

---

# Manitoba Training and Education Summit

# Acknowledgements

We would like to extend our deep appreciation to the approximately 250 leaders from large and small business, industry, government, community associations, and the post-secondary educational system for attending the Manitoba Training and Education Summit in Winnipeg, The Pas, and Brandon. Your input and feedback are extremely important to us and we assure you that they will shape the Manitoba Training Strategy and the College Expansion Initiative. We thank you for dedicating your time and effort to these two important strategies.

The two strategies are interwoven with one another; a training strategy relies on skilled graduates and the colleges provide a certain type of training to produce skilled and employable graduates. The four colleges were quite involved in the summit and we would like to thank the colleges' management, staff, and boards for their participation. In particular, we thank the College Presidents for showcasing their college and multi-year expansion plans.

We wish to thank those who contributed to the summit in Winnipeg (March 2001). Moderator Harvey Sector, Dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Manitoba, inspired many with his leadership style and concluding comments – thank you. We also appreciated the participation from Co-Chairs Irene Merie, past-Chair of the Board of the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce and Rob Hilliard, President of the Manitoba Federation of Labour. The summit included group discussions and these were successfully led by Facilitation Manager David Church, Wildwood Consulting, and his team of facilitators.

We are grateful to the management and staff at Keewatin Community College for assisting in organizing the summit in The Pas (May 2001). Facilitators Dan Reagan, Al Gardiner, and Brenda Delorme successfully led the group discussions.

We are appreciative of the management and staff at Assiniboine Community College for assisting in organizing the summit in Brandon (June 2001). We thank the facilitator Prabha Vaidyanathan for leading the group discussions.

The overall management of the summit was conducted by staff in the Departments of Education, Training and Youth and Advanced Education. We extend our deep appreciation to Pat Rowantree, Assistant Deputy Minister, Training and Continuing Education and her staff, as well as to Curtis Nordman, Executive Director, College Expansion Initiative, and his staff. We are grateful for their hard work, dedication, and professionalism.

In conclusion, we commit to continuing the dialogue on these important initiatives. As we develop approaches to implement these initiatives, we look forward to sharing our progress with you.

Sincerely,

Honourable Drew Caldwell  
Minister of Education, Training and Youth

Honourable Diane McGifford  
Minister of Advanced Education

# Table of Contents

## **Introduction**

The Manitoba Training Strategy .....	1
The College Expansion Initiative .....	2
Consulting the Public – The Manitoba Training and Education Summit .....	3

## **What we Learned from the Manitoba Training and Education Summit .....**

4

### 1. Themes that Focus on Manitoba's Economy:

Initiatives promote prosperity and growth throughout Manitoba.....	4
Education and training are vital to a knowledge economy.....	4
Training and human resources must be linked to economic strategy.....	5
Needs of specific sectors of the economy should be recognized.....	5

### 2. Themes that Focus on Specific Groups:

Rural Manitoba and the North have unique perspectives and needs.....	6
It is essential to include the Aboriginal community .....	6
Both initiatives need to focus on youth .....	7
Innovative approach to recruitment and retention is needed.....	7

### 3. Themes that Focus on Service Delivery:

Partnerships are critical.....	7
Initiatives must encourage a culture of lifelong learning .....	8
Technology will help us to move forward.....	9
Improved articulation and prior learning assessments are vital .....	9
We need to treat Manitoba colleges as a system .....	9

#### 4. Themes that Focus on Accountability:

Action must be based on knowledge .....	10
Need to evaluate our progress as we implement the initiatives.....	10
Comprehensive communication must be in place .....	11

#### **What you Told us about the Manitoba Training Strategy**

Goal A – Build a skilled workforce aligned with labour market needs and emerging opportunities .....	12
Goal B – Expand access to relevant learning opportunities for all Manitobans .....	14
Goal C – Create an integrated and high quality education and training system .....	15

#### **What you Told us about the College Expansion Initiative**

Goal 1 – Address labour market needs by reducing important skill shortages .....	16
Goal 2 – Pay attention to needs of under-served groups .....	17
Goal 3 – Enhance youth participation rates.....	18
Goal 4 – Improve retention and graduation rates .....	19
Goal 5 – Encourage innovative means to make the system more efficient.....	20
Goal 6 – Stimulate workplace-based programming that improves the skills of those in the existing workforce.....	20

#### **Moving Forward**

Next steps for the Manitoba Training Strategy .....	22
Next steps for the College Expansion Initiative .....	23



## Introduction

*“We believe the challenge to provide education and skills training is the challenge of the Twenty-first Century.”*

*Honourable Gary Doer,  
Premier of Manitoba*

In March 2000, the Manitoba Century Summit brought together 120 Manitobans from throughout the province who represented large and small business, labour, government, and community associations. The summit was the first of its kind to be held in almost 15 years, and it brought people together to discuss how to make Manitoba more productive, innovative, and competitive.

The one theme from the summit, “Workforce Development,” has been addressed in new ways since the March 2000 event with the development of the Manitoba Training Strategy and College Expansion Initiative. To showcase these two initiatives, the Departments of Education, Training and Youth and Advanced Education hosted the 2001 Manitoba Training and Education Summit. The main goal of the summit was to elicit feedback on the two initiatives, as briefly described below.

## The Manitoba Training Strategy

*“We need to develop a culture that expects a higher level of education for all jobs. Government should encourage industry with higher levels of education and higher wages. We have to invest in education and show that it is valued.”*

*Summit Participant*

The Manitoba Training Strategy is a key component of the province’s approach to workforce development, and focuses on improving the quality and quantity of the workforce through education and training policies and programs. The strategy recognizes the importance of including more Aboriginal Manitobans in the workforce, the recent labour shortages in certain areas, and the fact that some Manitobans lack the skills needed to fully participate in the workplace and society.

The Manitoba Training Strategy has three goals:

- Goal 1: Build a skilled workforce aligned with labour market needs and emerging opportunities
- Goal 2: Expand access to relevant learning opportunities for all Manitobans
- Goal 3: Create an integrated and high quality education and training system

# The College Expansion Initiative

“[Our college-system] is an economic priority for Manitoba. In today’s world, diplomas are a passport to real jobs and hope.”

*Honourable Gary Doer,  
Premier of Manitoba*

The second major educational initiative to emerge is the College Expansion Initiative (CEI). The College Expansion Initiative seeks to position the province’s four public colleges to respond to the labour market needs of tomorrow. The colleges are Assiniboine Community College, École Technique et Professionnelle, Keewatin Community College, and Red River College.

Working with the colleges, the Initiative has and will continue to focus on the following goals:

- Goal 1: Address labour market needs by reducing important skill shortages
- Goal 2: Pay particular attention to the needs of under-served groups
- Goal 3: Enhance youth participation rates
- Goal 4: Improve student success by concentrating on retention and graduation rates
- Goal 5: Encourage innovative means to make the system more efficient
- Goal 6: Stimulate workplace-based programming that improves the skills of those in the existing workforce

# Consulting the Public – The Manitoba Training and Education Summit

“We have convened this meeting because we want to know what you have to say about these two initiatives. It is important for us to know your views as community leaders. Your input will shape the goals of these initiatives and how they will be implemented.”

*Honourable Drew Caldwell, Minister of Education, Training and Youth*

The purpose of the Manitoba Training and Education Summit – the results of which are presented in this report – was to consider two questions: “Do the Manitoba Training Strategy and the College Expansion Initiative assist the province in developing a skilled and educated workforce? And, how can we improve these initiatives?”

The Manitoba Training and Education Summit consisted of three separate discussion forums that took place from March through June, 2001, in Winnipeg, Brandon, and The Pas. More than 250 Manitobans participated in these forums, sharing their time and ideas and helping us to review and improve these two initiatives.

Participants at the summit provided us with broad affirmation of the goals of both the Manitoba Training Strategy and College Expansion Initiative. Despite the broad support, some concerns were raised about possible components that are missing. In this report, you will find a summary of the most significant things that we learned from the group discussions at the summit.

The first part of the report highlights the sixteen specific themes that can be extrapolated from the discussions. The themes are categorized according to four topics: Manitoba’s economy, specific target groups, service delivery, and accountability. The second part of the report highlights the key discussion points on each goal of the Manitoba Training Strategy and the College Expansion Initiative.



# What we Learned from the Manitoba Training and Education Summit

## *1. Themes that Focus on Manitoba's Economy:*

### Initiatives promote prosperity and growth throughout Manitoba

Participants in all of the discussion forums emphasized that the Manitoba Training Strategy and the College Expansion Initiative are likely to promote economic and social prosperity throughout Manitoba. Participants feel that the initiatives could create a stronger economic base through higher education and skilled workers. They expect the population base to increase, partly by retaining the people who are already here, and partly by attracting new people and industries into the province. Some anticipated the possibility of reduced taxes and more new businesses and people moving to Manitoba. Some noted that family life would be enriched, and child poverty would decrease. Income may increase, and people will start to realize that there is a clear link between income and education.

### Education and training are vital to a knowledge economy

Some participants noted that the Manitoba Training Strategy and College Expansion Initiative aim at helping Manitoba evolve with the emerging knowledge economy, and recognize the vital significance of education and training to economic success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They anticipated a broad shift of our economic base to more knowledge-intensive industries, along with an increase in our capacity for innovation and our ability to adapt to change. The initiatives aim at creating stronger linkages between learning and economic success, and realize that the information age makes a culture of lifelong learning an essential feature of successful communities.

## Training and human resources must be linked to economic strategy

Some participants urged us to ensure that the Manitoba Training Strategy be aligned with and complementary to the province's overall economic strategy – and it was not lost on participants that this need is in fact the major underpinning of the College Expansion Initiative. We must ensure that emerging industries are able to access the human resources they need and we must allow for significant stakeholder participation for this to happen. Some participants also noted that education and training do not simply serve an economic purpose, but also serves a broader social and democratic purpose, and we must not lose sight of this broader perspective on the value of learning.

## Needs of specific sectors of the economy should be recognized

Participants pointed out that it is important to base the Manitoba Training Strategy and College Expansion Initiative on the needs of specific economic sectors that are important to Manitoba's future. We were repeatedly told about the human resource needs in areas as diverse as trucking and health care, or construction and aerospace. It is essential that the initiatives not lead to catch-all solutions, but instead be stringently focused on specific areas of need. Participants pointed out that one implication of this is a need for partnerships, and emphasis on communicating with industry and providing opportunities for industry to contribute to the initiatives. Other participants pointed to the need to ensure that industry is given a chance to help identify the skills that are required in today's workforce.

## 2. Themes that Focus on Specific Groups:

### Rural Manitoba and the North have unique perspectives and needs

“Remind the provincial government and civil service, and the Mayor of Winnipeg, why the Legislature’s Golden Boy faces North!”

*Summit Participant*

Participants in Brandon and The Pas drew our attention to the special perspectives and needs of our rural and northern communities. We must realize that for people in these communities, there is the added issue of ensuring that their communities continue to remain viable. They want to see training and learning opportunities delivered to their locations, and they want to see employment opportunities expand in their regions. As one participant in The Pas observed, “Northern jobs for northern people.” Participants in all discussion forums urged the college system to be more responsive to the social and cultural diversity of Manitoba, as well as to the challenges presented by the vast expanse of our province. Participants suggested that we increase access and availability through the use of distance education courses.

### It is essential to include the Aboriginal community

“We must communicate with First Nations people about the importance of education and the opportunities of the workforce.”

*Summit Participant*

Again and again, participants brought up the issue of *access* to education and training. Participants in The Pas, Brandon and Winnipeg urged us to ensure that Manitoba’s Aboriginal community has a prominent place in the two initiatives. We must find ways to encourage Aboriginal youth to remain in school and to obtain the education and training needed to secure employment in Manitoba’s emerging industries. Among other things, we were advised that we need programs designed specifically for Aboriginal communities.

## Both initiatives need to focus on youth

Participants urged us to ensure that the two initiatives include a strong focus on youthful learners, especially Aboriginal youth. We need to make Manitoba an attractive place for young people to begin their adult lives, and we must realize that with an aging workforce it is essential that we keep as many young people as possible in our labour force. High schools may need to reinstate or add more courses that provide life skills and that are targeted to the needs of the learning disabled. We may need to consider providing more resources for guidance counselors, and developing formal mentorship programs. We could promote success stories from successful graduates and employers who can explain what the college experience is like and how it has helped them.

## Innovative approach to recruitment and retention is needed

Many participants spoke of the need to improve our college recruitment efforts and to raise our retention rates. Some spoke of the need to increase our efforts to attract students out of high schools, and others emphasized the need to make the colleges an attractive environment for young people. Others said that we also need to consider the employment prospects that the college programs are targeting, and suggested we may need to take steps to improve wages in areas such as child care and health aides. Participants suggested that the colleges develop new orientation programs that focus on the skills needed to succeed in college. Another idea was to focus more attention on exit criteria rather than entrance criteria. Participants also suggested that more emphasis be placed on life skills and support services, and that counselors be available for students who are having difficulty in adjusting to college life.

### *3. Themes that Focus on Service Delivery:*

#### Partnerships are critical

We heard repeatedly from participants that for the Manitoba Training Strategy and the College Expansion Initiative to be effectively implemented and accepted by the broader community,

they must be based on a collaborative approach that places significant emphasis on partnerships. All affected groups must be given an opportunity to participate – including colleges and universities, secondary school system, private sector training organizations, students, industry, government, the Aboriginal community, and Manitoba communities.

These partnerships could see industry participating in carrying out needs assessments and in designing training programs, and in providing more on-the-job and co-op training. We could see high schools helping to recruit students for new programs, and universities negotiating new ways to collaborate on programs or recognize credits. We could see communities and learners helping to identify and validate emerging training needs and skill gaps. With a partnership framework and a collaborate approach to moving forward, participants felt that both initiatives stand a much better chance of succeeding.

## Initiatives must encourage a culture of lifelong learning

“To support lifelong learning, promote the notion of the equal value of job-related training with a post-secondary education – and the ease (articulation) of moving back and forth between the two.”

*Summit Participant*

Many participants observed that both initiatives should be viewed as vehicles for promoting the development of a culture of lifelong learning in Manitoba. Participants in The Pas suggested that college coursework and training programs could demonstrate to learners that learning is an ongoing developmental activity, and is not simply the means to an end. One Winnipeg participant said, “We must teach people how to access information, solve problems, and think. To achieve this goal, we cannot focus just on practical skills; we must also foster learning skills.”

## Technology will help us to move forward

Participants often referred to the potential for information and communication technology to assist the province in implementing the Manitoba Training Strategy and the College Expansion Initiative. The Internet has the potential to become an important vehicle for delivering training, and could help to overcome some of the geographic barriers that so many Manitobans face. However, the technology infrastructure must be in place before we can rely on this innovative approach to delivering training.

## Improved articulation and prior learning assessments are vital

Participants spoke repeatedly about the need for improved articulation of credits between Manitoba institutions, and for recognizing learning that has taken place outside of traditional educational institutions. Learners ought to have their prior learning recognized. Participants felt that by enhancing the transferability of credits and the recognition of prior learning, more people are likely to participate in the training and college programs. We were told that in some industries in particular (such as the film industry), on-the-job training is the most relevant and effective way of developing employee skills. With an effective assessment at the program's front end, learners stand a better chance of being directed toward programs where they will succeed, and also identifying areas where additional learning may be required.

## We need to treat Manitoba colleges as a system

In discussing the College Expansion Initiative, several participants made observations that imply we need to be more rigorous in viewing and treating Manitoba's four colleges as elements within a single system. One Winnipeg participant looked for "innovation of the total system (including delivery mechanisms and organization). For example, we should identify common elements across different courses in different colleges, and should speed up the process by offering dual accreditation."

## 4. Themes that Focus on Accountability:

### Action must be based on knowledge

Participant comments indicated that the Manitoba Training Strategy and College Expansion Initiative are well-aligned with the key labour market demographics that were presented in the discussion paper for the Manitoba Training and Education Summit.

Many participants affirmed that our success depends on gathering and analyzing the appropriate data on labour market supply and demand factors. We need to thoroughly understand labour shortages, emerging labour requirements, existing skill gaps, and barriers to student success. Having created this information, we must ensure that we are communicating it to the appropriate groups.

### Need to evaluate our progress as we implement the initiatives

“The goals are worthy and the focus is good, but they need to be more measurable.”

*Summit Participant*

As implementation moves forward, we must evaluate and report on our progress in achieving the goals of the Manitoba Training Strategy and the College Expansion Initiative. Stakeholders will want to know the status of various initiatives, and the outcomes that we have managed to achieve. Many participants urged us to ensure that we define our goals and action plans in ways that will allow us to define achievable, beneficial outcomes that can be monitored and measured. Some participants suggested that it is important to establish benchmarks today, so in the future we can look back and demonstrate what we have accomplished.

## Comprehensive communication must be in place

One major area of consensus from the discussions was the need for a comprehensive communication program to support the Manitoba Training Strategy and the College Expansion Initiative. We must seek to raise awareness in all stakeholder groups. We must particularly reach out to young people through their schools and communities, to help them understand and become excited about the opportunities that await them here. In some cases, we may need to combat the negative attitudes that exist toward certain trades and professions. Many participants suggested that it is vital that we improve the current public perception of the value of a college education. The colleges must be presented as an attractive alternative to other post-secondary alternatives, and we need to ensure that the programming within colleges justifies these claims.



# What You Told Us About the Manitoba Training Strategy

## Goal A – Build a skilled workforce aligned with labour market needs and emerging opportunities

“Meeting labour market needs and economic growth are important but not sufficient. We must also build citizenship through social development and economic development, and a better understanding of our commitment to ecological sustainability.”

*Summit Participant*

Given the fact that one of the specific objectives under this goal is to strengthen labour market information and planning at sectoral, regional and provincial levels, it is not surprising that participants asked us to ensure that we are gathering and analyzing the appropriate information. Participants urged us to move beyond broad information to focus on specific occupations and communities. They stated that we need to ensure that we simultaneously analyze demand and supply factors, and also look at occupational demographics. Participants also suggested that we attempt to identify five or six strategic economic clusters that are currently growing, and that we assess the needs and develop strategies and programs to promote continued growth in these areas.

Participants also pointed out that this goal is fundamentally linked to the need to instill a culture of lifelong learning in the province. Some participants suggested that Manitoba will need to foster social and life skills as well as technical and academic skills in order to achieve this objective. One group suggested that government needs to provide the vision for a culture of lifelong learning in Manitoba, and a partnership of public and private sector organizations need to devise and implement programs to achieve the vision.

Many participants commented on the need to deliver education and training in innovative ways. Training programs, such as apprenticeship programs, must be designed so that companies of all sizes can participate. We must take advantage of new technology such as the Internet to make training solutions widely available. Some specific suggestions were brought forward, including tailoring training delivery options to meet northern and rural needs, facilitating the creation of better workplace arrangements for daytime training, and providing training expertise to small and medium sized enterprises.

Participants urged the province to consider how we can attract skilled workers from elsewhere in Canada or from other countries. They also suggested that steps be taken to improve the credentialing process for immigrants, and to ensure that the training strategy is designed specifically to include Aboriginal people and others who may have been excluded in the past.

Participants also stressed repeatedly the need to create a broad partnership of public sector jurisdictions, educational institutions, and private sector stakeholders in order to implement the strategy. This theme of partnerships was pervasive in the summit, including calling for partnership practices between employers and employees, anticipating the need to develop participative processes that allow for ongoing consultation, and recruiting more Aboriginal people for various boards. Some participants also suggested looking at the use of tax incentives to encourage business participation in the strategy.

## Goal B – Expand access to relevant learning opportunities for all Manitobans

“We must work with Aboriginal parents and communities, and support Aboriginal institutions that provide holistic solutions involving community institutions and career counseling.”

*Summit Participant*

Participants talked about the need for training to be timely, flexible, and accessible. Some suggested the use of a portable training delivery mechanism that could reach out to specific communities throughout the province. To promote this, participants suggested that the province find ways to use or adjust student assistant programs to equalize access to training for people in rural and northern communities. Others suggested flexible hours of training delivery. Participants also focused on training delivery models, and suggested that a review might be undertaken to try to identify the most effective model to use in remote communities. Others suggested that we need to develop an array of workplace education models (such as internships, apprenticeships, co-ops, career development programs, etc.), and apply these within Manitoba workplaces and communities.

Participants also pointed out that access to learning might require social supports for some people. They suggested that we provide accessible, high quality childcare for parents who need to upgrade their skills. Many learners may require personal and social support if they are to successfully access learning opportunities, and therefore a comprehensive strategy must encompass these needs. Generally, participants wanted to ensure that this strategy would be relevant to all Manitobans, including those who are currently facing unique challenges – including the working poor, and people who are physically and mentally challenged.

Some argued that Aboriginal involvement will be critical to achieving this goal. Aboriginal people must be encouraged to participate in creating the programming to attain this goal. Some participants suggested that we begin to build the capacity within Aboriginal communities to create and sustain an educational institution, such as an Aboriginal college or university.

Participants also called for new investment in delivery systems and infrastructure. Several participants stressed the need to make use of the e-learning technologies to improve access, and to ensure that high-speed Internet access is available throughout the province.

## Goal C – Create an integrated and high quality education and training system

“We must carefully evaluate all initiatives to ensure that social, cultural and psychological factors are considered, as well as objectively measured learning achievements.”

*Summit Participant*

Participants felt that integration requires the recognition of credits and prior learning in ways that make learners more mobile and that improve access to learning opportunities. Some suggested that this might be best achieved through a joint provincial/federal program, and others suggested that, at the least, we will need a comprehensive province-wide approach to prior learning assessment and articulation.

Participants indicated that the articulation of credits will be very important to expand access to learning. We must recognize the credits of incoming students, and be prepared to use introductory college credits towards a high school diploma. The overall point is to ensure that we have reliable, flexible ways of recognizing people’s existing experience, knowledge, and skills. This could involve ensuring cooperation with professional associations and trade groups (such as the Apprenticeship Board) that need to be involved in credentialing.

Again, participants felt that this goal can be achieved only if a broad partnership of stakeholders is in place. They called for the removal of barriers between partners (such as the universities and colleges, or employers and unions). Brandon participants were wary of the possibility that “integrated” might come to mean “centralized,” and they called for a collaborative, decentralized approach. This was echoed in the other forums, where the emphasis was on collaboration and partnerships, and on creating an environment of cooperation. Others looked at the term “integration” and interpreted it to mean integration of the learning experience and the work experience.

Participants also urged government to start getting the message out, so people will become interested in and supportive of the strategy. Participants also referred to the need to monitor the success of the Manitoba Training Strategy – perhaps by tracking such indicators as drop out rates and hiring rates for specific categories of work. Other participants referred to this requirement as the need for an effective “accountability framework.”

# What You Told Us About the College Expansion Initiative

## Goal 1 – Address Labour Market Needs by Reducing Important Skill Shortages

“The key to this will be correctly identifying labour market shortages.”

*Summit Participant*

Participants emphasized the need to analyze and identify the existing skill shortages, and to gather accurate and timely labour market information. Some participants suggested that communities throughout the province should be surveyed to gain an understanding of the current supply and demand equation. Another suggestion was that the identification of skill shortages should yield a picture of the required competencies (both hard and soft) in the fields of work where shortages are occurring.

Participants recognized the importance of taking steps to attract people into the college programs meant to address the shortages. Labour market information on skill shortages and funding must be provided to high school guidance counselors so they will be able to help students make wise course selections. Many participants endorsed the view that colleges must find ways to grant credit for work experience, and credit for high school courses that are applicable to new programs. Some participants suggested the need to recognize and support a “skills portfolio” for students, which could become a useful mechanism for tracking progress and evaluating credentials. Others emphasized the need to prepare people for training, or addressing the “skills readiness deficit.”

Some participants also pointed out that education programs will need to be delivered in a flexible manner, so that seasonal workers are able to take advantage of upgrading opportunities. Some suggested exploring joint programming options, with development and implementation being shared by business and educational institutions. Others pointed out that training must be available in local communities in the rural areas and the north. We also need to explore innovative ways of providing training through work/study programs.

## Goal 2 – Pay Attention to Needs of Under-served Groups

Participants wanted to give this goal a broad interpretation, and to include a wide variety of groups who are currently not fully participating in the province's learning and economic opportunities. Some of the groups identified include:

- Technologically disadvantaged
- Single mothers
- Economically disadvantaged
- Women
- Aboriginal communities
- Older workers
- The underemployed
- People with disabilities
- Immigrants
- The working poor
- Ethnic minorities
- Francophones
- Rural communities
- Remote / isolated communities
- Unemployed people
- Under-educated people

Participants emphasized the need to provide sufficient funding to help learners overcome a variety of barriers that mainstream groups do not need to contend with. One suggestion was to establish college-based bursary programs with matching industry and government contributions.

Participants also pointed out that under-served groups would require flexible entrance requirements and flexible programs. Participants pointed to the need for flexible hours, family support, counselling services, support groups, and a transition support program. Some participants pointed out that distance education would not be an appropriate approach for all members of these groups. There was a strong feeling that programs for under-served groups would need to recognize and account for social factors if retention is to be adequate.

## Goal 3 – Enhance Youth Participation Rates

“Create a culture or attitude that accepts enrolment in a community college as equal to enrolment in university.”

*Summit Participant*

Participants felt that one of the keys to attaining this goal would be communication and promotion in high schools. We could encourage young people to pursue a college education by winning over high school teachers to the idea, perhaps by promoting industry / teacher partnerships aimed at high school teachers. Perhaps the province should explicitly undertake a public relations and promotion campaign, with the emphasis on the newer cutting-edge programs.

Participants also felt that students would find college more attractive if we could reduce waiting lists for popular programs, and shorten the time it takes to complete some programs. Some felt that we should conduct research to determine the demand cycles, and we should create the program capacity that is needed.

Another incentive for students are bursary and loan programs. We could combine bursary/loan financial support programs - Aboriginal people and lower income people may be reluctant to take out loans, so we may need some form of a sliding scale. We could also consider giving tax incentives to the private sector for participating in youth sponsorship initiatives.

Participants commented that to support lifelong learning, we should promote the notion of the importance and value of training that is targeted to specific jobs, and of the ease with which people can move back and forth between college and university programs. Picking up on this latter point, participants felt it is important to improve the articulation of credits between university and college.

## Goal 4 – Improve Retention and Graduation Rates

“We need to make it a priority to retain students in our province.”

*Summit Participant*

Participants spoke of the need for more support services to make this goal achievable, including support that is culturally appropriate. We should provide a budget for general lifeskills training, and try to encourage some preparation before students leave their home communities. Each student could be provided with a personal advisor and counselling support, if needed. We could also ensure that there are sufficient extra-curricular activities to interest the students, and cultural activities aimed specifically at Aboriginal students. Several participants suggested that a formal mentoring program could provide both academic assistance and a useful role model.

Participants also suggested that new processes might be needed to ensure that incoming students are adequately prepared for their college experience. Diagnostic testing could help in ensuring that the necessary prerequisite competencies are in place, and just-in-time upgrading could be used to deal with any shortcomings in the students' education. Participants also suggested that a full orientation program to the new institution might be useful for students.

Other participants pointed to the need for appropriate program content and flexible delivery mechanisms to ensure retention rates are high. Some suggestions included co-op programs, work-study programs, and learner-paced instruction. Several participants urged the colleges to place more emphasis on work practicums and on partnerships with employers. There was also a suggestion that colleges strive to increase the number of Aboriginal instructors on their staff.



## Goal 5 – Encourage Innovative Means to Make the System More Efficient

“We should be expanding options for program delivery – distance education, flexible time frames, weekend courses, etc.”

*Summit Participant*

Participants suggested that one way of bringing more efficiency to the system would be through more flexible program delivery. Suggestions included distance education, and providing more courses during the evenings and on weekends.

Others felt that a greater degree of employer involvement could promote this goal. One idea was to encourage businesses to guarantee employment for top graduates from specific programs. Another suggestion was to create a graduate incentive tax credit that could be linked to employment in Manitoba after graduation.

Participants also had specific suggestions on measures that could bring efficiency to a variety of college processes. One suggestion was to consider implementing on-line registration and payment applications. Another idea was to develop a single centre and process for handling applications to all Manitoba colleges, and make this centre available via phone, fax, and computer. Participants encouraged the colleges to look to technology as a way of promoting efficiency, and to seek ways of sharing resources (including curriculum and support services).

Participants also pointed to the need to involve stakeholders in the achievement of this goal. This could involve giving businesses more input into college curriculum, and establishing links to professional associations. Participants also recommended fostering links to the community through ongoing consultations.

## Goal 6 – Stimulate Workplace-Based Programming that Improves the Skills of Those in the Existing Workforce

“Let’s consider ways of sharing knowledge, training, and resources – for example, some employers have in-house training programs that could be used by other community organizations.”

*Summit Participant*

Participants felt that workplace programming would depend significantly on stakeholder involvement. Some participants suggested a variety of co-op programs that would increase the number of students spending time in the workplace. Other participants suggested giving college advisory committees more influence in course content and design. Participants also recommended partnering with the business sector in areas such as succession planning and in tracking the progress of graduates. Stakeholder collaboration could also help in determining individual and business needs and in designing programs to meet those needs. Others suggested that we provide mentoring and train-the-trainer opportunities to ensure that workplace programs are run effectively.

Participants also suggested that workplace programming would need to be modular and focused. Specific training components could offer credit towards a variety of certificates, and could be aimed at specific competency areas. We would also likely see more flexible access and delivery for workers and employers.

Participants pointed to the need to provide effective prior learning assessments to encourage people to participate in workplace programming. Moreover, participants recommended that we consider a variety of incentives and rewards for learners and employers to embark on this type of learning.

# Moving Forward

## Next steps for the Manitoba Training Strategy

“We will continue this dialogue today and in the months and years to come.”

*Honourable Diane McGifford, Minister of Advanced Education*

Public consultations provided strong support for the Manitoba Training Strategy, as well as new themes for future development and action.

A departmental steering committee has been mandated to develop practical approaches to the successful implementation of the Training Strategy. Our efforts will include better co-ordination of effort and resources across the Department and regular reporting to the public on achievements and outcomes.

In the months ahead, we will build upon the strength of our existing community and business partnerships to:

- Improve co-ordination and targeting of labour market information products and services
- Invest strategically in both the social and economic objectives of the Training Strategy
- Increase access to opportunities for learners across the province
- Promote public accountability by enhancing our capacity to track and report on results

## Next steps for the College Expansion Initiative

Based on what was heard at the Education and Training Summit, the CEI team is confident that the public supports the initiative's mandate and objectives. Therefore, CEI will continue to work with Colleges to ensure that programs are developed to:

- Increase youth participation rates;
- Increase the representation of under served groups; and
- Improve retention and graduation rates.

### **The CEI team will:**

- Present the results of the Education and Training Summit to the Colleges and discuss options for further co-operation based on what was heard at the Summit.
- Establish a web site that will keep interested parties updated on the progress of CEI. This site will maintain an up-to-date listing of all CEI investments and activities to date.
- Foster an environment for discussion between the Colleges, business and industry.