



**RED RIVER COLLEGE**

OF APPLIED ARTS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

# **Strategic Plan**

**2004-2009**

**January 2004**

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## President's Message

*Red River College's Strategic Plan 2004-2009 is our guide, our source and our blueprint for the future.*

*It is a bright future full of promise for learners and the Province of Manitoba but not without its challenges for the College. A future that calls for more College programming and research; improved facilities and services; a safe, respectful and healthy College environment; financial strength; and service to Manitobans.*

*This plan shows that Red River College is changing; it is on the move to a new level in step with the demands of today's economy and today's learners. The College will strive to enrich the lives of learners for meaningful careers and citizen participation in the changing world.*

*The vision and mission expressed in this plan provide the foundation for all of our strategies and activities. The values express our principles, beliefs and standards for decision-making and action. The goals and objectives report the future focus of the College. The areas of strategic focus identify the priorities.*

*In a companion document, Red River College Operational Plan 2004-2009, strategies and actions provide specific directions for members of the College community. Performance measures allow us to test how well we are doing in working towards our vision.*

*Many of the initiatives and directions are underway. Some relate to immediate matters and others look to the years ahead.*

*Red River College is Manitoba's College. Every year more and more graduates enter Manitoba's workforce to help build a prosperous and sustainable province. It is a premier College, focused on learning, innovation and excellence. The College is proud of its tradition in Manitoba and is committed to being a national leader in high quality applied education and research.*

*This is an ambitious but achievable plan for College and the people we serve.*

*Working together as a College and with our Community we will continue to progress in this plan which will guide us into a bright future.*



Jacqie Thachuk  
President

## Context

Red River College has a rolling five-year Strategic Plan.

The Plan is reviewed annually to ensure continuing relevancy. It is the fundamental basis for decision-making and sets the framework for all efforts at all levels of the institution.

The College recognizes the accelerating nature of change and the need to adapt and respond quickly. The College has adopted a consultative and data based strategic planning process to guide it into the future. Our process is inclusive, flexible and adaptive.

Each year we:

- Identify and respond to the key trends that will have the greatest impact on us over the next five years;
- Revisit the vision, mission, goals and objectives;
- Articulate College-wide strategies and actions to achieve the vision, mission, and commitment; and
- Facilitate divisional and departmental operational plans, actions, evaluation and accountability, consistent with this plan.

Through this process we strive to encourage strategic thinking at all levels in the College and link the plan to the real world. While the document is a valuable tool for all of us, the planning process is even more valuable.

## 2003 Process

The review process for 2003 consisted of two major activities, an environmental scan and internal consultations.

A PowerPoint version of the Scan is available at <http://www.rrc.mb.ca/researchplan/>. The Scan identified and analyzed internal and external trends affecting the College.

The internal review included:

- Enrolments trends and projections,
- Revenue and expenditure trends,
- Financial challenges,
- Student characteristics,
- Graduate outcomes,
- RRC image in the community,
- Facilities & equipment, including health & safety,
- Student Support,
- Climate and culture, and
- Technology and systems.

The external scan included:

- Demography,
- The economy,
- Labour market trends,
- Public policy,
- Social/community trends,
- Technology, and
- Education and training trends.

The Scan was used as the basis for a series of internal strategic planning sessions to verify the trends and to discuss the future. These included open consultation sessions for all members of the College community.

## Major Trends

Some of the major forces that are and will continue to affect the College are:

- Public policy focus by the Province of Manitoba on increasing college participation:
  - Princess Street Campus.
  - College Expansion Initiative.
  - Building innovation capacity, focusing on Bio-sciences and bio-technology, Advanced Manufacturing, Aerospace, Cultural and New Media, Hydro and Environmental sustainability, and Information & Communication Technology.
  - Expanding apprenticeships.
- Government of Canada public policy focus on innovation strategies through developing a world-class workforce and supporting research, commercialization and patenting.
- A growing, young Aboriginal population in the province.
- Anticipated need for and growth in immigration.
- Anticipated shortages in the skilled work force.
- Increasing need for post-secondary education and training for the knowledge economy.
- Growing aspirations for post-secondary education in all segments of the Canadian and Manitoba population.
- Increasing focus on learning and learner-centred outcomes.
- Increasing role for colleges in applied research.
- Continuing cost pressures and revenue and funding challenges.
- Increasing demand for more advanced technical learning credentials such as applied degrees.
- Increasing emphasis on accessible education.
- Increasing need for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) literacy.
- Increasing International presence of RRC and increasing international students at RRC.
- Accelerating demand for e-commerce college transactions from learners.
- Continuing movement towards program and service availability on a 24/7 basis.
- Increasing requirements for professional growth opportunities for faculty and staff.
- More accountability requirements from post-secondary education institutions for all constituencies.
- Increasing recognition of the value of partnerships among post-secondary education institutions and business, government, community agencies and labour.
- Increasing emphasis on seamless education through articulations to enhance the opportunities for learners.
- Increasing demand for and availability of e-learning opportunities for students.
- Greater student and staff mobility.
- Increasing competition from a broad range of education providers.
- Strength in the Manitoba stable and diversified economy.

## Opportunities and Challenges Analysis

### Opportunities

- **Public policy focus on post-secondary education** and on applied learning in colleges in Manitoba. RRC can respond and leverage interest, including building on C.E.I. to support long term financial health; Princess Street Campus could be used as a solid foundation for fundraising and partnership building.
- **Manitoba at the Forefront of Innovation.** There seems to be an increasing recognition of the role of applied education and research in innovation. This includes initiatives in applied research, commercialization of products; as well as a focus on building a highly skilled, educated workforce to ensure Manitoba is competitive in the new, knowledge economy.
- **Increase in immigration** to support labour force growth. Immigration will likely increase in the future. The College has expertise in PLAR, ESL and applied education for adults as well as success in training for employment linked to economic needs. Immigrants have a variety of unique needs to support their educational goals such as student isolation, culture shock, lack of information, financial challenges, need for credential recognition, need for help in the transition to college life, language barriers and challenges, the need of cultural sensitivity, course load issues, the need for help in the transition from school to the workplace, classroom issues, geographic challenges, and the need for family supports.
- **Growth and youth of the Metis, First Nations and Inuit communities** and the urban Aboriginal communities. The Aboriginal population is growing more quickly than the non-Aboriginal population and it is younger. RRC has a history of working with the Aboriginal community and providing supports and programs. There is a need for Aboriginal programming and extended and integrated programming.
- **Human capital in the college.** RRC has a very strong mix of knowledgeable, dedicated faculty, who have practical experience and links to the external community, as well as, committed and skilled support staff focused on meeting the needs of students. There will likely be increasing faculty and staff retirements in the future.
- **Record of success.** RRC has a history of positive assessments from students and graduates about their experience at the college and their outcomes in staying in Manitoba, finding employment and having good earnings. This reflects the College's focus on excellence, job-readiness and quality programming. There is a need to publicize this positive image of the College, particularly in comparison to other colleges.
- **Positive public image and perception of the College.** The public knows about, has a favourable impression of, and would recommend the College. The image has improved over the last five years. Communicating the successes of the College is an element of this including: emphasizing high technology and linkages of college credentials, success in anticipating labour market needs, and a focus on quality programs. There is a need to build and reinforce the image of the quality of RRC faculty, and to build towards national and international leadership.
- **Skilled trades shortage.** The College has a history of delivering successful apprenticeship training; the college responds quickly and can build on the capacity to change and deliver quickly.
- **Knowledge economy.** Increasingly new jobs will require post-secondary education. Success factors in the knowledge economy include: human capital, innovation culture, ICT infrastructure, export focus. This is happening in various geographic areas of the province, not just in Winnipeg.
- **Role in economic development.** Applied education and research are essential resources for Canada and Manitoba in continuing economic development.
- **Expected increases in post-secondary enrolments.** There are high aspirations for achieving post-secondary education in all segments of the population in Manitoba. Life-long learning is a requirement of active participation in the workforce. The number of learners is growing and the diversity of learners is increasing. Enrolments will continue to grow in the near future.
- **Sustainability initiatives.** National and provincial initiatives in sustainability and environmental protection, including the Kyoto Accord, provide an opportunity for the College.
- **Potential in key sectors.** The Province of Manitoba has identified key strategic sectors: ICT, Bio-sciences, Advanced

Manufacturing, Aerospace, Cultural and New Media, Hydro and alternative energy, as well as wellness, which align closely with the College key sectors for new and expanded programming areas.

- **Curriculum renewal.** Continuous revision as well as periodic testing against reality provides the potential for renewal.
- **Learner centred post-education** is a part of the College's plan and part of the commitment of the College. This includes learner relationship building, building student connections, increased communication, an emphasis on transferable skills (College-wide learning outcomes), and self-directed learning, anywhere, anyplace, anytime.
- **Partnerships.** RRC has experience and connections with business, trade unions, community organizations, other educational institutions and government to foster partnerships to advance learning opportunities. Strategic alliances to enhance synergies and increase educational offerings related to real economic needs will be required.
- **Increasing role of technology.** Technology will continue to play a key role in curriculum design and delivery, advanced administrative systems, building 24/7 capability, providing e-commerce transaction for learners and in knowledge management.
- **Growth in e-learning.** Life-long learning needs will drive enrolments in e-learning and the delivery of educational content in multiple modes through technological improvements and the spread of broadband access to the Internet.

## **Challenges**

- **Maintaining financial stability.** The College is facing significant cost pressures, including unavoidable costs such as Princess St. operating and facilities costs, salary and benefits, severance and vacation pay liabilities, and Accommodation Cost Recovery Program (ACRS); and others such as facility maintenance and repair, technology, program equipment replacement, and classroom furniture, Notre Dame backfill construction, student information system upgrade, and professional development. The College is reliant on the

Provincial Government for the majority of its funding. Other revenue sources are limited.

- **Managing growth effectively.** There are new programs funds but there is a concurrent pressure on existing resources as costs increase and funding does not keep pace. Strategies are needed to manage growth (facilities, succession planning, support staff, administration and ability to attract well-qualified academic staff), while financial resources are constrained.
- **Managing a multi-campus system.** A multi-campus system has challenges in maintaining organizational harmony, ensuring flexibility along with integration, clear communication channels, ensuring one college, providing risk management in facility expansion, increasing the need for alternative sources of funding. Moreover further renovations and expansion are required to allow for growth, particularly in certain areas such as apprenticeships. Facility and grounds improvements are needed at Notre Dame Campus. Ensuring health and safety in accordance with recent legislative changes will be imperative at all campuses. In responding to the applied learning needs of the non-Winnipeg service area, regional campuses will need attention.
- **Academic programming infrastructure.** There are challenges in providing lab space, program equipment, e-learning, and smart classrooms.
- **Student success** is the focus of the mandate of the College. This includes student preparation and entrance requirements, considering entry testing, and preparing students for citizenship. For a learning-centred view this means when thinking about every decision or action, considering how it benefits students and how we know it benefits students. Support needs include: One Stop Shop, students-at-risk initiatives, Web-enabled services a leading edge student information system, building student citizens, student success initiatives (advising, mentoring and tutoring; early intervention, financial aid and awards), support of needs for immigrants, International students and ESL students and support for students with accessibility needs.
- **Keeping up with technology.** How does the College ensure that students can combine their various modes of access to College programming, to retain currency for academic purposes and administrative needs and maintain program

currency in an era of rapid technological change while managing the cost of technological retooling? Areas of concern include: educational technology, student information systems, management and administrative systems, academic programming, distributed & distance delivery, infrastructure, technical support, curriculum and faculty support, support for ever-greening strategies, e-commerce and cross campuses connections and links.

- **Developing human resources** (faculty and staff). Recognizing and supporting staff in situations of overwork and burnout; acquiring, compensating and retaining faculty and staff; succession planning; providing rewarding staff development opportunities; ensuring diversity; providing facilities to allow synergies of staff, programs and equipment; and finding ways for faculty to maintain skills and keep current with new trends.
- **Need for new credentials.** Applied degree programming is expanding across Canada providing employers and learners in other provinces with the advanced applied learning required to compete in the knowledge based global economy. The need for such programs has arisen largely because of the increasingly intricate nature of work in many industries and businesses. Information and communication technology, environmental management, scientific research management, bio-technology, robotics, computer animation, allied health sciences, early childhood development, industrial design systems and film and video production are just a few examples of areas that lend themselves to a four year program with a strong base of vocational skills and in which applied degree programs have been developed in other provinces. In Manitoba, a number of employers, e.g., information technology and geomatics, have expressed a need for advanced applied degrees. The knowledge economy in Manitoba is where there are emerging jobs requiring the learning outcomes associated with applied degrees.
- **Maintaining a safe and healthy college** environment for all. A focus is needed on environmental health and safety matters for ensuring a safe workplace in view of the new legislation and the College's commitment to a healthy environment.
- **Living College values.** It is essential that College values be maintained and reinforced with staff and students. This includes cherishing learning, ensuring respect, fostering a

diverse community and striving for greater inclusiveness, maintaining integrity, promoting creativity, wellness and flexibility through a safe and sustainable learning environment and serving the community.

- **Engaging the Aboriginal population.** Developing relevant and appropriate programming; increasing Aboriginal focus and perspective and community development on campus; advocating for more funding for ACCESS programs.
- **Upgrading of academic skills for mature learners.** The current requirement for lifelong learning with an aging population means that there are needs for basic academic preparation to support success.
- **Encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation** balanced with risk management in programs / services / credentials through new delivery methods based on research and development.
- **Monitoring the College environment.** Accelerating change requires a closer monitoring of economic, social, public policy, learner & education trends. It is essential to ensure that research is current, accurate and accessible. Measure performance and report to the community. This will contribute to maintaining relevancy, currency and accreditation of programs.
- **Ensuring appropriate and resourced student support services** that provide supports for the whole learner and lead to retention and graduation improvements. The College exists to ensure student success and the right mix of student services is essential to achieve this. Currently there are several significant shifts in the nature, scope and mechanisms of delivery for meeting the needs of students across the post-secondary system. Essential services include initial enrolment activities, transition to college life, student awards and financial aid, a new Student Information system, academic advising and the learning assistance services, focus on diversity and inclusive issues, student employment services, and student – College relations; overall the imperative is to focus on student success.



## Evaluation and Measurement

Every year progress on the strategies and action statements in the Operational Plan is reviewed and documented.

This allows the College to measure success and alter planned actions where external or internal events dictate.

A companion document, **Progress in Achieving the Vision 2003**, provides an overview of achievements in 2003.



## A Statement of Values

Advancing our vision and mission can only be fully accomplished through a clear statement of values.

### **Learning.**

We cherish learning and have clear and high standards for learning for all members of the college community.

### **Respect.**

We believe in honouring the worth of others by demonstrating fairness, courtesy and compassion.

### **Inclusiveness.**

We believe in fostering a diverse community and striving for greater inclusiveness.

### **Integrity.**

We maintain at all times the highest level of honesty, communication, cooperation and credibility in relationships and fulfilling our commitments, including managing the resources entrusted to us.

### **Healthy environment.**

We believe in promoting creativity, wellness and flexibility through a safe and sustainable learning environment.

### **Contribution to Community.**

We serve the broader needs of the people of our community and strive to involve the community and contribute to the enhancement of the overall quality of life.

## Vision

*Red River College is a premier learning centred college, recognized in Manitoba and beyond as a leading centre of innovation and excellence.*

## Mission

*To build a prosperous and sustainable Manitoba through high quality applied education and research focused on advancing the economic, cultural and social progress of people.*

## Goals

### **Learning Quality:**

The College is committed to providing a high quality learning experience to facilitate student success.

### **Growth:**

Red River College will increase enrolments and participation rates in the college system by creating new, responsive programs, improving current programs and introducing innovative delivery methods to reduce barriers and facilitate access to education and training for Manitobans and meet the challenges of a changing economy.

### **Dynamic and Respectful Learning Environment:**

The College provides a safe, healthy workplace and a learning-centred environment that promotes peak performance and allows employees and students to participate and grow, respectful of each other and the diversity of the community and society.

### **Infrastructure Enhancement:**

The College will provide a vibrant learning environment through the development and enhancement of its infrastructure including the facilities, equipment, systems and technology supporting the teaching and learning process.

### **Financial Strength:**

The College will ensure the financial strength of the organization through government funding, fundraising and the development of business opportunities that advance the vision of the College.

### **Community:**

The College will support and enhance the progress of Manitoba and its diverse, multi-cultural and Aboriginal heritage through public and community service arising from its learning focus and broad array of applied arts, science and technology programs.

## Objectives

1. Deliver high quality programs and services that focus on the learner.
2. Increase student success.
3. Increase program offerings and ensure that programs and the mix of programming responds to the diverse and changing needs of Manitobans and the workplace.
4. Provide optimal accessibility to programs and services.
5. Recognize, strengthen and reward the capabilities and contributions of employees and support a respectful workplace.
6. Integrate information technology in the delivery, operation and management of all College programs and services.
7. Provide a safe and well-maintained environment for working and learning.
8. Continue the College's participation in global education.
9. Strengthen collaboration and partnerships.
10. Employ college resources effectively and efficiently to achieve financial strength and stability.
11. Enhance the image and commitment of the College among staff, students, alumni and the external community.
12. Enhance the learning-centred focus, innovative and technologically advancing aspects of the College.

## Areas of Strategic Focus

**Financial strength:** There will be a focus on establishing a financially sound economic base as the College faces significant cost pressures and revenue challenges. A strengthened financial position includes addressing on-going capital requirements of an aging infrastructure, academic programming needs, student success initiatives and support requirements. Only part of this is manageable through operational support efficiencies and cost effectiveness initiatives. Enhanced, balanced and sustainable revenue sources are needed; this includes a progressive tuition policy.

**Student Success:** RRC will continue its emphasis on student success by strengthening student support and ancillary services and academic supports and student preparation services in a multi-campus environment.

**People Strategy:** The people at RRC are fundamental for success. RRC will attract, retain, and reward College people, all of whom support innovation in learning. It will continue to develop capacity for staff to adapt to changing environments, including on-going staff development, leadership and management training and succession planning. This will help create a positive college culture of respect, tolerance, excellence and identity in the multi-campus world.

**Support Aboriginal Education:** The First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities and the urban Aboriginal communities in Manitoba are growing. RRC has a history of working with the Aboriginal community and providing supports and programs. The College will be positioned as a national leader in Aboriginal education and increase Aboriginal student enrolments and strengthen programming and services.

**Academic Excellence:** The College is committed to excellence in teaching and learning and dedicated to learner success in the knowledge and foundation economies. More and more jobs require higher levels of applied learning. RRC will review its academic expansion strategy. It will study its academic delivery mechanisms to improve access to regular programs, including reviewing class sizes, having course based registration, more on-line courses, having multiple modes of delivery, having more flexible scheduling, while maintaining standards of high quality. RRC will build on recent program expansion and enrollment increases to attract more post-secondary students and increase the ratio of learners in colleges.

**Innovation:** is the process through which new economic and social benefits are extracted from knowledge. The College is committed to helping Manitoba prosper through advanced education and training with appropriate college credentials, such as applied degrees. RRC

will be a leader in applied research in niche area and implement a Manitoba centred applied research agenda, including sustainable infrastructures, bio-sciences, advanced manufacturing, educational technologies, alternative energies and human care services.

**Technology:** is an essential success factor for RRC. Strategic investments in technologies that will progress the College forward are needed. These include overall systems renewal, workflow systems, e-learning, a new Student Information System, and web-enabled services to students, faculty and staff.

**Advancement and Partnerships:** RRC is an integral part of the community. The College will continue to build, foster and implement strategic partnerships with industry, government, labour and community groups. There will be an ongoing focus on college awareness building, marketing and fundraising and friend-raising to advance the vision and mission.

**Facility Renewal and Multi-campus Capital Planning:** The College is facing significant capital renewal, facility maintenance, and facility planning issues. It will focus on renovation and upgrading of facilities at Notre Dame to support backfill and the delivery of enhanced student services. Sustainability and environmental considerations will be included in this. A long term campuses plan will be developed.

**Government Relations:** RRC supports economic development. It will continue to work cooperatively with the Province of Manitoba to help achieve provincial educational, economic and social goals; and to advocate for College resource needs. It will also work cooperatively with and advocate to the Federal Government for such initiatives as ways and means to build sustainable applied research capacity at RRC and support for Canada's colleges as the primary vehicle for the growth and development of Canada's workforce.

**Immigrants and Immigration:** RRC will continue to develop an immigrant supportive culture. It will build on the Immigrant and Immigration Forum and advance funding and resource proposals to Federal and Provincial Governments for a variety of initiatives.

**Safety and a Healthy Environment:** There will also be a focus on environmental health and safety matters for developing a safety culture and ensuring a safe workplace in view of the new legislation and the College's commitment to a healthy environment.

**National Profile:** RRC will work to enhance its regional and national profile through leadership in selected applied learning and research areas and showcasing these at key opportunities.

**Accountability:** The College will continue to ensure accuracy, timeliness and relevancy in accountability to all constituencies.

## Key Principles of a Learning College

1. **The learning college creates substantive change in individual learners.**
2. **The learning college engages learners as full partners in the learning process, with learners assuming primary responsibility for their own choices.**
3. **The learning college creates and offers as many options for learning as possible.**
4. **The learning college assists learners to form and participate in collaborative learning activities.**
5. **The learning college defines the roles of learning facilitators by the needs of the learners.**
6. **The learning college and its learning facilitators succeed only when improved and expanded learning can be documented for its learners.**



**Terry O'Banion. (1997). *Creating More Learning-Centered Community Colleges*. Mission Viejo, CA: League for Innovation.**



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