Conestoga 50 Years

2017–2020 Strategic Plan
Letter from the President and Board of Governors Chair

When Conestoga College first opened to provide career-based education and training for 188 students in Technology, Business and Applied Arts programs, it operated out of a small single building and two portable classrooms. Despite its humble beginnings, the institution's mission was tremendously important: to support the needs of the local community by providing highly skilled workers for business and industry while inspiring students to achieve their full potential.

That was 50 years ago. Since then, we’ve grown and adapted to meet the changing needs of our students, our partners, our community and our world. We’ve evolved from a tiny community college to a multi-campus institute for polytechnic education, delivering a comprehensive range of programs to support workforce development and prepare an increasingly diverse group of learners for career and life success.

The 2017-2020 Strategic Plan provides a framework for the next stage in our journey and will serve as a foundation for the college's operations for the next three years. We will continue to focus on the core goals of quality, capacity and sustainability as we work in collaboration with our partners to support student success, economic growth, and a stronger, more prosperous community.

The plan builds on our strengths and successes, and provides opportunities to expand in new directions as we adapt to the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

It includes new initiatives that will support enhanced access to education and training for individuals from across our community. It addresses emerging talent shortages that impede business growth, and supports the development of new capacity to address identified needs.

There are many exciting developments ahead as we continue our transformation as a world-class institute for career-focused learning and applied research.

The importance of student-centred, career-focused education has never been higher, as we work to align the skills of available workers with the needs of a rapidly changing labour market. We invite you to engage with us on the exciting course we have set for Conestoga's future.

Thanks to the many individuals who have contributed to the development of this plan. Your input and commitment to the process have been greatly appreciated.

John Tibbits
President

Peter Benninger
Chair, Board of Governors
The demand for post-secondary graduates with the skills and knowledge required to address real-world needs is greater than ever.
Strategic Plan at a glance

VISION

Excellence in polytechnic education

MISSION

To champion innovation in education and research
To serve community needs and priorities
To empower individuals to achieve their potential

VALUES

Excellence in the design and delivery of programs and services
Equity in providing opportunities for individuals from diverse backgrounds and communities
Engagement as an active partner, responsible employer and corporate citizen
Goals & Objectives | 2017-2020

QUALITY
We will demonstrate excellence and continuous improvement in programming and services.

- Continually improve programming through the ongoing implementation of quality assurance measures and processes.
- Support student achievement and success through the delivery of a full range of services in a secure and inclusive learning environment.
- Develop career-ready graduates by building on our leadership in work-integrated, experiential and active learning.
- Foster the development of an effective and high-performing employee team.

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

- Deliver a comprehensive range of career-focused programs that respond to current and evolving workforce needs.
- Renew and expand campus facilities to support enhanced access and the delivery of programming and services.
- Increase access to education and skills training through pathways, technologies and flexible programming options.
- Address the innovation needs of industry and community partners through the expansion of applied research capacity.

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

- Achieve economies of scale and enhance revenues through enrolment growth and increased student retention.
- Enhance engagement with college and community partners to support the achievement of our goals.
- Effectively manage resources to support the sustainable delivery of college programming and services.
- Explore and advance revenue-generating opportunities.
Ontario’s colleges have much to celebrate this year as we look back at 50 years of delivering career-focused education and training to meet the workforce needs of the communities we serve. Together, we have produced more than two million graduates, and supported millions more through continuing education and part-time studies.

Our graduates include leaders in business and the arts, engineering and technology, health sciences, community services and skilled trades. They are the entrepreneurs and innovators, technicians and specialists who help make businesses competitive and communities better places to live.

Advances in technology and automation are reshaping our economy and transforming the nature of work. Some studies indicate that more than 40 per cent of current jobs are at risk of being replaced or significantly reduced because of automation.

Unemployment and underemployment remain high among younger workers, and even those with established careers require ongoing training and upskilling to keep pace with changing workforce needs and expectations. At the same time, many business leaders cite the lack of available workers with appropriate skill sets as a key impediment to growth.

The development of a highly skilled and adaptable workforce ready to address the challenges and make the most of the opportunities ahead is essential to our continued economic growth and competitiveness.

At Conestoga, we are committed to delivering education and training programs that will create the talent required for local workforce needs and support business development as we provide opportunities for individuals from across our community to achieve their full potential and carve out successful careers.

Our region, one of the largest and fastest growing in the province, is renowned for its thriving innovation and startup culture. It draws strength from a broad and diverse economy with major industry clusters ranging from high tech to insurance, advanced manufacturing, food
processing and agriculture. The community is now poised to become an even more powerful driver of Canada’s economic growth, leading development in the Toronto-Waterloo Innovation Corridor.

But realizing our full potential as an economic powerhouse requires strategic focus on the development of the talent required to sustain innovation and growth.

Through the initiatives outlined in the 2017-2020 Strategic Plan, Conestoga will create new capacity to serve the growing need for a skilled and adaptable workforce and help position our community for long-term growth and prosperity as we provide pathways to success and new opportunities for individuals across our community to build better lives for themselves and their families.

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QUALITY

Conestoga’s commitment to excellence in programming and services prepares students for long-term success and supports community needs.
Conestoga’s graduate employment and satisfaction rates are consistently well above the provincial average and higher than those of colleges in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton area. Almost 87 per cent of graduates were employed within six months of graduation in 2015-16; more than 81 per cent of graduates indicated that their college experience was useful in achieving their goals. More than 90 per cent of employers indicated their satisfaction with newly hired Conestoga graduates.

Ongoing investment in student success initiatives continues to yield results in terms of increased graduation rates. The graduation rate has risen steadily over the last four years and is well above the provincial average.

The graduation rate was 71.7 per cent in 2015-16.

The implementation of a formal, cross-college Program Quality Management framework supports continuous improvement. A Program Quality Assurance Process Audit (PQAPA, now known as College Quality Assurance Accreditation Process-CQAAP) conducted by external examiners in 2015-16 concluded that Conestoga is in full compliance with provincial standards and expectations for all areas assessed.

Conestoga’s **co-op students** contribute to the success of more than 1,000 employers and businesses each year.
Programs consistently meet or exceed requirements for professional accreditation.

Highlights for 2014-2017 include:

- Accreditation of the Bachelor of Engineering – Electronic Systems Engineering degree granted accreditation through the Canadian Engineering Board
- Extension of Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board accreditation for the Bachelor of Engineering-Mechanical Systems Engineering degree to 2019
- Accreditation of the Bachelor of Applied Health Information Science degree by the Canadian Health Information Management Association
- A full seven-year accreditation of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree (in collaboration with McMaster University) by the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing
- Accreditation of the Bachelor of Environmental Public Health degree by the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors
- Full recognition of the Bachelor of Business Administration – Bachelor of Business Administration - Accounting, Audit and Information Technology degree by the Chartered Professional Accountants of Ontario
- Successful outcome to 4th Class Power Engineering delivery audit conducted by the Technical Standards & Safety Authority
- Positive review by the Post-secondary Education Quality Assessment Board for the renewal of the Bachelor of Community and Criminal Justice degree
- Positive external review of the Bachelor of Interior Design self-study

We focus on active learning with a strong emphasis on work-integrated learning components. Extensive connections with industry contribute to the strength and breadth of programming and provide work-integrated learning and applied research opportunities for students.

Seventy per cent of full-time programs have a co-op stream or include formal work-integrated learning opportunities, including field experience, field placement, clinical placement and/or co-op placement. Work-integrated learning is augmented through additional experiential learning opportunities provided through hands-on, practical learning undertaken in simulation labs and through case study projects.

Conestoga’s commitment to the ongoing development of faculty and staff includes an annual employee conference focused on delivering excellence in education, skills development workshops held throughout the year, participation in the College Educator Development Program, and consultations with teaching and learning specialists.
CONTINUALLY IMPROVE PROGRAMMING THROUGH THE ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE MEASURES AND PROCESSES

We will focus on quality programming that supports student success and effectively addresses industry and community needs. Continued implementation of established quality assurance processes will contribute to the effectiveness of our programs, the success of our graduates and the satisfaction of their employers.

SUPPORT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SUCCESS THROUGH THE DELIVERY OF A FULL RANGE OF SERVICES IN A SECURE AND INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

We will support student success and satisfaction through a comprehensive range of services that address the academic, cultural and social needs of learners from diverse backgrounds.

DEVELOP CAREER-READY GRADUATES BY BUILDING ON OUR LEADERSHIP IN WORK-INTEGRATED, EXPERIENTIAL AND ACTIVE LEARNING

We will continue to enhance opportunities for students to apply their skills and knowledge through the integration of learning activities that reflect real-world challenges and opportunities and prepare graduates for successful careers.

FOSTER THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN EFFECTIVE AND HIGH-PERFORMING EMPLOYEE TEAM

We will achieve our current and future goals through the recruitment and development of a qualified and talented employee team supported through ongoing professional and personal learning opportunities that result in enhanced skills, shared successes and an engaged college community.
CAPACITY

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

Conestoga is committed to the delivery of a comprehensive range of education and training options to provide learners from diverse backgrounds with opportunities to develop the skills and knowledge that today's employers are seeking.

Our graduates are a primary talent source for the communities we serve: more than 65 per cent of graduates remain in the region after completing their studies.

We have made continued progress in the development of career-focused degrees in accordance with our 2014-2017 Strategic Plan. Bachelor's degree programs in Design, Early Learning Program Development and Environmental Public Health have been approved and launched; an additional degree program in Building Systems Engineering has been approved and will launch in 2018, with more programs currently in development or awaiting Ministry approval.

We have also successfully launched a number of new graduate certificate, diploma and certificate programs each year to meet changing student and workforce needs. Some of these programs are targeted specifically for international students to support enrolment growth and address the increasing talent needs of our community.
Conestoga has made substantial progress in facility improvement and expansion to serve a growing student population and create an enhanced learning and working environment. Highlights of achievements include:

- **A new Recreation Centre** completed in collaboration with Conestoga Students Inc. that increases our capacity to meet the recreational, wellness and social needs of our students and enhance the delivery of program-related courses.

- **A new Welcome Centre** at Doon that provides better access to academic and career advising for potential and current students.

- **An expanded and revitalized Library Resource Centre** that includes 27,000 square feet of research and learning space, including quiet study areas, meeting rooms for students working on collaborative projects, and expanded seating areas with integrated technology access.

- **New Graphic Design and Media Studies labs** that increase space efficiencies and create additional capacity to accommodate expanded programming.

- **Improvements at Conestoga’s student residence** that support higher levels of student satisfaction and on-site delivery of Connect Leadership programming in collaboration with Student Life.

- **A new Living Classroom at the Schlegel Centre for Excellence in Innovation in Aging** at University Gates in Waterloo that provides a leading-edge environment for the education and training of personal support workers and practical nurses.

- **A new Life Skills Suite in the Cowan Health Sciences Centre** developed with support from the Hallman Foundation to support delivery of the Community Integration through Co-operative Education (CICE) program.

- **Development of the Motz Pre-hospital Care Laboratory** that provides students in paramedic, firefighter and policing programs with the opportunity to carry out training scenarios that simulate the real-world conditions they will face when they complete their studies and launch their professional careers.

1,000 industry and community leaders contribute to Program Advisory Committees.
We have also made significant progress in the development and reach of applied research activities that support student learning, address business and industry needs, and contribute to regional prosperity.

Conestoga continues to lead research on improving the quality of life and care for seniors in partnership with Schlegel Villages and the Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging.

A new Industrial Research Chair for Colleges awarded through NSERC’s Colleges and Community Innovation (CCI) program in 2016 will also position Conestoga as an applied research leader in Advanced Recycling Technologies for Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment.

The Centre for Smart Manufacturing was launched in 2015, working in partnership with industry to drive innovation, commercialization, productivity improvement and competitiveness for Ontario’s manufacturing sector.

In 2014-15 and 2015-16, Conestoga secured a total of more than $5.5 million in grants as well as additional industry contributions to support applied research activities in numerous areas including advanced manufacturing, food innovation and technology as well as community services.

In 2015-16, more than 130 faculty and almost 1,500 students were engaged in applied research activities including capstone, in-class and independent projects. More than 1,000 students engaged in entrepreneurial learning initiatives in 2015-16: new activities included the launch of the Rising Stars program that develops future culinary and hospitality entrepreneurs.
Objectives for 2017-2020

DELIVER A COMPREHENSIVE RANGE OF CAREER-FOCUSED PROGRAMS THAT RESPOND TO CURRENT AND EVOLVING WORKFORCE NEEDS

We will remain committed to a comprehensive range of accessible, career-focused programming geared to workforce and community needs. Targeted areas for development in 2017-2020 include additional engineering and IT programming, increased access to trades and apprenticeship training, the enhancement of culinary and hospitality offerings, and focused programming for a new Milton campus in partnership with Wilfrid Laurier University (WLU).

RENEW AND EXPAND CAMPUS FACILITIES TO SUPPORT ENHANCED ACCESS AND THE DELIVERY OF PROGRAMMING AND SERVICES

The expansion of the Waterloo campus to be completed in 2018 will enhance access to programming and services for a diverse range of learners, grow enrolment in key program areas, improve the visibility and image of Conestoga at the gateway to Waterloo’s education corridor, and consolidate two small rental satellites while improving college services.

Other priority projects include the establishment of the new WLU campus in Milton, the development of an enhanced Student Centre, and continued renewal and refurbishment of existing facilities. We will also continue to explore potential partnerships for the development of new, multi-use facilities on college lands that address community needs while providing additional opportunities for students and programs.

INCREASE ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND SKILLS TRAINING THROUGH PATHWAYS, TECHNOLOGIES AND FLEXIBLE PROGRAMMING OPTIONS

We will continue to enhance access to programming through the expansion of online and hybrid delivery models and explore new opportunities for the delivery of short courses, modular programming and stackable credentials that lead to career success. Continued investment in technology-based tools and infrastructure will support new approaches to efficient and effective program delivery that meets the needs of today’s learners.

ADDRESS THE INNOVATION NEEDS OF INDUSTRY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS THROUGH THE EXPANSION OF APPLIED RESEARCH CAPACITY

We will continue to expand applied research activities and the development of Conestoga’s centres of excellence to support student learning, spur innovation for local SMEs, and contribute to regional prosperity. Priority projects include the establishment of a centre of excellence for Supply Chain Management and the development of an applied research hub in the Gaslight District in Cambridge that will provide new opportunities to focus on innovation for advanced manufacturing, cybersecurity and advanced recycling technologies.
We will build on our longstanding commitment to responsible resource management, engaging with partners and exploring new opportunities to support the achievement of our goals.

114,000 alumni include leaders in business, technology, manufacturing and health care
Conestoga’s student enrolment continued to grow faster than the provincial average from 2014 to 2017: full-time fall enrolment of 11,300 in 2013-14 grew to 12,500 in 2016-17. Larger student enrolment helped to address the workforce needs of our growing community while providing more opportunities for individuals to access career-focused education and training. Increased tuition revenues supported initiatives leading to increased capacity and ability to deliver quality programming.

**Strong international enrolment growth** – from approximately 600 in winter 2013 to more than 2,300 in winter 2017 – supported the internationalization of our campuses, preparing students for today’s global workplace while also contributing to financial viability, resource and facility expansion, as well as meeting the needs for skilled workers and entrepreneurs in Ontario.

**Academic partnerships supported opportunities for students** and the efficient delivery of programming. In 2014-15 and 2015-16, for example, Conestoga forged 30 new collaborative academic agreements with institutions here in Canada and around the world to provide additional learning and exchange opportunities for students. Partnership with Wilfrid Laurier University supported the delivery of increased programming in Brantford and resulted in new opportunities for students to earn Conestoga and WLU credentials simultaneously.

**Engagement with community partners** led to new or enhanced programming to support training in palliative and end-of-life care and mental health. Approximately 1,000 industry and community leaders participated on Conestoga’s Program Advisory Committees to support the development of new and existing programs.

**A commitment to reducing our carbon footprint** increased recycling and waste diversion across all campuses and supported new initiatives focused on achieving efficiencies in energy utilization.

**Increased revenue generation through initiatives** such as IELTS testing, corporate training and continuing education contributed to our positive financial performance, as did support provided by organizations, foundations and individuals. Despite ongoing financial constraints resulting from the provincial funding model for colleges, Conestoga achieved annual financial surpluses from 2014 through 2017 by controlling operating expenditures and increasing revenue opportunities.

We will continue to build on this success as we invest in facilities, equipment and services that will provide a quality learning and working environment and help prepare students for successful futures.
SUSTAINABILITY Objectives for 2017-2020

ACHIEVE ECONOMIES OF SCALE AND ENHANCE REVENUES THROUGH ENROLMENT GROWTH AND INCREASED STUDENT RETENTION

We will continue to increase enrolment in high-demand areas by implementing new recruitment methodologies and expanding international recruitment into a broader range of countries and markets. Delivery of a quality learning experience, including a comprehensive range of support services tailored to student needs, will support retention and continued progress in graduation rates.

ENHANCE ENGAGEMENT WITH COLLEGE AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS TO SUPPORT THE ACHIEVEMENT OF OUR GOALS

We will launch new initiatives to increase public awareness of Conestoga’s role in supporting the prosperity and well-being of our community. Building on our strong relationships with student government, alumni, partners and stakeholders will support the development of programs, services and facilities and provide new opportunities for current and future students.

EFFECTIVELY MANAGE RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE SUSTAINABLE DELIVERY OF COLLEGE PROGRAMMING AND SERVICES

We will implement new approaches to further improve space and resource utilization across the college to support increased enrolment in existing facilities and create additional revenues. Our continued commitment to energy use reduction and waste diversion will lead to cost-savings and further reduce our carbon footprint.

EXPLORE AND ADVANCE REVENUE-GENERATING OPPORTUNITIES

We will continue to seek out new opportunities to increase revenues from ancillary operations and introduce new or enhanced services that will result in additional revenues to support the achievement of our goals.
12,500 full-time students
38,000 part-time course registrations/year
1,075 full-time employees
Campuses and training centres in Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge, Guelph, Stratford, Ingersoll and Brantford provide a growing number of students with local access to full-and part-time programming. Fall 2016 full-time enrolment of 12,500 represents a 67 per cent increase since 2008. Continuing education programs attract more than 38,000 enrolments each year.

As the region’s only provider of polytechnic education, Conestoga plays an integral role in the success of our community: 65 per cent of our graduates remain in the area after completing their education, contributing more than $2.3 billion each year to the local economy. Almost 55 per cent of the local adult population has accessed our services.

Conestoga delivers more than 200 career-focused programs, and is a leader in trades and apprenticeship training. The college delivers more career-focused degree programs than any other college outside of the Greater Toronto Area, including Ontario’s only college-based, accredited engineering degrees.

Our comprehensive programming meets the needs of a variety of learners, providing multiple entry points and established pathways to ensure that individuals across our community can access the education they need for their chosen careers. Articulation agreements with colleges and universities around the world provide our students with ready access to additional post-secondary opportunities.

Conestoga graduates contribute more than $2.3 billion each year to the local economy.
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Labs equipped with the latest technology, project-based courses, field and clinical experiences, international exchange, applied research and co-op opportunities engage our students as they learn to connect theory, research and practice. Our focus on technology-enhanced learning through online and mobile technologies ensures that students are prepared to excel in our increasingly digital world. Conestoga’s commitment to student success includes a full range of support and career advising services available to students throughout their learning journey.

Conestoga’s applied research initiative supports student learning and helps area businesses grow, innovate and improve their productivity. Conestoga is tri-council approved, eligible for funding from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). In 2015-16, almost 1,500 students were engaged in applied research projects.

Active community, industry and academic partnerships provide support for Conestoga students, programs and facilities. Approximately 1,000 community and business leaders provide input and direction on programming through participation on program advisory committees.

Conestoga has a proven track record of continuous improvement and success. Our students consistently achieve top honours in local, provincial and international competitions. Our graduate employment and graduate satisfaction rates are among the highest of all Ontario’s colleges. Our employer satisfaction rating exceeds 90 per cent.

As a true polytechnic, Conestoga is uniquely positioned to create value for our local community and for Ontario as the result of our commitment to the delivery of a comprehensive range of accessible, career-focused education and training programs that contribute to individual success, business competitiveness and regional prosperity.

Almost 55% of adults in the local community have studied or trained at Conestoga

More than 3,500 local businesses are owned by Conestoga graduates
Conestoga is a leader in polytechnic education, providing a full range of career-focused education, training and applied research programs to prepare students for success in the new knowledge economy and promote economic prosperity throughout our region and across Ontario.