
Strategic Mandate Agreement (2014-17)

Between:

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

&

Sault College of Applied Arts and Technology



ONTARIO'S VISION FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Ontario's colleges and universities will drive creativity, innovation, knowledge, and community engagement through teaching and research. They will put students first by providing the best possible learning experience for all qualified learners in an affordable and financially sustainable way, ensuring high quality and globally competitive outcomes for students and Ontario's creative economy.

SAULT COLLEGE VISION/MANDATE

Vision

We will make our society a better place by providing a transformative life experience through empowering those who study with us to think and learn in progressive, innovative ways, including those we have not yet imagined.

PREAMBLE

This Strategic Mandate Agreement between the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (the Ministry) and Sault College of Applied Arts and Technology (the College) outlines the role the College currently performs in the postsecondary education system and how it will build on its current strengths to achieve its vision and help drive system-wide objectives articulated by the Ministry's Differentiation Policy Framework.

The Strategic Mandate Agreement (SMA):

- Identifies the College's existing institutional strengths;
- Supports the current vision, mission, and mandate of the College within the context of the *Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act, 2002*, and outlines how the College's priorities align with Ontario's vision and Differentiation Policy Framework; and
- Informs Ministry decision making through greater alignment of Ministry policies and processes to further support and guide the College's areas of strength.

The term of the SMA is from April 1, 2014, to March 31, 2017. The SMA proposal submitted by the College to the Ministry has been used to inform the SMA and is appended to the agreement.

The agreement may be amended in the event of substantive policy or program changes that would significantly affect commitments made in the SMA. Any such amendment would be mutually agreed to in writing, dated, and signed by both signatories.

SAULT COLLEGE KEY AREAS OF DIFFERENTIATION

Sault College is focused on serving the Northern Ontario Region with an emphasis on the Sault Ste. Marie and Algoma communities. Sault College contributes to the livelihood of the region and its economic development by providing access to comprehensive, career-oriented education in the areas of applied arts, business, health care, and community services.

The College provides programming in niche areas, including health, engineering technology, environmental studies, and aviation (pilot training), that respond to labour market needs, and are focused on future technologies and demands.

ALIGNMENT WITH THE DIFFERENTIATION POLICY FRAMEWORK

The following outlines areas of strength agreed upon by the College and the Ministry, and the alignment of these areas of strength with the Ministry's Differentiation Policy Framework.

1. JOBS, INNOVATION, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This component highlights institutions' collaborative work with employers, community partners, and regions, or at a global level, to establish their role in fostering social and economic development, and serving the needs of the economy and labour market.

1.1 Areas of Institutional Strength

Sault College focuses on jobs, innovation, and economic development in the areas of:

- Collaborative work with community partners, including Aboriginal communities, and local and international corporations to connect educational experiences with the private sector.
- Learners develop knowledge through authentic work experiences, along with specialized training, to support socio-economic development in the North and increased graduation rates for underrepresented student populations.
- Sault College has an active Applied Research Centre, which is engaged in projects with N-Sci Technologies Inc., Back in Motion Management Inc., GlobalAutoService Inc., and LifeLabs Medical Laboratory Services.

1.2 Additional Comments

- 2012-13 Ministry data notes a strong employment rate of 84.9% (above the sector average of 83.1%) and an employment rate in a related field of 41.9% (below the sector average of 45.1%).

1.3 Metrics

Institutional Metrics	System-Wide Metrics ¹
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community component in all programs measured by participation rates• Accessible community-based training, particularly for Aboriginal students, measured by Aboriginal student in-community contact hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Graduate employment rates• Employer satisfaction rates• Number of graduates employed full-time in a related job

2. TEACHING AND LEARNING

This component captures institutional strengths in program delivery methods that expand learning options for students, and improve their learning experience and career preparedness. This may include, but is not limited to, experiential learning, online learning, entrepreneurial learning, work integrated learning, and international exchange opportunities.

2.1 Areas of Institutional Strength

Sault College offers programs through a number of delivery methods, including:

- Practical learning is infused in all programming. For example, Natural Environment/Outdoor Studies students participate in extended field camp and community/industry projects.
- The College places significant emphasis on accessible education, community-based learning, industry partnerships, labour market responsive programming, and applied learning.
- The College offers a number of technology enabled learning opportunities for students and experiential learning through problem-based instruction in community-based learning environments, including simulations in Aviation, Nursing, and Automotive.
- Sault College offers a college-wide, mandatory general education course in Global Citizenship, which connects students with a global or community partner.

¹ Additional system-wide metrics focused on applied research, commercialization, entrepreneurial activity, and community impact will be developed in consultation with the sector.

2.2 Additional Comments

- 2012-13 data indicates high student satisfaction with the overall learning experience (86.2%, the highest rate among colleges) and preparedness for future careers (91.1%, the second highest among colleges).
- 2012-13 data notes a lower than average graduation rate (62.0%, below the sector average of 64.8%).
- The Ministry notes that, while serving a diverse student population, the College has performed in the mid-range with respect to retention rates.
- Based on system-wide metrics, in 2012-13 Sault College had a low number of elearning courses (149) and a relatively low number of elearning registrants (853).

Institutional Strategies

- The College is planning to provide more opportunities for short-term certificates, defined pathways to postsecondary diplomas, blended learning approaches (in person and online), and experiential learning in simulated and work site placements.
- All programs are moving toward a community-based project component.
- The College is planning to improve student success and access by implementing flexible program delivery schedules and models, and focusing on program completions for non-traditional students. The College reports that the graduation rate for 2013-14 is 67.5%.
- The College is implementing a Student Success Strategy, supported by a Student Success Advisor, to focus on addressing retention/graduation rates.

2.3 Metrics

Institutional Metrics	System-Wide Metrics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of programs with applied learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Satisfaction Survey results • Graduation rates • Retention rates • Number of students enrolled in a co-op program at institution • Number of online course registrants, programs, and courses at institution

3. STUDENT POPULATION

This component recognizes the unique institutional missions that improve access, retention, and success for underrepresented groups (Aboriginal, first generation, students with disabilities) and francophones. This component also highlights other important student groups that institutions serve that link to their institutional strength. This may include, but is not limited to, international students, mature students, or indirect entrants.

3.1 Areas of Institutional Strength

Sault College focuses on improving access and success for underrepresented groups in the areas of:

- Sault College serves a diverse and distinct set of learners, helping to support access for Aboriginal, first generation and other non-traditional student populations.
- Sault College is a leader in developing practical and innovative programming that supports Aboriginal learners across disciplines, including:
 - An active Aboriginal Education Council.
 - A number of student services ranging from well-being to academic.
 - An active Native Student Council and participation in the Metis Nation of Ontario's Infinite Reach program.
- The Community Integration through Cooperative Education program supports individuals with intellectual disabilities and/or learning challenges.
- Sault College is a strong member of the Algoma University Crown Ward Championship Team, and has developed partnerships and supports for Crown Wards.

3.2 Additional Comments

- The Ministry notes Sault College's strength in serving Aboriginal learners, including implementing on-reserve engagement strategies.
 - 2012-13 data indicates a high number of full-time Aboriginal students as a proportion of total enrolment (20.3%, in the top quartile among all colleges) and students with disabilities as a proportion of total enrolment (21.9%, in the top quartile among all colleges).
- 2012-13 data notes a moderate number of full-time first generation students as a proportion of total enrolment (29.3%, slightly below the sector average of 30.3%) and proportion of students receiving OSAP (63.4%, below the sector average of 67.2%).

Institutional Strategies

- The College plans to develop and implement an Aboriginal Centre of Excellence to continue to support postsecondary education attainment.

3.3 Metrics

Institutional Metrics	System-Wide Metrics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of students accessing counselling support services, including Aboriginal counselling and advising services. • Participation rate of eligible students who are Crown Wards. • Persistence of eligible students who are Crown Wards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and proportion of Aboriginal, first generation, students with disabilities, and francophone students at an institution • Number and proportion of international students enrolled in Ontario (as reported in annual institutional enrolment reporting) • Proportion of an institution's enrolment that receives OSAP

4. PROGRAM OFFERINGS

This component articulates the breadth of programming, enrolment, and credentials offered, along with program areas of institutional strength/specialization, including any vocationally oriented mandates. This component also recognizes institutions that provide bilingual and/or French-language programming for students.

4.1 Areas of Institutional Strength

Current program areas of strength include:

1. Aviation – Flight
2. Natural Environment: Forestry, Fish & Wildlife
3. Health Sciences
4. Engineering Technology
5. Business, including Information Technology, Hospitality & Culinary
6. Native Education
7. Applied Arts (Community Services, Media, Design, Justice Studies, Public Relations)
8. Apprenticeship & Skilled Trades

Proposed program areas for growth include:

1. Aerospace
2. Engineering Technology
3. Health Sciences
4. Applied Arts
5. Native Education

4.2 Additional Comments

- The Ministry notes that the College plans to expand in its areas of strength by 12 new and expanded programs that are generally supported by outcomes and program infrastructure, particularly in the areas of Aerospace, Engineering Technology, and Native Education (Residential Construction and Aboriginal Justice).
- The Ministry notes that Sault College has built a new academic facility for its Police and Justice programs, to support the Algoma Districts' high concentration of forces including RCMP, OPP, municipal and Aboriginal Policing, and the international border labour market.
- With respect to its Media and Design program, the Ministry notes Sault College's plans to monitor the trends in the Information and Communications Technology and media sectors, and develop and refine programming to match student and industry demands. The Ministry notes that the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation has supported Sault Ste. Marie as a film production destination, and that the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario cites support for postsecondary education and training in digital media.
- In the event the College requests funding approval to expand its Media and Design Programs, the Ministry will require additional information elements (e.g., student demand and labour market analysis).

Institutional Strategies

- The Ministry notes the College's plans to intensify its aviation expertise via enhancement of the Aerospace Canada International brand.

4.3 Metrics

Institutional Metrics	System-Wide Metrics
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No institution specific metrics currently identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proportion of enrolment at colleges by occupational cluster and by credential• Institution's system share of enrolment by occupational cluster and by credential• Number of apprentices in each trade

5. INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATION TO SUPPORT STUDENT MOBILITY

This component profiles partnerships between institutions that ensure students have access to a continuum of learning opportunities in a coordinated system. This may include, but is not limited to, credit transfer pathways and collaborative or joint programs between or within sectors.

5.1 Areas of Institutional Strength

Sault College focuses on improving collaboration, pathways, and student mobility in the areas of:

- Sault College is actively involved in creating transfers and student mobility options with other institutions, including Algoma University, Fanshawe College, Humber College, and Lake Superior State University.
- Sault College, along with the five other Northern colleges, participates in the Northern Colleges Collaboration, an initiative that is committed to improve sharing in the development and delivery of curriculum, courses, programs, and learner support services, as well as professional development opportunities.

5.2 Additional Comments

- As of 2012-13, Sault College had 16 formal college-to-college pathways with Humber College and 15 formal college-to-university pathways with Algoma University and Lakehead University; in 2013-14 there are 17 additional pathways with Western University and the University of Ontario Institute of Technology.
- In 2012-13, there were 59 Sault College graduates in Algoma University pathway programs; in 2013-14 there are 65 graduates in these pathway programs.

Institutional Strategies

- The Ministry notes that Sault College and Algoma University are discussing a number of joint initiatives to improve programming, pathways, and service delivery, and encourages this continued collaboration.

5.3 Metrics

Institutional Metrics	System-Wide Metrics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of initiatives with local school boards • Academic upgrading-to-college conversion rates • 'Upgrade for the trades' participation rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of college and university pathways and/or articulation agreements (college-college, college-university, university-college) • Number of transfer applicants and registrants • Number of college graduates enrolled in university programs

ASPIRATIONS

The Ministry recognizes the importance of supporting institutions to evolve and acknowledges the strategic aspirations of its postsecondary education institutions; the SMA is not intended to capture all decisions and issues in the postsecondary education system, as many will be addressed through the Ministry's policies and standard processes.

a) Expanded Credentials

The Ministry has noted the College's aspirations to be treated equitably within the Ontario college sector, including granting three year degrees if colleges are awarded this authority. This issue will be examined as part of the Ministry's policy review of Ontario's credential options. The Ministry has also noted the College's desire to offer a standalone Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing; however, any decision on this issue will be made only following the tripartite work currently underway.

b) Capital Expansion

The Ministry has noted the College's plans to build a new Institute for Energy and Environmental Studies that aligns with local resources and industry, as Sault Ste Marie has been positioned as the Alternative Energy Capital of North America. Requests for capital project funding are outside the scope of the SMA process. However, future capital projects should be aligned with the College's areas of strength highlighted in its SMA. Decisions regarding approval and/or funding for capital projects will be made within the context of the Ministry's long-term capital planning process and the Major Capacity Expansion Policy Framework, released December 20th, 2013.

c) Apprenticeship Changes

The college has indicated plans to establish a Centre for Apprenticeship to offer more in-class instruction, and to implement new delivery models as part of its commitment to apprenticeship and the skilled trades. The Ministry is currently undertaking efforts to modernize Ontario's apprenticeship administration and any decisions will be made within this context.

ENROLMENT GROWTH

The strategic enrolment and planning exercise is in the context of a public commitment in the 2011 Budget to increase postsecondary education enrolment by 60,000 additional students over 2010-11 levels. This government has demonstrated a longstanding commitment to ensuring access to postsecondary education for all qualified students.

Sault College's planned enrolment forecast as expressed in this baseline eligible enrolment scenario is considered reasonable and in line with Ministry expectations, based on the current and projected demographic and fiscal environments.

Projected Eligible Full-Time Headcounts

Level	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Certificate/Diploma	2,200	2361	2,424
Degree	220	218	211
Sault Total	2,420	2,579	2,635

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Ministry and the College recognize that financial sustainability and accountability are critical to achieving institutional mandates and realizing Ontario's vision for the postsecondary education system. To this end, it is agreed that:

- It is the responsibility of the governing board and Senior Administrators of the College to identify, track, and address financial pressures and sustainability issues. At the same time, the Ministry has a financial stewardship role. The Ministry and the College agree to work collaboratively to achieve the common goal of financial sustainability, and to ensure that Ontarians have access to a full range of affordable, high-quality postsecondary education options, now and in the future; and
- The College remains accountable to the Ministry with respect to effective and efficient use of resources to maximize the value and impact of investments made in the postsecondary education system.

The Ministry and the College agree to use the following metrics to assess the financial health and sustainability of the institution:

1. Annual surplus/deficit
2. Accumulated surplus/deficit
3. Net Assets to Expense Ratio
4. Debt Servicing Ratio
5. Quick Ratio
6. Debt to Asset Ratio
7. Net Income to Revenue Ratio

The Ministry notes the College's plans to proceed with an Enterprise Resource Planning Alliance with Niagara College to improve sustainability, mobility, data, and partnerships.

MINISTRY/GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS

Over time, the Ministry commits to align many of its policy, process, and funding levers with the Differentiation Policy Framework and SMAs in order to support the strengths of institutions and implement differentiation. To this end, the Ministry will:

- Engage with both the college and university sectors around potential changes to the funding formula, beginning with the university sector in 2014-15;
- Update the college and university program funding approval process to improve transparency and align with institutional strengths as outlined in the SMAs;
- Streamline reporting requirements across Ministry business lines with the goals of (1) creating greater consistency of reporting requirements across separate initiatives, (2) increasing automation of reporting processes, and (3) reducing the amount of data required from institutions without compromising accountability. In the interim, the Multi-Year Accountability Report Backs will be adjusted and used as the annual reporting mechanism for metrics set out in the SMAs;
- Consult on the definition, development, and utilization of metrics;
- Undertake a review of Ontario's credential options; and
- Continue the work of the Nursing Tripartite Committee.

The Ministry and the College are committed to continuing to work together to:

- Support student access, quality, and success;
- Drive creativity, innovation, knowledge, and community engagement through teaching and research;
- Increase the competitiveness of Ontario's postsecondary education system;
- Focus the strengths of Ontario's institutions; and
- Maintain a financially sustainable postsecondary education system.

SIGNED for and on behalf of the
Ministry of Training, Colleges and
Universities by:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY
Deborah Newman
Deputy Minister

April 3, 2014
Date

SIGNED for and on behalf of Sault
College of Applied Arts and
Technology by:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY
Dr. Ronald Common
President

April 20, 2014
Date

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY
Carla Fabbro
Chair, Board of Governors

April 24, 2014
Date