

# BUSINESS PLAN

2020-2021



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**Mission: Educating students for career success**  
**Vision: Transforming lives and communities through learning**

**Executive Summary: Stability Mandate**

Grounded in the principles of community, global citizenship, environmental stewardship, inclusion and social justice, Centennial’s vision of **transforming lives and communities through learning** remains foundational to all that we do and are as an institution. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted how we do things – business operations, employee and student engagement and strategic planning – and what we do, including preparing the next generation of leaders and changemakers, partnering with industry, advancing applied research and training Ontario’s workforce.

While the first quarter of the 2020-21 fiscal year focused on swiftly pivoting to online teaching and remote working, the remainder of the year will be focused on stewarding the College through a process of reflecting on what we do and how we do things, in order to reimagine and implement strategic and operational approaches for restoring and recalibrating the College for a post-pandemic world. The following core objectives were established for stabilization:

- ▶ the health, safety and wellbeing of our Centennial College community;
- ▶ academic recalibration, continuance and student success;
- ▶ continuity of efficient and effective business operations; and
- ▶ financial sustainability (our North Star).

We are in a time of “unknown unknowns.” Unprecedented and ubiquitous change is upon us: the programs we offer, the learner experience we create, the pedagogy we deliver, the structures and systems we use, and the ways we finance our operations have all been turned on their heads. As a result, it has become increasingly clear that a renewed and focused agenda is required if we are to address such disruptions head-on and position Centennial College to thrive through the unpredictable world before us.

To say we are going through uncertain times is perhaps the understatement of the 21st century when it comes to COVID-19 and the implications of the global pandemic. Nevertheless, Centennial College has been working diligently to ensure utmost risk mitigation and assuring academic continuity. These themes underpin our revised and confidence-inspiring Business Plan for 2020-21.



The 3E Strategy – Optimize Enrolment, Bolster Employment and Facilitate Empowerment – and associated Wildly Important Goals (WIGs) were previously positioned to clarify the College’s Book of Commitments and focus resources while continuing to differentiate the College within the higher education landscape. WIGs within the 3E framework will endure as institutional drivers for the College’s 2020-21 Business Plan; however, they have been recalibrated to realize the aforementioned core outcomes for College stabilization – our priority.

Our plan includes significant effort towards business continuity practices in re-establishing our past successes, but also gives rise to a richer student experience and even more meaningful opportunities for our community. It is laden with student-centred initiatives to foster student and community engagement, resilience and success – despite the pandemic environment.

We have always touted the crucial role technology plays in today’s world with endeavors such as BringIT and Technology-Enhanced Learning environments, within which students develop emerging employability skills such as digital fluency. As a higher education leader, Centennial College was among the first to recognize the importance of online content development in responding to our new reality, and have launched or are in the process of launching 44 fully online programs. This will ensure academic continuance through the 2020-2021 academic year and beyond, providing flexible learning platforms and new opportunities for current and future students.

We will integrate simulation software and augmented and virtual reality solutions within several programs to enable delivery in lab-based and applied courses. Leading-edge virtual tours, open houses, information sessions, and staff summits are being developed and offered to prospective students, employers, donors and other partners worldwide – positioning Centennial as a college of choice for online learning.

We will leverage research, data analytics and new predictive modelling platforms in promoting data-driven decision-making across the College and adopt the findings from our Strategic Enrolment Monitoring (SEM) Review to propel our competitive advantage.



Recognizing these are bold, innovative and forward-thinking initiatives – and recognizing the power of harnessing resources to row together on the most efficacious goals – we have affectionately dubbed them Wildly Important Goals. Sub-WIGs with specific, measurable objectives reside in our divisional operating plans and will serve as the basis for performance evaluation.

The WIGs – developed within the 3E Strategy to Optimize Enrolment, Bolster Employment, and Facilitate Empowerment, and in consideration of the core outcomes for stabilization – will serve as waypoints through these uncharted waters and lead Centennial College into the next frontier.

### **Optimize Enrolment**

The College must leverage high-impact recruitment and conversion practices grounded in reputational strengths to optimize domestic<sup>1</sup> participation, while also maintaining intentional ratios of international students from an array of countries to facilitate purposeful learning relationships for true intercultural, global learning. Associated with the invitation to study is the College’s obligation to enable persistence and progression through evidence-based, proactive, responsive and timely student services and programs. The unique Centennial value proposition and quality of both the student experience and the learning environment are critical.

The College must also optimize enrolment by (a) diversifying international markets to mitigate current and future sociopolitical disruptions; (b) strengthening our domestic outreach, particularly as it relates to upskilling and microcredentials; and (c) activating alternative revenue streams through innovative and socially responsible business opportunities.

#### **Our WIGs aimed at optimizing enrolment include:**

- ▶ Ensuring academic program continuity to preserve student enrolment and program completion.
- ▶ Establishing academic programs fully accessible to students in the GTA, provincially, nationally and internationally.
- ▶ Leveraging innovative technologies to enable online delivery in lab-based and other applied courses.
- ▶ Pivoting and re-orienting the focus and framework of Centennial’s renewed Academic Plan to reflect the changed reality for our college, our students and the world of work.
- ▶ Establishing the highest quality health and safety standards for staff and students whose programs require on-campus experiential learning.
- ▶ Implementing relational, engaging, innovative and high-touch approaches to recruitment and conversion (which amplifies Centennial’s brand identity, positions the unique value proposition with online learning and the virtual campus, and incorporates flexibility with administrative requirements) in order to maximize domestic and international enrolment.
- ▶ Providing pandemic-specific financial and enrolment planning expertise to build evidence-based financial scenarios, and planning to support the College’s fiscal sustainability during uncertain times.

<sup>1</sup> Domestic (“backyard”) enrolment identified as key within a COVID world where reduced finances and increased workforce re-skilling need will be norms.

- ▶ Reviewing our Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) process to address the following questions: What should Centennial’s SEM goals be? What should governance structure and ongoing evaluation look like in order to ensure coordination and accountability for powerful and effective execution?
- ▶ Reimagining and recalibrating approaches for quality, delivery and scaffolding of services, programs and opportunities for in-person and virtual engagement – where navigation is clear, and that is oriented hierarchically with a strong information provision as a foundation and proactive and responsive retention strategies at the top.
- ▶ Incorporating specific learning outcomes in co-curricular programming related to emerging institutional data on online learning and internationalization to facilitate both opportunities for community connections and online engagement/motivation towards global, international and intercultural development.
- ▶ Executing the A-Block expansion to realize 137,500 square feet of new Indigenous-inspired learning and administrative space.
- ▶ Designing fundraising appeals and strategies to raise urgently needed monies for students to support the Centennial COVID-19 Relief Bursary Fund and other need-based bursaries.
- ▶ Continuing to develop and enhance the Predictor Model to include new measures that have emerged from the COVID experience, such as changes in IRCC legislation and program delivery options.
- ▶ Exploring options for joint and multi-country delivery of products, including online and microcredential products off campus in Canada and offshore with strategic partners globally.
- ▶ Implementing an International Reorganization effort to meet enrolment and diversity targets to reflect changes in regional markets, business continuity (emphasis on virtual recruitment), recovery and recruitment changes.



## Bolster Employment

Centennial students, many of whom come from historically marginalized and underserved populations, trust Centennial with their time and money, and expect that the Centennial credential will lead to meaningful work and transformed circumstances.

To this end, the College must (a) ensure the most accessible, engaging and immersive learning environment, where work-integrated and industry-connected learning are ubiquitous; (b) facilitate development of essential employability skills, including resilience, leadership and social justice; and (c) engage in meeting industry needs and solving industry problems, so that Centennial students are regarded as candidates of choice.

Increasing graduate employment in alignment with the Strategic Mandate Agreement (SMA3) and fostering a dynamic and fulfilling working environment are at the heart of the following WIGs:

- ▶ Develop new, flexible and accessible programs aligned with the future of work and emerging industry needs.
- ▶ Adapt our curriculum to reflect the new and disrupted reality across all sectors of industry and employment.
- ▶ Scaffold the New Essential Skills (NES) throughout our programs.
- ▶ Expand student opportunities to engage in Work-Integrated Learning (WIL), paving the way to employment and career success.
- ▶ Launch an employer-focused promotional campaign and partnership model anchored on the relationship, program and graduate levers to enhance pathways for student employment.
- ▶ Mobilize the uniqueness of “Centennialized” student leadership through the Student Leadership Passport to position students for career success and also as a key means of staying connected to the Centennial student community.
- ▶ Launch a research initiative to develop evidence-based career resilience interventions.
- ▶ Re-design a strategic Alumni Engagement Plan to draw students, new grads and alumni through virtual and digital opportunities.
- ▶ Develop and implement a small and medium-sized enterprise (SMEs) strategy, mobilising our research skills and capacity as well as our skills training to contribute to local economic recovery and development



- ▶ Engage with all levels of government to better understand the priorities and strategies being implemented for post-COVID-19 economic recovery and workforce development
- ▶ Develop a collaborative, multi-faceted industry engagement strategy, including targeted outreach, virtual events and digital marketing campaigns
- ▶ Pursue external grants to fund new Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) opportunities
- ▶ Enable data-driven decision-making and institution-wide collaboration through the implementation of Industry Partner Profile Database and annual Industry Partner Survey
- ▶ Expand Solv. services in response to COVID-19 related industry needs and opportunities
- ▶ Continue to grow Solv. Sector Sessions through virtual platforms to bring together industry, government, community, academics and students to engage in cross-sectoral dialogue informing the College on the industry needs and future of work trends

### Facilitate Empowerment

A truly integrated learning community, with a positive culture and climate, supports not only individual, interpersonal and institutional health, but also translates to experiences that let our students thrive.

As a learning-centred college, Centennial will balance our focus on measurable results (high-quality and data-informed, with shared responsibility and accountability), processes (orientation towards life-wide and life-long learning and professional development for staff, values- and experiential-based decision-making, engagement and empowerment, celebrated accomplishments, and where total health matters), and relationships (where common values permeate and all members experience mattering and belonging).

**The following WIGs will facilitate empowerment and increase student, employee and community engagement:**

- ▶ Instill a clear understanding of empowerment and its foundation for our culture across our college and among all members of our community.
- ▶ Launch empowerment circles in support of more institution-wide, cross-leadership engagement where ideas and issues are explored, debated and developed for implementation.
- ▶ Foster the development of a cohesive, permeating and clear Centennial College community identity based on values that surfaced during the SEM review, the new post-pandemic brand identity and the unique value proposition for students.
- ▶ Actualize our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation in education through the development of learning opportunities for students, faculty and staff.



- ▶ Respond to systemic racism both across the college and within our community through active engagement with external partnerships and robust initiatives supporting education, awareness and governance practices.
- ▶ Redesign a performance management program aligned to the 3Es and based on a balance of institutional goals realized and personal objectives achieved.
- ▶ Leverage the feedback from the Employee Engagement survey and the student and staff wellness pulse surveys to deliver on institutional initiatives that encourage engagement, as well as support departmental initiatives to foster local alignment.
- ▶ Launch the Centennial Health and Wellness 2.0 Framework, which builds on foundations of wellness, including a library of resources aligned to the Total Health Index model, series of wellness huddles and departmental initiatives that support physical and psychological wellbeing during and post pandemic for our staff and students.
- ▶ Through robust workforce planning, identify and implement cost saving strategies to support financial sustainability and the staffing of pressure points across the college.
- ▶ Execute a robust telework program that enables agile work, both during the pandemic (at each phase) and after – thus freeing up College real estate for reimagined and revenue-generating use.
- ▶ Continue to expand our outreach and engagement via social media using a variety of approaches to ensure our messages are reaching the appropriate audiences, while facilitating two-way communication. Provide weekly “event” coverage and timely information, as well as day-in- the-life coverage of the College, painting a rich picture of the Centennial experience.
- ▶ Elevate the profile of the College’s President on social media, to better connect the President to communities, students, employers, and other stakeholders and partners.
- ▶ Execute initial steps in the development of a holistic Food Services Engagement Plan.
- ▶ Continue commitment to our Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) strategy known as BringIT.
- ▶ Expand the Donor Funded Scholarship Program to empower students to succeed.
- ▶ Execute against Accounts Receivable Revitalization Project.
- ▶ Continue execution of the Information Technology Service Review (ITSR).
- ▶ Execute against the Cyber Security Maturity Assessment conducted by Deloitte.



## Conclusion

The Wildly Important Goals represent a novel approach to business planning at Centennial College – prompted by feedback from the College community to do fewer goals well, and the pandemic context that has awakened the importance of focusing precious resources of time, energy and money on items that truly matter for stabilization. These core objectives were identified as:

- ▶ the health, safety and wellbeing of our Centennial College community;
- ▶ academic recalibration, continuance and student success;
- ▶ continuity of efficient and effective business operations; and
- ▶ financial sustainability (our North Star).

All corners of the College must “row together” to emerge from the stormy waters of the global pandemic. Indeed, we have already seen from Winter 2020 and Summer 2020 semesters the transformative power when the Centennial community collaborates on focused goals. Retooled online programs, a novel suite of emergency bursaries, and new systems and administrative processes all launched – quickly and effectively – thanks to the collaboration, ingenuity and motivation of the Centennial community.

Our 3E Strategy – Optimize Enrolment, Bolster Employment and Facilitate Empowerment – provides a cogent framework to orient our collective energy. The 3Es serve as steadfast pillars to realize our vision of transforming lives and communities through learning – which our people and communities need of us through the pandemic and on the other side. As always, Centennial will continue to rise to the challenge in our pursuit to enrich lives across Ontario, nationally and internationally. Now, not “after,” is the time for bold strategic moves.



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