

Quarterly Report

DECEMBER 2022



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The Aurora College transformation began in October 2018. Though often presented as one project, transformation is in fact a collection of over 100 projects, spread over three phases and a collaboration between Aurora College and the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT).

The project remains in phase 2 which includes several actions and milestones. This phase will take time, but once complete, program, policy and legislative changes will enable Aurora College to successfully transform to a polytechnic university, providing NWT students with enhanced, Northern focused post-secondary education opportunities closer to home.

December Project Spotlights

Have you been wondering how the polytechnic university will be funded?

How Aurora College and the future polytechnic university is funded is complex. A funding framework, government contribution agreements, co-investment partners, tuition, etc. are all contributing factors. Currently, work is underway to establish the funding framework. Co-investment opportunities are another area of regular focus. Below, you will find information on both.

Funding Framework

ECE is currently working towards the development of a funding framework for Aurora College and the future polytechnic university. There are several approaches to funding—with most allowing considerable autonomy for institutions to internally allocate the funds determined by the formula. The framework and funding formula need to correspond with GNWT priorities for system-level improvement and long-term growth of the post-secondary system.

The approach to a funding framework for the polytechnic university will look at Aurora College's/the polytechnic university's operating conditions across the territory and its goal of increasing access to quality post-secondary education opportunities for all residents. It will also be shaped by the fact that the NWT only has one public institution that supports three campuses and a network of community learning and research facilities across the territory.

Typical funding frameworks are comprised of three layers: core facilities and administration funding to support institutional sustainability, core program funding to support programs tied to long-term labour demands, and enrollment-based funding to support short and medium-term growth.

Note that overall, the GNWT currently funds only 65% of Aurora College's operating costs. Additional project specific or pilot funding may also come from the GNWT, including the potential for matching funds on federal grants. This information will be considered as the funding formula is established.



Co-Investment

The GNWT continues to work with Aurora College to establish co-investment partnerships. The term “co-investment partner” in the context of transformation, means any organization with a common interest in post-secondary education or research. Through a formal agreement, this organization contributes knowledge, resources, or funding to the polytechnic university.

Potential co-investment partners include the federal government, Indigenous governments, industry, non-government organizations and other post-secondary institutions. The establishment of co-investment partnerships through formal agreements will support the transformation of Aurora College, as well as its long-term development and growth as a polytechnic university.

Economic Benefits

As the institution emerges from transformation it will be stronger, more accessible, and able to attract a greater number of students from within the NWT and beyond. This will provide direct economic benefits to Northern communities, particularly the three campus communities.

For every new student enrolled in the polytechnic university, approximately \$22,000 would be added to the NWT economy. As the student population grows, so too would the demand for instructors. Every additional instructor hired to accommodate student population growth would contribute approximately \$257,000 to the economy.

Building the new campus in Yellowknife and enhancing facilities in Inuvik and Fort Smith is also estimated to contribute \$500 million to the GDP over the life of construction



**New Student =
\$22,000 to NWT economy**



**New Instructor =
\$257,000 to NWT economy**



**Infrastructure Enhancements =
\$500 million to the GDP**

Aurora College Program Review

Aurora College has created a program development team that continue to undertake projects related to program review. To-date, reviews of both the Social Work Diploma and Bachelor of Education program have been completed.

An exciting outcome of the Social Work Diploma review is acknowledgment that establishing a Social Work Degree program can work in the NWT. This critical gap in the labour force will address and empower Northerners to play a leading role in supporting their communities. The review of the Bachelor of Education program recognized that the current strengths of the program include community and land-based experiences. Ensuring these experiences are woven purposefully into the renewed degree program will allow students to stay connected with their culture and lands, both of which play such an important part of the education system in the North.

The GNWT is now working collaboratively with Aurora College to support the development and implementation of these renewed programs over the next few years.

A five-year schedule for the review of all existing programs has been established. The next program for review is the Environment and Natural Resources Technology program, followed by Office Administration. Though it will take time to review and develop new programs, the polytechnic university will provide Northerners with an opportunity to study new and laddered programs within areas of teaching and research specialization and support the establishment of a place of higher learning focused on meeting NWT labour market needs that will prepare Northerners to be the first in line for northern jobs.

Follow along with the transformation process and see what's coming next, by visiting the Aurora College Transformation website at: <https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/aurora-transformation/>.