



CONESTOGA
Connect Life and Learning

BUSINESS PLAN

2020-21

Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Conestoga's 2020-21 fiscal year will be like no other in the history of our college, as we continue our efforts to address workforce needs, prepare learners for successful futures and support the prosperity and well-being of our community in the shadow of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The social and economic impacts of the global pandemic continue to escalate, with almost 28 million cases now diagnosed worldwide, and more than 900,000 deaths directly attributed to the virus. While conditions in Canada generally, and our region specifically, have improved since the early months of 2020, public health officials warn of the need to remain vigilant to prevent community spread and a resurgence of cases.

At Conestoga, the safety and well-being of our college community is our highest priority. In mid-March 2020, all college programs and services moved to remote delivery format to support the need for physical distancing and protect the safety and well-being of our college community. Most programs, courses and services will continue to be delivered remotely in 2020-21 as the pandemic continues. Many employees will continue to work from home.

At the same time, we have re-opened campus labs, shops and studios to the extent that is required to support the safe delivery of hands-on learning activities that cannot be completed remotely. This effort has required substantial investment in personal protective equipment, enhanced infection prevention and control measures and the reconfiguration of campus facilities to support physical distancing requirements.

As a result of these efforts, we successfully delivered on-campus learning experiences over the summer for more than 3,000 Conestoga students who had been unable to complete their semester requirements as a result of the cancellation of face-to-face classes in March. This was an outstanding achievement. We have received no reports of COVID-19 transmission on our campuses and have been commended by public health officials for the diligence of our efforts. Compliance with new health and safety procedures by both employees and students has been outstanding.

This fall, more than 4,000 students are expected to participate in on-campus laboratory, shop and studio activities, requiring additional investment and ongoing vigilance to support the safety and well-being of our entire college community.

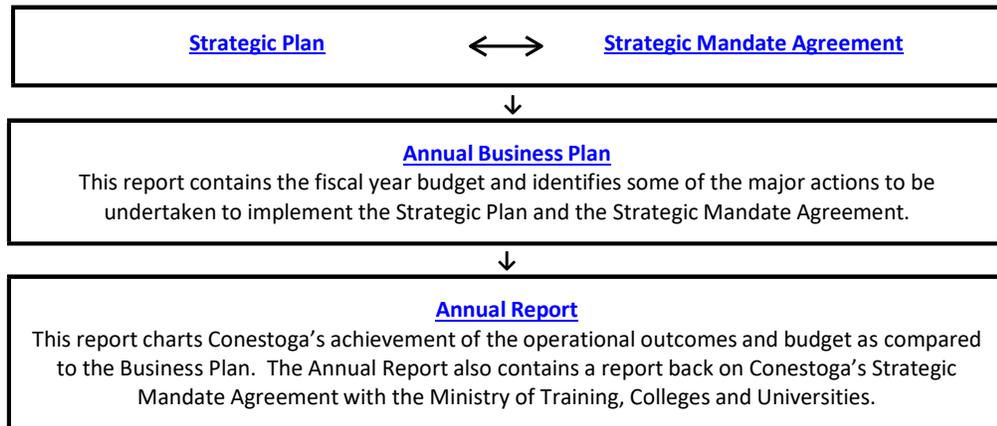
There is much uncertainty in the year ahead. We will face significant budgetary challenges as the result of both reduced revenues and additional costs. Building a strong, inclusive college community will require new tools and approaches in the current, largely remote context. College plans will be impacted by both global and local conditions that cannot be clearly foreseen or predicted.

As a result, the 2020-21 Business Plan is different than past versions, focused on overarching themes that reflect college priorities and key initiatives during this period of uncertainty and rapid change. The plan will be reviewed in November to ensure that it continues to represent college direction.

1. INTRODUCTION

The annual Business Plan is part of Conestoga’s planning, reporting and accountability process.

The key components and reports in the process are:



Conestoga’s Strategic Plan and Strategic Mandate Agreement set out the context for the Business Plan.

The 2020-21 Business Plan identifies themes and activities for the year as we continue to work towards our vision for excellence in polytechnic education.

2. STRATEGIC PRIORITY FOCUS

The 2020-21 Business Plan identifies goals and initiatives to support the further achievement of Conestoga's strategic goals as outlined in the Strategic Plan.

QUALITY

Conestoga will demonstrate excellence and continuous improvement in programming and services.

Objective Q1

Continually improve programming through the ongoing implementation of quality assurance measures and processes.

Overview

In 2020-21 our focus will continue to be on programming that supports student success and meets industry and community needs. Quality assurance systems guided by standardized processes, documentation, reflection, consultation, collaboration and data-informed action support programs through all phases of their life cycle, including program development, review, revision and renewal.

Given the unique challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, we will place increased emphasis on adapting and transforming both programming and processes to support both remote and face-to-face learning.

Key Initiatives

In 2020-21 we will:

- support faculty and staff training and implement new technology-based solutions as we continue to adapt to new demands and requirements resulting from the transition to remote and hybrid program delivery
- continue to refine program development, review and renewal processes to align with COVID-19 parameters (e.g., remote work)
- participate in a two-day virtual site visit by a CQAAP audit panel that will complete a comprehensive college-wide quality audit
- continue with PEQAB quality audits for degree programs
- continue surveying students on their experiences at Conestoga.

Objective Q2

Support student achievement and success through the delivery of a full range of services in a secure and inclusive learning environment.

Overview

Conestoga is committed to supporting student success and achievement through a wide range of services that address the academic, cultural and social needs of learners from diverse backgrounds.

These services play an important role in providing students with academic, social and cultural resources to support success. The transition to remote delivery of programming and services has necessitated significant investment in new initiatives to facilitate the virtual delivery of services and support options that address students' learning needs as well as the significant economic and social challenges they have faced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Studies indicate both high levels of engagement and stress among students during the pandemic.

Key Initiatives

In 2020-21 we will support a healthy campus for students by:

- providing health and wellness resources and services, including the continuation of a college mental health initiative
- delivering virtual orientations, workshops and other engagement events for our diverse student population
- utilizing online videos, workshops and guides to support remote learning
- providing additional financial and technical supports and resources to assist at-risk students.

Objective Q3

Develop career-ready graduates by building on our leadership in work-integrated, experiential and active learning.

Overview

In 2020-21, we will continue to provide students with opportunities to apply their skills and knowledge in learning activities that reflect real-world challenges and opportunities. The COVID-19 pandemic has created new challenges for the implementation of traditional work-integrated learning opportunities, such as co-op placements. The effect of the pandemic on work-integrated learning will be uneven across programs and will reflect the new realities of different sectors during the pandemic.

Key Initiatives

In 2020-21 we will:

- continue to support student involvement in applied research opportunities
- work with industry partners to identify work-integrated learning options and alternatives that fulfill health and safety requirements and academic outcomes
- explore and develop alternate models for achieving work-integrated learning and practicum components of programs.

Objective Q4

Foster the development of an effective and high-performing employee team.

Overview

The work done on recruitment and employee development practices has supported the growth of a qualified and talented employee team at Conestoga. In the last few years, we have leveraged technology and HR best practices to enhance our recruiting practices. As well, we have expanded the amount and range of ongoing professional and personal learning opportunities to employees to support skill development and quality improvement.

With the shift to remote work and instruction for most departments and programs, professional development has pivoted to include a broad range of college resources and events to support employee experience and well-being, pedagogy, technology and remote instruction.

Key Initiatives

In 2020-21 we will continue to:

- create and deliver educational events, processes and resources that:
 - support employee development, building essential capacity for the delivery of quality teaching and services, whether face-to-face, or in remote delivery format
 - enhance the employee experience and contribute to employee well-being
 - focus on communities of practice, coaching and leadership development opportunities
- recruit for roles that support core and emerging college priorities and operational capacities
- develop practices and resources to support Conestoga employees in their efforts to serve a diverse college community.

CAPACITY

Conestoga will build our capacity to address community, workforce and industry needs through the development of facilities, technologies and programming options.

Objective C1

Deliver a comprehensive range of career-focused programs that responds to current and evolving workforce needs.

Overview

Conestoga remains committed to delivering a full range of accessible, career-focused programming geared to workforce and community needs. New program development will continue during the pandemic. As we move forward, the college will continue to work and consult with government and community partners to create and deliver programs that meet the long-term and emerging needs of our students and community.

Key Initiatives

In 2020-21 we will:

- develop new degree, certificate, micro-credential and diploma programs that respond to current and evolving workforce needs
- implement a comprehensive range of technology-based solutions to support both remote and hybrid program delivery, enhancing both quality and efficiency
- address Ontario's urgent need to enhance the seniors care workforce through increased access to training opportunities and the introduction of new, technology-enhanced learning options
- continue to explore opportunities to serve the Milton community through local access to Conestoga programming
- provide leadership in the delivery of career-focused degrees through the development of STEM-focused programs
- deliver Indigenous studies through Interdisciplinary Studies and explore avenues to expand or incorporate Indigenous content into other programs

Objective C2

Renew and expand campus facilities to support enhanced access and the delivery of programming and services.

Overview

In recent years, facility renewal and expansion have supported college programming development. Many campus development initiatives will be paused for 2020-21 as a result of financial and operational considerations created by the pandemic. Instead, significant focus will be placed on enhancement of

facilities to support health, safety and well-being of students, staff and visitors in alignment with pandemic protocols.

Key Initiatives

In 2020-21 we will:

- continue to adapt our campus processes, scheduling and space configuration to support new physical distancing and health and safety measures
- track campus utilization rates and practices to ensure that campus space supports diverse program delivery needs during the pandemic
- focus on the development of hyflex classrooms that support multiple modes of teaching and learning (e.g., in-class, remote and self-directed)
- continue work with industry, government and community partners towards the delivery of programming in Milton to address local workforce needs
- continue preliminary plans to support the construction of a new 250,000 square foot trades facility at 25 Reuter Drive, Cambridge.

Objective C3

Increase access to education and skills training through pathways, technologies and flexible programming options.

Overview

We will continue to increase access to programming through the expansion of online and hybrid delivery models and the exploration of digital learning simulations.

We will further explore new opportunities for the delivery of short courses, modular programming and stackable credentials that lead to career success. Our ongoing investment in technology-based tools and infrastructure will support new approaches for effective and innovative program delivery.

Key Initiatives

In 2020-21 we will:

- continue to deliver most college programs either fully remotely or through a combination of remote and some on-campus activities for Fall 2020, with decisions for Winter 20201 to be made as soon as circumstances allow
- provide essential face-to-face learning activities in labs, studios and shops for approximately 4,000 students in the Fall 2020 semester
- enhance online course and program delivery opportunities and leverage new technologies to support remote learning and service delivery

- develop additional hybrid programs that combine remote and face-to-face instruction to provide students with greater timetable flexibility as well as enhance college scheduling capacity
- launch micro-credential programs that will increase access to education and skills training and meet workforce needs
- expand the range of digital learning simulations at Conestoga to augment the delivery of applied instruction.

Objective C4

Address the innovation needs of industry and community partners through the expansion of applied research capacity.

Overview

Conestoga is ranked among Canada's top 12 colleges for applied research. During the coming year, we will further develop our position as a research leader. We will continue to expand applied research activities and the development of Conestoga's centres of innovation to support student learning, spur innovation for small and medium-sized enterprises in the local community and contribute to regional prosperity.

Key Initiatives

In 2020-21 we will continue to:

- support specialized interdisciplinary research in sectors of key regional economic growth through centres of innovation that bring together faculty expertise, student researchers and state-of-the-art technology
- develop research projects that are integrated into the curriculum to provide students with opportunities to explore solutions for real life problems
- work with government, industry and community partners to pursue applied research initiatives – including COVID-19-related research - that reflect the diversity of industry and community needs.

SUSTAINABILITY

Conestoga will build on our longstanding commitment to responsible resource management, engaging with partners and exploring new opportunities to support the achievement of our goals.

Objective S1

Achieve economies of scale and enhance revenues through enrolment growth and increased student retention.

Overview

The global pandemic has had a significant impact on enrolment at post-secondary institutions worldwide. Closed borders and ongoing travel restrictions have created substantial barriers for international students wishing to pursue education in Canada. While we appreciate the efforts of the federal government to support alternative solutions that allow students to begin their post-secondary studies from their home countries, there is little doubt that the pandemic will continue to depress international student enrolments until such time as borders can re-open.

For Conestoga, the significant drop in international student enrolments anticipated for the 2020-21 fiscal year represents a substantial revenue loss.

In addition, the transition to remote learning may also result in some student retention challenges. We continue to develop new and innovative ways to communicate with and support students in their efforts to develop the professional and technical expertise they need for successful careers in a rapidly evolving workforce.

Key Initiatives

In 2020-21 we will:

- mitigate enrolment losses through enhanced recruitment efforts, flexible programming and delayed start dates to accommodate new and evolving federal guidelines regarding international study in Canada
- continue to provide students with a comprehensive range of support services, including the launch of a new Student Success Advisor initiative
- utilize digital technologies to engage with current and prospective students and create an engaged college community
- work with government partners to provide international students with a high-quality education experience abroad during the pandemic.

Objective S2

Enhance engagement with college and community partners to support the achievement of our goals.

Overview

Throughout the year, we will work with community partners to rebuild the local economy through education and training initiatives that help businesses and the local workforce adapt to new conditions arising as a result of the global pandemic. We will pursue opportunities that will increase public awareness of Conestoga's role in supporting the prosperity and well-being of the communities we serve. Our strong relationships with student government, alumni, partners and stakeholders will support the development of programs, services and facilities and provide new opportunities for current and future students.

In 2020-21 we will continue to:

- provide students and the broader community with information about college plans and operations during the pandemic
- work with media and community partners to build broader understanding of the unique role the college plays in preparing students for success, supporting business and workforce needs, and contributing to prosperity
- engage with partners to address critical workforce needs in the health and long-term care sectors
- explore opportunities to expand and enhance alumni engagement
- work with Conestoga Students Inc. on joint initiatives of common interest.

Objective S3

Effectively manage resources to support the sustainable delivery of college programming and services.

Overview

Resource management priorities for 2020-21 will reflect the changes to college operations that have occurred as a result of the pandemic, with fewer students and employees on campus and most programs and services expected to continue via remote delivery.

We will place increased focus on technology enhancements that support remote work, teaching, and learning. Initiatives and practices related to campus operations will be reviewed to ensure that they align with college priorities to protect the health, safety and well-being of our college community.

Key Initiatives

In 2020-21 we will:

- support the ongoing revitalization of college technology infrastructure through a range of information systems enhancements

- provide supplies, processes and resources to support the safe delivery of in-person, hands-on learning activities in Conestoga courses and programs that cannot be delivered through remote means
- consolidate college operations to key sites to maximize resource utilization and reduce costs
- maintain work-at-home protocols for Conestoga employees who are not required to be on-campus to perform their functions within the organization
- review our remote and on-campus staffing mix to inform campus planning and space use
- curtail discretionary expenditures, including travel and external professional development, to reflect college cost containment measures required during the pandemic
- enhance student service by continuing to streamline college processes, such as document imaging and student awards.

Objective S4

Explore and advance revenue-generating opportunities.

Overview

The economic impact of the pandemic in our province and community will affect our ability to pursue some traditional revenue-generating opportunities.

The college has progressively expanded the scope of revenue-generating services. For example, in 2019-20, Conestoga expanded its testing capacity by opening three computer-delivered test labs. Similarly, Workforce Development developed new programs, including Flexible, Accessible, Short Training (FAST) programs and micro-credentials to support skills development and advance revenue opportunities. These initiatives and others will be modified to meet the operational restrictions and opportunities arising from the pandemic.

Key Initiatives

In 2020-21 we will continue to:

- explore opportunities to improve cost-recovery in the delivery of services
- develop operational plans and implement solutions for ongoing opportunities as well as those that emerge during the pandemic
- promote our Corporate Training and International Education Testing (IELTS) divisions.

3. BUDGET COMMENTARY

The budget that was initially presented to Finance & Audit Committee at the beginning of March 2020 has been significantly adjusted to account for the current and future impacts of COVID-19. Closed borders and restricted travel are expected to have a significant impact on the number of international students who are able to study at Conestoga. The original budget anticipated an operating surplus. The budget that was approved in June has a \$5M deficit.

The pace of change is rapid, and the college is adapting to new conditions and requirements as quickly as possible. For simplicity, the budget presented assumes that many aspects of our operation that are currently closed will stay closed for the duration of the fiscal year.

Spring 2020 enrolment numbers remained strong, due in part to students having the ability to begin their studies out-of-country. Projections for the fall and winter semester assume about 70 per cent of the students originally expected to enroll will attend classes in some form. Tuition revenue is also impacted by Conestoga's decision to hold tuition at a 0% increase for international students.

Lower tuition revenue, student fees (also related to enrolment) and lower ancillary revenue due to the closure of some services (e.g., recreation centre, childcare) will result in revenue that is significantly lower than originally planned. Very difficult and careful decisions have had to be made to reduce staffing costs. Projections indicate a savings of over \$30M in total salaries and benefits compared to the amounts originally budgeted. This budgeted reduction is expected to be offset by a significant increase in salaries and benefits expense related to smaller required class sizes. Plans for the fall semester indicate that costs to provide reduced class sizes for in-person classes could have significant financial impacts. These increases will be reflected in the revised budget process as planning for the fall and winter terms is finalized.

Other reductions have been made in almost every expenditure area, particularly in deferral of \$13M for facilities maintenance projects. Moving to remote learning necessitates additional expenditures to enable remote teaching, and \$5M has been budgeted for additional staffing, software and other technology. Additional expenditures of \$6M related to personal protective equipment (PPE), security and cleaning are also included in the budget.

Other changes to the budget could occur as plans for the upcoming semesters are finalized. Public health requirements, provincial recommendations, and changes in the impact of COVID-19 could have a significant financial impact on the revised college budget for the year ending March 31, 2021.

**The Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning
2020/2021 Budget Summary**

	2020/21 Approved Budget \$ 000	2019/20 Actual \$ 000
Revenue		
Grants	81,609	84,475
Tuition Revenue	193,625	201,404
Contract Revenue	3,362	10,027
Other Student Fees	25,071	29,019
Other Revenue	15,251	32,541
Amortization of Deferred Capital Contributions	6,963	7,855
Total Operating Fund Revenue	325,881	365,321
Expenditures		
Salaries & Benefits	210,936	206,186
Student Related Expenses	15,295	21,553
Staff Related Expenses	6,725	8,553
Plant Related Expenses	20,795	30,245
Professional and Contract Fees	28,672	29,734
Other Expenses	10,476	15,641
Specifically Reimbursed Expenses	8,987	6,083
Amortization of Capital Assets	16,768	15,178
Total Non-Salary Expense	107,718	126,987
Total Operating Fund Expenditures	318,654	333,173
Surplus before strategic investments and COVID-specific expenses	7,227	32,148
Technology / Simulation / Online	5,000	
PPE and Staffing for Onsite Delivery	6,000	
Bursaries and Laptops for Students	1,500	
Surplus/(Deficit)	(5,273)	32,148