Priorities for Advanced Education

Draft

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**Manitoba
Education,
Training
and Youth**

INTRODUCTION

In "Strategic Directions 2000–2003", the Department of Advanced Education and the Department of Education, Training and Youth have set out a common context, set of goals, and range of strategies for the education sector generally over the next three years. This paper outlines more concretely the priorities of the Department of Advanced Education over that time, keeping in mind the overall scope of the larger paper.

CONTEXT

The main contextual challenges facing advanced education in Manitoba include the following:

−   too many students do not attain sufficiently high levels of achievement to participate fully in the community. As education becomes more important to individuals and societies, we cannot allow large numbers of people to go through life without reasonable levels of education and credentials;

−   the existing array of programs and institutions does not meet all the important needs. Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, visible minorities, and less educated adults (whether or not now in the labour force) are among the groups whose current educational status is least satisfactory;

−   the links between education and other economic and social issues are well recognized, but the processes for closer ties between programs or institutions are not sufficiently developed. Everyone talks about the importance of education as a contributor to broader public policy goals, but the means to achieve this contribution are not necessarily well developed or understood;

−   changing demography poses challenges. Increasing population diversity, a better educated— and therefore more demanding—population, and significant changes in factors such as gender roles and family structures all create challenges for educational institutions;

−   modes of delivery for education are changing with profound implications for how we organize services. The development of information technology is one element of this change, but so is the increased demand for and availability of informal learning;

−   the nature of work has changed in important respects. Skill demands are changing and the labour market appears less stable—especially for young people. Although preparation for work is only one purpose of education, changes in work do pose important challenges for many educational programs;

−   political processes are altering, posing demands on institutions around managing conflicts and partnerships as well as different requirements for effective citizenship;

−   boundaries around the the post-secondary sector have blurred. Not only colleges and universities, but also schools, community agencies, training organizations, unions, private companies and others in Manitoba and beyond are involved in the provision of advanced education. The roles of the federal and provincial governments are also shifting.

GOALS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ADVANCED EDUCATION
(shared with Education, Training and Youth)

1. Improve success rates in all programs and institutions
2. Expand the range of people we serve
3. Better integrate and support knowledge and skill development within economic and social priorities
4. Build the capacity of institutions and the community to support learning
5. Build a learning continuum in the province

SHORT AND MEDIUM TERM (1 TO 3 YEAR) PRIORITIES

1. Improve success rates in all programs and institutions

   - Gather better data on student retention

   - Gather data on a range of outcome or success measures (graduation, employment, social participation, *etc*.)

   - Strengthen student support and retention measures

   - Work with institutions to improve understanding and commitment to student success

   - Renew and strengthen Access programs

   - Identify specific steps to support success for high need groups

   - Ensure that student financial supports promote accessibility and success

2. Expand the range of people we serve

   - College Expansion Initiative—substantial increase in college programs and success rates

   - Maintain affordability of advanced education through appropriate combination of tuition, student financial assistance, tax credits, employment and wage measures, and other vehicles

   - Create better alignment among funding sources for students (*e.g*., Students Finance Assistance Program, Income Assistance, Employment Insurance, tax credits, wages)

   - Develop alternative delivery models such as distance education and workplace or community based programs

   - Improve credit transfer, articulation, and prior learning recognition all across the system

   - Create University College of the North

   - Work with Aboriginal groups to improve learning opportunities

3. Better integrate and support knowledge and skill development within economic and social priorities

    -   Improve connections between educational programs and short and long term labour force requirements

    -   Provide programs in areas vital to the development of the province

    -   Develop policies that work to keep skilled people in Manitoba

    -   Build stronger research capacity, especially linked to priority areas

    -   Increase co-op, service learning and other community-based programming

    -   Develop international education as an educational and economic activity

    -   Connect post-secondary education to the Province's Training Strategy

4. Build the capacity of institutions and the community to support learning

    -   Consider developing new credentials where need exists (*e.g.*, professional education)

    -   Develop and publicize success indicators for programs and institutions

    -   Strengthen institutional and system planning capacity

    -   Provide stable funding for operating and capital needs

    -   Support exchanges of people, ideas and practices across the sector and with other sectors

    -   Build capacity to research and evaluate system practices and outcomes

5. Build a learning continuum in the province

    -   Review implications of changing roles and boundaries in post-secondary education among various providers

    -   Review relevant legislation and change as required to meet goals

    -   Improve vehicles for broader community input into advanced education

    -   Improve links between high schools, adult learning centres, private providers, community groups and others with the post-secondary sector

    -   Ensure more student input into policy and program decisions

    -   Build communication routes between post-secondary institutions and community groups and organizations

    -   Build links among institutions through means such as joint programs and shared services