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Public Post-Secondary Funding Review

Coast Mountain College Responses

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Coast Mountain College Overview

Coast Mountain College (CMTN), previously Northwest Community College (NWCC), is an accredited post-secondary institution that serves the rich and diverse communities and learners of BC's beautiful Northwest region.

Established in 1975 in Terrace, BC, CMTN has five regional campuses serving 34 communities, 21 of which are First Nations communities. The College provides students with innovative programs that lead to sustainable careers for people in the north. Our campuses are located in Hazelton, Haida Gwaii, Smithers, Prince Rupert, and Terrace.

CMTN offers college access programs, small class sizes, health and human services programs, online programs, university credit programs, Trades foundation and apprenticeship programs. The College also offers innovative and flexible mobile training, reaching communities beyond its campuses.

CMTN aims to be the college of choice for experiential, place-based learning, allowing students to learn both in the classroom and in the spectacular outdoor spaces that are so unique to this part of Canada. CMTN, with approximately 40% of its students self-identifying as Indigenous, is deeply committed to the TRC's 94 Calls to Action, UNDRIP, and DRIPA documents.



Question 1: What are the most important contributions your institution makes to the economic, social, and environmental health of BC?

Economic Health

CMTN draws students to the region, thereby generating new dollars and opportunities for Northcoast/Nechako. The College serves a variety of regional businesses and industries, and benefits the provincial government through increased tax revenues and public sector savings. The benefits created extend to the entire province, which benefits from an expanded economy and an improved quality of life for its citizens.

For the fiscal year 2019-2020, CMTN worked with EMSI to provide an economic impact study (see Appendix A for the executive summary of this report).¹ In 2019-2020, CMTN paid \$22.2 million in payroll, much of which was spent locally for goods, services, and housing. The College spent another \$12 million on day-to-day expenses related to facilities, supplies, and professional services. Many students remain in the area after graduation and, in 2019-2020, CMTN alumni added an estimated \$100.8 million to the region. In total, CMTN added an estimated \$138.9 million to the Northcoast/Nechako economy and supported one out of every 25 jobs in the region through its activities and its students (see Appendix A).

The tax revenue CMTN generates indirectly (through its graduates paying higher taxes throughout their working lives and their employers making higher tax payments) outweighs its cost to the provincial government. In 2019-2020 the difference was approximately \$5 million. Benefits to taxpayers also consist of savings generated by the improved lifestyles of CMTN students and graduates, and the corresponding reduction in government services they require.

CMTN's education and training meet the needs identified in the labour market outlook for the North Coast/Nechako region (see Appendix B), with programs such as Social Service Worker, Administrative Assistant, and Licensed Practical Nurse being offered. The College also offers a variety of programs specific to this area (Applied Coastal Ecology, Environmental Science, and the Freda Diesing School of Northwest Coast Art). CMTN partners with other BC post-secondary institutions for smooth laddering into degree programs, and with local communities to offer the programming they require for their economic development. As well, when education is offered locally, students are more likely to stay in the area after graduation.

CMTN has approximately 300 international students, many of whom take jobs in local restaurants and small businesses, thereby alleviating staff shortages. Some international graduates remain in the area and often take leadership roles at, for example, the recycling depot, the Skeena Diversity Society in Terrace, and the Royal Bank in Smithers, as well as at the College itself. CMTN recently hired four international student graduates at the Terrace campus.

To the greatest degree possible CMTN does business and sources goods and supplies locally and regionally. The College employs more than 250 people and is one of two employers to have maintained its workforce through economic downturns in the North. CMTN has recently begun tracking the ratio of businesses it engages with to ascertain the percentage of locally-owned and Indigenous-owned businesses.

Social Health

CMTN offers affordable education in communities that are accessible for rural and remote students (Hazelton, Haida Gwaii, Smithers, Prince Rupert, and Terrace). Approximately 40% of the students are Indigenous and the value of engaging in education near home is immeasurable. The College actively promotes the intergenerational

¹ The Economic Value of Coast Mountain College, Main Report, Coast Mountain College, August 2021



transfer of Indigenous cultural knowledge through many of its programs, including the Freda Diesing School of Northwest Coast Art. The art programs use the artist-apprentice model that focuses on creating knowledge of self, the region, and the traditional arts of the area, rather than creating world-class artists. That said, many of the graduates are successful working artists with thriving businesses.

CMTN piloted Contact North BC, a collaboration between the College and Indigenous communities in the region, with a goal of expanding post-secondary access for students living in these remote and rural areas. Currently, Contact North BC operates 22 access centres in Northwest BC, with 500 students studying programs from a variety of BC public post-secondary institutions. Many of these 500 students would otherwise not be enrolled in post-secondary programming.

CMTN's Dual Credit program, which is a partnership between a student's school district and the College, is designed to help students explore career opportunities while saving money during their first year of studies. The credits earned are applied to both the high school transcript and the college transcript. Each year there are numerous cohorts in the CMTN region, including Houston, Smithers, Terrace, and Kitimat. While demand for Trades programming is strong, CMTN also offers health-related programs and will launch an Early Childhood Care and Education certificate as an additional Dual Credit offering.

The College encourages the development of practical experience through work-integrated learning and experiential, place-based learning. This approach strengthens students' soft skills, helps them apply core skills to broader, real-life contexts, and creates greater career agility for them. For example, earlier in 2022, the Professional Cook program in the Nisga'a Territory provided meals for students at the Nisga'a Elementary/Secondary School, and in Terrace at K'san Society, a non-profit that supports vulnerable populations, and Kitselas First Nation.

CMTN's field-schools provide opportunities for students to cooperate, understand other cultures, and engage in stewardship of the land. The College also provides inexpensive, easy access to upskilling and reskilling to support community adaptation to economic shifts.

The Adult Special Education (ASE) and Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs offer ladder opportunities for students to enter into more meaningful and secure employment. Many ASE graduates now work and live productively in the community. CMTN is piloting with Disabilities funding offering grade 10 English and Math courses so that more locals who did not complete high school can enter one of six Trades programs offered at CMTN.

CMTN's employees provide leadership on various local, provincial, and national boards, with non-profits and non-government organizations (NGOs). They are also heavily engaged in the Northcoast/Nechako communities through Rotary and Chamber of Commerce memberships. For example:

- Dr. Titi Kunkel, Acting VP Academic, Students and International, is a member of the Smithers Chamber of Commerce and the Smithers Rotary.
- Dr. Laurie Waye, Interim President, is Vice-Chair of United Way of Northern BC, Vice-Chair of Magnet Social Innovation Platform through Toronto Metropolitan University, and Advisory Board Member of the WriteAway provincial consortium.
- Colin Elliott, Dean of Business, Access Education, and Libraries, is a board member of the Skeena Diversity Society in Terrace.

As well as providing students with the education, training, and skills they need for fulfilling and prosperous careers, CMTN is a place where students meet new people, increase their self-confidence, and promote their overall health and well-being. During the pandemic, the College continued to provide education and role-modelled resilience by following the Public Health Officer's orders to remain open and ensure learning continuity. The College asks its



employees to engage in Indigenous awareness training and the results, which are evident on all five campuses, ripple out into the community to create more informed citizens. The College has recently launched free access to its employees training to become more inclusive of the LGBTQ community.

Environmental Health

CMTN's Applied Coastal Ecology program and University Credit programs (Sustainable Communities, Environmental Science) focus on climate change monitoring. As well as introducing students to environmental stewardship, the College's field schools train them in low-impact and sustainable research methods and encourage them to respect the space we live in.

The College actively encourages weaving local, Indigenous knowledge and stewardship into programs such as the West Coast Culinary Diploma. In this program, learners engage in traditional food harvesting and preparation activities, following the teachings of the Knowledge Keepers.

CMTN's buildings contribute to environmental health through their energy-efficient design, and plans for the new student housing buildings include bicycle storage.

Question 2: What is your institution doing to promote reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and First Nations?

Systems and Processes

Contact North BC has provided educational opportunities to 22 remote and rural communities that were previously underserved or not served at all. This partnership between the College and the communities optimizes the use of space and personnel. Of note, the communities determine the appropriate space to house the access centre and they hire the access centre staff, making this a true partnership. To lay the foundation for the project, CMTN visited many communities and has maintained relationships with them despite COVID. The 22 access centres are a testament to the success of the College's connection with Indigenous communities throughout the Northwest area.

CMTN's Centre of Learning Transformation (COLT) and Department of Indigenization have guided the development of Indigenized course and program content. Before curricula and programs go to Education Council (EdCo) for approval, the instructors meet with Kāshā, the Indigenous Learning Transformation Specialist, to discuss ways to further Indigenize the content and program framework. EdCo now has a sub-committee on Indigenization.

A review of the EdCo process led to the creation of an EdCo Indigenization taskforce that recommended the creation of a separate Indigenization voting seat at EdCo and the development of a curriculum Indigenization framework to build instructor capacity. The framework would also provide the instructors with tools to enable them to engage in curriculum and pedagogy Indigenization before they meet with the Indigenous Learning Transformation Specialist. In doing so, reconciliation becomes the role of all college members, not just the Department of Indigenization and the Indigenous Learning Transformation Specialist.

The College has also developed a set of policies and procedures to formalize the way in which employees respect and engage with Elders and Knowledge-Keepers. Doing so will help Elders and Knowledge-Keepers be treated with respect when visiting the campus.

Programs and Partnerships

This year CMTN celebrated 25 years of First Nations Council (FNC) stewardship of the college. The FNC's mandate



is to ensure that educational offerings are relevant in the lives of the College's Indigenous students, develop strong partnerships to support education within Indigenous communities, and develop ways for those communities to have a greater say in the College's educational initiatives. Comprised of representatives from First Nations communities, the Council provides a process of direct consultation with all of the Indigenous communities in the College region, and direction in the strategic and operational planning of the College through a policy framework. FNC also meets with the Board of Governors annually and has a seat on the Board and on Education Council.

Stepping Stones to Improved Relationships: Aboriginal Equity and Coast Mountain College (formerly Northwest Community College; 1995), which dovetails with the institutional strategic plan, recorded the process of establishing the FNC and the resulting action plan, and served as the road map for the College going forward. *Stepping Stones* has recently been revised from its original version to celebrate the successes and set new goals.

CMTN has increased access to Trades programs through collaboration with Indigenous communities, such as Nisga'a Elementary/Secondary School with Youth Explore Trades Samplers (Fall 2021), Professional Cook Level 1 (Winter 2022), and Carpentry Foundations (Fall 2022). To offer Professional Cook Level 1 in a culturally relevant way, the College collaborated with the Nisga'a Elementary/Secondary School Culture and Language Coordinator to include cultural opportunities and Indigenous content (oolichan harvest, sealion butchering, connection to traditional Knowledge-Keepers).

CMTN also has a partnership with Kitselas First Nation to deliver a Carpentry Apprenticeship program for Kitselas members at their clubhouse. Other program-level partnerships include Adult Upgrading with the Aboriginal Friendship Centre in Smithers and with the Haisla Nation at Kitimat Valley Institute.

The College created the Freda Diesing School of Northwest Coast Art to honour, recognize and continue the legacy of Haida artist Freda Diesing, a master carver, painter, tireless educator, and champion of First Nations art and culture. The school brings all Nations together in the pursuit of higher education and sets new standards for aspiring artists. The only school of its kind in Canada, it focuses on traditional First Nations Pacific Northwest Coast art.

In both its programming and in other activities, the College encourages and engages with Indigenous cultures through a variety of activities:

- offering welcome and farewell feasts at the Longhouse at the Terrace campus
- hosting traditional, culturally-appropriate totem pole raisings outside Wii Gyemsga Siwilaawksat and the Smithers campus
- conducting Indigenous awareness training – to date, the 250 employees of the college have taken 600 seats of this training
- designing buildings through an Indigenous lens, earning kudos from the architecture world in both Canada and the United States
- requesting the appropriate Nation to provide an Indigenous name for the new marine classroom and Elders' gathering space in Prince Rupert, and for the student housing in Terrace.

Finances and Facilities

CMTN has moved from having the Aboriginal Service Plan (ASP) fund 50% of the salary and benefits for the First Nations Access Coordinators to base funding. The College recently created two new positions and is currently hiring an Indigenous Special Events Coordinator and an Indigenous Student Recruiter. In the near future, First



Nations Council will meet to determine how they want the replacement funding for ASP to be used for 2022-2023.

Terrace campus buildings are named with Smalgy'ax names and the new student housing building is simply named in Smalgy'ax: Wii Gyemsiga Siwilaawksat, which means "where learners are content or comfortable." There is an Elder's suite in the building to provide space for Elders to come support Indigenous students living there. In addition, there are hoteling suites in the building so that families of students can come for a visit to support students who are struggling. As well, there is a cultural room that is specifically vented for smudging and provides space for numerous traditional activities. Overall, the recent construction incorporated Indigenization through design elements, art, and gathering spaces. This attention to Indigenization of space is mirrored in the recent renovation to the library at the Terrace campus, which incorporates Indigenization through its use of space, subject headings, and development of an Indigenous reading lounge.

People

In addition to the Indigenous Awareness training CMTN employees undergo, the CMTN management team helps move reconciliation forward through leadership opportunities:

- Kelly Swain, Associate Dean of Trades and First Nations Fine Arts, is Chair of the Trades BC Curriculum Indigenization sub-committee
- Bridie O'Brien, Executive Director of Indigenization, is the leader of Digital Literacy Committee in I-LEAD, the network of post-secondary Indigenous educational leaders
- Marc Snelling, Director of Information Technology, serves on the Indian Residential School Society and BCNet.

Under Kelly's leadership, the Industry Training Authority (ITA) has five colleges coming together to Indigenize the curriculum for the hairstylist program.

Question 3. What is your institution doing to promote equitable access for people who come from disadvantaged socio-economic circumstances?

Financial Support

Tuition at CMTN is generally the third lowest in the province, which makes our education very accessible financially. The College is, however, aware that even this is beyond the reach of some students, so a number of measures have been put in place to promote equitable access.

Most of CMTN's Workforce Training/Contract Services proposals target students who may not otherwise have access to training (e.g., youth, LGBTQ+, Indigenous, and women). Daily living allowances, travel expenses, childcare expenses, and completion bonuses are included, which allows the College to ensure that disadvantaged students have every opportunity to study and succeed in these programs.

During the 2021-2022 academic year, CMTN provided \$100,000 in emergency bursary funding. The College's Education Advisors and First Nations Access Coordinators actively guide students toward funding opportunities and faculty are encouraged to lower the cost of textbooks by creating, adopting, or adapting Open Education Resource texts, through BCcampus.

Forty-five of CMTN's 75 awards and bursaries (approximately \$40,000 a year) are for financial need along with other criteria. The College provides emergency funding for all students, and offers self-funded entrance awards for international students. The CMTN Foundation (the fundraising arm of the College) recently approved offering



awards to students in the Adult Special Education program. For the next three years this group, which has been traditionally overlooked and underfunded, will receive \$5,000 annually.

For former Youth in Care, CMTN has a webpage dedicated to introducing the registration process and outlining the supports that are available. In addition to the recorded webinar that allows 24/7 access, the College offers in-person information sessions at least twice a year and tops up the financial support provided by the Province.

There are other ways the College supports students from disadvantaged socio-economic circumstances. On-campus food banks are available to all students. At the Terrace campus, the main line in the cafeteria offers a healthy, delicious meal for \$5. For those who cannot afford the \$5, CMTN covers the cost internally. And, the College's short-term student housing for apprenticeship training greatly reduces the cost of accommodation.

CMTN is constantly looking for gaps in its financial support and, as these are identified, the College explores ways to meet the need and further promote equitable access to its programs.

Access Support

During the pandemic, CMTN moved all of its programming online. Since then the College has made strategic decisions to keep some of its offerings in distributed learning, which includes web-conferencing platforms, online videos, social media, textbooks, print modules, experiential tasks, and many other innovative ways of engaging students.

For example, the Education Assistant program, which prepares graduates to work under supervision to support elementary and secondary school students with exceptionalities and challenges, allows learners to study and engage in their practicums in their home communities. For an area with a number of uncertified Education Assistants in the school system, CMTN provides a much-needed service in an accessible way.

The Early Childhood Care & Education program is another example whereby CMTN provides access support to full- and part-time students through distributed learning. Current best practice theory is brought to life through experiential and place-based learning that challenges learners to co-create curriculum with children and to design learning environments that embrace the diversity of all children and families, including local First Nations, Indigenous and Inuit peoples.

CMTN also has two mobile classrooms which allow the College to provide in-community programming. These units can be configured to serve as a traditional classroom or a Trades shop, making them very versatile. Bringing education to the community is substantially more cost-effective for both the community and the College, and less disruptive when compared to communities sending their students away to gain post-secondary training and education.

Contact North BC, the partnership between CMTN and remote communities, provides educational opportunities to 22 communities. Students can remain in their community to study, which reduces the cost to them personally as well as to their Nation's education funding. As First Nations Council has noted, Indigenous communities are the only ones who pay twice for high school. Through Contact North BC, learners can access any online program offered by a BC public post-secondary institution.

Access to education is also available through Dual Credit programming, in which high school students take a year of post-secondary education at little or no cost to the student. These programs are offered in Smithers, Houston, Terrace, and Kitimat.



Question 4. What are your major challenges in enhancing the contribution your institution makes to the economic, social, and environmental health of BC?

Stretched Funding

Funding from the Industry Training Authority (ITA) does not cover the full cost of Trades training. Despite the alignment of Trades training with the labour market outlook and with key local Indigenous initiatives like the *Changing Tide* agreement between the Federal Government and the Haida Nation, CMTN spends approximately \$800,000 per year to subsidize Trades training. Given that many Trades positions are currently vacant in northern BC, and that this number will continue to grow over the next decade, the \$800,000 shortfall will continue to grow, especially if CMTN is to ramp up Trades offerings.

Although short-term funding provides the College with a great opportunity to experiment, it does not allow for continuity of programming. Longer-term funding for development and experimentation would be ideal.

CMTN requires more funding to support the integration of Indigenous content and experiential learning into its curriculum and programs, to provide regional and community-based offerings, and to develop and maintain relationships in remote communities. In short, reconciliation comes at a cost and must be funded.

For now, CMTN's budget envelope is sufficient to allow the College to continue the activities it has undertaken, but it does not allow for growth and innovation.

Small institutions are required to do almost everything big institutions do but without the financial base to support these activities. CMTN draws on a small population base, which impacts its growth and limits its recruitment efforts. To meet its provincial targets for program areas, the College needs to expand its reach beyond Northwest BC.

Two other challenges faced by the College in the communities it serves are the high cost of materials and services (a result of being in a northern location that is remote and has limited accessibility) and the limited number of local vendors (i.e., limited competition).

Colonial Structures and Old Infrastructure

CMTN operates under a colonial structure that ties its hands. Timetables, the semester system, collective agreements, and seniority requirements all impede the College's ability to offer accessible education to potential students in Northwest BC. The relics of colonization no longer fit in a region that is doing its best to decolonize and these holdovers inhibit the College's ability to make the required changes.

Many CMTN facilities are in need of renovation and expansion. In particular, for the College to attract more students and increase the impact of its Trades programs and the Freda Diesing School of Northwest Coast Art, these facilities need to be much larger and more vibrant.

Life in the Rural North

Offering programs in more than one community is costly, as is the travel CMTN employees do to build and maintain strong relationships with the communities the College serves. Finding practicum placements and work-integrated learning opportunities with local employers is both challenging and costly. There is also a considerable cost to these remote communities when they purchase cohort training from CMTN (or from any other college).

Students in the Northcoast/Nechako can graduate with grade 12, but some do not have the requisite level of literacy and numeracy for success in first-year college programming. In addition, the transition rate from grade 12



to post-secondary in Northwest BC is low compared to many other areas in the province – 45.7%³ in 2018-19 compared to the provincial average of 51.2%.

CMTN offers Adult Special Education (ASE) and Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs that can prepare students to enter more meaningful and secure employment. However, both sets of adult learners are expensive to educate. The College also offers retraining to people employed in dying industries; however, because the new opportunities invariably have a lower pay scale, this is a hard sell.

Low salaries relative to the cost of northern living and the recent housing crisis across the region make it challenging to attract and retain leadership staff, specialized staff (e.g., information technology), and qualified instructors. Turnover has resulted in a lack of consistency in relationship building, maintenance of trust, and quality in community education. Compared to a number of very significant infrastructure projects in the area (Prince Rupert liquified natural gas [LNG] project, Prince Rupert port expansion, the new Mills Memorial Hospital build), CMTN's job openings and salaries are not as attractive as they might be and it will become increasingly difficult to hold onto key employees such as Trades instructors.

Not all communities have an education plan that is tied to their economic development plan, which creates further challenges, especially when the economic plan fails to align with the courses and subjects students want to study.

Question 5. What are the most significant contributions your institution makes in collaboration with other parts of BC's PSE system?

Collaboration, Not Competition

CMTN currently collaborates with a number of other BC post-secondary institutions to exchange curricula for free (e.g. the College received Vancouver Island University's Information Technology Diploma and Camosun College's Mental Health and Addictions Program). The College recently partnered with North Island College to offer the Mining Exploration Field Assistant program and with the College of New Caledonia to develop a work-integrated learning platform.

As a small institution, CMTN has little to trade with the larger, southern institutions, although recently it exchanged Adult Upgrading curriculum with College of the Rockies.

To enable better cross-learning and collaboration, Sunil Kanamala, CMTN's Director of Facilities, is currently arranging for two more province-wide groups: Food Services Leads and Campus Store Leads, collaborations that will enable them to share best practices and support each other. Marc Snelling, Director of IT, the northern representative on the provincial Distributed Cybersecurity Team, reports that CMTN leads other BC colleges in collaborating and sharing information when problems arise.

The College's Workforce Training and Contract Services has co-authored grant proposals and shared or co-developed many of its materials with other BC post-secondary institutions. Workforce Training and Contract Services is a member of the Continuing Education and Training Association of BC (CETABC) and has recently

³ https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/post-secondary-education/data-research/stp/stp_research_results.pdf



collaborated on:

- Forest Worker Essentials (pilot projects were run with BC Forest Safety Council, North Island College, Selkirk College, Okanagan College, and the College of New Caledonia)
- Indigenous Forest Initiative (a Natural Resources Canada proposal with North Island College, Okanagan College, and Northern Lights College to research Indigenous forest practices)
- Hospitality and Tourism (a collaboration with Employment and Social Development Canada, along with Camosun College, College of New Caledonia, College of the Rockies, North Island College, Okanagan College, Selkirk College, Vancouver Community College, and Vancouver Island University)
- Essential Skills Research and Training (a collaboration with Vancouver Island University to address digital skills gaps in unemployed or underemployed people).

The College has block transfer agreements with Royal Roads University and the University of Northern BC (UNBC) for a number of programs and is actively seeking to establish similar agreements with other universities. UNBC students who attend the regional centre in Terrace may have the option of staying in CMTN dormitories.

CMTN is a member of CETABC, BC Council on Admissions & Transfer (BCCAT), BC Colleges, the Northern Presidents Council, and Senior Academic Administrators Forum.

Extension of Existing Programs

Extending the reach of Contact North BC would allow CMTN to collaborate even more fully with other post-secondary institutions in BC. Ideally, with collaboration, students in the Contact North BC access centres could study all levels (adult upgrading through to master's degrees) by accessing online programs that are offered at any of BC's post-secondary institutions.

CMTN could also adopt hybrid options similar to those offered by Contact North Ontario, whereby in a cohort model the theory component of a program is taught online in the access centres and intensive in-person programming is run at one of CMTN's campuses. This would allow the College to leverage college housing, classrooms, and shop space during the summer season (May – August). This model has allowed Contact North Ontario to assist institutions in that province to run Trades and health programs for northern communities. The College is currently exploring this option for Spring 2023, with an Apprenticeship Level 1 in Electrical or Carpentry.

Question 6. What stands in the way of you collaborating more with the rest of BC's PSE system?

The System

The BC public post-secondary system seems to set its institutions up to compete rather than collaborate. Despite this, the post-secondary institutions do collaborate, but the absence of incentives and rewards makes such efforts difficult. As long as the BC post-secondary system promotes competition among its institutions the growth of each will remain a threat for the others, particularly the smaller ones. The mindset is one of scarcity rather than abundance, and BC's labour market outlook shows that post-secondary institutions need to be in the abundance mindset if they are to fill the many job vacancies that now exist and will continue into the future.

Inter-institutional collaboration would be greatly helped by a provincial framework that encourages collaboration on all levels of programming and rewards institutions for doing so. At present, when representatives from the



post-secondary institutions do meet (usually in the south), the meetings are often unfocused (with the exception of at the President level and in Trades). A framework for sharing would be extremely beneficial although, as a small institution, CMTN does not have much to trade.

Articulation can create artificial complications. The collective agreement likely plays a role here, too. Why must institutions articulate Adult Special Education (ASE) and lower-level Adult Basic Education (ABE) programming? Why does each institution create these programs on its own? Why do ABE courses have 120 or 90 hours attached to them? Why is prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) done on in a one-off manner instead of in a provincially-led manner? The number of hours for ABE programming is a barrier for adult learners. These issues never receive the robust discussion they deserve, with a focus on solutions and the future. These issues can only be solved by collaboration.

CMTN is very different from other BC post-secondary institutions in that it serves a primarily Indigenous population and largely focuses its services on meeting their needs. The College has similarities with Northern Lights College, but there are also differences (e.g., NLC is in an area rich in resource extraction industries).

Capacity and Funding

The College has limited own-source revenue. Currently, its two streams are international student tuition and Workforce Training and Contract Services.

CMTN needs capacity and funding to support faculty release for curriculum coordination, and it needs the faculty to backfill the release time. These requirements limit the College's ability to engage in provincial curriculum initiatives which, in turn limits the northern and remote/rural voice.

Given CMTN's location, it is costly both in time and travel, for College representatives to visit other institutions and develop the relationships that are so badly needed for effective collaboration and partnering.

Question 7. What are the key economic, demographic, social, and technological trends that will unfold over the next 30 years that will impact BC's PSE system?

Economic Trends

The Kitimat LNG site, along with other industry growth (Prince Rupert port expansion, the Mills Memorial Hospital build), will offer jobs that are low-skill and high-pay, along with creating incredible competition for skilled workers like those in Trades, management, and office administration. These large projects will attract some of CMTN's current employees, including its Trades instructors. Some resource-related industries, such as forestry and fishing, will continue to decline while other industries, such as information technology and daycare workers, will grow. One set of employees does not easily translate to the other industries.

The war in Ukraine has made it obvious that Europe cannot rely on only one source of energy. Canada could improve its oil and gas production to fill gaps such as this; however, at the same time there is a strong movement within the country toward green energy production. Small colleges like CMTN would like to be a leader in green energy research and community partnership but lack the innovation funds to begin this crucial work.



The effects of climate change are already making an impact on the region⁴. Farmland in Terrace is generally drier now than it used to be. Like the rest of BC, northern BC suffers from more frequent extreme weather. Negative impacts to the growing season will result in less local food security.

Demographic Trends

The Indigenous youth population in BC is growing and with this growth comes a demand for Indigenized educational systems and curricula. CMTN is a leader in Indigenizing its services and offerings, and is ideally positioned to continue sharing with other institutions.

Climate-change-induced increases in natural disasters (floods, fires) may cause people to move to different areas, which would disrupt regional stability. If this were to happen it could negatively impact post-secondary teaching and learning practices. The need for justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI)-focused practices and approaches would likely increase as a result.

Social Trends

The pandemic created options in education, particularly for hybrid education and microcredentials for upskilling and reskilling. Going forward, people will redevelop themselves more than once as employees, and education will play an important role in people's career transitions.

As high-speed Internet comes to the North, it will allow for better in-community programming. At the same time, this development could pose a threat to the CMTN employee landscape. During the pandemic, many people resigned, retired, or realigned their work life. In March 2020, most people at the College did not want to work from home; by September 2021, most did and felt conflicted by the return to campus. The private sector will set the expectations for a public workforce, e.g. remote work, hybrid work, and pay scale. As a result, CMTN may face not only a staff recruitment issue, but a retention one, as well.

Without extreme and rapid government intervention, the housing crisis will continue to affect the entire province, including northern communities. The shortage of housing makes it difficult to attract qualified staff and instructors and, as current employees lose their rental housing, they could well move elsewhere.

There will be further recognition of the needs and benefits of engagement with Indigenous communities. In the coming years there will be more Indigenous control over industry, business, and traditional lands. Indigenous communities will want and need to train their people to support this growth.

Technological Trends

Information technology needs will continue to grow exponentially and post-secondary institutions will be expected to keep current with new trends. To fill the shortfall of practicum spots, virtual reality and artificial intelligence options could be leveraged.

⁴ <https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfd/pubs/Docs/Tr/Tr045.pdf>

and https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/natural-resource-stewardship/nrs-climate-change/applied-science/2a_va_bc-climate-change-final-aug30.pdf



Green energy and renewable resources will increase as a focus for communities throughout the province. Post-secondary institutions will be called on to provide training in these fields, including teaching the skills needed to install and maintain green energy systems.

Food sovereignty, i.e., the right of people to healthy and culturally-appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems, is likely to increase in importance. Here, as well, post-secondary institutions will be expected to keep abreast of and respond to new developments.

Question 8. How do you think the PSE system needs to evolve in response to those trends?

Decolonize and Indigenize

Post-secondary institutions that embrace the TRC 94 Calls to Action, UNDRIP, and DRIPA will need to make changes to much of their systems. Decolonizing an institution can mean re-examining the semester system, recognizing adult learners for their prior learning in a more robust way, rethinking entry requirements, creating more various opportunities for the display of knowledge and mastery of skill, and offering a budget for programming in community as opposed to allocating it to specific programs that are offered at a centralized location. Currently there are structures in place that make such change unwieldy, including collective agreements, articulation, and lack of training of how to decolonize systems.

The PSE system needs to train Indigenous in-community faculty for future teaching. This could be done by identifying potential instructors and working with communities to invest in their development. A long-term strategy will need to be developed to provide incentives for this type of change.

As Contact North BC receives more stable funding, it is possible to grow the number of access centres by adding them in regions that are in the geographic realm of other institutions. For example, Atlin, BC, is in the geographic region of Northern Lights College, but is very remote: it takes 14 hours to drive there from CMTN's Terrace campus and 16 hours from Northern Light's Dawson Creek campus. Partnering with communities that are remote from BC college campuses would provide an opportunity for even more learners to access BC post-secondary education.

Be Strategic and Modernize

The post-secondary education system could:

- Promote efficiencies across the province and knowledge-sharing between institutions. Institutions could share some services, such as information technology, human resources, finance, curriculum development, and staff training.
- Encourage the Post-Secondary Employers' Association (PSEA) to continue to offer the training it provides to institutions; CMTN was very appreciative of the training it received recently.
- Encourage other institutions, particularly those in the North, to see themselves as part of a whole, to offer programming in rotation and to advertise each other's offerings. Note that this does not mean amalgamation; this means a focus on collaboration.
- Provide incentives for institutions to offer programs in rotation with one another rather than repeating what is already being offered by a nearby institution.
- Create ways whereby post-secondary institutions can increase partnerships with other institutions and with



communities.

- Provide financial support to rural colleges for partnering with communities and industry to engage in applied research in key areas such as food sovereignty and renewable energy.
- Support Indigenous language revitalization and community leadership that are in alignment with government and reconciliation priorities.
- Explore new post-secondary education governance models to align federal, provincial, local, and Indigenous government interests.
- Remove some positions, such as information technology (IT), from the collective agreement at the provincial level. This would allow IT roles to offer a salary that is competitive. As well, it better reflects the nature of IT work, which can require significant overtime.
- Allow for market-rate increases for specific instructional positions, such as Trades instructors, so institutions can remain competitive with other employers.

Align with Labour Market Outlook

Align program offerings with the labour market outlook and develop a cohesive strategy for talking to economic development officers, education coordinators, and high schools about what work in these industries entails.

Create more “unicorn” programs, like the Health Career Access Program, to entice adults into roles that need to be filled and partner the institutions with industry. This kind of program makes it easy for students, as well as education coordinators and high school career counselors, to visualize the student’s pathway to a better job.

Determine how to “train two people” – it is not useful for a village of 1,000 to have 12 plumbers. The current model requires a certain number of students in a cohort to make it financially viable for either the college or the community purchasing the training. There is likely a way to collaborate regionally to train two students in each community in a given Trade or other college program to avoid unnecessary and uneconomical duplication.

Create a better funding model for the Industry Training Authority (ITA). ITA funding remains the same whether it is per seat or per week; it does not increase to allow for in-community education. ITA funding covers the instructional costs but not increases to ancillary costs such as slumber, fuel, tools, and supplies.

Question 9. How does your institution need to evolve in response to those trends?

Experiment and Learn

Allocate base funding from retirements and resignations to rotating programming in communities.

Provide the government with viable options for the future of Contact North BC, either to maintain or evolve into an enhanced model.

Whenever possible, cooperate with other institutions, particularly those in the North, to form partnerships, share knowledge, and advertise each other’s offerings.

Promote lifelong learning and develop a means to stack learning for credentials. For example, a series of microcredentials plus a one-year certificate might be considered as a diploma.



Enhance and broaden the College's use of microcredentials between programs, over and above using them as a means for students to enter programs.

Pursue the creation of co-operative opportunities with local businesses to fill some of the labour shortages for lower-skilled jobs.

Continue to use the College's metrics for the strategic plan and the strategic enrolment plan, and develop metrics for Indigenization and alignment with the labour market outlook.

Embrace Technological Solutions

Increase the use of simulation training for work-integrated learning where local, in-community placements are not available.

Question 10. Considering the above, what modifications to the funding formula would you recommend?

Institutions serving multiple rural and remote communities should be funded differently than their urban counterparts to enable them to provide services that are more expensive as a result of their location. Funding should take into account geographic size, remoteness, and population base. The funding formula should also aim for fairness – each student in the province should have an equitable learning and support experience. The current funding model does not support that.

The provision of services by northern institutions is more expensive than for their southern counterparts. Students in the Northcoast/Nechako region are more spread out and more tied to community than in larger, more urban areas. The full-time equivalent (FTE) model only works if its calculation takes into account CMTN's commitment to serve the chronically underserved. In addition to the cost of training, the College provides housing and a large number of wrap-around supports (e.g., First Nations access coordinators, accessibility services, learning assistance specialists, mental health supports, tutoring services), all of which require funding. CMTN does not want to be the weak link in the post-secondary chain, which could happen if things like cybersecurity and quality of programming are underfunded because of other priorities.

Many students who apply to the College have either not completed high school or they have graduated but lack a grade 12 level of literacy and numeracy. The College welcomes them all and ladders them into the PSE system; however, this kind of upgrading and teaching is both challenging and expensive. It costs more to find, welcome, and support a student to success in the rural Northwest than it does in urban centres.

The funding formula needs to be changed to provide financial incentives so CMTN and other institutions can engage in the activities the government wants: inter-institutional collaboration, in-community programming, and reconciliation. The formula should also take into consideration wrap-around costs that are not covered, such as increases to management salaries, which are needed to attract and retain committed professionals, and the number of positions required to support student success and completion rates.

Amalgamation

While amalgamation may provide some cost-effectiveness, the resulting institution would not be big enough or responsive enough to deal with the evolving and rapidly changing needs of each region. CNC's focus is on the



north-central region, while NLC is in the northeast; both are very different from the northwest region served by CMTN. These are three distinct economic regions with different needs and resources, and each institution is ideally placed to meet the unique needs of the region within which it is located.

The student transition rate and local program specializations would not change with amalgamation. If anything, amalgamation would negatively impact programs and service delivery in the short-term and potentially the longer term, as well. Delivering the same programs would yield no cost savings beyond IT, library, and registration services.

There are few efficiencies to be gained by joining a college with a university, e.g., different library catalogues are required, UNBC uses Banner while the Colleges use Colleague. UNBC is a research-intensive university, with a structure and governance that serve this purpose and mandate. The University does not have a rich history of offering programming in community and lacks the robust student supports that CMTN has and that its students need.

Amalgamation would mean a loss of jobs at all four remote CMTN campuses and would lead to an inevitable withering on the vine of the remaining (Terrace) campus. UNBC Terrace has not had onsite programming in a regular way and, in 2018, attempts to form a partnership with CMTN to offer a Business degree were rebuffed by the Prince George campus.

CMTN has made much progress in implementing meaningful reconciliation. The College has spent the last 25 years working with its First Nations Council to establish Indigenous governance and to build relationships with the Indigenous communities served by the College. Amalgamation would disrupt the results of these 25 years of progress and reconciliation work at CMTN. Indigenous Nations and cultures are not the same across the North – Northwest Coastal Indigenous communities have different cultures and governance structures than the Northeast and Central Nations, which are served by other northern institutions. Amalgamation would benefit neither the Northwest Coastal Indigenous communities nor their established governance structures; it will disrupt existing systems, partnerships, and relationships, and provide fewer opportunities for CMTN to serve these communities. Furthermore, CNC and NLC have huge numbers of international students, which would disturb CMTN's focus on Indigenous students.

Funding

If CMTN had more money the College would:

- Continue another three years of Contact North BC leadership, either as a second three-year pilot or as an enhanced version of the existing pilot.
- Invest in technology-support programs identified in the labour market outlook that the College does not currently offer. Offering these programs would be a huge benefit to the area.
- Invest in leadership and management training (potentially through Continuing Education) to meet labour market outlook skill demands.
- Offer more in-community programming by having new money allocated for rotating programs using the mobile Trades training trailer unit. For example, the Social Service Worker Certificate and Mental Health and Addictions Certificate could be offered each year in a different community.
- Fund reconciliation activities in a meaningful, planned way.



Appendix A: The Economic Value of Coast Mountain College (EMSI)⁵ Executive Summary

Economic Impact Analysis

During the analysis year, CMTN spent \$22.2 million on payroll and benefits for 221 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees, and spent another \$12 million on goods and services to carry out its day-to-day operations. This initial round of spending creates more spending across other businesses throughout the regional economy, resulting in the commonly referred to multiplier effects. This analysis estimates the net economic impact of CMTN, directly taking into account the fact that local dollars spent on CMTN could have been spent elsewhere in Northcoast/Nechako⁶ if not directed towards CMTN and would have created impacts regardless. We account for this by estimating the impacts that would have been created from the alternative spending and subtracting the alternative impacts from the spending impacts of CMTN.

This analysis shows that in fiscal year (FY) 2019-20, CMTN's operations and student spending, together with the enhanced productivity of its alumni, generated **\$138.9 million** in added income for the Northcoast/Nechako economy. The additional income of \$138.9 million is approximately equal to **3.5%** of the region's gross regional product (GRP). For perspective, this impact from the college is larger than the entire Accommodation & Food Services industry in the region. The impact of \$138.9 million is equivalent to supporting **1,532 jobs**. For further perspective, this means that **one out of every 25 jobs** in Northcoast/Nechako is supported by the activities of CMTN and its students. These economic impacts break down as follows:

Operations spending impact

Payroll and benefits to support CMTN's day-to-day operations amounted to \$22.2 million. The college's non-pay expenditures amounted to \$12 million. The net impact of CMTN's payroll and expenses toward day-to-day operations in Northcoast/Nechako was approximately **\$31.5 million** in added income in FY 2019-20. This is equivalent to supporting **348 jobs**.

Student spending impact

Around 11% of students, originated from outside Northcoast/Nechako, and many of these students relocated to the region to attend CMTN. In addition, some students are residents of Northcoast/Nechako who would have left the region if not for the existence of CMTN. The money that these relocated and retained students spent at local businesses toward living expenses is attributable to CMTN. These expenditures added approximately **\$6.6 million** in income to the Northcoast/Nechako economy in FY 2019-20. This is equivalent to supporting **115 jobs**.

Alumni impact

Over the years, students have studied at CMTN and entered or re-entered the regional workforce. Their enhanced skills and abilities bolster the output of local employers, leading to higher regional income and a more robust economy. The accumulated contribution of former students of CMTN who were employed in the regional workforce in FY 2019-20 amounted to **\$100.8 million** in added income in the Northcoast/Nechako economy. This is equivalent to supporting **1,069 jobs**.

⁵ The Economic Value of Coast Mountain College, Main Report, Coast Mountain College, August 2021

⁶ For the purposes of this analysis, Northcoast/Nechako is comprised of parts of the Nechako/Bulkley Valley and North Coast census divisions.



Appendix B: North Coast and Nechako Labour Market Report⁷

| Occupation | Job Openings to 2031 |
|---|----------------------|
| Retail and wholesale trade managers (NOC 0621) | 352 |
| Social and community service workers (NOC 4212) | 265 |
| Administrative officers (NOC 1221) | 238 |
| General office support workers (NOC 1411) | 237 |
| Accounting technicians and bookkeepers (NOC 1311) | 215 |
| Nurse aides, orderlies and patient service associates (NOC 3413) | 181 |
| Program leaders and instructors in recreation, sport and fitness (NOC 5254) | 158 |
| Railway conductors and brakemen/women (NOC 7362) | 136 |
| Administrative assistants (NOC 1241) | 135 |
| Railway and yard locomotive engineers (NOC 7361) | 133 |
| Facility operation and maintenance managers (NOC 0714) | 116 |
| Managers in transportation (NOC 0731) | 107 |
| Accounting and related clerks (NOC 1431) | 98 |
| Air pilots, flight engineers and flying instructors (NOC 2271) | 91 |
| Construction managers (NOC 0711) | 88 |
| Electronic service technicians (household and business equipment) (NOC 2242) | 86 |
| Home building and renovation managers (NOC 0712) | 84 |
| Supervisors, supply chain, tracking and scheduling co-ordination occupations (NOC 1215) | 71 |
| Police officers (except commissioned) (NOC 4311) | 67 |

⁷ https://www.workbc.ca/getmedia/c43af36f-f408-4990-9ae1-c5b5f5f7be7a/BC_Labour_Market_Outlook_2021_9MB.pdf.aspx



| Occupation | Job Openings to 2031 |
|--|----------------------|
| <u>Computer network technicians (NOC 2281)</u> | 64 |
| <u>Dispatchers (NOC 1525)</u> | 64 |
| <u>Managers in agriculture (NOC 0821)</u> | 62 |
| <u>User support technicians (NOC 2282)</u> | 61 |
| <u>Power engineers and power systems operators (NOC 9241)</u> | 59 |
| <u>Civil engineering technologists and technicians (NOC 2231)</u> | 58 |
| <u>Electrical and electronics engineering technologists and technicians (NOC 2241)</u> | 56 |
| <u>Paramedical occupations (NOC 3234)</u> | 56 |
| <u>Production logistics coordinators (NOC 1523)</u> | 46 |
| <u>Supervisors, mail and message distribution occupations (NOC 1214)</u> | 42 |
| <u>Property administrators (NOC 1224)</u> | 32 |
| <u>Managers in customer and personal services (NOC 0651)</u> | 32 |
| <u>Other assisting occupations in support of health services (NOC 3414)</u> | 31 |
| <u>Supervisors, petroleum, gas and chemical processing and utilities (NOC 9212)</u> | 29 |
| <u>Supervisors, motor transport and other ground transit operators (NOC 7305)</u> | 29 |
| <u>Retail and wholesale buyers (NOC 6222)</u> | 26 |
| <u>Licensed practical nurses (NOC 3233)</u> | 26 |
| <u>Deck officers, water transport (NOC 2273)</u> | 25 |
| <u>Manufacturing managers (NOC 0911)</u> | 25 |

