4.1.9	Review and implement CCI model	September 2003 – January 2004
		4.1.10	Communicate the role and responsibilities of Academic Council	June 2004
		4.1.11	Explore alternate model for program development with respect to resources	2003 - 2004
4.2	Develop accountability framework	4.2.1	Complete the accountability work plan	September 2003
		4.2.2	Develop the key performance indicators (KPI)	March 2004
		4.2.3	Develop benchmarks for the KPI	2004

		4.2.4	Develop targets for the KPI	2005
		4.2.5	Cascade the accountability framework through the College	2005 - 2006
		4.2.6	Integrate accountability, strategic planning and risk management processes	2006
4.3	Institute formative evaluation process for all programs including student and instructor input	4.3.1	Solicit student feedback on all courses, programs and campuses	2004 and annual
		4.3.2	Improve College's capability to receive and act on evaluation data (feedback) on all programs and services	Ongoing
4.4	Establish and communicate budget processes and principles	4.4.1	Develop the budget work plan	Annual
		4.4.2	Strengthen the link between the budget and program plan	Annual
4.5	Strengthen our financial management framework	4.5.1	Work with Audit and Governance Committees to change fiscal year to align with the academic year	2005-2006
		4.5.2	Remedy management letter issues on an annual basis	Ongoing

	4.5.3 Monitor and report on major activities in key functional areas	Ongoing
	4.5.4 Ensure that ERP implementation reflects best practices and integration of all subsidiary information from other functional areas	2004-2005
	4.5.5 As opportunities arise and circumstances dictate, consolidate various decentralized processing locations into one	Ongoing
	4.5.6 Work with Board/Audit Committee to improve methodologies employed to generate forecasts and financial reports	2004-2005
	4.5.7 To ensure improved profitability, resale activities including bookstores and cafeterias, will be operated on a "best practices" basis	2004-2005
	4.5.8 Increase informal dialogue with Audit Committee on financial issues through pre-meeting discussions	Ongoing

		4.5.9 Provide feedback to Audit Committee on internal audits, as per auditor's recommended time frames	Ongoing
		4.5.10 The internal audit department will be appropriately staffed	Ongoing
		4.5.11 The internal audit department will review and report on its future operations prior to March 31, 2005	2005
4.6	Improve the quality, accuracy and timeliness of financial and management statements and reports.	4.6.1 Ensure that financial reports meet or exceed recognized financial accounting and management accounting principles	2004-2005
		4.6.2 Proactively identify and communicate potential financial risks or issues to the executive and board, as appropriate	2004-2005
		4.6.3 Align the financial statements and reports so that they reflect year end financial results	2004-2005

Appendix A – Detailed Strategic Planning Methodology

College of the North Atlantic conducted of an environmental scan (October 2002 – March 2003). The stakeholder consultation process included college employees, students and key external stakeholders. Several specific methodologies were utilized to solicit input, including:

- An online survey, administered via the College's dedicated strategic planning website, collected input from 669 students, employees, and other stakeholders;
- Facilitated consultation sessions with 53 groups, including approximately 600 people from various communities in the province. Community consultations included government agencies such as Human Resources Development Canada, Human Resources and Employment, community economic development agencies such as Chambers of Commerce, Zonal Boards, municipalities, employers of the College's graduates, and contract training clients; and
- Sessions were also held at each of the College's 17 campuses and the head office.

Both the online survey and the facilitated consultation sessions asked stakeholders to respond/validate a prepared list of strategic issues and to offer suggestions or options to address the issues.

A summary of the results of the stakeholder consultations are attached. The stakeholder results to do not represent a consensus view. The stakeholder input has been included where appropriate in the Plan.

Senior managers have engaged in strategic planning sessions, validating and defining the objectives and activities to implement the strategic directions established by the Board of Governors.

College receives feedback from communities, industry, students and government on a regular basis through mechanisms such as:

- Industry Planning Committees, which provide guidance and input to programs, involves HRDC, and other government stakeholders and students;
- Academic Council, which approves academic policy and programs involves faculty, students and management;
- Eighteen student council presidents; and
- Government through the Department of Youth Services and Post-Secondary Education.

Appendix B – Strategic Planning Consultations Executive Summary

BACKGROUND

The strategic planning stakeholder consultation process was grounded in and initiated as a result of the strategic planning work completed by the college's Board of Governors in September and October 2001 and by the college's senior managers in February 2002. In spring 2002, the decision was taken to seek input from all college employees, students, and key external stakeholders.

The consultation process included the development of an environment scan; the preparation for and conduct of consultations with internal and external stakeholders; the identification of strategic issues specific to the college; a gap analysis between the actual and desired strategies; the identification of actions required to close the gap; the validation of identified issues and actions; and finally the preparation and dissemination of this and other related reports.

As part of its communication plan, the CNA established a dedicated strategic planning website that contained background information on the college's strategic planning and consultation processes. An on-line survey was created and detailed consultation and survey reports and other data garnered throughout the process were added as they became available.

Facilitators examined and considered several consultation models/approaches for possible application to the college environment. They ultimately proposed a process that was slightly different than a more traditional or open-ended strategic planning process. This process focused participants on the strategic issues confronting the college and asked them to consider/recommend options available to address these issues.

Consultations were held from October 2002 to April 2003 with stakeholders at all 17 campuses and at CNA Headquarters. In total, there were 53 separate consultation sessions with approximately 600 people in attendance from various communities across the province. Students, employees, and other stakeholders also completed over 600 on-line surveys.

This document summarizes approximately six months of consultations carried out by two facilitators (Jim Marsden and Susan Hollett). Feedback was very positive with a high level of consensus that the sessions were effective (78% thought they were very good or excellent), and with 85% recommending the sessions to others.

STRATEGIC ISSUES

All issues identified in this document are derived from one or more of the 53 consultations that were held as a part of the strategic planning process and/or from survey responses. Campus-specific issues are excluded from the summary. Many issues identified by respondents apply to and intersect with other issues.

While issues are all community-based, there was no process of reaching formal consensus around them and while the issues may read like a "shopping list," it is important to recognize that they represent the views of a diversified group of people who are quite familiar with the college. Also, there are many opinions about the college expressed in this report. While these views are presented as fact, it is important to note that these opinions represent the views of those

consulted and may or not be factual.

For the purpose of this report, issues are organized and presented by the following groupings: Community Stakeholders, Students, and Employees.

Community Stakeholders

Community stakeholders were selected and invited by campus administrators to attend and participate in the consultation sessions. Typically they included representatives of funding agencies (HRE, HRDC), community economic development agencies (Chambers, Zonal Boards, Municipalities), employers of graduates, and contract training clients. Stakeholder attendance averaged around 15 and ranged from 9 to 35. There were 16 separate stakeholder consultations with the session for Prince Phillip Drive and Ridge Road combined. Community stakeholders highlighted and elaborated upon the following strategic issues:

I.   Changing Demographics

There was concern expressed about the future source of college students. Flexibility to meet the needs of atypical students (especially those who are not full-time, "straight out of high school", 19-year-old students) was identified as a growing concern. On a related note, it was felt there was a need to learn more about the needs and learning requirements of this population in order to meet them. This was also a critical issue with college employees.

II.   Projected Skill Shortages

It was felt that the college needs to aggressively market training for trades and related skills that are, or soon will be, in short supply in Newfoundland and Labrador. There is enough information around skills shortages to act on them. The college needs to position itself to seek funding that will allow it to partner with employers and unions to train skilled trades people, technologists, and technicians. There was much emphasis on increasing the level of cross-training for trades people (in particular cross-training between trades and technology). This was also an issue identified by college employees.

III.   Marketing

It was suggested that the college needs to improve its marketing, particularly at the local community level. Stakeholders didn't have a clear understanding of what the college did or offered. There was a strong willingness expressed amongst stakeholders to assist the college in marketing efforts, if they could access the relevant information. Marketing to increase the student base and the level of contract training activity were two specific areas identified.

Employees

Campus administrators and other managers attended and participated in consultation sessions. All employees - faculty, staff and management (other than management who were in the senior management group) - were included. Some campuses enabled full participation by re-scheduling classes for the sessions, and others did not. Sessions were occasionally held on different days and at different times of the day in order to provide ample opportunity for employee participation.

Employees highlighted and elaborated upon the following strategic issues:

I.   Professional Development for Staff

Resoundingly, professional development was the single biggest issue for employees. The PD challenges identified include the (in)ability to identify qualified instructors to backfill staff pursuing PD opportunities; the sufficiency of notice and communication of PD opportunities; the lack of financial incentives to pursue many PD opportunities (in particular industry experience); for many specialized faculty, the lack of PD opportunities in Newfoundland and Labrador; and the lack of PD opportunities for temporary staff.

II.   Recruitment and Retention of Qualified Staff

This was one of only two issues deemed critical by all three groups with whom the college consulted (Students, Stakeholders and Employees). The ability of the college to recruit and retain qualified staff (faculty in particular) was questioned because of relatively low salaries compared to industry. The number of temporary staff and the inability to transfer to permanent status after a relatively long period of employment was also seen as a source of employee frustration. There was considerable concern that the challenge of recruiting qualified staff will continue to grow.

III.   Marketing

The college, it is felt, is one of the best kept secrets in the province. Employees felt most people have absolutely no idea of what programs are being offered. The need for a comprehensive marketing plan that identifies key products, prospective clientele, and the tools for reaching out to potential clients/students was identified.

IV.   Changing Demographics and Increased Student Base

Like other stakeholders, college employees believe the college needs to better understand the needs of older, part-time, and other non-traditional students and offer them more flexible program options. The need to attract a higher percentage of the shrinking base of high school students was also identified. Similarly, the need to increase accessibility to the large number of people in the province who would like to take programs from the college, but who don't meet the minimum college entrance requirements was identified.

V.   Projected Skills Shortage

Regarding projected skills shortages, employees felt they needed to better understand the issue, as well as the ability of the college to reconfigure itself and its programs to train for these shortages, and the belief that the required shortages may not be so much in the area of individual skills, but rather in the acquisition of multiple and portable skills.

VI.   Changes to Program Content

There is a need for more communication between program developers, instructors, and students. The college does not put enough resources into program development and review and some courses have been condensed, further adding to the problem. In this case, the issue of program content is too complex, with too many concepts for stakeholders or students to cover in time allotted for those consultations.

VII.   Physical Infrastructure

Many campuses have difficulty accommodating programs that currently exist. The biggest fear around this issue is that the lack of adequate space will result in missed opportunities for the CNA. Funding is needed for the upgrade and expansion of facilities to ensure adequate accommodations for the effective delivery of programs. Space may be better utilized at some campuses to ease the pressure that currently exists.

VIII.   Funding

Funding issues focused primarily on internal matters related to budgetary restraints. A number of campuses raised localized issues dealing with HRDC training priorities. The college must get more adequate funding for capital works, salaries, and equipment replacement and therefore needs to be better at identifying external funding sources. It is necessary to identify other sources of funding besides government and diversify in order to be competitive in the marketplace.

Students

Members of student councils represented students at various campus meetings. There was little consensus on their issues. Overall, issues raised were more diverse and immediate than with other stakeholders. Students highlighted and elaborated upon the following strategic issues:

I.   Changes to Program Content

Students identified a need for changes to program content to bring courses more in line with the present demands of society. Industry expectations, they argue, are changing on a consistent basis but the college has failed to adequately respond to these changes.

II.   Need for Increased Student Base

This was a localized issue for students at a number of the smaller campuses. They see a need to increase student enrollment. It was felt there is a need to focus on a comprehensive marketing plan to attract students to the different campuses and programs.

III.   Marketing

CNA needs to change the public image that it is a second-class institution. They felt there is still a widespread perception that the college is simply a trade school. CNA, they argue, is not marketing the diverse programs offered as aggressively as it should.

IV.   Individualized Learning

The learning process does not permit enough instructor-student time and this results in stress and frustration. In many cases, students are not ready for this type of learning and it intimidates them to a point where they sometimes leave.

V.   Recruitment and Retention of Qualified Staff

Students at larger campuses identified this issue. They felt instructor retention was a serious problem.

VI.   Distributed Learning

Many students, it was argued, have limited background and familiarity with computers and they are intimidated by and have difficulty understanding and navigating through the DLS process. Students identified a need for more DLS orientation and promotion.

Suggestions for Improvement

Marketing

Marketing constituted a significant area of interest/concern to stakeholders in all areas. Suggestions for improvement were numerous but can be synthesized into the following:

- Implement a comprehensive and strategic marketing plan
- Dedicate more resources to marketing
- Change the public image that the college is a second-class institution.
- Promote the quality, accessibility and affordability of the college's programs
- Work closely with high school guidance counsellors
- Use student testimonials and student ambassadors
- Better utilize the college's website as a conduit of information
- Identify individuals to do marketing on a district/campus basis
- Target high school students, parents, and educators
- Sell the employability of college graduates
- Diversify marketing to attract a wider student base
- Promote the Centres of Excellence more
- Develop an alumni relations program

Demographics

If rural campuses are to survive, there is a need to attract students from outside the immediate or local catchment areas. Campus catchment areas need to be expanded to include the entire province and beyond. Demographic data clearly indicates a shrinking population base in rural communities, but participants identified quality programs (as supported by the Centre of Excellence model) as a means of attracting students from outside the region. There is also an urgent need for a focused marketing strategy that effectively determines when, where, and how we proceed.

As much as participants would like to see rural and remote regions of the province survive, they maintain that this cannot be done at all costs. They suggested that a number of the more remote campuses are not viable and the college needs to consider cuts.

Increasing the Student Base

The college could create a five- or six-year training process for potential students to ensure that those who don't currently qualify are able to get the basic qualifications and progress from there (as is done in Qatar).

An increased student base can be achieved by focusing more on programs at each campus and identifying the needs of the region/province/country. Some consideration needs to be given to the possibility of program rotation from campus to campus as a means of attracting potential students who may not have the option/desire to relocate to distant campuses.

There has to be a course-based registration system implemented. The college cannot afford to tell people that they have to take an extra year to do one course because the college doesn't offer it.

The waiting list situation also needs to be addressed and kept current

Program Content

Program content constituted a significant area of interest and concern. Suggestions for improvement were numerous but can be synthesized into the following:

- Increase admission standards in some programs
- Expand the ABE program to include Level I offerings and ESL courses
- Carry out a program review to eliminate irrelevant courses in already overly intensive programs and reduce the number of academic courses in technical programs
- Provide better oversight for individualized learning (open-learning) programs
- Develop closer relationships with professional bodies and with MUN
- Provide more co-operative education opportunities

Curriculum Suited to Older Students

Stakeholders feel that CNA must be better able to respond to the needs of a changing clientele; it needs to start programs earlier and incorporate special programs to enable people who have been away from school for a long time to upgrade their skills. It was argued that the college should offer upgrade programs and extra support at night through night classes. The college also needs to enhance its part-time studies offerings/options.

The college could also place more emphasis on a stepping-stone approach to education and careers. This approach is growing more popular and provides opportunities for graduates to return for complimentary training.

There was some concern expressed about course load inflexibility. Rather than jamming eight courses into a two-year program, stakeholders suggested the college could use the summer or spread them out over a three-year program. This would allow more flexibility around personal and family commitments.

It was felt that the older population is less comfortable with computers and distributed learning technologies, and that therefore, college should consider the provision of a facilitated

environment. It may also want to offer purchase/rental of computers (for students) with tuition or as part of a program, in order to encourage home use.

Institutional Linkages & Transferability of Credits

It was felt that CNA must take a lead role in actively promoting the issue of transferability of courses to other institutions as a "win-win" situation. It is also imperative that students have the opportunity to do courses anywhere in the system.

The college appears to have different academic standards for different regions of the province. College administration must examine course transferability from one campus to another and from one program to another as a means of preventing or eliminating double standards.

The college, it was argued, needs to better communicate program details (accreditations, transferability, etc.) to its students. Every course and program should include a list of where credits are accepted.

Projected Skills Shortage

Skills shortages have already begun in many industries throughout the country, and the college needs to take a close look at its training capacity as it relates to current and future industry demands. It also needs to better inform the general public about the ensuing shortages as a means of helping them make future choices as it relates to training and re-training. Many high school students, it was argued, are unaware of projected skills shortages.

Students need much more attention in the area of career planning and job searching. Having the college help students in identifying potential employment opportunities would be both an asset to the student and positive reflection on the organization.

All statistics associated with skills shortage projections need to be included in a comprehensive marketing plan. Targeted populations such as students, teachers, and parents need to be made aware of the ensuing skills shortages as a way of making sound career decisions. In concert with a marketing plan, the college must be prepared to offer training in areas where skills shortages are projected.

Communication is the key to identifying what industry needs and what the CNA can offer. Unfortunately, the college appears not to have a good handle on what future industry requirements will be, and in turn, industry has little idea what the college has to offer. Steps need to be taken to open lines of communication as a means of positively addressing current and future skills shortages.

Global Workforce Standards

The need for global workforce standards is absolutely critical for all college programs. There must be an awareness of issues that may restrict mobility of graduates. Program accreditation is essential as a means of ensuring global workforce standards and should be protected at all cost. The college must ensure that accreditation of programs is not jeopardized in any way.

Recruitment & Retention of Qualified Staff

Issues around recruitment and retention were broad-based. Generally, there was a call for more instructors, instructor demonstrators, and lab assistants. Proactive succession planning, including mentoring, job shadowing, and job overlapping were suggested as possible solutions. A better orientation for new employees was also identified.

Changes to the faculty classification system are required, it was argued, as the current system results in less competitive salaries and, therefore, less incentive to stay with the college. Further, the reliance on part-time, sessional, and other temporary instructors is seen as detrimental for a variety of reasons. An Employee Assistance Program for staff, especially around stress, was

Students expressed a desire to evaluate instructors more often. They felt it was good for both instructors and students.

Professional Development

Professional development constituted a significant area of interest/concern to employees in all areas. Suggestions for improvement were numerous but can be synthesized into the following:

- PD needs to be carried out in a more comprehensive and strategic fashion
- Better and more coordinated communication regarding PD opportunities is required
- Greater institutional incentives/rewards for completing PD training are required
- More resources need to be dedicated to PD training
- More efficient PD approval processes need to be implemented
- Some PD (especially regarding instructional techniques and methodologies) needs to be incorporated into the orientation process

Attrition

Some stakeholders feel that the first-come-first-served admissions model contributes to higher attrition. The suggestion was made that a competitive or hybrid admissions process would address attrition problems. A more substantive screening process (combined with access to remedial training), it was argued, could also contribute to lower attrition.

Stakeholders believe that the college needs to know more about students who leave prior to the completion of their programs. A systemic exit surveys program was identified as one means of addressing that knowledge gap.

Contract Training

The college needs to offer more contract training programs that are directly relevant to local business and industry needs. CNA, it is argued, has to become more creative in identifying the needs of businesses and industry. It must then respond to these needs by offering courses or programs where demand warrants.

Centres of Excellence

The Board of Governors and Executive of the college must fully embrace the Centres of Excellence model throughout the province and support these centres by eliminating program

duplication. Concentrating a critical mass of equipment and human resources at specific campuses will help build "state-of-the-art" training institutions throughout the system.

Every campus in the province should be a Centre of Excellence for something and every effort should be made to promote and expand the concept at each campus.

Physical Infrastructure

All suggestions were based on the college accessing more funding to improve and replace the existing physical infrastructure.

Capital Equipment

In some cases, students are required to use outdated equipment and textbooks and are ill prepared for the workforce upon graduation.

Additional funding must be targeted to procure and maintain capital equipment if programs are to be considered current and in line with industry standards. Industry partnerships are an underutilized means of securing capital equipment.

Having a dedicated support person available for the maintenance of equipment in each district was recommended.

Housing

Students would like to see housing that is easier to access. The college needs to be more proactive in identifying accommodations for students (with some quality control).

Distributed Learning

A number of issues need to be addressed as a means of making the college's Distributed Learning Service more appealing to users. They include having course registration a week early for DLS courses, pre-ordering textbooks through campuses, the identification of specific skills necessary to avail of DLS, and the provision of an orientation for students and staff.

Funding

The college has to consider alternate ways of raising money. It cannot continue to rely solely on traditional government sources. External funding options include:

- Partnerships with private industry
- Partnership with Memorial University of Newfoundland
- Partnerships with aboriginal groups
- More research and development activity

Community Economic Development

The college needs to take a more active role in regional economic development activities. Affiliation with resource sectors as a means of identifying opportunities for specific industries is important and necessary. There are opportunities for the college to get involved in forestry, for

example, with a focus on processing and manufacturing. There are also numerous Research & Development opportunities in resource-based industries that need to be further explored by the college.

The college must be an active and visible participant in rural economic development initiatives. Taking a lead role in supporting community leaders and organizations, and being directly involved in identifying sectors of the economy with a capacity for growth, should be one of the primary mandates of the public college system.

Communication, Leadership & Organizational Structure

There is some perception that the Board of Governors is too closely linked with government and that their decisions are influenced by politics to the detriment of the institution. There was also a call for proportionate regional representation on the board. It might also be beneficial to have a regional advisory committees that could communicate and work with regionally appointed board members on relevant regional issues. The college was called upon to consider enhancing public participation through the formation of campus councils.

Some argue that college administration and leadership needs to be decentralized. Currently, it is argued, there is too much authority at Headquarters. Regional issues need to have more priority on the executive agenda.

COLLEGE-WIDE SURVEY RESULTS

In order to gather quantitative information for and from the college community, surveys were designed and delivered to Students, Stakeholders and Employees. These surveys were intended to probe people's opinions about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to the college, as well as to identify the critical issues facing it.

The surveys were delivered two ways – through the Strategic Planning website (for college employees and students), and at the designated consultations for stakeholders and some employees and students who had not accessed it through the website. There were 669 surveys completed. The following is a brief overview of the results.

Strengths

Half (50%) of all respondents felt the college's greatest strength was tuition costs. The next two top strengths were the quality of programming (43%) and the ability to deliver programming province-wide (30%).

Weaknesses

The top three internal weaknesses identified by survey respondents were internal communications (33%), program waiting lists (23%), and marketing initiatives (23%). Significantly, 25% of survey participants chose not to respond to this question - they did not identify any weaknesses (versus 9% who did not identify any strengths).

External Opportunities

When respondents were asked to identify what they felt were the greatest opportunities for the college, the most frequent responses were local clients within the province (48%), the national skills shortage (47%), and private sector/contract training (40%).

External Threats

Reduction in government funding was considered a threat to the college by 75% of respondents. Out-migration (50%) and demographic trends generally (41%) were the next two most frequently selected responses.

Perception of the College

The majority (86%) of survey respondents have a very positive perception or image of College of the North Atlantic, based upon their knowledge of the college and its programs. Only 11.4% had a fair or poor perception.

Critical Issues

The cluster of critical issues which survey respondents considered most important to the college were changing demographics (35%), need for increased student base (34%), and the recruitment and retention of qualified staff (31%).

Detailed Reports

There are 24 detailed reports available:

1 College-Wide Survey Report
1 College-Wide Evaluation Report
17 Campus Reports
1 Headquarters Staff Report
3 Appendices:
Research Instruments
Terms of Reference
Environment Scan

Reference Documents

- CNA Environmental Scan for Strategic Planning, January 21, 2003, Susan Hollett and Jim Marsden
- CNA Summary Report Board of Governors Strategic Planning Retreat, January 2003
- Environment Scan for Strategic Planning – College of the North Atlantic
- Strategic Planning Consultations Executive Summary
- College of the North Atlantic, Strategic Planning Retreat, September 20-21 and October 19, 2001
- College of the North Atlantic, Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada
- Marketing Plan 2003-2004, College of the North Atlantic
- Career Search 2002, Department of Youth Services and Post-Secondary Education, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Labour Market Assessment of the Offshore Oil and Gas Industry Supply and Service Sector in Newfoundland and Labrador, Petroleum Industry Human Resources Committee and Newfoundland Ocean Industries Association

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