



# In Front of What's Ahead

STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2026



## A message from the President and Board Chair



The future is calling – and Red River College Polytechnic stands ready to answer that call. RRC Polytech is well-positioned to face the challenges of tomorrow by adapting quickly to change, delivering education at the cutting edge and reconciling a broken trust in an education system with roots in a colonial past.

Fuelled by confidence and ambition, we are charting a bold new course into the future by getting In Front of What's Ahead – the theme of our strategic plan for 2022-2026.



Our strengths have always been our exceptional staff, diverse students, outstanding programs and deep ties with industry. For more than 80 years, these advantages have helped us produce the job-ready graduates that Manitoba's employers need – and to generate innovation, through applied research, that drives our industries forward.

But the passing decades have introduced new challenges, from technological disruption to social and environmental change. The pace of change is accelerating – which means we must act now. Never before have we encountered a more urgent need to shape and follow a clear, bold, strategic direction.

Meeting the priorities described in this plan will better prepare us to embrace disruption and protect our economy and our climate, and will allow RRC Polytech to grow in the years ahead. Indigenous perspectives on sustainability and stewardship remind us of the importance of making decisions that have a positive impact on the next seven generations. The objectives we establish in our new plan will serve as our north star, guiding us to plan with those future generations in mind.

### HERE'S HOW.

By leaning into our strengths in polytechnic education, we will grow in pace with the needs of our students, our society and our economy. Together, we are transforming today's workforce into a force for change.

By building greater flexibility into our operations and learning models, we will evolve quickly to meet workforce training and re-skilling demands, meet students where they're at, and create lasting outcomes for our College, our community and each other.

By tightening our ties across all sectors of industry, including new and emerging fields, we will maintain a direct sightline on the horizon ahead, and leverage our research and development strengths into innovation with global impact.

By embedding Truth and Reconciliation, equity, diversity and inclusion into every aspect of our work, we will shape a more vibrant future within the RRC community and across Manitoba.

We are grateful for the passion, hard work and insight of the students, employees, partners and stakeholders who helped shape this plan over the past several months. Thanks to you, we have a clear roadmap to follow in the years ahead – one that aligns us all in common cause.

The pace of change we have witnessed in recent years has taught us that we must stay nimble and adjust our path so that we stay focused on the destination ahead. Now, we call upon all members of the RRC Polytech community to take the next step forward with us and transform our vision into a reality.

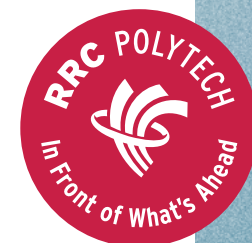
We know we can count on you to help us lead the way.

#### **Fred Meier**

**PRESIDENT AND CEO**  
Red River College Polytechnic

#### **Loren Cisyk**

**CHAIR, BOARD OF GOVERNORS**  
Red River College Polytechnic





## A message from the Elders-in-Residence



Elder Paul Guimond



Elder Una Swan

Over the past few decades, the dedication, foresight and leadership of the Elders and Knowledge Keepers that have worked with Red River College Polytechnic have provided the strong foundation for the Indigenous perspectives and reconciliation work that the College has embedded within it today. This foundation is critical for the advancement of Indigenous inclusion and equity, methodology and curriculum development, as well as respectful and meaningful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples within the College community.

Each Elder has brought with them a lifetime of experiences, stories, ceremonial gifts and lessons they've collected – each a rarity unto themselves. We recognize these distinct perspectives are not all-encompassing of Indigenous beliefs and ways of knowing, but represent microcosms of many nations on these lands that have created layers of organizational and belief system shifts.

The consultation process that has occurred leading into this Strategic Plan has been led by Paul Guimond, Okonace (Little Eagle Bone), from Sagkeeng First Nation, and Ms. Una Swan, Black Eagle Woman, from Fisher River Cree Nation, but they also wish to acknowledge and thank the Elders that have come before that have advocated, educated and shared of themselves, their knowledge and their gifts so generously.

Along with sparking movement towards Indigenization within classrooms and boardrooms, and impacting the personal and spiritual development of many students and staff, Elders who have worked with RRC Polytech have advocated for the cultural spaces that allow for ceremony to occur, including the Medicine Wheel Garden, sweat lodge, teepees and the Indigenous Student Support Centres.

It's within this spirit of advocacy and speaking truths with integrity, reciprocity, love and respect that Elders move RRC Polytech forward towards reconciliation, which simultaneously and equally can only occur where Elders are being utilized to assist in the process of inclusion, policy and strategy development, breaking down systemic barriers and integrating Indigenous knowledge and teachings.

RRC Polytech acknowledges that many Elders not only carry the living histories, teachings and stories of their ancestors, but in many different ways, act as a gateway between other worlds as they seek guidance for what is asked of them, bringing their deep spiritual relationships and gifts with them throughout their work at the College. These values and personal sacrifices by Elders cannot adequately be thanked and recognized, but RRC Polytech is committed to reciprocity and, through intentional consultation, ensuring Elders take their seat at the strategic planning table.

Chii Miigwetch (thank you) to Mae Louise Campbell, Jules Lavallee, Levinia Brown, Jocelyne Pambrun and Mark Thomas, along with the many visiting Elders who have left their mark on RRC Polytech.

**Elder Paul Guimond**  
**ELDER-IN-RESIDENCE**  
Red River College Polytechnic

**Elder Una Swan**  
**ELDER-IN-RESIDENCE**  
Red River College Polytechnic

# We're a polytechnic.

At the heart of Turtle Island, in the place where the Red and Assiniboine rivers join, Red River College Polytechnic is taking a bold step forward in a spirit of partnership, respect and shared opportunity. This new five-year strategic plan maps out the path we must follow to meet a future of disruption head on, and lead the change we want to see in this province.

For more than 80 years, students have come to RRC Polytech to prepare for what lies ahead. By working on the cusp of what Manitoba needs next, our evolution from a community college to a college of applied learning has helped us grow into the polytechnic we are today.

In this age of ever-increasing disruption, however, we need to do more than keep up: we must *get ahead* of what's coming next.

Manitoba businesses have identified an urgent, ongoing need to attract and retain qualified, job-ready employees. People with modern skills and certifications. People who have gained new skills in emerging technologies. People who can think creatively and critically. People who can contribute on day one, and are poised for leadership opportunities in the future.

No post-secondary institution better prepares people to meet those needs for Manitoba than RRC Polytech.

Students have always been at the centre of our work – and the strongest measure of our success. As tomorrow's innovators, professionals, leaders and change-makers, they come to us for high-quality programs and work-integrated learning experiences that prepare them for a constantly changing world. When they graduate, they know they're ready to hit the ground running – and so do their employers. In fact, we produce the highest proportion of job-ready graduates of Manitoba's leading post-secondary institutions.

Our success has been built on strong, dynamic partnerships – with communities, industry, employers and applied research partners. Our partners want to work with us because of our ability to solve problems, train talent and respond nimbly and meaningfully to disruption and labour market needs.

At RRC Polytech, we thrive on the cutting edge. Through our exceptional employees, we embrace disruption, diversity, new technology, traditional knowledge and emerging fields to overcome the challenges facing our communities and our world. And we look to our past to understand the role we must play in building a better tomorrow.

As an educational institution, that means we acknowledge the colonial history of this country and our part in it. Our campuses are located on Treaty One territory – the original lands of the Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota and Dene Peoples, and the homeland of the Métis Nation. As we embark upon this strategic plan, we commit ourselves to renewing our relationship with Indigenous Peoples and advancing Truth and Reconciliation in all of our actions, with all our industry and employer partnerships, and in everything we do.



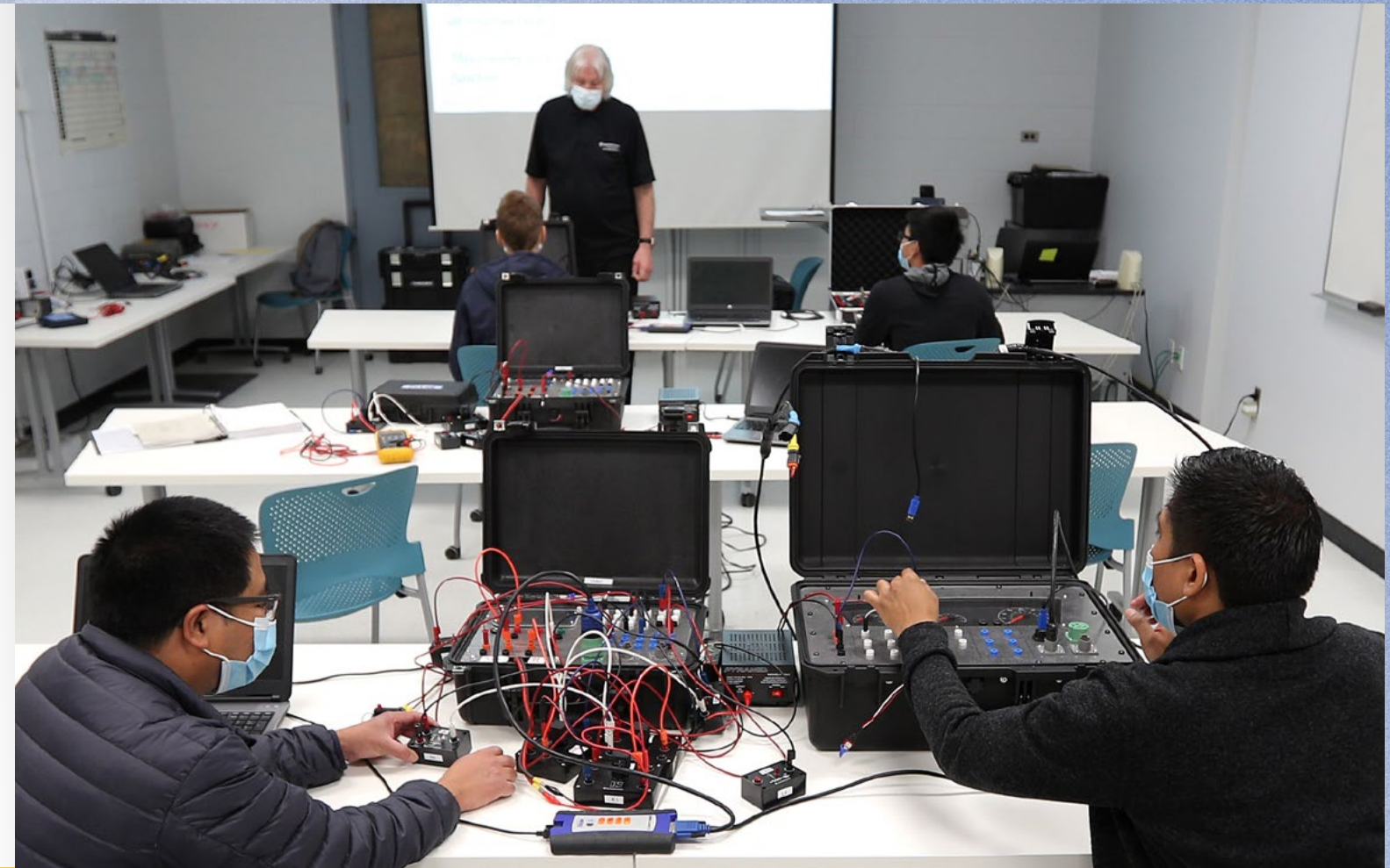
# Manitoba's Polytechnic

RRC Polytech has successfully fulfilled its purpose in the province for decades. But even we aren't immune to disruption. Across Canada, technological, environmental and social change continues to radically transform labour markets. The way we work is constantly evolving. In every industry, jobs are changing, disrupted by new technologies and the demand for new skills.

Driven by our strong ties to industry, we know what's around the corner – because we're already there.

As we embark upon the journey of our new strategic plan, we are beginning with a bold first step: embracing our identity as RRC Polytech.

This new name reflects our evolution into a specific kind of post-secondary institution that blends deep, theoretical learning with applied, hands-on experience. It highlights the important role our graduates will play in growing Manitoba's economy as our province recovers from the pandemic and looks to the future.



The term *polytechnic* is used around the world to describe institutions that focus on strategic workforce development enhanced by strong applied research capacity. Unique in Manitoba, our educational model combines a wide variety of credentialed programs (from micro-credentials to degree programs), work-integrated learning opportunities and employer-driven applied research.

For students, polytechnic education means more choices, flexible options and opportunities to gain highly-desired skills at state-of-the-art facilities. For employers and industry partners, working with a polytech means access to a pipeline of top talent and opportunities for research collaborations that position Manitoba businesses at the forefront of innovation and growth, and fuel them as they compete on the global stage.

Polytechs are agile. RRC Polytech is built to respond nimbly and meaningfully to fluctuations in our labour market. Thanks to relationships and strategic partnerships with thousands of professionals and leaders who power the province, our College is inextricably woven into Manitoba's economy, the demands of its workforce and its most pressing challenges and opportunities.

As Manitoba's polytechnic, our top priority is preparing students to thrive in a rapidly changing world of work. Achieving this requires that we take a leap into the future, rather than incremental steps – a bold approach that shows our community and industry partners we're not only ready to meet rapidly shifting demands, but to lead the way forward.

Our strategic plan guides us to embed agility into our learning model, foster a culture committed to reconciliation and respect, and strengthen the partnerships that are key to shaping the future.



# Mission

To elevate people, industry and community in Manitoba through future-focused polytechnic education, research and partnerships



RRC Polytech has a mission to elevate people, industry and community in Manitoba through future-focused polytechnic education, research and partnerships. We do this by keeping our eyes on the horizon ahead, delivering on our promises and aligning our priorities to the needs of our province and local communities.

Through deliberate action unique to polytechnic education, we invest in research that solves today's problems and powers the growth of our industries.

Our experienced faculty and staff deliver maximum value to students, industry and community through mutually beneficial partnerships. Committed to the future, we approach all our work with humility and a desire to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of all Manitobans.





# Vision

Manitoba's polytechnic:  
your partner in shaping the future



By working at the cutting edge of teaching and learning, we open doors for more students to build meaningful careers and make a difference.



By working closely with industry, we help Manitoba businesses build the talented, diverse and culturally aware workforce they need to face disruption and compete on the global stage.

By expanding our award-winning applied research capacity, we create more routes for organizations to access top talent and cutting-edge facilities and equipment, and to capitalize on opportunities.

By fostering innovation, we become a nexus where global perspectives meet local needs, traditional knowledge informs solutions, and students, employees, alumni and partners connect to solve problems.

**TOGETHER, WE SHAPE THE FUTURE.**



# Our Values



Our values shape how we work with our students, our partners and our colleagues. They provide clarity about how to move forward through the journey of our strategic plan. They tell us who we are.

To fulfil a mission and vision as bold as the ones outlined in this strategic plan, we must embed the following values into our work at every level of RRC Polytech:



## LEARNING

To be curious about, and committed to, acquiring knowledge for the application of new ways of teaching and working, and for personal growth.



## RESPECT

To treat one another with appreciation, dignity and kindness.



## INCLUSIVENESS

To embrace the uniqueness of all members of the RRC Polytech community, by removing barriers to equality and encouraging greater mutual understanding.



## INTEGRITY

To be accountable and honest in all that we do, by fulfilling commitments and acting in ways that build relationships and trust.



## SUSTAINABILITY

To demonstrate economic, social and environmental resiliency for generations to come.



## COLLABORATION

To strengthen learning and student experience by building sector and community partnerships.



# Our Commitments

Staying *in front of what's ahead* requires RRC Polytech to align our efforts across all our priorities. As the needs of industry, employers and communities evolve, so must we: by shaping the future of learning, building the collaborations that drive shared outcomes and deconstructing colonial and biased assumptions that have broken trust in post-secondary education, employment and administration.





## Commitment 1

# Transform our learning model to meet emerging needs



As Manitoba's polytechnic, we support our economy by providing the right learning opportunities to students at the right time. We excel at preparing students in environments that replicate the current pace of change to ensure they are learning from industry-trained faculty, on the latest equipment, and in similar conditions that they'll find on the job.

But post-secondary education is not immune to disruption – which is why we are meeting disruption head-on by transforming our learning model into one that is nimble and supports the changing needs of industry and employers.



Our new learning model will put the needs of students first, embed flexibility across all our programs, and leverage our strengths as a polytechnic to adapt to the changing needs of industry and employers and meet the requirements of rapidly changing labour markets.

Instead of delivering most of our academic learning through cohort-based, full-time programming, our new model will maximize our strength as a polytechnic, providing students with exceptional experiences through a wider variety of credentials, expanded work-integrated learning, and applied research opportunities. The new model will transform our academic programs and provide students with what they need, when and how they need it.

Over the next five years, we will design and offer a variety of flexible, novel course-delivery mechanisms to manage the increasing demand for retraining and job transitioning among those already working in the province. We will enhance our community-based learning to introduce new avenues and pathways, providing learners with alternative means of entry into post-secondary education.

We will grow our outstanding community of instructors, who have the experience and research acumen to translate knowledge and provide career guidance that best reflects Manitoba's emerging labour market opportunities.

The result will be greater flexibility, more on-demand micro-credentials to support the needs of our partners, and the integration of human skills and cultural competency development across our programs.

Our students will experience improved pathways to, from and between RRC Polytech and other post-secondary institutions. We will walk alongside students from recruitment through employment, and provide wrap-around supports while they are studying. We will expand opportunities for reskilling and upskilling, increase recognition of prior learning and eliminate barriers to entry. We will work toward a student body that reflects Manitoba's diverse population and welcomes the valuable perspectives of Indigenous and international students.

## PRIORITIES

- Create learning opportunities to meet the current and emerging needs of students, employers and communities
- Enhance student experiences in their journey to, with and beyond RRC Polytech
- Strengthen academic pathways to and from RRC Polytech

## KEY OUTCOMES

- RRC Polytech will lead the way in producing job-ready graduates through work-integrated learning opportunities
- Students at every level will have access to more flexible learning options
- More industry partners will turn to us to create programs designed to meet their workforce needs



## Commitment 2

# Commit to Truth and Reconciliation. Pursue equity, diversity and inclusion in everything we do.



We are renewing our commitment to addressing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action within our operations and in our work to advance Indigenous education in Manitoba. Our commitment reflects on the harms of the past and focuses our path forward in partnership with Indigenous Peoples. We are dedicating ourselves to reconciling a broken trust in our education system and supporting the key role Indigenous Peoples must play for our province to realize its fullest potential.



This commitment is a critical foundation for our work in pursuing equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) within our institution and our partnerships – because those goals cannot be advanced without doing the work of reconciliation. While our commitment to reconciliation is distinct from, and important to advancing EDI, we bring them together in this commitment to demonstrate that the work is parallel and mutually reinforcing.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada calls on us to create a more equitable and inclusive society by closing gaps in social, health and economic outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities and people. Our work will begin with listening. We will work in partnership with Elders and First Nations, Métis and Inuit members of the RRC Polytech community. Guided by principles from the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), we will create opportunities for collaboration and engagement to support the integration of Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into student and faculty supports, to inform our administrative processes, and to build partnerships that elevate reconciliation.

Our pursuit of EDI will seek to support students and staff to reach their learning and employment goals. This will involve removing barriers to access and participation, and establishing or revising systems, policies and practices that ensure alignment to our commitment to EDI. One of RRC Polytech's greatest strengths is that we care deeply about the people who work and study here. We will ensure a respectful atmosphere that is diverse, inclusive and equitable to our students, staff and partners – a place where we understand, embrace and uplift each other's culture, and a place where all are welcomed for who they are, and for what we can build together.

### PRIORITIES

- Continue to walk the path together towards Truth and Reconciliation
- Address systemic barriers
- Foster a culture of inclusion

### KEY OUTCOMES

- Progress on all of the TRC Calls to Action that relate to post-secondary education
- Increased partnerships with Indigenous students, businesses and communities
- Increased employee development and engagement opportunities to advance RRC Polytech priorities
- Our students, graduates, staff and committees will reflect the diversity of Manitoba's population

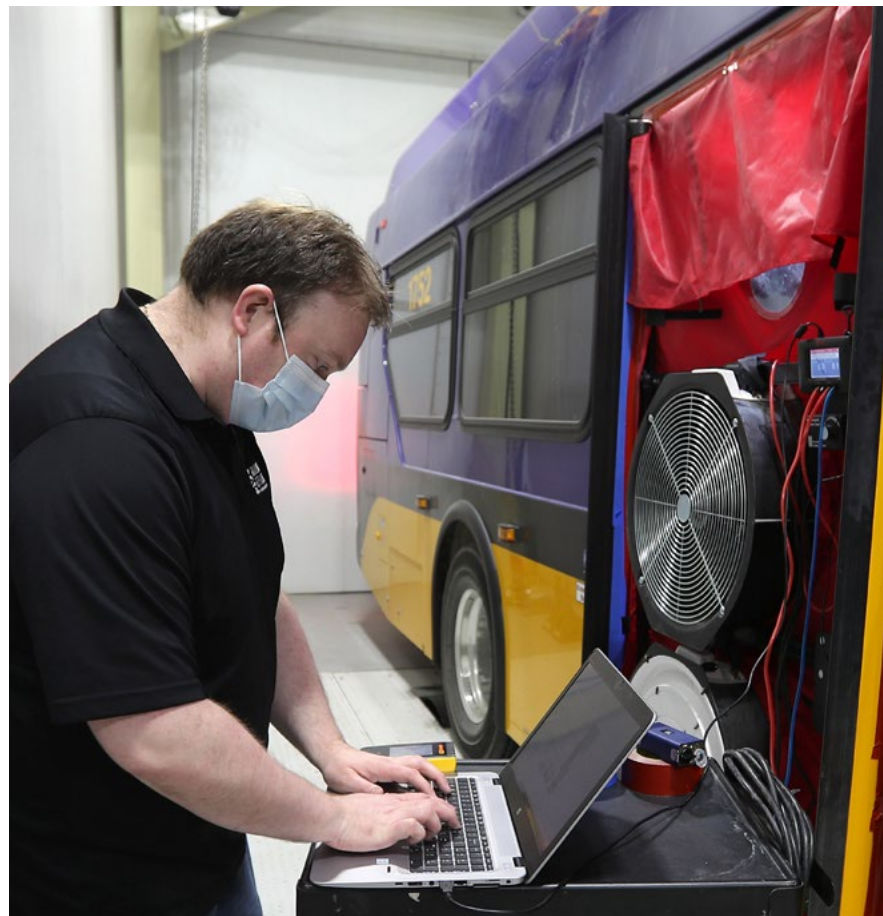


## Commitment 3

# Deepen partnerships to maximize prosperity across industry and community



RRC Polytech plays an important role in Manitoba's economic success. As our economy grows and our community diversifies, we will leverage our partnerships to help communities thrive and power Manitoba businesses to help them compete on a global stage.



Our partnerships are the core of our success. They enable us to extend our resources, leverage our partners' strengths, accelerate progress in innovation and research, and expand our reach.

By strengthening and deepening our strategic relationships, we will create reciprocal value that drives Manitoba forward economically, environmentally, socially and culturally. Through our partnerships, we will reinforce our prosperity and sustainability by diversifying our revenue sources, maximizing private investment, and engaging our alumni and stakeholders in the future of the institution.

Our applied research enterprise is one of RRC Polytech's best-kept secrets. We will build our capacity to deliver applied, solutions-focused research that can help Manitoba stay steps ahead of the incoming changes – positioning us for success in a globally competitive environment in the decades ahead.

Over the next five years, we will expand the opportunities for applied research across our schools and in areas that are important to our partners and our future economy. This will elevate opportunities for students to participate in solving practical problems, support entrepreneurs to launch and grow their businesses, and further strengthen our relationships with our partners and funders across all sectors.

The foundation of this future is a strong culture of philanthropy – one that we will cultivate inside RRC Polytech and with our valued partners. Our first comprehensive campaign will be the vehicle that helps us strengthen relationships with our donors and reach our full potential. Together we will meet the inevitable disruption facing our economy and create the change that we want to see in Manitoba.

## PRIORITIES

- Maximize new and current strategic partnerships to realize mutual benefit
- Elevate applied research in Manitoba
- Build a culture of philanthropy to increase strategic partnership potential

## KEY OUTCOMES

- Increased applied research partnerships and integration of applied research within academic programming
- Expanded partnerships and relationships with donors to drive strategic growth and deliver mutual benefits
- RRC Polytech plays an elevated role in strengthening Manitoba's economic, social, environmental and cultural prosperity



# Our Journey

A strategic plan is a map that guides our way forward – even in the midst of uncertain circumstances. To create this map, we drew on our strong culture of connection with industry, employers and community. That connection was the starting point for five months of intensive listening and learning. We engaged deeply with employees, stakeholders and community members, who shared advice, insights and diverse opinions that would inform our priorities for the future.

Since the fall of 2020, we have witnessed a renewed and solutions-focused conversation about social justice and our colonial history. The world is waking up to the reality of our changing climate and its impact on every facet of society. And a global pandemic reminded us that, good or bad, disruption is inevitable.

These are urgent challenges facing Manitoba and Manitobans. And solutions are needed – not eventually, not someday. Now.

Only Manitoba's polytechnic can be responsive to the needs of today that will define our province's economic viability and global position tomorrow. With a finger directly on the pulse of our economy, and a more immediate ability to operationalize change compared to other post-secondary partners in the province, we are built to respond quickly and effectively to labour market change.

Recognizing the role that RRC Polytech must play in leading that change, we understood the time had come to assess our future.

We began this work with a pipe ceremony led and supported by our respected Elders-in-Residence. This included a blessing to ask Creator to help us hear the wisdom of each person who would share their thoughts, ideas and experiences. The Elders also shared teachings, which helped to shape our conversations and inform the approach we used to create the strategic plan.

Our community engagement began with our internal staff and faculty. Through online tools and virtual focus groups, employees at all levels shared their experiences, hopes and ideas. In focused conversations about our strengths, our culture and our future, employees shared their pride and optimism about our important role in shaping Manitoba. They spoke with conviction about the commitment they want RRC Polytech to make to advance reconciliation within the College and with our partners.

**“We live in a province that is deeply rooted in colonialism. The college structure is an important tool that can start to dismantle the colonial ways.”**

**- RRC Polytech employee**

Next, we engaged with our external partners and stakeholders, especially members of our Strategic Councils, the industry and employer partners who volunteer in collaboration with us to inform the future of our programs and help us stay in front of what's ahead. Their perspectives identified opportunities for us to extend our partnerships, advance philanthropy and confidently stand apart from other post-secondary institutions in Manitoba.

**“Your humility is a liability. You need to stand on the rooftops and let everyone know how great you are.”**

**- Strategic Council member**

We spoke with Indigenous education leaders, who shared their experiences in supporting students and spoke to us about the unique needs of Indigenous students. These conversations helped us understand the need to address systemic barriers and build our learning model to support the diverse and changing needs of Indigenous students, whether they study at our campuses or through remote and blended models.

We also spoke with students from diverse backgrounds, who shared their appreciation of the work RRC Polytech has been doing to develop an anti-racist culture within our community. They spoke about the value that diversity brings to the classroom and encouraged our work to support international students pursuing a polytechnic education in Manitoba.

We heard from our government, research and community partners, who told us they appreciate our commitment to creating mutual value, and aligning opportunities for students to solve practical problems while gaining valuable workplace experience. They called us their partner of choice when solving problems today and planning for their future needs.

**“We come to RRC first, because we know you are committed to working with us to solve the problems we face in our industry.”**

**- Industry research partner**

Throughout the process, we kept staff and faculty informed of progress through webinars, learning events and regular updates from the President. We also continued engagement with our Elders-in-Residence, seeking their advice and wisdom as our path ahead became clear.

The development of the key elements of the strategic plan rested on the shoulders of the leadership team. They did this work together in facilitated sessions, which encouraged the full participation and collaboration of leaders from across RRC Polytech. The process encouraged debate, disagreement and divergent views, and led to a plan that outlines our most important priorities as we walk the coming journey together.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INCLUDED

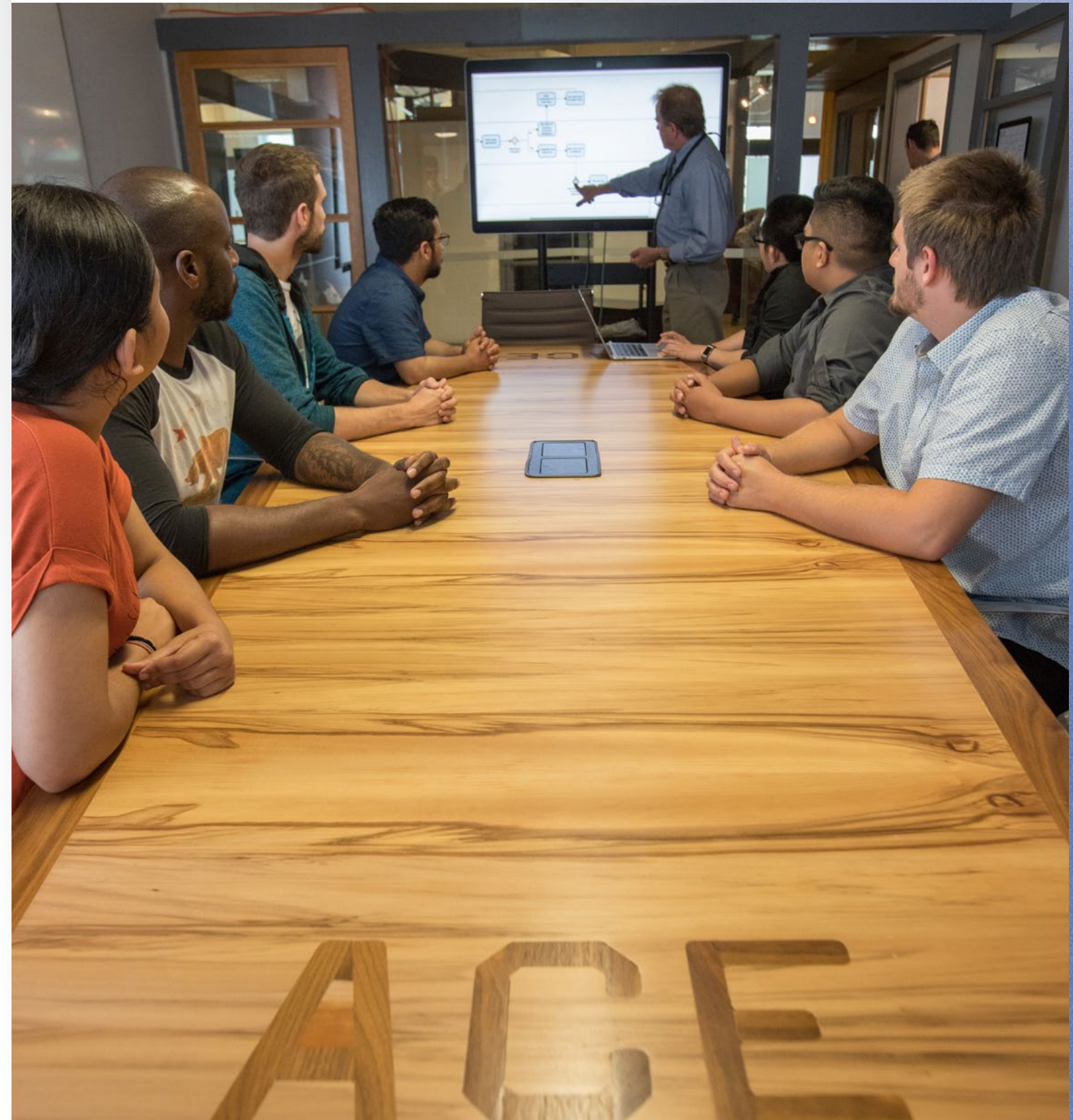
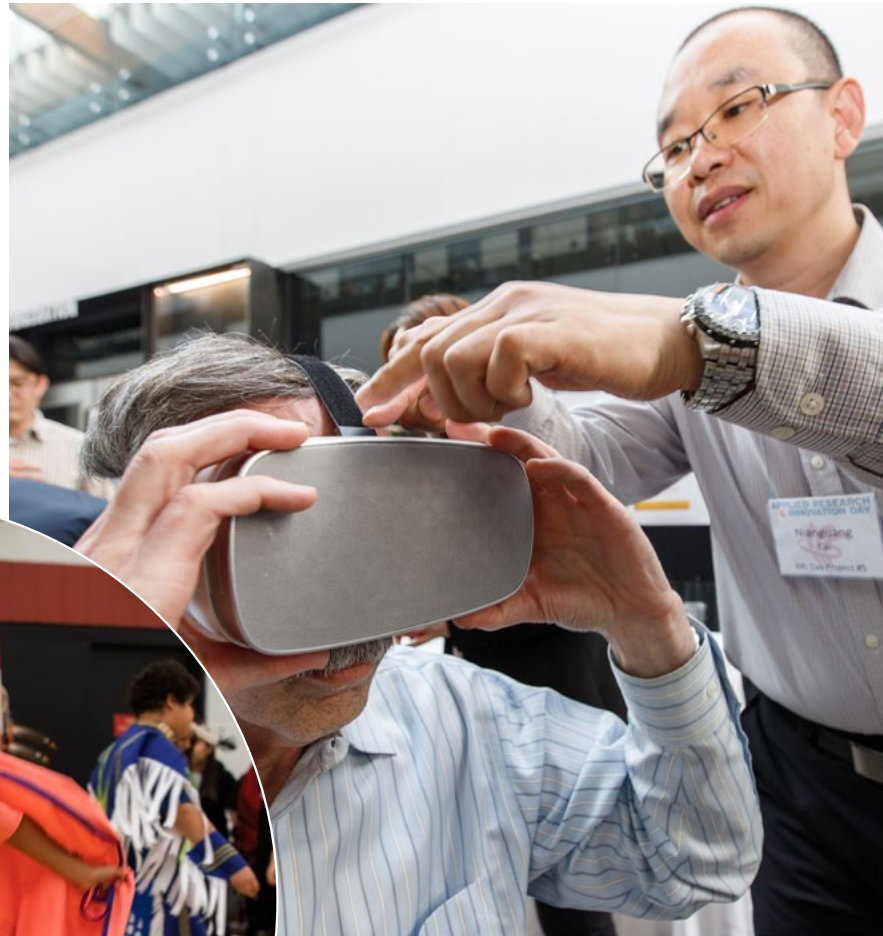
- 863 thoughts and ideas shared and rated over 12,000 times by employees
- 12 focus groups, with 71 employees
- 34 interviews with RRC Polytech leaders and Indigenous Elders
- Engagement with 31 First Nations education directors
- Conversations with leaders from over 70 Manitoba businesses
- Feedback and advice from over 500 alumni, donors, and industry and educational partners





# Get Involved

This plan is the result of the thoughtful feedback and insights shared by hundreds of internal and external partners and stakeholders. While the work of advancing the plan rests largely within RRC Polytech, this is a plan that extends beyond our doors, to the partnerships and relationships that connect us to our broader community. It took our community to create this plan. We look forward to working together to advance our vision.



Visit [rrc.ca/polytech](http://rrc.ca/polytech) and follow RRC Polytech on LinkedIn to hear our latest news and announcements.

Update your contact information with Alumni Engagement to stay informed and learn about opportunities to volunteer your time.

Donate to RRC Polytech, to help keep us in front of what's ahead.





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