



AURORA COLLEGE FOUNDATIONAL REVIEW MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Rationale

As part of the government's ongoing work to improve opportunities for employment success in the NWT, the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment (Minister) called for an Aurora College Foundational Review. The first part of the Aurora College Foundational Review will be the Review Report.

The Review Report is to be provided by MNP LLP following their six month examination of the College and the needs of stakeholders. Although MNP LLP has been contracted by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE), they have carried out the review independent of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT).

As noted in the Terms of Reference for the Report, a GNWT Steering Committee was formed to provide final approval of the Contractor's deliverables, including: scope of work; work plan and completion of draft reports, for the sole purpose of ensuring the conditions of the Terms of Reference and Request for Proposal are met.

The second component of the Aurora College Foundational Review is the official response of the GNWT to the recommendations in the Report, referred to as the Management Response. Providing a Management Response to a report of this nature is standard practice across Canada.

The Management Response is the government's opportunity to consider the feasibility of each recommendation. The Management Response complements the Report by making clear and transparent what will be implemented.

Analysis of the recommendations by the government is expected to take several weeks to complete and will be done in confidence. However, the full Report and Management Response will be made public as soon as both processes have been completed, including time for input from the Standing Committee on Social Development (SCOSD).

The public release the Report and Management Response will together form a new path for the ongoing development of Aurora College and allow for an informed discussion among stakeholders regarding the opportunities and challenges ahead.

2. Background

The College is established through the *Aurora College Act* and follows the direction of the Minister. It is the only public postsecondary institution in the NWT. The majority of students are Indigenous and many are from small communities. The College delivers programs and services as close to NWT communities as possible through a network of three campuses (Thebacha in Fort Smith, North Slave in Yellowknife and Aurora in Inuvik) and community learning centres.

Preparing Northerners for the jobs of the future is important to their personal success and to the long-term success of the NWT. One of the ways to ensure this is by taking a good look at the needs of our residents, future job trends, the kind of programs available and how that programming is delivered. That is one of the reasons the Minister called for a foundational review of Aurora College in early 2017.

The contract to conduct the Review, including delivery of the Review Report, was awarded to MNP LLP. The objective of this Review has been to evaluate and make recommendations regarding the operations and governance of the College in order to ensure programs are managed effectively and efficiently, are meeting the diverse needs of students and are responsive to changes in the labour market.

All Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) were given the opportunity to provide input into the Terms of Reference for the Review Report which was then incorporated into a Request for Proposals (RFP). Following these, the Review Report to be produced by MNP LLP will:

- Examine academic program management processes;
- Examine operations;
- Examine the governance structure;
- Examine the accountability measures; and
- Examine the policies and practices used to recruit and retain students.

The independent contractor responsible for the Review Report has provided MLAs, GNWT staff, members of the public and stakeholders with an opportunity to provide input to the Aurora College Foundational Review. Such stakeholders included Indigenous Governments and Organizations, Aurora College staff and students, former Members of the Aurora College Board of Governors, postsecondary institutions and research centres affiliated with Aurora College, private postsecondary organizations operating in the NWT, licensed researchers and industry groups from across the NWT.

3. Objectives

1. The Management Response will determine where the government will accept, partially accept or not accept each recommendation in the Review Report.
2. The Management Response will provide an explanation of the government's response to each recommendation in the Review Report.
3. In responding to each recommendation in the Review Report, the government may, as appropriate, indicate the next steps in implementing some recommendation.

4. Scope

The Management Response will address to the findings and recommendations from the Review Report.

5. Guiding Principles

The government shall follow the following guiding principles when determining the feasibility of each recommendation:

1. The Management Response will provide transparency and disclosure related to the justifications for the response to each recommendation of the Aurora College Foundational Review;
2. The Management Response will consider the challenges pertaining to the NWT including: geography, climate, cost of living and population projections;
3. The Management Response will pursue fiscal and operationally sustainable options that are realistic given the broader fiscal framework of the GNWT;
4. The Management Response will consider cultural differences in communities across the territory and how such differences may have an impact on the operations and activities of the College;
5. The Management Response will ensure that each recommendation is clear and evidence-based; and
6. The Management Response will be considerate of the broader strategic objectives contained in the GNWT Mandate, legislation and policy.

6. Methods

ECE will lead the drafting of a Management Response, work collaboratively with other GNWT departments to determine the implications of each recommendation and ensure adherence of the guiding principles.

7. Oversight

The Steering Committee will oversee the development of the Management Response. The Steering Committee will consist of the:

- Deputy Minister, ECE;
- Deputy Minister, Finance;
- Deputy Minister, Industry, Tourism and Investment;
- Assistant Deputy Minister, Labour and Income Security ECE; and
- Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services ECE.

8. Project Schedule

The Aurora College Foundational Review will end when the full Review Report and Management Response are released to stakeholders and the public at the start of the 2018/2019 academic year.