



NWT Polytechnic University Facilities Master Plan

Community Learning Centres:

What We Heard Report

Prepared for:

GNWT Department of Infrastructure (INF)

GNWT Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE)

& Aurora College

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Executive Summary

Aurora College is transforming into a polytechnic university to increase access to quality post-secondary education opportunities for Northwest Territories' (NWT) residents. As part of the transformation, a Polytechnic University Facilities Master Plan was released in 2022. This strategic planning document proposes expansions and enhancements at Aurora College's three campuses as well as, at the time, 21 community learning centres (CLCs).

Through the Facilities Master Plan process, a concept arose for CLCs to become vibrant, community-driven spaces and hubs for collaboration that could benefit both communities and Aurora College. To better understand community needs and interests, Taylor Architecture Group (TAG) undertook engagement focused on CLCs on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories' Department of Education, Culture and Employment (GNWT ECE) and Aurora College.

Between April 2023 and April 2024, 33 engagement sessions were conducted with representatives of Indigenous and community governments, local organizations and Aurora College in five sample communities: Déljné, Fort Liard, Fort Resolution, Tuktoyaktuk and Whati. Discussions largely revolved around demand for specific program areas, formats for program delivery, ways to support students and potential partnerships. Feedback from participants was analysed, and common themes and recommendations are summarised in this report.

Overall, the following themes and takeaways emerged as fairly clear and consistent throughout discussions:

- There are many people in communities who are not being served by CLCs in their current form or by post-secondary education centred in campus communities. CLCs currently focus on delivering Adult Literacy and Basic Education (ALBE) during working hours and without providing training allowances for attendance. This programming therefore caters to community members who are without regular employment and who, largely, do not have dependents. Aurora College's campuses serve a similarly limited demographic of students who are willing and able to relocate from their home communities for long periods of time. Many people in smaller communities are not served by either of these approaches.
- An opportunity exists for CLCs to serve a broader range of northern learners by diversifying programming and tailoring in-community programming to community wants, needs and preferences.
- Respondents frequently requested or recommended that education be directly connected to employment opportunities. This would serve a dual purpose of attracting more students into training programs, while also helping to fill the local demands for skilled labour.
- Respondents requested that programming be made more accessible and readily available to people in their home communities because several barriers limit residents' ability to relocate to campus communities for post-secondary education. Ways of making programming more accessible might include diversifying in-community programming, making use of remote learning or adapting academic calendars to fit communities' schedules.

- Many CLCs are designed to deliver programming in a classroom-style setting, which often does not reflect community preferences and Indigenous perspectives on education. Respondents requested flexible spaces that can accommodate a variety of hands-on programs while being able to support remote learning, as well as spaces designed with local cultures and preferences in mind.
- Community awareness of and enrolment in CLC programs is currently perceived as low but several untapped opportunities exist to increase enrolment. Partnering with local governments and community organizations would invite more local engagement with the CLCs and strengthen the presence of Aurora College in communities.
- Communities are eager to be involved in decisions about Aurora College's infrastructure and programming, and CLCs' success depends on community leadership being meaningfully involved in these decisions. Many opportunities exist for partnerships that would be mutually beneficial to Aurora College and communities.

In addition to these common themes, respondents highlighted several systemic or institutional barriers – from funding to human resources procedures to decision-making protocols – that may be relevant as the College re-envision its role in communities through the Transformation. Discussions suggested that there are various ways to improve the service delivery occurring at CLCs, but many of these opportunities go beyond upgrades to facilities themselves, potentially encompassing changes to organizational structures, goals and policies.

Feedback on the existing Facilities Master Plan and comments specific to individual communities are also summarized in this report.

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List of Acronyms

NWT	Northwest Territories
GNWT	Government of the Northwest Territories
ECE	Department of Education, Culture and Employment
ACT	Aurora College Transformation team
CLC	Community Learning Centre
ALBE	Adult Literacy and Basic Education
FMP	Facilities Master Plan
DGG	Déliné Got'ine Government
ADKFN	Acho Dene Koe First Nation
TCC	Tuktoyaktuk Community Corporation
TAG	Taylor Architecture Group

1. Introduction & Context

1.1. Background

Aurora College is transforming into a polytechnic university to increase access to quality post-secondary education opportunities for NWT residents and foster growth in research that is beneficial to communities and people. The polytechnic university will be about providing training for jobs that are needed in the territory. The vision is to establish a university in the North for the North.

A critical milestone in the transformation was achieved in September 2022, when the GNWT and Aurora College released the Polytechnic University [Facilities Master Plan \(FMP\)](#). This strategic planning document proposes enhancements and expansions at Aurora Colleges' three campuses – Aurora Campus, Thebacha Campus and Yellowknife North Slave Campus – and, at the time, the territory's 21 CLCs. There are now 19 CLCs operating in the territory.

In the development of the Facilities Master Plan throughout 2021-22, engagement took place with Indigenous and community governments and stakeholders in the sample communities of Aklavik, Behchokò, Fort Good Hope and Fort Simpson as well as with representatives from Aurora College. A vision for highly flexible, vibrant and community-driven CLCs emerged.

The concept that arose through the Facilities Master Plan process was for CLCs to become hubs for collaboration between various local actors: which could include secondary, post-secondary, community government and co-management organizations. Although adult literacy, academic upgrading and professional development could remain the focus, programming would be expanded to respond to community needs and interests. CLCs could be designed to offer trades training in communities, language programs or laboratory space, for example. Future CLCs would benefit both communities and the polytechnic university by fostering available, accessible training and research opportunities locally.

The following What We Heard report is an extension of the Facilities Master Plan, focusing on community learning centres. To better understand community needs and interests, Aurora College and the GNWT Department of ECE retained Taylor Architecture Group (TAG) to undertake a more targeted round of engagement, including validation of the concepts presented in the Facilities Master Plan. Interviews were conducted with representatives of Indigenous and community governments, local organizations and Aurora College in five sample communities: Déljnè, Fort Liard, Fort Resolution, Tuktoyaktuk and Whati.

This report summarizes feedback from these engagements, conducted between April 2023 and April 2024. It is organized in three sections:

- The first section highlights themes that arose in discussions in all five sample communities;
- The second discusses feedback specific to individual communities; and
- The third section outlines feedback on the existing Facilities Master Plan.

Interviews were intended to inform facilities planning for CLCs, by collecting feedback on the two concepts presented in the Facilities Master Plan, and by gathering further information about community needs, aspirations and contexts. Conversations revolved around program availability, program delivery, facilities and potential partnerships, and also uncovered further opportunities for Aurora College generally. These opportunities, while not always related directly to facilities, are presented in this report as they may be useful to the College as it re-envision its role in communities through the Transformation.

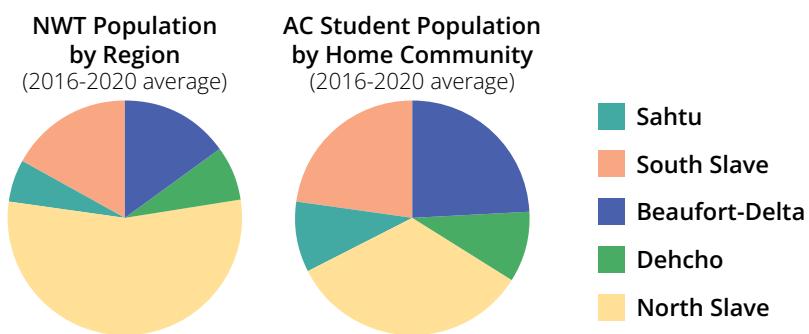
1.2. Existing CLCs and Student Population

Community learning centres (CLCs) are currently located in 19 communities across the NWT. There were previously CLCs in 21 NWT communities, but facilities in Gamètì and Wekweètì have since closed due to staffing issues. Many CLC facilities are aging, having been built 25 to 35 years ago. Most are standalone buildings owned by the GNWT, some are spaces leased from community partners, and some are spaces co-located within community buildings, such as schools. More information about existing CLCs can be found in [Appendix A](#).

CLCs are typically resourced with a full-time Community Adult Educator and may also be served by visiting instructors who deliver specialized short courses and workshops. Adult Literacy and Basic Education (ALBE) is the program most-often offered at CLCs, along with continuing education courses such as employment safety training.

Aurora College serves students from NWT communities more so than students from Yellowknife or from outside the territory. Although more than half of the NWT's population lives in the North Slave region, the majority of Aurora College's student population comes from other regions in the territory.

Figure 1. Origin of Aurora College students based on 2016-2020 enrolment



Given Aurora College's mission of creating equitable opportunities for residents across the NWT to reach their full potential, these statistics provide important context. Even at Aurora College campuses, a significant portion of Aurora College clientele come from non-campus communities. According to interviews, an even larger number would be served by in-community learning if re-location was not required. Figure 1 also highlights the importance of considering the wants, needs and interests of non-campus communities in planning for future CLCs.

1.3. Methodology

One sample community from each of the NWT's five administrative regions was selected for engagement. Under the guidance of the Project Steering Committee (comprising representatives from Aurora College and the GNWT Departments of ECE, Infrastructure and Finance), several factors were considered when selecting the sample communities. Communities with CLCs that are open and staffed were prioritized, as were communities with aging facilities in need of more timely replacement. Communities already engaged during the development of the Facilities Master Plan were not revisited during this round of engagement. Varying population sizes and geographic circumstances were intended to

be represented. Those ultimately selected for engagement were Déljnè, Fort Liard, Fort Resolution, Tuktoyaktuk and Whatì.

Between April 2023 and April 2024, TAG visited each community to conduct interviews or focus group sessions with leadership and staff from Indigenous governments, community governments, K-12 schools and other local agencies involved in education. Regional Program Heads for Aurora College and Community Adult Educators were also consulted during these visits. Additional sessions were conducted with individuals referred to TAG due to their expertise on CLCs. Overall, 33 sessions were conducted in the five communities, with a total of 70 participants. A summary table of engagement sessions and participants can be found in [Appendix B](#).

Most discussions were conducted in person, although some individuals were interviewed using video conferencing software. Engagement sessions consisted of a mix of one-on-one conversations and discussions in small groups. An interview guide was used to direct dialogue (see [Appendix C](#)), but interviewees were also encouraged to bring forward their own issues, priorities and perspectives. The Facilities Master Plan was shared with participants and used to initiate conversations in many cases. Participants were asked about four major topics; these included:

- Current operations and facility needs
- Discussion/verification of findings in the Facilities Master Plan
- Functional requirements to support student needs and pathways
- Community partnerships or co-investment in CLC facilities

Detailed notes were taken during discussions and later analyzed for themes. Common responses were also tabulated in a matrix (see [Appendix D](#)). Tallies shown in Appendix D can be used to infer general trends but are not intended to represent a definitive number of 'votes'; some interviews included multiple people, whose comments were logged as a whole, rather than counted individually. The key themes that emerged from the 33 sessions are, overall, fairly consistent.

2. What We Heard: Key Themes

2.1. Requests for Programming

A major theme emerging from discussions was the request for additional programming to be delivered by Aurora College at CLCs. Participants frequently suggested that student enrolment would increase at the CLC if the programs on offer could lead directly to local employment opportunities, respond to the needs and wants of local organizations, or cater more specifically to the interests and competencies of community members. Common suggestions for more relevant programming included training in: construction trades, office or business administration, teaching and social work, life skills programming, traditional and cultural programming, and academic upgrading beyond the current ALBE offerings, among others.

Programming in construction trades was the most frequently requested. While many people mentioned demand for trades training in general, some specified demand for carpentry, other construction trades (such as plumber, oil burner mechanic or electrician) or heavy equipment operator courses. Several people also indicated interest in pre-trades training, designed to help students pass an entrance exam to get into an apprenticeship program. Most respondents indicated that there would be demand for trades preparation programs, which could provide safety training and hands-on practice in the application of various trades. Requests for trades training stemmed from at least two different lines of thinking. On one hand, there is a marked need for qualified tradespeople, especially in larger communities, and several organizations are looking to hire workers with varying levels of certification in various trades (e.g. heavy equipment operator, carpenter, mechanic, housing maintainer). Further, many participants suggested that there is abundant local interest from community members, especially youth, in learning and practicing hands-on skills. Respondents generally suggested that shop-based courses tend to be significantly better attended than classroom-based programming.

The second most commonly requested program among participants was academic upgrading beyond current ALBE offerings. Several respondents suggested that CLC programming should include a direct pathway to a high school diploma, or that upgrading should be available at a higher level than currently offered in the community. In one community, it was expressed that the level of math required for admission to Aurora College's Environment and Natural Resources Technology program is not offered locally. Some educational professionals suggested a dual credit system, in which students would be able to earn high school credits towards a GED while completing a training course at Aurora College.

Office administration or business administration were also popular requests, with many respondents expressing that there are ample employment opportunities in local government for community members with these qualifications.

In a similar vein, many people said that programming should respond, in general, to local employment needs or labour market plans. In various communities, requests included training related to environment and natural resources (such as environmental monitoring), teaching and social work (such as early childhood education), nursing and Indigenous governance.

In regard to environmental programming, several people suggested that this type of training could also include components of local Traditional Knowledge: for example, Elders could be involved in the delivery of education related to wildlife monitoring or climate change.

Other types of traditional and cultural programming were also requested, including Indigenous languages, on-the-land programs, traditional arts and traditional food preparation.

Culinary programming in general was a fairly common request. Camp cook programs were specified by some respondents as a local area of interest and a route to employment.

Many people said that continuing education courses, such as first aid, driving courses and firearms safety training, are particularly popular and should continue to be offered.

Some expressed interest in courses that train people in skills useful in everyday life, such as small engine repair.

Specific requests for programming have been tabulated and are represented per community in [Appendix D](#).

2.2. Programming Availability, Accessibility

Alongside requests to increase programs on offer at CLCs, another major theme emerging from discussions was the request for programs to be made more accessible and readily available to learners living in communities.

Many participants suggested that more programs should be delivered in communities and that student enrolment would increase if programs were available locally. Requests for more in-community programming arose from the fact that relocating to attend a campus elsewhere is a major challenge for many northern learners.

Respondents highlighted several hurdles to attending classes at Aurora College's campuses, including familial responsibilities, housing barriers and strong ties to the community and the land. For many northern learners, especially those with children or dependents, moving to another community is a challenge, as is finding a way to attend classes while also providing for their families. Interviewees frequently said there is a reluctance from community members to relocate to any campus community, but apprehensions about Fort Smith in particular were most common. Fort Smith was described as too far from home, unfamiliar, costly to visit and – according to several individuals – perceived as unsafe.

Another critical concern is the perception that if a person is living in public housing and they vacate their unit to attend a campus elsewhere, the unit will be re-allocated to another household. Given the typically long waitlists for public housing, community members worry that they will be unable to find any kind of housing when attempting to return to their home community. This perception seriously disincentives community members from leaving home to access post-secondary education. Housing NWT's Local Housing Organization Tenant Relations Manual includes a Leave of Absence Policy that addresses this issue. According to the policy, the requirement for public housing tenants to maintain their unit as a principal residence may be waived by the LHO when an eligible tenant is on temporary leave, including for the purposes of education or an out-of-town job placement lasting between three months and two years. However, due to the shortage of public housing, the policy states the LHO should reallocate a unit that is vacant for more than three months to another tenant on a fixed-term lease. The tenant on temporary leave is therefore required to deliver vacant possession of their rental unit to the landlord and is responsible for storage of their personal belongings. At the end of the fixed-term lease, the tenant on leave will be reallocated a suitable unit. While the Leave of Absence Policy addresses the core concern community members expressed about losing their spot in public housing, the situation may still present

barriers. The need to find storage for personal belongings may be a logistical hurdle, and tenants do not have the option of returning to their unit early.

A common remark among participants was that some prospective students have limited experience outside of their home community. Leaving home creates practical as well as cultural challenges. For example, seeking new living quarters, budgeting for rent and groceries, and finding transportation in an unfamiliar environment are real barriers for some community members, especially young people who are considering relocating. In addition, the sudden separation from families, friends and cultural norms can be isolating, disorienting or overtly harmful for some people from tight-knit communities.

Some, but not all respondents, said that travelling to a nearby regional centre would be more feasible than relocating to a campus community in the NWT. More specific findings related to program delivery in regional centres are addressed under Sections 3.1 to 3.5.

Remote learning was commonly suggested as a way to increase the accessibility and availability of programming. The vast majority of participants were enthusiastic about the prospect of various types of training being delivered remotely through CLCs, including post-secondary programs. It was acknowledged by several Aurora College staff, and some external respondents, that the availability of programming at CLCs is currently limited to the instructional specialization of the individual adult educator in the community. A vision was expressed for campus-based instructors, specializing in various program areas, to seamlessly deliver courses across the whole territory via remote learning – creating efficiencies and expanding program reach to all communities. However, in some communities, it was indicated that internet connectivity would need to be upgraded at the CLC in order for this to work (see Section 2.3). Another potential challenge noted in discussions is that some northern learners may struggle to study at home due to familial responsibilities. Because levels of digital literacy vary between students, it was also frequently suggested that a local facilitator would be required to support students with enrolling, getting set up and navigating online interfaces.

Several other formatting options or instruments were suggested for remote learning:

- A CLC-based cohort of students could participate in remote learning, together, on a large screen in a classroom-like setting, to create a more social, supportive learning experience
- A roving instructor could deliver the full program remotely, while visiting each community for short periods of face-to-face learning (e.g. two weeks at a time)
- Cohorts of students could visit a campus or regional centre for short periods of hands-on learning
- Community Adult Educators or resident community coordinators could act as a tutor for individual students who are tuning into remote classes

Aurora College has taken steps toward offering more online learning opportunities. The College is currently moving toward online coordinated delivery of ALBE by five or six instructors across the territory, which the Aurora College Transformation Team (ACT) and the Steering Committee have suggested will allow community adult educators more time and capacity to respond to demand for other types of programming. Still, many respondents from community organizations wondered why more Aurora College programs, including degree programs, are not offered remotely. Seeing as residents can access equivalent programs online through other institutions, one person said the College is “quickly becoming irrelevant.”

Beyond suggestions about modes of program delivery, many participants said that the timing of programming could be adjusted to better match daily schedules and seasonal rhythms in communities. At present, most classes are offered during work hours, so people who are employed within the community are unable to enrol in upgrading or up-skilling; it was suggested several times that this demographic of people could be served by courses offered outside of work hours, or else in partnership with employers such as local governments.

Some people also said that student enrolment at CLCs tends to decline in the spring or summer (with specific timing varying by community/region), when people go out on the land. It was also expressed that the current duration of semesters is a barrier for student attendance and completion. Community-based education should take into account the local ways of life, including seasonal schedules, in order to effectively serve the College's clientele. In some communities, it was suggested that academic or intensive programming be scheduled during the fall semester, with shorter, continuing education courses running from January through April. In other communities, it was suggested that academic programming be scheduled during the coldest months of winter.

2.3. Facilities and Equipment

The improvements suggested by participants for the physical CLC facilities were largely in alignment with the themes outlined above. In summary, common suggestions included creating dedicated, flexible spaces that could be used for hands-on programming, increasing connectivity and designing facilities with the local community, culture and preferences in mind.

One of the comments most frequently voiced by participants was that CLCs are not equipped for hands-on programming. While CLCs have generally been designed to deliver programming in a conventional classroom setting, many respondents said that community members tend to prefer hands-on learning and that practicing hands-on skills helps keep students engaged and motivated. Facilities could be designed to facilitate various hands-on programs (see [Section 2.1](#)) as well as remote learning. Spaces commonly requested for hands-on learning in CLC facilities included a makerspace, a kitchen or a wet lab. In some interviews, participants suggested a multi-purpose space that could serve as a gathering space, accommodate community needs and uses, or facilitate various other formats of teaching and learning. Some participants requested an outdoor space, such as a garden, that could be used for interactive learning.

Along this line of thinking, many people requested that facilities be adjusted to accommodate trades training. Several respondents – both internal and external to the College – acknowledged that it would be cost-prohibitive to construct fully-equipped trades training facilities in every community, but at the same time, they suggested viable alternatives. CLCs could be conceived to facilitate introductory-level trades components by incorporating a well-ventilated, industrial-type space that could be reorganized for various uses, along with ample storage. Some respondents referenced the existing mobile trades trailers in the Beaufort Delta as an innovative, replicable precedent (see [Section 3.4](#)). In many conversations, space-sharing arrangements with local governments or development corporations were suggested as a way to facilitate more intensive hands-on training courses.

Another frequent and critical request was to address connectivity issues. If remote learning is to be offered at CLCs, a reliable, high-speed internet connection will have to be established. Comments regarding connectivity varied by community. In Fort Liard, Déljnë, Behchokǫ

and Whatì, for example, CLC facilities are currently hooked up to the fibre optic line and connectivity is adequate. In Fort Resolution, it was suggested that a fibre optic line to the community has been established but the CLC has yet to be connected. In Tuktoyaktuk, respondents recommended Starlink as a way of resolving the current connectivity issues. According to ACT and the Steering Committee, Starlink connections have been ordered for CLCs in some other communities, such as Łutséł K'é, and the College is currently in the process of assessing connectivity levels across CLCs.

During conversations with ACT and the Steering Committee, and during the FMP process, it was sometimes suggested that efficiencies can be created by co-locating CLCs within other facilities, such as government buildings or schools. By contrast, the user perspective that emerged during engagement was overwhelmingly that CLCs should have their own separate, dedicated space. Participants highlighted several issues with co-locating CLCs within other facilities. CLCs located within GNWT buildings were perceived as being tucked away, and the institutional feel of government buildings is not always the most inviting. In communities where CLCs are co-located with K-12 schools, respondents noted other problems, including that returning to K-12 buildings can be discouraging or embarrassing for adult learners and that K-12 activities can be disruptive. In addition, respondents said that students who experienced traumatic incidents while attending K-12 school may be apprehensive of returning to the building as adults. Further, adult learners with criminal histories may not be allowed on school premises. With community infrastructure generally lacking and K-12 schools requiring more space, it was also expressed that CLCs are being squeezed into increasingly small spaces in some communities. Many participants said that CLCs will need a space of their own if the College wants to have a presence in communities.

In conjunction with having dedicated facilities for CLCs, respondents expressed a vision for flexible, multi-purpose spaces that have a strong presence in communities. Some requested improved signage and navigation as a means of increasing community awareness and familiarity with the College. Respondents also requested that facilities have their own identity and that local culture be embedded in the design. It was occasionally suggested that the concept designs presented in the Facilities Master Plan seem too institutional, largely reflecting western perspectives on education (e.g. learning taking place in a conventional classroom setting). Designing spaces with local cultures and perspectives in mind may help create a more welcoming learning environment and help people identify with the space. Reflecting culture in facility designs could take on many forms; one suggestion offered during discussions was to have local artists paint murals on facilities.

Overall, participants generally expressed enthusiasm for having a facility in their community. A fairly common sentiment was that the facility would be (or is) valuable due to a general lack of infrastructure in the community. Some people said that, if the facility did not exist, there wouldn't be another space to deliver programming. It was also noted that the facility could serve various uses for the community, especially if it were made to be a flexible, multi-use space. Several respondents said that community organizations would be interested in using the space if it was accessible, and that allowing for multiple uses would increase community members' familiarity and comfort with the space, and awareness of program offerings.

Finally, several participants provided feedback on the bunk or dorm areas included in CLC concept designs presented in the Facilities Master Plan. Responses on these temporary accommodations were mixed. Some people said that all types of accommodations in communities are limited, and more housing would help with staff retention. Some respondents

said temporary accommodations would be useful for hosting visiting or short-term students from other communities. Others suggested that temporary accommodations might not be appropriate, as Community Adult Educators need permanent housing, and might end up staying long-term in a bunkhouse if such an option was provided. Participants noted that any plans or designs for local accommodations might depend on how the College decides to deliver programs going forward. A visiting instructor could stay in temporary accommodations in the CLC, for example, but a permanent Community Adult Educator will require long-term housing. In addition, some people commented on the fact that organizations and businesses within communities may have lodging of their own. Offering temporary accommodations at the CLC could impinge on their business – a drawback that should be carefully considered in the College’s plans.

2.4. Student Enrolment and Student Supports

An underlying theme that arose during discussions is that CLCs are not realizing their full potential. Participants expressed that enrolment is generally low and that resources offered through the College are underutilized by community members. Generally, respondents said they would like to see more uptake of CLC programming and that several untapped opportunities exist to increase enrolment.

One view expressed during engagement sessions is that CLCs are underutilized because they currently cater to a small, specific population within the community. The current model – which focuses on delivering ALBE in communities and post-secondary training at College campuses – results in limited opportunities offered to a limited group of people. Participants requested that additional programming be delivered at CLCs, particularly programs that respond to community interests and needs, as well as training that is linked to job opportunities or allowances (see [Section 2.1](#)).

Aside from expanding the types of programs offered, participants recommended developing CLCs’ presence in communities. Opportunities were identified for CLCs to become flexible, multi-use spaces that are open to community use. These spaces could deliver hands-on programming while fostering strong community partnerships and integration. Participants suggested that programs and events beyond those offered through Aurora College could be hosted at CLCs. These could include traditional arts or language mentorship programs led by community organizations. They could also include makerspace programming. The makerspace in Tuktoyaktuk – which was delivered within the community’s CLC and is run by the Tuktoyaktuk Community Corporation – was highlighted as an example of a successful partnership (see [Section 3.4](#)). As the College is planning to develop makerspaces in 11 communities in total, further opportunities exist to support community leadership in CLCs. Participants also suggested that hosting career fairs, open houses and virtual campus tours at CLCs could help familiarize people with programming and showcase pathways from education to employment. The idea behind these events would be to get people in the door, support a sense of belonging and help people identify with the space.

Although limited community integration may be one barrier to enrolment, several participants also commented on the fact that the K-12 system has not prepared students for post-secondary education. It was frequently commented that there is a gap between the competencies students emerge with from K-12 schools and the competencies they need to move onto post-secondary education. In addition, some highlighted the gap in quality of education at K-12 schools in the NWT, versus other jurisdictions in Canada. One respondent said the gaps in NWT’s education system are more like “abysses” given how insurmountable

they can be for students looking to further their education. Low enrolment in K-12 schools was identified as a factor underlying low enrolment at Aurora College.

Addressing many of these challenges may be beyond the scope of the College's work. However, one suggestion offered to better support northern learners given the barriers they face was to offer dual credits, whereby students could earn high school credits while completing training at Aurora College (see [Section 2.1](#)). Because the K-12 system often does not adequately prepare students for post-secondary education, one concern sometimes expressed was that students spend their Student Financial Assistance accessing upgrading, which leaves them without funding to continue their education. It was recommended that offering dual credits could help students bridge the gap between the K-12 system and post-secondary education, streamlining education pathways and attracting a wider variety of learners.

One view expressed by respondents is that changes in federal funding – namely, the termination of training allowances for students pursuing upgrading – have played a significant role in reducing CLC utilization. In one community, an adult educator relayed that some community members used to take every course offered at the CLC. When training allowances were no longer available, classes went from 12 to 0 students “overnight.”

Respondents noted that, in the absence of training allowances being offered for attendance at CLCs, other benefits of education need to be clearly highlighted to encourage enrolment and participation. Creating a direct link from training to employment could make CLC programming more relevant for northern students. Similarly, other pathways could be more concretely defined: for example, from ALBE to a high school diploma or enrolment in postsecondary; or, from a local training program to a local job placement. One participant suggested the College focus on developing a graduated education system, where in-community courses support learners in their journeys – from high school, to upgrading, to college diplomas, to universities degrees, if they so choose.

Further, participants cited the need for additional student assistance, such as childcare and mental health supports. Some said that finding childcare is a major hurdle for students. Issues with attendance are often due to issues with self-esteem leading to fear of failure, or to overwhelming turbulence in students' personal lives. Several respondents suggested that cultural accommodations be offered for all Aurora College students. Examples included translation services; a flexible academic calendar to accommodate on the land activities and cultural events; Elder-youth knowledge exchanges; and making space for Indigenous ways of knowing in CLC programming.

Finally, respondents recommended that CLCs offer lifeskills training and paperwork support. Participants felt that students require support in skills needed for success in academic and workplace pursuits, such as personal financial management, resume building and workplace communication. As mentioned in Section 2.2, students also may not be familiar with tasks that come with leaving home, including seeking new living quarters, budgeting for rent and groceries, and finding transportation. If CLCs are to become a pathway to campus-based education, lifeskills training could be integral to helping students succeed in post-secondary education and beyond.

2.5. Partnerships

A core theme that emerged from engagement is that CLCs can only be viable and effective if communities are meaningfully involved in decisions about infrastructure and programming.

As discussed in [Section 2.4](#), participants said that CLCs are likely to remain underutilized unless these spaces become active parts of the community. At the same time, responsibilities and powers are being devolved to community governments, which are expected to increasingly self-determine their own priorities, plans and programs, offer employment through newly-localized roles, and staff these roles with qualified community members. As such, the success of CLCs may depend on Aurora College respecting community leadership and working with their direction.

It was expressed that communities want – and should have – a say in what opportunities exist locally and how education is delivered. Overwhelmingly, respondents said that community leadership and organizations are eager to provide input on programming. By partnering with communities, participants said the College could deliver educational opportunities that respond to chronic staffing shortages in roles related to office administration, nursing, teaching, social work or other professions. Similarly, some communities said they have previously done studies on employment needs or are in the process of doing so. Others said they have been engaged by the GNWT Department of ECE about local labour market needs and opportunities, and suggested that the College consult these reports and studies when thinking about what programs to offer in communities [see May 2023 [20-year forecasts for jobs in demand](#) in the territory].

Several opportunities were suggested for partnerships that could be mutually beneficial to Aurora College and communities, some of which may already be in place in certain communities. Participants identified the following possible arrangements:

- Local organizations might be able to offer facilities for hands-on programming – e.g. woodshop or warehouse spaces for trades prep
- Local organizations could hire students enrolled at CLCs for work placements
- Local organizations could send staff to CLCs for upskilling
- Students enrolled in nursing, social work or other post-secondary programs in campus communities could complete a work placement or practicum in communities, which may foster connections for future employment
- Local organizations could use spaces within CLCs to deliver their own programs (see [Section 2.3](#) and [2.4](#))
- The College could partner with high schools to offer students career counseling, support with applications, tutoring or lifeskills training
- The College could partner with high schools to use spaces in their facilities, such as trades training areas or teaching kitchens
- The College could develop programs with input from Knowledge Holders residing in communities
- Indigenous governments could provide training allowances for students to enrol at the CLC

- The College could partner with community organizations to co-invest in an upcoming infrastructure project, such as an office complex, a school or a friendship centre
- The College could partner with industry to train community members for roles on upcoming projects, such as new mines, near communities.

Throughout discussions, almost all respondents offered suggestions for potential partnerships with local organizations, which suggests that there are ample opportunities for the College to collaborate with communities to fulfil common goals.

About half of participants also said that some partnerships are ongoing or being piloted in their communities, with variable levels of success. In the Beaufort Delta, for example, the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, the Gwich'in Tribal Council and Aurora College co-invested in a mobile trades training trailer, which provides hands-on introductions to various trades (see [Section 3.4](#)). In the Dehcho, the Trades Awareness Program was frequently referenced as a successful initiative between local high schools and the Thebacha Campus. In the Tł'chǫ region, the Tł'chǫ Community Services Agency is working with high schools and the College to pilot a joint credit program. Through this program, students would be able to earn high school credits while also obtaining training at the College, similar to a dual credit system. Participants familiar with the program said that, because the College can't offer high-level K-12 courses, this component would be delivered by a K-12 teacher. Although partners are in the early stages of this project, several respondents expressed enthusiasm about it (see [Section 3.3](#)).

On the other hand, several external respondents indicated that the community has instead forged partnerships with other postsecondary institutions, sometimes explicitly because Aurora College was unable to meet their needs. For example, the University of Alberta provides Indigenous language programming, Wilfrid Laurier University has an in-community presence in terms of research and post-secondary academics, and Yukon University offers in-community trades training including a locally delivered Housing Maintainer program.

For Aurora College to forge new partnerships and strengthen existing ones, increased flexibility, adaptability and a localized presence may be required on the part of the College. About a third of respondents suggested community organizations are not aware of ongoing programs or potential opportunities at CLCs. Some people also indicated that partnerships have historically been built around relationships at an individual level, and that high staff turnover at the College can be a barrier to building lasting partnerships. Addressing underlying reasons for staff turnover (see [Section 2.6](#)), as well as improving CLCs' integration into communities (see [Section 2.4](#)), may help lay the groundwork for stronger collaboration in the future.

2.6. Systemic or Institutional Issues

While discussions uncovered many opportunities for CLCs, respondents internal and external to the College also acknowledged systemic barriers relevant to the key themes outlined in this report. Some participants said issues with CLCs go beyond facilities and programs, and are instead rooted in the way the College is set up. While ideas for improving in-community education were generally well received by participants, many made note of barriers that might hinder real action on these fronts. Discussions suggested that, for CLCs to flourish, the College will have to change the way they operate and become more flexible, adaptable and responsive.

A common perspective among participants was that issues with in-community learning stem from it being a relatively minor component of the College's operations. People felt that the College's focus is on campus-based post-secondary education, modelled on southern institutions. As a result, there is a degree of skepticism about the College's intention or desire to offer meaningful education opportunities in communities. Similarly, a degree of skepticism was expressed by some about whether the College should be transforming into a polytechnic university when current resources appear to be stretched thin. Some felt CLC programming and in-community learning is simply an add-on to the College's main operations. It was expressed that if the College intends to develop CLCs and in-community education opportunities properly, the institution's model should be re-examined. A majority of respondents recommended that the polytechnic university's leadership establish a renewed focus on delivering readily available and accessible educational opportunities and programming to communities across the NWT, without requiring students to relocate.

Some respondents expressed that new programs are challenging to set up in communities, partly as a result of limited resources and funding. Although Community Adult Educators have sometimes been aware of programs requested by community members, a variety of hurdles impede their ability to deliver on these requests. Notably, some participants pointed out that no funding from Aurora College is available to deliver in-community programming beyond ALBE on a regular basis. If someone wants to organize a course, they must dedicate time and resources into seeking third-party funding for the program. If this task is added to the responsibilities of the Community Adult Educator, it creates a significant administrative burden for an already-multifaceted position. Two possible solutions were suggested by participants regarding this issue. One solution is the provision of dedicated administrative support to Community Adult Educators. Another solution would be for the College to allocate annual base funding to deliver in-community programming beyond ALBE. As noted in Section 2.2, Aurora College is currently moving toward online coordinated delivery of ALBE by five or six instructors across the territory, which will ideally allow Community Adult Educators more time and capacity to respond to demand for other types of programming.

Besides issues with program delivery, many participants commented on challenges with CLC staffing. Respondents said that CLC positions are difficult to fill, in part due to the demands of the job. Typically, facilities are staffed by a single Community Adult Educator; candidates must be self-directed and have a range of skills, including instructional expertise, subject matter expertise as well as aptitudes for networking and administration. In addition, the prospect of working alone, without local coworkers or management, and sometimes without a personal support worker, may be unappealing to potential candidates. Community Adult Educator roles also don't come with housing, unlike other in-community positions with the GNWT such as nursing. Limited housing was noted as a major barrier for staffing CLCs. In one sample community, it was expressed that a Community Adult Educator resigned when their landlord sold the house they had been renting and they couldn't find another place to live. In some communities, it was suggested that Aurora College should hire local community members to staff the CLC; this has taken place in some instances, where a local "Community Facilitator" now connects students to remote or seasonal programming.

Issues with staffing CLCs have knock-on effects. Respondents said partnerships between the College and community organizations are often based on individual relationships. High staff turnover can therefore impede strong partnerships, which take time to build (see Section 2.5). New CLC hires typically do not have inroads into community life or a local support network.

One participant said they struggled to forge connections in the community, even after being in the position for a few years. On the other hand, another participant who had been working in the community for several years said they felt isolated, threatened and burnt out. This person suggested the College limit the number of years a Community Adult Educator can work in a given community to reduce the chances of burnout.

Further, respondents said human resources procedures make it challenging both to hire CLC staff and to deliver meaningful programs. For example, some participants said offering evening classes at CLCs would be difficult as Community Adult Educators are part of a Collective Agreement signed between the Union of Northern Workers and the GNWT. As such, respondents said Community Adult Educators are expected to abide by standard hours of work, which fall between 8:30 am and 5 pm. It was also expressed that the Collective Agreement results in Community Adult Educators taking summers off, leaving CLCs unstaffed over the period when the College typically focuses on promotion and recruitment. This means no CLC staff is available to take in college applications or assist students with low digital literacy.

One respondent spoke about specific ways in which human resources procedures complicate or hamper CLC staffing. It was expressed that, when a CLC coordinator is hired as a casual employee, this person must be temporarily laid off after six months. This leaves the CLC unstaffed for several weeks, during which time the facility shuts down. The respondent said that, due to human resources policies, they were unable to replace a casual staffer who left before their stipulated end date. More broadly, staffing issues were perceived as a major barrier to CLCs' operations that could be at least partially addressed by changing human resources procedures and policies. As a result of these many barriers, some facilities end up chronically unstaffed, and CLCs in several communities are currently closed because of this issue.

Some other conflicts with GNWT policy were brought up during discussions. As mentioned in [Section 2.2](#), participants said that if a person living in a public housing unit in their community vacates the unit to attend a campus elsewhere, their housing unit will be re-allocated to another household. Although they may be assured a unit at the end of their period of leave, they still have to give up their home, find a place to store their personal belongings and will be unable to access housing if they return early. These hurdles may create disincentives to relocate to attend the College. In addition, as discussed in [Section 2.4](#), respondents said students may spend their Student Financial Assistance accessing upgrading due to limitations in the K-12 system, leaving students without funding to continue their education. It was expressed that many northern learners cannot go without income during the period of time they are enrolled in training. Overall, people felt that it should be easier for students to access financial aid or assistance.

An additional barrier highlighted by several respondents – both internal and external to the College – was that, because campus communities feel reliant on their campuses as economic drivers, staff in these communities may be protective of the programs they deliver. This approach is perceived to be hindering program delivery to other communities across the NWT. Although the veracity of these statements was not confirmed, it was sometimes expressed by respondents that administration in campus communities has gone so far as to deliberately block efforts to deliver programming elsewhere. A recurring theme was that the politics around on-campus programming creates barriers to in-community education.

It should be noted that, in the absence of Aurora College offering local postsecondary programming, communities have instead formed partnerships with other institutions such as the University of Alberta, Wilfrid Laurier University and Yukon University.

Finally, some participants expressed frustration about what they viewed as a top-down style of governance. Respondents said decision-making at the College tends to be concentrated in campus communities, and that CLC staff may not have the authority to take action on in-community initiatives. Wait times for approvals were sometimes perceived as lengthy, which could hamper the ability of local staff to make decisions about partnerships or programming. It was suggested by some that communications to management staff went unanswered, and attempts to implement new ideas received minimal support. Some Aurora College staff expressed a sense of disempowerment and even frustration.

3. What We Heard: Community-Specific Themes

3.1. Fort Liard (April 2023)



The Fort Liard CLC is located within Echo Dene School, which offers JK-12 education. Primary access to the space is via a secondary door, around the side of the school from the main parking lot. The space is marked by a small exterior sign beyond the main entrance of the school and a small interior sign on a glass partition. The space itself was renovated within the past five or six years. It is comprised mostly of a single classroom, plus an entry vestibule connecting to two gender-neutral bathrooms and an office. The CLC is located adjacent to a kindergarten classroom and is down the hall from a high school classroom.

The CLC's co-location with the K-12 school was a major theme throughout discussions in Fort Liard. For respondents both internal and external to the College, the co-location was generally viewed as less-than-ideal, problematic or even inappropriate. A variety of reasons were given for this: the adjacent kindergarten can be a noisy disruption for adult learners; students don't always feel proud to return to a K-12 school in adulthood, or might feel self-conscious about it; those with criminal records may be disbarred from entering the school and thereby from enrolling at Aurora College; there have been incidents in the past which have sometimes caused the school to be perceived as an unsafe space (see [Section 2.3](#)).

The CLC's presence and signage were also identified as needing improvement. The adult educator indicated that navigational tools could be developed to facilitate easier access to the space or more of a public presence.

When TAG visited Fort Liard, respondents said connectivity at the facility was not adequate to run remote programming that demands video, audio and screenshare components. There is access to a fibre optic line in Fort Liard, but the K-12 school (and therefore the CLC) had not yet been connected at the time. Our understanding is that the CLC has since been connected to the fibre optic line.

The community is undergoing self-government negotiations. Acho Dene Koe First Nation (ADKFN) indicated that they would be compiling a list of local employment positions that will be newly created through self-government and suggested that Aurora College could have a prominent role in providing training pathways for community members to fill these positions. ADKFN also indicated that the Band had, in the past, provided training allowances for community members who attend Aurora College, and that this system could be reestablished.

In terms of trades training, ADKFN offered their own warehouse for potential use by Aurora College to deliver construction-related programs locally.

The Hamlet of Fort Liard, similarly, referenced chronic job vacancies within the community, with a focus on roles in office administration. Representatives of the Hamlet indicated that the Housing Maintainer position has long been vacant. Participants suggested that the College could provide training that would help fill both of these roles.

The Trades Awareness Program has been offered to high school students in Fort Liard in recent years, and was frequently cited by respondents as a successful and in-demand initiative by Aurora College. The program has, however, been cancelled for the upcoming fall semester because no chaperone from the community could be found.

Several respondents referenced a recent Heavy Equipment Operator course that was delivered by Aurora College in the community, which was not perceived to be a success and which could hinder development of partnerships. Eleven local students enrolled in the course, and only one student passed. Locals perceived that a major reason for this outcome was that the College's equipment failed. After the truck broke down in Fort Liard, the course was apparently relocated to Fort Simpson, where the equipment failed again.

Comments about partnerships being largely contingent on individual relationships were particularly frequent in Fort Liard (see [Section 2.5](#)). Most interview participants suggested that these relationships can take years to build. Respondents suggested that turnover in the Community Adult Educator position has been the largest barrier to forming partnerships with Aurora College in recent years. Participants internal to Aurora College, meanwhile, indicated that the deficit of housing in the community is the largest barrier to consistently staffing the Community Adult Educator position, along with the absence of a local support network (see [Section 2.6](#)).

Community members overwhelmingly indicated that prospective students are unable or unwilling to relocate to Fort Smith. Ideally, students could attend training within their own community. Alternatively, Fort Simpson was generally considered to be within a reasonable distance and easier for residents to access – travel by car is an option and residents could still see their families on weekends. If some hands-on programming were delivered in Fort Simpson, participants suggested that people from Fort Liard might be more able and willing to attend.

3.2. Déljnę (April 2023)



The Déljnę CLC is a standalone facility that is centrally located in the community, across the road from the John Tetso Building, which houses offices of the Déljnę Got'Inę Government (DGG). Most respondents referred to the Déljnę CLC as a nice facility, relatively spacious and well-suited for its current purpose, which is the delivery of ALBE programming. The building contains two classrooms, one office and a lounge area with library shelves, along with washrooms, a vestibule and a mechanical room. Connectivity at the Déljnę CLC is currently adequate to support remote learning. During a feedback session, it was noted that the building was constructed 25 years ago and that the GNWT should be considering plans for replacement, or at least renovation and upgrades, in coming years.

Déljnę as a community has self-government. DGG is intending to deliver an employment plan for the community as well as a training plan. DGG suggested that once these plans are complete, conversations could be held with Aurora College to determine if and how the College would tie in. Respondents at DGG painted a picture of post-secondary education as part of a holistic spectrum of education, training and employment, which spans from enrolment in daycare or kindergarten through to local job placements; there was some criticism of the GNWT's current 'siloed' approach.

Given that the CLC's focus is overwhelmingly on ALBE rather than on programs that lead to jobs, DGG indicated that the College's current offerings do not meet the community's overall education and training needs. It was suggested that if Aurora College is unable to meet the community's requests with regards to post-secondary training, DGG will create partnerships with other institutions. The current Chief listed DGG's priorities for training related to employment and economic development as:

1. Construction trades
2. Entrepreneurship or business administration to help with develop a local tourism industry
3. Traditional knowledge transfer from Elders to youth, especially as it relates to the environment

While the CLC facility was acknowledged to be adequate for its current uses, other facilities would be required for programming that aligns with DGG's priorities for post-secondary training.

Some information was volunteered about initiatives currently being undertaken by DGG, as they relate to training facilities. These initiatives included: trailers equipped as wet labs, which are expected to arrive in Déljnè in the near future and will be used by the community for environmental monitoring; a feasibility study for a culinary facility where traditional methods of food preparation will be practiced and taught; and a proposal to develop a new facility where trades training is delivered.

Various respondents expressed that the Déljnè CLC is not currently accessible for any use other than ALBE, despite interest from the community. DGG expressed frustration with the application process for accessing the CLC facility, which was perceived to require a minimum of two months' notice. Participants also said access to the CLC is denied if the intended programming is seen as misaligned with the College's own priorities.

There are students as old as 29 who are currently taking upgrading at the high school. It was suggested that having these students attend Aurora College instead would be more appropriate. Courses offered at Déljnè's CLC currently extend only to the Grade 9/10 equivalency level, however, and not to Grade 11/12.

A strong push for traditional and cultural programming emerged from discussions, though it was acknowledged that Aurora College can only be a partner, and not a leader, in these areas. As one example, the CLC space could be offered for use by the community to host its own Dene Kädá knowledge sharing and language activities. It was also suggested that environmental remediation programming is important for upcoming jobs in the community, but that this programming should generally include a Traditional Knowledge component from Elders or Knowledge Keepers.

Staff turnover was not identified as an issue at the Déljnè CLC, as the Community Adult Educator is a long-time resident with strong ties in the community and has held the position for nine years.

Related to the seasonal timing of Aurora College courses, there was a general acknowledgement that community life changes with the opening of the winter road from January to March, and that the best time for the delivery of more focused academic courses is September through December. Short, intensive or continuing education courses could be scheduled for the late winter and spring (see [Section 2.2](#)).

Overall, community members in Déljnè expressed reluctance about being required to relocate to any other community to pursue education, including to the nearest regional centre. Given geographical distances and seasonal access between Sahtu communities, Norman Wells was generally not considered to be an accessible location for training programs – geographically or culturally.

3.3. Whatì (May 2023)



The Whatì CLC is located within Mezi Community School (K-12). The space allocated to the Whatì CLC at one time included a large classroom and office, as well as a central lounge area with a kitchenette and washrooms. In recent years, the K-12 school opened a student-run cafe within the lounge area of the CLC. The CLC classroom has now been subdivided, with one half being used as storage for the school. Respondents said there was no formal lease agreement between the K-12 school and the CLC regarding the use of this space.

The co-location of Whatì's CLC within the school was a recurring theme during interviews. Respondents frequently suggested that Aurora College would be better off having its own standalone location in the community (see [Section 2.3](#)). This would offer the College better control over its facility and the opportunity to establish a larger, more prominent and well-equipped space. It would also help foster a new sense of place and growth for adult learners, rather than having them return to their high school after graduation. It was even suggested that, where students might have left high school due to incidents with peers, expecting them to return to the same building for upgrading was unrealistic and potentially unsafe.

Connectivity at the Whatì CLC is currently adequate for running remote programming, since the school has recently been hooked up to the fibre optic line.

Several partnerships are already taking place between Aurora College and other organizations in the Tł'chǫ Region; these were referenced during discussions. The Tł'chǫ Community Services Agency is enthusiastic about an upcoming pilot program which will deliver something similar to dual credits – where students who only need a few more credits to graduate high school will be able to earn those credits while gaining exposure to post-secondary programming. The NWT Literacy Council is running a six-week program in Behchokǫ, Whatì and several other communities across the NWT that includes life skills and employment skills, traditional and cultural programming and a two-week work placement. The Literacy Council, a not-for-profit organization, has been using CLC facilities to offer this program, which was generally referred to as successful by participants. A Support Assistant program is currently being piloted at the CLC in Behchokǫ and is intended to serve as an entry point for a pathway to further education. The Tł'chǫ Government Department of Client Services was referred to frequently as an important partner for Aurora College. Client Services currently provides training allowances to full-time Tł'chǫ students, along with laptops and other resources to support their education. It was noted that the TG has certain policy stipulations around student financial assistance, and AC programs should adhere to these where possible (e.g. a twelve

week minimum for enrolment). Reference was also made to an upcoming apprenticeship program designed by the Tłı̨chǫ Government – an opportunity on which Aurora College could potentially collaborate.

In Whatì, the relative dearth of local, permanent employment opportunities was referenced more frequently than in most other sample communities. While the community's Senior Administrative Officer indicated that office workers would be in demand at the Community Government, she also said that there weren't really any year-round job vacancies for certified tradespeople. On the other hand, jobs tied to mining were sometimes referenced as opportunities in the Tłı̨chǫ Region. It was suggested that a Camp Cook certification, combined with Level 3 First Aid, would make a person highly employable. There was, however, some apprehension about upcoming mine closures, and discussions about the need to re-skill workers.

Several participants referenced a recent attempt to host Camp Cook training in Whatì. Aurora College conducted an inspection of facilities in the community and found none that were suitable. It was therefore suggested that any new CLC facility be up to standard for these types of hands-on programs.

The issue of student supports came up in every community, but perhaps with the most consistency in the Tłı̨chǫ Region (see [Section 2.4](#)). It was suggested that mental health supports should be made available to students, along with cultural accommodations like translation services or Elder mentorship. Life skills programming was suggested to be critical in helping community members along a pathway into education and then into a workplace – for example, support with personal budgeting, in-person communication skills, workplace etiquette or finding accommodations in a campus community.

In terms of the relationship between Whatì and the nearest regional centre, respondents generally expressed that residents of Whatì (along with Gamèti and Wekweèti) would be more inclined to undertake training in Behchokò than in Yellowknife or Fort Smith. Some participants also suggested that Tłı̨chǫ living in Behchokò, for example, would be pleased to visit Whatì for a short course because of the more traditional and scenic nature of the community. Short-term accommodations would need to be constructed either in Behchokò or in Whatì to facilitate this type of exchange.

3.4. Tuktoyaktuk (June 2023)



The Tuktoyaktuk CLC is a standalone facility within walking distance from most places in the community. Though the facility's location is not particularly prominent, its views over the Arctic Ocean lend it a pleasant, peaceful atmosphere. The building has two classrooms, an office, washrooms, a vestibule and a foyer with a makeshift kitchenette. One classroom is equipped with computer workstations, desks and whiteboards. Beginning in September, this classroom will be used by the local high school while the Mangilaluk School building continues to undergo renovations. The second CLC classroom currently contains a small makerspace, which is operated in partnership with the Tuktoyaktuk Community Corporation (TCC). When the first classroom is occupied by the high school, the second classroom will be subdivided to contain both the makerspace and a space for adult education.

Poor connectivity at the CLC currently hinders the effectiveness of remote learning, even though some remote classes have already been delivered between the Sahtu and Beaufort Delta regions. Some Tuktoyaktuk residents indicated that they are hooked up to Starlink at home; they perceive the speed and quality of Starlink to be significantly better than the connection currently used at the CLC and the K-12 school.

The Tuktoyaktuk makerspace was a frequent topic of conversation during discussions, as the makerspace seems to be the primary reason that community members interact with the CLC. The makerspace technician works full-time out of the CLC but is employed by the TCC. Whereas adult education takes place during work hours, the makerspace is open in afternoons and evenings. It mostly has digital fabrication technology such as laser cutters, Cricut machines and a 3D printer. The equipment is used by community members who create souvenirs for tourists, thereby generating local economic activity. It was suggested by TCC that new artistic motifs and styles are being developed to create and market a Tuktoyaktuk-specific artistic identity via the community makerspace. Based on engagement sessions, the makerspace is perceived as an important piece of community infrastructure, a successful economic driver, and a comfortable, accessible place. TCC suggested that the initiative could be further expanded.

In one engagement session, representatives of community leadership strongly suggested that the current CLC programming and the current CLC facility are both inadequate to meet the labour market demands and training needs of the community. (Some TCC representatives and Hamlet Councilors were also present in this engagement session.) It was suggested that Aurora College review existing studies and forecasts on employment needs in the Beaufort

Delta and ensure that the training being offered provide pathways for community members to fill jobs identified as being in high demand (see [Section 2.5](#)). It was also suggested that Aurora College should hire local community members to staff the CLC itself. A more ambitious vision for post-secondary education in Tuktoyaktuk was put forward by some Councilors, which would involve the remediation and conversion of decommissioned oil camps into an educational campus. Other relevant initiatives were discussed in various conversations, for example, plans to build a new friendship centre.

Aurora College's mobile trades trailers were a frequent topic of discussion. There was enthusiasm for the hands-on programming that was delivered by the trailers in previous years, and enthusiasm to see this return to Tuktoyaktuk. Respondents seemed generally unclear on why the trailers were no longer delivering trades programming in the community; some suggested it was due to a lack of funding. There was a strong sentiment that trades (along with other programming) should be delivered locally. It was expressed that moving to Fort Smith is an unfair expectation and more unrealistic for Beaufort Delta residents than other NWT residents. The cost and duration of travel to Fort Smith was cited as problematic, as were the issues around safety, especially given the ongoing missing-person status of a Gwich'in-Inuvialuit student at the Thebacha Campus.

There was an emphasis on the importance of Traditional Knowledge as a component of education for Tuktoyaktuk Inuvialuit. The current academic calendar at Aurora College was seen as inappropriate given that courses run through the spring season when community members need to be out on the land. Language training was highlighted as important. It was expressed that the College's western approach to education tries to force students to fit certain roles, but neglects to support the real development of each individual student in a healthy and holistic manner. Adjustment of the academic calendar was requested to accommodate hunting seasons. Cultural accommodations such as translation services and time off for cultural events were also requested (see [Section 2.4](#)).

When the relationship between Tuktoyaktuk and the Aurora Campus was discussed, Inuvik's lack of housing and other supports were cited as barriers to attending programming in the regional centre. Some respondents also referred to Aurora College programs from past years, such as recreation leadership and the Environment and Natural Resources Technology program, which had previously created opportunities for Beaufort Delta residents but have since been discontinued.

3.5. Fort Resolution (April 2024)



The Fort Resolution CLC is a standalone facility located in the centre of the community, next to the community hall. Respondents felt the facility in itself is not a barrier to programming or enrolment. The facility has two classrooms, a computer lab, an office, a common area, two washrooms, a kitchenette and a janitor's room, with mechanical systems housed in the basement. According to respondents, the building was upgraded in 1967. Prior to this, it served as a garage for the local mission, which ran a hospital next door. Some said the CLC's basement was once used as a morgue and that the building may be haunted.

Although there were no complaints about the condition of the facility itself, Aurora College staff mentioned running into issues with computers at the facility due to limited IT support. When TAG visited in April, staff said the facility's printer had been down since January due to a problem with print drivers, which could not be fixed locally due to restrictions on upgrading computer software. Limited IT support also meant issues with Wi-Fi had previously gone unresolved for a year.

Generally, respondents said there is very little use of the CLC among community members and that there appears to not be much going on at the facility (see [Section 2.4](#)). One person said they had never seen a car parked outside the CLC.

It was suggested by some that barriers to collaboration have arisen due to relational conflict between Aurora College staff and a local government. Several people said communication between Aurora College and the community could be improved; representatives of one community organization shared that they are unaware of what the CLC offers. Community organizations have opted to run continuing education courses such as First Aid, basic driver training, and WHIMS through private instructors.

Challenges with financial aid were a common theme in discussions in Fort Resolution. Several people mentioned that Student Financial Assistance is inadequate given the current cost of living ([Section 2.4](#)). Respondents expressed the need for programs to be tied to training allowances, which were seen as a major factor in programs' success. Participants shared that some of the most popular programs in the community (i.e. sewing, chainsaw training) are those delivered by community organizations that have training allowances attached and/or budgets for buying course materials.

In terms of regional centres, Hay River was seen as a more feasible place to travel to for schooling than Fort Smith. Some respondents highlighted a commercial fishing course offered

at the Soaring Eagle Friendship Centre in Hay River as an example of the kind of programming that would be of interest to residents. It was noted that many people in Fort Resolution do not have access to transportation; among those with access to transportation, however, there is a willingness to travel to Hay River for training.

As in other communities, respondents in Fort Resolution have a strong interest in programs related to construction trades and industrial training ([Section 2.1](#)). In several engagement sessions, interviewees mentioned a past partnership between Aurora College and Deninu Kué First Nation, in which residents obtained Class 1 and Class 3 Driver Training while working to build a road to a set of cabins on Mission Island. Representatives from community organizations felt generally unclear as to why Class 1 and Class 3 Driver Training is no longer offered locally; Aurora College staff suggested that regulations related to these certifications have changed.

Representatives from Deninu Kué First Nation did not mention any ongoing partnerships with the College, but an openness to future partnerships was expressed. It was suggested that the College has access to equipment, such as dozers and loaders, that would be beneficial to the First Nation; meanwhile, the First Nation runs a variety of temporary accommodations in the community that could be used to host visiting instructors.

One new initiative between Aurora College and the Fort Resolution Métis Government was brought up in discussions. Representatives said the community's old nursing station will soon be transferred to the Fort Resolution Métis Government, and a visiting team from Aurora College will use the station to deliver hazardous materials (hazmat) training to residents.

In terms of delivering training connected to local jobs, several people suggested there may be opportunities to partner with upcoming mining projects in the area, such as Pine Point mine. A desire was expressed for community members to be trained not only for labour jobs at the mine but also desk jobs. In addition, representatives from Deninu Kué First Nation discussed an intention to set up a protected area near the community, which could provide opportunities for environmental jobs. An example of a past project that combined local jobs with training was also referenced in several conversations: It was suggested that the Slave River Sawmill, which operated until around the 1990s, employed 32 people in the community at the peak of its operations. During the winter months, respondents said training was offered to employees in heavy equipment operation or lumber grading. Some signalled an opportunity to redevelop a forestry-based industry in the community by producing biomass for heat generation locally.

There was emphasis on the need to deliver training locally to help fill chronic job vacancies (i.e. teachers, nurses, daycare workers). One challenge noted in several discussions is that, once residents are educated, they tend to leave due to a shortage of local jobs or higher paying positions elsewhere. To address this issue, one respondent proposed that the College to enter into an agreement with trainees to ensure they commit to working in the community for a certain period of time.

As far as the seasonal timing of courses, respondents said to avoid September and May because of firewood harvesting and hunting seasons, and suggested that the coldest months of winter would be best for delivering training.

Overall, residents appeared to feel that Fort Resolution is not a focus or priority for the College (see [Section 2.6](#)). As an example of this, one person pointed out that a branded Aurora College mug decorated with the names of communities does not include Fort Resolution.

4. What We Heard: Facilities Master Plan

As part of engagement sessions, the Facilities Master Plan was printed and shared with participants. The “CLCs” section of the FMP was circulated in outreach emails prior to engagement. In many cases, this section of the Facilities Master Plan was used as a starting point for discussions.

Where feedback was provided by respondents specifically on the FMP’s section on CLCs, responses were generally quite positive. There was an appreciation for the College “thinking outside of the box” with the proposed approach to engagement, and satisfaction or enthusiasm for the potential programs outlined. Regarding the list of potential program areas proposed by the FMP, one respondent said anyone would be thrilled to see any of these being delivered in their own community.

Some respondents expressed skepticism about the pace of the project and the College’s ability or intention to follow through on the ideas presented in the FMP. Several participants asked if the College would be acting on the ideas presented or whether the engagement sessions for this report were a waste of their time. These comments stemmed from personal experiences working with the College or the GNWT in communities. Participants asked about the budget and timeline for facility upgrades, and were frustrated to hear that neither was established. Overall, there was a sense of suspicion that the Plan would not be put to action or realized.

A minority of participants offered comments on the concept designs presented. One piece of feedback that was mentioned several times was that the bunkhouse seemed too small and that it would be hard to live in for extended periods of time. Some people questioned the usefulness of short-term accommodation and expressed concern that the bunkhouse could create unhealthy living conditions if a housing-insecure staff member chose to stay there longer-term ([see Section 2.3](#)).

A criticism sometimes received about the concept designs was that the floor plans appear conventional and lack imagination or excitement. It should be noted that the Facilities Master Plan offered limited information about what future CLCs might look like, and renderings of the designs have not yet been created. Still, participants questioned whether community members would feel compelled to engage with the facilities or would see their culture represented. It was requested that the facilities be more architecturally interesting, on par with expectations for post-secondary institutions elsewhere in Canada.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Key takeaways

Engagement sessions conducted with the sample communities of Délı̨nę, Fort Liard, Fort Resolution, Tuktoyaktuk and Whati uncovered several important considerations that should be kept in mind as Aurora College re-envisioned its role in communities through the College's Transformation. While common themes highlighted current limitations with CLCs, feedback also elicited many opportunities for improvement and collaboration.

Key takeaways from discussions included the following:

- There are many people in communities who are not being served by CLCs in their current form or by post-secondary education centred in campus communities. CLCs currently focus on delivering Adult Literacy and Basic Education (ALBE) during working hours and without providing training allowances for attendance. This programming therefore caters to community members who are without regular employment and who, largely, do not have dependents. Aurora College's campuses serve a similarly limited demographic of students who are willing and able to relocate from their home communities for long periods of time. Many people in smaller communities are not served by either of these approaches.
- An opportunity exists for CLCs to serve a broader range of northern learners by diversifying programming and tailoring in-community programming to community wants, needs and preferences.
- Respondents frequently requested or recommended that education be directly connected to employment opportunities. This would serve a dual purpose of attracting more students into training programs, while also helping to fill the local demands for skilled labour.
- Respondents requested that programming be made more accessible and readily available to people in their home communities because several barriers limit residents' ability to relocate to campus communities for post-secondary education. Ways of making programming more accessible might include diversifying in-community programming, making use of remote learning or adapting academic calendars to fit communities' schedules.
- Many CLCs are designed to deliver programming in a classroom-style setting, which often does not reflect community preferences and Indigenous perspectives on education. Respondents requested flexible spaces that can accommodate a variety of hands-on programs while being able to support remote learning, as well as spaces designed with local cultures and preferences in mind.
- Community awareness of and enrolment in CLC programs is currently perceived as low but several untapped opportunities exist to increase enrolment. Partnering with local governments and community organizations would invite more local engagement with the CLCs and strengthen the presence of Aurora College in communities.
- Communities are eager to be involved in decisions about Aurora College's infrastructure and programming, and CLCs' success depends on community leadership being meaningfully involved in these decisions. Many opportunities exist for partnerships that would be mutually beneficial to Aurora College and communities.

Alongside these key takeaways, it is important to keep in mind that responsibilities and powers are being devolved to community governments, which are expecting to create new, localized

roles and staff these roles with qualified community members. Collaborating with community leadership and responding to training needs is therefore critical to supporting this transition.

In addition, a large proportion of northern learners live in communities. Yet, discussions highlighted that participants do not perceive in-community education to be a clear focus of the College, and relocating to campus communities for post-secondary education is often out of reach. Further, engagement sessions suggested that issues with CLCs go beyond facilities and are instead rooted in the way the College is set up. If Aurora College is to better serve northern learners, it was suggested that the College should renew its focus on in-community education, re-envision the way CLCs operate, and invest in CLC infrastructure, programming and staffing.

Based on what we heard, the College could better serve northern students by offering diversified, flexible, hands-on programming in communities in line with requests that emerged from discussions. Community leadership should be involved in decisions about CLC infrastructure and programming, and facilities and programming should be designed with community preferences and needs in mind.

5.2. **Next Steps**

The results of this engagement process have informed the development of the *Community Learning Centres: Facility Planning Report*. This second report takes the input from community and College representatives in the five sample communities to propose a conceptual model for a new type of learning centre facility: one that is replicable across communities while being scalable to meet different demands, is flexible to accommodate different programs, and includes a customizable element that can be co-developed alongside communities.

The second report also provides information about the existing conditions of community learning centre facilities and proposes a framework for prioritizing replacements. Potential scenarios are outlined, providing options for how Aurora College and the Department of ECE can begin to address the facilities-related findings from these engagement sessions. Overall, recommendations emerging from this project are summarized in Section 7 of the *Facility Planning Report* for community learning centres.

Beyond the recommendations relevant to facility planning specifically, Aurora College might consider organizational changes that respond to comments frequently raised about the use of community learning centres, including those relating to: program availability in communities, program accessibility, student enrolment and supports, community partnerships, and systemic or institutional issues at the College and GNWT.

6. **Appendices**

A) Summary Table: Existing CLCs	page 34
B) List of Participants	page 35
C) Sample Interview Guide	page 37
D) Summary Table: Common Themes from Interviews	page 39

A) Summary Table: Existing CLCs

Note: this information has been compiled based on reports provided by the Department of Infrastructure and sometimes Aurora College; accuracy of this information has not been directly verified by TAG.

Community	Year constructed / renovated	Area (m ²)	No. classrooms	Notes
Standalone CLC facilities				
Aklavik	1994	251	2	
Behchoko	1990	205	2	
Deline	1998	252	2	
Fort Good Hope	1991	232	2	
Fort Resolution	1967/2000	225	2	
Hay River	1999	456	3+	See <i>CLC Facilities Report</i> for information on facility conditions
Katl'odeeche	2011	230	2	
Lutselk'e	2011	197	2	
Tsiigehtchic	2011	220	2	
Tuktoyaktuk	1992	236	2	
Tulita	1991	119	2	
Ulukhaktok	1967/1988	86	1	
CLC space is leased within a shared facility				
Fort Liard	1988/2002	109	1	Located in K-12 school
Fort McPherson	1997	140	2	Located in K-12 school
Fort Providence	1999	105	2	Located in K-12 school
Fort Simpson	2009	320	2	In GNWT facility
Ndilo	1991/2000	--	--	Shared with YKDFN
Norman Wells	2007	186	2	In GNWT facility
Whati	2000	<101	1	Located in K-12 school
CLC space has been leased within the past 10 years, but no CLC currently exists				
Colville Lake				
Gameti				
Paulatuk				
Sachs Harbour				
Wekweeti				
No record of CLC existing within the past 10 years				
Dettah				
Enterprise				
Jean Marie River				
Kakisa				
Nahanni Butte				
Sambaa K'e				
Wrigley				

B) List of Participants

List of participants in engagement: April 2023 - April 2024

Organization	Participants	Meeting Date & Time	Meeting Location
Fort Liard			
Aurora College - Regional	(1) Program Head - Dehcho	April 5th, 2023 (3:30pm)	Fort Simpson CLC
Aurora College - Local	(1) Community Adult Educator	April 6th, 2023 (8:30am)	Fort Liard CLC
Hamlet of Fort Liard	(3) Mayor, Senior Administrative Officer, Assistant to SAO	April 6th, 2023 (10am)	Hamlet Council Chambers
Echo Dene School	(2) Principal, Senior Teacher	April 6th, 2023 (1pm)	Echo Dene School
Acho Dene Koe Band	(3) Sub-chief, Councilor, Chief Negotiator	April 6th, 2023 (3pm)	Band Office
Number of sessions	5		
Total Participants	10		
Deline			
Aurora College - Regional	(1) Program Head - Sahtu	April 13th, 2023 (10:30am)	MS Teams / virtual
Aurora College - Local	(1) Community Adult Educator	April 18th, 2023 (3pm)	Deline CLC
Deline Got'ine Government	(4) Chief, Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Director of Education	April 18th, 2023 (12pm)	John Tetso Building
Ehtseo Ayha School	(1) Principal	April 18th, 2023 (11am)	Ehtseo Ayha School
Number of sessions	4		
Total Participants	7		
Whati			
Aurora College - Regional	(1) Program Head - Tlicho & North Slave Regions	May 19th, 2023 (4pm)	MS Teams / Virtual
Aurora College - Local	(1) Community Adult Educator - Behchoko	May 24th, 2023 (11am)	Behchoko CLC
	(1) Community Adult Educator - Whati	May 30th, 2023 (10:30am)	Whati CLC
Tlicho Community Services Agency	(2) Chief Executive Officer, Director	May 11th, 2023 (3pm)	MS Teams / Virtual
Interagency Committee in Behchoko	(6) Community Government Manager, TG Victim Services Manager, ECE Career Development Officer, Northern Store Owner, Planning Consultants	May 24th, 2023 (1:30pm)	Community Government Boardroom
Whati Community Government	(9) 7 Councilors, Senior Administrative Officer, TG Community Director	May 29th, 2023 (1pm)	Council Chambers
	(1) Councilor	May 29th, 2023 (4:30pm)	Councilor's residence
	(1) SAO	May 30th, 2023 (10:00am)	Community Government Office
	(1) Councilor	June 24, 2023 (12:30pm)	Explorer Hotel
Tlicho Government in Whati	(1) Whati Community Director	May 30, 2023 (9:30am)	Tlicho Government Whati Office
Mezi Community School	(1) Principal	May 29th, 2023 (3pm)	Mezi Community School
NWT Literacy Council	(1) Educator / Former Community Adult Educator at Aurora College	June 15th, 2023 (3pm)	TAG Boardroom
Number of sessions	12		
Total participants	26		

Tuktoyaktuk			
Aurora College - Regional	(1) Program Head - Beaufort Delta	June 9th, 2023 (11am)	Aurora Campus Academic Building
Aurora College - Local	(1) Community Adult Educator	June 8th, 2023 (9:30am)	Tuktoyaktuk CLC
Innovate Centre, Inuvik	(1) Innovate Technician	June 7th, 2023 (3pm)	Innovate Centre
Hamlet of Tuktoyaktuk and Tuktoyaktuk Community Corporation	(7) Hamlet: Deputy Mayor, Councilors, Senior Administrative Officer, Assistant SAO; TCC: Chair, Director	June 8th, 2023 (3pm)	Hamlet Council Chambers
Tuktoyaktuk Community Corporation	(3) Vice-Chair, Manager, Program Manager	June 8th, 2023 (5:30pm)	TCC Boardroom
	(1) Makerspace Technician	June 8th, 2023 (7pm)	Tuktoyaktuk CLC
Mangilaluk School	(2) Principal, Vice-Principal	June 8th, 2023 (11am)	Mangilaluk School
Number of sessions	7		
Total participants	16		

Fort Resolution			
Aurora College - Regional	(1) Program Head - Akaitcho & South Slave	February 20th, 2024 (1:45pm)	MS Teams
Fort Resolution Métis Government	(4) President, Councilors	April 3rd, 2024 (6:00pm)	FRMG Office
Hamlet of Fort Resolution	(1) Administrator	April 4th, 2024 (10am)	Hamlet Office
Aurora College - Local	(1) Community Adult Educator	April 4th, 2024 (1pm)	Fort Resolution CLC
Deninu Kue First Nation	(4) Sub-Chief, Councilors, IMA Coordinator	April 4th, 2024 (5:00pm)	Band Office
Number of sessions	5		
Total participants	11		

Total number of engagement sessions (April - July 2023)	33
Total number of participants (April - July 2023)	70

Total sessions where feedback was provided	30
Total number of participants who provided feedback	59

Note: the table above includes sessions where a presentation was given by TAG but no feedback was provided by attendees. These sessions are highlighted in grey and are omitted from the total number of sessions and participants reported in Appendix D.

C) Sample Interview Guide



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Gathering information for CLC Facilities Planning

Sample Interview Guide: External Organization

Date of Meeting:	Start Time:
Location:	End Time:

Present:	Name:	Title:	Organization:

Introduction	
i.	Overview of Facilities Master Plan project and how that has led to the current involvement.
ii.	Summary on CLC engagement undertaken to date and how your interview fits into the larger process.
iii.	Overview of the general goals for this interview.
iv.	Any questions on those points, or anything that you need to make you more comfortable before getting started?
A) Current operations and facility needs	
1.	What is your perspective on how the CLC currently operates in the community? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are people generally interested in enrolling? - How is the location, the facility itself? - Do you feel that the space is accessible to people and provides an important service? - What about the programs on offer currently? Are they relevant, in demand?
2.	Is there demand within your community for postsecondary programming? Which programs would you want to see offered at the CLC?
3.	Does the community have any current/future initiatives for which some form of training / formal education might be necessary?
4.	Has your organization ever partnered with Aurora College to deliver programming? How did that work out / why not?
B) Discussion of findings in the Facilities Master Plan	
5.	Preliminary engagement was undertaken with some communities in 2022 while the Facilities Master Plan was being developed. During the initial round of engagement, a vision emerged for highly flexible and community-driven CLCs. What is your perspective on the planning principles in the FMP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce or revitalize the relationship between a CLC and its host community • Enhance interconnectivity between campuses and CLCs • Improve accessibility of facilities and programming to local students • Establish a cohesive sense of place or sense of belonging to the polytechnic university, across locations

6.	<p>What is your perspective on the opportunities identified in the Facilities Master Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-way learning exchange • Responding to housing challenges • Enhancing capability for postsecondary programming and research • Strengthening pathways to learning through hands-on education
7.	<p>What do you perceive the community's level of interest to be, in these potential spatial components identified by the FMP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic community learning centre has strongly integrated IT hardware, flexible spaces, equipment to enable learning/teaching in Indigenous languages, and community-facing design • Field research and on-the-land learning • Laboratory space • Food security • Traditional arts and crafts • Construction trades • Accommodations
8.	<p>Do you have any comments on the viability of integrating these components? Are there any other opportunities that haven't been represented in the plan?</p>
C) Functional requirements to support student needs and pathways	
9.	<p>If there is demand for postsecondary programming to be offered at the CLC, which of these models seems suitable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities could be equipped for individual remote learning, with instructors mostly based on-campus; • Facilities could be highly flexible, designed to host a changing rotation of short courses by visiting instructors; • Facilities could be specially equipped to deliver a specific area of programming – one which is in high demand by the community, and for which local expertise might also contribute to instruction, around which a community of practice could develop.
10.	<p>In terms of student pathways, how can the development of CLCs support local students and prospective students to engage comfortably with the education system?</p>
11.	<p>How can a welcoming and supportive learning environment be established?</p>
D) Community partnerships or co-investment in CLC facilities	
12.	<p>Would your organization be interested in partnering with Aurora College to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver academic programming; • Deliver other relevant programming (e.g. Trades Awareness Program); • Share space, equipment or resources; • Advertise and promote postsecondary education or upgrading; or • Support local students attending the CLC or prospective students at the polytechnic?
13.	<p>Is there something Aurora College should do differently to support these kinds of partnerships?</p>
14.	<p>Is there anyone else we should speak to about the CLC facility?</p>

D) Summary Table: Common Themes from Interviews

Note: the total number of sessions and participants listed in the matrices below do not include sessions where a presentation was given by TAG but no feedback was provided by attendees.

Summary of common themes from interviews		ALL RESPONDENTS TOTAL	AURORA COLLEGE TOTAL	EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS TOTAL	FORT LIARD TOTAL	DELINÉ TOTAL	BEHCHOKO TOTAL	WHATI TOTAL	TUKTOYAK-TUK TOTAL	FORT RESOLUTION TOTAL
		30 sessions, 59 participants	12 internal interviews	18 sessions, 47 participants	5 sessions, 10 participants	4 sessions, 7 participants	4 sessions, 10 participants	7 sessions, 7 participants	5 sessions, 14 participants	5 sessions, 11 participants
Requests for programming										
Construction trades		29	10	19	5	4	4	6	5	5
Trades training, non-specific		20	6	14	3	2	4	4	2	5
Pre-trades training		12	8	4	2	3	1	2	2	2
Carpentry		12	4	8	3	1	1	2	3	2
Other construction trades - plumber, OBM, electrician		12	5	7	2	1	1	2	2	4
Heavy equipment operator		9	4	5	1	1	1	2	0	4
Trades prep / Intro to trades		7	5	2	1	2	0	1	2	1
Academic upgrading beyond current ALBE offerings		23	8	15	3	4	4	4	5	3
Con. Ed. short courses are in high demand (First Aid, Class 7, etc)		22	9	13	4	4	4	2	3	5
Programming should respond to local employment		21	5	16	3	2	3	5	3	5
Graduates could fill chronic job vacancies		13	2	11	2	2	3	1	0	5
Programming should respond to employment/labour market plan		13	3	10	3	2	0	2	2	4
Administration		20	6	14	4	2	2	4	5	3
Office administration		14	4	10	2	2	2	3	4	1
Entrepreneurship training / small business start-up		10	3	7	2	1	0	1	4	2
Business administration		9	3	6	3	1	1	0	2	2
Financial administration or accounting		9	2	7	2	2	0	1	2	2
Traditional and cultural programming		19	8	11	5	4	0	3	4	3
Indigenous languages		11	3	8	4	2	0	1	3	1
On-the-Land programs		10	3	7	2	1	1	1	4	1
Traditional Knowledge		8	3	5	1	2	0	1	3	1
Traditional arts		6	4	2	1	1	0	0	2	2
Environment and natural resources		19	6	13	4	4	2	1	3	5
Environmental monitoring		12	2	10	1	4	2	1	2	2
Environmental remediation		5	2	3	0	3	0	0	1	1
Combine ENR with Traditional Knowledge		5	1	4	1	2	0	0	1	1
Teaching and social work		16	5	11	1	2	2	3	4	4
Early childhood		12	4	8	0	2	2	3	2	3
Teacher training		11	2	9	1	1	1	2	3	3
Support assistant		4	1	3	0	1	2	1	0	0
Personal support worker		3	2	1	0	1	2	0	0	0
Social work, non-specific		2	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0
Culinary arts		14	6	8	2	3	3	2	1	3
Non-specific		12	5	7	2	2	2	2	1	3
Traditional		5	3	2	0	2	1	0	0	2
Camp cook		4	1	3	0	2	2	0	0	0
References to successful programs (past or present)		14	8	6	3	2	0	2	3	4
Mobile trades trailer in the Beaufort Delta (ended)		7	4	3	1	1	0	1	4	0
NWT Literacy Council Skills for Success (ongoing)		6	3	3	0	0	0	2	4	0
Trades Awareness Program (ongoing)		6	3	3	0	0	0	0	2	1
BEAHR (ongoing)		3	2	1	0	2	1	0	0	0
Social Work and Teacher Training programs (ended)		4	1	3	1	1	1	0	1	1
Building Trades Helper in Fort Good Hope		2	2	0	1	1	1	0	0	0
Introduction to Skilled Trades Essentials Program (ISTEP)		1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Traditional Arts Program (ended)		2	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Life skills programming		9	0	9	1	1	1	2	3	1
Nursing		8	0	8	1	1	1	0	2	3
Digital media or information technology		8	2	6	1	1	0	1	1	4
Leadership or Indigenous governance		6	0	6	1	2	1	0	1	1
Cosmetology, aesthetics or hairstyling		4	0	4	1	0	0	0	2	1
Recreation leadership (coaching)		2	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	1

Summary of common themes from interviews		ALL RESPONDENTS TOTAL	AURORA COLLEGE TOTAL	EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS TOTAL	FORT LIARD TOTAL	DELIN TOTAL	BECHOKO TOTAL	WHATI TOTAL	TUKTOYAK-TUK TOTAL	FORT RESOLUTION TOTAL
		30 sessions, 59 participants	12 internal interviews	18 sessions, 47 participants	5 sessions, 10 participants	4 sessions, 7 participants	4 sessions, 10 participants	7 sessions, 7 participants	5 sessions, 14 participants	5 sessions, 11 participants
Programming availability, accessibility										
More programming should be available in communities		29	10	19	5	4	4	7	4	5
Leaving is difficult for everyone and especially for parents		22	7	15	4	3	2	6	3	4
Enrolment would increase if programs were available locally		21	6	15	3	3	3	4	4	4
Community members don't want to go to Fort Smith		20	6	14	4	3	3	2	3	5
Travel to a regional centre / nearby community is feasible		15	7	8	4	1	4	3	1	2
If you leave the community, lose your place in public housing		9	3	6	1	1	2	1	3	1
More programs should be offered through online learning at CLCs		22	9	13	4	4	3	3	3	5
Connectivity at CLC needs to be upgraded for online learning		14	7	7	5	1	3	1	4	0
Online postsecondary programs should be available at CLCs		15	5	10	3	3	1	0	3	5
Should be synchronous/blended with in-person support		14	8	6	3	3	2	1	1	4
Local educator or coordinator will need to be a tutor/facilitator		13	7	6	4	3	1	0	1	4
Include in-person component - roving instructor or campus visit		8	3	5	1	1	2	1	1	2
Digital literacy will be a challenge with online learning		9	5	4	2	1	1	2	0	3
Courses should be offered outside of regular work hours		17	5	12	5	2	2	4	0	4
Academic calendar should better align with seasons in the community		11	6	5	2	2	3	0	3	1
Academic calendars should align with IG funding requirements		1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Facility and Equipment										
The CLC is not currently equipped for hands-on programming		22	11	11	3	3	3	4	5	4
Trades training should be accommodated		14	4	10	3	3	1	3	2	2
Makerspace should be added or expanded		10	8	2	2	1	1	0	4	2
Request for a kitchen facility		9	6	3	1	1	1	2	1	3
Request for gathering space or other flexible addition		6	3	3	1	0	1	1	2	1
Request for laboratory space		4	3	1	1	1	0	1	1	0
Comments on temporary accommodations		17	9	8	4	2	3	1	3	4
Accommodations in the CLC could help attract & retain staff		9	5	4	2	0	2	0	2	3
Accommodations could host visiting instructors for short courses		6	4	2	3	0	2	1	0	0
Students from other communities could use short-term dorms		6	3	3	1	0	2	1	1	1
Other local businesses offer short-term accommodations		3	3	0	1	2	0	0	0	0
Aurora College could rent market housing from local government		2	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	1
Connectivity issues need to be addressed		15	8	7	5	1	3	1	4	1
CLC is important because there is a lack of infrastructure generally		15	4	11	2	1	2	4	4	2
The CLC should be more available for community use		13	5	8	2	3	0	2	3	3
For hands-on programming, there are local space-sharing opportunities		13	5	8	3	3	1	3	1	2
The CLC should not be co-located with a K-12 school (Liard+Whati only)		11	4	7	4	0	1	5	1	0
Facility should be central, prominent, with its own clear identity		11	5	6	3	1	2	2	2	1
Prospective students might not be comfortable in an institutional space		10	4	6	3	2	0	2	2	1
Facility should be designed to reference local culture		7	2	5	3	1	0	0	1	2
Signage or navigational tools need improvement		4	2	2	3	1	0	0	0	0

Summary of common themes from interviews		ALL RESPONDENTS TOTAL	AURORA COLLEGE TOTAL	EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS TOTAL	FORT LIARD TOTAL	DELINI TOTAL	BECHOKO TOTAL	WHATI TOTAL	TUKTOYAK-TUK TOTAL	FORT RESOLUTION TOTAL
		30 sessions, 59 participants	12 internal interviews	18 sessions, 47 participants	5 sessions, 10 participants	4 sessions, 7 participants	4 sessions, 10 participants	7 sessions, 7 participants	5 sessions, 14 participants	5 sessions, 11 participants
Student enrolment & student supports										
CLC should accommodate flexible uses to get people in the door		23	10	13	5	4	3	2	5	4
Space should be available for community use		15	7	8	3	2	1	2	5	2
Traditional arts		10	5	5	1	1	0	0	5	3
Makerspace programming		9	7	2	1	1	1	0	4	2
Language mentorship program		6	1	5	2	1	0	0	2	1
Host or participate in local career fairs		6	1	5	1	1	1	0	0	2
Host open houses		6	1	5	2	1	1	0	0	2
Virtual or in-person campus tours		6	0	6	2	0	0	1	1	2
Comments on the K-12 system										
K-12 system has not prepared students for postsecondary		18	5	13	3	2	2	5	1	5
Low enrolment in K-12 translates to low enrolment in college		14	4	10	3	1	1	3	1	5
Students spend their SFA accessing upgrading		14	3	11	3	1	1	4	0	5
K-12 system & CLC have not recovered from COVID-19		10	4	6	2	2	0	0	2	4
Offering dual credits would be a path forward		7	3	4	3	2	0	1	0	1
5		5	2	3	1	2	1	1	0	0
Students need to see connection b/w education and job opportunities										
Training allowances are helpful for attracting enrolment		15	3	12	3	3	0	5	1	3
Life skills training and paperwork support should be available		16	6	10	1	0	3	4	3	5
Childcare is a barrier		12	4	8	3	2	1	2	3	1
Advertisement and promotion should be improved		10	1	9	2	1	2	2	2	1
Students struggle with self-esteem / quit because they fear failure		9	4	5	3	2	0	1	1	2
Cultural accommodations should be available		7	2	5	1	0	1	2	1	0
Mental health supports should be available to students		8	2	6	1	1	1	2	1	2
		8	2	6	1	1	1	2	1	2
Partnerships										
Suggestions for future partnerships		28	9	19	5	4	3	6	5	5
Local organization would hire students for co-ops/placements		15	1	14	3	2	3	3	1	3
Local organization can offer space for hands-on programming		13	5	8	3	3	1	3	2	1
High school partnerships - e.g. career counseling, space sharing		11	3	8	3	1	0	2	3	2
Local organization would use the space for programming		9	3	6	2	2	2	0	5	0
College can develop programs with input from Knowledge Holders		9	4	5	1	3	0	1	3	1
Indigenous government provides training allowances to students		9	3	6	1	0	3	1	2	2
Local organization would send staff for upskilling		8	1	7	1	2	2	2	1	0
Co-investment opportunities in upcoming infrastructure projects		7	1	6	0	1	1	2	3	0
Other resource-sharing - e.g. staffing, staff housing		5	0	5	0	0	1	1	2	1
Partnerships are important for the success or viability of CLC										
Community organizations want input into programming		24	9	15	4	4	3	3	5	5
There is an opportunity to respond to chronic job vacancies		17	5	12	2	4	1	1	4	5
College should respond to existing or future labour market plans		16	4	12	3	3	1	3	1	5
Partnerships are about relationship-building on an individual level										
Turnover at the College is a barrier to partnerships		13	3	10	3	2	0	2	3	3
Partnerships are currently ongoing or being piloted		14	6	8	4	0	1	2	3	4
Turnover at the College is a barrier to partnerships		7	3	4	3	0	0	1	3	0
Community organizations aren't aware of opportunities		11	5	6	2	1	1	1	5	1
Dual credits could be piloted with the high school		10	1	9	2	2	0	2	1	3
		10	1	9	2	2	0	2	1	3

Summary of common themes from interviews		ALL RESPONDENTS TOTAL	AURORA COLLEGE TOTAL	EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS TOTAL	FORT LIARD TOTAL	DELINI TOTAL	BEHCHOKO TOTAL	WHATI TOTAL	TUKTOYAK-TUK TOTAL	FORT RESOLUTION TOTAL
		30 sessions, 59 participants	12 internal interviews	18 sessions, 47 participants	5 sessions, 10 participants	4 sessions, 7 participants	4 sessions, 10 participants	7 sessions, 7 participants	5 sessions, 14 participants	5 sessions, 11 participants
Systemic or institutional issues at the College or GNWT										
In-community training needs to receive more focus from the College		19	7	12						
Objectives/mandate of CLCs could be reviewed		12	5	7						
In-community training does not receive base funding		6	6	0						
Seeking out funding is a major drain on staff capacity		5	5	0						
Issues with staffing and staff turnover										
Lack of housing in communities presents a barrier to staffing		14	8	6						
Aurora College staff at CLCs can feel isolated		8	7	1						
Partnerships are hindered by staff turnover		6	3	3						
Aurora College staff do not feel empowered		6	6	0						
GNWT HR procedures present a major barrier to staffing		4	4	0						
Focus on hiring local: e.g. community coordinator		3	3	0						
Scope of local programming is limited by single-staff capacity										
Course delivery is based on CAE expertise		11	9	2						
Efficiencies will be found by delivering territory-wide courses		7	7	0						
Conflicts with GNWT policy										
Students lose their place in public housing if they go to campus		8	3	5						
GNWT SFA is not flexible enough		7	4	3						
College would benefit from thinking outside the box										
Regional protectionism is hindering education delivery to communities		7	4	3						