

# **FUTURES CLOSE TO HOME**

**Final Report of the 1999 Regional College Committee of Review**

**March 2000**

## **Message from the Minister**

I am pleased to release the Regional Colleges Review Committee report, *Futures Close to Home*, and to outline the government's expectations regarding the implementation of its recommendations. The report will assist the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training and the regional colleges to strategically position the colleges to meet the emerging post-secondary education and training needs of students, employers and communities in rural and northern Saskatchewan, over the next five to ten years.

I endorse the report's recommendations, and ask that regional colleges and the Department incorporate the recommendations within their business planning and strategic planning processes, as well as monitor the progress of implementation through each organization's annual report.

The Regional Colleges Review will be used to inform the comprehensive, strategic plan for the post-secondary education, training and employment services sector which is being developed by the Department, the regional colleges, and other sector partners. Ultimately our mission is that, through continuous learning, all Saskatchewan people have the knowledge, skills and abilities to benefit from and contribute to society and the economic prosperity of the province.

To date, the regional colleges have played a crucial role in making an array of educational programs and services available to the residents of rural and northern Saskatchewan. In the future the colleges will continue to be the province's primary vehicle for responding to the post-secondary education and training needs of individuals, and labour markets outside of the major urban centers.

The 1999 Regional Colleges Review fulfills a provision of *The Regional Colleges Act* which requires a review and report of the mandate of the regional colleges every five years. When government appointed the Review Committee of senior representatives from the college system and the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training, we asked them to build upon the strengths of the current regional college system and to address those areas which are critical to the colleges' future relevance and effectiveness.

I am pleased that stakeholder involvement formed a critical part of the review process. The Review Committee sought the views of regional college board members, senior managers, staff, union representatives and students, as well as those of stakeholders outside of the college system, including other training institutions, industry, government, and community-based organizations.

The report shows that the regional colleges continue to embody the original principles set out for the system at its inception, and that these principles continue to be relevant and appropriate to the needs of the province. The emphasis on needs assessment and the brokerage model remain cornerstones of college effectiveness. However, changing social and economic conditions necessitate that priority be given to enhanced access to post-secondary education and skills training close to home, including the use of Technology-Enhanced Learning; improved responsiveness to the needs of individual learners and the labour market; and a more strategic, system-wide planning approach for colleges within the post-secondary education, training and employment services sector. I am confident that these recommendations build on the strengths of the regional college system and will establish a strategic direction that ensures college effectiveness in providing post-secondary education and training opportunities that contribute to the growth and development of rural and northern communities.

The report complements the findings of several other evaluations and reports that the Department has been working on. These include an evaluation of the *Saskatchewan Training Strategy*, the SIAST Review, the Labour Market Trends Report, and the results of the public consultations on financial access. Implementation of the review committee's recommendations will also support Saskatchewan's economic development strategy, *Partnership for Prosperity*, and provincial efforts to redesign social assistance, our *Building Independence* strategy.

I thank the review committee members whose efforts have produced an excellent roadmap for the regional colleges and my Department over the next five to ten years. As well, thank you to everyone who participated in the consultations and informed the review. I believe that this collaborative piece of work reflects the innovation and self-reliance that is characteristic of our regional colleges and our province.

Glenn Hagel, Minister  
Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training

# REPORT OF THE REGIONAL COLLEGES REVIEW COMMITTEE

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The 1999 Regional Colleges Committee of Review was made up of the following individuals:

- Lily Stonehouse, Assistant Deputy Minister, Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training, and chairperson of the committee;
- Spencer Wooff, Chairperson, Cypress Hills Regional College Board;
- Valerie Mushinski, Chief Executive Officer, Cumberland Regional College;
- Shelley Hoover, Executive Director, Institutions Branch, Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training;
- Donna Krawetz, Executive Director, Special Projects, Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training.

The 1999 Regional Colleges Committee of Review acknowledges the people and organizations who submitted written briefs or met with the Committee to inform its deliberations. We also appreciate the involvement of the regional college students, staff, administration, union representatives and Boards of Directors, whose input pertaining to the major challenges and opportunities facing the colleges, helped to shape the future direction recommended by the Committee.

The Committee gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Kathleen Handford, Frances Bast and Raman Visvanathan, Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training, in providing research, writing and coordination support to the project. Appreciation is also extended to Daphne Pompana, Karen Middleton, Diane Boulanger, Debbie Rieger, Brenda Assman, Lorraine Burns and Gaile Buckley for clerical and administrative support.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 1999 Regional Colleges Review Committee was appointed by the Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training to provide recommendations on the future mandate and role of regional colleges within the context of an integrated delivery system of education, training and labour market services. *The Regional Colleges Act* requires that a committee be appointed at least once every five years to review and report on the mandate of the regional colleges and any other matters prescribed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

The membership of the Review Committee included senior representatives from the college system and the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training. The committee's aim was to develop a shared understanding of the colleges' strategic directions, as well as public policy goals and expectations for the regional colleges. The review built on the strengths of the regional colleges as well as the recent changes implemented in response to the *Saskatchewan Training Strategy*. It also focused attention on those areas which are critical to the colleges' future relevance and effectiveness.

The Review Committee's recommendations are intended to provide the broad public policy context and directions for the colleges' future planning over the next five to ten years. As such, the Review Committee made recommendations with the intention of building these policy directions into the strategic planning and business planning processes of the colleges and the Department.

It is the view of the Review Committee that colleges have stayed remarkably true to the original ideals and principles set out for the system in 1972 and that these principles, by and large, continue to be relevant and appropriate to the needs of the province. In particular, the so-called "seven principles of the community college movement" remain a key framework for college operations: a commitment to lifelong learning, responsiveness to community needs, provision of learner support and career counseling, support to community development, efficient use of educational resources, regional governance, and administration by the minister responsible for continuing education. The emphasis on needs assessment and the brokerage model remain cornerstones of college effectiveness. There are, however, some areas where college evolution has departed from the original concept. Changing social and economic conditions have produced the following key challenges for the regional colleges.

Education and training needs in rural and northern Saskatchewan are growing due to factors such as economic diversification, migratory patterns, demographic change, and technological innovation. Increasingly, people are seeking affordable options for attaining post-secondary education such as studying in their home communities and taking advantage of technology that provides access to education and training in their homes and workplaces. These changes have led colleges to expand the array of services they offer to both learners and employers. However, the greater sophistication of education and training programs

has created new pressures on college facilities, equipment, technology and learning resources.

Regional colleges currently do not have the capacity to respond to increased demand for education and training, and the expansion of Technology-Enhanced Learning options. Funding restrictions limit their ability to allocate resources to launch programs and services in accordance with the changing needs of the region. Most colleges do not have the technological infrastructure to enhance their services and, through distance education, capitalize on promising opportunities to serve small dispersed populations with a diversified range of programs. Resources to address these infrastructure pressures are not predictable or sufficient.

While colleges are expected to manage individual operations in a manner that fits regional conditions, their responsiveness is also dependent upon developing strong linkages with labour market planning processes beyond their regions at the industry sector and provincial levels. Despite resource pressures, learners, employers, communities, and government expect colleges to make greater efforts to accommodate the diverse range of learners' needs, as well as maximize accessibility and quality of learning opportunities, through inter-college cooperation and other partnerships, at the program, operational, and policy levels.

Given the shift in the past decade to an emphasis on credit programs and skills training in response to the social, cultural and economic changes within the respective college regions, it has become increasingly important for the colleges and the Department to develop a strong relationship based on clear and realistic expectations about outcomes to be achieved through colleges' use of public funds. The Saskatchewan public expects the colleges to be accountable for serving learners in the most efficient and effective way within available resources, and to demonstrate responsible use of public funds.

The Review Committee believes that the regional colleges will continue to be important assets for supporting social and economic development in rural and northern Saskatchewan. The future holds many opportunities for regional colleges to demonstrate leadership, innovation and commitment to communities. Based on the analysis of the regional colleges' current organizational positioning in relation to current challenges, future trends, and public expectations, the Review Committee's recommendations regarding strategic directions for the regional colleges are focussed on four overarching priorities:

- **Responsiveness to Education and Training Needs**

Responsiveness to the education and training needs of learners, employers and communities must be at the center of regional college decision-making, operations and accountability. Regional colleges need to adopt new strategies and partnerships to ensure responsiveness in the future while building on the success of their current mandate and model of operations.



- **A Commitment to Support for Learners**

A commitment to supporting learners with diverse needs and circumstances must continue to be a focal point for regional colleges to ensure access and equity for all people in rural and northern Saskatchewan.

- **Regional Colleges within an Integrated Delivery System**

The future evolution of regional colleges should contribute to developing an integrated delivery system for post-secondary education and skills training through enhanced collaboration and cooperation with other regional partners, among colleges, and with government and other provincial institutions.

- **Effective Governance, Management and Support**

Regional colleges and the government must work towards strengthening governance, management and support for colleges to enable them to meet the challenges and resource pressures of the future.

In order to achieve these priorities, the Review Committee offers the following recommendations:

## **STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR REGIONAL COLLEGES**

### **I. RESPONSIVENESS TO EDUCATION AND TRAINING NEEDS**

#### **Technology-Enhanced Learning**

**1. *The Review Committee recommends that the regional colleges develop new roles and capabilities in using Technology-Enhanced Learning to meet the needs of learners, employers and communities. A network of Technology-Enhanced Learning centers is proposed to support access in rural and northern Saskatchewan to the growing number and variety of programs and services offered by post-secondary institutions in the province and elsewhere via electronic communications. Regional colleges would perform the following functions:***

- ***Provide free or low cost access to computers, the Internet, and other technologies, such as video-conferencing, for learners wishing to enroll in technology-enhanced courses or programs;***
- ***Assist students to acquire skills to be successful in using Technology-Enhanced Learning such as study skills, computer skills, basic academic knowledge, and skills for self-directed learning;***

- ***Provide information, advice, and counseling to learners on career planning and Technology-Enhanced Learning options appropriate to their needs;***
  - ***Provide opportunities for learning in group settings to complement on-line courses or programs;***
  - ***Connect learners with mentors, fellow students, employers, or professional and community groups that could lend support to their learning or career path;***
  - ***Facilitate access to learning resources required by individuals using Technology-Enhanced Learning, in collaboration with post-secondary institutions and the provincial library system;***
  - ***In cooperation with other credit granting post-secondary institutions offering Technology-Enhanced Learning options, serve as invigilators or test centers for learners who cannot travel to those institutions to write exams or demonstrate their knowledge and skills to obtain credit for their learning; and***
  - ***In collaboration with other colleges and other post-secondary institutions, evaluate technology-enhanced courses offered by out-of-province institutions in terms of their quality, recognition and applicability to Saskatchewan circumstances and needs. Regional colleges, SIAST, the universities and First Nations and Métis institutions could specialize in different areas of study and share expertise.***
2. ***The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges, in taking on these new roles for Technology-Enhanced Learning, continue to be primarily brokers and facilitators of learning within the provincial post-secondary sector.***
  3. ***It is further recommended that the regional colleges' new role and capabilities for Technology-Enhanced Learning be developed within a provincial plan, with leadership from the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training. A provincial plan will facilitate cooperation among the institutions to ensure that the needs of rural, northern and First Nations and Métis learners are fully taken into account in setting priorities for developing technology-enhanced courses and programs in Saskatchewan. Priority setting for investments in Technology-Enhanced Learning should be based on improved needs assessment for university and technical education and training and SIAST's current commitment to implement multi-site delivery, to the greatest extent possible, so that training is available where learners and jobs are located.***
  4. ***The Review Committee recommends that the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training work with the regional colleges to identify the necessary infrastructure and support to implement the proposed network of Technology-Enhanced Learning centers, and to develop and resource a complementary information technology plan. Requirements should be identified and addressed within the provincial plan for Technology-Enhanced Learning, including the potential roles of SCN and SaskTel.***

## Needs Assessment Processes and Planning

5. ***The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges strengthen partnerships in conducting needs assessments, determining priorities, coordinating labour market planning and undertaking joint training with other organizations and agencies at the regional level such as the Canada Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services, Regional Economic Development Authorities, First Nations and Métis organizations, Human Resources Development Canada, Social Services, municipal governments, health districts, school divisions, community-based organizations and others.***
6. ***The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges, along with other partners and with leadership from the Department, develop processes at the provincial and sectoral levels to undertake labour market development planning and needs assessment, including forecasting of occupational and skill requirements, identifying emergent training demands, and creating potential solutions to meet the pressures.***

***The Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training should take the lead in facilitating this process and involving other partners, such as industry, First Nations and Métis organizations, SIAST, the universities, the Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission, Human Resources Development Canada, and other provincial departments. The feasibility and usefulness of conducting in-depth needs assessments in a few targeted industry sectors each year could be tested on a pilot basis. A sectoral approach to labour market development and training needs assessment should be linked to industry sectors within the province's economic development strategy.***

7. ***The Review Committee recommends that the assessment of needs for university courses and programs also be included in the annual needs assessment process. Regional colleges and the universities should collaborate to develop approaches and methods for identifying and prioritizing these needs, with the possibility of conducting in-depth assessments every few years.***
8. ***The Review Committee recommends that colleges clearly demonstrate linkages between the needs presented in their annual needs assessment reports and proposed programming in their business plans. It is also recommended that the methods and processes used by regional colleges to conduct their needs assessments be clearly outlined in their reports.***

## Future of the Brokerage Model

9. ***The Review Committee recommends that the current brokerage model and protocol agreement with SIAST be updated and revised to enhance delivery of technical education and training in rural and northern Saskatchewan. It is recommended that a new agreement:***

- ***Establish a formal process for SIAST and the regional colleges to coordinate and integrate their needs assessment processes and jointly plan how identified needs can be addressed;***
- ***Clarify points of contact and channels of communication for the regional colleges within SIAST's organizational structure;***
- ***Provide ways for colleges to have input into the design, evaluation and updating of curricula for programs that are brokered by colleges to address learning needs in their regions;***
- ***Identify appropriate and reasonable timelines for SIAST to respond to requests from regional colleges, to be determined mutually by SIAST and the colleges;***
- ***In addition to discussing their requirements with SIAST and giving SIAST an opportunity to respond before choosing an alternative provider, recognize that regional colleges may seek to broker programs from institutions other than SIAST;***
- ***Include avenues for SIAST and the regional colleges to work together in making the best use of Technology-Enhanced Learning and supporting learners at a distance;***
- ***Clarify institutions' responsibilities for students from a legal point of view, in terms of obligations for student support services, and for accountability and reporting purposes;***
- ***Encourage cooperation between the regional colleges and SIAST in providing student services at the local level; and***
- ***Continue to require SIAST and regional colleges to notify each other in identifying and responding to training needs in their respective service areas.***

***10. To enhance the range of SIAST programs available for delivery off-campus, the Review Committee recommends that SIAST give priority to making available a greater array of programs for delivery in northern and rural areas using a variety of formats and methods such as face-to-face multi-site delivery, Technology-Enhanced Learning, and work-based training.***

***11. With respect to university courses and programs, the Review Committee recommends that regional colleges and the province's two universities collaborate in identifying and responding to needs in rural and northern Saskatchewan. It is further recommended that these needs be given priority in university plans for greater use of Technology-Enhanced Learning.***

### **Access to Training Programs**

***12. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges, SIAST, the Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission and the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training work together to enhance access to skills training and basic education where learners and jobs are located in rural and northern Saskatchewan. Partnerships among regional colleges, the Department,***

***SIAST and the Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission should continue to be strengthened to address issues of capacity within the training system to meet growing needs for basic education and skills linked to jobs throughout the labour force.***

#### **Non-Credit Community Education and Training for Industry**

- 13. The Review Committee recommends that a role for regional colleges in providing non-credit community education programs and training for industry be explicitly recognized as appropriate and valuable and included within their mandate. These programs involve colleges in supporting communities to acquire knowledge and skills to plan and undertake economic and social development initiatives and in providing training to enable workers and employers to keep pace with skills needed on the job. In carrying out this mandate, regional colleges are encouraged to collaborate with partners in developing inter-institutional and inter-agency cooperation to identify community and industry learning needs, coordinate educational resources, reduce duplication of effort, and improve effectiveness in the delivery of educational services supporting economic and social development.***
- 14. In order to reflect the purpose of non-credit programming, the Review Committee recommends that the current term for this activity, Community and Individual Development, be replaced by two new categories, one reflecting a focus on community education and the other training for industry. In addition, to acknowledge the significance of this role, it is recommended that the colleges develop a system for consistently and regularly reporting this programming in consultation with the Department.***
- 15. In instances where a community need for personal interest or leisure programs cannot be met by another agency, it is recommended that regional colleges have the ability to provide this type of programming on a full cost-recovery basis including both direct and indirect costs. It is also recommended that this activity be tracked using a category of programming separate from community education and training for industry.***
- 16. The Review Committee recommends that the regional colleges, as a system, develop appropriate, transparent and consistent pricing policies for non-credit community education programs and training for industry in rural and northern Saskatchewan. Because the policies will define those regional college activities to be subsidized by provincial funding, they should be submitted to the Minister for approval. A timeline of implementation in the 2001-02 academic year is further recommended.***

## Regional Colleges and Agricultural Programming

**17. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges participate in processes to better coordinate efforts of the many agencies and institutions involved in training within the agricultural sector, serving farm families and other specialized workers, and addressing gaps in current responses at the regional and provincial levels. The Departments of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training and Agriculture and Food should take the lead in facilitating this process. It is further recommended that the Departments review training and related income support programs in terms of their fairness and responsiveness to the needs of people engaged in agriculture.**

## Locally Developed Programs

**18. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges continue to have an ability to develop and customize programs to fit unique needs and circumstances. It is further recommended that where credit is desirable for locally developed programs, regional colleges seek certification from recognized credit granting organizations, including other post-secondary institutions, industry associations or professional regulatory bodies.**

## International Development

**19. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges have an ability to become involved in international development projects, where colleges have another institutional partner and all direct and indirect costs associated with a project are fully recovered.**

## II. A COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS

### Equity Policy

**20. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges adopt the Equity Policy Framework developed as part of the Saskatchewan Training Strategy and its guidelines for responding to diversity among learners and contributing to the development of a representative workforce in the province. As part of implementation of the Equity Policy Framework, it is further recommended that colleges give priority to implementing employment equity for their own workforces.**

**21. To facilitate implementation of the policy, it is recommended that regional colleges include an equity action plan as part of their business plans and report progress towards achieving results for equity group members, including First Nations and Métis people, people with disabilities, visible minorities and women. Equity plans and**

*goals should reflect the distinct make-up of the populations served by individual regional colleges.*

### **Services for People with Disabilities**

- 22. The Review Committee recommends development of a “shared services” network involving the regional colleges, SIAST, the universities, school divisions, and health districts to share expertise and enhance access to specialists who can provide diagnostic and testing services for people with disabilities with follow up at the colleges. It is recommended that the Departments of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training, Education, and Health play a facilitation role in developing this network.***
- 23. The Review Committee recommends that the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training and the provincial Office of Disability Issues ensure that the regional colleges are involved in the Disability Action Plan and implementation of the agreement on Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities.***
- 24. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges collaborate with the Canada Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services and community-based organizations to link education and training for people with disabilities with support for job finding, placement and retention in employment.***
- 25. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges and the Department ensure all college facilities are accessible to people with disabilities.***

### **Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) and Credit Transfer**

- 26. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges work with credit granting institutions or agencies, including SIAST, the universities and the Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission, to develop support services for learners who could benefit from PLAR and credit transfer at the institutions. The role of regional colleges would be to provide initial information and support to assist learners in applying for PLAR and credit transfer, and to continue to advocate for improvements in PLAR and credit transfer for the benefit of learners. The Review Committee also notes the potential for regional colleges to play a role in arranging for on-site assessment of learners’ skills and knowledge for credit.***
- 27. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges cooperate with the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training and other post-secondary institutions in developing a provincial vision and action plan for increasing prior learning assessment and recognition on a system-wide basis.***

## Other Student Services

- 28. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges continue to strengthen their capacity to support learners through academic and career counseling, financial counseling, assistance in developing study skills and life management skills, and referral services for psychological counseling, crisis intervention or other specialized services.**
- 29. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges explore ways to develop the capacity of students to support each other and to represent their own interests in a collective way, for example, by facilitating greater contact among students and forums or avenues for the development of a student body.**
- 30. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges develop avenues for professional development for instructors to support effective teaching and learning.**

## **III. THE REGIONAL COLLEGES WITHIN AN INTEGRATED DELIVERY SYSTEM**

### Partnerships and Cooperation at the Regional Level

- 31. The Review Committee recommends that colleges continue to emphasize partnerships at the regional level as a key way of doing business in rural and northern communities. Regional colleges should continue to seek innovative arrangements for meeting education and training needs that involve joint needs assessment and planning, coordinated labour market planning, shared decision-making, flexibility in training delivery to suit the needs of partners, and shared programming and use of resources.**
- 32. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges and the Canada Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services continue to consult and collaborate with each other at the regional level to provide integrated services for learners, employers and community organizations.**

### Inter-College Planning and Cooperation

- 33. The Review Committee recommends that the regional colleges examine potential benefits and efficiencies from greater inter-college collaboration in areas such as administrative services, information technology, academic programming, learning and counseling resources, partnership development, communications and staff development. It is further recommended that colleges prepare a report to the Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training by the Spring of 2001 outlining**

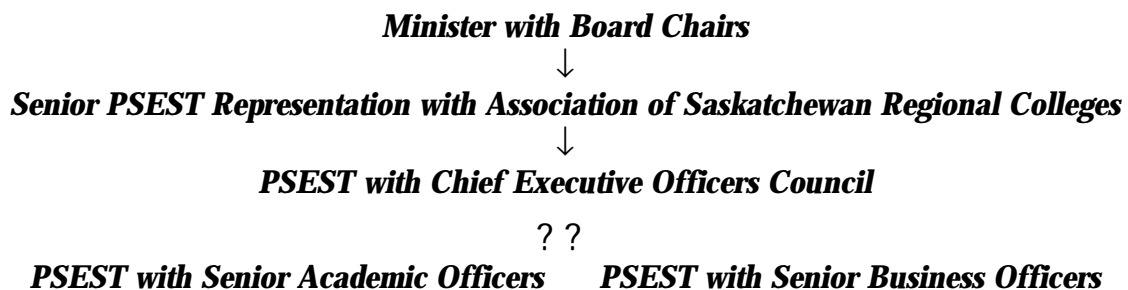


*their conclusions and proposing an implementation plan for action in those areas that show promise.*

- 34. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges cooperate to enhance professional development opportunities for college employees.**
- 35. The Review Committee recommends that regional college boards and chief executive officers ensure that individuals are appointed with the authority to represent the collective views of the colleges in provincial policy development initiatives.**
- 36. With respect to human resource issues, the Review Committee recommends that ongoing discussion occur to find an approach to system-wide collective bargaining that is satisfactory to the government, regional college boards and management, and college employees and their union representatives.**

#### **Department-College Collaboration and Communication**

- 37. The Review Committee recommends that formalized processes for ongoing collaboration and communications between the regional colleges and the Minister and the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training (PSEST) be established to address strategic policy issues and system-wide directions. These processes would be in addition to current collaboration at the officials' level involving college chief executive officers and senior academic and business officers. Together, the proposed and existing channels for communication and collaboration would include regular liaison at the following levels:**



#### **Linkages within the Provincial Post-Secondary System**

- 38. The Review Committee recommends that the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training ensure that the regional colleges are fully engaged in the development of the post-secondary sector strategic plan and accountability process.**
- 39. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges, as a system, consult regularly at the provincial level with the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, the Dumont Technical Institute, and First Nations and Métis training**

*and employment agencies to identify and implement partnership initiatives. At the regional level, it is recommended that individual colleges undertake similar consultation and partnership development initiatives with First Nations and Métis institutions and organizations.*

#### **IV. EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT**

##### **Board Appointments and Operations**

**40. *With respect to the appointment of board members, the Review Committee recommends that:***

- *College board members be individuals who can incorporate different viewpoints in making decisions, represent a diversity of backgrounds, and bring skills or expertise relevant to the regional colleges' mandate and operations, such as knowledge of industry trends, small business perspectives, accounting principles, leadership and management, and education and training;***
- *Board appointments be made on a staggered basis so that there is continuity of board decision-making and knowledge;***
- *Prospective board members be given a clear explanation of their roles and responsibilities and expectations for the position prior to their appointment; and***
- *Boards have the opportunity to offer advice to the Minister with respect to gaps in knowledge or perspectives needed by the board at a particular point in time, to be considered in the appointment of new members.***

**41. *The Review Committee recommends that boards undertake regular self-evaluations of their progress in achieving the goals they have set for themselves and their colleges. It is further recommended that the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training provide a model or guidelines which may be used by boards for carrying out this type of evaluation.***

##### **Boundaries**

**42. *The Review Committee recommends that the boundaries of regional college service areas be reviewed on a regular basis. Further, the Review Committee recommends that the regional colleges and the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training work together to define an appropriate rationale for college boundaries, including factors such as labour market regions, areas of other service providers, travel time, population and viability to offer a range of programs and services.***

## Business Planning and Accountability

- 43. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges submit a strategic planning document to the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training by September of each year, articulating medium to long-term objectives, strategies, financial requirements and trade-offs.**
- 44. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges and the Department address the Review's recommendations within the business planning process and that its recommendations be integrated into strategic planning for the post-secondary sector as a whole. It further recommends that progress in implementing the recommendations be documented in regional college and Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training annual reports.**
- 45. The Review Committee recommends that efforts to develop performance indicators and information systems for reporting be given priority by the regional colleges and the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training.**

## Funding Issues

- 46. The Review Committee recommends that a new funding model for regional colleges be developed and implemented, as envisioned in the Saskatchewan Training Strategy, to enable greater flexibility on the part of colleges to direct resources to priorities and needs at the regional level. The Minister would continue to approve the annual business plans of regional colleges, which outline the particular configuration of programs to be offered in each college service area and the specific outcomes to be achieved.**
- 47. The Review Committee recommends that all program funds have a built in component for administration, incorporated into existing programs under the current funding model or into consolidated resources under a new funding model. Further, it is recommended that funds for administration increase in relation to increases in program funds.**

## Financial Management

- 48. In order to improve financial reporting, the Review Committee recommends that regional colleges and the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training work together to develop consistent definitions for financial information and that regional colleges adopt these definitions on a system-wide basis.**
- 49. The Review Committee recommends that the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training and the regional colleges work together to plan the use of the current accumulated surplus.**

**50. The Review Committee recommends that the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training and the regional colleges work together to develop guidelines for future use of accumulated surplus and to establish an appropriate level of working capital colleges should have on hand to meet contingencies or unforeseen circumstances.**

**51. The Review Committee recommends that a rational and sustainable expenditure and financing plan be developed to establish a consistent, predictable source of funding for regional college facilities, equipment and information technology. As well, it is recommended that a process be developed and implemented to identify and prioritize expenditures for these purposes in a predictable and transparent way.**

### **Communications and Marketing**

**52. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges, SIAST, the Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission, and the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training coordinate their communication strategies to raise awareness of the value of post-secondary education and training and career opportunities in technical and trades occupations, and to ensure consistency of messages and enhanced visibility for all parties.**

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **1. Purpose of the Review**

The 1999 Regional Colleges Review Committee was appointed by the Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training to provide recommendations on the future mandate and role of regional colleges within the context of an integrated delivery system of education, training and labour market services. *The Regional Colleges Act* requires that a committee be appointed at least once every five years to review and report on the mandate of the regional colleges and any other matters concerning the Act.<sup>1</sup>

The review was structured to build on the current strengths of the regional colleges and the recent changes implemented in response to the Saskatchewan Training Strategy which was launched in April 1997. The membership of the Review Committee included senior representatives from the college system and the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training. The committee's aim was to develop a shared understanding of the colleges' strategic directions, as well as public policy goals and expectations for the regional colleges.

The Review Committee's recommendations to the minister are intended to provide the broad public policy context and directions for the colleges' planning over the next five to ten years. As such, the Review Committee made recommendations with the intention of building these policy directions into the strategic planning and business planning processes of the colleges and the Department. It is the responsibility of the colleges and the Department to develop detailed action plans to achieve these policy directions.

The Terms of Reference for the Review are included in Appendix A.

### **2. The Review Process**

To ensure that its deliberations were well informed, the Review Committee solicited the views of major stakeholders with an interest in the regional colleges' future development. It also undertook a number of research projects on selected topics and examined key historical documents chronicling the origin and evolution of the college system in Saskatchewan.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that Lakeland College and Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT) are not included in the review, as they have different operating and funding relationships with the province of Saskatchewan compared with other regional colleges. Lakeland College in Lloydminster serves Saskatchewan students but is administered by the Province of Alberta (under Alberta legislation). Saskatchewan provides this college with funding in recognition of services offered to Saskatchewan students. SIIT is governed by a board determined by the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and receives no operating grant from the province. At present, specific legislation for SIIT is being introduced to govern its operations as a separate entity from the colleges.

Three one-day consultation workshops were held, including a session in Saskatoon with regional college board members, college and Department senior managers, and Department officials, involving a total of 103 participants. Similar workshops were held in Regina and Prince Albert with college staff, union representatives and students, involving a total of over 110 participants. The workshops were organized to seek input on the major challenges and opportunities facing the colleges and possibilities for the future. Participants were provided with a background document prior to attending the workshops, outlining trends affecting the colleges' current mandate and activities and is available on the Department's website at <http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca>.

The Review Committee also sought the views of stakeholders outside of the colleges including: professional and business organizations, First Nations and Métis institutions, municipalities, health districts, school divisions, agricultural rural service centers, the universities, SIAST, the apprenticeship system, private vocational schools, government departments, crown corporations, the Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board, Regional Intersectoral Committees, Regional Economic Development Authorities (REDAs), and community-based organizations. These organizations were invited to provide input about their expectations for the colleges and suggestions about working with the colleges in the future. A total of 68 responses was received. The Review Committee also arranged meetings with several organizations to gain a more in-depth understanding of their perspectives. Lists of the organizations invited to provide input, as well as the written submissions to the Review Committee and meetings with stakeholders, are included in Appendix B.

As the Review Committee's work progressed, a number of topics emerged where further information and analysis were sought to inform the committee's deliberations. These topics included:

- Technology-enhanced learning and its potential for delivering education and training;
- Regional college responsiveness to regional labour market needs;
- Trends in Saskatchewan in prior learning assessment and recognition, and credit transfer; and
- An evaluation of the regional colleges' use of resources.

The results of this research are presented in background reports which are available on the Department's website at <http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca>.

## **CHAPTER 2: THE REGIONAL COLLEGES' UNIQUE ROLE WITHIN SASKATCHEWAN'S POST-SECONDARY SYSTEM**

### **1. An Historical Perspective**

The regional colleges were initially established in 1973, under *The Community Colleges Act*, as a means of providing continuous learning opportunities to the people of Saskatchewan. The “community college movement” was based on seven principles: lifelong learning; responsiveness to community needs; learner support and career counseling; community development; efficient use of educational resources; regional governance; and administration by the minister of continuing education. The organizational model used to translate this philosophy into reality was an interconnected approach involving many players in the post-secondary education sector.

The Saskatchewan community college system was described by its architects as the “college without walls but with foundation” (as cited in Selman and Dampier 1991, p. 214). Rather than constructing college buildings in each region of the province, colleges were to serve the various communities within their regions by utilizing existing facilities such as farm houses, church basements, and school facilities. The ideal was that colleges would be such an integral part of the community that no single set of buildings or group of people would be considered the college campus or college staff. Rather, the community would be the campus and those with knowledge and attitudes worth sharing would be the potential staff and students. The foundation of this system was the sense of community in rural Saskatchewan which was built on traditions of community participation, cooperation, and self-reliance (Faris et al., 1972).

The community colleges were created with the expectation that they would broker credit programs from other post-secondary institutions. As credit-granting institutions, the universities and technical institutes were to develop, deliver and maintain credit programs, while the colleges were to serve as the vehicle through which these programs would be offered outside of the four major urban centers of Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Saskatoon and Regina.

In 1987 the college system was restructured with the introduction of *The Regional Colleges Act*. The number of colleges was reduced by creating larger service regions and eliminating the four urban colleges. The name was changed from “community” to “regional” colleges and the colleges were to provide rural and northern Saskatchewan with access to technical institute and university programs, cost-recoverable training, career services and adult basic education. While introducing this new Act in the legislature, the Minister described it as “... an Act respecting accessibility to adult education in this province.... The issue for us and our government is how do we get that core [credit] ... programming, delivered across this province? ... The pipeline will be the regional college network....” (Hansard, 1987, p. 3013). Similar to the previous college model, this provision of technical institute and university programming was to be made through

brokerage arrangements with the province's universities and the newly created Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Sciences and Technology (SIAST).

In order to focus their efforts on occupational skills and preparation for employment, the regional colleges were directed to transfer the delivery of hobby and leisure programming to other community groups. The colleges were also expected to work cooperatively with businesses to ensure that training was consistent with the labour market needs of the region. Non-credit programming in areas of social and health issues was permitted on a cost-recovery basis and colleges were given an increased capacity to acquire permanent educational facilities.

The restructured college system was assessed in 1992-93 by the first Regional Colleges Committee of Review (Reiman, Dumelie, Edwards, Lafond, & Wilkins, 1993). This review confirmed that the new structure and mandate were effectively addressing the needs of rural and northern Saskatchewan. It also confirmed that the original principles, such as responsiveness to regional needs, broad range of learning opportunities, and enhanced coordination of education and training opportunities, continued to provide a relevant and valid framework for the operation of regional colleges. The most recent Review Committee noted similarities in the challenges and opportunities facing the regional college system today. As a result, this Review Committee's direction is consistent with the themes put forth by the 1992-93 Review Committee and the original principles put forth in the Faris report (1972).

The primary purpose of the regional colleges continues to be providing education and training opportunities to adults in rural and northern Saskatchewan. These opportunities enable learners to be economically and socially self-reliant, and contribute to the growth and development of their communities.

Throughout the evolution of the college system, there has been a consistency of approach: an interconnected model that requires high degrees of cooperation and flexibility from all education and training partners, including SIAST and the two universities, as well as other stakeholders. Throughout the past 30 years colleges have demonstrated the ability to overcome the challenges associated with this interconnected model and to thrive within a complex environment.

To provide a context for the review, following is an overview of the current array of programs and services offered by the regional colleges; the unique aspects of the Saskatchewan regional college system as it has evolved to the present day; and the complex network of relationships within which regional colleges operate. The chapter will be concluded with a discussion of the public policy goals that regional colleges implement at the local and regional levels.



## 2. Regional Colleges' Current Programs and Services

Over the years governments have provided colleges with funding targeted to specific types of programming and services, thereby ensuring that a defined array of programs and services is available at every college across the province. At present, the eight regional colleges provide adults in rural and northern Saskatchewan with access to basic education, technical training, university courses, career and learner support services, as well as distance education services.

Operating out of learning centers in over 40 locations throughout the province, the colleges feature four major types of programs and services under the current mandate: credit programming, non-credit programming, career and learner support services, and access to distance education opportunities. Figure 1 illustrates the regional boundaries of the colleges and the locations of their learning centers throughout the province.

### Credit Programming

The credit programming provided by the regional colleges falls under three main categories: basic education, technical education and training, and university courses (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Total Regional College Learner Opportunities 1998-99  
Full/Part-Time Credit**

<b>Regional Colleges</b>	<b>Basic Education<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>University<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Technical Training<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>Total Credit Opportunities</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,791</b>	<b>2,586</b>	<b>6,245</b>	<b>12,622</b>

Source: Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training, Regional College Business Plan Submissions, 1999-2000

- **Basic Education:** The Basic Education program helps people to develop literacy, academic and job readiness skills required to participate in the labour market or enter further post-secondary education and training. The program includes literacy and life skills preparation, academic upgrading, high school completion, GED testing and preparation, English as a Second Language, transitions to work, counseling and assessment services. The regional colleges also assess and register basic education students eligible to receive income support in the form of the Provincial Training Allowance. During the 1998-99 academic year, the college system offered 3,791 full-time and part-time opportunities in basic education.

<sup>2</sup> Basic Education (BE): includes people who are in academic programs, GED preparation and testing, and literacy programs. These numbers include full-time and part-time participation in programs, and the same person may be counted a number of times as he/she moves through the various types of BE offerings.

<sup>3</sup> University: includes the number of course registrations as opposed to the number of learners taking university courses. In effect, an individual may be counted several times depending on the number of university courses taken in the academic year.

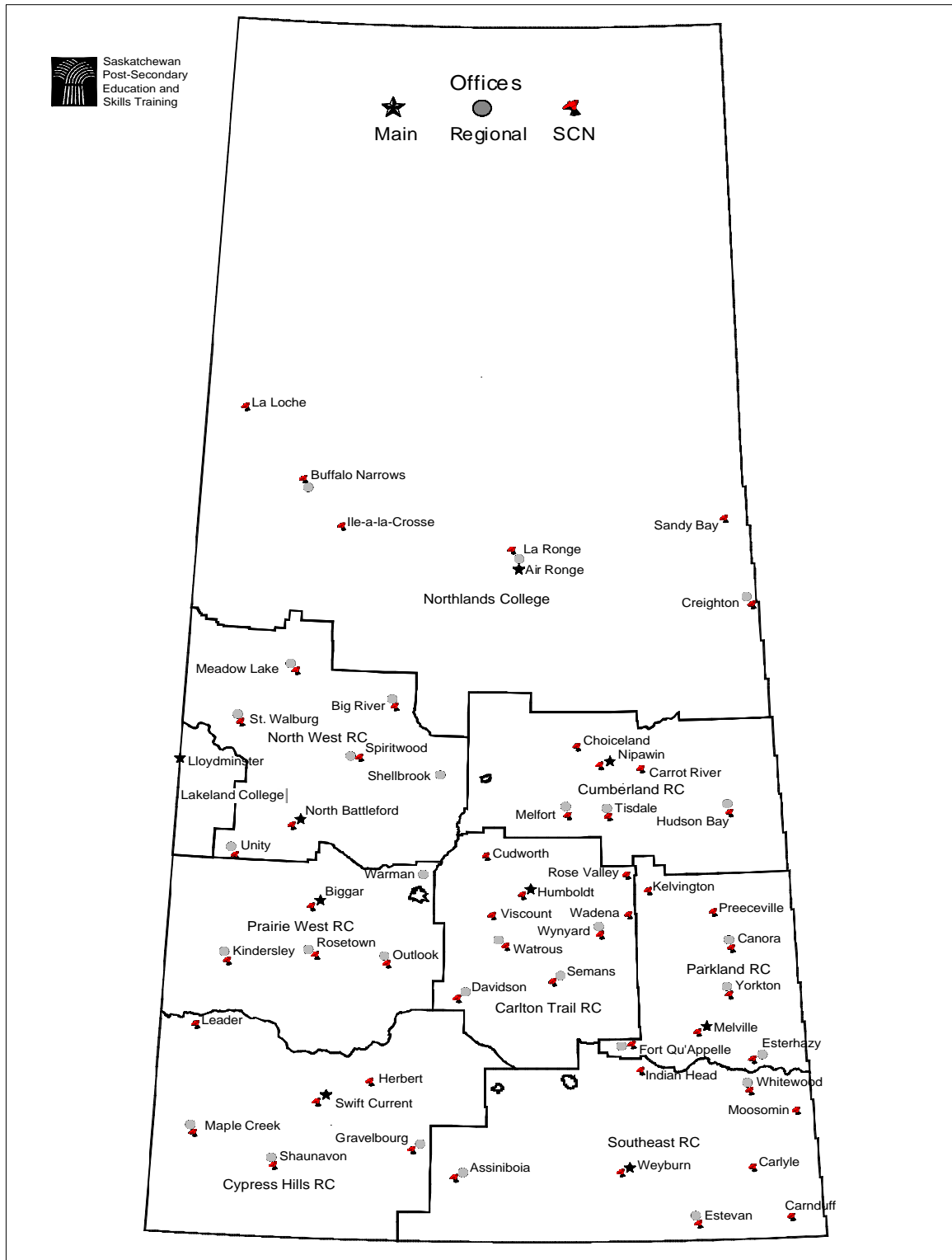
<sup>4</sup> Technical: includes both full-time and part-time enrollment in SIAST credit and non-credit programs, industry/sector certified training, and participation in JobStart/Future Skills training.

- **Technical Education and Training:** The regional colleges broker approximately 30 full-time credit technical education programs annually from SIAST for delivery in college learning centers across the province. In addition, colleges, through arrangements with businesses in their region, offer on-the-job training or short-term training linked to immediate, medium and long-term employment opportunities. Through the JobStart/Future Skills program, work-based training completed by learners may lead to SIAST credit or industry recognition or certification. A few college programs facilitate entry into, and completion of, the training required to be indentured into some of Saskatchewan's apprenticeable trades. In the 1998-99 academic year the colleges provided approximately 6,245 full-time and part-time training opportunities in technical training.
- **University Courses:** All colleges provide access to university level courses in their respective regions. The colleges' primary focus is brokering an array of first-year courses from the province's universities that permit students to complete their first year of university in their home communities. In some colleges a portion of the second year or other advanced level classes are provided. These courses are delivered through various means: face-to-face, televised (SCN), or any combination of print resources, audio conferences, video materials and visits with instructors. Colleges may also broker courses from out-of-province institutions if it helps them to meet regional needs. For the 1998-99 academic year, colleges provided access to 2,586 opportunities in university courses in rural and northern Saskatchewan.

### **Non-Credit Programming**

- **Community and Individual Development (Non-Credit Programs):** Community and Individual Development programs, which include non-credit training for industry, community education, and a variety of professional and personal development courses, generated 22,445 part-time opportunities in the 1998-99 academic year. Industry training is usually delivered on a contractual basis for business and industry clients and can vary from a one-hour session, to a one-day session, to programs of several weeks in duration. Some of these programs are skill-based in nature (e.g. computer training), while others respond to the needs of specific businesses or sectors (e.g. staff training, agriculture, safety training). Other types of programs are general interest and, while not relating directly to employment or academic skills development, do lead to personal and community development (e.g. legal information, financial planning, coaching theory, first aid).

**FIGURE 1: REGIONAL COLLEGE BOUNDARIES AND LOCATIONS**



## **Career and Learner Support Services**

- ***Career Services:*** Colleges provide a variety of career services to students, young people graduating from the K-12 education system, and the general public, to facilitate entry into the labour market as well as the post-secondary education and training system. These services are closely integrated with the Department's Canada-Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services and may include career information and planning, job search training, academic counselling and assessment services, and financial information on loans, grants and scholarships. In the 1998-99 academic year, approximately 39,000 contacts were made through the colleges' career services.
- ***Learner Support Services:*** The regional colleges provide support to learners taking all levels and forms of training whether it be literacy, basic education, apprenticeship, technical education, university courses, or correspondence courses or other distance delivery programs. Some of the services include: training and matching volunteer tutors for literacy programs; tutoring assistance for a wide range of course work; offering writing skills workshops for students in university programs; providing access to library resources, computers and Internet programs. The regional colleges also have learning specialists on staff to provide testing, assessment and counselling services to students with learning disabilities, as well as support to students requiring other types of learning support.

## **Distance-Education Services**

- ***Saskatchewan Communications Network (SCN):*** The regional colleges manage the SCN centers in approximately 65 communities as well as provide learner support to students enrolled in SCN courses. SCN is a broadcasting network that provides students with televised education and training. This technology is used to deliver skills training and university courses from the two universities and SIAST. On occasion, businesses and professional organizations use SCN to provide employee development opportunities. Televised courses enable students to enroll in post-secondary courses without having to travel to a main campus in the major urban centers. In 1998-99, the colleges provided access to over 1,600 course registrations through SCN sites.
- ***Technology-Enhanced Learning:*** Two pilot projects are also underway in the college system using video-conferencing technology and web-based delivery to offer university courses and basic education. These projects are intended to test the viability of using new forms of technology to enhance program delivery.

### **3. Unique Aspects of the Saskatchewan Regional College Model**

Saskatchewan has developed a unique post-secondary education and training system in which regional colleges have four distinguishing features. They broker credit programs from post-secondary institutions, thereby providing adults and employers in rural and northern

Saskatchewan with access to education and training close to home. They offer a full range of adult education opportunities ranging from basic education to university courses to non-credit programs. They support community development and community education activities. They operate within a complex web of interconnected stakeholders at the local, regional and provincial levels. Regional colleges are distinct from other post-secondary institutions to the extent that they rely on brokerage and other partnership arrangements to carry out their business.

***Brokering Credit Programs:*** With respect to program delivery, Saskatchewan regional colleges use a brokerage model whereby academic and technical courses are provided under a contractual arrangement with the universities and technical institutes. This brokerage ability allows the province to make efficient use of its post-secondary education and training resources by building an infrastructure that enables Saskatchewan residents to take all, or a portion, of their post-secondary education in varied geographic locations. Colleges also contribute to rural and northern Saskatchewan by accommodating those people who have family and employment commitments in their home communities, and are unwilling or unable to commute or relocate to the major urban centers for post-secondary education and training. This enhanced accessibility translates into lower costs for learners to obtain post-secondary education.

***Full Range of Programs:*** Regional colleges are unique from most post-secondary institutions in that they offer a full-range of educational programs for adults including literacy and basic education programs, credit and non-credit training, and university courses. Colleges, therefore, accommodate a wide variety of learners with diverse education and training goals and learning needs.

***Community Development and Community Education:*** Regional college programs and services fulfil both economic and social development roles. For example, the regional colleges provide basic education, literacy and lifeskills that are essential to assist individuals who are disadvantaged in the labour market because they cannot meet entry requirements for jobs. Some colleges have developed a high degree of expertise within literacy and basic education. For example, Parkland Regional College has received provincial and national recognition as well as international exposure for its work in literacy. This college is also working towards building community capacity through such things as extensive training of volunteer tutors to support adult learners in its programs throughout the region, and establishing a support group for adults with Attention Deficit Disorder within the Yorkton area.

Colleges serve a community support role, in addition to the adult education and training role. College staff have a presence in rural communities through their participation on various boards and committees (e.g. REDAs, Chamber of Commerce), and usually are residents of the colleges' geographic service areas. Colleges help communities acquire the knowledge and skills required to plan and implement social and economic development initiatives, thereby contributing to the strength of communities and enhancing the viability and quality of life in rural and northern Saskatchewan.

***Interconnectedness at the Provincial, Regional and Local Levels:*** From its inception, the effectiveness of the Saskatchewan regional college model has been dependent upon the cooperation of many stakeholders. As depicted in Figure 2, Regional Colleges Network, regional colleges work within a complex environment that entails relationships with a variety of partners at the community, regional, provincial, interprovincial, and national levels. These key partners include: private and public sector employers, other post-secondary education institutions, school divisions, government departments, crown corporations, the federal government, and community-based organizations. Colleges bring together this wide array of partners to respond to the education and training needs within their respective regions.

Through their ability to develop, deliver, coordinate and broker education and training programs, colleges complement the contributions of other partners and, in effect, link the post-secondary education and training system to rural and northern Saskatchewan. Following is a description of some of these activities, highlighting the interconnected nature of regional college operations.

Regional college training programs are designed to prepare workers for employment opportunities within their region. Employers and employees benefit from regional college training opportunities because of colleges' ability to broker programs that keep pace with the labour market and employment changes in both the private and public sectors. Every year, the colleges work directly with hundreds of employers to provide contract training and related services that respond to changes in industry and to support employers in the delivery of provincially-sponsored work-based training.

This work provides concrete benefits to employers and communities. For example, Parkland Regional College used a provincially sponsored training program to help a company adjust to the changing skilled labour needs due to a plant closure in the United States. The project retrained 10 existing and 41 new employees. The college's quick response contributed to the company's decision to expand the Melville plant, ultimately resulting in 41 new employment opportunities in the area. This college is assisting another company in the region that is expanding its operations in Yorkton. The company will receive support for its training needs over the next three years through the provincially sponsored JobStart/Future Skills program, enabling it to train at least 30 people annually for new jobs, and to retrain current staff to meet skill needs resulting from the expansion.

The regional colleges also contribute to skilled workers for resource-based industries, such as mining, forestry and energy. For example, Northlands, Cumberland, and North West Regional Colleges are working closely with industry to develop a long-term strategic training partnership addressing employment opportunities in the forestry sector. The regional colleges also address economic development at a more general level. For example, Cypress Hills Regional College has worked with the manufacturing sector to offer ISO 9000 Quality Assurance training for employees as well as academic upgrading in the work place for employees. Prairie West Regional College has worked closely with local organizations, businesses and REDAs to offer educational opportunities about entrepreneurship.

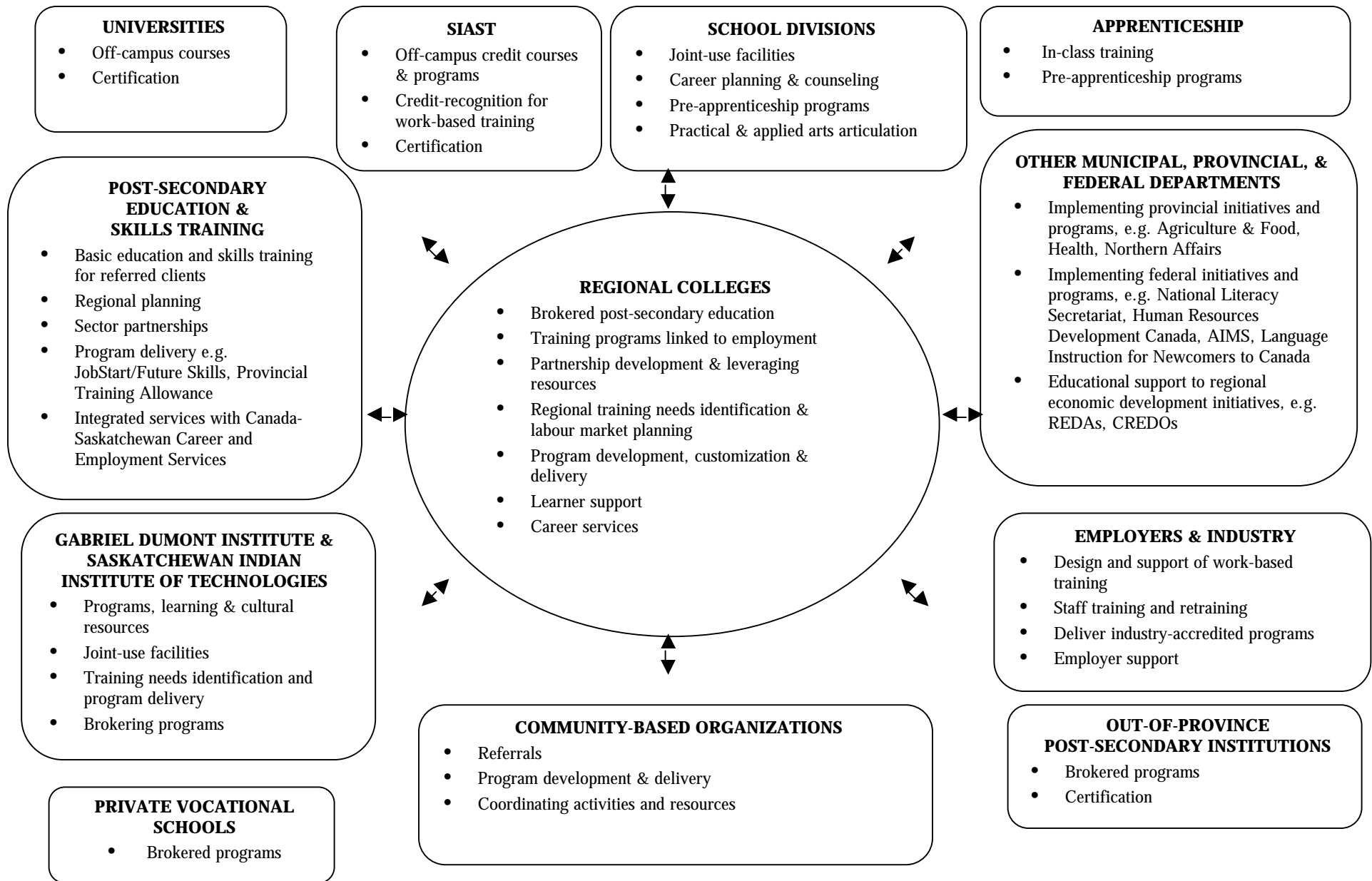
Some of the work with employers and industry involves all of the regional colleges. For example, one province-wide initiative intended to enhance the technological capability of people throughout the province involved SaskTel, Toronto Dominion Bank, Saskatchewan credit unions, SIAST, Hewlett Packard and the regional colleges. Together these corporations and institutions assisted Saskatchewan residents to attain technical skills and knowledge regarding the Internet and its functions. SaskTel provided the Internet access; the bank and credit unions provided loans to consumers who wished to buy personal computers; Hewlett Packard offered its computer products for sale to customers, and SIAST and the regional colleges provided the instructors. The training was provided at various facilities throughout the province, and various other partners provided facilities and access to the computers.

Increasingly, colleges are developing relationships with First Nations and Métis organizations to address the needs of the Aboriginal adult learner. The goals of the relationships include such things as improving the participation, retention and success of Aboriginal learners in the post-secondary education system, as well as increasing the representation of Aboriginal people within the labour force. These relationships have included such activities as joint needs identification, planning, funding, program delivery arrangements, and sharing facilities.

The federal government's relationship with the colleges has changed significantly over recent years. Historically the federal government took an active role in training where it funded projects or purchased seats directly from institutions. This money enabled the regional colleges to deliver the specified training on a full cost-recovery basis and to leverage resources for new partnership arrangements and initiatives. In 1999 the federal government withdrew from the direct purchase of training and its role in the direct delivery of career and employment services. In response to this devolution, the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training assumed responsibility for the direct delivery of these services and has enhanced its regional presence through Canada-Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services.

Although these new arrangements have placed the federal government in a more peripheral role in relation to its post-secondary training partners, it continues to provide funding for programming related to First Nations and Métis people, youth and people with disabilities, immigration and literacy.

**FIGURE 2: REGIONAL COLLEGES NETWORK**





Educational support for community development was part of the colleges' original mandate in the 1970s and continues to form part of the philosophical underpinnings of regional colleges. Today, when speaking of community development, most colleges refer to the process of building partnerships with other organizations and groups in the community to pool human and financial resources, share decision-making processes, and share leadership of community projects in order to serve the needs of the region.

#### **4. Regional Colleges' Role in Achieving Public Policy Goals**

Regional colleges are one of the vehicles through which the provincial government implements its public policy goals at the local and regional levels. These policies may be enacted differently in each region depending on its demographics, economic activities, dynamics and resources. However, because of regional colleges' central role in the delivery of post-secondary education and workforce preparation in rural and northern Saskatchewan, their performance is critical to the achievement of government's public policy directions. Consequently, the regional colleges are expected to incorporate public policy goals into their vision and operations, and to demonstrate accountability for contributing to these goals as set out in *The Regional Colleges Act* and its accompanying Regulations.

The colleges have made important contributions to achieving various public policy initiatives. Following is a discussion of the roles that regional colleges fulfill within each policy initiative as well as future direction.

Public accountability of universities and other post-secondary institutions is a public priority at the provincial and national levels. Two notable initiatives that outline public expectations of the post-secondary sector include Saskatchewan's measures in 1996 to revitalize the two universities and the 1999 report of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). The public expectations highlighted in these reports include the following principles: quality education and training; accessibility of post-secondary programs and services; equitable opportunities for participation in learning and working opportunities; relevance to social, cultural and economic development; community service; using a variety of delivery methods, including technology, to enhance delivery to diverse populations and geographic areas; and, coordinating programs and services with other post-secondary institutions to increase the efficacy of the post-secondary system.

In Saskatchewan, the public expects the universities to provide rural and northern areas of the province with greater access to programs of study which lead to degrees, certificates, or reflect students' needs for lifelong learning. Universities have also been encouraged to consult with educational and community representatives about levels and types of demand for off-campus university education, and to develop the technologically and pedagogically most effective means of instruction. Through their brokerage capabilities, the regional

colleges have been, and will continue to be, instrumental in increasing access to university programs in rural and northern areas of the province.

The Saskatchewan Training Strategy was introduced in 1997 to develop a provincial training and employment services system that responds to the Saskatchewan economy, labour market and social priorities. The colleges have a key role in implementing the strategy in rural and northern Saskatchewan. The goals of the Training Strategy are to:

- Develop a skilled workforce relevant to Saskatchewan's labour market;
- Enhance access and support opportunities for all learners; and
- Create a coherent, effective and sustainable delivery system.

The focus on developing a skilled workforce relevant to Saskatchewan's needs means that college programs must reflect the changes in regional labour markets, and the colleges must have processes or mechanisms in place with employers and industry to stay attuned to these needs. This strategy links social and economic development, and enhances the capacity of communities to manage their own futures.

In order to respond in a timely way to the needs of learners, industry and communities, colleges must be able to use a variety of approaches, including partnerships, for program delivery. To improve access the colleges must manage their planning, operations and resources to: maximize learning opportunities; address the barriers to training faced by many groups; and contribute to the coherence and sustainability of the provincial training and employment services system. To increase the efficacy of the post-secondary system, colleges are expected to link their programs and services with those of other institutions and service providers in order to complement, rather than duplicate, the existing array of programs and services in the regions.

In any given region, the colleges work with communities and employers to ensure that the training offered is relevant to jobs within the region. The colleges' role in preparing workers who have skills that match demands in the workforce is a critical support to the province's economic development strategy. Regional economic development efforts to enhance competitiveness, diversification and value-added processing, and to create new economic activities in sectors such as manufacturing and food processing, depend on having a high quality training capacity. Access to education and training linked to jobs enables all individuals to participate in and benefit from these job and business opportunities, as well as make full use of all talents and skills within the economy.

The vision of the province's Northern Development Strategy is that the people of northern Saskatchewan will possess the means to address the goals and aspirations they have for their communities, their families and themselves. One goal of the strategy is to strengthen education and training, enabling northerners to pursue further academic goals and to better compete in the labour market, in the north and elsewhere. Northlands College has partnered with industry, First Nations and Métis organizations, and other stakeholders to offer skills training preparing northerners for jobs in fields such as forestry, mining,

tourism, health care and public administration. Shifting demographics, growth in the number of northern youth, and the government's efforts to stimulate economic development in several sectors, all underline the importance of Northland College's role in the future of northern Saskatchewan.

The province is committed to enhancing partnerships with First Nations and Métis people to ensure they have the opportunities and resources to participate fully in social and economic development. A priority area for cooperation is enhanced participation of First Nations and Métis people in all forms of education and training, including academic upgrading, high school enrolment and completion, enrolment in technical education, skills training, apprenticeship training and university programming. By serving First Nations and Métis people, the colleges' programs in basic education and technical training contribute to improving their employment prospects and the well-being of individuals and families.

The province's *Building Independence* strategy aims to provide income and training supports to lower income families and to individuals and families receiving social assistance. This framework relies on the regional colleges in rural and northern areas to deliver programs that assist individuals in acquiring the basic qualifications for employment and further skills training. Incomes increase as individuals' levels of education and training rise, thereby enabling individuals and their families to become self-supporting. The regional colleges also assess and register basic education students eligible to receive income support in the form of the Provincial Training Allowance.

In addition to the specific strategies mentioned above, the colleges support many other government priorities by providing skills training that enables public policies and services to be implemented. College training in areas such as farm business management supports policies for diversification and competitiveness in the agricultural sector. Several other examples of training relevant to the public sector include colleges' roles in training skilled personnel for municipal administration, resources management, early childhood education, home care, computer training, and youth services.

## **CHAPTER 3: ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

Strategic directions for the regional colleges should be responsive to changes and future challenges affecting individuals, employers and communities in rural and northern Saskatchewan. The following outlines major changes and conditions in the environment in which regional colleges operate, including social and economic trends, the expectations of public groups, and developments in post-secondary education and training.

### **1. Social and Economic Trends**

Saskatchewan's economy is restructuring and diversifying in response to the emergence of a global information and a knowledge-based economy where technical expertise, technology and innovation are the most important growth factors. Our traditional strengths, grain production and resource extraction, are facing intense competition, while new economic opportunities are opening up to provide goods and services to worldwide markets. Improved technology and transportation are overcoming distance, location and time.

These trends are creating requirements for post-secondary programs and services in rural and northern Saskatchewan to:

- Produce skilled workers who are able to use new technologies, knowledge and work processes to enhance competitiveness and to create new business opportunities at the community or regional level;
- Provide specialized or customized training to unique businesses competing in national and international markets;
- Build literacy, employability and technological skills, and the capacity for lifelong learning throughout the population;
- Support ongoing learning and skills acquisition in the workplace for individuals and employers adjusting to continuous change in their field of expertise or line of business; and
- Certify knowledge and expertise gained from a variety of sources and support mobility of learners into new careers or further education and training.

Shifts in the economy in response to worldwide trends are reflected in changes in jobs and employment in rural and northern Saskatchewan.

As shown in Table 2, the labour force in rural and northern Saskatchewan, which is the area served by regional colleges, declined slightly from 1991 to 1996. The most significant job losses occurred in agriculture and the public sector. These losses were offset to some degree by increases in most service industries, manufacturing and other primary industries such as mining and forestry. The growth in manufacturing is particularly noteworthy; it represents 3,000 new jobs and an increase of almost 30% in five years.

**Table 2**  
**Labour Force by Industry in All Regional College Service Areas**  
**1991 and 1996**

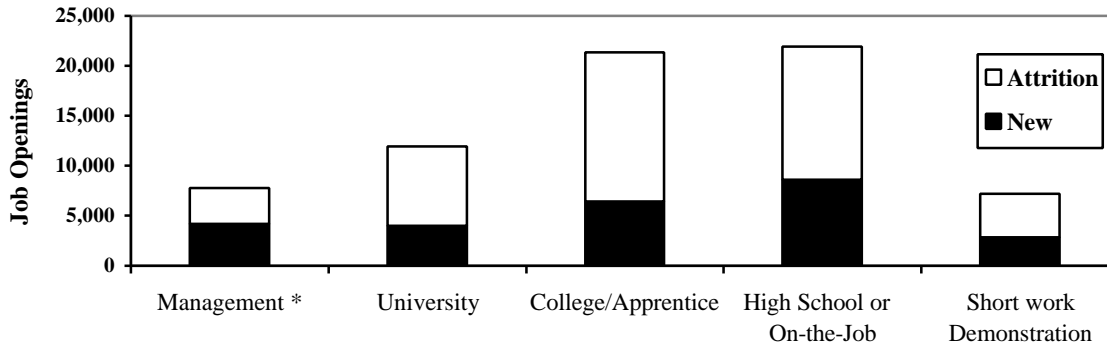
	<b>1991</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>Change</b>	
	<b>(000)</b>	<b>(000)</b>	<b>(000)</b>	<b>(%)</b>
<b><i>Goods Producing Industries</i></b>	<b>120.0</b>	<b>110.5</b>	<b>-9.5</b>	<b>-7.9</b>
Agriculture	86.5	73.1	-13.4	-15.5
Construction	13.0	12.6	-.4	-3.0
Other Primary	10.1	11.4	+ 1.3	+ 12.9
Manufacturing	10.4	13.4	+ 3.0	+ 28.9
<b><i>Service Producing Industries</i></b>	<b>148.9</b>	<b>153.6</b>	<b>+ 4.7</b>	<b>+ 3.2</b>
Commercial Services	30.8	33.9	+ 3.1	+ 10.1
Non-Commercial Services	39.9	42.4	+ 2.5	+ 6.3
Trade	37.1	38.6	+ 1.5	+ 4.0
Transport, Communications & Utilities	16.6	17.1	+ .5	+ 3.0
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	8.6	8.7	+ .1	+ 1.2
Government	15.9	12.9	-3.0	-18.9
<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b>268.8</b>	<b>264.1</b>	<b>-4.7</b>	<b>-1.8</b>

Source: Statistics Canada, 1991 and 1996 Census.

While a degree of “deskilling” has taken place as a result of technological change and employment shifts in some industries, overall labour demand has been strongest for skilled workers. This trend is expected to continue.

Table 3 shows approximately 70,000 job openings are forecast for Saskatchewan in the period 1998-2003, including new jobs plus vacancies created through attrition or people leaving the work force for reasons such as retirement or out-migration. Of these job openings, approximately 60% will require management skills or post-secondary education and training, and almost all jobs will require high school standing. This demand will accelerate pressures for access to post-secondary education and training and basic education for adults who do not have grade 12.

**Table 3**  
**Projected Job Openings By Skill Level**  
**Saskatchewan 1998-2003**



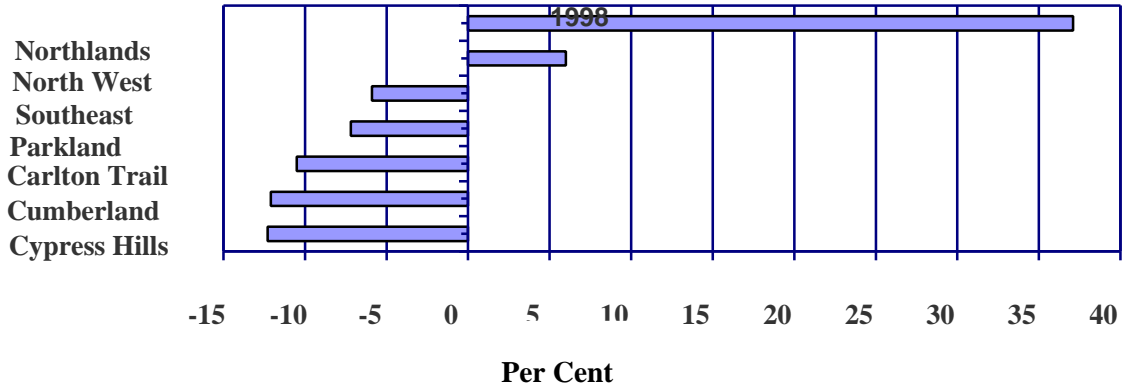
Source: *Canada-Saskatchewan Strategic Initiatives Employment Forecast*, based on *Canadian Occupational Projection System*, June, 1999. \*Management occupations are not assigned to an education or training category because other factors than education and training, such as previous experience, are often more significant determinants for employment, according to the National Occupational Classification, Human Resources Development Canada.

Saskatchewan's economy in rural and northern areas will continue to be vulnerable to cyclical trends in agriculture and the resource industries and their repercussions for other industry sectors such as trade and commercial services. This volatility presents issues for training and the role of regional colleges in assisting people and communities to adapt to change. During times of economic downturn, training may be in greater demand as individuals seek to become more competitive in the job market or to switch careers to find work in occupations with better long-term prospects.

The continuing importance of agriculture to the rural economy presents challenges for education and training in assisting people engaged in farming and other agricultural-related occupations. Global competition, technological change, and rising input costs are influencing the knowledge and skills that farmers require to sustain their operations, to diversify into new products, or to find off-farm employment. Technological innovation in agriculture has also led to the emergence of specialized occupations thereby signaling a potential demand for new training.

Rural depopulation is a long-term trend in Saskatchewan expected to continue with agricultural restructuring. As shown in Table 4, this trend has had a significant impact on the population within the service areas of regional colleges. All colleges, except Northlands and North West, have lost population in the 1980s and 90s, exacerbating the challenge of providing programs and services to small population groups dispersed over large geographic areas.

**Table 4**  
**Population of Regional Colleges Service Areas Per Cent Change, 1983-**



Source: Saskatchewan Health, Covered Population, 1998

Even though urbanization is a fact of life, Saskatchewan still has a relatively decentralized population with the majority of residents living and working outside of the four major urban centers of Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and Moose Jaw. Table 5 shows that over one half of Saskatchewan's population, labour force and employers are located outside of the four major cities in the province's rural and northern areas.

**Table 5**  
**Rural and Urban Distribution of Saskatchewan Population and Employment**

	Major Urban Centers (%)	Rural/North (%)
<b>Population</b>	44.6	55.4
<b>Employers</b>	41.2	58.8
<b>Labour Force</b>	45.9	54.1
<b>Paid Employees</b>	51.9	48.1

Source: Labour Market Information, Canada-Saskatchewan Strategic Initiatives, *Regional Profiles and Community Facts*, Statistics Canada, 1996 Census and Business Registry, 1998

Although almost 60% of the province's employers are located in rural and northern areas, the majority of these establishments are small with less than five employees as shown in Table 6. In contrast, the majority of large employers with twenty or more employees are located in the major urban centers.

**Table 6**  
**Size of Employers in Regional College Service Areas and Major Urban Centers, 1998**

Number Of Employees	Employers			
	College Areas		Major Centers	
	No.	%	No.	%
1 to 4	16565	67.6	8903	51.8
5 to 19	6375	26.0	5997	34.9
20 to 49	1131	4.6	1505	8.8
50 plus	422	1.8	776	4.5
<b>Total</b>	24493	100.0	17180	100.0

Source: Statistics Canada, Business Registry, June 1998.

Because small employers typically have less capacity to support skills training, either in-house or through purchase of services, the role of regional colleges is critical in responding to their needs. The presence of many small employers also has implications for colleges in maintaining contact with them and attempting to assess their collective needs to offer appropriate training programs and services.

In the next decade Saskatchewan will face major social and demographic challenges in achieving a well-educated population encompassing all sectors of our society. These challenges include aging of the population and growth in the number of First Nations and Métis peoples who have historically been under-represented at all levels of education and employment.

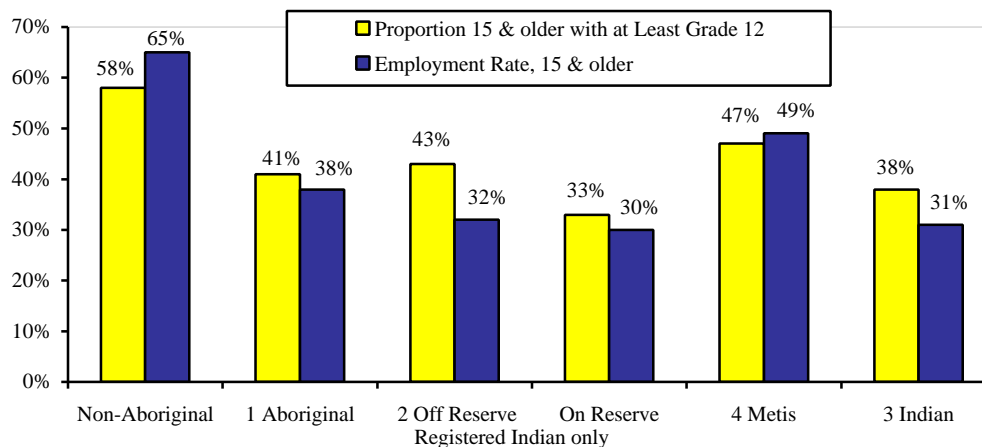
Demands for skills updating, retraining and support for career changes will increase as the province's labour force ages and the number of youth declines in absolute and relative numbers. As the baby boom generation retires, the working age population in Saskatchewan will begin to decline in the next ten years, assuming historical trends in inter-provincial migration continue. A general shortage of workers in many occupations could emerge. Specific skills shortages currently exist in the province and will likely become more evident during the next decade.

The employment status of First Nations and Métis peoples will be the major determining factor in preventing skill shortages and ensuring that the province has a pool of talented and skilled individuals to fill jobs and to create new job opportunities. Their participation in



the labour force and the economy will depend on increasing education levels and eliminating barriers to the hiring, retention and promotion of First Nations and Métis peoples in the workplace. As shown in Table 7, currently there is a considerable gap between the education and employment levels of First Nations and Métis peoples and the rest of the provincial population.

**Table 7**  
**Employment Rates and Formal Education Levels, Saskatchewan**  
**1996, Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Populations**



Source: Doug Elliot, Sask Trends Monitor, *Saskatchewan Labour Market Trends*, Prepared for Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training, 1999. Special tabulation from 1996 Census.

1. Aboriginal refers to those people who reported themselves as identifying with at least one of the following groups: North American Indian, Métis, Inuit, Treaty Indian, Registered Indian, as well as members of an Indian Band or First Nation. 2. Registered Indian refers to those people who reported that they were registered under the *Indian Act of Canada*. 3. Indian refers to those people who reported that they were North American Indian, as well as people who were Registered Indians or members of an Indian Band or First Nation. 4. Métis refers to people who reported that they identified with this Aboriginal group.

Saskatchewan's First Nations and Métis population is expected to grow steadily beyond its current level of approximately 12% of the provincial population. In the younger age categories, about 25% of youth are First Nations or Métis. This proportion is forecast to increase to 1 in 3 by 2010 and represents a major opportunity for the province and its regions to develop the future workforce and citizenry. The percentage of population in regional college areas who are First Nations and Métis is shown in Table 8. Priorities for programs and services to First Nations and Métis will differ in each region because of population size and distribution.

**Table 8**  
**First Nations and Métis Population in Regional College Service Areas**  
**Per Cent of Total Regional Population, 1996**

<b>Regional College</b>	<b>Per Cent of Total Regional Population</b>
Northlands	80.9
North West	25.8
Cumberland	12.3
Parkland	9.4
Southeast	5.2
Carlton Trail	5.1
Prairie West	1.8
Cypress Hills	1.3

Source: Statistics Canada, 1996 Census.

Disparities in education, training and employment among other groups, including people with disabilities, also require attention as a social and economic imperative to Saskatchewan's future well-being.

According to the 1991 Census, approximately one in six people of working age in Saskatchewan has a physical, psychological or learning disability that affects their ability to perform functions and maintain the social roles expected of them. In terms of education, 18% of people with disabilities in this age group have post-secondary certificates or diplomas, compared to about 23% for the non-disabled population, and approximately 7% have university degrees compared to 12% for non-disabled people. At the same time, the proportion of people with and without disabilities, who have achieved high school standing, is almost equal at about 46%. These statistics suggest that people with disabilities face a range of barriers in making transitions from the secondary level into post-secondary education and training.

### **1. Expectations of Saskatchewan Learners, Employers, and Communities**

Another key aspect of the environment shaping college direction is the expectations of Saskatchewan people, employers and communities. The many public interest groups that regional colleges serve are also being affected by large scale trends in Saskatchewan's social and economic fabric and they look to the regional colleges for programs and services to assist them in adapting to change. The following summarizes these expectations drawn from the Review Committee's consultation process and research.

## **Learners**

Learners expect regional colleges to:

- Ensure local access in rural and northern communities to a variety of education and training opportunities that fit learners' career plans and interests;
- Offer education and training that will prepare learners to enter the labour force or to fill job openings with employers in their region;
- Provide opportunities for skills updating and renewal for people wishing to re-enter the labour force, to prepare for changes in their work or business, or to enhance their current job knowledge and skills;
- Offer programs with credentials that are recognized by post-secondary institutions, employers, industry or professional associations, and that are portable and transferable for learners seeking further education and training;
- Work with other partners in education, training and employment services to create a continuum of opportunities for learners, for example, in moving from one level of education to the next and in accessing support services;
- Accommodate the circumstances of learners in the design and delivery of programs and services, including work and family responsibilities, learning styles and abilities, and special needs;
- Utilize a variety of formats, locations, times, and methods, such as SCN, face-to-face, multi-media, and on-line delivery, to maximize options and accessibility for learners;
- Assist learners in determining their program of study and career plan, and in selecting the most appropriate route to achieve their goals;
- Ensure programs and services are affordable for learners and their families; and
- Be accountable for serving learners in the most effective and efficient way possible with the available resources.

## **Employers**

Employers expect regional colleges to:

- Provide access to education and training at the regional level to develop a qualified workforce and to reduce barriers to participation in education and training;
- Offer training to match ongoing and emergent skill needs in rural and northern Saskatchewan;
- Use flexible delivery options to accommodate employer and employee circumstances and to facilitate access for people with work and family responsibilities;
- Cooperate with industry in the planning, design and delivery of education and training to anticipate skill demands, to ensure relevant training, to share expertise and resources such as equipment and facilities, and to enhance work experience and transitions to employment for learners;

- Contribute to developing a culture of lifelong learning and options for skills updating and retraining to enable employers and employees to keep pace with rapid changes in technology, the restructuring of work, and competition in the marketplace;
- Enhance credit transfer, portability of skills, and recognition of knowledge and skills learned on the job or through industry or private sector training;
- Assist employers in assessing skills and identifying training gaps for individuals, workplaces, and industry organizations;
- Prepare First Nations and Métis people to fill jobs with employers in their community or region, contributing to the development of a representative skilled workforce in the northern and rural areas;
- Enhance apprenticeship opportunities for rural and northern residents and contribute to enhancing decentralized delivery, flexibility, responsiveness, equity, and industry involvement in the apprenticeship system;
- Ensure programs and services are affordable for employers, workers and other learners so that cost is not a barrier to developing skills in demand in the workplace; and
- Demonstrate accountability and responsible use of public funds.

### **Communities**

Communities expect regional colleges to:

- Enhance the social and economic viability of communities and their attractiveness as places to live and to locate businesses by offering an array of education and training opportunities relevant to the needs of learners, employers and communities;
- Encourage youth to stay in rural and northern areas by offering education and training that is matched with regional jobs;
- Facilitate access to education and training for people in rural and northern areas who are employed or active community members;
- Offer education and training using a variety of formats and delivery methods to enhance learning options;
- Build strong relationships and partnerships with a wide range of community agencies and services including school divisions, health districts, municipalities, REDAs, provincial Career and Employment Services, Social Services, and non-government organizations;
- Include community groups representing learners with special needs in training, needs identification, program development and referral services, as well as ongoing evaluation and modification of programs and services; and
- Make full use of local facilities and equipment, sharing with other public services where possible to achieve economies and efficiencies.

### **3. Developments in Post-Secondary Education and Training**

Post-secondary institutions in Canada and elsewhere are facing changes and expectations that are similar to those experienced in Saskatchewan. A wide variety of strategies and approaches are being explored and implemented by other institutions to respond to such change and to take advantage of opportunities to enhance their services, reputation, and public support. This section outlines these developments and suggests potential directions for regional colleges, as well as emerging “benchmarks” for education and training, against which colleges will be compared by students, employers and communities.

#### **Technology-Enhanced Learning**

Technology-Enhanced Learning is at the center of massive changes in how education and training will be developed, delivered and accredited in the future. With advances in on-line capabilities and other multi-media, and the increasing availability of technology in the home and the work place, most institutions are introducing electronic formats for their programs and services. Some institutions, for example, the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, are committed to putting the majority of their programs on-line in the next few years and plan to attract learners world-wide. The Gartner Group (1998), an internationally recognized consulting group on information technology and management, estimates that in the next five years more than 50% of all traditional students in programs at colleges and universities in developed nations will take one or more courses off-campus.

The expansion of Technology-Enhanced Learning has many implications for regional colleges and other post-secondary institutions:

- Students will have greater choice to access learning from many sources at times and locations convenient to them and to design their own programs of study. There will be increasing pressure on institutions to accommodate and support customized, individualized learning in addition to delivery of education and training for students;
- Technology is spurring innovation in institutional arrangements. Consortia among institutions to deliver and recognize courses and programs delivered by electronic means are enabling institutions to greatly increase learning options to their constituents;
- Technology-Enhanced Learning is moving into the “mainstream” of institutional programming. The traditional place of the distance education or extension department as a separate organizational unit is breaking down in institutions where all courses use some form of technology and are adaptable for either classroom or on-line instruction;
- The roles of instructors are changing. They will increasingly move away from being transmitters of information to becoming coaches and facilitators that guide and challenge students through course material offered by their institution as well as other institutions; and
- Costs for integrating technology are significant and likely will not bring immediate savings to educational institutions that can be re-invested in the short-term to help

defray new expenditures for technology or the conversion of courses to electronic formats.

In response to these developments, institutions that serve dispersed population groups using distance education methods or “outreach” programming are changing their roles and strategies. For example, British Columbia is piloting the establishment of distance education learning centers to provide access and support to individuals wanting to study part-time and full-time, in programs from institutions of their choice from around the world.

The Western Governors University (WGU, 1998) has moved towards competency-based assessment where it offers a form of credential brokering in which an advisor or mentor who is knowledgeable in a subject area, assists the learner in determining ways to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to pass WGU’s competency-based assessment.

WGU was created to improve access to education by gathering courses and programs from about 20 institutions, corporations and other entities into a master catalogue. This enables learners to attain their educational goals by taking college-level courses through educational providers and corporations, degree programs at other universities, credit from technical institutes, and degrees through WGU. The competency-based degree is different from the traditional degree program in that programs are modeled on a learner’s demonstrated skills and knowledge, not on the number of credits earned. Instead, a learner’s mastery is measured through a range of methods from the written test to hands-on demonstration of skills. The WGU is not an accredited university, however, making the value of its degree uncertain. Successful completion of the assessment results in a WGU degree.

### **Community-Driven Learning and Development**

Community-driven learning strategies are evolving along with the increased opportunities to use information technologies for interactive communications and the growing awareness of the need for lifelong learning for sustainable economic and social development. Varying models of “learning communities” are developing around the world through collaboration among educational institutions, local government, community agencies and the private sector. These partnerships are aimed at broadening access to information technologies at the regional level, and to meeting many formal and informal learning needs, often linked to economic development initiatives and efforts to assist socially excluded individuals or groups (Faris, 1998). In Canada, the federal government is encouraging the development of Community Learning Networks through its Office of Learning Technologies. These networks are community controlled structures aimed at furthering community development and enhancing the lives of their members by supporting and encouraging lifelong learning.

The role of colleges in building community capacity for change and economic and social development is increasingly being recognized. The Ford Foundation, for example, has created a Rural Community College Initiative that challenges colleges in economically

distressed rural areas in the United States to become catalysts for economic development and to undertake aggressive efforts to expand access to education for their constituents. The aim is to develop communities with a “collaborative advantage” that comes from strong relationships among the business, government, education and community sectors. These relationships are the basis for “regional resiliency” and the capacity to achieve longer-term development goals. Colleges in this initiative have played a pivotal role in team-building among community leaders and in encouraging their active participation in institutional planning (Eller, Martinez, Pace, Pavel, and Barnett, 1999).

### **The Learner-Centered Organization**

Economic and social restructuring and technological change in the 1990s have forced post-secondary educators to assess the models and assumptions underlying their work. The concept of learner-centered organizations is gaining ascendancy as a new paradigm for creating access, relevance and accountability within today’s environment. The learner-centered organization seeks to move from being an institution that “provides instruction to students” to one that “produces learning in students” (Flynn, 1999). To illustrate the concept and its implications, the following are examples of learner-centered strategies:

- Curriculum explicitly designed around the critical learning outcomes necessary for graduates’ success in life and the workplace;
- Use of multiple instructional strategies that respond to different learning needs and styles;
- Redefinition of the role and training for faculty in identifying learning styles, developing modularized curriculum, using instructional technologies and designing effective learning environments;
- Use of time schedules and places or settings that are conducive to learning, rather than being determined by bureaucratic rules or the standard classroom configuration; and
- Collaborative leadership and cooperation among all employees in defining how they will reconfigure the institution to place learning first in all decisions and actions.

### **Partnerships and Alliances**

Institutions are increasingly involved in a wide variety of partnerships with each other, industry, community organizations, professional bodies and government agencies for a wide range of mutual benefits. For example, inter-institutional partnerships have developed where curriculum is licensed to a partner institution for fees, allowing the home institution to generate revenue and the delivery institution to extend offerings to its students. Through partnerships with industry, institutions are able to offer students learning in “real-life” settings, using up-to-date technology, while industry receives training customized to its requirements and potential employees who are well-versed in the business. Partnerships with community agencies facilitates integration of training with learner support services and regional economic and social development plans.

## **Mobility and Transferability of Learning**

Traditional education and career paths are breaking down with the greater geographic and occupational mobility in the workforce, and the greater need for people to continuously revamp their knowledge and skills. Accordingly, institutions have experienced pressure to increase the transferability and portability of learning and credentials and to make these arrangements transparent to learners. The introduction of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is well underway in many institutions to allow learners to gain advanced standing for their previous learning or experience. The expansion of credit transfer and equivalency arrangements among different post-secondary institutions and with industry organizations is another trend.

In striving to make their post-secondary sector as “seamless” as possible, various provinces have encouraged transferability of learning through system-wide directions and organizational structures to facilitate credit transfer. For example, both British Columbia and Alberta have established councils on admissions and credit transfer. In Manitoba and Ontario, councils or consortia that include technical institutes, colleges and universities have been formed to advance collaboration among the sectors, with improved transferability of learning being a high priority.

At the national level, the Association of Canadian Community Colleges has initiated a Pan-Canadian Protocol for the Transferability of Learning. The protocol, signed by colleges and technical institutes in all provinces, commits signatories to maximizing the recognition and transfer of learning acquired through formal education, workplace training and work and life experience.

In addition, the federal and provincial governments have recently signed the Social Union Framework Agreement which commits them to eliminate residency-based policies or practices which constrain access to post-secondary education or training, unless the practices are reasonable and consistent with the agreement’s principles. Some national forums are using this agreement to further the cause of enhanced credit transfer among Canadian post-secondary credit-granting institutions.

## **Accountability and Performance Management**

The post-secondary sector in most jurisdictions in Canada and abroad is experiencing escalating demands for accountability and performance management. Governments, learners, industry and the general public want to be assured that institutions are responsive to their needs and expectations and are achieving results in an efficient and effective way. While post-secondary institutions have long used methods such as program reviews, advisory bodies and surveys of graduates to monitor their performance and make adjustments, the demand today is for comprehensive and systemic approaches that link plans, performance measurement, reporting, and continuous improvement throughout the organization.



Technical institutes and colleges in a number of provinces are working with government to develop and refine key performance indicators aligned with system-wide strategic goals and institutional business plans. These performance indicators are being integrated into annual reports to the public and, in some jurisdictions, the budget allocation process.

## CHAPTER 4: CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL POSITIONING

The current organizational positioning of the regional colleges describes how well they are prepared to respond to the major social and economic trends affecting rural and northern Saskatchewan and the expectations of learners, employers and communities. Given the existing mandate and activities of regional colleges, the Review Committee identified strengths that should be preserved and enhanced in the future and issues that will need to be addressed for regional colleges to continue their effectiveness and relevance over the long-term.

### 1. Key Strengths

- ***Focal Point for Access in Rural and Northern Areas:*** Regional colleges are highly valued in rural and northern Saskatchewan because they are viewed as playing a crucial role in ensuring that education and skills training programs and services can be accessed close to home at a reasonable cost. Several organizations commented during the Review Committee’s consultation process on the importance of regional colleges in providing a comprehensive “one-stop” education and training service for people and industry in their communities. The regional colleges are clearly recognized as having a leadership role in delivering education and training at the local level, and communities look to the colleges to enhance accessibility and responsiveness as needs change and evolve.
- ***Brokerage Arrangements with SIAST and the Universities:*** Regional colleges have taken a leadership role at the local level by brokering credit programs and drawing upon the expertise and instructional resources of SIAST and the province’s two universities. The model has served colleges well by allowing them to offer an array of programs in a manner that has the following advantages:
  - Students receive recognized and transferable credentials from institutions that are widely known and respected in Saskatchewan and Canada;
  - Colleges avoid the costs of curriculum development and maintenance and the implications of being responsible for granting credit such as keeping extensive records of student performance and curricula for past courses and programs;
  - Colleges can access programs that are continually being updated by institutions that are in touch with industry and the latest developments in academic disciplines;
  - Communities and learners have access to a program array that can change with identified needs and circumstances at the local level;
  - Program delivery can be tailored to fit regional circumstances; and
  - The post-secondary system as a whole is able to minimize unnecessary duplication and effort among institutions.

The Review Committee heard that the brokerage model generally operates effectively from the perspective of the regional colleges, SIAST and the universities. It represents a unique and valued capability developed through years of collaboration and experience. While the Review Committee noted that these partnerships can be improved, the existing arrangements provide a strong foundation for future collaboration in the delivery of post-secondary education and training outside of the major urban centers.

- ***Flexibility and Responsiveness:*** Regional colleges are the most flexible and responsive post-secondary institutions in Saskatchewan due to their mandate, the way in which they operate, and their philosophical and historical commitment to being driven by needs of learners, employers and communities. The Review Committee learned during its consultation process that many organizations are well-satisfied with the efforts regional colleges have made to respond to the particular needs of their particular sectors.

Because they do not have a fixed set of programs determined by their own institutional infrastructure, colleges can serve as “honest brokers”, bringing into communities the best courses or programs that fit local needs and providing information about the range of post-secondary choices learners may have. As relatively small organizations with a wide set of contacts in the regions they serve, colleges are able to stay in touch with needs on an ongoing basis and to quickly mount programs with minimal bureaucratic processes. For example, there are instances of regional colleges delivering training for employers within days of receiving a request. In other instances, colleges have responded to regional needs by developing customized programs tailored to specific industries such as forestry, mining, or oil and gas, and to the particular challenges of delivering public services such as health care in rural areas.

Regional colleges also demonstrate flexibility and responsiveness in terms of the location of programs. Colleges are not committed to large centralized campuses and typically move training to communities wherever the demand for programs is situated. Colleges have a base of operations in well over 40 communities in rural and northern areas.

- ***Regional Partnerships:*** The relevance, capacity and reputation of regional colleges in their service areas are very much influenced by their ability to develop a wide range of partnerships. Regional colleges are enmeshed in an extensive network of relationships with other organizations to carry out joint needs identification, planning, program development, service coordination, and delivery of training and education. This ability expands the colleges’ effectiveness and efficiency in immeasurable ways that allow far more to be accomplished than if colleges worked on their own.

For example, Southeast Regional College has worked with industry to create the Energy Training Institute to identify and deliver courses and programs beneficial to companies and individuals within the energy sector. Northlands College co-chairs the Northern Labour Market Committee which includes nearly all major employers,

educational institutions, government agencies, First Nations and Métis organizations, and economic development organizations in northern Saskatchewan. The Committee identifies and assesses emerging labour market issues in the north and initiates actions to enable northerners to benefit from development. Several colleges have collaborated with local employers and industry organizations to provide custom designed training solutions. To illustrate, Carlton Trail Regional College developed a partnership with the Prairie Implement Manufacturers Association to provide an industrial applicators training program to train people to apply paint and other coatings to industrial machinery and buildings.

- ***Learner-Centeredness:*** Since their inception in the early 1970s, colleges have operated with a philosophy that places students at the center of their organizational principles and activities. Decision-making is much closer to learners, and their needs are the starting point for determining programs. Because of this orientation, colleges expect to modify their offerings and delivery methods to suit the characteristics, learning styles and needs of students. This philosophy, and way of operating, strongly positions colleges to meet the growing need for individualized programs and services to diverse learners and to adopt new methods such as the use of educational technologies, which expand possibilities for meeting learners' needs.
- ***Needs Assessment and Business Planning:*** Regional colleges undertake education and training needs assessments on an annual basis, in addition to their ongoing liaison with learners, employers, community organizations and other groups. Each regional college prepares a report outlining significant social and economic developments in its service area, occupations in demand, potential skills shortages and implications for college programs and services. Colleges use a variety of methods to gather this information including focus groups, surveys, interviews and community consultations, as well as secondary sources of data.

Although reports are produced annually, regional colleges stress that needs assessment is not a one-time event. It is a fundamental feature of college operations in all relationships and contacts at the local level. The material compiled by the colleges through these formal and informal processes represents the best information available in the province on regional and local labour market developments and needs for education and training.

The results of the needs assessment processes are used by regional colleges to prepare annual business plans. The business plans are a vehicle for establishing strategic goals, objectives, priorities and operational plans to achieve these ends, and a shared understanding of expectations and outcomes between the colleges and the government. The needs assessment and business planning processes also contribute to partnerships, communications and the credibility of colleges with their clients. Some colleges, for example, publish joint needs assessment reports with regional partners, such as the Canada Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services, and Human Resources

Development Canada. Others have used the reports and plans as ways to account to their regional stakeholders about how identified needs have been addressed.

- ***Quality and Dedication of Regional College Staff:*** The success of the regional colleges, and the respected position which they enjoy in their communities, have depended on the quality and dedication of managers, instructors, counselors and support staff at the colleges. College employees often play many roles and must be adaptable and flexible in serving diverse student needs and in working with various community partners. Through its workshops with regional managers, instructors, administrative staff and union representatives, the Review Committee was impressed with the vision and high aspirations that college staff had for their organizations, and their dedication to serving their clients in the best way possible.

## **2. Key Challenges for Regional Colleges' Future Directions**

- ***Capacity to Address Unmet Education and Training Needs:*** Regional colleges are facing several pressures to meet a range of education and training needs in their service areas. Education and training needs are growing due to factors such as diversification of the rural and northern economies, the emergence of niche industries, technological change, and major changes in public services such as health care. Transitions in the agricultural sector are creating demands for information and training for farm families to remain competitive in grain and livestock production, to develop alternative specialties, and to prepare for off-farm employment as well as for people engaged in the specialized occupations emerging in agriculture. Northern areas are facing a rapidly growing population that traditionally has had lower levels of education and training than the rest of the province. Like their urban counterparts, most youth in rural and northern areas are seeking post-secondary education or training and are looking for affordable options such as studying in their home communities.

There is evidence that many needs are going unmet because regional colleges do not have the capacity to respond to them. Regional college annual needs assessment reports and business plans for 1999-2000 identify a need for an additional \$6.5 million in program funding to meet documented demands in areas such as basic education, and many occupations including truck driver training, home care/special care, teacher assistants, construction trades, tourism and hospitality, forestry, and computer support. Based on a recent survey conducted by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, employers in all areas of the province are concerned about shortages of qualified workers as shown in Table 9:

**Table 9**  
**Concern Over Shortage of Qualified Labour In Saskatchewan**

	South West Sask	Central West Sask	South East Sask	Central East Sask	North Sask	Total
Shortage of Qualified Labour	22.4%	39.7%	33.1%	37.1%	41.7%	34.8%

Source: Canadian Federation of Independent Business, *Members' Opinion Survey*, July, 1999.

Regional colleges are limited in responding to growing training needs by the type and size of their operations and the resources available to them. These limiting factors include:

- Most of the funding available to regional colleges is allocated through specific program funds. Once these funds have been expended on an annual basis, colleges have little ability to draw upon or re-allocate operating grants or other resources to address new priorities. The average annual operating grant of individual colleges is approximately \$1.3 million and is stretched to support a variety of administrative and program coordination functions. The average program grant to each college is \$1.7M, excluding Northlands College which has a program budget of approximately \$3M. This amount of funding can support approximately 1,350 students per college in full-time and part-time programs;
- Program funding to colleges was reduced in the 1990s due to the federal withdrawal from training and related cutbacks. The province backfilled most of the federal reduction, particularly in the area of short-term training and basic education. Support for longer programs, such as credit training, has not been fully addressed;
- Although the brokerage model with SIAST and the universities has worked well, only a limited number of SIAST and university courses or programs are available and practical for colleges to deliver off-campus. Availability of instructors and facilities, institutional priorities for on-campus programs, and the need to have sufficient numbers of students to fill classes, are major constraints. As well, it may be difficult for colleges to broker only part of a program for credit to meet specific learning needs because many institutional programs are not set up to permit this flexibility; and
- Program criteria limit the flexibility of colleges to use those resources to address particular needs in the region. For example, work-based training programs do not allow funds to be used to train workers to fill existing positions where replacement workers are needed.

- ***The Challenge of Technology-Enhanced Learning:*** Technology-Enhanced Learning represents a major challenge to regional colleges as well as a significant opportunity. As more programs become available on the Internet, colleges risk losing students who can access education and training on their own from home or the work place. Many individuals, however, will be constrained in their ability to use this learning resource in the future due to:
  - Many homes in Saskatchewan do not have access to computers and the Internet, particularly lower income households, and will not be able to afford them in the foreseeable future despite falling prices;
  - Access to high speed Internet, to support quality programming and delivery, is not expected to become common for home use in the near future;
  - Many programs will continue to require a “hands on” component and face-to-face instruction with computer-mediated learning as an adjunct rather than the only learning mode; and
  - Learners often need a variety of skills and supports to find programs appropriate to their career interests and to succeed in courses of independent studies.

While regional colleges have made investments in technologies for learning, most are not well-positioned, in terms of their technological infrastructure, to take on an enhanced role or to expand the services they offer to learners or employers. Unless this challenge is addressed, rural and northern Saskatchewan will miss one of the most promising options to serve dispersed, small populations and to offer a diversified range of programs that respond to regional needs.

- ***Partnerships for Labour Market Planning and Development:*** The extensive network of partnerships in which regional colleges are involved, are primary mechanisms for the colleges to undertake labour market planning and development with employers and other significant organizations such as health districts, agricultural groups, business associations, regional economic development agencies, community-based organizations, and government services. The Review Committee noted during the consultation process that many partners are seeking even greater collaboration with the colleges to identify skill needs and to plan and deliver joint responses. These organizations recognize the valuable leadership role colleges play in facilitating coordinated planning and programming.

The needs assessment processes initiated by the regional colleges are challenged by the ongoing dynamic nature of the labour market, which is not amenable to detailed forecasting and has great variation across industry sectors. Regional colleges often find themselves in a “catch up” situation regarding training needs. By the time a need is identified, skill shortages may already be evident on a regional or provincial basis. Part of the problem stems from the colleges’ inability to stay in touch with every development in their service areas and their focus on their own regions, while labour markets generally are far more fluid. At the present time, colleges do not have strong

linkages to labour market planning processes beyond their regions and at the industry sector or provincial levels. Further, the province has few coordinating mechanisms to improve labour market information and needs assessment.

- ***The Future of Community Education:*** Regional colleges have an ambiguous mandate for activities that generally are referred to as community development and education. With the shift in the past decade to an emphasis on credit programs and skills training, the regional colleges have a less clear role in responding to the range of learning needs that are driven by the social, cultural and economic changes experienced by regional residents, employers and communities. These needs often cannot be met through existing credit programs. At the same time, there are many more agencies operating at the regional level that are capable of undertaking community development and informal educational activities than were in existence during the early days of the colleges (e.g. health districts, libraries and REDAs).

With the social and economic transformation underway in rural and northern Saskatchewan, it is important for colleges to have a defined role in meeting informal learning needs at the local level. This role must be complementary to other organizations and maintain a focus on priorities for post-secondary education and skills training.

- ***Support For Learners:*** Regional colleges are challenged in providing a range of support services and quality instruction to address the diversity of learners' needs that exists in rural and northern areas. Colleges have made many efforts to meet this challenge. For example, all colleges have counselors who assist students in determining their learning and career goals and several have hired learning specialists to work with students who have learning difficulties and special needs. Some regional colleges have focused on developing staff competencies in dealing with the needs of various equity groups. These initiatives support and reflect the learner-centered orientation of colleges.

In the future, regional colleges will be expected to make even greater efforts to ensure equity and to meet legal obligations to accommodate the needs of all learners. While most colleges have equity initiatives, few have taken a comprehensive approach by developing and implementing equity plans. As small organizations with limited discretionary resources, colleges generally cannot afford to offer highly specialized services on their own. As well, many do not have the data systems to monitor the participation of learners from equity groups in their programs.

There is also confusion about responsibilities for learner support services for students in brokered programs from SIAST and the universities. SIAST's Education Equity Program (1998), approved by the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, includes extension activities such as brokered programs offered by the colleges. However, the



practical application of this provision in terms of responsibilities for providing learner support services has not been clarified.

Increased demands for transferability and portability of learning will also affect regional colleges. Regional colleges, on behalf of students, have advocated for improved credit transfer arrangements and prior learning assessment and recognition from provincial credit granting institutions. With progress in this area, and growth in Technology-Enhanced Learning, regional colleges will be challenged to better assist students in identifying ways in which they may gain recognition for previous learning and in applying for credit.

- **Infrastructure Pressures:** The original model of regional colleges as flexible organizations receiving a base grant to support administration, community needs identification and program coordination, and drawing upon other public and private sources of funding to pay for program delivery, continues to characterize the colleges' fundamental mode of operation. While this model is a strength because it supports flexibility and responsiveness, it has not kept pace with the changing role of the colleges and the greater demands for education and training than were present when colleges were first established. The expanded role of regional colleges in delivering post-secondary credit programs, and the greater sophistication and complexity of these programs, have created new pressures for college facilities, equipment, technology, and learning resources.

At the present time, regional colleges receive ad hoc funding to address these pressures and attempt to generate budget surpluses which can be carried forward year over year to make investments in their infrastructure and training capacity. This practice reduces the colleges' resources for mounting education and training programs and limits accessibility for learners and employers. The lack of a predictable and rational approach for supporting college infrastructure will continue to be an issue with increased demands for education and training and the expansion of Technology-Enhanced Learning options.

- **College Operations and Management:** The system of regional colleges that has evolved in Saskatchewan, and the colleges' role in delivering brokered credit programs and provincial training initiatives in ways that respond to regional needs, is known nationally for its effectiveness and efficiency. The Review Committee believes that this model of operation continues to be relevant and appropriate in Saskatchewan. In the future, regional colleges will continue to require flexibility and independence in their regional operations to respond to the varying social and economic conditions found across the province. At the same time, like all public institutions, colleges will face growing pressures to demonstrate that they are using their resources in the best way possible and are cooperating with other partners to maximize accessibility and quality learning opportunities.

Although colleges face different circumstances in their regions, they experience common challenges and resource pressures in their operations. Colleges have collaborated with each other in many instances to address joint interests and needs. For example, colleges may share specialist services or work together to develop shared programs or projects. The Association of Saskatchewan Regional Colleges provides a forum at the provincial level for colleges to address common needs and to articulate their views on system-wide policy directions. These avenues of cooperation enhance, rather than detract from, the ability of regional colleges to be effective within their own individual boundaries. This type of cooperation will become more important in the future given the circumstances facing the colleges. As a system, the colleges will need to extend their collaborative efforts, while maintaining the ability of individual institutions to manage their operations in a manner that fits regional conditions.

- ***College-Department Relationship:*** With growing demand for accountability and resource pressures, it will become increasingly important for the regional colleges and the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training to develop a stronger relationship based on clear and realistic expectations about the outcomes colleges should achieve through their use of public funds. A relationship built on clear expectations could work to enhance regional decision-making, allowing the colleges to manage their operations with greater flexibility, while ensuring that provincial standards and policy directions are being met. This type of relationship will require change on the part of the Department to better articulate system-wide goals and expectations, at a policy rather than administrative level, and change on the part of colleges to establish consistent ways of monitoring their use of resources and reporting their plans and the results achieved.

## **CHAPTER 5: STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR REGIONAL COLLEGES**

### **OVERARCHING PRIORITIES**

Based on the analysis of the regional colleges' current organizational positioning in relation to future trends and public expectations, the Review Committee's recommendations regarding strategic directions for the regional colleges are focussed on four overarching priorities:

#### **I. Responsiveness to Education and Training Needs**

Responsiveness to the education and training needs of learners, employers and communities must be at the center of regional college decision-making, operations and accountability. Regional colleges need to adopt new strategies and partnerships to ensure responsiveness in the future, while building on the success of their current mandate and model of operations. This includes focusing on strategic opportunities such as those provided through Technology-Enhanced Learning; partnerships extending the array and capacity of programs as well as the extensiveness of the needs assessment and planning processes; and enhancing the educational brokerage model.

#### **II. A Commitment to Support for Learners**

A commitment to supporting learners with diverse needs and circumstances must continue to be a focal point for regional colleges to ensure access and equity for all people in rural and northern Saskatchewan.

#### **III. Regional Colleges within an Integrated Delivery System**

The future evolution of regional colleges should contribute to developing an integrated delivery system for post-secondary education and skills training through enhanced collaboration and cooperation with other regional partners, among colleges, and with government and other provincial institutions.

#### **IV. Effective Governance, Management and Support**

Regional colleges and the government must work towards strengthening governance, management and support for colleges to enable them to meet the challenges and resource pressures of the future.

The Review Committee proposes these priorities, and the recommended strategies to address them, as long-term directions for regional colleges to work towards over the next five years or more. They are intended to focus attention on those areas which are critical to the colleges' future relevance and effectiveness, recognizing their existing strengths and capabilities. The Review Committee believes that the regional colleges will continue to be

important assets for supporting social and economic development in rural and northern Saskatchewan. The future will hold many opportunities for regional colleges to demonstrate leadership, innovation and commitment to communities.

## **I. RESPONSIVENESS TO EDUCATION AND TRAINING NEEDS**

The responsiveness of regional colleges in the future will depend on taking advantage of new opportunities to use technology and partnership with other organizations to extend the array and capacity of the programs and services colleges can offer to meet the needs of their clients. Regional colleges are well positioned to move in this direction because of their orientation to identifying and responding to regional needs and their ability to access or develop programs through working with a wide range of organizations including credit granting post-secondary institutions and many local agencies. This fundamental approach to delivering programs and services is still as relevant today as it was in the past, if not even more appropriate now in light of advances in Technology-Enhanced Learning and conditions in rural and northern Saskatchewan.

### **Technology-Enhanced Learning**

Regional colleges have the potential to play a major new role in assisting learners in rural and northern areas to access education and training through Technology-Enhanced Learning.

As Technology-Enhanced Learning becomes more pervasive, Saskatchewan people could have many more options to participate in education and training offered by provincial post-secondary institutions, as well as those from beyond our national and international borders. In order for Saskatchewan learners to take advantage of these options, regional colleges could develop system-wide capabilities to assist learners in selecting appropriate, quality programs and in supporting them to be successful in their programs of study. Technology-Enhanced Learning capabilities in regional colleges would serve as a valuable resource to learners, particularly those who do not have ready access to computers or the Internet, as well as to employers and communities seeking to advance their social and economic development.

The province is currently developing a Technology-Enhanced Learning strategy for post-secondary education and skills training involving the universities, SIAST, the Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission, regional colleges and other organizations such as SaskTel and the Saskatchewan Communications Network (SCN). It is important that regional colleges' plans and their potential future role be integrated and developed within this larger exercise to ensure complementary roles and recognition of rural and northern priorities for technology-enhanced programs and services.

The Review Committee recognizes that while regional colleges have an approach to program delivery that meshes well with Technology-Enhanced Learning, they do not have

sufficient technological infrastructure or resources to implement a significant new initiative. The will need to be addressed in order to enable regional colleges to utilize new developments in Technology-Enhanced Learning.

**1. The Review Committee recommends that the regional colleges develop new roles and capabilities in using Technology-Enhanced Learning to meet the needs of learners, employers and communities. A network of Technology-Enhanced Learning centers is proposed to support access in rural and northern Saskatchewan to the growing number and variety of programs and services offered by post-secondary institutions in the province and elsewhere via electronic communications. Regional colleges would perform the following functions:**

- **Provide free or low cost access to computers, the Internet, and other technologies, such as video-conferencing, for learners wishing to enroll in technology-enhanced courses or programs;**
- **Assist students to acquire skills to be successful in using Technology-Enhanced Learning such as study skills, computer skills, basic academic knowledge, and skills for self-directed learning;**
- **Provide information, advice, and counseling to learners on career planning and Technology-Enhanced Learning options appropriate to their needs;**
- **Provide opportunities for learning in group settings to complement on-line courses or programs;**
- **Connect learners with mentors, fellow students, employers, or professional and community groups that could lend support to their learning or career path;**
- **Facilitate access to learning resources required by individuals using Technology-Enhanced Learning, in collaboration with post-secondary institutions and the provincial library system;**
- **In cooperation with other credit granting post-secondary institutions offering Technology-Enhanced Learning options, serve as invigilators or test centers for learners who cannot travel to those institutions to write exams or demonstrate their knowledge and skills to obtain credit for their learning; and**
- **In collaboration with other colleges and other post-secondary institutions, evaluate technology-enhanced courses offered by out-of-province institutions in terms of their quality, recognition and applicability to Saskatchewan circumstances and needs. Regional colleges, SIAST, the universities and First Nations and Métis institutions could specialize in different areas of study and share expertise.**

**2. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges, in taking on these new roles for Technology-Enhanced Learning, continue to be primarily brokers and facilitators of learning within the provincial post-secondary system.**

**3. It is further recommended that the regional colleges' new role and capabilities for Technology-Enhanced Learning be developed within a provincial plan, with leadership from the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training. A**

***provincial plan will facilitate cooperation among the institutions to ensure that the needs of rural, northern and First Nations and Métis learners are fully taken into account in setting priorities for developing technology-enhanced courses and programs in Saskatchewan. Priority setting for investments in Technology-Enhanced Learning should be based on improved needs assessment for university and technical education and training and SIAST's current commitment to implement multi-site delivery, to the greatest extent possible, so that training is available where learners and jobs are located.***

- 4. The Review Committee recommends that the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training work with the regional colleges to identify the necessary infrastructure and support to implement the proposed network of Technology-Enhanced Learning centers, and to develop and resource a complementary information technology plan. Requirements should be identified and addressed within the provincial plan for Technology-Enhanced Learning, including the potential roles of SCN and SaskTel.***

#### **Needs Assessment Processes and Planning**

The responsiveness of regional colleges to education and training needs depends on working with many partners to gather and analyze information about changing knowledge and skill requirements and learners' needs. The annual needs assessment process and the reports prepared by regional colleges have developed an effective mechanism for giving colleges an understanding of changing needs in their service areas. This vehicle could be further utilized to engage many regional partners in college planning and joint programming, and would respond to the desire of these organizations to work more closely with the colleges. There is also a need for collaboration with the universities to conduct effective needs assessments for determining priorities for university extension programs delivered through the colleges.

The dilemma that regional colleges face in identifying and responding to labour market needs which often extend beyond their service areas, requires other processes that involve colleges in planning at the industry sector and provincial levels. There is a need for the province to take the lead in developing and facilitating these additional forums where regional colleges, as well as other institutions and organizations, can gain a more comprehensive view of training needs and plan coordinated responses.

The needs assessments carried out by the regional colleges only have real value in terms of responsiveness if the results are incorporated into college plans and programming. While it is not possible for regional colleges to address all demands for education and training, their business plans should make it clear how proposed programs will address needs which have been identified as priorities.

5. ***The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges strengthen partnerships in conducting needs assessments, determining priorities, coordinating labour market planning and undertaking joint training with other organizations and agencies at the regional level such as the Canada Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services, Regional Economic Development Authorities, First Nations and Métis organizations, Human Resources Development Canada, Social Services, municipal governments, health districts, school divisions, community-based organizations and others.***
6. ***The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges, along with other partners and with leadership from the Department, develop processes at the provincial and sectoral levels to undertake labour market development planning and needs assessment, including forecasting occupational and skill requirements, identifying emergent training demands, and creating potential solutions to meet the pressures.***

***The Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training should take the lead in facilitating this process and involving other partners, such as industry, First Nations and Métis organizations, SIAST, the universities, the Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission, Human Resources Development Canada, and other provincial departments. The feasibility and usefulness of conducting in-depth needs assessments in a few targeted industry sectors each year could be tested on a pilot basis. A sectoral approach to labour market development and training needs assessment should be linked to industry sectors within the province's economic development strategy.***

7. ***The Review Committee recommends that the assessment of needs for university courses and programs also be included in the annual needs assessment process. Regional colleges and the universities should collaborate to develop approaches and methods for identifying and prioritizing these needs, with the possibility of conducting in-depth assessments every few years.***
8. ***The Review Committee recommends that colleges clearly demonstrate linkages between the needs presented in their annual needs assessment reports and proposed programming in their business plans. It is also recommended that the methods and processes used by regional colleges to conduct their needs assessments be clearly outlined in their reports.***

### **Future of the Brokerage Model**

The unique partnerships developed by the regional colleges to broker SIAST and university programs is a strength that should evolve with changing needs and circumstances, for example, the growth of Technology-Enhanced Learning and the reorganization of SIAST into a provincial organization with a commitment to multi-site delivery. A renewal of the brokerage model is desirable to ensure its continuing effectiveness, while preserving the benefits of existing arrangements. Programs delivered in cooperation with the universities

and SIAST support these organizations in carrying out their province-wide mandate. In return, regional colleges have ready access to programs geared to Saskatchewan needs and recognized by regional employers. The province as a whole benefits by keeping education and training resources in the province and using them to enhance our capacity.

In the future, regional colleges, SIAST and the universities should collaborate more closely to coordinate their planning and priority setting so that rural and northern needs are addressed by the institutions. Opportunities are developing to provide enhanced programs to rural and northern learners through a variety of methods. It is incumbent on provincial institutions to work with the regional colleges to ensure that these opportunities for off-campus delivery are built into their priorities and planning. In instances where provincial institutions have been made aware of regional college needs but cannot respond to them, regional colleges should continue to have the flexibility to broker programs from out-of-province institutions.

A specific issue was raised with the Review Committee concerning responsibilities for students in brokered programs, particularly in the context of the brokerage arrangement with SIAST. It is not clear where SIAST's obligations end and those of the colleges' begin. SIAST sets admission and academic standards and counts students in brokered programs in its total enrolment, as well as in its reporting on its equity plan to the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission. Regional colleges, however, pay for SIAST programming through student tuition fees and provincial funding for training, and have responsibility for student recruitment and program delivery, including student support services. It is not clear when or whether college or SIAST student discipline and appeal policies apply. These issues should be resolved as part of the discussions between the regional colleges and SIAST in renewing the brokerage agreement.

**9. The Review Committee recommends that the current brokerage model and protocol agreement with SIAST be updated and revised to enhance delivery of technical education and training in rural and northern Saskatchewan. It is recommended that a new agreement:**

- **Establish a formal process for SIAST and the regional colleges to coordinate and integrate their needs assessment processes and jointly plan how identified needs can be addressed;**
- **Clarify points of contact and channels of communication for the regional colleges within SIAST's organizational structure;**
- **Provide ways for colleges to have input into the design, evaluation and updating of curricula for programs that are brokered by colleges to address learning needs in their regions;**
- **Identify appropriate and reasonable timelines for SIAST to respond to requests from regional colleges, to be determined mutually by SIAST and the colleges;**
- **In addition to discussing their requirements with SIAST and giving SIAST an opportunity to respond before choosing an alternative provider, recognize that**



**regional colleges may seek to broker programs from institutions other than SIAST;**

- **Include avenues for SIAST and the regional colleges to work together in making the best use of Technology-Enhanced Learning and supporting learners at a distance;**
- **Clarify institutions' responsibilities for students from a legal point of view, in terms of obligations for student support services, and for accountability and reporting purposes;**
- **Encourage cooperation between the regional colleges and SIAST in providing student services at the local level; and**
- **Continue to require SIAST and regional colleges to notify each other in identifying and responding to training needs in their respective service areas.**

**10. To enhance the range of SIAST programs available for delivery off-campus, the Review Committee recommends that SIAST give priority to making available a greater array of programs for delivery in northern and rural areas using a variety of formats and methods such as face-to-face multi-site delivery, Technology-Enhanced Learning, and work-based training.**

**11. With respect to university courses and programs, the Review Committee recommends that regional colleges and the province's two universities collaborate in identifying and responding to needs in rural and northern Saskatchewan. It is further recommended that these needs be given priority in university plans for greater use of Technology-Enhanced Learning.**

### **Access to Training Programs**

Regional colleges, other post-secondary institutions and agencies with provincial mandates, and the province face a dilemma in responding to all of the education and training needs evident in rural and northern areas. Colleges have limited ability to raise significant revenues on their own to finance additional programs because they must keep their services affordable for learners and employers. While provincial funding for training programs has increased in recent years, this expenditure has been stretched to backfill federal reductions and has not kept pace with increasing demands.

Partnerships with other local organizations and industry have been developed by regional colleges to share resources and costs for training. This approach has been effective in many instances in providing training that otherwise would not have occurred. Still, many other needs, particularly for basic education and longer-term credit programs, are difficult to finance without program funds. As well, partnership development itself can be a resource-intensive activity in terms of staff time, coordination and administration. Although these constraints are serious, there are possibilities to increase training opportunities in rural and northern areas through collaboration among the regional colleges, SIAST, the Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission and the Department of

Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training. Both SIAST and the Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission have priorities to enhance decentralized delivery of their programs. Similarly, the Department has interests in ensuring that provincial programs such as basic education and JobStart/Future Skills are operating as effectively as possible to respond to critical education and training needs.

***12. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges, SIAST, the Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission and the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training work together to enhance access to skills training and basic education where learners and jobs are located in rural and northern Saskatchewan. Partnerships among regional colleges, the Department, SIAST and the Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission should continue to be strengthened to address issues of capacity within the training system to meet growing needs for basic education and skills linked to jobs throughout the labour force.***

### **Non-Credit Community Education and Training for Industry**

The non-credit programming offered by regional colleges, currently referred to as Community and Individual Development, to respond to informal, short-term community and industry needs continues to be an important function of the colleges. These activities have not been formally recognized as a part of the colleges' mandate even though they are highly useful and valued at the local level. They are essential in building community capacity, knowledge and skills to undertake social and economic development and in enabling employers to keep pace with changing conditions in their industry. These activities, by their very nature, should be collaborative educational efforts with others at the regional level assuming a significant role in the planning, designing and funding of training. Because this activity constitutes a legitimate role for colleges, it should be counted in a consistent way like other college programming and reported as part of demonstrating responsiveness.

This is not a reinstatement of hobby and leisure programming. The regional colleges' role in offering a range of non-credit programs that respond to leisure or personal interests was phased out several years ago. The Review Committee recognizes that there may be rare instances where regional colleges are called on to offer these types of programs and that they may support the cultural and recreational development of communities. Since these activities are generally not consistent with the priorities of regional colleges to support education and training linked to social and economic development, the Review Committee believes they should only be offered when there is no other provider and only on a full cost-recovery basis, including all direct and indirect costs.

For the past decade, colleges have operated with a directive to offer non-credit programs on a cost-recovery basis. At the present time, regional colleges have different pricing policies in this regard. Some colleges generate revenue through these programs, others

operate them on a break-even basis, and still others subsidize them. Although regional college flexibility is important, the lack of a system-wide approach to pricing means that people in different regions of the province are not being treated equitably for similar public services.

While it may be appropriate for colleges to subsidize community education programming related to the development and understanding of critical social issues in the region, or to fully recover all costs relating to computer skill classes for regional employers, it is important for colleges to clarify the principles and values underlying these decisions and to ensure that communities, employers, and citizens throughout the province are being treated equitably. Given that a cost-recovery focus cannot expect identical fees, as colleges experience differing costs for delivering programs, for example facilities, the fee setting process should be consistent, transparent and equitable across the college system.

***13. The Review Committee recommends that a role for regional colleges in providing non-credit community education programs and training for industry be explicitly recognized as appropriate and valuable and included within their mandate. These programs involve colleges in supporting communities to acquire knowledge and skills to plan and undertake economic and social development initiatives and in providing training to enable workers and employers to keep pace with skills needed on the job. In carrying out this mandate, regional colleges are encouraged to collaborate with partners in developing inter-institutional and inter-agency cooperation to identify community and industry learning needs, coordinate educational resources, reduce duplication of effort, and improve effectiveness in the delivery of educational services supporting economic and social development.***

***14. In order to reflect the purpose of non-credit programming, the Review Committee recommends that the current term for this activity, Community and Individual Development, be replaced by two new categories, one reflecting a focus on community education and the other training for industry. In addition, to acknowledge the significance of this role, it is recommended that the colleges develop a system for consistently and regularly reporting this programming in consultation with the Department.***

***15. In instances where a community need for personal interest or leisure programs cannot be met by another agency, it is recommended that regional colleges have the ability to provide this type of programming on a full cost-recovery basis including both direct and indirect costs. It is also recommended that this activity be tracked using a category of programming separate from community education and training for industry.***

***16. The Review Committee recommends that the regional colleges, as a system, develop appropriate, transparent and consistent pricing policies for non-credit community education programs and training for industry in rural and northern Saskatchewan.***

***Because the policies will define those regional college activities to be subsidized by provincial funding, they should be submitted to the Minister for approval. A timeline of implementation in the 2001-02 academic year is further recommended.***

### **Regional Colleges and Agricultural Programming**

The agricultural sector presents unique challenges for post-secondary education, training and employment services in the province. The Review Committee notes that many institutions and agencies provide a wide range of information, counseling services and training programs to farmers and other people working in the agricultural sector. These organizations include the regional colleges, SIAST, universities, federal and provincial departments, industry associations, private companies, and others. With the changes occurring in the agricultural sector, there are growing needs to assist farmers seeking to become more competitive, to diversify their operations, to find off-farm employment, and to make transitions into alternative careers.

There is potential for the regional colleges and other organizations to expand their programs and services to people engaged in farming and other agricultural-related occupations. Some examples include: counseling to determine additional training options and career mobility; offering programs that are affordable and responsive to current economic challenges facing farm families; and offering training for new specialized occupations in agriculture. With the number of agencies involved in agricultural programming, enhancements should be planned in a coordinated fashion utilizing the respective strengths and expertise of various partners.

***17. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges participate in processes to better coordinate efforts of the many agencies and institutions involved in training within the agricultural sector, serving farm families and other specialized workers, and addressing gaps in current responses at the regional and provincial levels. The Departments of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training and Agriculture and Food should take the lead in facilitating this process. It is further recommended that the Departments review training and related income support programs in terms of their fairness and responsiveness to the needs of people engaged in agriculture.***

### **Locally Developed Programs**

Through current Regulations under *The Regional Colleges Act*, colleges may develop and deliver credit post-secondary technical and vocational training programs that respond to education and training needs in their region and are approved by the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training. This mechanism to enable responsiveness has been used by several colleges in recent years. In practice, all programs developed by colleges have sought partnerships and accreditation from external organizations, such as SIAST and industry associations. No programs are offered only with accreditation by a

regional college and, thus, no programs have been forwarded to the Department for approval.

The Review Committee believes that locally developed programs have a place within the regional colleges' mandate for those circumstances where a very specialized response is required and other avenues for finding a relevant program have been exhausted. Their appropriate use is to respond, in cooperation with other partners, to unique needs in rural and northern Saskatchewan, rather than to create new programs of general applicability.

Considering the strengths of the current regional colleges' model, the Review Committee is of the view that regional colleges in the future should not seek to develop and accredit programs on their own because of the responsibilities and costs associated with this activity. The maintenance of student records and curriculum development and updating are expensive functions. Colleges have neither the academic and administrative staff nor the resources to support them in a credible and efficient manner.

***18. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges continue to have an ability to develop and customize programs to fit unique needs and circumstances. It is further recommended that where credit is desirable for locally developed programs, regional colleges seek certification from recognized credit granting organizations, including other post-secondary institutions, industry associations or professional regulatory bodies.***

### **International Development**

The focus of regional colleges on serving local residents and on brokering programs has generally precluded involvement in international education projects. In recent years, a few colleges have had opportunities to become involved in international projects through partnerships with other post-secondary organizations and agencies. The Review Committee considered whether this development was appropriate in light of pressures for regional colleges to address needs in the province and the trend towards globalization of the economy and other fields of endeavour such as education.

Saskatchewan's unique model of regional colleges has much to offer the world, particularly to developing nations that are facing the challenges of serving rural and dispersed populations with limited resources. International education projects could benefit from Saskatchewan's experience. At the same time, the province could realize economic benefits through international contacts and regional college employees could benefit from professional development. Considering these benefits, as well as pressures within the province for education and training, the Review Committee concluded that regional colleges should be able to participate in international activities, provided this involvement does not come at the expense of their responsibilities to meet regional needs.

**19. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges have an ability to become involved in international development projects, where colleges have another institutional partner and all direct and indirect costs associated with a project are fully recovered.**

## **II. A COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS**

The historical learner-centered orientation of regional colleges must evolve in the future to meet growing expectations for programs and services that serve the needs of all students and assist students in taking advantage of opportunities to advance their academic and career goals. The proposed role for regional colleges in developing new learner support services related to Technology-Enhanced Learning would represent a major step for colleges in reinforcing their learner-centered philosophy in today's world of electronic communications. There are additional directions that regional colleges should take to ensure equity and support for learners.

### **Equity Policy**

The Review Committee believes that the current equity initiatives of the regional colleges could be given greater impetus through the adoption of a systematic and comprehensive approach at the regional level. An Equity Policy Framework has been developed as part of the Saskatchewan Training Strategy as a guideline and reference for post-secondary training institutions, programs and services (PSEST, 1998). This policy framework considers all aspects of organizational and program effectiveness in meeting the needs of students from equity groups, including the implementation of employment equity in the institutions' workplaces as part of creating an inclusive learning environment.

**20. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges adopt the Equity Policy Framework developed as part of the Saskatchewan Training Strategy and its guidelines for responding to diversity among learners and contributing to the development of a representative workforce in the province. As part of implementation of the Equity Policy Framework, it is further recommended that colleges give priority to implementing employment equity for their own workforces.**

**21. To facilitate implementation of the policy, it is recommended that regional colleges include an equity action plan as part of their business plans and report progress towards achieving results for equity group members, including First Nations and Métis people, people with disabilities, visible minorities and women. Equity plans and goals should reflect the distinct make-up of the populations served by individual regional colleges.**

## **Services for People with Disabilities**

Regional colleges are challenged in meeting the needs of students with disabilities because they do not have the capacity to offer highly specialized services. This is a common challenge facing other agencies in rural and northern Saskatchewan that are serving relatively small population numbers. Inter-agency collaboration among organizations is one approach that could assist in extending specialized services, such as diagnosis and testing, and in better integrating education, training and employment services for people with disabilities.

Education, training and employment services for people with disabilities are being reshaped with the creation of a provincial Disability Action Plan and implementation of the new federal-provincial agreement on Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities. Regional college involvement in these processes is desirable given the central role of colleges in providing education and training services in rural and northern areas.

Regional colleges also need to address any barriers that exist within their operations to the participation of people with disabilities in college programs and services. Accessibility to college facilities is one issue that needs to be addressed in the future. Currently, 12 college facilities out of about 40 are not accessible.

***22. The Review Committee recommends development of a “shared services” network involving the regional colleges, SIAST, the universities, school divisions, and health districts to share expertise and enhance access to specialists who can provide diagnostic and testing services for people with disabilities with follow up at the colleges. It is recommended that the Departments of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training, Education, and Health play a facilitation role in developing this network.***

***23. The Review Committee recommends that the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training and the provincial Office of Disability Issues ensure that the regional colleges are involved in the Disability Action Plan and implementation of the agreement on Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities.***

***24. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges collaborate with the Canada Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services and community-based organizations to link education and training for people with disabilities with job finding, placement and retention in employment.***

***25. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges and the Department ensure all college facilities are accessible to people with disabilities.***

## **Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) and Credit Transfer**

Collaboration among institutions to increase PLAR and credit transfer is quickly becoming one of the hallmarks of the type of flexibility and innovation that learners, employers and governments expect from the post-secondary system. This capacity will become increasingly important with the growth of technology-enhanced programs as learners will have options to take programs from several different institutions. Saskatchewan institutions will be challenged to articulate roles and relationships with respect to increasing services for PLAR and credit transfer.

With the growing importance of flexible approaches to recognition of knowledge and skills, the Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board (SLFDB, 2000) has developed a proposal to establish a Saskatchewan Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Center. The center would be managed by a consortium of partners including the SLFDB, SIAST, University of Regina, University of Saskatchewan, Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training, and the SLFDB's Racialized Canadians Reference Group. Its major objective would be to build capacity by providing a resource center for the development of practitioners, candidates, employers, unions and support agencies, for the application of PLAR in a diverse range of settings.

The Review Committee believes that these challenges can best be met through a coordinated provincial effort that places renewed priority and focus on improved credit transfer and PLAR. Within a provincial effort, regional colleges could have an important role in supporting learners to benefit from PLAR and credit transfer policies from credit granting institutions and agencies. Regional colleges are often the first point of contact that learners in rural and northern areas have with the post-secondary system. Colleges need to be in a position to provide them with the necessary information and support to apply for PLAR or credit transfer.

***26. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges work with credit granting institutions or agencies, including SIAST, the universities and the Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission, to develop support services for learners who could benefit from PLAR and credit transfer at the institutions. The role of regional colleges would be to provide initial information and support to assist learners in applying for PLAR and credit transfer, and to continue to advocate for improvements in PLAR and credit transfer for the benefit of learners. The Review Committee also notes the potential for regional colleges to play a role in arranging for on-site assessment of learners' skills and knowledge for credit.***

***27. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges cooperate with the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training and other post-secondary institutions in developing a provincial vision and action plan for increasing prior learning assessment and recognition on a system-wide basis.***



## **Other Student Services**

The Review Committee supports the direction that regional colleges have followed in devoting resources to a variety of support services to learners. These services, such as counseling and referral services, can mean the difference between success and failure for students and should continue to be a priority. They need to be complemented by efforts in the classroom to ensure that the learning styles and capabilities of all students are taken into account through effective instructional approaches. Opportunities for professional development for college instructors are critical to continue to build teaching knowledge and skills.

As part of their learner-centered orientation, regional colleges need direct input from students concerning their perspectives on college programs and services. This input may be difficult to obtain as many college programs are short-term in nature and learners have many other responsibilities outside of the classroom. As well, distance can make it difficult for students across the regional college system to communicate with each other. Although these barriers are significant, the Review Committee believes it is important for regional colleges to assist students in developing ways to articulate their needs and opinions and to work together where they can support each other in learning.

***28. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges continue to strengthen their capacity to support learners through academic and career counseling, financial counseling, assistance in developing study skills and life management skills, and referral services for psychological counseling, crisis intervention or other specialized services.***

***29. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges explore ways to develop the capacity of students to support each other and to represent their own interests in a collective way, for example, by facilitating greater contact among students and forums or avenues for the development of a student body.***

***30. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges develop avenues for professional development for instructors to support effective teaching and learning.***

## **III. THE REGIONAL COLLEGES WITHIN AN INTEGRATED DELIVERY SYSTEM**

The future of regional colleges as part of an integrated delivery system for post-secondary education and training will ensure that colleges are cooperating with a range of partners to maximize responsiveness and accessibility to learning opportunities for Saskatchewan people, employers and communities. This collaboration needs to occur at a number of levels with other regional partners, among the colleges across the province, and with government and other post-secondary institutions. Regional colleges are well known for their cooperative style of operation and ability to find shared solutions that serve mutual

interests. This strength will serve the regional colleges well in further development of their inter-relationships with others.

### **Partnerships and Cooperation at the Regional Level**

Results from the Review Committee's consultation process underline the importance and benefits of partnerships between colleges and other partners at the regional level and opportunities to extend this cooperation. There is also a willingness on the part of these organizations, such as health districts, municipalities, economic and cooperative development, and school divisions, to build additional avenues for cooperation ranging from collaboration in developing programs tailored to specific needs to sharing facilities and student services to joint planning and coordinated programming. The Review Committee believes that regional colleges could benefit from pursuing these opportunities and have a responsibility to do so as part of their responsiveness in serving regional needs.

Regional colleges and the newly created Canada-Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services have worked together over the past year to coordinate their services and clarify roles and relationships for planning, needs assessment and the delivery of training, education, income support, career information and counseling and employment services. In the Review Committee's opinion, these relationships are evolving in a satisfactory way and both parties are to be commended for their efforts.

***31. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges continue to emphasize partnerships at the regional level as a key way of doing business in rural and northern communities. Regional colleges should continue to seek innovative arrangements for meeting education and training needs that involve joint needs assessment and planning, coordinated labour market planning, shared decision-making, flexibility in training delivery to suit the needs of partners, and shared programming and use of resources.***

***32. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges and the Canada Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services continue to consult and collaborate with each other at the regional level to provide integrated services for learners, employers and community organizations.***

### **Inter-College Planning and Cooperation**

Inter-college cooperation and planning presents a way for regional colleges to pool their efforts to address common challenges and resource pressures. Although there are many examples of inter-college efforts, the Review Committee believes that a thorough examination of opportunities for collaboration among colleges is desirable to ensure that potential avenues are identified, evaluated and pursued where there are clear benefits. Collaborative efforts, developed and initiated by the colleges themselves, should not

threaten the ability of individual institutions to remain responsive to their regional needs and circumstances.

To strengthen regional colleges as part of the province's post-secondary system, the government has encouraged colleges to speak and act collectively in many areas of provincial policy development. It will continue to be important for regional colleges to represent themselves in an authoritative way. Regional colleges need to collaborate in articulating their views as a system and in ensuring that they are well represented.

With respect to human resource issues, regional colleges have collaborated in hiring a human resources consultant for the system through the Association of Saskatchewan Regional Colleges (ASRC). The Review Committee believes this is a positive step and encourages the colleges to cooperate further in enhancing professional development opportunities for college staff. The government has had concerns about consistency in wages and benefits for college employees across the province. There have been barriers to implementation of this direction that should be resolved through ongoing discussion with all parties.

***33. The Review Committee recommends that the regional colleges examine potential benefits and efficiencies from greater inter-college collaboration in areas such as administrative services, information technology, academic programming, learning and counseling resources, partnership development, communications and staff development. It is further recommended that colleges prepare a report to the Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training by the Spring of 2001 outlining their conclusions and proposing an implementation plan for action in those areas that show promise.***

***34. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges cooperate to enhance professional development opportunities for college employees.***

***35. The Review Committee recommends that regional college boards and chief executive officers ensure that individuals are appointed with the authority to represent the collective views of the colleges in provincial policy development initiatives.***

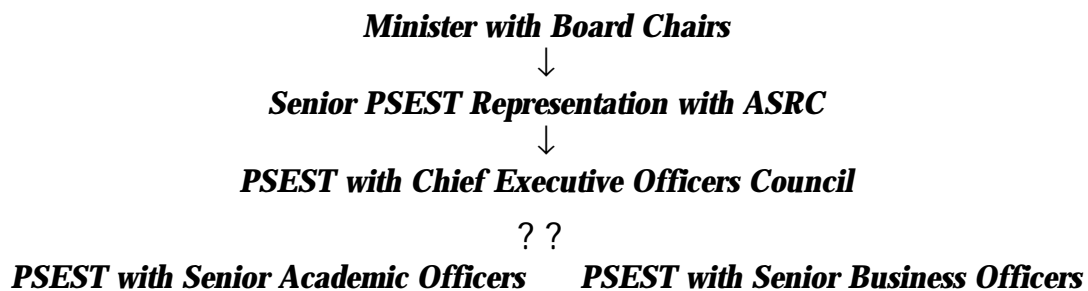
***36. With respect to human resource issues, the Review Committee recommends that ongoing discussion occur to find an approach to system-wide collective bargaining that is satisfactory to the government, regional college boards and management, and college employees and their union representatives.***

### **Department-College Collaboration and Communication**

Collaboration and communication between the regional colleges and the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training is an essential part of developing an effective relationship where public policy directions for regional colleges can be discussed and

where colleges can have a role in shaping these directions and expressing their views. At the present time, the Department and college officials have regular meetings to work through policy, program and administrative issues. Other regular channels of communication at the ministerial and senior department levels are needed for the discussion, clarification and resolution of strategic policy issues. This approach would give both the regional colleges and the government a forum that is not crisis driven and provides a predictable forum for communications.

**37. The Review Committee recommends that formalized processes for ongoing collaboration and communications between the regional colleges and the Minister and the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training be established to address strategic policy issues and system-wide directions. These processes would be in addition to current collaboration at the officials' level involving college chief executive officers and senior academic and business officers. Together, the proposed and existing channels for communication and collaboration would include regular liaison at the following levels:**



**Linkages within the Provincial Post-Secondary System**

The development of a coherent, integrated and effective post-secondary system is a provincial priority. Regional colleges, along with other post-secondary institutions, currently have few mechanisms to collaborate in achieving this goal. This situation makes it difficult to address system-wide issues in a timely way and provides little direction or impetus to institutions in advancing common goals. The Review Committee believes that the government's initiative to develop a strategic plan and accountability process for the post-secondary system as a whole, creates a provincial mechanism for collaboration among public post-secondary institutions, including the regional colleges.

The Review Committee recognizes that First Nations and Métis institutions and organizations are playing a major role in the province in meeting the education and training needs of their communities. During its consultation process, the Review Committee heard that these institutions and organizations wish to collaborate with the colleges in ways that better extend education and training opportunities to First Nations and Métis learners and that strengthen both their institutional capacity and the colleges' capacity to meet First Nations and Métis needs.

**38. The Review Committee recommends that the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training ensure that the regional colleges are fully engaged in the development of the post-secondary sector strategic plan and accountability process.**

**39. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges as a system consult regularly at the provincial level with the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, the Dumont Technical Institute, and First Nations and Métis training and employment agencies to identify and implement partnership initiatives. At the regional level, it is recommended that individual colleges undertake similar consultation and partnership development initiatives with First Nations and Métis institutions and organizations.**

#### **IV. EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT**

Regional colleges and the government must work together to strengthen governance, management and support for colleges to enable them to meet the challenges and resource pressures of the future. There needs to be recognition that while regional colleges share the same philosophy and model of operation with their predecessors in the 1970s, they have grown beyond the original college mandate in tandem with growth in education and training needs in the province. Today's colleges are complex operations offering a wide array of programs and services with very limited resources and infrastructure. Changes in governance, management, and support should preserve the community-based roots of the colleges along with their flexibility and efficiency, and at the same time, position colleges to meet demands for up-to-date relevant programs and for accountability in using resources and achieving results.

##### **Board Appointments and Operations**

Regional college boards are at the heart of providing leadership to college operations and responsiveness to local communities. Their effectiveness should be supported by ensuring that all board members have a clear appreciation of their roles and responsibilities and bring a diversity of knowledge, skills and points of view relevant to directing and overseeing the delivery of education and training services. To assist boards in carrying out their responsibilities, regular self-evaluation of progress towards meeting goals can be a valuable and productive exercise. Boards could be supported in this process through making available guidelines that they can apply within their local context.

**40. With respect to the appointment of board members, the Review Committee recommends that:**

- **College board members be individuals who can incorporate different viewpoints in making decisions, represent a diversity of backgrounds, and bring skills or expertise relevant to the regional colleges' mandate and operations, such as**

- knowledge of industry trends, small business perspectives, accounting principles, leadership and management, and education and training;***
- ***Board appointments be made on a staggered basis so that there is continuity of board decision-making and knowledge;***
  - ***Prospective board members be given a clear explanation of their roles and responsibilities and expectations for the position prior to their appointment; and***
  - ***Boards have the opportunity to offer advice to the Minister with respect to gaps in knowledge or perspectives needed by the board at a particular point in time, to be considered in the appointment of new members.***

***41. The Review Committee recommends that boards undertake regular self-evaluations of their progress in achieving the goals they have set for themselves and their colleges. It is further recommended that the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training provide a model or guidelines which may be used by Boards for carrying out this type of evaluation.***

### **Boundaries**

In order to offer a range of accessible, quality programs and services, regional colleges need to be organized so that their service areas have sufficient population and reflect functional economic areas, including community, labour market, commuting and trade patterns. Regional college boundaries have not been reviewed or revised since the reorganization of the colleges in 1988. Since that time, rural and northern Saskatchewan have experienced demographic and economic changes. As well, other public services have been reshaped at the regional level, including the emergence of health districts, REDAs and provincial Career and Employment Services.

In the future, regional college boundaries should be adjusted reflecting changes in the province and be subject to regular review to keep them updated. It will be important for there to be agreement between the government and regional colleges on the rationale for drawing boundaries so that revisions contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of the colleges.

***42. The Review Committee recommends that the boundaries of regional college service areas be reviewed on a regular basis. Further, the Review Committee recommends that the regional colleges and the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training work together to define an appropriate rationale for college boundaries, including factors such as labour market regions, areas of other service providers, travel time, population and viability to offer a range of programs and services.***

## **Business Planning and Accountability**

The Review Committee was originally established with representatives from the regional colleges and the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training to engender a shared understanding of strategic issues and directions for the colleges. This approach and the Review Committee's recommendations are intended to put in place the elements to implement a relationship between the government and the colleges based on mutually agreed upon expectations, effective planning, performance management and reporting of results.

Colleges' business plans, budgets, annual reports, and strategic planning documents are the key accountability mechanisms colleges will use to articulate this relationship, and implementation of the Review Committee's recommendations. As part of this process, it will be essential for the colleges and the Department to develop appropriate performance indicators, and the information systems to produce them, to ensure monitoring of progress and accountability.

To ensure input into the government's budget development process, by September of each year colleges would need to submit a document to the Department articulating medium- to long-term goals, objectives, and financial requirements. This strategic planning document should also articulate existing pressures and trade-offs colleges will need to make in the event that financial resources are not forthcoming. Following release of the provincial budget, colleges submit their business plans and budgets reflecting provincial funding levels, anticipated revenues from other sources, and expenditures.

Currently, efforts are underway by colleges and the Department to develop performance indicators for regional colleges and for the broader post-secondary education sector. In future, regional college business plans should articulate activity targets for the upcoming year, and annual reports should document actual performance for each indicator. This will directly link the activities of regional colleges to the broader post-secondary sector strategic plan thereby supporting a coherent and integrated provincial system.

***43. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges submit a strategic planning document to the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training by September of each year, articulating medium to long-term objectives, strategies, financial requirements and trade-offs.***

***44. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges and the Department address the Review's recommendations within the business planning process and that its recommendations be integrated into strategic planning for the post-secondary sector as a whole. It further recommends that progress in implementing the recommendations be documented in regional college and Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training annual reports.***

**45. The Review Committee recommends that efforts to develop performance indicators and information systems for reporting be given priority by the regional colleges and the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training.**

### **Funding Issues**

Regional colleges need to use the resources available to them as effectively as possible to provide programs and services that respond to regional needs. As college funding and accounting requirements are tied to programs with specific criteria for their use, colleges are constrained in re-allocating these funds to various education and training needs in their service areas. They are also constrained in using their funding to address regional needs by limited provision for the administrative costs that are incurred along with the delivery of programs.

The introduction of a new funding model for training programs and services was an objective within the Saskatchewan Training Strategy. The Review Committee believes work to develop a new funding model should be given priority to support the effective use of resources by colleges through greater flexibility to direct funding to regional needs and recognition of the actual costs to support program delivery. Progress in the college business planning process will complement a new funding model to ensure accountability for achieving public goals and specific outcomes. As well, improved planning will allow colleges to take a longer-term perspective to guide use of resources and program decisions.

**46. The Review Committee recommends that a new funding model for regional colleges be developed and implemented, as envisioned in the Saskatchewan Training Strategy, to enable greater flexibility on the part of colleges to direct resources to priorities and needs at the regional level. The Minister would continue to approve the annual business plans of regional colleges, which outline the particular configuration of programs to be offered in each college service area and the specific outcomes to be achieved.**

**47. The Review Committee recommends that all program funds have a built in component for administration, incorporated into existing programs under the current funding model or into consolidated resources under a new funding model. Further, it is recommended that funds for administration increase in relation to increases in program funds.**

### **Financial Management**

Financial management is a critical part of accountability for the effective and efficient use of resources to achieve stated purposes. The annual budgets proposed by the colleges for the Minister's approval and reporting on actual expenditures are aspects of financial management that enable the colleges to present their intentions for using public resources and to demonstrate the extent to which their plans have been realized. These activities



need to be carried out using common definitions and guidelines to ensure government and the colleges are working from the same understandings about use of resources and to determine the financial position of colleges on a system-wide basis.

In examining the regional colleges' use of resources, the Review Committee noted that college budgets and actual expenditures often are not closely aligned, resulting in year-end surpluses that apparently were not planned. Most regional colleges have accumulated surpluses that are held in reserve to deal with unforeseen circumstances or contingencies, for special purposes such as computer equipment purchases, and for capital projects. In the absence of guidance regarding the use of accumulated reserves, funds intended to support learning opportunities may be tied up and not available to deliver the education and training for which colleges received the funding.

The current ad hoc approach to provincial funding for regional college facilities, equipment and information technology is becoming increasingly untenable with the expanded role of colleges in delivering credit programs, growth in public demands for services, and technological advances. Infrastructure pressures need to be addressed in a rational, transparent way that recognizes and prioritizes these costs as necessary in order for colleges to meet the government's expectations for them.

***48. In order to improve financial reporting, the Review Committee recommends that regional colleges and the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training work together to develop consistent definitions for financial information and that regional colleges adopt these definitions on a system-wide basis.***

***49. The Review Committee recommends that the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training and the regional colleges work together to plan the use of the current accumulated surplus.***

***50. The Review Committee recommends that the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training and the regional colleges work together to develop guidelines for future use of accumulated surplus and to establish an appropriate level of working capital colleges should have on hand to meet contingencies or unforeseen circumstances.***

***51. The Review Committee recommends that a rational and sustainable expenditure and financing plan be developed to establish a consistent, predictable source of funding for regional college facilities, equipment and information technology. As well, it is recommended that a process be developed and implemented to identify and prioritize expenditures for these purposes in a predictable and transparent way.***

## **Communications and Marketing**

Marketing and communications are essential to ensure that individuals and employers who could benefit from regional college programs and services are aware of these opportunities. The Review Committee commends the Association of Saskatchewan Regional Colleges for their recent initiative to develop a system-wide communications plan for the colleges. At another level, the post-secondary system has a responsibility to publicize the value of education and training and career opportunities in different technical fields and the trades. A coordinated approach to communications, in addition to individual efforts, would strengthen the profile of all institutions.

***52. The Review Committee recommends that regional colleges, SIAST, the Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission, and the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training coordinate their communication strategies to raise awareness of the value of post-secondary education and training and career opportunities in technical and trades occupations, and to ensure consistency of messages and enhanced visibility for all parties.***

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**Regional Colleges Committee of Review  
Terms of Reference**

**Introduction:**

*The Regional Colleges Act* requires a committee to be appointed, at least once in every five years, to review and report on the mandate of regional colleges as set out in legislation and any other matters concerning the *Act*.

**Purpose:**

Regional colleges have played a crucial role in making available an array of educational programs and services throughout rural and northern Saskatchewan. In the future, they will continue to be the province's primary agent for responding to the education and skill development needs of individuals, employers and communities outside of the major urban centers. Like all public services, in order to remain effective and relevant, regional colleges will have to evolve and adapt to changes in Saskatchewan that are creating new expectations, demands and conditions for service delivery.

This review of regional colleges will examine and make recommendations on the mandate, functions and relationships that should guide the activities of the colleges over the next five years. In particular, the recommendations will consider the implications of the following developments for regional colleges:

- The Saskatchewan Training Strategy and other policy frameworks that constitute the government's directions for post-secondary education, training and labour market services;
- Shifts in the demographic, economic and social fabric of rural and northern Saskatchewan;
- Opportunities and challenges presented by technology to enhance learning and better integrate service delivery among institutions and agencies;
- Changes in the training requirements of Saskatchewan employers on a regional and sectoral basis;
- Organizational developments related to the role and operations of other service providers such as the Department, SIAST, First Nations and Métis institutions and agencies; and
- Ongoing fiscal restraint and declining college revenues from funding sources such as the federal government.

## ***Specific Outcomes***

The following are specific outcomes that the review is expected to produce:

### **1. Education and Training Services**

The review will clarify the colleges' mandate and their unique role within the province's post-secondary system. It will include recommendations on ways to strengthen the education and training services of regional colleges and their capacity to:

- Address adult and community learning needs to support regional economic and social development;
- Provide learner support services for a broad range of academic pursuits from literacy to university level and including a wide range of learning approaches from work-based training to computer mediated instruction;
- Create local access to relevant programs through brokerage arrangements;
- Develop and facilitate strategic alliances with other service providers and community and industry organizations or interests;
- Offer customized and individualized services to learners and employers;
- Respond to employer needs for training and a skilled workforce; and
- Promote representative participation and results for equity group members.

### **2. An Integrated Service Delivery System**

Regional colleges are a key partner in creating a coordinated and integrated system for regional delivery of education, training and employment services to serve clients in the most effective way, to facilitate transitions for people across programs and services, and to make the best use of all resources. Other partners include the Department's regional services, SIAST and the universities, community-based organizations, private vocational schools, First Nations and Métis organizations, the K-12 system and REDAs. The review will address future roles and relationships that will enable colleges to fulfill their commitments to serving learners, employers, and communities within an integrated system. The recommendations will consider how regional colleges and other partners can cooperate to:

- Provide a seamless continuum of programs and services for clients;
- Meet the needs of employers;
- Undertake joint needs assessment and planning for the regional labour market; and
- Enhance learning and employment options for people in rural and northern Saskatchewan.



### **3. Accountability and The Business Planning Cycle**

Over the past year the Department has worked closely with colleges to develop new relationships based on clear expectations, effective strategies and business plans, performance measurement and evaluation, reporting of results and follow-up action. The intention is to provide the government direction that colleges require as publicly supported institutions and to reinforce the colleges authority and flexibility to determine how best to meet identified needs at the local level. The review will recommend ways that these processes should continue to be improved so that the Department and regional colleges can both exercise and meet their responsibilities.

### **4. Support For College Operations**

The review will examine the support colleges require to carry out their evolving mandate and opportunities to address these needs in affordable and efficient ways. Recommendations will address:

- Inter-college cooperation to respond to common issues and needs;
- Sustainable and appropriate funding mechanisms;
- Technological needs for student services, program delivery, accountability and administration;
- Public communications about college services;
- Consistent labour relations support to all colleges; and
- Capital facilities and equipment needs, including the continued viability of joint use.

### **Committee Membership**

Lily Stonehouse, Assistant Deputy Minister, Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training (Chairperson)

Shelley Hoover, Executive Director, Institutions Branch, Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training

Donna Krawetz, Executive Director, Special Projects, Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training

Spencer Wooff, Board Chairperson, Cypress Hills Regional College

Valerie Mushinski, Chief Executive Officer, Cumberland Regional College

**APPENDIX B****Regional Colleges Review Committee  
Invitations for Input**

Group	Contact	Title
<b>Aboriginal</b>		
MNS	Mr. Clem Chartier	President
FSIN	Mr. Perry Bellegarde	Chief
<b>Universities</b>		
U of Regina	Dr. David Barnard	President
U of Saskatchewan	Dr. J. W. George Ivany	President
<b>Business</b>		
CFIB	Ms. Marilyn Braun	Director, Saskatchewan Provincial Affairs
Sask. Economic Developers Assoc (SEDA)	Mr. Larry Lang	Exec. Director
<b>K-12</b>		
LEADS	Pat Dickson	Executive Director
<b>Apprenticeship</b>		
Apprenticeship Board		
<b>Aboriginal</b>		
GDI	Ms. Karon Shmon	Executive Director
DTI	Ms. Lisa Wilson	A/Principal
SIIT	Ms. Joan Greyeyes	Principal
<b>Government/Crowns</b>		
Agriculture & Food	Mr. Terry Scott	Deputy Minister
Economic & Co-operative Development	Mr. Fraser Nicholson	Deputy Minister
Education	Mr. Craig Dotson	Deputy Minister
Energy & Mines	Mr. Ray Clayton	Deputy Minister
Environment & Resource Management	Mr. Stuart Kramer	Deputy Minister
Finance	Mr. Bill Jones	Deputy Minister
Health	Mr. Con Hnatiuk	Deputy Minister
Highways & Transportation	Mr. Brian King	Deputy Minister
Intergovernmental & Aboriginal Affairs	Mr. Brent Cotter	Deputy Minister
Justice & Attorney General	Mr. John Whyte	Deputy Minister
Labour	Ms. Sandra Morgan	Deputy Minister
Municipal Affairs, Culture & Housing	Mr. Ken Pontikes	Deputy Minister
Northern Affairs	Mr. Alex Campbell	Deputy Minister
Public Service Commission	Ms. Wynne Young	Chair

Group	Contact	Title
Social Services	Ms. Glenda Yeates	Deputy Minister
Women's Secretariat	Ms. Fay Rafter	Exec. Co-ord.
Sask. Comm. Network (SCN)	Mr. Jim Benning	President
SPMC	Mr. John Law	President
Sask. Research Council	Mr. Jim Hutchinson	President
Crown Investments Corp.	Mr. Frank Hart	President
Sask. Energy	Mr. Ron Clark	President
SGI	Mr. Larry Fogg	President
Sask. Opportunities Corp	Mr. Zack Douglas	President
Sask. Power	Mr. John Wright	President
SaskTel	Mr. Don Ching	President
STC	Mr. Jim Hadfield	President
Sask. Water Corporation	Mr. Ron Styles	President
Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce		
SK Chamber of Commerce	Ms. Mary Ann McFadyen	Executive Director
Education Committee	Mr. Art Whetstone	Chair
Regional Economic Development Authority		
The Prince Albert REDA	Mr. Graham Halliday	General Manager
Saskatoon REDA	Mr. John Hyshka	Director of Business Development
Entrepreneurs 2000 REDA Inc.	Ms. Laurie Shalley	CEO
Etomami Valley REDA Inc.	Ms. Yvonne Peters	
Southwest REDA	Mr. Terry Brodziak	General Manager
West Central REDA Inc.	Mr. Kevin Fruhstuk	
Northwest REDA	Mr. Pat Pylot	Marketing Manager
Carlton Trail REDA Inc.	Ms. Wendy Smith	Interim CEO
Long Lake REDA	Mr. Patrick Weichel	Economic Development Officer
Touchwood Hills REDA	Mr. Steve Boha	Chairperson
Good Spirit REDA	Mr. Phil Devos	Secretary-Treasurer-Manager
Cornerstone REDA	Ms. Judith Riddell	Manager
Eden REDA	Ms. Judy Childs	Economic Development Officer
Red Coat REDA	Mr. Gord Bell	Chairperson
Midwest REDA	Mr. Kent Dubriel	Economic Development Officer
South Parkland REDA	Mr. John Persson	Economic Development Officer
South East REDA	Ms. Catherine Kerr	Secretary/Manager
Moose Jaw REDA	Mr. James Leier	Economic Development Officer

Group	Contact	Title
Gateway REDA	Mr. Jeff Cole	Economic Development Officer
Great River Lakes REDA	Ms. Joan Corneil	Economic Development Officer
Border REDA	Mr. Jimmy Pollard	Economic Development Officer
Prairie to Pine REDA Inc.	Mr. Robert Colliar	Chairperson
Mainline REDA Inc.	Mr. Larry Lang	General Manager
Big Gully REDA	Mr. Ken Reiter	Acting EDO
Yellowhead REDA Inc.	Ms. Jolene Kotzer-Mitschke	Economic Development Officer
Regina REDA	Mr. M.L. (Marty) Klyne	President & Chief Operating Officer
Cypress Hills REDA Co-operative Inc.	Ms. Marilyn Neudorf	Economic Development Officer
<b>Private Vocational Schools</b>		
Academy of Learning – Estevan	Ms. Rheta Storozuk	Principal
Academy of Learning – Fort Qu’Appelle	Mr. Heath Desjarlais	Principal
Academy of Learning – Moose Jaw	Mr. Ronald A. Mercier	Principal
Academy of Learning – North Battleford	Ms. Lorie Kuntz	Principal
Academy of Learning – Regina	Ms. Veronica Johnson	Principal
Academy of Learning – Prince Albert	Ms. Tamara McKay	Principal
Academy of Learning – Saskatoon	Ms. Marie Kent	Principal
Academy of Learning – Weyburn	Mr. Jack Gerger	Principal
Academy of Learning – Yorkton	Mr. Patrick Chopik	Principal
Artistique Beauty College	Ms. Jo-Vonne Richardson	Principal
Auctioneers Training Center of Canada	Ms. Loren McDougall	Principal
Avant-Garde College of Esthetics	Ms. Connie Neufeld	Principal
CDI College of Business & Technology – Regina	Mr. Peter Hubbs	Principal

Group	Contact	Title
CDI College of Business & Technology – Saskatoon	Mr. Doug Freeman	Principal
Deloitte & Touche	Ms. Gwen Lepage	Principal
Fountain of Life School of Ministry Inc.	Rev. John Fryters	Principal
Heinze Institute of Applied Computer Technology	Mr. Dennis Armstrong	Principal
H & R Block Canada Inc.	Ms. Maureen Guliov	Principal
Lokken Career College	Mr. Rick Lokken	Principal
Manitou Sewing & Design Inc.	Ms. Heather J. Brigidear	Principal
MARCA College of Hairstyling & Esthetics Day Spa	Ms. Janice Istace	Principal
Marvel Beauty School	Ms. Bonnie Noble	Principal
Marvel Beauty School & Salon	Ms. Shellie Williams	Principal
McKay Tech Inc.	Mr. Gordon McKay	Principal
P A Shoe Clinic Vocational School	Mr. Bruce Ahlstedt	Principal
Professional Institute of Massage Therapy	Ms. Tracy Bazylak	Principal
Regina's #1 Academy of Pet Grooming Co. Ltd.	Mr. Reg Stulberg	Principal
Richard's Beauty College	Ms. Debra Forsberg	Principal
Saskatoon Business College Ltd.	Mr. Barry Chapman	Principal
T & H Academies Career Training Center	Mr. Harvey Moran	Principal
Timeless Instruments	Mr. David Freeman	Principal
Universal Career College	Ms. Marie Kent	Principal
Western Academy Broadcasting College Ltd.	Mr. Don Scott	Principal
Western College of Remedial Massage Therapies Inc.	Mr. Wayne B. Baiton	Principal
Yvonne Yuen School of Design	Ms. Yvonne Yuen	Principal
Alpha Institute of Professional English Training	Ms. Grace Lee Selover	Principal
BSD Training and Resources Ltd.	Mr. Gordon Benton	Principal

Group	Contact	Title
Culinary Arts Foundation of Saskatchewan Inc.	E. Rodgers	Principal
Engle & Kook Associates Ltd.	Ms. Eileen Pocha	Principal
Lokken Associates Training Consultants	Rick Lokken	Principal
Mnemonic Enterprises	Mr. Mark Campbell	Principal
Moose Jaw Multicultural Council	Ms. Linda Dirkson	Principal
Multicultural Enterprises Inc.	Mr. Carlo Bizzarri	Principal
Regina Open Door Society Inc.	Mr. Keith Karasin	Principal
Royal Canadian Mounted Police Academy	C/Supt J. G. Harper Boucher	Principal
Western Trade Training Institute	Mr. Ron Chyz	Principal
<b>Northern Labour Market Committee</b>		
Nrthrn Labour Mkt Cmttee	Alex Campbell, (DM, SK Northern Affairs)	Co-Chair
Nrthrn Labour Mkt Cmttee	Julia Ewing	Co-Chair
Nrthrn Labour Mkt Cmttee	Al Rivard	Co-Chair
<b>Regional Intersectoral Committees</b>		
ADMs Forum	Mr. Bill Werry	Executive Director
Southwest Regional Committee	Ms. Liz Gordon	RIC Coordinator
Nipawin-Melfort Regional Committee	Mr. Peter Waldbillig	RIC Coordinator
North Battleford Regional Committee	Mr. Jeff Christiansen	Community Services Consultant
Northern Regional Committee	Ms. Valendie Lathlin-Buck	Community Development Coordinator
Prince Albert Regional Committee	Ms. Paige Finney	RIC Coordinator
Regina Regional Committee	Ms. Donna Benesh	Regina Inter-Agency Coordinator
Saskatoon Regional Committee	Mr. Dennis Chubb	RIC Coordinator
Southeast Regional Committee	Ms. Bernice Puritch	Regional Coordinator
Moose Jaw Regional Committee	Mr. Don Mitchell	Regional Community Development Coordinator

Group	Contact	Title
<b>Seniors</b>		
Seniors Mechanism	Ms. Linda Blach	Executive Director
<b>K-12</b>		
STF	Dr. Derwyn Crozier-Smith	General Secretary
SSTA	Craig Melvin	Executive Director
<b>Youth</b>		
PACE	Ms. Laurie Shalley	Co-Chair
PACE	c.c. Hounourable Janice MacKinnon (Economic & Co-operative Development)	Co-Chair
<b>Municipalities</b>		
City of Estevan	Mr. John Len	Mayor
City of Melfort	Mr. Desmond Henderson	Mayor
City of Lloydminster	Mr. Ilston Plant	Mayor
City of Melville	Mr. Michael K. Fisher	Mayor
City of Moose Jaw	Mr. Ray Boughen	Mayor
City of Prince Albert	Mr. Don Cody	Mayor
City of North Battleford	Mr. Wayne Ray	Mayor
City of Regina	Mr. Doug Archer	Mayor
City of Saskatoon	Mr. Henry Dayday	Mayor
City of Weyburn	Mr. Don Schlosser	Mayor
City of Swift Current	Mr. Paul Elder	Mayor
City of Yorkton	Mr. Ben Weber	Mayor
<b>Aboriginal</b>		
SIFC	Dr. Eber Hampton	President
<b>Health Districts</b>		
Assiniboine Valley	Mr. Gary Johnson	CEO
Battlefords	Mr. John Yarske	CEO
Central Plains	Ms. Karen McClelland	CEO
East Central	Dr. James Millar	President/CEO
Gabriel Springs	Mr. Gren Smith-Windsor	CEO
Greenhead	Mr. Eugene Motruk	CEO
Keewatin Yathé	Mr. Nap Gardiner	CEO
Living Sky	Ms. Jill Johnson	CEO
Lloydminster	Mr. Greg Derkach	CEO
Mamawetan Churchill River	Mr. Norman Hatlevik	CEO
Midwest	Mr. Doug Ball	CEO
Moose Jaw-Thunder Creek	Mr. Dan Florizone	CEO
Moose Mountain	Mr. Warren Wallin	CEO
North Central	Mr. David Fan	CEO
North-East	Mr. Joe Kirwan	Acting CEO

Group	Contact	Title
Northwest	Ms. Irene Denis	CEO
Parkland	Ms. C. Jean Morrison	CEO
Pasquia	Mr. Gordon Denton	CEO
Pipestone	Mr. Alvin Gallinger	CEO
Prairie West	Mr. Gord Johnston	CEO
Prince Albert	Mr. Stan Rice	CEO
Regina	Dr. Glenn S. Bartlett	President/ CEO
Rolling Hills	Mrs. Marlene Weston	CEO
Saskatoon	Mr. Jim Fergusson	President/ CEO
South Central	Mr. Lee Spencer	CEO
South Country	Mr. Dale Schmeichel	CEO
South East	Mr. Gerry Hildebrand	CEO
Southwest	Mr. Alan Ruetz	CEO
Swift Current	Mr. Shawn Terlson	Acting CEO
Touchwood Qu'Appelle	Mr. Royce Dill	CEO
Twin Rivers	Ms. Karen Simons	Confidential Secretary to the Board
<b>Rural Service Centers</b>		
Estevan	Mr. Colin Beaulieu	Extension Agrologist
Assiniboia	Mr. Garry Nobel	Extension Agrologist
Shaunavon	Mr. Trevor Lennox	Extension Agrologist
Moosomin	Mr. Jim Pollock	Extension Agrologist
Indian Head	Ms. Judy McKell	Extension Agrologist
Weyburn	Ms. Elaine Moats	Extension Agrologist
Moose Jaw	Mr. Dale Risula	Extension Agrologist
Swift Current	Mr. Pat Gerwing	Extension Agrologist
Maple Creek	Mr. Daryl Tumbach	Extension Agrologist
Yorkton	Mr. Jim Donovan	Extension Agrologist
Regina	Mr. Barry Rapp	Extension Agrologist
Davidson	Ms. Elaine Meachem	Extension Agrologist
Outlook	Mr. Lorne Hovdestad	Extension Agrologist
Kindersley	Ms. Patty Robertshaw	Extension Agrologist
Canora	Mr. Wally Vanin	Extension Agrologist
Wynyard	Mr. Lewis Reeve	Extension Agrologist
Humboldt	Mr. Don Perrault	Extension Agrologist
Saskatoon	Rob Rugg & Dave Hryhor	Extension Agrologist
Biggar	Mr. Glenn Barclay	Extension Agrologist
Hudson Bay	Vacant	Extension Agrologist
Tisdale	Mr. Leroy Bader	Extension Agrologist
Unity	Mr. Keith Bater	Extension Agrologist
Nipawin	Mr. Larry Lee	Extension Agrologist



Group	Contact	Title
Prince Albert	Harry Swanson & Brian Harris	Extension Agrologist
North Battleford	Mr. Dave Whitehead	Extension Agrologist
Lloydminster	Mr. Howie Bjorge	Extension Agrologist
Meadow Lake	Mr. Jim Danyluk	Extension Agrologist
Rosetown	Mr. John Ippolito	Extension Agrologist
Carnduff	Mr. Grant McLean	Extension Agrologist
Kelvington	Mr. Ernest Patrick	Extension Agrologist
Watrous	Vacant	Extension Agrologist
Community-Based Organizations		
Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities	Mr. Ken Engel	Executive Director
Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association	Mr. Keith Schneider	Executive Director
Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations	Mr. Arliss Wright	President & CEO
Saskatchewan Association of Career Colleges	Mr. Barry Chapman	President
Battlefords Indian & Métis Friendship Center	Mr. Ray Fox	Executive Director
Youth Futures	Mr. Brian Howell	Acting Project Manager
YWCA of Prince Albert	Ms. Olesia Kowalsky	Executive Director
Work Preparation Center	Ms. Carla Stewart	Counsellor
Yorkton Friendship Center	Mr. Ivan Cote	
Valley Action Industries Inc.	Mr. Al Lawson	Manager
Vantage Vocational Center	Ms. Mary Friedman	Manager
West Flat Citizens Group	Mr. Laurent Fournier	Program Coordinator
Southwest Ability Center	Ms. Irene Ens	Regional Director
Star Dale Women's Group	Ms. Helen McPhaden	Coordinator
The Bea Fischer Center Inc	Mr. George Zaychkowsky	Manager
Society for the Involvement of Good Neighbors	Mr. Tom Seeley	Executive Director
Saskatchewan Business & Professional Women's Clubs	Ms. Tracy Meyers	President
Sakewskam Learning Center	Mr. Lazarus Masson	Employment & Career Counsellor
Prince Albert Multicultural Council – Settlement Agency	Ms. Marge Nainaar	Manager
Qu'Appelle Valley Friendship Center	Mr. Peter Dubois	Executive Director

Group	Contact	Title
PA & District Community Future Development Corporation	Ms. Karrie Rolston	Disabled Entrepreneur Program Officer
PA Indian & Métis Friendship Center	Mr. Alan Dreaver	Executive Director
Parkland Ability Center	Mr. John Denysek	Regional Director
Personal Employment Readiness Center	Ms. Rosalind Fyrk	Program Manager
Porcupine Opportunities Program	Mr. Carl Kwiatkowski	Manager
Portage Vocational Society	Mr. John Mandin	Vocational Programmer
Prairie Employment Program	Ms. Sharon Brydges	Coordinator
Moose Jaw Family Service Bureau	Ms. Judy Vermette	Executive Director
Moose Jaw Multicultural Council	Ms. Linda Dirkson	Coordinator
Multiworks Vocational Training Corp	Ms. Marilyn Farr	Employment Resource Counsellor
Northwest Friendship Center	Ms. Gladys Joseph	
Kikinahk Friendship Center		
Lestock & District Community Health Center	Ms. Brenda Battyanie	
Lloydminster Native Friendship Center	Mr. Roger Chicheness	Employment & Training Coordinator
Meridian Community Futures Development Corporation	Ms. Vicki Newmeyer	Manager
Moose Jaw Diversified Services for the Handicapped Inc	Jerry Hicks	Manager
Ile-a-la-Crosse Friendship Center	Mr. Gerald Roy	Youth Support Services
Iskwew – Women Helping Women	Hazel Bear & Val Burns	Counsellors
John Howard Society – Moose Jaw	Mr. George Dash	District Manager
Estevan Diversified Services	Mr. Wilf Tisdale	Manager
Gary Tinker Federation for the Disabled	Mr. George Ward	Executive Director
Battlefords Interval House Society	Ms. Jean Beattie	Executive Director
Battlefords Trade & Education Center	Mr. Bob Reader	Executive Director

Group	Contact	Title
Big River Youth Center Inc	Ms. Judith Marshall	Executive Director
Buffalo Narrows Friendship Center	Mr. Norm Hansen	Administrator
Saskatchewan Association for Lifelong Learning	Ms. Susan Anholt	Executive Director
Northwest Community Futures Development Corporation	Pat Redl	Manager
Newsask Community Futures	Ms. Judy Childs	Manager
Eastern Assiniboine Training & Employment	Ms. Helen Johnson	Area Director
Swampy Cree East Side Training Center	Ms. Kasandra Stene	
Beaver River Community Futures Development Corporation	Ms. Patti Conkin	
North Western Métis Training & Employment Inc	Mr. Guy Bouview	Area Director
Lloydminster Community Futures	Mr. Bob Kondro	
Métis Employment & Training Center	Ms. Noreen McBride	
Urban Aboriginal Employment Center	Ms. Marilyn Hiughway	
Kinsmen Community Workshop	Mr. Dennis Bleier	
Employment Assistance for Persons with Disabilities	Ms. Laurie Peifer	
Métis Women of Saskatchewan	Ms. Darlene Mckay	
Aboriginal Women's Council of Saskatchewan	Ms. Theresa Woods	Council Member

**LIST OF CONSULTATION MEETINGS &  
WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS  
FOR REGIONAL COLLEGES**

**CONSULTATION MEETINGS**

- Association of Saskatchewan Regional Colleges (All board chairs and CEOs) Dec. 9, 1999
- Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Ms. Marilyn Braun, Director, Saskatchewan Provincial Affairs; June 29, 1999
- Crown Investments Corporation, James Hoffman, Senior Analyst, Strategic Planning; June 29, 1999
- City of Melfort: Dub Henderson, Mayor; Brent Lukes, Councilor; Roger Vogelsang, Co-ordinator; May 4, 1999
- Economic and Co-operative Development, Robert Greenwood, Assistant Deputy Minister, August 27, 1999
- Farm Stress Line Delegation: Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food, Ken Imhoff; Farm Stress Unit, Jim Birch; Green Certificate Program, Sandra Stanger; Extension Branch Saskatchewan, Justice, Farm Land Security Board, Dan Patterson; Saskatchewan Women's Agriculture, Network, Lil Sabiston; Agriculture Canada, Farm Consultation Services, Wendy Collinge; September 17, 1999
- First Nations Organizations: Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN), Paula Acoose; Saskatchewan Indian Training Assessment Group (SITAG), Roger Schindelka; Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, Joan Greyeyes; Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, Del Anaquod; September 30, 1999
- League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents (LEADS), Pat Dickson, Executive Director; Gerry Guillet, Region 5 Representative; David Steele, Region 3, Representative; Bill MacFarlane, Past President; June 30, 1999
- Métis Organizations: Métis Employment and Training of Saskatchewan Inc., Bonnie Starr; Dumont Technical Institute, Gabriel Dumont Institute, Lisa Wilson; September 30, 1999
- Northlands College, Louis Gardiner, Board Chair; Bill McLaughlin, CEO; September 17, 1999
- Regional College staff, students, management, union representatives, boards  
April 20, April 30, May, 5 1999
- Saskatchewan Government Employees Union, President, and Post-Secondary Education Committee; December 9, 1999

Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board (SLFDB), SLFDB members;  
June 22, 1999  
SIAST Board and Senior Management Council; November 26, 1999  
SIAST Review Committee; August 27, 1999  
SIAST Senior Management Assembly; December 10, 1999  
SIAST Senior Management (President, Vice President, Central Directors, Deans, Campus  
Directors), Aug. 27/99  
Social Services, Office of Disability Issues, Jim Brown, June 21, 1999  
University of Regina, Kathy Heinrich Vice President of Academic, Bob McCulloch  
Associate Vice President of Academic; December 17, 1999  
University of Saskatchewan, Extension: Gordon Thompson, Dean of Extension, Robert  
Cram; October 8, 1999

## WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

### **Regional Colleges Faculty and Staff**

Association of Saskatchewan Regional Colleges, Submission Concerning the Review of Regional Colleges, Presented to the Honourable Maynard Sonntag, Minister of Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training, October 22, 1998.

Association of Saskatchewan Regional Colleges, Shannon Lindgren, President  
Brown, Gerald, Presentation to SIAST and Regional Colleges Review Committees, Saskatoon, April 19, 1999.

Regional Colleges, Chief Executive Officers  
Northlands College, Bill McLaughlin, CEO

### **Provincial Government Departments**

Agriculture and Food, Farm Stress Unit, Ken Imoff, Manager

Agriculture and Food, North Battleford Rural Center, David Whitehead, Extension Agrologist

Agriculture and Food, Rosetown Rural Service Center, John Ippolito, Extension Agrologist

Agriculture and Food, Tisdale Rural Service Center, Leroy Bader, Extension Agrologist

Agriculture and Food, Wally Vanin, Extension Agrologist

Economic and Co-operative Development, Fraser Nicholson, Deputy Minister

Environment and Resource Management, Duncan Campbell, Fire Operations and Training Coordinator

Education, Craig Dotson, Deputy Minister

Environment and Resource Management, Stuart Kramer, Deputy Minister

Energy and Mines, Ray Clayton, Deputy Minister

Executive Council, Brenda Righetti

Health, Community Care Branch, Jim Simmons, Executive Director

Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs, Ernie Lawton, Assistant Deputy Minister

Justice, Betty Ann Pottruff, Director

Justice, John D. Whyte, Deputy Minister

Labour, Cheryl Hanson, Assistant Deputy Minister

Municipal Affairs, Culture and Housing, Brij Mathur, Acting Deputy Minister

Northern Affairs, Alex Campbell, Deputy Minister

Provincial Apprenticeship Board, George Pellerin, Chair

Public Service Commission, Wynne Young, Chair

Finance, Davern Jones, Deputy Minister

Health, Con Hnatiuk, Deputy Minister

Social Services, Glenda Yeates, Deputy Minister

Social Services, Office of Disability Issues, Daryl Stubel, Executive Coordinator

Social Services, Regina Inter Agency Co-ordinator, Donna Benesh

Women's Secretariat, Faye Rafter, Executive Co-ordinator

## **Crown Corporations**

Crown Investments Corporation, Frank Hart, President  
Saskatchewan Government Insurance, Gina Winkler, Manager, Employee Development and Diversity, Human Resources  
Saskatchewan Communications Network, James Benning, President and CEO  
Saskatchewan Water Corporation, R. W. Styles, President

## **Health, Education and Community Organizations**

East Central Health District, Sherrell Fox, Acting VP Human Resources and Development  
Moose Mountain District of Health Board, Terry Steininger, Director of Human Resources  
NewSask Community Futures Development Corporation, Laurie Peifer, Employment Services Representative  
North-East Health District, Sharon de Santis, Director of Health Services  
Prince Albert Health District, Trudy Radford, Director of Integrated Care  
Regina Health District, Laura Saporlo, Director Education and Development  
Regina Health District, Kim Zacaruk, Recruitment/Classification Consultant  
Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations, John Carter, Director Educational Services  
Saskatchewan Council for Community Development, Linda Pipke, Executive Director  
Saskatchewan Teacher's Federation, Derwyn Crozier-Smith, General Secretary  
Saskatoon District Health, Kathleen M. Martin, Director, Organizational Health and Development

## **Business and Industry Organizations**

Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce, Mary Ann McFadyen, Executive Director  
The Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors, R.H. (Bob) Geddes, President

## **Municipalities**

City of Yorkton, Larry Horncastle, Director of Economic Development  
City of Melfort, Dub Henderson, Mayor  
City of Melville, Michael K. Fisher, Mayor  
City of Prince Albert, Don Cody, Mayor