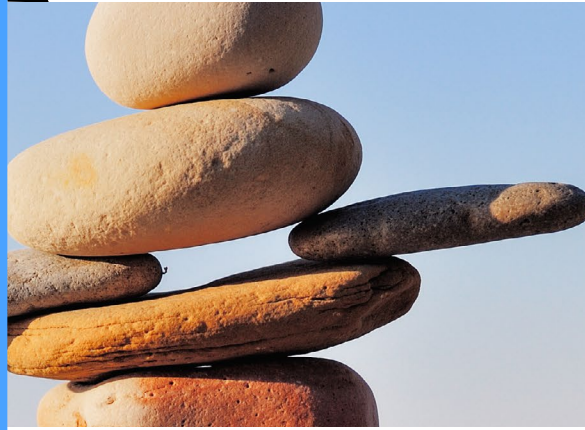


LEVERAGING NATIONAL RESOURCES TO CULTIVATE A LOCAL SKILLED WORKFORCE



A recent labour market forecast from the Conference Board of Canada reports that the Northwest Territories (NWT) has the potential for substantial economic growth between now and 2030, but the territory is facing a significant challenge of workforce readiness. In order for the NWT to be competitive and maintain a strong economy, it must address gaps in education and skills development, as many future jobs will require either a college certificate or university degree. One field with a great need for highly skilled workers is health care, specifically nursing.

In a sparsely populated territory spanning a wide geographical area with few institutions of higher learning, filling those workforce gaps is a challenge that requires innovative solutions.

NATIONAL COLLABORATION WITH LOCAL IMPACT

To meet this challenge, Aurora College created a program in partnership with the University of Victoria that allows NWT students to obtain a nursing degree from the University of Victoria without ever leaving the North. Canada's National Research and Education Network (NREN) and its provincial and territorial partners make this possible.

The powerful digital infrastructure provided by the NREN's 12 provincial and territorial partners and CANARIE connects researchers and educators across Canada with the goal of fostering innovation and excellence that crosses geographical and technical boundaries. This is especially important in Northern Canada, where vast geographic expanses and inclement weather make travel and face-to-face collaboration difficult.

The Bachelor of Science in Nursing program delivered at Aurora College in Yellowknife and accredited through the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing was developed to address the unique needs, culture, and infrastructure of the North while fulfilling all the rigorous

requirements of a Bachelor's degree. This required regular and extensive collaboration between professors, instructors, and researchers who connected to each other via the NREN to develop the program. Faculty were able to create curriculum and generate course work — often using video conferencing— all while remaining in classrooms, labs, and offices over 2,000 km away from the NWT.

WHAT IS THE NREN?

The National Research and Education Network (NREN) is an essential collective of infrastructure, tools and people that bolsters Canadian leadership in research, education, and innovation. CANARIE and its twelve provincial and territorial partners form Canada's NREN. We connect Canada's researchers, educators, and innovators to each other and to data, technology, and colleagues around the world.



BALANCING PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY NEEDS

NWT students who take the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program attend classes locally at Aurora College. Removing a requirement for students to travel outside of the Northwest Territories in order for them to receive an education is crucial in the North, since travel can be prohibitively expensive and often perilous during the winter. For some students, leaving their community in the North can bring on culture shock. The small communities they leave behind also feel the loss of a valued resident whose skills may be essential to the wellbeing of the residents.

This four-year degree program is now considered one of Aurora College's most successful.

CULTIVATING HOME-GROWN TALENT

While education continues to present some unique needs in the North, the NREN and its partner Aurora College allow NWT communities to develop creative solutions to cultivate a highly skilled local workforce. Newly registered nurses benefit from employment opportunities at new healthcare facilities such as the Stanton Territorial Hospital in Yellowknife and the Denínu Kúé Health and Social Services Centre at Fort Resolution. The NREN also allows Aurora College to compete for students with larger academic institutions. Students no longer have to travel to obtain diplomas and degrees and Northern communities can retain and benefit from local talent.

For more information, visit:

AURORACOLLEGE.NT.CA

