



X COLLEGE 2021/23 STRATEGIC PLAN

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Mission Statement	3
X College Philosophy	3
Background – Review	3
What makes the college competitive?	3
Goals - 2021 to 2023	5
Review of Growth and Successes - 2016 to 2020.....	6
Successes - Highlights from 2016 to 2020.....	6
Areas of Focus (Weaknesses) and Opportunities/Risks 2021 to 2023.....	7
<i>#1 FOCUS AREA - School Vision, Mission and Values - Medium Priority</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>#2 FOCUS AREA - Program and Curriculum – Relevance to Needs of the Job Market.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>#3 FOCUS AREA - Human Resources - Policies – Medium Priority.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>#4 FOCUS AREA - Review of Staffing Structure - High Priority</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>#5 FOCUS AREA - Staff Satisfaction and Retention - High Priority.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>#6 FOCUS AREA - Consistency in Instructional Standards -High Priority.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>#7 FOCUS AREA - Program Review – Current and New Programs – Medium Priority.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>#8 FOCUS AREA - Target/Client Group - Low Priority for International Students</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>#9 FOCUS AREA - Training Mandate of College – Medium Priority.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>#10 FOCUS AREA - School Image – How Clients View College - High Priority.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>#11 FOCUS AREA - Quality Assurance – High Priority.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>#12 FOCUS AREA - Student Attraction and Retention -High Priority.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>#13 FOCUS AREA - Community Relationship Building – Low priority.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>#14 FOCUS AREA – Learning Model – Medium Priority.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>#15 FOCUS AREA – Financial Stability and Growth -High Priority</i>	<i>19</i>
Summary	19

Introduction

Mission Statement

The current mission statement states what the college is doing currently to achieve its goals:

At X College, we are committed to offering our students in-demand programs and courses for today's economy.

X College Philosophy

We were founded on the principle of providing the best possible education to tomorrow's leaders in healthcare and business.

Our experienced instructors and comprehensive practicums give our graduates the real-world experience they need to start their new careers. All the courses we teach and the tools with which we train our students reflect the current best practices of their related industries.

Our programs include practicums or work placements in Calgary-area businesses and organizations. These practicums help students practice their skills in real-world environments, build connections within their industry, and develop the confidence they need to find a job in their field of training after graduation.

We have empowered hundreds of students to transform their futures.

Background – Review

What makes the college competitive?

X college has an attractive portfolio of various programs in many fields of employment training.

We currently offer a Pharmacy Assistant Diploma program, a Retail Management program, Bridging program for International Pharmacy graduates and other technical courses. Our main course offering is the Pharmacy Assistant Diploma program. This program is approved by Alberta Advanced Education. It was started in 2015 as a certificate program and became a diploma program in 2016. This 340 hour/16 week program duration combines 13 weeks of classroom training, with a 3

week practicum. Since 2015 we have had over 100 graduates from the Pharmacy Assistant Diploma program.

In addition to these courses, we are currently working with regulating agencies to develop more programs for our learners in 2019 - 2021. Some examples of courses include Medical Office Assistant/Unit Clerk, Business Administration Diploma and Certificate, Early Childhood Educator, Massage Therapy, and First Aid Courses.

Our programs are 2 – 3 months shorter than other colleges but offer a competitive standard of training as other colleges. The competitive advantage is a result of offering efficient course strategies with online self-study, asynchronous components such as the soft skills and essential skills courses that students are able to complete on a self-paced basis.

Our community of learners is a diverse population that reflects the multicultural make up of Canada. New immigrants seek out the Canadian experience and skills that employers are looking for when hiring employees. Immigrants as well as native Canadians recognize the need for career training in order to move beyond minimum wage jobs that do not offer job security and opportunities for advancement. X College provides the respect, support and cultural understanding that this target group needs in order to succeed in completing their training and transition to careers in Canada.

Diversity and inclusion strategies are embedded in the approach to hiring staff. A high percentage of the faculty and staff reflect the diversity of the student population. Understanding and valuing the diverse perspectives of the college faculty and staff also promote the inclusive approach to learning that is highly valued in Canadian and global workplace culture.

An important area of success is the personal rapport with students that encourages an open-door policy for feedback from staff and students. The staff and management have created a workplace culture that celebrates successes and accomplishments not only of students but also those of staff. Staff are encouraged and supported to work collaboratively and to work in a respectful, collaborative environment. The college teamwork inspires the college's efforts to constantly improve and find opportunities to grow. Staff are rewarded for their commitment and efforts to achieve excellence.

The College is committed to ongoing internal reviews to achieve and maintain relevance in training that will keep up with and anticipate trends in careers that are

in demand. The college has committed to continually developing the capacity of staff to deliver a high standard of instruction by exploring and implementing instructional tools that keep up with learning trends as well as continually refreshing curriculum with relevant and emerging content that support industry standards and needs. This commitment to excellence through ongoing internal and external reviews is key to maintaining a healthy and sustainable college.

The strategic plan that follows will outline the current state of the college as well as the areas upon which the college has determined it will need to focus. Action items will be identified in response to the focus areas identified. SWOT analysis – Successes, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats is the process that has been used.

Goals - 2021 to 2023

Our goal is to achieve program outcomes that will lead to direct employment for our graduates in their field of training.

The following are the broad goals that will support our college objectives that will support students' achievements through strong college practices and operations:

1. Vision and values statements that reflect college philosophy
2. Increased student attraction and retention
3. Financial stability – steady growth towards increased profitability
4. Stable teaching staff
5. Excellence in instructional design and delivery
6. High student morale and achievement
7. High staff morale and teamwork
8. Broader student base that includes ESL/immigrant/International students
9. Expanded program offerings to keep up with current and future training needs

Review of Growth and Successes - 2016 to 2020

Successes - Highlights from 2016 to 2020

In 2016-2017 (reporting period April 1 to March 30), our employment rate with Alberta Advanced Education was 71%. Finally, we have a large network of employers who are keen to hire our graduates in many fields like pharmacies, medical centers, retail stores, Alberta Health Services, nursing homes, and other related businesses.

The Pharmacy Assistant Program accounts for 75% of our revenue; this is the flagstone program for the college that has been developed to a high standard and has generated graduates that are well received in the Pharmacy community. This program reflects trends and needs in the health sector and responds to demands in workplace. The Foreign Trained Pharmacist Program is also a well-received program although it is not eligible for students to access for Alberta and Canada Student Loan funding.

In 2020, the college submitted an application to Alberta Learning under the Integrated Foundational Pathways Program to offer an ESL program to Immigrant learners who do not have high enough English language competency and academic skills for entry into career training programs such as those offered at X College. Approval of this program will add another pathway for entrance into the college career programs.

Staffing at the college has had to adapt to the ups and downs of financial realities during the pandemic that started to affect the economy in 2019. There has been a move towards restructuring in order to be more efficient and sustainable. The college has recently hired a part time Financial Adviser and a Program Coordinator to add more support services for our students. Recruitment for additional positions is ongoing.

A 360 review was conducted to prepare for the development of a strategic plan that would focus and guide the direction of the college towards growth in all areas of operations. The following are the results of the review and the recommendations that staff and faculty have proposed to move the college towards growth and excellence in training. The objective of this endeavour is to guide the college towards supporting and empowering students and staff to succeed. The following are the areas of focus that the 360-review survey identified:

Areas of Focus (Weaknesses) and Opportunities/Risks 2021 to 2023

#1 FOCUS AREA - School Vision, Mission and Values - Medium Priority

Objective

- To work on Vision and Values statement. Mission statement has already been developed and is online.
- To review the statements and change any of them to meet the current school plans
- To ensure that we have a complete plan for the next 3-5 years

When

- By Sept 2021

How - Action Items

- Plan staff meetings to review how the school is going to move forward
- Plan yearly review of college operations and program delivery that includes staff and management that will inform strategic plan updates that will move the college forward to reach the business and strategic goals.

Opportunities and Threats - What to Consider

The current mission statement might benefit from a stronger statement about the influence on students. A suggestion would be to add the word “empower” as follows:

“At X College we empower students to transform their futures by offering in-demand programs and courses for today's economy.”

Vision Statement

The development of the vision statement is one of the objectives for the future.

The vision statement will be the guiding inspiration for strategies undertaken to drive the operation of the college into the future.

The vision is the core that germinates what the college ideally wants to achieve.

An example of a vision statement projects ideals that contribute to the future success of the college. A sample of a vision statement for the college is the following:

Our vision at X College is to empower students to achieve successful and

rewarding careers because of the excellent training and practicum opportunities that we provide.

During the development of the vision statement, the employees and management will test it against the following questions:

- Does it communicate why we exist?
- Is it tangible?
- Will it inspire our people?
- Can it be easily memorized?

Values Statement:

The values statement will be developed as one of the objectives for the 2020/21 business year.

The Values that are expressed in this statement will define the organization's culture and identity.

Values are the core principles that underscore how all college associates serve clients and as a result, how clients experience these values through each service and product that the clients receive.

The question that will guide the development of the values statement will be “How do we do what we do?”

There should be no more than 4 values stated that are action-oriented words or phrases such as:

Diversity, Empowerment, Student Success, Professional Integrity, Excellence in Training, Transparency etc.

The values that are developed will be tested against the following questions:

- Can your people translate them into actions?
- Are they tangible?
- Can they be easily memorized?

#2 FOCUS AREA - Program and Curriculum – Relevance to Needs of the Job Market

Objective

- To keep up with trends in skills training for current and future job market.
- To set up a process and structure for regular curriculum review with a team

of instructors

When

- By Sept 2021

How – Action Items

- Set up a system for annual review for all programs to meet market's expectation and new learning modules
- Develop a review committee for each program from market expert and let them review our program on regular basis

Opportunities and Threats - What to Consider

- IT skills programs seem to be limited offerings at X . It would be recommended to explore the trends in IT administrative jobs and consider introducing relevant IT skills training programs.
- Retail (RA) and Administrative (AP) could be revised to target online customer service training – Support services training or Chain Management training such as the positions advertised and in demand for employers who have online retail business such as Amazon.
- Perhaps review the curriculum of ELCC to specialize in different areas of education e.g., ESL support, behavioural support, special needs support.
- CSW is a great addition for the current health care crisis.
- HCA would be a great addition however, Alberta Health has put a moratorium on approving licenses to new HCA training programs. The status of the moratorium should be explored.

#3 FOCUS AREA - Human Resources - Policies – Medium Priority

Objective

- To update HR policies

When

- By Sept 2021

How – Action Items

- Update the HR policy manual for areas that need to be added or updated
- Engage the HR team to work with an HR agency to help to develop a

manual that covers our work needs

Opportunities and Threats - What to Consider

- Some research and comparison with other private school policies could be conducted and checked against Canadian and Alberta employment law. The staff contracts would be the first step in setting the basics for the HR policy manual.
- The current procedure for onboarding looks like a great process and should be outlined in the HR manual. This would really help the new employees see what is going to be done in the first week or so.

#4 FOCUS AREA - Review of Staffing Structure - High Priority

Objective

- To ensure that the college has enough resources to assist our faculty and students

When

- In progress

How – Action Items

- Create an organizational chart
- Determine which positions are relevant, which can be combined and turned into full time, and identify what additional services are missing for current and future needs

Opportunities and Threats - What to Consider

Sales and marketing team:

- The staffing may require more than one full time person on the sales team. If the school moves forward with ESL and International student recruitment, then the second person should have a background in recruiting International students.
- Compensation structure for the sales team member could be reviewed.

Department coordination/management:

- The addition of an Education Manager/Coordinator or Department

Head/Instructor for each program area would be an important addition when the student numbers increase, and the budget allows.

- Designating a Program Coordinator or when there are multiple classes. A Program Manager would bring continuity and emphasis on educational quality control.
- These additional positions could be added gradually as the school student population grows.
- Since the main source of revenue is in the Pharmacy Program area, then there should be a designated Pharmacy Program Coordinator.
- It would be suggested that the job descriptions be reviewed if there is a restructuring of positions.

Financial Advisor and Student Support Services:

- The Financial Advisor position could eventually be broadened to include other support services such as student wellness.

Review compensation to be more competitive and to attract qualified staff that will commit to long term employment:

- The current payment structure will attract the staff that will support and define academic excellence. However, if possible, try to pay higher to come closer to public school rates that start at \$35 to \$60 per hour.
- Columbia College offers higher range according to educational qualifications. They can make as much as \$60 per hour.
- It is suggested that the college offer \$25 to start and \$30 to \$35 after 6 months to encourage retention.

#5 FOCUS AREA - Staff Satisfaction and Retention - High Priority

Objective

- To increase our retention rate to 80% in 2021

When

- ASAP

How – Action Items

- Continue with a 3-month satisfaction survey that has been adopted for all employees and to listen carefully to their feedback about different work aspects
- Implement this 3-month satisfaction survey with faculty
- Implement a complain/ideas box, so staff and students can leave their feedback anonymously for us

Opportunities and Threats - What to Consider

- Staff Retention rate is 50% for 2020 due to COVID – 19. It would be recommended that the college explore what are the other factors may be contributing to this turnover such as low wages, part time contracts, limited benefits.
- 50% turnover is high. It does not build confidence in students if instructors keep changing. \$19 per hour is an exceptionally low rate of pay for subject matter experts. It would be suggested that the college look at profit margins to increase wages to recruit instructors that you will be able to retain.

*#6 FOCUS AREA - Consistency in Instructional Standards -High Priority***Objective**

- To review the instructional evaluation process

When

- Before end of 2021

How – Action Items

- Seek and engage external assistance from an expert
- Review the instructional evaluation process leading to the creation of an instructional manual that defines the college standards and expectations for excellence for instruction
- Review the online learning platform and online instructional guide

Opportunities and Threats - What to Consider

- The level of knowledge and skills of instructors in delivering that reflects solid adult education principles and the ability to manage and deliver an

online learning system is what will attract and retain students.

- Data collection and student monitoring tools are important for instructors and students to track student progress and evaluate the support that students need to be successful in their programs of study.
- Online learning will be around for a long time even when the educational sector returns to the new normal after COVID-19. Therefore, a LMS platform is not enough to ensure quality and consistency in online instructional practices. An online instructional manual and guide is recommended. Attached is a document that could be reviewed and adapted for a college online instructor manual.

#7 FOCUS AREA - Program Review – Current and New Programs – Medium Priority

Objective

- To add 3-5 programs every year to our programs list

When

- Ongoing

How - Action Items

- Continue to develop We already working on 3 programs 3 year and making progress.
 - ELCC
 - ESL
 - CSW
- Hire a program developer for VOA
- Research needs and trends for the “New Normal” in post-secondary education.
- Cooperate with other private schools outside Alberta to exchange experience and programs to save resources for developing new programs

Opportunities and Threats - What to Consider

- Keep and promote the Programs that define the success of the college
- The Pharmacy Assistant Program accounts for 75% of our revenue. This is a really great program. It fits into the trends and needs in the workplace.

Your foreign trained pharmacist program is also a great program and I am not sure why it is not getting funding. Perhaps this can be explored.

#8 FOCUS AREA - Target/Client Group - Low Priority for International Students

Objective

- To develop the capacity to provide programs to attract International Students

When

- End of 2021

How – Action Items

- Market to International students when the college has the capacity to do so.
- Research programs that would appeal to an International market
- Create an online EAP transitions to career programs for International students that can be taught completely online
- Assign project to an expert who worked on the international application before offering this program to students
- Broaden the target groups to other communities

Opportunities and Threats - What to Consider

- The Canadian government has indicated that recruitment of International students is vital to ensure the economic health of the Canadian economy. International students are also important to Canada as they will contribute to the stability of the Canadian population and consequently will ensure the sustainability of a healthy economy.
- The college may be overlooking an important and substantial source of income by not marketing to international students. IRCC policies have changed to encourage more international students to come to Canada with easier access to Permanent Residence status. This is an area that I would strongly suggest that you explore
- Once there is an ESL component, you may want to broaden the range of communities to which that the college markets and recruits in order to attract

a more diverse population locally and internationally.

#9 FOCUS AREA - Training Mandate of College – Medium Priority

Objective

- To provide students with soft skills that our programs are currently missing

When

- End of 2021

How – Action Items

- Develop a one week noncredit soft skills for new students that includes Soft Skills training and add Essential Skills training
- Develop an online learning model in a recorded, self-directed format that can be completed by the student on their own time and reviewed and marked by the instructor as the student submits assignments

Opportunities and Threats - What to Consider

- With the majority of students from different cultures, soft skills are extremely important for job retention. I would suggest that students join an orientation week that focuses on essential skills training that reflects what the government is promoting as an important part of preparation for work. There could be an orientation week that combines new students from all programs. Students are skeptical about shorter programs that are not aligned with other schools.
- Essential skills give students an understanding of the types of basic skills that students from different backgrounds are expected to demonstrate at the college and the workplace. Essential Skills also address study skills and how to work with teams. You can also address working in an online environment.

#10 FOCUS AREA - School Image – How Clients View College - High Priority

Objective

- To relocate our campus to a new location by May 2021 to accommodate all the new programs and be closer to the public transit

When

- We are already working on the deal now

How – Action Items

- To complete the move to a new location that will double the size of our existing campus with better access to LRT station in NE area where most of the students are coming from.

Opportunities and Threats - What to Consider

- Even though the online training will be a reality for a long time, this may be a good time to secure a space that has lower rent that you can lock into and be available for students who may need a space for lab and hands-on instruction.

#11 FOCUS AREA - Quality Assurance – High Priority

OBJECTIVE:

- To have regular feedback about our services

WHEN

- 2021

HOW – Action Items

- The existing system will be reviewed to be more effective in evaluating program and faculty performance.

Opportunities and Threats - What to Consider

- HR to develop student and instructor assessment/satisfaction surveys. Create tools to determine the best quantitative results that would give students competitive advantage. Quantitative Results are more attractive to students. Rapport is a great to attract student, but all schools make this statement. Perhaps instead of anecdotal comments, there needs to be an independent, data driven review of the results.

#12 FOCUS AREA - Student Attraction and Retention -High Priority

Objective

- To identify and implement more strategies to attract students during the pandemic restrictions that are limiting access to a classroom

When

- Initiatives are in place to work on this area.

How – Action Items

- Continue working on the incentive program and it is providing good number of applications

- Proceed as planned with a planning committee for new programs for 2020/21 that has selected 4 programs for this fiscal year
- Continue to work on converting more programs to be online to fit more the new norm after COVID -19

Opportunities and Threats - What to Consider

- The market now is not in need of new pharmacists and the gov is not looking to fund them for now.
- IFP program if approved will fill this gap and attract students who have finished LINC.
- Consider an alumni newsletter and referral incentives
- Set up a marketing strategy committee

#13 FOCUS AREA - Community Relationship Building – Low priority

Objective

- To continue developing employer relationships for practicums as we do not have the experience to work B-B in addition to the competition with the public sector

Opportunities and Threats - What to Consider

- There are at least three more schools that have recently started up that are focused on one ethnic group. Students like to see a variety of students from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds that include native born Canadians from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.
- Marketing to International students would be a target strategy when there is opportunity based on resources, college capacity as well as economic climate and government policies.
- If approved, the IFP Alberta Works program will attract a more diverse student population.

#14 FOCUS AREA – Learning Model – Medium Priority

Objective:

- To review and strength the current learning model; online and blended learning

When

- Ongoing

How – Action Items

- As there are limited funds at the moment, we will continue to work with current LMS system and use recoded lessons for efficiency

Opportunities and Threats - What to Consider

- The current LMS is poor in design and operation. We need to invest in a new one, but we do not have enough resources to do that transition for the mean time
- The LMS is a particularly important investment as it will be a reality for a long time. When possible, the school can look at what other schools are using. Even ZOOM is better for direct instruction but not for tracking work and marks. Perhaps D2L Brightspace or Moodle would be good alternatives.

Program Delivery:

- Online is the future of education and training. However, not all students are attracted to online learning. The school can set up AHS COVID-19 protocols and the programs could be reviewed to determine which courses or lessons need to be done in class such as lab work for PT and PCA programs.
- Blended learning would attract domestic students with some online and some in-classroom settings.
- Flexible schedules require self directed online courses but there must be some office hours for instructors during these flexible schedules to reach out and get guidance.
- A best practice for online course delivery could be added to an instructor manual. A document that outlines best practices for online curriculum development and instruction is included in this report.
- Perhaps investigate another location now that rents are really low in order to get more exposure and easier access. Even though the online training will be a reality for a long time, this may be a good time to secure a space that has lower rent that you can lock into and be available for students who may

need a space for lab and hands-on instruction.

#15 FOCUS AREA – Financial Stability and Growth -High Priority

Objective:

- Steady growth to sustain financial stability in the short and long term.

When:

- High/Ongoing

How – Action Items

- To work on a financial budget plan that is not part of this strategic plan
- To review the current budget and revise according to the projected addition of new programs, additional resources required and set financial targets

Opportunities and Threats - What to Consider

- Financial targets are missing in this strategic plan as they pertain to the financial cost analysis and financial forecasts.
- Whereas the profit for X College overall will be reasonable, there are certain issues that must be addressed. What is needed is a long-term view of revenue and expenses that will take into account delays in program approvals and roll out.
- Key performance indicators will be identified in project plans for each project that will evolve from the implementation of this strategic plan. These are management driven projects that will relate back to the financial forecasts in the Financial Budget plan.

Summary

During waves of low employment as a result of a downturn in the economy, one of the opportunities that emerges for unemployed or underemployed individuals is the opportunity for retraining for career areas that surface as in demand areas of employment. This is the case during the current unfortunate downturn in the economy brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

X College has been proactive in assessing the current economic landscape and the careers sectors for which industry will need trained individuals. As a result, more programs that meet the employment demands of the economy are being developed. The resources and projects that will be needed to support the new

program offerings have been identified in this strategic plan. The following is a summary of the focus areas that the 360-review identified.

These support the broad goals of the college:

High Priority Focus Areas

- #4 Review of Staffing Structure
- #5 Staff Satisfaction and Retention
- #6 Consistency in Instructional Standards
- #10 School Image – How Clients View College
- #11 Quality Assurance
- #12 Student Attraction and Retention
- #15 Financial Stability and Growth

Medium Priority Focus Areas

- #1 School Vision, Mission and Values
- #2 Program and Curriculum – Relevance to Needs in the Job Market
- #3 Human Resources - Policies
- #7 Program Review – Current and New Programs
- #9 Training Mandate of College
- #14 Learning Model

Low Priority Focus Areas

- #8 Target/Client Group - International Students
- #13 Community Relationship Building

The college has identified action items that are achievable in varying degrees of priority. The related projects will ensure a steady growth and keep the college from overextending the college's finances. This strategy will provide a solid foundation on which to build the growth strategies that have been articulated very well by staff and management.