

Investigation of Professional Development Utilization in Northern Colleges

Prepared for:

**Northern Labour Market Information Clearinghouse
Northern Alberta Development Council**

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Preface

The Northern Labour Market Information Clearinghouse has initiated this study to investigate the utilization of professional development (PD) across three Alberta northern colleges. Professional development can be in-house training or external scholarly activities such as attending conferences, presenting papers or taking online courses or programs. Ongoing learning is essential to ensure that college staff maintain and enhance their knowledge and skill sets needed to deliver course and programs to students in different learning environments.

The consultant examined and describes the environment – demographic trends in northern Alberta, student numbers, a continuing competence model, and trends affecting colleges in the north. A review of the literature, both on professional development in the colleges, and PD related to educational technology in post-secondary institutions, was completed. The applications of learning / educational technologies, the forces for and against technology use, and technology initiatives in the participating colleges are discussed. The study analyzed the college staff characteristics and their utilization of professional development.

The consultant would like to thank the many people that assisted and provided data for this project. Thanks to the Northern Labour Market Information Clearinghouse and NADC for providing direction, input and feedback regarding the study. We also wish to thank the college staff who took time to complete the online survey, provide detailed comments regarding their professional development activities and participate in the focus groups. We greatly appreciate the assistance of the three colleges' contacts who assisted us in getting to the right people to provide the data we needed to complete this study.

Finally, we want to state that the views, opinions and recommendations in this report are the sole responsibility of the consultant, and do not necessarily represent the official positions of the Northern Labour Market Information Clearinghouse, NADC, Northern Lakes College, Keyano College or Grande Prairie Regional College.

Russell Sawchuk
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March 24, 2010

Executive Summary

The Northern Labour Market Information Clearinghouse initiative contracted Steppingstones Partnership Inc. to conduct a research study to assess the utilization of professional development and educational technologies in three post-secondary institutions in northern Alberta, i.e., Grande Prairie Regional College (Grande Prairie and Fairview campuses), Keyano College and Northern Lakes College.

The first phase of the project was to conduct an environmental scan. According to Alberta government projections, the number of people in the 17 to 29 year old category is expected to remain relatively level over the next few years. Student enrolments (FLE) in the three participating colleges have decreased by 5% over the last six years. Enrolments are projected to remain stable or show a slight increase over the next three years.

Females account for 74% of students at Grande Prairie, 69% at Northern Lakes and 49% at Keyano College. This compares to 61% for other Alberta colleges, and 55% for all post-secondary institutions in the province. The average age of students at GPRC is 25 years, with students somewhat older at Keyano (28 years) and Northern Lakes (29 years). The average age of all post-secondary students in Alberta is 26 years.

A literature review was undertaken to identify the important factors in successful professional development programs. Some of these were: getting staff input regarding the PD needs; incorporating flexible scheduling and various delivery options; and, providing access to online resources, such as tutorials, for continued, self-paced support. Ways to offer professional development on a limited budget were also identified and are included in this report.

Faculty members all over are being pressured to integrate technology into their instructional activities. The pressure is coming from administrators trying to keep up with new technological advances, from students who are becoming increasingly insistent that technology be part of their education, and colleagues who are considered innovators of instructional technology and are eager to spread its advantages to laggards.

The research shows that many faculty PD programs for educational technology fail to make significant changes to teaching itself. This is because they focus on the technical side of teaching online, breaking it down into skill sets rather than addressing pedagogy. For teaching to change to accommodate the fundamentally different online environment, faculty professional development also needs to change.

While it is still important to develop skills sets, especially around technology, it is also important to consider faculty role changes, a shift toward student-centred teaching, and different basic values and assumptions about teaching. It cannot be assumed that faculty with experience teaching face-to-face in the classroom can move seamlessly to successful teaching online. Faculty need training and support to teach online or via distance education.

There are powerful forces and obstacles opposing the adoption of educational technologies in post-secondary institutions. Some of these include: need to develop a new set of staff competencies; significant additional costs for hardware, software, infrastructure and support; time, that is already scarce, to develop and implement technology-supported instruction; amount of work required to develop quality online courses and programs; and, questions as to the efficacy of online instruction compared to face-to-face, small class instruction.

An online survey was conducted with the staff at Grande Prairie and Keyano Colleges regarding their views on current PD programs and desired changes. The survey findings show that most respondent (80%) were satisfied with their own professional development with about two-thirds being satisfied with PD opportunities at their college. Most recent professional development activities took place either on-campus or within Alberta.

Workshops, seminars and conferences were the most common formal professional development activities. Internet research, journals, speakers, meetings, books and committees were the most frequently mentioned sources of informal professional development.

The professional development priorities were leadership and management for the administration group; content and work expertise for the faculty and student support groups; and, technology used in work for the admin support group.

A high percentage of the survey respondents felt that their professional development offered excellent value, was effective, and was applicable to their work. For faculty, most said the PD they took applied to their instruction as well.

Workshops, seminars and conferences are the preferred methods for doing professional development. A single one-day workshop was the most preferred length for a formal professional development activity. Short workshops and release time for projects were the preferred approaches to informal professional development.

The barriers to professional development mentioned by the survey respondents were heavy workloads, shortage of time, and distance from PD events. In terms of desired incentives to encourage more professional development, certificates and recognition were most mentioned by admin, student support and admin support; faculty wanted more release time.

When asked about they liked about professional development at their institutions, staff said that funds were available for PD, the freedom and flexibility in choosing and using the PD funds, and the fact that PD was encouraged and supported at their college. The top suggestions on how to improve the professional development programs at their institutions were more funding, release time to take PD, a greater variety and timing for PD events, and more on-campus learning opportunities.

The professional development survey also provided information related to the utilization of learning technologies at Grande Prairie and Keyano Colleges. E-mail, PowerPoint, business software and videos/multimedia were the most frequently used technologies at the two participating institutions.

Some 43% of administrators and 46% of faculty were somewhat or very interested in developing and delivering online / distance education courses and programs. The reasons given by respondents as to their lack of interest in online courses were: no time, little knowledge / expertise, not appropriate to their content, and they could see no significant benefits in doing so. The top reasons given for some or a lot of interest in developing online courses were to expand their knowledge / expertise, develop marketable skills, enable more students to take their courses, and they saw significant benefits in doing so.

The main topics of interest in designing online courses were converting traditional courses, choosing the right technologies, and developing and using assessment tools. Most frequently mentioned topics of interest related to online course delivery were managing relationships with students, giving feedback on assignments, and managing the teaching workloads. The top three topics of interest in the administration of online courses were keeping students informed, evaluating courses effectiveness, and using the learning management system (LMS).

The greatest perceived barriers to greater use of educational technologies at the institutions were heavy workloads and shortage of time, costs and funding, and lack of knowledge / skills among the faculty.

In terms of the preferred ways to learn about how to use educational technologies, the preferred methods were similar to general professional development, i.e., workshops, seminars, conferences and face-to-face training.

The study identified and discusses a number of opportunities, challenges and issues related to professional development and greater utilization of learning technologies at the colleges. Some of the issues mentioned include: definition of professional development; clarification of roles and responsibilities; whether professional development should be mandatory; how much freedom should individual staff members have in choosing their PD; whether learning plans should be required; how learning needs should be identified; how PD programs and activities should be monitored, evaluated and reported; and, what accountability systems should be put in place.

Finally, this report makes a number of recommendations for ways to improve and enhance the planning, administration and operation of profession development programs and activities. Suggestions are also provided as to how to encourage, facilitate and advance the use of learning technologies at the northern colleges.

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1. Introduction

The Northern Labour Market Information Clearinghouse initiative is interested in conducting a research study to assess the utilization of professional development (PD) in post-secondary institutions in northern Alberta. The three post-secondary institutions participating in this study are Grande Prairie Regional College (Grande Prairie and Fairview campuses), Keyano College and Northern Lakes College.

Professional development is an important issue in today's ever changing environment. The success of educational colleges and their graduates is dependent on the quality and competence of their staff. Ongoing professional development (i.e., life-long learning) is essential to the maintenance and enhancement of the college staff's knowledge, skills, judgments and competencies.

Developments in technology and delivery methods have changed both the environments and the way in which colleges and instructors deliver courses to students. New delivery environments now include in-home learning, Community Access Points (CAP) sites, mobile students using laptops, and enhanced classroom learning tools and resources.

Students are no longer coming from just regional "catchment" areas. With current technology, students from anywhere in the world can take college courses and programs. Distance is becoming less a limiting factor. However, new strategies, delivery and student support models are required to educate these distance technologically-sophisticated, new-age students. More importantly, college staff need to acquire the technical expertise and knowledge about how to most efficiently and effectively deliver education and support students using these non-traditional learning approaches.

The purpose of this study was to assess the current state of professional development in the three colleges – utilization, frequency, methods, perceived effectiveness, unmet needs, obstacles and opportunities. The research findings will provide recommendations for potential strategies for improving accessibility and effectiveness of professional development for college staff. In addition, the study will make recommendations on collaborative PD activities that can be carried out among the northern colleges.

Steppingstones Partnership, Inc. of Edmonton was contracted to undertake this research study. This report describes the project, the research findings and makes recommendations regarding professional development for the participating colleges.

2. Project Goals and Objectives

The overall goal of this research project is to:

Enhance professional development across northern Alberta colleges.

The specific project objectives are to:

1. Assess the amount, types and sources of professional development activities
2. Determine how professional development utilization and methodology has changed over the past few years
3. Assess whether professional development utilization and effectiveness is related to the demographics and location of college staff
4. Describe the perceived value and effectiveness of professional development
5. Identify the most important components for successful professional development
6. Determine what standards and expectations exist for college instructors
7. Assess whether professional development is related to the colleges' strategic goals and objectives
8. Assess the use and acceptance of educational technologies for professional development
9. Determine to what degree instructors are incorporating and using what they learned from professional development
10. Assess preferences and willingness to learn new techniques and technologies for program and service delivery
11. Identify and define challenges, issues and obstacles that currently interfere with full utilization of professional development opportunities
12. Evaluate adequacy of current and anticipated resources and opportunities for professional development.

This research project will provide recommendations to improve the relevance and effectiveness of professional development among instructors, support staff and administrators in the northern colleges.

3. Methodology

The research plan to achieve the objectives for the project was as follows:

1. **Project initiation** – The consultant confirmed the work plan, schedule, reporting relationships, and deliverables.

The outcomes from this step were:

- An agreement on project expectations and goals
- An agreement on reporting relationships and processes
- An agreement on the deliverables
- A finalized work plan and schedule
- An agreed to list of project participants.

2. **Background research** – The environmental scan was designed to put the research questions and findings within an appropriate context. The consultant reviewed and summarized existing statistics and reports from such sources as:

- Census data: current and projected numbers of college age persons
- College annual reports and business plans: enrolment projections, expected resources and challenges facing northern colleges
- Other relevant government reports (post-secondary data)
- Internet search to identify similar research projects.

This information provided a background for development of the other data gathering procedures and for this research report.

3. **College staff profiles** – Since the focus of the research study is on the professional development activities of college staff, it is important to know something about this group. Of particular interest would be any data that may relate to learning needs, accessibility and interest in professional development. Some of the data that to be collected includes:

- Numbers – instructors, support staff and administrators
- Employment status – full-time, part-time or contracted
- Program type – some professions change more rapidly than others
- Experience – individuals who have been instructing for many years may require different PD than newly graduated ones
- Age category – indicates time since graduation and nearness to retirement.

The participating colleges were unable to provide this data for all their staff, but some sample demographics were obtained from the online survey.

4. **Professional development activities** – The consultant was interested in doing descriptive statistics and an analysis of the recorded professional development activities at each college over the last three years. This would provide an overview of the current PD activities of the colleges’ staff. The type of data that was requested includes:

- Numbers of PD activities
- PD numbers by category of staff
- PD numbers by different types – conference, workshops, online, etc.
- PD by location – in-house, in region, in province, out-of-province
- Direct expenses associated with PD
- Any trends or changes over time.

Only Keyano College was able to provide this data for the last year. Therefore, the results were not included in this report.

5. **Survey** – This primary data collection procedure used an online (Internet) survey to collect the data to answer the questions outlined in the study objectives. The types of information that were sought included:

- Frequency of participation in professional development activities
- Types and location of PD activities
- Overall satisfaction with PD opportunities and activities
- Methods of assessing professional development needs
- Preferred methods of professional development
- Use of educational technologies for PD and instruction
- Issues, challenges and obstacles to PD
- Availability of appropriate and affordable PD activities
- Adequacy of resources for PD
- Demographic variables for cross-tabulation analyses.

Steppingstones used their *Surveys-Plus.com* website to host the survey and collect the data. The survey was online during the last three weeks of January 2010. The data was automatically captured and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Further analyses will be done to explore differences among the major groups and types of staff.

A mass e-mail to all college staff, along with one reminder e-mail, within each institution was used to inform and direct staff to the online survey.

7. **Focus groups** – Once the survey data was collected and analyzed, the consultant conducted three focus group sessions (Grande Prairie, Fairview and Keyano) with six to eight representatives from each campus. Representatives of the various professional development committees were present.

The purpose of the focus groups was to:

- Provide insights and possible explanations of some of the findings from the online survey
- Review the challenges, issues and opportunities, and identify any that may have been missed
- Assist the consultant to develop suitable recommendations for the research report.

The agenda for the focus groups can be found in Appendix E.

8. **Report preparation** – As the project progressed, the consultant shared various drafts of the report with the Clearinghouse and Committee. Once the survey data results had been analyzed and included in the report, this document was shared with the Committee and members of the focus groups. The final draft report was prepared based on the input from the focus group and Committee members.

4. Environmental Scan

4.1 Demographics

Colleges cannot exist without students. Although all post-secondary institutions have a portion of students from beyond their catchment areas, the vast majority of students are still from the surrounding geographic region. For this reason, it is important to know the size and trends of the local pool of potential students. Table 1 shows the actual and projected numbers of college age students in Alberta and in the northern part of the province served by the three institutions involved in this study.

Table 1: College Students Pool (Ages 17 to 29) – 2006 to 2013

Northern Alberta*	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Male	25,500	26,225	26,760	27,370	27,730	28,015	28,200	28,260
Female	23,755	24,515	25,135	25,660	26,135	26,615	26,775	26,820
Total	49,255	50,740	51,895	53,030	53,865	54,630	54,975	55,080
% change		3.0%	2.3%	2.2%	1.6%	1.4%	0.6%	0.2%
Alberta								
Male	334,110	340,920	344,485	346,735	347,810	348,985	348,490	347,670
Female	322,500	330,185	334,795	338,040	339,740	340,815	340,195	339,225
Total	656,610	671,105	679,280	684,775	687,550	689,800	688,685	686,895
% change		2.2%	1.2%	0.8%	0.4%	0.3%	-0.2%	-0.3%

* Census Districts 16, 17, 18, 19

Source: Alberta Finance and Enterprise, 2009 Alberta Population Projections: Medium Scenario

According to Alberta government projections, the number of people in the 17 to 29 year old category is expected to remain relatively level over the next few years. For Alberta overall, a small decrease in actual numbers is expected beginning in 2012. In northern Alberta, the numbers of college age students is expected to level off.

Fewer Canadians

Census data shows a couple of other trends developing within Canadian population demographics that will impact planning and potential success of colleges and their programs.

According to Statistics Canada, in 2008 there were 2.6 million employed Canadians who were 55 years of age or older. However, there were only 2.1 million Canadians between the age of 15 and 19 years of age available to replace them. Since not all of these will be entering the workforce, the data suggests that there will be a shortage of 500,000 to

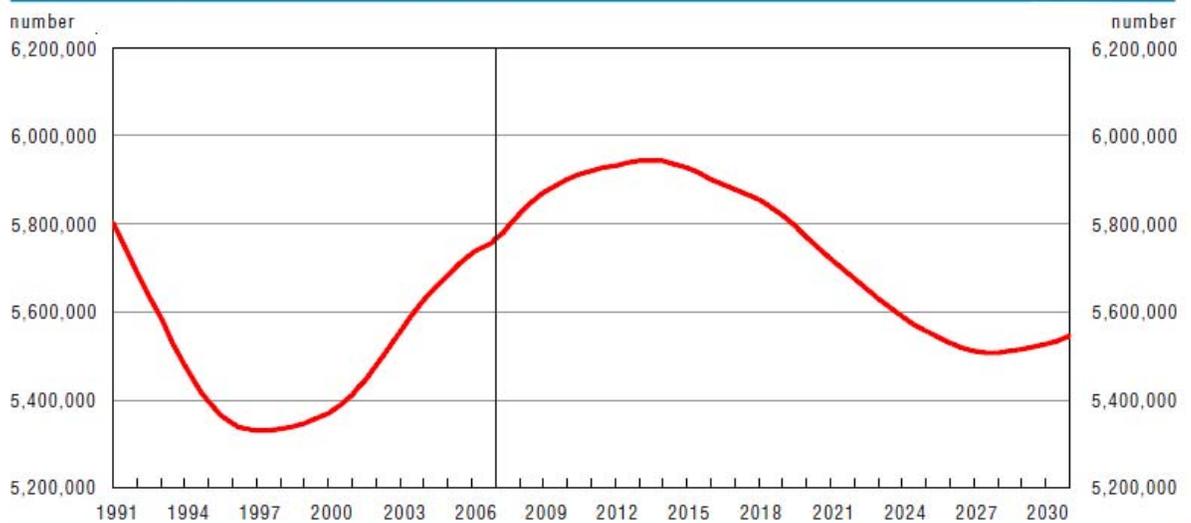
700,000 workers to replace those that will be retiring and dying. Vacant jobs will have to be filled through immigration.

Shrinking student pool

A directly related issue is that the pool of students for post-secondary programs has also peaked and will begin declining over the next few years.

Graph 1

Population age 17 to 29, Canada, 1991 to 2031



Note: This is not including Yukon, Northwest Territories or Nunavut.
Population estimates as of January 1st.

Source: Statistics Canada (2005), *Population Projections for Canada, Provinces and Territories 2005-2031*. Catalogue no. 91-520-XIE.

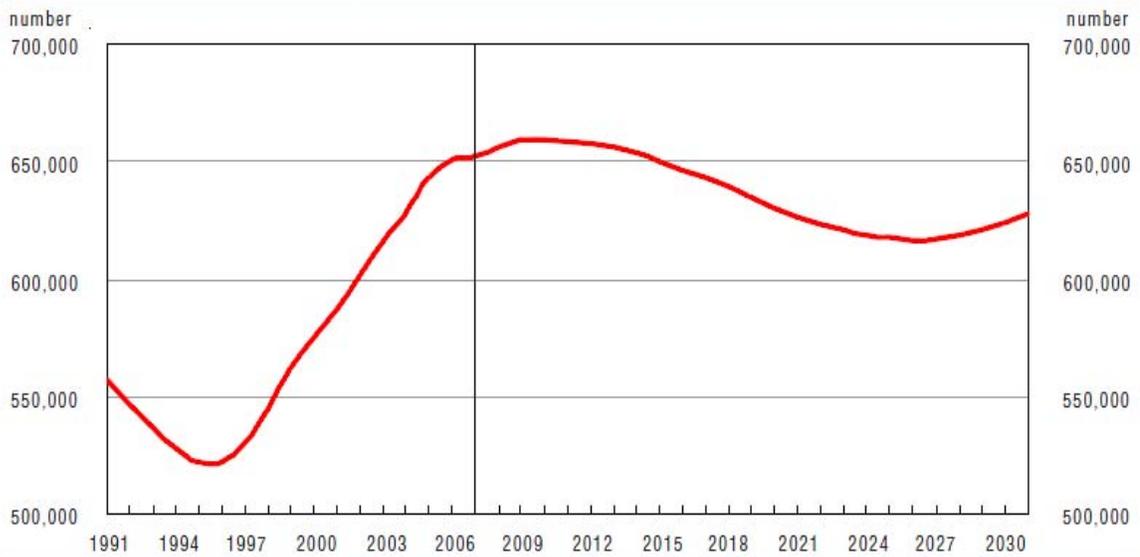
Graph 1 shows the actual and projected Canadian population of 17 to 29 year olds. This is the age group that is most likely to enroll in post-secondary educational program. According to the data shown above, the peak for all of Canada is about the year 2014 after which the numbers begin to decline.

Graph 2 shows the same projections for Alberta. The data shows that the population of 17 to 29 year olds has peaked, will remain flat for the next few years, and then will begin to decline.

Graph 3 shows the student projections for Alberta colleges (not universities). The projections show that for the overall group of 17 to 29, the decline in enrollments should have already begun. However, many post-secondary institutions have experienced an increase in applications as a result of the economic recession. Whether these increased enrolments are sustainable is not yet known.

Graph 2

Population age 17 to 29, Alberta, 1991 to 2031

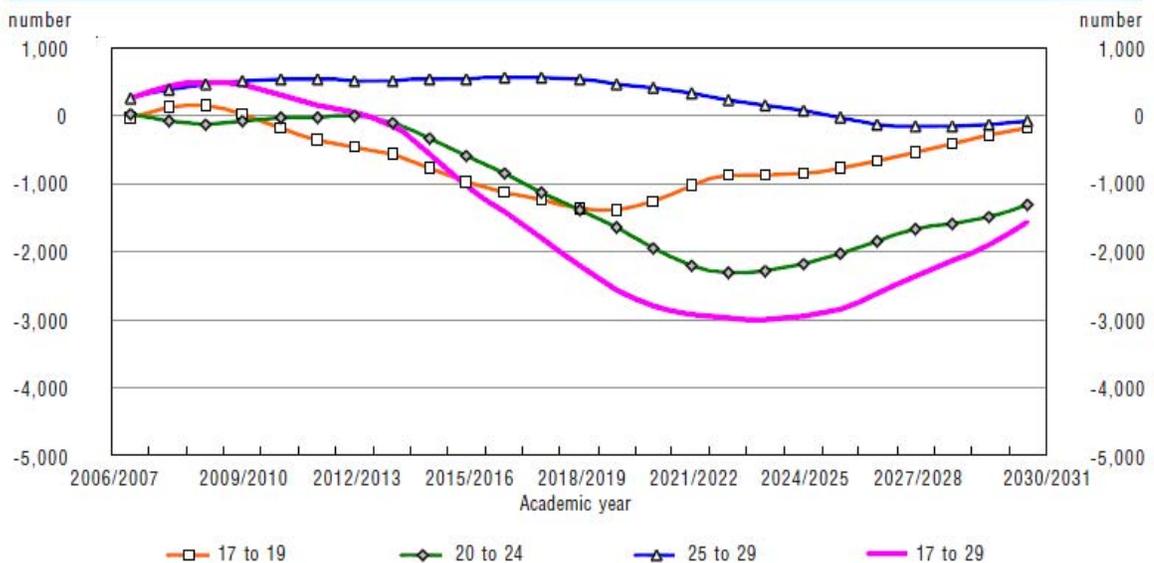


Note: Population estimates as of January 1st.

Source: Statistics Canada (2005), *Population Projections for Canada, Provinces and Territories 2005-2031*. Catalogue no. 91-520-XIE.

Graph 3

Difference in full-time college enrolment¹ between the 2003/2004-to-2005/2006 average and the projected enrolment: Alberta, 2006/2007 to 2030/2031



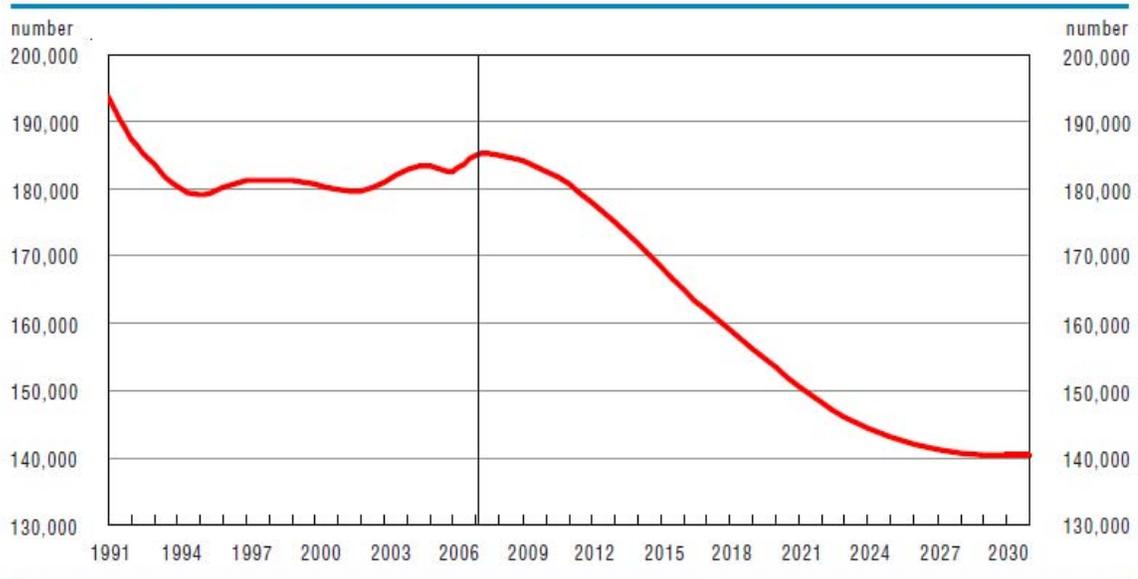
1. Enrolment difference is calculated by subtracting the 2003/2004-to-2005/2006 average enrolment from the projected enrolment.

Note: The line at zero indicates no difference between the projected enrolment and the 2003/2004-to-2005/2006 average enrolment.

So what are the longer potential implications of these trends? Competition for students in Alberta (and everywhere else in Canada) is about to get even more fierce. Reduced enrolments will likely result in less funding for the post-secondary institutions making education more expensive and less affordable. Students will have more choices as there will be fewer individuals competing for the available spaces. More students will have an opportunity to pursue their first choice careers and will not have to settle for what is available. This could affect some smaller and less popular programs as institutions cannot justify running them with fewer students.

Graph 4

Population age 17 to 29, Saskatchewan, 1991 to 2031



Note: Population estimates as of January 1st.

Source: Statistics Canada (2005), *Population Projections for Canada, Provinces and Territories 2005-2031*. Catalogue no. 91-520-XIE.

As a further reference, Graph 4 shows the projections for post-secondary age students in Saskatchewan. Their colleges and universities are facing significant enrollment drops beginning in 2009. It is reasonable to expect that Saskatchewan post-secondary institutions will be aggressively recruiting students from other provinces including Alberta.

4.2 Students

Table 2 below shows the numbers of students (Full Load Equivalents or FLE) in the three participating colleges. Student enrollment is shown from 2003-2004 and is projected until 2012-2013. Also shown is the percent of students compared to the potential student pool (17 to 29 year olds) as measured and projected in Table 1.

Table 2: Student Enrolment Trends in the Three Colleges (FLE)

College	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08
GPRC	1,509	1,386	1,347	1,262	1,251
KC	1,306	1,322	1,283	1,224	1,290
NLC	875	758	863	778	860
Total	3,690	3,466	3,493	3,264	3,401
% change		- 6.1%	0.8%	-6.6%	4.2%
% of pool **			7.1%	6.4%	6.6%

College	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13
GPRC *	1,290	1,971	2,111	2,312	2,440
KC	1,212	1,240	1,302	1,367	1,435
NLC	1,020	1,009	1,092	1,106	1,120
Total	3,522	4,220	4,505	4,785	4,995
% change	3.6%	19.8%	6.8%	6.2%	4.4%
% of pool **	6.6%	7.8%	8.2%	8.7%	9.1%

* Growth after 2009-2010 due mainly to absorption of NAIT / Fairview campus students

** Percent of students compared to 17 to 29 year olds in census districts 16, 17, 18, 19 for that year.

Student FLE has decreased slightly over the last few years – 3,690 in 2003-2004 compared to 3,522 in 2008-2009. However these are projected to increase slightly. Grande Prairie Regional College accounts for a significant increase after 2009-2010 as it absorbs the students from NAIT / Fairview campus.

For Northern Lakes, students come to the college less prepared than in other regions. Many have less than grade 10; 50% have one or more dependents. The average drop-out rate of 14 – 18 year olds in the five main school divisions is double the provincial rate. The average high school completion rate in the region is low compared to the rest of the province.

For comparison purposes, Table 3 shows the numbers of students in the other eight provincial colleges defined by Alberta Advanced Education and Technology as Comprehensive Community Institutions (CCIs). Also, the student FLEs for all Alberta 29 post-secondary education institutions are shown.

Table 3: Student Enrolment Trends in other Alberta Colleges (FLE)

College	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09
Bow Valley	3,913	3,941	3,457	3,591	3,825
Lakeland	2,058	1,938	1,778	1,928	2,051
Lethbridge	4,104	3,954	3,726	3,669	3,815
Medicine Hat	2,456	2,415	2,366	2,347	2,313
NorQuest	4,056	4,196	4,023	4,365	5,084
Olds	1,304	1,305	1,309	1,275	1,271
Portage	1,050	1,070	979	911	980
Red Deer	3,667	3,640	3,600	3,653	3,730
Total Colleges	22,608	22,459	21,238	21,739	23,069
% change		-0.7%	-5.4%	2.4%	5.8%
Total Alberta	138,372	139,864	140,701	142,229	146,440
% change		1.1%	0.6%	1.1%	2.9%

For the eight colleges, there were 461 more student FLEs in 2008-2009 as compared to 2004-2005 or a 2.0% increase. For all post-secondary institutions in Alberta, there was an increase of 8,068 FLE students, an enrolment growth of 5.8%.

Table 4: Percentage of Female Students in the Three Colleges

College	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09
GPRC	70%	70%	73%	74%	74%
KC	57%	52%	54%	51%	49%
NLC	71%	73%	72%	70%	69%
Average (WT)	65%	64%	66%	64%	64%

Table 5: Percentage of Female Students in the Other Alberta Colleges

College	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09
Bow Valley	71%	71%	72%	74%	72%
Lakeland	45%	43%	45%	44%	43%
Lethbridge	64%	53%	53%	51%	51%
Medicine Hat	66%	67%	65%	65%	63%
NorQuest	73%	74%	74%	75%	76%
Olds	52%	52%	53%	51%	55%
Portage	58%	61%	61%	60%	57%
Red Deer	62%	61%	60%	56%	55%
Average (WT)	64%	64%	62%	62%	61%
Average Alberta	56%	56%	55%	55%	55%

Tables 4 and 5 show the percentage of female students in the three participating colleges as well as for the eight comparative colleges.

For the province as a whole, females make up 55% of the student population. Grande Prairie and Northern Lakes colleges are considerably higher having more than 70% of their students being female. However, Bow Valley and NorQuest also have more than 70% female students. All of the other colleges, except Lakeland, Lethbridge and Olds, have a higher proportion of females than the provincial average.

Table 6: Average Age of Students in the Three Colleges

College	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09
GPRC	24.5	24.7	24.9	25	25.1
KC	28.3	28	27.8	27.5	27.9
NLC	28.5	28.6	29	28.9	29.2

Table 7: Average Age of Students in the Other Alberta Colleges

College	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09
Bow Valley	32.5	32.7	31.8	31.8	31.7
Lakeland	29.5	29.4	30.2	30.5	29.9
Lethbridge	29.3	25.2	24.8	24.4	24.4
Medicine Hat	28.2	29.2	28.9	28.8	28.1
NorQuest	31.2	31.8	32.3	30.6	31.2
Olds	25.9	27.7	30.4	29.7	27.7
Portage	30	29.9	29.8	29.9	30.5
Red Deer	24.5	24.1	23.9	24.1	24
Alberta ave.	26.5	26.6	26.4	26.3	26.3

Tables 6 and 7 show the average age of students in the three participating colleges and the eight comparative post-secondary institutions.

The average age of a student in Alberta is approximately 26 years. The average age of students in Grande Prairie College is less than that, while the average student age in Keyano and Northern Lakes is slightly above the provincial average. However, there are several other colleges that have students with an older average age – Bow Valley, Lakeland, NorQuest, Olds and Portage. Therefore, the data suggests that older students are not limited to the northern Alberta colleges.

Table 8: Number of Graduates in the Three Colleges

College	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09
GPRC	289	250	295	203	220
KC	664	544	481	607	441
NLC	188	129	178	192	263
Total	1,141	923	954	1,002	924
% change		-19.1%	3.4%	5.0%	-7.8%

Table 9: Number of Graduates in other Alberta Colleges (FLE)

College	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09
Bow Valley	881	807	686	557	691
Lakeland	757	836	693	753	884
Lethbridge	1,053	939	1,075	932	954
Medicine Hat	374	477	425	396	314
NorQuest	1,621	1,835	1,646	1,431	1,819
Olds	646	649	709	705	633
Portage	517	481	629	477	538
Red Deer	1,380	1,379	1,447	1,488	588
Total Colleges	7,229	7,403	7,310	6,739	6,421
% change		2.4%	-1.3%	-7.8%	-4.7%
Total Alberta	40,851	41,948	40,437	41,335	41,367
% change		2.7%	-3.6%	2.2%	0.1%

Tables 8 and 9 show the number of graduates from the 3 participating colleges and the 8 comparative institutions. This data is reflective the student enrolments numbers shown previously.

For the province as a whole, there were 516 (1.2%) more graduates in 2008-2009 as compared with 2004-2005. For the three project colleges, there was a decrease of 217 (-19%) graduates over this same time period. For the eight other CCI colleges, there was a decrease of 808 (-11.2%) graduates.

The nature of students in northern Alberta creates challenges for:

- Funding
- Meeting admission requirements
- Limited facilities / courses
- Transportation
- Childcare
- Housing
- Distance from services.

The characteristics of the students attending northern colleges also creates challenges for recruitment, upgrading, instructional design and delivery, and support services.

4.3 Continuing competence programs

It may be useful to take a look at another model in Alberta requiring professional development. One example is the legislative and regulatory requirements affecting members of the 30 regulated health professions. College faculty in the health sciences departments are likely to be familiar with their profession's continuing competence programs.

The Alberta *Health Professions Act (2000)* requires that all regulated health professions have a responsible, accountable and formal means of assessing and reporting on the continuing competence of their members. All health professions are required to establish a continuing competence program (CCP), to set up a competence committee, and report to Alberta Health and Wellness.

Competency is the quality of being functionally proficient in performing the tasks and assuming the role of a specified position with the requisite knowledge, ability, capability, skills, judgment, attitudes and values.

A detailed competency profile is the foundational document for professions' continuing competence programs. The CCP is a system for assessing, maintaining and monitoring the ongoing competencies of a health profession. It is a way of ensuring a high level of expertise, competence and appropriate ethics in performing the job.

The continuing competence initiative in Alberta has several characteristics:

1. The tone and approach is positive rather than punitive. Government and regulatory bodies prefer to encourage their members to continuously learn and enhance their competencies, rather than searching for, and punishing, the incompetent ones.
2. The continuing competence programs are kept separate from the disciplinary policies and processes. This is done to keep professional development separate from issues related to disciplinary actions.
3. The continuing competence programs are member centered. Professionals are responsible for maintaining their competence. The regulatory bodies provide the structure and resources for professional development and are also responsible for monitoring and encouraging participation by all their members.

4. The continuing competence programs are totally independent from any employer's work performance appraisals or reviews. The CCP's focus is on professional competence, and is less concerned with work performance.
5. The continuing competence program is operated as an independent program. Most regulatory bodies have a continuing competence co-ordinator who is responsible for the program. It is important that this position be independent of the Registrar and other personnel that may be involved in disciplinary activities.
6. A member's CCP data is protected by legislation. This was done by the government to encourage individuals to participate in professional development without having to be concerned that their private and confidential competency data can be used against them. In addition to the legislation, the regulatory bodies have implemented policies and other steps to protect the privacy and confidentiality of competency data.
7. Meeting the professional development requirements of the continuing competence program is a condition of the annual professional registration renewal process. The regulatory body has the right to deny registration, which in turn means losing the right to work in the regulated professional capacity in this province.
8. The processes implemented under the CCP enable health professionals to more systematically identify, plan and undertake continuing competence activities. Professional development is now based more on learning needs rather than taking whatever is available or convenient.
9. The competency profile defines ALL the competencies for the profession. Using this as a tool will enable a practitioner to identify those competencies required to work in another setting, or to specialize. Once these competencies have been identified, a member can undertake the necessary professional development activities that will enable career advancement and/or job enrichment.
10. Members of a regulated health profession MUST demonstrate ongoing learning in order to maintain their professional registration. The regulatory bodies conduct systematic and/or random audits to make sure that their members comply. Although some employers provide funding and other support for professional development activities, lack of financial support is *no excuse* for not undertaking PD activities.

From our work with competence management programs for the health professions, here are the important components of PD that we typically evaluate.

1. *Compliance* – are staff regularly participating in professional development activities to keep current their knowledge, skills and competencies? Most health professions require at least two PD activities per year.

2. *Relevance to professional competence* – are the professional development activities being undertaken directly related to addressing the individual’s learning needs and thus enhancing that person’s knowledge, skills or instructional competence? Research shows that up to 80% of professional development activities are often taken because of personal interest, convenience or unrelated perks.
3. *Relevance to college priorities* – are the professional development activities of college staff consistent with the strategic priorities and goals of the institution? If not, then it is unlikely that the college will have much success in making major changes in direction or achieving its longer-term objectives.
4. *Learning effectiveness* – are members learning what they need to learn most and does this investment in PD result in improved performance / instruction and enhanced client services?
5. *Learning efficiency* – to what degree are learning activities meeting members’ PD needs? If the PD activities are poorly done, or not directly related to the individual’s learning needs, then scarce resources, time and effort are being wasted.

Implications

Many provinces and states are implementing the equivalent of the *Health Professions Act*. The trend is to formalize in legislation and regulations the requirements for professionals to maintain and enhance their professional competence. Demonstrating professional development is now becoming a formal requirement in being allowed to continue to practice in many professions.

It is just a matter of time before all college managers and staff will be expected to follow a similar model of identifying their learning needs, undertaking appropriate professional development to address these needs, and reporting the impact on their performance.

4.4 Trends affecting northern colleges

Managing and teaching in any post-secondary institution today is a challenge. Doing so in a northern Alberta college is even more challenging.

Some of the trends and issues facing northern colleges are:

1. **Funding** – these include:
 - Government is sending a signal that there will be no increases in college funding over the next few years.
 - It costs more to operate a college in the north than in other parts of the province.

- Government grants do not adequately take into account the higher costs of operating a college in the north.
- Raising tuition to increase revenues will impact affordability and thus may make it more difficult to attract and recruit students.
- Lack of visibility in small rural settings results in being lower in priority for limited college and provincial resources.
- Expectation and demands from the local community for use of college facilities and services that makes cost containment / reduction more difficult.
- Opportunities for additional revenue generation (donations, sponsorships, foundations) are less due to smaller populations, fewer corporations and businesses.
- KPI rewards individual institutional results thus discouraging sharing and joint ventures among colleges.

2. **Students** – these include:

- Declining enrolments and a smaller pool of potential students as the baby-boom echo peaks in Alberta in 2009-2010.
- Greater competition for students due to lower numbers of applicants and greater space availability in programs in other post-secondary institutions.
- More students require upgrading and support to meet program requirements and successfully complete their studies.
- Greater diversity of students in terms of educational preparation, upgrading needs and support services.
- Students are part of the millennial generation; they have high expectations with respect to technology use, customer service and customization of learning.
- More culturally diverse students require language and supplementary services.
- More difficult to recruit high school graduates; issue of branding and image; brighter students may seek post-secondary education only larger centres can offer.

3. **Programs** – these include:

- Difficulty in keeping and offering a broad range of courses / programs with fewer students; more difficult to cost justify running smaller programs.
- Continuing political pressure to provide programs and services to the disadvantaged even though it costs more than regular programs this takes away resources from other college programs and students.

- Demands for trades is dependent of the strength of Alberta’s oil industry which has its cycles; this makes it more difficult to effectively plan and operate trades programs.
- Sparse populations scattered over large geographic region create student support and program delivery challenges.
- Not offering a wide range of programs and student support services makes it more difficult to recruit students to the institution.

4. **Technology** – these include:

- Educational technology offers competition, and opportunities as more students learn at a distance.
- Rapid changes in technology and knowledge in some professions and occupations require constant upgrading of instructors, equipment and facilities.
- Local community learning centres are not up to standards required by today’s technologies and students.
- Higher costs of installing and operating technology infrastructure e.g., SuperNet
- Technology and infrastructure not as prevalent in rural areas, smaller communities and reserves, e.g., high-speed Internet access.
- Unequal access to computers and high-speed Internet makes it more challenging to design, implement and support the latest learning technologies.

5. **Staffing** – these include:

- Difficulty in recruiting and keeping talented and specialized instructors, especially with the high cost of living in Grande Prairie and Fort McMurray; Keyano has to get into the housing business to provide for its staff.
- Competitiveness of the market makes it difficult to financially attract qualified staff while maintaining fiscal balance during the economic downturn and keeping pay equity with other positions and institutions.
- Difficulty in recruiting part-time instructors thus reducing flexibility and expertise available to students and the institutions.
- More challenging working conditions especially for instructors that have to travel to remote communities in winter.
- Higher costs and time commitments in attending provincial, national and international professional development events.

If the northern colleges are to continue to be successful, their management and staff must have the knowledge, skills and innovations to address these challenges.

5. Literature Review

5.1 Professional development in colleges

Today, most colleges have faculty who care deeply about teaching, yet feel isolated and disconnected from like-minded colleagues. Simply working in the proximity of others does not ensure a motivating environment that enhances professional collegiality. All educational institutions, and the groups that operate within them, should attend to the development of dynamic and nurturing interactions among faculty that support excellence in instruction and the scholarship of teaching. Such conditions, in turn, will promote a collective sense of mutual benefit and reciprocal responsibility among faculty. (Eib and Miller, 2006).

Commonly mentioned concerns among teaching faculties at colleges and universities include a sense of isolation, lack of community, and lack of belonging. If left unaddressed, such concerns may progress towards exasperation, disillusionment, and the eventual alienation of faculty. “This isolation, tolerable at age thirty, becomes deadening by the age of fifty.” To counter this isolation felt by teachers and faculty members, Palmer strongly supports collegial socialization as a core component of professional development programs. (Eib and Miller, 2006).

Palmer also talks about how isolation can result in the “privatization of teaching”:

Privatization creates more than individual pain; it creates institutional incompetence as well. By privatizing teaching, we make it next to impossible for the institution to become more adept at its teaching mission. The growth of any skill depends heavily on honest dialogue among those who are doing it. Some of us grow by private trial and error, but our willingness to try and fail is severely limited when we are not supported by a community that encourages such risks. The most likely outcome when any function is privatized is that people will perform the function conservatively, refusing to stray far from the silent consensus on what “works” – even when it clearly does not. (Palmer, 1999, p. 1).

Faculty in one study, who experienced various methods of professional development, indicated a preference for an inquiry approach to professional development: “The best way to learn about teaching in higher education is not to be given information and advice by outside experts who determine what academics need to know. Rather ... academics can and should try to learn about teaching as they do in their discipline or particular subject area, this is, as personal scientists”. (Zuber-Skerritt, 1992).

Learning about teaching is a social process involving formulation of knowledge through sharing and comparing learnings and understandings with others. This model is in line with the collegial aspects of the “Process” and “Discipline” approaches to faculty development described in the review of literature on professional development completed by Amundsen and colleagues (2005). Collaborative work in collegial groups to enable individuals to examine their thinking about teaching is one of the characteristics of the “Process” approach. The “Discipline” approach is characterized by small groups of colleagues from the same discipline making explicit their understanding of knowledge development or learning in their discipline to develop their teaching and critique the perspectives and understandings of their colleagues. Both approaches emphasize the important role of colleagues in professional development to support reflection on, and development of, knowledge and skills required for effective teaching. (Amundsen *et al*, 2005).

Researchers that work in the area of professional faculty development often refer to the value of learning communities. Hord *et al* (1998) propose that learning communities are distinguished by supportive and shared leadership, collective learning, shared values and vision, supportive conditions, and shared personal practice. Sergiovanni (2000) describes a learning community as an organization whose members are committed to thinking, growing, and inquiry, and as a place where learning is an attitude as well as an activity, a way of life as well as a process.

A culture that supports learning, nurtures collegiality, and encourages the co-creation, sharing and use of teaching knowledge and skills is a critical ingredient in a successful professional development effort. (Eib and Miller, 2006).

Successful professional development

Diaz *et al* (2009) say that 21st-century faculty members have unique professional development and support needs, especially in the area of teaching and learning. To support, and also leverage the talents of faculty members, many of whom are early technology adopters or innovators, institutions may want to consider the following recommendations:

1. Avoid making assumptions about what faculty members need. Instead, develop and administer an annual faculty survey to compile demographics and to identify trends in faculty development needs. Such a survey can also assist in partnering individuals in mentorship program.
2. Become familiar with, and establish, a diverse menu of instructional technology tools. For instance, a menu may include a course management system, social networking tools, and mobile technologies. Remember that the technologies

identified should also include discipline-specific tools to which new faculty may have been recently exposed in their graduate programs.

3. Develop collaborative support programs. Supporting a diverse set of instructional technology options can be expensive and challenging, especially in fiscally restrictive environments. To the extent possible, explore ways to engage and enlist the aid of new faculty in collaborating with, and helping to lead, faculty development.
4. Incorporate assessment into faculty development programs, which needs to align with institutional strategic initiatives. Anticipated outcomes should be clearly defined and measured. Assessment results can become the driver for the ongoing refinement of current faculty development programs and for the creation of new programs.

Research (Diaz *et al*, 2009) shows that post-secondary institutions that offer successful faculty development programs:

1. Offer development opportunities focused on goals related to student success – retention, access, course completion, progression, graduation and employment.
2. Incorporate flexible scheduling and various delivery options for faculty learning.
3. Align offerings with the changing higher education landscape.
4. Provide faculty members and academic units with opportunities to provide input into PD program design.
5. Support the implementation of newly adopted technologies and support faculty members at various levels of use and experience, i.e., novice, experienced, expert.
6. Blend the application of technology tools with teaching and learning methodologies and pedagogies.
7. Give suggestions and examples for measuring success of the new technologies or methodologies that are introduced in courses to encourage the scholarship of teaching and learning.
8. Provide access to online resources, such as tutorials, for continued, self-paced support.
9. Regularly assess offerings and make modifications based on assessment results.
10. Model best practices in assessment, active learning, new instructional delivery modes, and/or deeper learning.

Professional development on a limited budget

Finally, given the tight fiscal environment that Alberta post-secondary institutions are operating within, here are some recommendations from an article entitled “Professional development in tough financial times.” (Gandel and Golden 2004).

1. Take advantage of local trade shows and conferences. Local events avoid hotel and travel costs, and many vendors offer complimentary admission to these events. Attending local events can be a catalyst for organizational as well as personal reflections if you hold formal or informal staff discussion after the event. Discussing how to apply what staff have learned can prompt rethinking of existing structures and processes.
2. Hold your own on-site technology fair or conference. Holding your own conferences enables you to gear the event directly to your institution’s needs. Campus events are an excellent way to build staff pride in a unit’s accomplishments and to share information across the institution. These events also offer staff opportunities to improve their communication and presentation skills. Presenting encourages self reflection and self improvement of individual skills and knowledge.
3. Bring classes or workshops to your campus as a cost-effective and efficient way of offering professional development. In addition to avoiding travel costs, bringing events to campus enables more staff to attend.
4. Use “train the trainer” approach for fiscal and operational benefits. One staff member attends a seminar or workshop with the understanding that, having learned the material, he or she will be responsible for teaching the same material to other staff members. Not only is this approach cost-effective, it also reflects current knowledge in effective learning – those that can teach what they know have deeper knowledge of the content they teach.
5. Arrange visits to nearby institutions so staff can network with their colleagues. Professional visits to other colleges need not be highly orchestrated affairs. They can be very successful as simple, free-wheeling discussions where everyone has a chance to share ideas and concerns and to suggest solutions to problems brought up by others. Such dialogues are effective ways to gather good advice from colleagues, to build pride in one’s own accomplishments, and to begin to develop a network of fellow professionals to call on in the future.
6. Turn routine meetings into professional development opportunities. Formal staff presentations at meetings offer an excellent way to share information and improve organizational communication. Such presentations both inform the team and break down organizational boundaries by creating a forum to discuss projects and issues

facing all areas of the organization. Staff meetings can also be used as a venue for conference-goers to report back to colleagues who could not attend.

7. Bring in outside speakers to staff meetings. Colleagues working nearby are often willing to come to speak as a professional courtesy and for the price of a good lunch. Even paying a modest honorarium and travel expenses is still a cost-effective method of introducing issues and ideas into the organization and generating discussion among staff. These speakers can also be the college's senior administrators sharing their ideas and concerns with staff.
8. Institute "brown bag" lunch sessions. These are a highly effective mechanism for encouraging staff members to get together and discuss projects or to give reports on recent conferences or workshops. Informality is the key here, and the ability to "drop in" on an occasional or regular basis creates an inviting, casual and non-threatening atmosphere.
9. Create a resource library and encourage staff to use the resources as well as meet informally to discuss the materials. This could include "reading groups" where staff get together to read/view and discuss a particular article, book or video that is germane to issues being faced by the organization or group.
10. Have staff members spend regular time in helping out in another area. This is an excellent way to broaden everyone's horizon as well as improve understanding and communications between departments. These "job swaps" can also be effective tools for any areas that need to work closely together.
11. Participate in college-wide committees and task forces. This helps build better bridges across various stakeholder groups, and also helps staff develop skills and assume broader leadership roles within higher education.
12. Orient new staff. Getting to know other areas of the department, the division and the institution can broaden a staff member's understanding of the college and help them perform better in their jobs. These orientations can be both formal and informal such as having meeting with senior administrators and heads of support service units.
13. Use technology to reach out to experts and learn about the latest developments. These technologies include web-based seminars, discussion forums and mailing lists. If several staff are involved in the same events, these activities can be followed by informal meetings to discuss ways to develop and implement new projects and ideas.
14. Use unexpected events to develop staff. While crises are best avoided, it is important to recognize the professional development opportunities in effective crisis planning and management. Crises do typically bring out the best in people and are a wonderful

opportunity to improve weak links in the organization and build team spirit when celebrating a crisis well managed.

15. Allocate time for personal exploration and growth. Staff members should be encouraged to regularly schedule a block of time to work on their own professional development by reading, experimenting, visiting colleagues, doing online research on a topic, or taking an online tutorial or seminar.
16. Stress that regardless of budgets, professional development is important. It is one of their responsibilities. Creating an environment where this expectation is clear and where the right coaching and resources are available is the key to the staff member's success.
17. Have your professional development committee formally encourage and implement these kinds of activities.

It is possible to have an ambitious organization-wide professional development program even in tight financial times. None of the ideas is costly, nor do they need a lot of planning. More importantly, each idea can involve large numbers of staff, and when done correctly, can build strong communication links and a sense of team across the institution. (Gandel and Golden 2004).

5.2 Professional development for educational technology

Increased competition, decreased enrolments, greater numbers of non-traditional students and decreased government funding are the most obvious problems higher education faces in the twenty-first century. Many higher education institutions view technology as a cost-effective and innovative solution to many problems. Faculty members are being pressured to integrate technology into their instructional activities. The pressure is coming from administrators trying to keep up with new technological advances, from students who are becoming increasingly insistent that technology be part of their education, and colleagues who are considered innovators of instructional technology and always willing to spread its advantages to laggards. Faculty members adopt online technology either into face-to-face, hybrid, blended or mixed delivery courses. (Baltaci-Goktalay and Ocak, 2006).

Many faculty teach as they were taught, in traditional classrooms with teacher-centred strategies dominated by lecture and discussion. The way faculty teach is also shaped by their own learning preferences. Most online faculty members' learning history still comes from this conventional, face-to-face environment. This will probably change in the next 10 to 15 years as new faculty with online learning histories join instructor ranks.

Many faculty development programs fail to make significant changes to teaching itself, however, because they focus on the technical side of teaching online, breaking it down into skill sets rather than addressing pedagogy. For teaching to change to accommodate the fundamentally different online environment, faculty professional development also needs to change.

While it is still important to develop skills sets, especially around technology, it is also important to consider faculty role changes, a shift toward student-centred teaching, and different basic values and assumptions about teaching. It cannot be assumed that faculty with experience teaching face-to-face in the classroom can move seamlessly to successful teaching online. Faculty need training and support to teach online. (Taylor and McQuiggan, 2008).

Kentucky technology survey

A study of distance learning in Kentucky's higher education system revealed faculty willing to use the technology, but needing more support (Wilson 2001). The specific findings of this study were:

1. Faculty had a positive attitude towards distance education as a general concept, but were less enthusiastic about personal involvement.
2. Respondents were unsure about the instructional efficacy of distance learning.
3. One-on-one instruction was rated as the most effective method of faculty development, followed by face-to-face classroom instruction; online instruction was ranked as the least effective method.
4. Faculty with no prior experience with distance education have little interest in teaching a distance education course, while those with experience showed only mild interest.
5. Most respondents indicated comfort with operating a computer and peripherals and using word processing, e-mail and the Internet.
6. Faculty felt moderately comfortable with installing software, using a spreadsheet and using presentation software.
7. Respondents felt uncomfortable with any of the instructional techniques associated with instructional techniques or distance education such a modifying an existing course for distance learning delivery or developing effective online activities.
8. Faculty tended to be intrinsically motivated to participate in distance education, especially to facilitate student learning.

9. Financial incentives received the lowest rankings as motivators.
10. Although valued, technology use isn't rewarded in yearly reviews or promotion / tenure decisions.
11. Faculty perceive that upper administration value instructional technology more than department heads / chairs or their colleagues.
12. Respondents ranked time as the primary barrier to using instructional technology; this included time to prepare course materials and time to participate in technical training.
13. Faculty also reported lack of support and lack of hardware / software as barriers to their use of technology.
14. At least one third expressed dissatisfaction with technology for teaching, technical computer support, and instructional design support at their institutions.

Penn State online teaching survey

A study at Penn State University provides some insights into what faculty want and need to be successful in teaching online. (Taylor and McQuiggan, 2008).

With regard to designing and developing online courses, faculty were most interested in:

- Choosing appropriate technologies to enhance their online course (56%)
- Converting course materials for online use (35%)
- Creating effective online assessment instruments (35%)
- Creating video clips (34%)
- Determining ways to assess student progress in online courses (34%)

Course delivery topics that held most interest included:

- Facilitating online discussion forums (47%)
- Building and enhancing instructor-student relationships in the online classroom (40%)
- Facilitating web conferencing sessions (35%)
- Increasing interactions in an online course (35%)
- Managing online teaching workloads (34%)
- Providing meaningful feedback on assignments (32%)

The administrative issue that generated most interest was making online courses available to students at other campus locations.

What format do online faculty prefer for professional development experiences? This study found:

- Self-paced materials (43%)
- Informal face-to-face events (42%)
- Informal online events (34%)
- Formal face-to-face training (31%)
- Online programs (29%)

In addition, faculty indicated that other helpful aspects would be opportunities to share real-life experiences with their colleagues, to use various technologies including the institution's course management system, and to access specific examples and strategies.

One-on-one development with a mentor or colleague was considered the most effective learning mode. This was followed closely by one-on-one interactions with an instructional designer.

Faculty also considered online resources and references, and online self-paced modules a more effective learning mode than any of the traditional classroom or workshop options. This might be due to the time constraints faced by the faculty.

The study also asked about the preferred lengths for professional development experiences. The findings showed:

- Less than one day workshops over several weeks (21%)
- Single one-day workshop (19%)
- Self-paced materials available as needed (16%)

What barriers inhibit faculty from participating in professional development experiences related to teaching online?

- Time to participate (62%)
- Lack of recognition toward promotion and tenure (27%)
- Lack of incentive or reward (20%)
- Lack of awareness of PD opportunities (18%)
- Little or no access to PD opportunities (12%)

What incentives do faculty wish to receive in return for participating in professional development experiences related to online teaching?

- Recognition towards promotion and tenure (24%)
- Financial incentive (18%)
- Assistance teaching the online course (14%)
- Certificate from institution (12%)
- Release time (4%)
- No incentive necessary (12%)

Because of diverse demands on faculty time, providing multiple training opportunities is recommended. This could begin with an on-site workshop that continues online. Other suggestions include a combination of:

- Lunchtime classroom sessions
- Multi-day institutes
- Peer mentoring consultations that provide just-in-time training
- Peer demonstrations
- Archived sessions
- Web repositories
- Short workshops to practice skills
- Release time for independent study.

It has also been found that developers and faculty alike prefer to select from offerings of formal and informal self-paced programs and short classes offered at different times during the semester. (Taylor and McQuiggan, 2008).

Conditions for success

There are eight conditions that must be met for successful implementation of educational technology innovations: (Baltaci-Goktalay and Ocak, 2006).

1. *Consumer behaviour*: students have the technology, expertise and demand integration of technology into their education.
2. *Dissatisfaction with the status quo*: there is a strong feeling among administrators, staff and students that there is a need for change.
3. *Expertise*: access to the knowledge and skills required by the users (faculty, students).
4. *Resources*: things needed to make things work – funding, hardware, software, technology support, infrastructure.
5. *Time*: prioritized allocation of time to develop, deliver, evaluate and revise.
6. *Rewards and incentives*: internal and external motivators preceding and following adoption; also means removal of obstacles and negative consequences.
7. *Participation*: this includes shared decision-making, full communication, and good representation of interests.
8. *Commitment*: firm and visible evidence of continuing endorsement and support from the institution's leadership.

6. Learning Technologies

6.1 Applications in instruction and learning

Learning / educational technologies are defined as any electronic communications, media or data devices used to acquire, access, manage and organize information / knowledge. These technologies include:

- Internet websites
- Webcasts / discussion forums / social networks / chat
- CD-ROM / DVD
- Mobile phones / communication devices / notebook computers
- MP3 players / iPods
- E-mail / text messaging

Table 10 shows the various educational technologies categorized by one-way vs. two-way communications and synchronous vs. asynchronous applications.

Table 10: Classification of Educational Technologies by Structural Characteristics

	Technologies			
	Broadcast (one-way) applications		Communication (two-way) applications	
Media	Synchronous	Asynchronous	Synchronous	Asynchronous
Face-to-face	Lectures	Lecture notes	Seminars	
Print		Books		Mail
Audio	Radio	Audio CDs	Telephone tutoring Audio conferencing	
Video	Broadcast TV Cable TV Satellite TV	Video DVDs		
Digital multimedia	Webcasting Audio streaming Video streaming	Websites CD-ROMs DVDs Learning objects Multimedia clips	Chat Multi-player games / simulations Web conferencing Mobile phones	E-mail Discussion forums Social networking Text messaging Twitter

Source: (Baltaci-Goktalay and Ocak, 2006).

Synchronous, which literally means “at the same time,” involves interacting with an instructor in real time. Asynchronous, which means “not at the same time,” allows the student to complete the learning activity on his or her own time and schedule, without live interaction with the instructor.

Synchronous education is currently less common. It involves geographically dispersed students accessing the same learning activity at the same time as an instructor. Typically this type of training involves the instructor “broadcasting” audio out to the students through either a teleconference phone call, or through web-based audio. The instructor typically “drives” a slideshow presentation, which the students watch while connected to a conference web site. Students can ask questions or provide comments through the phone line, or through a chat window. Synchronous training is most popular in academic type programs, such as continuing education programs or college distance learning programs.

Asynchronous e-learning is more common because it creates a just-in-time, on-demand student learning experience. Unlike synchronous training, students do not need to schedule their time around the predetermined plan of the instructor. There is complete flexibility with asynchronous training, which comes in two forms, facilitated and self-paced.

Facilitated asynchronous training involves an instructor and group of students, but the interaction is not in real time. The instructor will post assignments on a web page, which typically includes online reading or research conducted on various web sites. Students communicate with each other through threaded discussions (also known as online bulletin boards), and submit their homework to the instructor via e-mail.

An advantage of this type of training is that students have a lot of peer interaction, and can receive personalized attention and guidance from the human facilitator. The disadvantage is that it tends to involve only one type of media, text. Additionally, even though the training isn’t completed live, students still have scheduling concerns. Because a human instructor is posting assignments and grading homework, some kind of schedule needs to be kept, typically with each assignment lasting for one week.

Facilitated asynchronous training is common in the academic community, but the most common form used in corporations is self-paced instruction. This form of delivery consists of standalone instructional material that can be accessed and completed via the web, without additional interaction among students. Materials could include guided tutorials, discovery learning simulations, and assessment exercises. Simple web-based programs are text-heavy and look like the original disk-based CBT. More technologically advanced e-learning looks and feels as if the student were interacting with a multimedia CD-ROM.

Examples of educational technology in use

The Calgary Board of Education is starting a series of pilot projects that could see many types of technology such as iPods, video conferencing and green screens incorporated into classrooms and school libraries. Teachers may be able to make learning more

personal for students by helping incorporate these familiar gadgets into the school. Erin Hansen, who is heading this initiative, found a vast variety of educational applications for iPods. While they're not included in classrooms just yet, possible tools range from portable periodic tables, astronomy charts, graphing calculators to downloadable audio books and news feeds. Another component of the project is to figure out how to help students be smart about finding information in a wired world and knowing who and what to trust. (Edmonton Sun, Sunday October 25, 2009, p 54).

Duke University in North Carolina gave all new students free iPods in 2004, and designed a special website where educational resources could be downloaded. A review after the first year found 60% of students used the iPods to record audio for classroom purposes, while three quarters used them in at least one way to support classroom learning.

California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger made headlines earlier this year when he suggested that relying on printed textbooks is out of date and too costly. Schwarzenegger launched an initiative to see whether students could use more online learning materials, projecting that math and science books will be digital by the fall.

Many classroom instructors now use Powerpoint instead of the whiteboard or blackboard. Some professors embed video clips from YouTube or other multimedia into their presentations. Students now expect (demand) that lecture notes be available online preferably before the session. Some innovative instructors record their lectures and post these as podcasts or videos on the college website for their students to access.

E-mail is an older technology that is used extensively to connect instructors with students, students with each other, and with external resources. E-mail is now available on most mobile phones. Subscribing to specialized academic mailing lists gets you notices of events and new publications. Doing research is rapidly changing from going to the library to review books and journals, to doing online searches using Google, or the many specialized online databases available to students (e.g., ERIC, Medline, etc).

Finally, technology makes social networking easy. Students, instructors and external resources can talk and communicate on discussion forums, either class specific, subject specific or profession specific. Services such as Google Groups allow students and resource people to post messages, links and files of common interest.

A client of Steppingstones is developing a system to send automated reminders to college students via their mobile phones. The reminders will alert students to upcoming deadlines, exams, new assignments and other important information they need to know.

It has become a digital world that today's students have embraced. Colleges and their staff have to adopt and use technology if they are to remain relevant and competitive.

6.2 Forces for greater use of learning technologies

What are some of the forces pressuring post-secondary institutions, their administrators and faculty to adopt educational / learning technologies? Here are the major ones:

1. *Client demand* – unlike many other educational innovations, this one is primarily driven by external forces. Young people have embraced the new communication technology and are demanding it be part of their college education. Industry and business have adopted the technology and expect graduates to be proficient in its use.
2. *Competition* – it is necessary to keep up with other colleges and universities in the adoption and use of educational / learning technology. Otherwise, it becomes more difficult to attract, recruit, enroll and retain students.
3. *Reach* – distance education through technology allows a college to reach beyond its catchment area and enroll more students. With decreasing numbers of students, this allows the institution to maintain and increase its student numbers and maintain / expand its programs.
4. *Convenience* – technology greatly benefits the students by making more resources available to them within a college setting. With blended and distance courses, students have travel less and incur fewer costs. Communicating with the instructors and other students, and doing research via the Internet is much more convenient than using the traditional methods of trying to find and get copies of books and journals.
5. *Efficiency* – distance education and learning technologies enable an institution to serve greater numbers of students without greatly increased human or physical assets. With stagnant student numbers and a tight fiscal environment, colleges are going to find it difficult to obtain funding to add new classrooms or facilities on their campuses.
6. *Effectiveness* – there is a considerable body of research that shows that use of technology does enhance the effectiveness of student learning and success. Institutions want to give their students these benefits.
7. *Faculty* – as the baby-boomer faculty retire, they will need to be replaced by new graduates from universities. This new generation of faculty will be looking for work in institutions where educational technology leadership, infrastructure and support is in place. Technology thus becomes a competitive factor in recruiting the best faculty.

It is probably fair to conclude that any post-secondary institution that wants to survive and still be competitive in today's environment, has to have learning technologies incorporated into its programming and student support services.

6.3 Forces against use of technology

There are also some powerful forces and obstacles against the adoption and implementation of educational / learning technologies in post-secondary institutions. These include:

1. *Competence* – effective use of technology in teaching and learning requires a new set of competencies (see below) and a different approach to education. The role of the instructor has to change from a source of knowledge to a learning manager / facilitator. These competencies, along with the confidence to use them, need to be developed and used by the faculty.
2. *Costs* – educational technology costs money. Money is required for the hardware, software, technology infrastructure and support. Technology evolves rapidly so constant replacement and updating is necessary. Additional significant costs are incurred in converting existing classroom courses to online courses, and to develop new courses that incorporate the most effective techniques and technologies for distance learning. Using capital dollars for technology takes away funds from other asset needs.
3. *Time* – educational technology requires significant time commitments for faculty – time to incorporate technology into existing programs, and time to develop new courses and delivery methods. Time is also required to answer e-mails from students, participate in discussion forums, post lecture notes and schedules online, create engaging Powerpoint presentations, and so on. Time is already a scarce commodity among college faculty, so it is understandable that many resist using the technology.
4. *Work* – similar to requiring more time, educational technology requires more work, at least initially to set up the courses and systems. Unlike limited office hours, students now expect instructors to answer their e-mails promptly, seven days a week. Even with all the new developmental tools available today, it is still estimated that it takes 50 to 100 hours of work to create a one-hour online course.
5. *Efficacy* – there is still a question among many faculty today as to how effective technology-based education is compared to classroom instruction with small classes and lots of individual attention. Unlike the universities, northern colleges typically have small class sizes so it is fair to question the benefits achieved by technology. Also, technology, especially distance education, may not be suitable for certain applications such as a academic upgrading, students with poor initiative / self motivation, and teaching of hands-on skills found in trades and health professions.

6. *Equity* – given the nature of the students in the northern colleges, the issue of equity comes up. How many Aboriginal and rural students have computers / notebooks in the home, and high-speed Internet access? Do programs with a high technological component discriminate and create barriers to those students that will benefit most from their college education?
7. *Inertia* – much college learning is done in a similar way as in the past, i.e., an instructor in the front of the classroom imparting his knowledge to a group of students. Most instructors teach like they were taught – using the traditional classroom model. Change is risky; change is difficult. Fear of, and reluctance to, change is a major barrier to educational technology.
8. *Infrastructure* – as mentioned previously, the technology infrastructure is not as well developed in northern Alberta as it is in the large urban areas, and typically costs more to use. With greater distances and sparse populations, it is difficult to convince the telecommunications providers to install and maintain such infrastructure. With the Alberta government trying to manage its deficit, additional technology infrastructure funds are going to be difficult to come by.
9. *Support* – for educational technology to be effectively used, a strong support system is required, both for faculty and students. Faculty need access to instructional design, media and IT expertise. Students require support via a Helpdesk to resolve hardware and applications problems. This specialized expertise is in high demand, so the northern colleges may have difficulty in recruiting and keeping these specialists.
10. *Rewards* – as indicated by some of the research above, there are few rewards or incentives for faculty to learn and take on the extra work associated with incorporating educational technologies into their programs. On the other hand, the risks and negative consequences can be great – less time with current students and family, failure and poor student results, additional stress, etc.
11. *Administration* – finally, existing administrative systems may be an impediment. As mentioned previously, the KPI funding incentives reward individual institutional results rather than co-operation among colleges. Many other issues need to be resolved, e.g., foreign students taking distance education courses, credit transferability to other institutions outside of Alberta, recognition and status of distance education credits / programs.

There are some significant forces opposed to the introduction and application of educational and learning technologies. Senior college administrators need to be aware of these obstacles. If their institutions are to be successful, all stakeholders will need to find ways to address and overcome these real and perceived barriers.

6.4 Technology initiatives in the colleges

Suncor Learning Innovation Centre – Keyano College

The Learning Innovation Centre focuses on three areas:

1. Supports innovations in promoting alternative teaching methodologies that contribute to students' learning and success.
2. Promotes excellence in e-Learning, distance education and instructional design
3. Develops and implements professional development activities that inspire excellence in learning.

The Learning Innovation Centre designs and delivers Professional Educators' Orientation Program which is mandatory for all new faculty. The Centre offers basic professional development on topics such as SmartBoard usage, project management, lesson planning, Microsoft Word, student profiling, e-learning, etc. Centre staff support migration of online and blended learning course materials from WebCT/Blackboard to Moodle.

eCampusAlberta

The three colleges involved in this project are participating members of eCampusAlberta.

eCampusAlberta is a consortium (partnership) of 15 Alberta colleges and technical institutes, which was established in 2002 to facilitate greater access to high quality online learning opportunities. The organization enables students from across the province to choose from more than 30 provincially accredited online certificate, online diploma and applied degree programs and 400 online courses offered by 15 Alberta colleges and technical institutes.

Courses are delivered based on a lead and partner model. The lead institution develops and offers the course or program and provides the instruction and materials in an online environment. The partner institution offers support services, such as access to the library and exam supervision as well as research and study skills support.

The advantage of this model is that it enables students to take courses offered by institutions located far from their home but access the services offered by an institution that is close to where they live.

In addition to providing the infrastructure (website, server and learning management system) that facilitates the learning experience for the student, eCampusAlberta also researches and shares high quality standards for online education with member institutions and offers monthly seminars and professional development opportunities for

online educators. In this way, eCampusAlberta has established itself as a community hub for online educators.

Participation in online education has increased steadily since the partnership was formed in 2002. The number of registrations in online courses offered through eCampusAlberta increased by approximately 37 per cent in 2007/08 to 7,128. This compares with 5,189 registrations in 2006/07.

6.5 Competencies for online instructors

According to various research articles, here is a list of desirable competencies, specifically for instructors teaching via online courses.

1. Models the tone and quality of interactions expected of students
2. Provides general grading criteria
3. Promotes and encourages a range of viewpoints in discussions
4. Makes clear the due dates for assignments and examinations
5. Helps make “classroom” environment inviting and non-threatening
6. Provides clear objectives, expectations and policies
7. Plans activities that allow learners to attach personal meaning to content
8. Helps learners assess their learning and attain personal learning goals
9. Fosters sharing of knowledge, questions and expertise
10. Ensures hyperlinks are updated and in working order
11. Updates announcements and sets them to appear at relevant points during the term
12. Provides navigation cues to help students figure out where to begin and how to best move through the course content
13. Provides compelling opportunities for online discussion, negotiation and debate
14. Responds to discussion postings adequately without taking over
15. Helps learners troubleshoot technical issues and problems
16. Develops reciprocity and co-operation among students
17. Encourages contact between students and faculty
18. Communicates high expectations
19. Uses effectively the technology selected for the course delivery
20. Translates and adapts content for online delivery

21. Develops exercises that take advantage of the Internet
22. Networks with others involved in online education.

Obviously, some of these competencies also apply to traditional face-to-face teaching. (Taylor and McQuiggan, 2008).

7. Secondary Data Results

7.1 Faculty and staff profiles

The following tables provide some basic information on the staff at the three participating colleges along with some staffing comparisons with other post-secondary institutions and the province as a whole.

Table 11: Total Staff in the Three Colleges (FTE)

College	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08
GPRC	274	290	271	262	294
KC	349	343	349	369	361
NLC	244	239	250	259	275
Total	867	872	870	890	930
% change		0.6%	-0.2%	2.3%	4.5%

Over the five-year period for which data was available, staff at the three participating colleges grew by a combined 63 FTE or 7.2%. Individually, Keyano staffing grew by 3.4%, Grande Prairie by 7.3% and Northern Lakes by 12.7%.

Over this same time period, the other colleges' staff grew by 13.9% and the total post-secondary institutional staff grew by 15.6%. Staff increases at the three participating institutions were less than the other colleges and the post-secondary sector in Alberta.

Table 12: Total Staff in the Other Alberta Colleges (FTE)

College	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08
Bow Valley	425	459	478	472	508
Lakeland	437	444	373	409	434
Lethbridge	615	634	637	727	681
Medicine Hat	369	376	386	424	423
NorQuest	438	460	477	491	537
Olds	295	302	326	350	367
Portage	226	220	223	229	242
Red Deer	581	576	593	623	665
Total	3,386	3,471	3,493	3,725	3,857
% change		2.5%	0.6%	6.6%	3.5%
Total Alberta	28,016	29,027	29,759	30,714	32,377
% change		3.5%	2.5%	3.2%	5.4%

Table 13: Staff Distribution in the Three Colleges (FTE)

College	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08
GPRC					
Academic	127	135	136	124	136
Support	128	133	116	117	140
Administration	19	22	19	21	19
Total	274	290	271	262	295
% change		5.8%	-6.6%	-3.3%	12.6%
Keyano					
Academic	156	150	153	167	145
Support	182	181	182	186	142
Administration	11	13	15	17	74
Total	349	344	350	370	361
% change		-1.4%	1.7%	5.7%	-2.4%
NLC					
Academic	106	109	107	110	118
Support	121	121	124	127	134
Administration	17	10	19	22	23
Total	244	240	250	259	275
% change		-1.6%	4.2%	3.6%	6.2%
Totals					
Academic	389	394	396	401	399
% change		1.3%	0.5%	1.2%	-0.5%
Support	431	435	422	430	416
% change		0.9%	-3.0%	1.9%	-3.3%
Administration	47	45	53	60	116
% change		-4.2%	17.8%	13.2%	93.3%

Table 13 shows a detailed breakdown of total staff by occupational category at the three participating colleges over a five-year period.

At Grande Prairie College, academic staff grew by 7.1%; support staff grew by 9.4% and administration remained the same over the five years.

At Keyano, academic staff declined by 7.1%; support staff declined by 22%; while administration grew by 572%. (This was likely due to a re-classification of about 57 academic/support staff to administration).

At Northern Lakes College, academic staff grew by 11.3%; support staff grew by 10.7% and administration grew by 35% or 6 FTE.

Table 14: Student (FLE) to Staff (FTE) Ratios

College	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08
GPRC				
Students / faculty	10.3	9.9	10.2	9.2
Students / total staff	4.8	5.0	4.8	4.2
Keyano				
Students / faculty	8.8	8.4	7.3	8.9
Students / total staff	3.8	3.7	3.3	3.6
NLC				
Students / faculty	7.0	8.1	7.1	7.3
Students / total staff	3.2	3.5	3.0	3.1
Total 3 Colleges				
Total students / faculty	8.8	8.8	8.1	8.5
Total students / staff	4.0	4.0	3.7	3.7
Other Colleges				
Students / faculty	13.4	13.4	12.1	12.6
Students / total staff	6.5	6.4	5.7	5.6
Alberta Total				
Students / faculty	10.0	9.9	9.7	9.4
Students / total staff	4.9	4.8	4.7	4.6

Table 14 shows the student to faculty, and student to total staff ratios for the three participating colleges. The same ratios for the other colleges and the Alberta post-secondary sector are provided for comparison purposes.

In 2007-2008, Grande Prairie College had one FTE faculty for every 9.2 FLE students; and one FTE staff for every 4.2 FLE students. Both ratios have dropped slightly over the five year period probably reflecting the slight decrease in student enrolments.

Keyano College had a faculty member for every 8.9 students, and a staff member for every 3.6 students. These ratios fluctuated slightly over the five-year period.

Northern Lakes had a faculty member for every 7.3 students, and a staff member for every 3.1 student. Their ratios remained relatively constant over the five year period.

However, individually and as a group, the three colleges had lower student to faculty and student to staff ratios than the other colleges and the Alberta post-secondary sector as a whole. Students benefit by having smaller classes and better support services. However, the three project colleges would have slightly higher staffing costs per FLE student.

7.2 Professional development objectives

A review of the three colleges' business plans identified the following objectives related to professional development.

1. Support and fund the Professional Development program (GPRC).
2. Improve and support excellence in instruction (GPRC).
3. Build leadership capacity by developing current employees for future position vacancies (GPRC).
4. Evaluate and improve external professional development by increasing directed professional development (KC).
5. Increase sharing of learning from conferences (KC).
6. Expand current internal professional development opportunities (leadership, staff orientation) (KC).
7. Improve quality in teaching and learning (NLC).
8. Increase in-service and professional development opportunities (NLC).
9. Support transition to new Learning Management System (Moodle) (NLC).
10. Provide software training to staff (NLC).
11. Improve the capacity of Community Learning Centre personnel to provide quality support to learners in all programs (NLC).
12. Continue to share information on new technologies and practices for curriculum development, instructional design and course delivery alternatives (NLC).
13. Continue offering Instructional Skills Workshops for all new faculty members (NLC).
14. Provide ongoing learning opportunities for employees to learn while at their workplace (NLC).

7.3 Professional development activities

The Alberta Colleges and Institutes Faculty Association (ACIFA) conducts a yearly survey of their members across the province to obtain their views on working conditions and attitudes in their institutions.

Four of the ACIFA survey questions are relevant to this project. These are:

- My institution demonstrates a strong commitment to improving my teaching skills. (Q#1)
- My institution demonstrates a strong commitment to improving my discipline-specific knowledge. (Q#2)
- I have enough time to attend to my professional development needs. (Q#3)
- I have the resources I need to do my job effectively. (Q#13)

The survey asks academic staff members to indicate their level of agreement with 13 statements on a Likert scale of 1 to 5. A response of 5 indicates *strong agreement*; a response of 1 indicates *strong disagreement* while a response of 3 is considered *neutral*.

Table 15: Results of ACIFA 2008 Climate Survey

Item	GPRC	KC	NLC	Alta Ave
Q1: Improving teaching skills	3.4	3.6	3.4	3.5
Q2: Improving knowledge	3.3	3.6	3.2	3.3
Q3: Time for PD needs	3.6	3.0	2.9	2.9
Q13: Resources to do job	3.5	2.9	3.4	3.2

On average, faculty from all three colleges felt somewhat positively that “My institution demonstrates a strong commitment to improving my teaching skills.” Keyano rated this item slightly more positively (3.6) than the provincial average (3.5), while Grande Prairie and Northern Lakes were slightly less (3.4).

On the item, “My institution demonstrates a strong commitment to improving my discipline-specific knowledge,” the provincial average was 3.3 with Grande Prairie and Northern Lakes being similar while Keyano faculty rated this somewhat higher (3.6).

When it comes to time to attend to professional development needs, the faculty at Grande Prairie College rated this item higher (3.6) than the other two colleges (3.0, 2.9) and it was considerably higher than the provincial average (2.9).

Finally, faculty at Grande Prairie and Northern Lakes were more likely to indicate that they had the resources to do their jobs effectively. Keyano College faculty did not; their average (2.9) was lower than the other two colleges and the provincial average.

8. Survey Results

8.1 Respondent Characteristics

The next six tables provide data on the demographic characteristics of the respondents from the two colleges who completed the online survey.

Table 16: PD Survey Respondents by Gender

Item	GPRC	KC	Total
Female	96 (67%)	70 (69%)	166 (67%)
Male	48 (33%)	29 (28%)	77 (31%)
Unspecified	-	3 (3%)	3 (2%)
Total N	144	102	246

Table 16 shows that the females accounted for two-thirds of the survey respondents while the remaining one-third were men. The gender distribution was similar for both colleges.

Table 17: PD Survey Respondents by Age Category

Item	GPRC	KC	KC (All)*
25 years of age or less	4 (3%)	4 (4%)	5%
26 to 35 years	33 (23%)	16 (16%)	17%
36 to 45 years	31 (22%)	29 (30%)	25%
46 to 55 years	49 (34%)	33 (34%)	37%
56 years or older	26 (18%)	15 (15%)	16%
Total N	143	97	410

* Age distribution for all Keyano College staff.

The age distribution of the survey respondents is shown in Table 17. The largest age category was the 46 to 55 years group followed by 36 to 45 years group. Overall, about 16 percent were in the 56 years and older category. Grande Prairie had slightly higher numbers in the 26 to 35 year category while Keyano had slightly more in the 36 to 45 year old group.

For comparison purposes, the age distribution for all Keyano College staff is included. This comparison shows that the ages of the survey respondents are similar to the age distribution of all college staff.

Table 18: PD Survey Respondents by Years Worked at College

Item	GPRC	KC	Total
5 years or less	77 (53%)	60 (59%)	137 (56%)
6 to 10 years	13 (9%)	20 (20%)	33 (13%)
11 to 15 years	18 (13%)	6 (6%)	24 (10%)
16 to 25 years	29 (20%)	13 (13%)	42 (17%)
26 years or more	7 (5%)	2 (2%)	9 (4%)
Total N	144	101	245

Table 18 shows how long survey respondents have worked at the colleges. Over half of the respondents had been at their institution 5 years or less! The next largest category at 17% of all respondents was 16 to 25 years.

High staff turnover is a factor at Keyano College which probably accounts for the high proportion of respondents working at their institutions 5 or less years. Data provided by Grande Prairie College shows an average turnover rate of 6% over the last few years.

Table 19: PD Survey Respondents by Years Worked at College by Role

Item	Admin	Faculty	Student Support	Admin Support
5 years or less	66%	57%	62%	44%
6 to 10 years	9%	15%	13%	16%
11 to 15 years	7%	7%	5%	22%
16 to 25 years	18%	17%	16%	16%
26 years or more	0%	6%	3%	2%
Total N	55	106	37	49

Table 19 shows years worked at the colleges by survey respondents' role. Overall, administration and student support groups are likely to have been at the college five years or less. The admin support group is more likely to have worked longer, although the turnover still is relatively high. Some 57% of faculty respondents have been at their institution for 5 or less years.

Table 20: PD Survey Respondents by Role

Item	GPRC	KC	Total	KC (All)
Administration	28 (20%)	26 (26%)	54 (22%)	22%
Instructional faculty	56 (39%)	49 (48%)	105 (43%)	38%
Student support services	28 (20%)	9 (9%)	37 (15%)	40%
Admin support / maintenance	31 (21%)	17 (17%)	48 (20%)	
Total N	143	101	244	410

The distribution of survey respondents by their role is shown in Table 20. The largest group is instructional faculty (43%) followed by administration (22%), followed by admin support / maintenance (20%). The smallest group was student support services at 15%. A comparison with all staff at Keyano College suggests that all functional groups were proportionately represented in the survey.

Table 21: Faculty Survey Respondents by Program

Item	GPRC	KC	Total
University transfer	25 (21%)	14 (15%)	39 (18%)
Diploma	11 (9%)	14 (15%)	25 (12%)
Certificate	10 (8%)	13 (14%)	23 (11%)
Apprenticeship / trades	19 (16%)	15 (16%)	34 (16%)
Continuing education / non-credit	5 (5%)	4 (4%)	9 (4%)
Academic prep / upgrading	3 (3%)	9 (10%)	12 (6%)
Not applicable	45 (38%)	24 (26%)	69 (33%)
Total N	118	93	211

Finally, in this demographics section, Table 21 shows the faculty survey respondents by program. For Keyano College, the largest number of faculty respondents were from apprenticeship / trades, followed by university transfer and diploma programs. For Grande Prairie Regional College, the largest group of faculty respondents came from university transfer programs, followed by apprenticeship and trades. All programs from the participating institutions were represented in the survey.

8.2 Satisfaction with professional development

The survey began by asking respondents about how satisfied they were with their own professional development and their satisfaction with PD opportunities at their institution. The results are shown in the following two tables.

Table 22: Satisfaction with own Professional Development

Item	GPRC	KC	Total
Very dissatisfied	3%	3%	3%
Dissatisfied	16%	19%	17%
Satisfied	59%	59%	59%
Very satisfied	22%	19%	21%
Total N	143	102	245

Overall, some 80% of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with their own professional development, while 20% expressed some degree of dissatisfaction. There were no significant differences between the two colleges.

Analysis of data by role shows that instructional faculty were most likely to be dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their own professional development (26%) followed by student support staff (22%), and then administration and admin support, both at 14%.

Table 23: Satisfaction with Professional Development Opportunities at College

Item	GPRC	KC	Total
Very dissatisfied	6%	6%	6%
Dissatisfied	24%	33%	28%
Satisfied	58%	44%	52%
Very satisfied	12%	17%	14%
Total N	144	102	246

About a third of the respondents were unhappy with the PD opportunities at their college. The dissatisfaction was slightly higher at Keyano College (33%) than at GPRC (24%). However KC had a slightly higher proportion of “very satisfied.”

In terms of professional development opportunities at their college, student support staff were most likely to be dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (46%), followed by faculty (39%), then administration (33%) and finally admin support (28%).

8.3 Recent professional development activities

Some 74% (107) of respondents from Grande Prairie and 76% (78) of respondents from Keyano indicated that they had done professional development since the summer of 2008. These N's are used to calculate the percentages in the next three tables.

Table 24: Recent Professional Development Destinations

Item	GPRC	KC	Total	KC (All)*
On-campus	76%	41%	61%	41%
Within the province	52%	54%	53%	26%
Within Canada	20%	28%	23%	14%
International	12%	33%	21%	19%
Total N	107	78	185	228

* Based on analysis of funded PD activities from data provided by the three Keyano PD Committees

Table 24 shows where survey respondents took their most recent professional development activities. Overall, most PD activities were right on campus, followed by learning events within the province. Some three-quarters of the GPRC respondents had PD on campus and another half within the province. Fewer respondents at Keyano college had on-campus professional development; most undertook learning activities within the province. Also, respondents from Keyano were more likely to attend international PD events (33% vs. 12% for GPRC).

Table 25: Recent Formal Professional Development Activities

Item	GPRC	KC	Total	KC (All)*
Workshop / seminar	64%	58%	61%	53%
Conference or convention	50%	63%	55%	40%
Online course / webinar	34%	35%	34%	19%
Credit or non-credit course	35%	32%	33%	-
In-service sessions	34%	13%	25%	-
Vendor / equipment / technology	22%	13%	18%	-
Other	9%	8%	9%	7%
Leave to study / research	6%	3%	4%	-
Total N	107	78	185	228

* Based on analysis of funded PD activities from data provided by the three Keyano PD Committees

Table 25 shows the type of professional development activities respondents undertook since the summer of 2008. For GPRC, workshops / seminar were the most popular, followed by conferences and conventions. For Keyano, the reverse was true – conferences and conventions were the most popular followed closely by workshops and seminars. About a third of the respondents took online professional development activities.

In terms of “Other” PD activities, respondents from Grande Prairie added: art residencies and exhibitions; WHMIS, first aid; fieldwork / travel; learning to run classes; fitness and yoga classes (2); on-line MBA; professional coaching – telephone; learning while working; exercise class; two-day classroom course; research and writing; and, doing Master’s degree.

For Keyano respondents, “Other” included: departmental professional development; World Forum; talks by experts; research; self study; and, mentorship.

Table 26: Recent Informal Professional Development Activities

Item	GPRC	KC	Total
Internet research and learning	83%	79%	82%
Journals / magazines	67%	68%	68%
Speakers	67%	64%	66%
Meetings with colleagues	64%	64%	64%
Books related to profession	61%	65%	63%
Committees and work groups	58%	60%	59%
Online discussion forums	24%	27%	25%
Sessions with experts	21%	22%	22%
Industry / business work	16%	17%	16%
Made presentations	17%	15%	16%
Study groups	9%	11%	10%
Other	10%	5%	8%
Job swap	1%	0%	1%
Total N	107	78	185

The “informal” professional development activities undertaken since the summer of 2008 are shown in Table 26. The most popular form of PD learning is via the Internet (82%), followed by journals (68%), speakers (66%), meetings with colleagues (64%), books

(63%), and committees / work groups (59%). The other learning activities were done by 25% or less of all the respondents.

For Grande Prairie respondents, “Other” included: participated in 4 art exhibitions and work published in 2 catalogs; attended industry-related trade shows; webinars; computer skills development by self; presented to colleagues what I learned on my own; hands-on research in the shop when not with students; exercise class; researched classroom delivery technology; regularly meet with colleagues from my professional group, in my community; sculpt classes and exercise class; and, completing a Masters of Education on-campus.

For Keyano College respondents, “Other” included: attended World Forum on Early Care & Education, with reps from 80 countries; shared information with colleagues that I learned at conferences; presented to stakeholders in community to share research and information; and, worked on a government funded research project.

8.4 Professional development decisions and priorities

An important question asked on the survey was “Which of the following factors influence your choices regarding professional development?” The data is shown in Table 27. This question was designed to assess how respondents identify their learning / professional development needs.

Table 27: Factors Affecting Professional Development Choices

Item	GPRC	KC	Total
Role / work changes	72%	69%	70%
Interesting topics	68%	67%	67%
Self assessment	60%	59%	60%
Technology development	58%	51%	55%
Changes in student needs	40%	43%	41%
Low-cost and convenience	46%	33%	41%
Networking opportunities	31%	50%	39%
Supervisor / admin feedback	27%	31%	29%
College strategic plans	24%	18%	21%
Employer requirements	20%	14%	17%
Other	8%	6%	7%
Total N	144	102	246

It appears the most important factor in deciding which professional development activities to undertake is role / work changes. This is closely followed interesting topics, self assessment and technology development.

At the lower end of the list is supervisor feedback, college plans and employer requirements. This suggests that respondents have considerable freedom and independence in identifying their professional development needs.

In terms of differences between institutions, GPRC respondents placed higher priority on low-cost and convenience, while Keyano respondents placed a higher priority on networking opportunities.

For Grande Prairie respondents, “Other” factors included: continue to maintain an active art practice; intellectual curiosity; part of my performance evaluation plan; availability; my desire to have an MBA; personal goals and development; pesticide applicators renewal; professional skill development/refresher; personal development; work on my PhD; cutting-edge research in my field; and my professional association requires 32 hours of PD per year.

For Keyano College respondents, “Other” factors included: destination; employment opportunities elsewhere; opportunities to meet people who have been inspirations to me through their writing; career advancement; being able to continue my academic research; mandated provincial curriculum changes; program plan; staying current in my discipline; and, what becomes available and if it does or should apply.

Table 28: Factors Affecting Professional Development Choices by Role

Item	Admin	Faculty	Student Support	Admin Support
Interesting topics	67%	71%	73%	59%
Changes in student needs	20%	69%	32%	6%
Role / work changes	74%	66%	68%	78%
Technology development	47%	62%	46%	53%
Self assessment	74%	57%	54%	53%
Networking opportunities	42%	44%	38%	24%
Low-cost and convenience	44%	37%	38%	47%
Employer requirements	9%	28%	13%	6%
Supervisor / admin feedback	31%	22%	35%	37%
College strategic plans	34%	19%	16%	18%
Total N	55	106	37	49

Table 28 shows that different factors influence PD choices depending on the respondents functional role in the college. For administration, the most important factors are role/ work changes, self assessment and interesting topics. For faculty, the top three factors are interesting topics, changes in student needs and role / work changes. For student support services, interesting topics, role / work changes and self assessment are the top three factors affecting professional development choices. Finally, for admin support, their decisions are mostly affected by role / work changes, interesting topics, and technology development and self assessment.

Admin is most likely to take into account college strategic plans, while admin support is more likely to take into account supervisor feedback.

Table 29: Priorities for Professional Development

Item	GPRC	KC	Total
Content / work / expertise	29%	39%	33%
Leadership and management	23%	25%	24%
Technology used in work	24%	21%	23%
Learning technologies	13%	11%	12%
Instructional methodologies	6%	3%	5%
Other	5%	1%	3%
Total N	144	101	245

Tables 29 and 30 show the staff's current professional development priorities. The highest priority is to maintain and enhance content and work expertise. The second priority is leadership and management followed by learning more about technology they use in their work. There were no major differences between the institutions.

Table 30: Priorities for Professional Development by Role

Item	Admin	Faculty	Student Support	Admin Support
Content / work / expertise	18%	39%	38%	31%
Technology used in work	14%	18%	27%	39%
Learning technologies	9%	16%	11%	8%
Instructional methodologies	0%	12%	0%	0%
Leadership and management	53%	11%	22%	18%
Other	6%	4%	2%	4%
Total N	55	106	37	49

However, as Table 30 indicates, there are significant differences in priorities by functional group. For administration, by far the highest priority (53%) is leadership and management. For faculty and student support services, the highest priority is content and work expertise. For administrative support staff, their highest PD priority is to learn more about the technology they use in their everyday work.

Other priorities mentioned were completing degree (4); professional development as a practicing artist; course development; and changing careers.

Table 31: Perceived Importance of Professional Development

Item	GPRC	KC	Total
Senior administration	78%	50%	66%
Departmental administration	82%	73%	78%
Colleagues	89%	88%	89%
Respondent	98%	99%	98%
Total N	144	102	246

Percent rating each as “somewhat” or “very” important.

A final question in this section of the survey was designed to assess the perceived importance of professional development as seen by various groups. The results are shown in Table 31.

Nearly all respondents said that professional development was important to them. A high proportion of respondents felt that professional development was important to their colleagues. However, fewer respondents, especially at Keyano College, felt that their department administration and senior administration saw professional development as important.

8.5 Impact of professional development

One of the concerns about professional development activities, especially in a tight fiscal environment, is whether the funds spent result in significant benefits. Therefore, four questions were asked regarding the value, effectiveness, application to work, and application to instruction of professional development activities.

Table 32: Impact of Professional Development

Item	GPRC	KC	Total
Value	89%	94%	91%
Effectiveness	88%	93%	90%
Application to work	85%	90%	87%
Application to instruction	54%	64%	58%
Total N	144	102	246

Percent rating each factor as “some” or “a lot” .

According to the survey respondents, the professional development funds are being well spent! Overall, some 91% said that they got good value from their PD activities; 90% said that the professional development activities were effective, and some 87% said what they learned can be applied to their work. Since not all respondents were instructors, the percent applicable to instruction was lower.

Taking a look at the responses by functional group (Table 33), shows similar results. Administration provided the highest ratings for value, effectiveness and application to work. The lowest number (still very respectable at 83%) was faculty who said that their PD activities were applicable to instruction.

Table 33: Impact of Professional Development by Roles

Item	Admin	Faculty	Student Support	Admin Support
Value	98%	89%	89%	90%
Effectiveness	94%	87%	92%	90%
Application to work	93%	86%	89%	86%
Application to instruction	-	83%	-	-
Total N	55	106	37	49

Percent rating each factor as “some” or “a lot” .

8.6 Professional development preferences

Next a series of questions were asked regarding the preferences of college staff related to professional development activities. This information can be used by professional development committees in planning and organizing PD events and activities.

Table 34: Preferred Learning Methods

Item	GPRC	KC	Total	Penn*
Workshops / seminars	84%	79%	82%	-
Conferences / conventions	64%	70%	66%	-
Formal face-to-face training	51%	51%	51%	31%
One-on-one with expert	31%	32%	32%	-
Online programs / resources	31%	31%	31%	29%
Informal face-to-face training	31%	26%	29%	42%
One-on-one with mentor	30%	25%	28%	-
Self-paced materials	28%	23%	26%	43%
Professional research / discovery	25%	22%	24%	-
Informal online events	11%	7%	9%	34%
Other	2%	3%	2%	-
Total N	144	102	246	

* Comparative data from the Penn State University study described on page 26.

An analysis comparing respondents 35 years and younger showed their preferred learning methods are similar to those shown above. Conferences and workshops / seminars were by far the most preferred learning methods.

“Other” comments in Table 34 included: reading and experience; keeping fit and active; co-presenting with other leaders in field; I learn by myself what I feel I need; and credit courses.

The staff at KC and GPRC are more traditional in their learning preferences when compared to the staff at Penn State University. A significantly higher proportion of the faculty at Penn State preferred self-paced materials and informal online events than did the respondents in NADC PD survey.

Table 35: Preferred Learning Methods by Role

Item	Admin	Faculty	Student Support	Admin Support
Workshops / seminars	85%	76%	89%	88%
Conferences / conventions	73%	65%	65%	59%
Formal face-to-face training	56%	47%	57%	49%
One-on-one with expert	34%	37%	24%	22%
Professional research / discovery	22%	33%	13%	12%
Informal face-to-face training	27%	30%	30%	31%
One-on-one with mentor	29%	28%	30%	26%
Self-paced materials	31%	26%	19%	24%
Online programs / resources	40%	26%	40%	24%
Informal online events	14%	5%	11%	10%
Total N	55	106	37	49

The preferred learning methods are fairly similar across the various functional groups (Table 35). However, administration and student support services have a greater preference for online programs / resources (40%) than do the other two groups.

Table 36: Preferred Lengths for PD Events

Item	GPRC	KC	Total	Penn
Single one-day workshop	76%	70%	74%	19%
Less than one day over weeks	31%	24%	28%	21%
Self-paced materials as needed	23%	19%	21%	16%
Other	6%	12%	8%	-
Total N	144	102	246	

To assist PD committees in planning their events, the survey asked respondents their preferences for length of professional development activities. As shown in Table 36, by far the most preferred methods was a single one-day workshop.

For Grande Prairie respondents, “Other” included: credit courses – lasting a semester; on location over several days; depending on material to be covered; time line as required by the type of course; university courses; topic specific workshops of less than one day total; two days (2); and, week-long content specific technical courses.

For Keyano College respondents, “Other” included: course over a semester; one week seminars; 4-5 day hands on seminars; 4-5 days of concentrated PD; weekend course; week-long workshops during term breaks; depends on instructional schedule to ensure PD does not impact teaching time; sessions with experts for 2 - 3 hours; half day sessions; and, workshops that you have a choice of topics.

Table 37: Preferred Lengths for PD Events by Role

Item	Admin	Faculty	Student Support	Admin Support
Single one-day workshop	84%	66%	76%	80%
Self-paced materials as needed	13%	32%	8%	16%
Less than one day over weeks	25%	26%	35%	26%
Total N	55	106	37	49

Table 37 shows that about a third of the faculty like to use self-paced learning materials as needed. Just over a third of the student support respondents would like to have shorter workshops spread out over several weeks. However, most of the respondents still preferred a single one-day workshop.

Table 38: Preferred Informal Learning Opportunities

Item	GPRC	KC	Total
Multi-day workshops / seminars	62%	59%	61%
Short workshops to practice	58%	48%	54%
Release time for study / projects	50%	47%	49%
Peer / expert demonstrations	32%	30%	31%
Peer / expert mentoring	26%	24%	25%
Lunchtime classroom sessions	29%	15%	23%
Virtual online communities	24%	16%	21%
Study / user groups / clubs	15%	12%	14%
Web-based libraries	16%	6%	12%
Archived sessions	11%	7%	9%
Other	1%	3%	2%
Total N	144	102	246

Table 38 shows the preferred “informal” learning approaches by the survey respondents. The most preferred method is multi-day workshops or seminars followed by short workshops to practice and release time for study and projects. The preferences were similar for both colleges except that more GRPC staff would like lunchtime classroom sessions.

“Other” comments were: workshops that include skill development in addition to theory – and the time to take it in; distance education; I personally like to get away from my college to share and learn from colleagues from other institutions; and, quality intellectual experiences.

Table 39: Preferred Informal Learning Opportunities by Role

Item	Admin	Faculty	Student Support	Admin Support
Release time for study / projects	31%	57%	54%	47%
Short workshops to practice	45%	55%	59%	61%
Multi-day workshops / seminars	76%	46%	81%	61%
Peer / expert demonstrations	24%	35%	49%	22%
Peer / expert mentoring	29%	26%	27%	14%
Lunchtime classroom sessions	36%	18%	22%	22%
Study / user groups / clubs	11%	18%	16%	6%
Virtual online communities	24%	15%	24%	26%
Web-based libraries	13%	14%	8%	13%
Archived sessions	16%	9%	8%	2%
Total N	55	106	37	49

Analysis of preferred informal learning approaches did show some differences among the functional groups. Faculty wanted release time, short workshops to practice and multi-day workshops and seminars. Administration wanted multi-day workshops and seminars, short workshops and lunchtime classroom sessions. Student support services wanted multi-day workshops and seminars, short workshops to practice and release time. Admin support wanted short workshops to practice, multi-day workshops / seminars and some release time as well.

Also faculty and student support services rated peer / expert demonstrations higher than did the two other groups.

8.7 Barriers and incentives

The survey included a couple of questions to assess the perceived barriers and desired incentives related to professional development. One question asked, “*What do you see as the major barriers preventing you from engaging in more professional development?*” The results are shown in Tables 40 and 41.

Table 40: Perceived Barriers to Professional Development

Item	GPRC	KC	Total	Penn*
Heavy workload	72%	70%	71%	-
Shortage of time	62%	43%	54%	62%
Distance from PD events	42%	45%	43%	-
Lack of funding	31%	38%	34%	-
Difficult to access	46%	23%	28%	12%
Lack of awareness	26%	16%	21%	18%
Lack of recognition	9%	17%	12%	27%
Lack of incentive / reward	8%	14%	11%	20%
Other	4%	11%	7%	-
Total N	144	102	246	

*Penn State study comparison as reported on pages 26-27 of this report.

Overall, the top three barriers to professional development were heavy workload, shortage of time, and distance from PD events. Staff at GPRC were more likely to mention shortage of time, difficult to access, and lack of awareness than were their Keyano College colleagues. Conversely, KC staff were more likely to see lack of funding, lack of recognition, and lack of incentive / reward as barriers to professional development.

Respondents to the Penn State University survey also mentioned shortage of time as their greatest barrier. They were also more likely to identify lack of recognition, and lack of incentives and rewards, as barriers than were the staff at KC and GPRC.

For Grande Prairie College respondents, “Other” barriers mentioned include: no information is supplied to new employees; release time and increased funding to support PD fees and expenses; need much more on campus; not so much a lack of funding support, rather I have to pay up-front and get reimbursed afterward; some of the valued seminars and conferences are only available to executive group; new at the position and unsure of what needed courses I really want; and, not many that I would like to take.

The “Other” barriers that Keyano College respondents mentioned were: parameters set by college governing the type of workshop we can attend ‘must be directly related to your job’; lack of support from administration (2); difficulty finding courses required without travel; some funding, but inadequate and unrealistic; finance limits set by executive office; the institution does not consider self-learning as a valid PD; travel restrictions; timing of programs offered; timing of events (during the week rather than weekend) makes participation difficult due to our location involving more travel; lack of substitute instructors to cover classes if PD takes place during semester; and, PD approval.

Table 41: Perceived Barriers to Professional Development by Role

Item	Admin	Faculty	Student Support	Admin Support
Heavy workload	73%	76%	59%	65%
Shortage of time	58%	60%	38%	47%
Distance from PD events	40%	48%	46%	37%
Lack of funding	38%	29%	40%	35%
Difficult to access	31%	23%	35%	33%
Lack of awareness	20%	22%	27%	18%
Lack of recognition	7%	14%	8%	14%
Lack of incentive / reward	13%	9%	5%	12%
Total N	55	106	37	49

For administration, faculty and admin support the top three barriers mentioned were heavy workload, shortage of time and distance from events. For student support services, heavy workload, distance from events and lack of funding were the most frequently mentioned barriers.

Table 42: Desired Incentives for Professional Development

Item	GPRC	KC	Total	Penn
Release time	48%	36%	43%	4%
No incentives necessary	40%	43%	41%	12%
Promotion and tenure	37%	36%	37%	24%
Certificate / recognition	38%	37%	37%	12%
Financial incentives	33%	27%	30%	18%
Other	2%	6%	4%	14%*
Total N	144	102	246	

* Assistance teaching the online course.

The complementary question related to the barriers to professional development was, “Which of the following rewards and incentives would encourage you to undertaken more professional development?” The results are shown in Table 42 and 43.

The number one mentioned incentive is to provide release time so that staff would have the time to undertake professional development activities. The second most mentioned incentive was that no incentive was necessary! A desire for promotion / tenure and certificate / recognition was mentioned by 37% of the respondents. Grande Prairie respondents were more likely to mention release time and financial incentives.

“Other” desired incentives mentioned were: reimbursement of tuition/books expenses; being available/no students; a chance to go to PD events with my immediate department colleagues; full cost recovery of the PD; free PD; recognition on our collective agreement step/grid positioning and increments; PD financial support; and, work supported with time and financial support, but if ability to attend while off work, then I tap into any educational opportunities.

Table 43: Desired Incentives for Professional Development by Role

Item	Admin	Faculty	Student Support	Admin Support
Release time	33%	53%	40%	37%
No incentives necessary	53%	40%	35%	41%
Promotion and tenure	36%	38%	43%	33%
Financial incentives	36%	34%	27%	24%
Certificate / recognition	53%	25%	43%	45%
Total N	55	106	37	49

Table 43 shows the desired incentives by functional groups in the colleges. For administration, the top two mentioned incentives were no incentives and a certificate or some sort of recognition. For faculty, release time and no incentives were the top two mentioned. Student support services respondents mentioned promotion and tenure and a certificate / recognition. For administrative support, a certificate or recognition and no incentives were the most frequently mentioned.

It is interesting to observe that between a third to a half of the respondent felt that no incentive was necessary for professional development. Another quarter to a half mentioned a certificate or some sort of recognition. This is low-cost option that should be considered. The other incentives – release time, promotion and financial incentives – all have significant financial implications.

8.8 Utilization of Learning Technologies

One of the goals of the survey was to assess the utilization of learning technologies at the participating colleges. Tables 44 and 45 show the current use of technology by staff.

Table 44: Current Use of Technology

Item	GPRC	KC	Total
E-mail	74%	76%	75%
PowerPoint	65%	76%	69%
Word processing / spreadsheets	58%	57%	57%
Videos / multimedia	49%	56%	52%
Social networking	37%	37%	37%
Course descriptions online	28%	31%	30%
Resources / readings online	25%	25%	25%
Text messaging / Twitter	23%	28%	25%
Online / distance education	24%	25%	25%
Online feedback to students	16%	23%	19%
Self-paced learning resources	20%	17%	19%
Lecture notes online	14%	22%	17%
Course assignments online	17%	18%	17%
Discussion forums	15%	17%	16%
Webcasting / webinars	15%	12%	13%
Online tests and quizzes	10%	15%	12%
Learning Management System	8%	9%	8%
e-Learning development software	7%	9%	8%
Other	4%	7%	5%
Total N	144	102	246

Technology that is used by more than half of the respondents include e-mail, PowerPoint, word processing and spreadsheets, and videos / multi-media. PowerPoint and media appear to be used slightly more frequently at Keyano.

“Other” technologies mentioned by respondents include: Blackboard, Google, face to face, podcasts; Blackboard/WebCT as extra aid; email, web search; telephone, blog; graphing calculators (overhead), manipulatives, overhead projector, Proxima; books; and, professional contact for communication.

Table 45: Current Use of Technology by Role

Item	Admin	Faculty	Student Support	Admin Support
PowerPoint	71%	87%	46%	51%
Videos / multimedia	47%	79%	22%	18%
E-mail	74%	73%	84%	73%
Word processing / spreadsheets	60%	49%	59%	69%
Course descriptions online	29%	43%	19%	10%
Resources / readings online	22%	35%	19%	10%
Online feedback to students	13%	33%	13%	0%
Course assignments online	14%	28%	5%	4%
Lecture notes online	22%	27%	3%	2%
Online / distance education	27%	25%	30%	16%
Discussion forums	14%	24%	13%	0%
Self-paced learning resources	16%	23%	13%	14%
Social networking	53%	23%	40%	51%
Online tests and quizzes	13%	18%	8%	4%
Text messaging / Twitter	40%	14%	24%	35%
Learning Management System	4%	11%	11%	4%
e-Learning development software	9%	10%	5%	2%
Webcasting / webinars	27%	8%	8%	14%
Other	7%	7%	3%	2%
Total N	55	106	37	49

Administration respondents tend to use e-mail, PowerPoint and word processing / spreadsheets most frequently. Faculty's top three technologies are PowerPoint, videos / multi-media, and e-mail. Student support services use e-mail, word processing / spreadsheets, and PowerPoint. Finally, the top three technologies for admin support are e-mail, word processing / spreadsheets and PowerPoint / social networking.

It is interesting to note that over half of the administration and admin support respondents say they use social networking sites such as Facebook. These same two groups use text messaging more frequently than do faculty and student support.

Interest in Learning Technologies

All staff were asked as to their interest in developing and delivering online / distance education courses and programs. These results are shown in the following two tables.

Table 46: Interest in Developing and Delivering Online / Distance Ed

Item	GPRC	KC	Total
Not at all	35%	40%	37%
A little	22%	17%	20%
Somewhat	24%	24%	24%
Very	19%	18%	19%
Total N	113	82	195

Overall, as shown in Table 46, some 43% of the respondents said they were somewhat or very interested in developing online / distance education materials. There were no differences between the colleges.

Some 46% of faculty were somewhat or very interested, compared to 43% of administration, and 38% for student support and admin support. With only 18% of the faculty very interested, this isn't a very large pool of interest to build upon in developing and implementing more online programming.

Table 47: Interest in Developing and Delivering Online / Distance Ed by Role

Item	Admin	Faculty	Student Support	Admin Support
Not at all	49%	26%	45%	48%
A little	8%	28%	17%	14%
Somewhat	15%	28%	17%	31%
Very	28%	18%	21%	7%
Total N	39	104	24	29

Both not interested and interested groups were asked as to their reasons why they were or weren't interested. The results are shown in Tables 48 and 49 below.

Table 48: Reasons for No or Little Interest in Developing Online Courses

Item	GPRC	KC	Total
No time	56%	51%	54%
Little knowledge / expertise	47%	53%	50%
Not appropriate for my content	44%	45%	44%
No significant benefits	36%	36%	36%
Other	33%	32%	32%
Few incentives / rewards	23%	30%	26%
Students don't have technology	16%	11%	14%
Close to retirement	9%	4%	7%
Total N	64	47	111

The reasons given for no or little interest are no time, little knowledge or expertise, not appropriate for my content, and see no significant benefits. Keyano College respondents gave their top reason as lack of knowledge and expertise while lack of time was the major reason at GPRC.

“Other” reasons for low interest mentioned by Grande Prairie respondents include: pedagogically speaking, I prefer face-to-face interaction with my students; I teach studio based courses whose best method of delivery is in the classroom; I’m not motivated; training funds; have extensive experience but no degree; nothing that interests me; and, no budget is available for development.

“Other” reasons given by Keyano College respondents are: no recognition of the amount of time it takes to develop and teach online classes; additional time on workloads would be incentive; although I am interested, any development would be assigned as workload above and beyond my regular classroom teaching; institutional support; prefer face-to-face in dealing with some of the issues in my courses; I don’t care for the medium; I’m still a learner; I enjoy classroom time with students, and I do not like spending all of my time sitting at my computer; I have surveyed my students and none wanted the online component to be mandatory, only optional supports; our students do NOT want online courses – this is why they come and take our in-class courses; and, I find benefits to group sharing, discussion and hands on.

Table 49: Reasons for Some or A Lot Interest in Developing Online Courses

Item	GPRC	KC	Total
Expand knowledge / expertise	76%	69%	73%
Develop marketable skills	51%	49%	50%
More students can take course	51%	34%	44%
Significant benefits	35%	34%	35%
Appropriate for my content	27%	31%	29%
Competitors offering courses	20%	23%	21%
Other	8%	17%	12%
Time available	14%	3%	10%
Total N	49	35	84

As shown in Table 49, the main reasons for interest in developing online courses were expanding knowledge and expertise, developing marketable skills and enabling more students to take courses. Enabling more students to take courses was mentioned more frequently by GPRC respondents than by Keyano staff.

Table 50: Topics of Interest in Designing Online Courses

Item	GPRC	KC	Total	Penn*
Converting courses	34%	38%	35%	35%
Choosing right technologies	32%	35%	33%	56%
Assessment tools	30%	26%	28%	35%
Creating audio / video clips	27%	22%	25%	34%
Measuring student progress	21%	24%	23%	34%
Other	7%	11%	9%	
Total N	113	82	195	

*Penn State study comparison as reported on pages 26-27 of this report

When asked about topics of interest in designing online courses, respondents indicated interest in all the topics listed. Most interest was in converting existing courses, followed by choosing the right technologies, followed by designing assessment and evaluation tools for online courses.

It is interesting to note that our survey findings are similar to those at Penn State University except that their faculty had a much higher level of interest in choosing the right technologies.

“Other” topics of design interest mentioned were: creating effective discussions with distributed learning; podcasting; and, techniques specific to staff in-service type training.

Table 51: Topics of Interest in Online Course Delivery

Item	GPRC	KC	Total	Penn
Relationships with students	36%	44%	39%	40%
Feedback on assignments	34%	32%	33%	32%
Managing teaching workloads	16%	26%	20%	34%
Facilitating virtual communities	18%	17%	17%	47%
Online communities	18%	15%	16%	35%
Web conferencing sessions	15%	12%	14%	35%
Learning management system	14%	11%	13%	-
Other	7%	10%	8%	-
Total N	113	82	195	

The top topics of interest related to the *delivery* of online courses were establishing effective working relationships with students, providing feedback on assignments and managing the teaching workloads. Keyano respondents were slightly more interested in developing relationships with students and managing teaching loads than compared to their colleagues at GPRC.

In comparison, the respondents in the Penn State study were most interested in facilitating virtual communities and developing effective relationships with students.

“Other” topics of delivery interest include: short courses; providing courses that are student driven; developing our own LMS; support student technology competencies; i.e. the use and implementation of Math Equation Editor by students; and engaging students.

Table 52: Topics of Interest in Administration of Online / Distance Programs

Item	GPRC	KC	Total
Keeping students informed	34%	32%	33%
Evaluating course effectiveness	31%	29%	30%
Using LMS	30%	26%	28%
Course promotion	31%	19%	26%
Technical support	33%	17%	26%
Recruiting students	27%	23%	25%
Orientation to technologies	22%	19%	21%
Counseling and support	23%	17%	20%
Working with partners	23%	17%	20%
Other	6%	10%	8%
Total	113	82	195

Table 52 shows the topics of interest in the *administration* of online / distance education courses and program. All topics listed has some level of interest. The top three mentioned were keeping students informed, evaluating course effectiveness and using the learning management system (LMS). Course promotion and technical support were of slightly higher interest to GPRC respondents than their Keyano colleagues.

“Other” topics of interest in administration mentioned were: more effective selling for the store; advertising and promotion of programming and facility; faculty workload, student satisfaction and other measures

8.9 Barriers to Learning Technologies Use

A question was asked, “Which of the following factors do you see as barriers / obstacles to a greater use of learning technologies at your College?” The results are shown in Table 53.

Table 53: Barriers to Greater Use of Learning Technologies

Item	GPRC	KC	Total
Workloads and time	60%	59%	60%
Costs and funding	60%	54%	57%
Knowledge / skills of faculty	38%	32%	36%
Interest among staff	31%	23%	27%
Instructional design expertise	26%	27%	26%
Technological infrastructure	24%	29%	26%
Technology / programming	22%	24%	22%
Incentives and rewards	20%	21%	20%
Other	4%	9%	6%
Total N	144	102	246

Overall the two biggest perceived obstacles to greater use of learning technologies is workloads and time, and costs and funding.

“Other” barriers mentioned include: inappropriate technology for the learners and course content; much of what I teach is hands on; trades courses need hands on competence / assessments ‘live’; lack of support over life of a project; constant change too disruptive; lack of competent people to configure computers; distance; lack of college support for WFD online development i.e. staff willing to work with the credit side but not us; we don’t need technology in the course; not the BEST way to facilitate learning when a classroom is available; 24 - 7 technical support for faculty and students – when an issue arises it needs to be fixed now, not a day or two later; not all students want online/distance delivery; and questionable worth of online education.

8.10 Learning about Learning Technologies

Finally, a question was asked, “Which of the following have you personally used to increase your knowledge / skills regarding learning / educational technologies?”

Table 54: Methods used to Increase Knowledge of Learning Technologies

Item	GPRC	KC	Total
Workshops / seminars	70%	69%	70%
Conferences / conventions	43%	57%	49%
Formal face-to-face training	37%	44%	40%
Informal face-to-face events	33%	33%	33%
Online programs / resources	28%	36%	31%
One-on-one with mentors	28%	30%	29%
Self-paced materials	24%	30%	27%
Professional research	25%	23%	24%
One-on-one with experts	13%	20%	16%
Informal online events	13%	18%	15%
Other	3%	4%	4%
Total N	144	102	246

As shown in Table 54, staff in the two participating institutions learn about technologies in the same way they learn about other topics – predominately via workshops and seminars. Less than a third use technology to learn about technology, e.g., online programs and resources, self-paced materials, and informal online events.

“Other” methods mentioned were: self-taught trial and error training; pilot test implementation of Blackboard in class and refined based on student recommendations; I have a Moodle Sand Box; in class courses; professional associations; and, online webinars, journals, informal conversations with staff more knowledgeable than me.

8.11 PD survey respondents comments

The professional development online survey included a couple of open-ended questions. One asked respondents, “*What do you like about professional development at your college?*” The other question asked, “*What changes or improvements to professional development at your college would you like to see?*”

An analysis / summary of the respondents’ comments is presented below. Each survey participant’s full comments can be seen in Appendix D.

Grande Prairie and Keyano survey respondents made these comments about what they *like* regarding professional development at their institutions.

Table 55: Respondent Comments Regarding *Likes* about Professional Development

Theme	GPRC	KC	Total
PD funds are available	27 (26%)	32 (43%)	59 (33%)
Flexibility / freedom in choosing PD	13 (13%)	9 (12%)	22 (12%)
PD is encouraged and supported	13 (13%)	6 (8%)	19 (11%)
Opportunity for self improvement	11 (11%)	7 (9%)	18 (10%)
PD available on campus	14 (13%)	2 (3%)	16 (9%)
Easy to access	7 (7%)	8 (11%)	15 (8%)
Variety and range of PD events	5 (5%)	2 (3%)	7 (4%)
Opportunity to network	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	3 (2%)
Spend funds on computers	3 (3%)	0	3 (2%)
Other	7 (7%)	7 (9%)	14 (8%)
Total N	102	74	176

The most frequently mentioned “like” was that professional funds were available. The next most mentioned positives were: flexibility and freedom on how the PD funds could be used; that professional development is encouraged and supported; and that the colleges provide opportunities for their staff to enhance and improve their knowledge and skills.

There were a few differences between the two post-secondary institutions. A greater proportion of Keyano respondents liked that PD funds were available. More Grande Prairie respondents liked that professional development was available on campus.

Table 56 shows a summary of the suggestions made by Grande Prairie and Keyano College survey respondents regarding possible improvements to their professional development programs.

Table 56: Respondent Comments Regarding *Improvements* for Professional Development

Theme	GPRC	KC	Total
More funding	15 (15%)	14 (20%)	29 (17%)
Time and/or workload release	8 (8%)	13 (19%)	21 (13%)
More variety – types and times	18 (19%)	3 (4%)	21 (13%)
More on-campus PD	9 (9%)	6 (9%)	15 (9%)
Easier applications / approvals	1 (1%)	10 (14%)	11 (7%)
More flexibility /fewer restrictions	2 (2%)	9 (13%)	11 (7%)
More technology-related PD	8 (8%)	1 (1%)	9 (5%)
No changes	7 (7%)	1 (1%)	8 (5%)
More awareness of PD events	3 (3%)	3 (4%)	6 (4%)
Better access to PD	2 (2%)	4 (6%)	6 (4%)
More for support staff	4 (4%)	0	4 (2%)
More online, self-directed PD	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	3 (2%)
Clearer rules as to what PD is	2 (2%)	0	2 (1%)
Other	16 (16%)	5 (7%)	21 (13%)
Total N	97	70	167

The top three suggestions for improvement at GPRC were: more variety in terms of content and times for professional development; more funding; and more professional development available on campus.

For Keyano respondents, their top four suggestions were: more funding for professional development; making more time available for professional development activities; an improved process for applications and approvals; and, more flexibility and fewer restrictions on selection of PD activities and funding use.

General comments

At the end of the survey, respondents were provided with an opportunity to make any general comments about professional development. Here is a summary of the comments from the GPRC and KC staff.

Table 57: Respondent General Comments Regarding Professional Development

Theme	GPRC	KC	Total
PD is important / supported	7 (35%)	3 (21%)	10 (29%)
Time to take PD	2 (10%)	4 (29%)	6 (18%)
Survey more for faculty	3 (15%)	0	3 (9%)
More training for new employees	2 (10%)	1 (7%)	3 (9%)
Other	6 (30%)	6 (43%)	12 (35%)
Total N	20	14	34

Most of the general comments were an re-iterations of what was already mentioned in the “likes” and suggestions for improvements, e.g., professional development is important and supported in their institutions, and that more time should be made available for staff to participate in PD activities.

9. Discussion

In this section of the report, we will review, consolidate, summarize and discuss the implications of this research project's findings for professional development at the northern Alberta colleges.

The environment

There are two significant trends that are affecting how post-secondary educational institutions in Alberta conduct their business:

- Stagnant populations and declining numbers of students
- Government funding constraints.

The Canadian population has been relatively stable over the last decade and is projected to begin declining as the baby boomers pass on. Over the last five years, student enrolments in all Alberta colleges have grown by 2%; for the 3 northern colleges, enrolments have declined by 5% over the last six years. Statistics Canada projects a decline in the 17 to 29 year age group over the next 20 years.

Some possible implications for the colleges of this trend are:

- Greater competition for students by post-secondary institutions, not only within Alberta, but across provinces
- Fewer quality applicants to choose from for the various programs
- Pressure to lower standards to meet quotas for programs
- Pressure to rationalize and/or eliminate low-enrolment programs
- Reduced funding from tuition and government grants.

Implications for professional development include:

- Having outstanding faculty, both with content knowledge and instructional skills, to serve as a competitive edge to attract students
- Having faculty and student support services competent to deal with a greater diversity of students (as standards are lowered to accept more students)
- Having faculty with multi-disciplinary knowledge to teach across several low-enrolment programs.

To achieve these objectives will require more professional development among the faculty and supporting staff.

The second trend is a contraction of government funding to the post-secondary sector. All colleges and universities will receive less funding this year, and the level of funding is expected to stay frozen for the next few years. However, costs will increase so the colleges will be expected to do more with less resources.

There are several potential implications of this trend on professional development:

- Pressure to reduce funding allocated for professional development
- Increased demands for accountability to “prove” PD funds are being well spent and having significant benefits
- Interest in exploring and trying innovative and co-operative approaches to get “more bang for the buck” from professional development activities
- Pressure for better monitoring and evaluation of professional development activities and expenditures.

These two trends will create challenges for post-secondary institutions. Remaining competitive will require more, not less, professional development at a time when general funding is restricted.

Professional development

A review of the literature on professional development came up with the following conclusions and suggestions.

1. Professional development of faculty and staff is a common concern in the post-secondary education sector.
2. Set up mechanisms to obtain regular and ongoing input from staff regarding PD program design and activities. Avoid making assumptions about what staff need.
3. Incorporate flexible scheduling and various delivery options for professional development to accommodate varying workloads and schedules of staff.
4. Incorporate assessment into professional development programs, which needs to align with institutional strategic initiatives. Anticipated outcomes should be clearly defined and measured.
5. Hold more professional development activities at the institution using a combination of in-house presenters and outside speakers. This approach reduces travel costs, and enables more staff to attend and participate.

6. Support and encourage ongoing professional development. Stress, that regardless of budgets, professional development is an expectation and responsibility of working at an institution of learning.

The professional development survey conducted as part of this project found:

1. Most respondent (80%) were satisfied with their own professional development with about two-thirds being satisfied with PD opportunities at their college.
2. Most recent professional development activities took place either on-campus or within Alberta. More GPRC respondents said they took their PD at their institution.
3. Workshops, seminars and conferences were the most common formal professional development activities.
4. Internet research, journals, speakers, meetings, books and committees were the most frequently mentioned sources of informal professional development.
5. Role / work changes, interesting topics and self assessment were the factors most affecting professional development choices.
6. The professional development priorities were leadership and management for the administration group; content and work expertise for the faculty and student support groups; and, technology used in work for the admin support group.
7. A high percentage of the survey respondents felt that their professional development offered excellent value, was effective, and was applicable to their work. For faculty, most said the PD they took applied to their instruction as well.
8. Workshops, seminars and conferences are the preferred methods for doing professional development.
9. A single one-day workshop was the most preferred length for a formal professional development activity.
10. Short workshops and release time for projects were the preferred approaches to informal professional development.
11. The top three barriers to professional development mentioned by the survey respondents were heavy workloads, shortage of time, and distance from PD events.

12. In terms of desired incentives to encourage more professional development, certificates and recognition were most mentioned by admin, student support and admin support; faculty wanted more release time.
13. When asked about they liked about professional development at their institutions, staff said that funds were available for PD, the freedom and flexibility in choosing and using the PD funds, and the fact that PD was encouraged and supported.
14. The top four suggestions on how to improve the professional development programs at their institutions were more funding, release time to take PD, a greater variety and timing for PD events, and more on-campus learning opportunities.

The consultant's assessment is that the professional development programs at Grande Prairie and Keyano are well designed and run. Only some minor tweaking is needed to make them better and to adjust for the changing times.

Learning technologies

An important component of this project was to assess the use of, and make recommendations regarding improvements to, learning technologies in the participating institutions.

A review of the literature on educational technology in post-secondary institutions found:

1. Increased competition, decreased enrolments, greater numbers of non-traditional students and decreased government funding are the most obvious problems faced by higher education. Many post-secondary institutions view technology as a cost-effective and innovative solution to their problems.
2. Faculty members all over are being pressured to integrate technology into their instructional activities. The pressure is coming from administrators trying to keep up with new technological advances, from students who are becoming increasingly insistent that technology be part of their education, and colleagues who are considered innovators of instructional technology and are eager to spread its advantages to laggards.
3. Professional development programs for learning technologies need to consider faculty role changes, a shift toward student-centred teaching, and different basic values and assumptions about teaching. Faculty need training and support to teach online.

4. There are powerful forces and obstacles opposing the adoption of educational technologies in post-secondary institutions. Some of these include: need to develop a new set of staff competencies; significant additional costs for hardware, software, infrastructure and support; time, that is already scarce, to develop and implement technology-supported instruction; amount of work required to develop quality online courses and programs; and, questions as to the efficacy of online instruction compared to face-to-face, small class instruction.

It is going to be a challenge to promote and advance the use of learning technologies in the post-secondary sector within an environment of declining enrolments, increasing workloads, and reduced funding and resources.

The professional development survey provided the following information related to the utilization of learning technologies at Grande Prairie and Keyano Colleges.

1. E-mail, PowerPoint, business software and videos/multimedia were the most frequently used technologies at the two participating institutions.
2. Some 43% of administrators and 46% of faculty were somewhat or very interested in developing and delivering online / distance education courses and programs.
3. The top 4 reasons given by respondents as to their lack of interest in online courses were no time, little knowledge / expertise, not appropriate to their content, and they could see no significant benefits in doing so.
4. The reasons given for some or a lot of interest in developing online courses were to expand their knowledge / expertise, develop marketable skills, enable more students to take their courses, and they saw significant benefits in doing so.
5. The main topics of interest in designing online courses were converting traditional courses, choosing the right technologies, and developing and using assessment tools.
6. The major topics of interest related to online course delivery were managing relationships with students, giving feedback on assignments, and managing the teaching workloads.
7. The top three topics of interest in the administration of online courses were keeping students informed, evaluating courses effectiveness and using the learning management system (LMS).
8. The main perceived barriers to greater use of educational technologies at their institutions were heavy workloads and shortage of time, costs and funding, and lack of knowledge / skills among the faculty.

9. In terms of the preferred ways to learn about how to use educational technologies, the preferred methods were similar to general professional development, i.e., workshops, seminars, conferences and face-to-face training.

Encouraging the development and greater use of learning technologies is going to be a challenge. On one hand, greater use of technology may be able to offset declining enrolments and improve efficiencies. However, on the other hand, increased workloads and reduced funding will make it difficult to spare the resources necessary to develop, test, implement and evaluate new online / distance education programs. Some suggestions on how to advance the utilization of learning technologies are provided in the recommendations section.

10. Opportunities, Challenges and Issues

Here are some of the opportunities, challenges and issues that have been identified in this research project.

Opportunities

The possible opportunities include:

1. *Encouragement for innovation* – declining enrolments and reduced funding will necessitate exploring new and creative ways to provide quality education to students and to enhance the competence of staff.
2. *More collaboration and co-operation in professional development* – there is an opportunity for more and better working together – the various PD committees at each college, admin and PD committees, PD committees across institutions, and more co-operative learning activities with external stakeholders.
3. *Incentives to use learning technologies* – as funding and resources become more limited, there will be more of a willingness among some to adopt technology to get things done. Technology will be used more for professional development, and to provide students with better access and support for education.

Challenges

Some of the general challenges include:

1. *Maintaining PD programs* – as indicated before, the trends in the post-secondary sector dictate that more, not less, professional development will be required. However, maintaining or enhancing current PD funds and programs will be a challenge given that government funding is not increasing over the next few years.
2. *Collaboration takes work* – although there are significant benefits in working together, collaboration and co-operation take considerable time, energy, effort and compromise. Given the existing staff workloads and shortages of time, and restrictions on travel funds, quality and effective collaboration may be a challenge.
3. *Overcoming learning technology obstacles* – as discussed previously, there are some formidable obstacles to the greater use of technology. Given the diminished resources of funding and time, it may be a challenge to utilize educational technologies to the extent desired by senior administration and faculty.

Issues

The following issues were identified during the course of the project. The colleges and Professional Development Committees should spend some time reviewing and addressing / resolving them as appropriate.

1. *Definition of professional development* – learning can be as simple as reading an article in a professional journal, to doing some Internet research, to taking a seminar or workshop, to a partial or full sabbatical. What learning activities should be considered professional development for purposes of funding, tracking, monitoring and reporting?

A related issue is whether professional development should be defined as enhancement of current competencies only, or should it also include development of basic skills and knowledge required to do the current job? Focus group participants felt that basic skills training were the responsibility of the employer, and that those costs should not be taken out of PD funds.

2. *Clarification of roles and responsibilities* – what are the respective roles, obligations, responsibilities and expectations by the various parties regarding professional development programs and activities? Currently the staff member, their supervisor, senior administration and professional development committees are all involved in the process. Concerns were expressed about the clarity and transparency of the application and approval process.
3. *Voluntary versus mandatory* – should professional development be a formal requirement of faculty, and/or all college staff? Under the *Health Professions Act*, all regulated health professions in Alberta are required to undertake PD as a condition of their continued registration (and therefore employability). Or, should professional development continue to be voluntary, but strongly encouraged? Another option is to have only certain aspects of professional development mandatory e.g., new instructor workshops and management seminars for administrators.
4. *Degree of independence* – how much independence should staff have in deciding which professional development activities to undertake, or events to attend? Currently staff have considerable independence in choosing their learning activities. However, from an institutional perspective, this independence leaves the college with little influence in managing its human resources to develop the talent and expertise required to achieve its strategic objectives. Also, since the college is paying for the professional development of its employees, shouldn't it have a say on how the funds are used?

The survey results show that one of the best things staff like about their PD program is the ability to choose their learning activities. It was also pointed out in the focus groups that supervisors, students and performance reviews do have an influence on staff members' decisions regarding what learning they should undertake.

5. *Ad hoc versus planned* – should professional development continue to be ad hoc, or should staff be required to prepare and follow a personalized learning plan? Most regulated health professions now require their members to prepare and submit a learning plan. One big advantage is that the organizations can assess and monitor the overall learning needs of their members and plan appropriate programs to cost-effectively address these needs. To some extent, some informal planning is already being done at the colleges as part of the performance review process.
6. *Identification of learning needs* – how should staff identify their professional development needs? Most use some form of self assessment. Unfortunately, there is a considerable body of research that shows self assessments are not very reliable. Supervisor, colleague and student feedback are much better indicators for areas that need improvement, and are being used by staff to some extent to influence their choices for PD. Also, should professional development be focused on maintaining content expertise, or improving instruction, or both?
7. *Monitoring and evaluation* – what measures and systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of individual professional development activities and the PD programs as a whole? As post-secondary funding becomes tighter, policy and decision makers will want to see evidence that their investments in professional development are paying adequate dividends.
8. *Accountability* – what responsibilities and obligations does a staff member have upon accepting professional development funding and support? Should the individual be required to submit a report, provide an evaluation of the learning activity / event, and/or be required to share what he/she learned with colleagues and other interested college staff?

11. Recommendations

Here are the suggestions and recommendations that Steppingstones makes based on the analysis of the data and findings of this research project.

General

1. In future projects, NADC and the consultants should consult with stakeholders *prior* to designing and undertaking the research study. In retrospect, the consultant wishes that the professional development committees had been given an opportunity to have more input into the design of the study overall, and the survey questions in particular. Since the PD committees will have main responsibility for implementing the recommendations, it would have been useful if they had received all the information they need.
2. Senior administration, human resources and the professional development committees at each college should review the data and results of this research project, and formulate their own conclusions and recommendations as well. This study was designed to provide detailed information so that professional development programs at the participating institutions can be improved.

Planning

1. Administration and the professional development committees should get together once a year to develop a three-year PD Plan for their institution. This brief PD Plan should include priorities for professional development and programs / initiatives that will be undertaken to achieve these objectives. The PD Plan should be included in the college's Business Plan. It should be updated annually and a progress report made in the college's Annual Report.
2. The three professional development committees should meet as a group at least twice a year to co-ordinate and collaborate on their professional development programs. Discussions should be about the planning and scheduling of events (individual and joint); pooling resources to bring in speakers of interest to all staff; aligning application and approval processes to enhance transparency across admin, faculty and support; and to jointly lobby senior administration for changes to PD related policies, regulations and resources.
3. Representatives of the professional development committees in the northern Alberta colleges should meet (face-to-face or virtually) at least on an annual basis to share and exchange information, and to seek opportunities to collaborate and work together. Suitable topics for discussion include: scheduling on-campus PD events so that members from other colleges can attend; sharing travel costs so that big-name

speakers can present at several of the colleges during one trip; and, exploring ways for faculty in similar programs a greater opportunity to get together, network and exchange ideas and their successes.

4. The northern Alberta colleges should consider joining and participating in the Alberta Network of Professional and Organizational Development (ANPOD). The stated mission of ANPOD is to foster within the Alberta post-secondary system, a collaborative culture that values and promotes excellence and innovation in professional development, leadership, teaching and learning.

Administration

Each college should consider designing and implementing an Internet or Intranet-based professional development management and reporting system. This system should have the following capability and features:

1. An online PD application and approval process for all college staff. This would expedite and streamline the process while providing better real-time statistics on professional development applications, approvals/rejections and remaining budgets.
2. A calendar and description of upcoming professional development events and activities within the college, in nearby post-secondary institutions, and appropriate conferences and conventions elsewhere.
3. A news section highlighting significant achievement and accomplishments of staff, e.g., presenting at conferences, publishing papers and articles, winning awards, conducting research.
4. A professional development activity reporting and evaluation component. This would be an online form where *all* staff who received PD funding would be required to provide a brief description about their learning activity, and do a short evaluation on it as well. (This may eventually be extended to unfunded PD activities so that a more accurate picture is available of total professional development at the institution). All or parts of this component would be available to other staff to assist them in selecting suitable PD activities. Queries and regular reports would provide information to the PD committees and administration as to the status and accomplishments of the professional development programs.

Programs

The consultant concluded that existing professional development programs at Grande Prairie and Keyano Colleges were generally well designed and run. However, here are some suggestions for tweaking the programs.

1. The colleges should set up a mechanism to obtain regular and ongoing input from staff regarding professional development programs and activities. This information should be used for co-operative planning as recommended above.
2. Policies and documentation within each institution should be reviewed to make sure that the definition of what constitutes professional development is clearly defined and described. In addition, the respective roles, obligations, responsibilities and expectations of the various parties are clearly outlined. This should be done as a joint venture among the three PD committees to ensure consistency and perceived fairness across the organization.
3. Offer one or more professional development events yearly at the college. The PD days at Grande Prairie had rave reviews, so the other colleges should consider doing the same. Currently Grande Prairie is considering a fall PD event for their campus and a spring event for the Fairview campus. Staff would be able to attend either event depending on their work schedules.
4. The northern colleges should consider co-ordinating their on-campus PD days to allow their staff the opportunity to attend events at other institutions. The collaboration should also include the possibility of sharing expenses to bring in out-of-town speakers and experts.
5. The on-campus PD days should include presentations and sessions from outside speakers, college staff members and students. Outside speakers bring news on what is happening elsewhere in an industry or sector. However, there are many exciting innovations and developments at each college as well. Having staff share what they are doing with colleagues and others at institutions is great for sharing information and networking, especially across departments. Finally, consider getting students involved – after all who better to do a session on how to use iPhones or Facebook.
6. In addition to the PD Days, the colleges should consider offering short workshops during the year. These workshops should focus on things such as computers and software, and provide an opportunity for the participants to develop and practice their skills. This type of PD activity was requested often by admin support staff in their survey responses. These should incorporate flexible scheduling and various delivery options to accommodate varying workloads and schedules of staff.

7. For now, it is recommended that individual professional development remain optional, but strongly encouraged. However, certain professional development such as new instructors' orientation and workshops, and certain management courses may be mandatory.
8. Orientation sessions and/or short workshops should be offered to make staff aware and encourage them to take advantage of the various technology tools that can be used for distance professional development, e.g., webinars, discussion forums, video conferencing, etc. It may be necessary to fund one or two individuals to compile lists and evaluate the various online resources that are available.
9. The PD committees and administration should explore affordable ways to provide more time for staff to undertake professional development activities. The three biggest barriers to undertaking professional development were heavy workloads, shortage of time and distance from events. The above recommendations may partially address some of these obstacles, but finding more time for staff for PD is needed.
10. The PD Committees and the institutions should review their incentive programs for professional development. The most frequently mentioned desired rewards for PD achievements were certificates and recognition. Fortunately, these are relatively inexpensive ways to encourage and reward staff for enhancing their competence.
11. More funding for professional development was the most frequently requested improvement. As indicated before, professional development of staff is important to the success and competitiveness of the colleges. So funding for professional development must remain a priority within the institutions. However, given the fiscal reality and government funding intentions, it is also necessary that ways be explored to make existing funds go further and get more value from current expenditures.

Learning Technologies

All institutions of higher education are continuously facing challenges in keeping up with technological developments. Technology keeps changing and advancing rapidly during a time when colleges and universities are seeing declining enrolments and diminished funding. There are no magic solutions to the learning technologies challenge, but here are a few suggestions.

1. As part of their business planning process, the colleges should research and prepare a rolling three-year learning technologies plan. This plan should be included in the institution's business plan and progress reported in the colleges' annual reports.

The learning technologies plan should include:

- An annual inventory of the college's learning technology initiatives, projects, courses, programs and support services
- A review of what has worked and what has not in the college, and with which student types
- A prioritized list of learning technology initiatives and projects proposed for the next three years
- A description of the project team and a profile of the intended audience for each initiative and project
- An assessment of the proposed benefits to the students and college versus the anticipated development and ongoing operational costs
- An assessment of what online or blended delivery courses are already available to their students from other institutions
- An objective assessment of college's core and distinctive programming strengths upon which to build online courses and other initiatives
- An identification of the content and technical expertise required to undertake the priority initiatives – broken down by what is currently available and what needs to be developed
- A development, testing, implementation and evaluation process and schedule
- A listing of the resources – human, technological and financial – required for each of the proposed initiatives and projects; potential sources of funding should be identified
- A process and criteria to measure how successful each initiative and project was.

2. Provide short, scheduled opportunities to present and showcase technology initiatives and projects to other college staff. These sessions will increase awareness and interest in the potential applications of educational technologies. The sessions will also serve as a mechanism for cross-fertilization of ideas and solutions across departments and programs. If practical, staff from other institutions and organizations should be invited to participate in the sessions.

3. For those interested in developing their skills to create online / distance education courses, workshops should be provided. These can be done during the campus-wide PD days, and scattered throughout the year. The critical topics that need to be covered include:
 - Faculty role changes related to online learning along with different basic values and assumptions about distance learning
 - Designing online learning – converting traditional courses, choosing the right technologies and using appropriate assessment tools
 - Online course delivery – managing relationships with students, giving feedback on assignments and managing teaching workloads
 - Online course administration – keeping students informed, evaluating course effectiveness, and using the LMS.

4. Affordable ways should be sought to provide faculty with release time to develop either online or blended delivery courses. It is unrealistic to think that faculty can develop quality online courses by adding it on to their existing workloads. Professional development funds should be made available to faculty who are keen to undertake technology development projects.

5. Educational technology initiatives should also be implemented to support students in their learning activities. At the minimum, *all* college programs should:
 - Have course schedules, assignments dates, list of readings and tests times available online
 - Have course instructors available via e-mail.

Desirable technology support systems for students should include:

- Readings and learning materials either posted online, or available via online libraries or other sources
- Copies of the lectures available online – text notes, PowerPoint slides and/or podcasts of the lecture
- Discussion forums where students virtually get together with other students and the instructors to discuss topics covered in class
- Timely class notifications and news sent out via text messaging (Twitter) and social networking sites (Facebook).

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13. Appendices

Appendix A: College Instructor Competencies

Here is a fairly detailed list of competencies for college instructors. This list is applicable to faculty using either traditional and/or any of the new online learning delivery and support approaches.

1. Demonstrate knowledge of curriculum development and revision:
 - identify major content areas / theoretical knowledge and skills
 - assist with blueprinting course outline
 - collect data regarding course content, delivery methods, learner objectives / outcomes
 - identify and develop learner objectives / outcomes
 - prepare learner objectives / outcomes
 - sequence modules
 - develop student materials
 - develop instructional materials and learning activities
 - develop case situations and clinical / shop simulations
 - develop evaluation materials
 - collect ongoing information to assist with revision of course content
 - maintain currency of course content throughout delivery of course
 - validate learner objectives / outcomes
 - participate in committees and taskforces to facilitate ongoing review and revision of the curriculum.
2. Demonstrate knowledge and ability to establish curriculum for areas of study.
3. Demonstrate knowledge and ability to use a variety of teaching / learning strategies and delivery methods:
 - use adult learning principles
 - facilitate self-paced learning
 - deliver course content via a variety of methods, i.e., lectures, group discussions, seminars, debates, role play, online, etc.
 - recognize and utilize methods to address individual learning styles of students
 - have a working knowledge of technology-based learning / instruction
 - conduct lab / shop skill demonstrations
 - select and utilize appropriate resources
 - utilize team teaching
 - utilize and integrate other strategies (guest speaker, field trips).
4. Demonstrate knowledge and ability to facilitate learning within the clinical / occupational / business environment.

5. Demonstrate knowledge and ability to effectively manage the learning environment:
 - maintain and model professional behaviour in the classroom, lab, and clinical / shop / business settings
 - use modules of curriculum to guide learning experience
 - assess needs of students
 - set up classroom and lab / shop facilities
 - set up appropriate equipment
 - establish an environment conducive to student learning
 - establish expectations and standards and communicates them to students and relevant others
 - communicate and implement policy and procedures
 - select clinical / field assignments for students
 - supervise field experiences by students
 - manage conflict
 - encourage interaction between instructor, student, and peers
 - focus on group efforts and outcomes
 - model safe work methods.

6. Demonstrate knowledge and ability to establish and maintain a safe learning environment.

7. Demonstrate knowledge and ability to facilitate learning:
 - articulate student expectations, standards, and objectives / outcomes
 - model good oral and written communication
 - assist students to set achievable goals
 - motivate learners through variety of strategies
 - promote preparation for learning
 - encourage critical thinking
 - encourage independence in learning
 - encourage flexibility and adaptability
 - respect student contribution
 - recognize student's previous and / or related experience
 - adapt to special needs of students.

8. Demonstrate knowledge and ability to communicate effectively:
 - speak and write clearly
 - listen
 - provide support, direction, and feedback
 - respond to student feedback
 - develop rapport
 - recognize differences among students
 - clarify roles and responsibilities of the educator and student

- seek and accept guidance and feedback from team members
- establish and maintain effective interpersonal relationships with faculty, team members, students, and clinical / field personnel
- promote feedback from clinical / field areas and other stakeholders through effective communication and provision of evaluation tools.

9. Demonstrate knowledge and ability to evaluate learning:

- define evaluation criteria
- design student evaluation instruments
- adhere to policies and procedures of the program in applying evaluation methods and techniques
- evaluate performance of students in classroom, laboratory / shop and clinical / field settings
- provide formative evaluations
- provide summative evaluations
- maintain confidential, accurate, objective, and current records of student performance
- provide individual support and assistance to students in developing their learning plans.

10. Demonstrate ability to participate in professional development:

- keep current in subject content
- adhere to appropriate codes of ethical conduct
- comply with academic regulations
- develop and improve teaching techniques
- evaluate own professional performance
- establish collegial relationships
- practice self-management (time / stress management)
- pursue personal growth.

11. Demonstrate knowledge and ability to evaluate own performance:

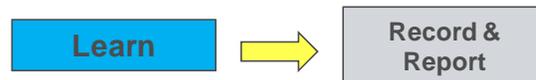
- conform to the policies and conditions of employment
- establish own objectives to maintain competence and improve performance
- participate in annual performance appraisal
- adhere to the duties, roles and responsibilities of the job description
- participate in internal and external committees and professional activities
- take responsibility for own professional and personal development
- maintain appropriate professional behaviour
- use effective communication to maintain positive interpersonal relationships with students, peers, administration, and field staff
- promote a positive image of the program and the college
- act as an advocate for students and the learning process.

Appendix B: Models of Professional Development

Here are four different models of professional development / continuing competence programs. The models show the difference numbers and components in each approach ranging from a simple continuing education format to a fully comprehensive version.

Basic model I

Typical continuing education approach



Learning:

- Varied Association roles
- Formal & informal
- Approved lists
- In-house and brokered
- Many approaches / ways
- Courses / workshops
- Discovery learning
- e-Learning

Record and Report:

- Measurement – hours, credits or ?
- Review and monitor
- Approved / not approved
- Content / topics / subject
- Impact of learning
- Minimum learning requirements
- Data for analysis
- Reports to stakeholders

Basic model II

Basic continuing competence program



Learning Needs Assessment:

- Reflection (self-assessment)
- Feedback (supervisor, peers, clients)
- Tests and quizzes
- Journals and diaries
- Critical incidents
- Performance audits
- External requirements

Record and Report:

- Learning based on needs
- Mandatory external
- More data / reports

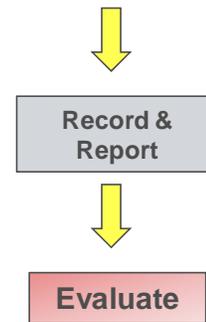
Advanced model I

CCP with Planning and Evaluation components



Learning Plans:

- Need for plan approval
- Reflect needs assessment
- Plan year (multi-year plans)
- Competency profile reference
- What will be learned
- How it will be learned
- Target date for learning
- Status / progress
- Date completed

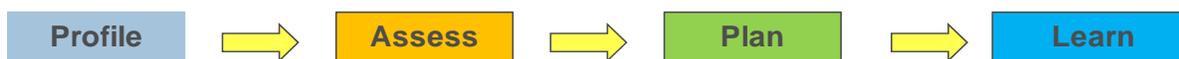


Evaluations:

- Accountability
- Feedback on learning
- Learning resource list
- Quality / value
- Needs met
- Recommend or not

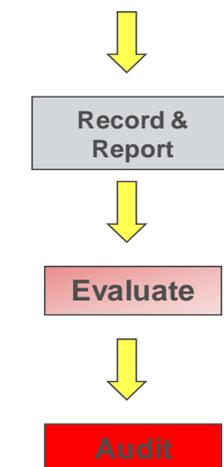
Advanced model II

CCP with Competency Profile and Audit



Competency Profile:

- Detailed list of competencies
- Entry level and advanced
- Priority ratings
- Developmental sequence
- Varied levels of detail
- Foundation for CCP
- Multiple applications



Audits:

- Cyclical / random / data
- Proof of activity
- Proof of learning
- Performance reviews

Appendix C: Professional Development Questionnaire

INSTRUCTIONS:

The Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC), in partnership with Grande Prairie Regional College, Keyano College and Northern Lakes College, is conducting a research study to assess the utilization of professional development (PD) in post-secondary institutions in northern Alberta. This survey is part of the study.

Please take the 10 to 15 minutes necessary to complete this anonymous questionnaire. Your input is critical to understanding the status, needs and issues related to professional development in your College. Your participation is strictly voluntary and non-response to specific items is acceptable. Your individual data is strictly confidential and will only be seen by the consultant. Only aggregate results will be reported to the NADC and the Colleges.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this survey, please phone Steppingstones at 1-800-267-9997 or send an e-mail to info@steppingstones.ca

Thank you for your assistance and input.

Professional Development

1. Overall, how satisfied are you with your own professional development over the last three years?
 Very dissatisfied
 Dissatisfied
 Satisfied
 Very satisfied
2. How satisfied are you with the professional development opportunities available to you at your College?
 Very dissatisfied
 Dissatisfied
 Satisfied
 Very satisfied

3. Have you done any professional development since the summer of 2008?

- Yes
- No

If “No”, skip to Question 7

4. Indicate the destinations of any professional development events you have attended since the summer of 2008: (Check all that apply).

- On-campus
- Within the province
- Outside the province (within Canada)
- Outside the country (international)

5. Since the summer of 2008, in which of the following “formal” professional development activities have you participated? (Check all that apply).

- Conference or convention
- Workshop / seminar
- Credit or non-credit courses
- Online course / webinar
- In-service sessions
- Leave to study and/or do research
- Vendor / equipment / technology training
- Other, please specify _____

6. Since the summer of 2008, which of the following “informal” professional development activities have you done? (Check all that apply).

- Reviewed and read professional / trade journals and magazines
- Read recent books related to my profession / work
- Did Internet research and learning
- Participated in online discussion forums
- Participated in committees and work groups
- Met with colleagues from my own and/or other colleges
- Participated in one or more study groups
- Had one-on-one sessions with “experts”
- Worked in industry / business to update knowledge
- Listened to speakers
- Participated in a job swap
- Presented to colleagues what I learned at a conference
- Other, please specify _____

7. Which of the following factors influence your choices regarding professional development?
(Check all that apply).

- A self-assessment of my learning needs
- Changes / demands in role, work or responsibilities
- Changing types and needs of my students
- Changing requirements by employers of graduates
- Evolving and new developments in technology
- Feedback from supervisor / administration
- Opportunities for networking with others
- Low-cost, convenient PD opportunities
- Topics of great interest to me
- Strategic directions as per my College's plans
- Other, please specify _____

8. At this point in your career, which one of the following is your highest priority for professional development?

- Leadership, supervision and management
- Content / work / professional expertise
- Instructional methodologies
- Learning / educational technology
- Technology used in my work
- Other, please specify _____

9. What value do you get from most of your professional development activities?

- Not much
- A little
- Some
- A lot

10. How effective are most of the professional development activities that you attend?

- Not much
- A little
- Some
- A lot

11. To what degree have you been able to apply what you learn at professional development activities to your work?

- Not much
- A little
- Some
- A lot

12. To what degree have you been able to apply what you learn at professional development activities to your instructional development and delivery activities?

- Not much
- A little
- Some
- A lot
- Does not apply

13. Rate the importance of professional development as seen by each of the following groups within your College:

	Not important	A little important	Somewhat important	Very important
Senior administration	1	2	3	4
Departmental admin	1	2	3	4
Your colleagues	1	2	3	4
You	1	2	3	4

14. What is your preferred learning method(s) for professional development? (Check all that apply).

- Conferences / conventions
- Workshops / seminars
- Formal face-to-face training
- Informal face-to-face events
- Self-paced materials
- Professional research and discovery
- Informal online events
- Online programs / resources
- One-on-one with mentor or colleague
- One-on-one with “experts”
- Other, please specify _____

15. What are your preferred lengths for in-house PD events? (Check all that apply).
- Less than one day workshops over several weeks
 - Single one-day workshops
 - Self-paced materials as needed
 - Other, please specify _____
16. What do you see as the major barriers preventing you from engaging in more professional development? (Check all that apply).
- Shortage of time to participate
 - Workload making it difficult to get away
 - Lack of recognition from institution
 - Lack of incentive or reward
 - Lack of awareness of PD opportunities
 - Difficult to access suitable PD opportunities
 - Lack of funding support for fees and expenses
 - Distance from PD events
 - Other, please specify _____
17. Which of the following rewards and incentives would encourage you to undertake more professional development? (Check all that apply).
- No incentives necessary
 - Recognition towards promotion and tenure
 - Financial incentives
 - Certificate / recognition from institution
 - Release time
 - Other, please specify _____
18. Which of the following learning methods would you be interested in for your professional development? (Check all that apply).
- Lunchtime classroom sessions
 - Multi-day workshop / seminar sessions
 - Peer / expert mentoring consultations
 - Peer / expert demonstrations
 - Study / user groups / clubs
 - Virtual / online communities
 - Archived sessions
 - Web-based libraries with articles, case studies, etc.
 - Short workshops to practice skills
 - Release time for study / projects
 - Other, please specify _____

Learning Technologies

19. Which of the following technologies are you currently using? (Check all that apply).

- PowerPoint for presentations / lectures
- Videos / multimedia
- Online course descriptions and schedules
- Online course assignments and due dates
- Online lecture notes and presentations
- Online list of resources and readings
- Online tests, quizzes and assessments
- e-Learning development software
- Learning management system (LMS) software
- E-mail to communicate with staff / students
- Business software such as word processing / spreadsheets
- Discussion forums to supplement class discussions
- Online marks and feedback are available to students
- Online / distance education courses
- Self-paced learning resources
- Webcasting / webinars
- Social networking
- Text messaging and Twitter
- Other, please specify _____

20. How interested are you in developing and delivering online / distance education courses?

- Not at all
- A little
- Somewhat
- Very

21. If “not or little interested,” what are your reasons? (Check all that apply).

- I don't have the time
- I don't have the knowledge or expertise
- There are no incentives or rewards in doing so
- In my situation, online courses don't offer any significant benefits
- Online courses are not appropriate / suitable for the content I teach
- My students don't have the technology or skills to take online courses
- I'm too close to retirement to learn the necessary technology skills
- Other, please specify _____

22. If “somewhat or very interested,” what are your reasons? (Check all that apply).
- I have the time
 - I would like to expand my knowledge and expertise
 - In my situation, online courses can offer significant benefits
 - Online courses are appropriate / suitable for the content I teach
 - My competitors are offering online / distance education courses
 - More students would be able to take the courses
 - I want to develop some marketable skills for the future
 - Other, please specify _____
23. Which of the following topics on designing and developing online / distance education courses are of most interest to you? (Check all that apply).
- Choosing appropriate technologies to enhance online / distance education courses
 - Converting course materials for online / distance education use
 - Creating effective online / distance education assessment instruments
 - Creating video / audio clips
 - Determining ways to assess student progress in online / distance education courses
 - Other, please specify _____
24. Which of the following course delivery topics are of most interest to you? (Check all that apply).
- Facilitating virtual communities / online discussion forums
 - Building and enhancing instructor-student relationships
 - Facilitation web conferencing sessions
 - Increasing interactions in online communities
 - Maximizing effectiveness of our LMS
 - Managing online teaching workloads
 - Providing meaningful feedback on assignments
 - Other, please specify _____
25. Which of the following administrative topics related to online / distance education programs / courses are of the most interest to you? (Check all that apply).
- Course advertising and promotion
 - Recruiting and selecting appropriate students
 - Student orientation to technologies / systems
 - Student technical support
 - Student counseling and support
 - Managing working relationships among partners

- Best ways to keep students informed
- Using the College's Learning Management System (e.g., Moodle)
- Monitoring and evaluating effectiveness of courses
- Other, please specify _____

26. Which of the following factors do you see as barriers / obstacles to a greater use of learning technologies at your College? (Check all that apply).

- Costs and limited funding
- Little interest among instructional staff
- Lack of knowledge and skills of faculty
- Lack of instructional design expertise
- Lack of technology / programming expertise
- Technological infrastructure not there
- Lack of incentives and rewards
- Existing workload and shortage of time
- Other, please specify _____

27. Which of the following have you personally used to increase your knowledge / skills regarding learning / educational technologies? (Check all that apply).

- Conferences / conventions
- Workshops / seminars
- Formal face-to-face training
- Informal face-to-face events
- Self-paced materials
- Professional research and discovery
- Informal online events
- Online programs / resources
- One-on-one with mentor or colleague
- One-on-one with "experts"
- Other, please specify _____

28. What do you like about professional development at your College?

29. What changes or improvements to professional development at your College would you like to see?

About You

The following demographic data will enable the consultant to assess whether any significant differences exist among the various groups working at the Colleges. Answers will be kept anonymous and only aggregate results will be reported.

30. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male

31. What is your age category?

- 25 years of age or less
- 26 to 35 years
- 36 to 45 years
- 46 to 55 years
- 56 years or older

32. How long have you worked at this College?

- 5 or less years
- 6 to 10 years
- 11 to 15 years
- 16 to 25 years
- 26 years or more

33. What is your primary role within the College?

- Administration
- Instructional faculty
- Student support services
- Admin support and maintenance staff

34. If you are an instructor, in what type of program(s) do you teach?

- University transfer
- Diploma
- Certificate
- Apprenticeship / trades / industrial
- Continuing education / non-credit
- Academic preparation / upgrading / student support
- Not applicable

35. At which College do you work?

- Grande Prairie Regional College
- Keyano College
- Northern Lakes College

Comments

If you have any comments or suggestions regarding professional development in general, or at your College, please make them here.

Appendix D: Online Survey Participants' Comments

1. Likes about professional development

Grande Prairie Regional College

Grande Prairie survey respondents made these comments about what they *like* regarding professional development at GRPC.

- It is encouraged.
- Funds, time allotted.
- The ISW was an excellent introduction to teaching at the college. As a new instructor, I would love to have ongoing workshops or sessions available to keep developing my teaching skills.
- Easy access to funds.
- I appreciate that we are allotted a budget and are given the freedom to choose how that funding is spent.
- That we are able to attend conferences to increase and expand our knowledge in our fields of instruction; and also to expand and develop new skills to enhance our work place as a whole.
- Lots of opportunity to have professional development, not only faculty but also support staff.
- It gives me the chance to better myself.
- Freedom to choose what areas of PD I feel are important to me as an artist/educator.
- If it is a workshop, you are gathered with people within the college that you would not normally be with for one or two days to discover something about them and learn together.
- I do not know enough about it.
- I do not know enough about the PD.
- There is adequate funding in addition to tuition waivers for courses offered by the college.
- I enjoyed our annual PD Day we had. The ALFA courses offered are great as well.
- I am supported by the department to participate in as much professional development as is feasible.

- That we are given the opportunity to take courses that will be of benefit in the future.
- It is available if you choose to participate.
- I enjoy the choice of how to spend my PD funds.
- That there is some monies available for PD. The 3-day PD event that is put on every 2 years.
- PD is well supported, as it should be within a learning work environment.
- The College attempts to bring in guest speakers and information that increases understanding of college instructors in relation to educating our students. There is a professional development fund of \$1400 per year that encourages instructors to attend conferences and workshops.
- There is a good variety of topics during the annual PD day. Opportunities for leadership training are very thorough and frequent.
- There are some PD opportunities on campus that have a short time commitment.
- That it is recognized and we can utilize it.
- It is supported and valued by my supervisor.
- I have not worked here long enough to be able to answer this question.
- The current availability of the ALFA courses and the encouragement to take them.
- Freedom to choose from available resources.
- Don't know /not able to access yet.
- Don't have to travel. Easy access.
- If available and time allows, lets us keep up with changes in our field.
- So far courses are offered for middle to top management.
- That there are opportunities every year and my supervisor is supportive of anything I express interest in or suggests I take courses.
- I like the fact that it is easy to access and easy to use.
- That individual funding is available for items of interest to each individual.
- The collective agreement for my work group pays me for \$2000 PD annually.

- Variety of different development opportunities and/or guest speakers.
- I am hoping that a personal PD fund will allow for opportunities to broaden my horizons in my field. Greater experience in technical and technological areas would be of extreme benefit.
- The ALFA Leadership Program
- Haven't had much to do with it yet.
- College provides opportunities to take training and the time to do so.
- Allowing to go for conferences and buying computers in P.D. money.
- Haven't been here long enough to know.
- It is diverse and open to choice.
- We do receive a decent amount of money and the college also offers numerous PD activities that we do not have to pay for out of our own PD funds.
- When we were part of NAIT in 2008 we got to help plan the P.D. programs by conducting surveys and putting on those of most interest.
- That there is a variety of activities / seminars available - some that are not directly related to my area of instruction, but that I am interested in learning about.
- It is well funded. The topics are diverse.
- I like how I have control of how my PD money is used.
- Being able to spend funds on computer technologies.
- Funds available and that PD is 'work' time.
- Once you are involved the people are very helpful and courteous.
- Most PD is directed directly towards my topic of instruction.
- Recently we have had funds made available for our personal choices and the funds can be accumulated to a more significant amount.
- There seem to be good opportunities for in-house management training.
- It is also another way to interact with staff that you might not see. It's a chance to see new points of view.

- Sometimes, just the opportunity to enroll in a short, stress-free PD activity to keep myself sane under this unbearable workload.
- Responsive to faculty needs.
- It is nice that (almost) everyone, no matter their position, has access to PD funds.
- There is great opportunity.
- Not sure I will be better informed by next year.
- Increased level of funding over NAIT. Greater flexibility for use of PD funds.
- Able to accumulate more than one years amounts.
- I am happy that I do have funds to help me pay for courses and conferences to go to.
- Encouraged to make yourself available for professional development and to complete development within a time frame.
- I like that it is usually focused on teaching/learning or other relevant topics...sometimes a variety of topics too.
- Flexible use of PD funds.
- I haven't had the chance to take any at this college but have done development at another college.
- The opportunity to use it for areas that are of interest to ME and my field.
- Well supported with PD fund.
- PD fund easily accessed - encouraged to take opportunities offered - many located on site.
- Access to funds. Support from Department.
- It is nice to continue to learn new skills. Keeps my job fresh with new challenges.
- I like that the professional development activities are planned during times where there might be decreased workload for the staff (spring; early fall before classes start). Last year's PD event was great, lots of variety, guest speakers, key note speakers, very inspirational.
- That it's in-house.
- Easily accessible

- It is important to the College and staff is supported in any they want to do.
- Support from my supervisor/dean for my PD; reasonable funding.
- That it is made available to all staff.
- Find that professional development is now limited because our college has yet to understand the needs of the technology and trade industry in supporting extra training.
- Necessary beyond “normal” amount to keep up with industry changes.
- They offer a wide variety of courses, some pertaining to my job and other that are more on a personal development.
- Supported by immediate supervisor.
- Financial resources readily available.
- That we’re able to take courses to upgrade our skills and update our knowledge, that we can purchase personal computers, which allow us to use recent-generation technology at home so when we come to work we’re completely familiar with what we use here.
- I get to choose what I want.
- Not sure - have not had to use it at GPRC.
- The ability to self-direct my efforts.
- Not sure yet college recently merged with another college
- I enjoy the yearly instructors conference with the seminars but in three years I have seen only two course lists from management and could not go to either of them.
- Professionalism of presenters.
- That it is seen as important.
- The financial arrangement that SOME of our costs are covered by the college and our association.

Keyano College

Keyano College survey respondents made these comments about what they *like* regarding professional development at their institution.

- It is available on an annual basis and is, primarily, driven by my interests and needs in relation to my work.
- It is available for those who choose to participate. Divisional support.
- There are funds available to those that apply
- In theory, it is available.
- That there is some funding available for staff to offset the cost of PD.
- Reasonable funding and established process.
- Allows you the financial support to continue upgrading your education.
- I deeply appreciate the amount of money designated to faculty for PD each year. I achieved my Masters through our long-term PD funding, and am very grateful for that opportunity. It transformed me as a teacher. I like that it is a committee of colleagues that assess our applications. I appreciate the in-service workshops that staff are trying to institute from SLIC.
- It provides me with the opportunity to advance my career. It is recommended by Me and not dictated by Supervisors/managers. Therefore I have complete buy in and am 100% committed. Professional development is one of the main reasons that I work and will continue to work for the college.
- I like that there is money allotted for PD and it is up to me what I choose to do or not do.
- I like that the Educational Technology group occasionally brings in speakers of interest for workshops/seminars.
- PD funding is available and accessible.
- The availability of resources: I have always been able to receive both short- and long-term PD opportunities when I need them. The support of my chair and dean: both people believe in the importance of PD.
- PD selection is wide open; any course that relates to my material is available to me.
- Well funded.
- It's easy to apply and well-supported financially.

- Its a great asset for continuing and expanding education in multi-direction.
- Nothing, I am not able to attend with my work load.
- Professional Development allows you to upgrade your skills.
- It is fairly accessible.
- Adequate funding.
- It is supported and encouraged.
- The easy application process.
- I like best when we get the experts brought in to teach the big oil companies and we get a chance to jump in.
- I don't, it is hard to access.
- I like the funding that we get, however it is usually not enough and if your department won't pay the difference it comes out of your own pocket.
- The accessibility to funds and the encouragement of the administration to access PD opportunities.
- There is always an opportunity to develop, it just may be challenging to make happen.
- I like that a fairly generous PD fund is established to access funds to pay for PD.
- There used to be reasonable funding at one time but that has all disappeared.
- That we are in control of choosing opportunities.
- That it exists.
- I have not been given any.
- Variety of courses and subjects.
- Broad scope of availability.
- Availability - have not really been denied.
- No comment because I haven't participated in anything yet.
- I like that we have different types and that up to the dean level it is supported.

- It can be practical with practical applications.
- Flexibility and monetary support.
- That there is a decent budget for PD.
- It benefits me and the students cause I learn more about teaching and course content.
- The ability to choose what I need.
- Keyano College is in a remote location - I appreciate the fact that we are allowed to travel to attend PD opportunities.
- I have been able to access it every time I have requested. Consideration and allowances are given for specialized conferences. This allows for national and international travel as required.
- It's readily available and the process is easy.
- There are a number of different options out there - we are not restricted to looking.
- It's a no-hassle way to apply for PD; you are kept informed by the committee, and it is fast and efficient.
- PD is encouraged; however, often difficult to go externally due to teaching commitments and not having any sub instructors. We have excellent PD (long and short term) funding when compared to other institutions.
- Up until 2 years ago I was very happy – now everything I apply for is denied by administration before it even gets to the PD committee.
- I like the freedom to choose what interests me and to have the support and resources to take advantage of that opportunity.
- The yearly funding available per faculty member.
- I appreciate the freedom to be able to attend conferences that are meaningful to my area of study. Connecting with other members in the provincial, national and international communities has made me a better instructor and better able to meet the needs of my students. Getting away from Fort McMurray to attend a work shop or conference is imperative to my professional growth and personal well being.
- Generous annual funding available.
- It assists in my further growth related to my job and my area of expertise.
- Good funding for Faculty PD.
- It was readily available but there now seems to be a shift against it.

- Seems to be a fair practice.
- I liked it when travel was better supported. But I believe now we are limited to our destinations. I have had the opportunity to use my PD every year and have gained great experiences and knowledge from it but fear that in the future it will not be the same.

2. Suggested improvements to professional development

Grande Prairie

Here are the suggestions made by Grande Prairie respondents regarding possible improvements to their professional development programs.

- More funding for travel.
- Workload release.
- The administration is extremely unclear about the role of research at the college. Many of the activities that I undertake on my own time keep me current and active in my field. I do not feel that the research that individual faculty are pursuing is being promoted, recognized, or supported in terms of financial incentive or release time. Research and teaching are not separate for me, they feed each other and both contribute to excellence in the classroom and beyond. Our reputation within the province as an academic institution would be well served by promoting and supporting the research that we do.
- More awareness of available opportunities.
- An increase in the budget to permit travel to conferences (we are in a remote location so most professional conference attendance requires more money than if we were in a major city centre).
- More financing to promote more utilization.
- Less workload so that one has time to pursue research opportunities. Recognition of research by administration as important in maintaining high quality instruction and also in retaining and attract in faculty.
- More variety.
- There are so many changes happening now and they have all been so positive, why would I want to have anything else change, it is going it the right direction or at least a different direction that it had been in for many years and that is very good.
- The process of getting access to PD funds is a bit difficult. There is a lot of paperwork to fill out. It's a pay-for-it/get-refunded process, which can take a while and be quite cumbersome. Also, it's not clearly spelled out anywhere what activities/items count towards PD, so you never know if you'll actually be able to get your money back for something.
- I wish we had more variety in computer program training, such as Photoshop, Web Design, etc.
- If Senior Administration would recognize the importance of financially assisted PD leave for our Employees Association members.

- Don't really care for the ALFA courses.
- We need more personal development as well as instructional; more intellectual and stimulating; more exposure to thinkers, innovators, analysts, activists; more connection to the outside world.
- Budget is very constraining. There is no release time and minimal \$ to start and complete a masters - which is a requirement for tenure in the department I work in.
- More specific training with certain technologies, e.g. Smartboard possibilities (not just basics of how to run it). Same could be said.
- More funding for professional development or providing the opportunities for staff to attend out-of-province conferences at reduced costs.
- Opportunities throughout the year would be appreciated, rather than once only. Half-day sessions would allow some actual skill transference rather than the brief overview which is all our sessions typically allow for.
- More funding! Based on the college's location, quality PD conferences are often difficult to travel to, therefore, the cost to attend is more than the PD allowance for the entire year for one particular conference.
- More wellness courses.
- A training fund available for the AUPE staff to apply to (currently there is not one at GPRC).
- I have not worked here long enough to be able to answer this question.
- More short courses on day-to-day software i.e. excel, word outlook.
- Better access to college courses.
- More in-house PD.
- Make available to ALL instructors regardless of tenure.
- We have some very good PD events. Any added PD funds would be great.
- Having courses offered locally.
- More time available and funds.
- Offer more for support staff.
- More opportunities offered on campus I work; and spread out over the year.
- I can't think of any.

- More online / evening & self study opportunities so that credit courses are not in conflict with work hours.
- PD investment to attend appropriate conferences and seminars, or have them web cast to this campus
- More front-line professional development opportunities rather than a majority of PD focused at a senior/executive or leadership level.
- None so far, but this is my first year as an instructor at GPRC Fairview.
- I would like to receive a credential through professional development opportunities at my campus but there is nothing that interests me; Need more variety in credential programs offered at outlying campuses. Need to use Supernet technology to deliver credential programs between campuses and institutions. Credential programs need to be offered at flexible times (i.e. evenings, weekends).
- I'll let you know in the next survey
- Allowing to buying computer accessories. At present only half the amount is covered from P.D. money.
- More administrative initiative to provide technological workshops.
- More funding for the nursing faculty to receive their Master Degree as it is a requirement.
- At the moment there is no funding for A.U.P.E. staff to take any professional development. Luckily because the pesticide applicators license is required for my job there is some funding built into my budget for this purpose.
- I would like to see Professional Development funding easier to access, especially for contractual positions.
- At times they are offered at a very busy time of year for teaching faculty.
- I would like to see the program have some money in their budget to have the department attend a conference.
- On PD days have more courses pertinent to my trade.
- Good for now.
- Possibility of evening classes as we have day to day commitments.
- More opportunities made available to instructors.
- Make time available. Workloads are very restrictive.

- More opportunities for AUPE staff to take training outside the college.
- More notice, scheduling that can fit with course load and it's schedule.
- There should be at least 1 HUGE, FUN college-wide PD session per semester. We're all working extremely hard and we're going to burn out.
- More individualized and more flexible times (evenings weekends).
- I would like to see a list of what our personal funds can be used for and I think by seeing this it would help me participate in opportunities I may not have know about otherwise.
- More onsite development in different area.
- Not sure I will be better informed by next year.
- In house conference/seminars. New staff orientation.
- More flexibility to choose training or products.
- More availability to attend workshops, schedule is too busy to find time to go.
- A little more mentoring to determine the direction to be moving in.
- None. Our PD opportunities and benefits are far better than most employers.
- I would like to see evening classes.
- More flexibility in how we use our funds.
- More variety.
- Need for more useful PD on-site.
- Mandatory professional development of so many hours would encourage all employees to update training and skills. We are an institution of learning and we as employees should set the standard.
- Key on areas such as marketing, recruitment, promotion. Increase access to a broader range of software and training.
- Less focus on web design and more on actual instructional skills. There is not a lot of support/orientation to help new faculty develop their teaching skills.
- More offers for technology courses, computer courses, computer troubleshooting courses, offer more courses geared to the staff for their learning and not always for instructors and teaching.

- More variety; more related to my job.
- More information on conferences, workshops, etc.
- We really need to move more aggressively toward technology-mediated/online or blended learning. How to get faculty active re online/distant/blended T&L. Currently there is no in-house organized PD for teaching & learning... a serious gap I believe.
- PD geared to those not in instructional positions. Opportunities to take part in PD opportunities outside the college - because of lack of opportunity within the college to meet with others in my field.
- Currently use our PD to pay for large association dues. Used to have dues paid for would like to see that continue so we can have money to pay for PD.
- I would like more computer related courses offered.
- Senior administration has to understand that a trades college has different needs and definitely has a different timetable. We can't get clear direction on how we can use up our holidays let alone find time for PD.
- More serious technical sessions, no more short 'fluff' topics without work value.
- Regarding computer purchases, we should be able to use the money to upgrade an existing computer rather than buying a whole new one. This, I think, would be more efficient in terms of the money spent.
- More funds for professional development.
- Opportunities to learn how to use new technology in delivering course instruction.
- More funding for professional development.
- We need more money than what is allotted by the EA or ASA. It is very expensive to complete a Masters and the PD money we receive per year is only a small drop in the bucket.
- The fact that we have to use PD money to cover professional association dues that is mandatory for our job.
- More offerings that would be relevant and meaningful, on a regular basis, would be helpful.
- Previous college paid my association fees, with the new college I have to use my personal funds or PD funds.
- If the instructors who know all the ins and outs of P.D. were to share with those who have not it would be extremely helpful but it remains the "BEST KEPT SECRET"

- Most of the time I am unable to attend a lot of the things I would like due to either work load or the fact that I have classes at the same time.
- Continued support of PD.
- More professional development opportunities locally - as it is, most often, I have to travel to Edmonton to seek the PD I need.
- Better training before you start the job in the first place! After all I was a tradesman for 20 years before I came here.

Keyano College

Here are the suggestions by Keyano College respondents on how to improve professional development at their institution.

- More use of in-house experts to teach other staff. Bringing in more experts to provide presentations to staff.
- It would be nice if each person was allotted a certain amount so that it wasn't all used up by the time you find something of interest to do. That amount should be able to be carried over. I haven't been able to do anything PD related in 3 years because the money is always used up.
- Less hoops to jump thru to obtain approval. Increase funds overall. Bring the expert to us so that more people can benefit, instead of paying for transportation of a few to attend.
- In order to obtain funding for professional development you have to demonstrate that the training relates to your current position. If you want to advance your career or move to another position within the college, that training is not available to you, ex custodians are entitled to PD money, but really what are they supposed to take "toilet cleaning 101?" Keyano does not support personal growth, and would not even give me unpaid leave to do PD.
- Staff should have the ability to choose what is important to their learning needs without the support of management on such initiatives.
- More funding and encouragement from Senior Management for staff to improve their skills. I have worked on all assignments on my own time and taken courses on my own time. Very rarely have the ability to do training during work time. The funding is very lacking. The amount of money available to the employees does not allow for much training to happen (6 months into the year and most of the funding is gone.) often runs out before the end of the year.
- The application process too time-consuming and bureaucratic; expense schedules are unrealistic and parsimonious; no assumption of honesty for expense claims – too

much time and hassle regarding details. Vigilance is always required, but control freaks and bean counters always leave a bad taste.

- More time available to full-time employees to take daily classes not always night time classes. By the time you are finished your work day women have extra jobs at home to attend to and when this gets too much women burn out and loss of time at work can occur.
- Recognition that PD opportunities that happen to be outside of the country can be as cost effective as somewhere else in Canada, and are often not available within Canada.
- Recognition that attending conferences/workshops with colleagues can be VERY beneficial for the department (and thus the college) in terms of team-building and transformation of philosophy/practices.
- I would like to see that more funding would be provided. With a limited budget of \$2000 per year, the cost of most seminars or workshops are that price alone, leaving nothing for travel or hotel.
- Required training (chairs academy, masters classes for those required to be masters prepared, etc.) needs to be paid for by the college not from the PD funding. Other training (Moodle) and development of Moodle classes needs to have some time (credit hours) associated, as it is unfair to expect an instructor to develop online and continue to teach their regular course load. The PD faculty pot of money should be administered by the faculty, and approval for release time should be the only administrative concern. You should not have to have the VP sign off for travel, as this pot of money should not be under the same budget scrutiny.
- More release time during the semester, i.e. by providing access to substitute instructors, so that I could attend a week-long conference out of town.
- Greater funding, more time available.
- More opportunities during term; not all during Spring, which can be busy enough when one is teaching as well.
- PD has become one of the first budgets cuts for people not protected by faculty agreements. All other people groups are at the mercy of their respective sign off people in executive as to PD. Travel is viewed upon as being a definite no.
- Takes too much time to get through administration approval.
- Better ways to travel other than driving a car or truck for PD at great travel distances.
- Give instructors time to attend these courses.
- More time to attend courses.

- More half-day, full day in college workshops are needed.
- More employees participate in PD.
- More time.
- We need to offer more in-house
- I would like to have self-learning recognized.
- On-site PD opportunities as well as more time available for faculty to access PD events.
- Access to funding with realistic budgeted amounts, timelines and restrictions. i.e. allow for more than \$90 / night for out of town accommodation.
- I would like to see director/managers encourage their staff to access PD instead of discouraging it with “staffing/coverage issues” and/or “money shortage” excuses. People should not be told that they cannot participate in a PD activity because “it doesn’t directly relate to your job.” There are many in-house opportunities available that people should be given time to access. Longer serving employees should be included for all training sessions. Employees should be allowed to meet with each other regularly to mentor/learn from each other.
- Re-instate adequate funding.
- I would like there to be a mail out list of opportunities.
- I would like to see more PD dollars available for excluded admin staff. \$3500 every two years limits my ability to keep up with the competition.
- They need to make it more available.
- More time designated for PD, (less work load).
- Increase the monetary value so that all levels of administration are equal between faculty, administration and CUPE.
- Less travel restrictions so that highly desired seminars and conferences can be taken advantage of.
- Increase funds.
- More information provided. Do not have the time to do the research but if something comes up in the staff email and have the time will apply.
- To bring in experts from the field.

- It's too focused on technology as the only NEW way to aid students and learning. As well, I find that they are only focused toward lecture based courses, which is not helpful in a College that is so hands on (trades, Studio Arts, Drama etc.).
- Get the VP out of the process. PD needs to be supported and not only ONLINE PD is beneficial. PD is an opportunity to network and meet like-minded professionals and should not be limited to online offerings.
- More incentives.
- Ease of application; access to other institutions and PD in town. Highlight of PD that may be available to me.
- Administration is NOT supportive of PD outside Canada. This is exceedingly frustrating because in my field, the research is being done outside Canada and the conferences are held outside Canada.
- More accessible.
- Release time for events. Faster response from Admin to approve PD activities. A clear separation of Faculty PD and Admin related activities. Time off for attending PD events. Activities ARE work related! A separate fund for travel versus the activity. This would allow for greater PD activities without having travel costs act as a barrier.
- More of a budget I guess. This way more employees can partake in this great 'extra'.
- Streamlining or speeding the application process. Updating allowable expenses, or more flexibility in regional costs. Example: a hotel in New York is a different cost than a hotel in Athabasca.
- I'm satisfied.
- PD available for all, and to all employees. Those on contract or term positions are not deemed appropriate (read worthy) candidates for the budget to spend money on. Better training and support will increase a person's loyalty and desire to remain in the working environment.
- On-going teaching and learning seminars throughout the Fall and Winter terms.
- Just when I thought I knew how to use BlackBoard we are switching to Moodle! Unfortunately for some faculty, unless there is incentive - they don't participate. I sense that administration thinks the best way to go is to have every course online or accessible online - caution: not every student is technologically savvy and wants access - some what a face to face instructor. There should be balance.
- More support for the whole idea of why it is so important to stay current in our fields. More release time to be able to attend the most interesting conferences/ trainings available. More support for conferences and trainings outside of the country. More

respect and support from administration for instructors who want to stay current in their fields.

- I would like to see a division between mandated professional development and self-chosen professional development and two pots of money to fund these. I would like to see a lift on policies restricting travel for professional development. I think we have a generous professional development amount but if there are restrictions on where you can go then people just get discouraged because their applications get denied. We live in a remote area and professional development is an incentive to want to keep learning. Sometimes there are no suitable conferences available and faculty must go outside the province to access PD.
- Recently, there seems to be a back log of PD approvals. International PD is being refused, even if it is proven cheaper than what can be found in Canada. I think this is flawed thinking.
- The volume of paperwork required in the approval process is tedious and time-consuming. Most faculty members can't attend out of town PD during fall and winter semesters at which time the most interesting and discipline-appropriate conferences/workshops take place.
- Make reporting mandatory in that after attending college funded PD, participants must provide a report documenting what they did and what were the benefits.
- Increased funding for Admin PD.
- Better availability and an understanding of the time constraints we currently face.
- Method of application. Where does the original paper work go? There is no guidance for new employees for the application process. The committee who approves and or reviews is not responsible for advising the applicant of the process, but it is nor clear who should guide you.
- If we are being allotted an amount of funding then do not limit how we use the funding. For example: I can get approved funding for local events, but no funding for distant events.

3. General comments

Grande Prairie Staff comments

At the end of the survey, respondents were provided an opportunity to make any general comments about professional development. Here are the comments from the GPRC staff.

- College has to realize that to prepare and deliver online courses requires more time than in class delivery.
- The survey was more focused for instructional not support staff.
- More info for new employees.
- As an educational institution, professional development for staff should be of prime importance.
- When I was a teaching assistant I was able to take students to the horticultural convention in Edmonton. This kept me current on what was happening with new plant varieties , insects, diseases, sprays, predators, etc. I run the greenhouses so it's important to keep up with all the new technology.
- Fairly hard to answer this survey as we have just done the transition and are new to GPRC's PD
- If it was possible for training to take place at our facility rather than traveling to many places, both the cost and convenience would be affected positively.
- Would like to have more input into the examination process used by the apprenticeship branch i.e. exam question development.
- I sure wish I had the time to get away from work and take a course that would increase my knowledge in my area of expertise.
- I think that there are great efforts made already to facilitate professional development.
- I have not had much of an opportunity to take any professional development opportunities as I am in a temporary position. Regarding that, I sometimes feel since I am in a temporary position that staff who are permanent should have the opportunity before me to attend different workshops etc.
- I have been fortunate to work in departments that encourage time for professional development but I understand that is not the situation in all departments. I wonder if an administrative recommendation for all College employees to continue to professionally develop would open the opportunity for some that feel that they are not able to or do not make the time. I have worked in industries that mandate professional development and although this is sometimes met with hostility – it

certainly keeps each member up to date and maintained and improved professional competence.

- Lots of questions about Web Design and Creating Online courses....not my area of interest at all.
- I found this survey to be geared more towards the instructor rather than the general college as a whole.
- I think that GPRC gives the staff and instructors good support financially and other support to take what PD they want or need.
- PD should be part of our workload, not an addition to it!
- The best workers do PD on their own initiative and get the most out of it. Those who want to have their PD spoon fed to them by the efforts of others to organize it and present it usually do not gain much, nor do they change what they do as a result. So spending a bunch of money for organizing and presenting PD to groups who are not keen is a waste of time and money for all.
- Professional development is mandatory in the medical fields - keeping up-to-date is essential. Encouragement to be in the field and keeping up on technical skills should be supported both financially and time wise.
- I think our College is doing a very good job in providing PD.
- The only thing that I would have to add is we need more training and better training in even just the basics, like for instance I think all prospective instructors should be helped along with their basic computer skills in at least the first year. I've had to make do and muddle thru to the best of my limited abilities for far too long and I'm sure I'm not the only one. I never even touched a computer let alone used one before last September and every one was aware of that everything I can do now was picked up by trail and error. If you have the time it can be a great way to learn but in my circumstance it wasn't cool.

Keyano Staff Comments

Below are the general comments made by Keyano College respondents.

- With ongoing attrition and anticipated attrition due to the age of our staff, many new hires need or will need to be trained up in their current positions. More in-house training would help address this ongoing training need. Professional development should focus on interacting with peers on a provincial, national or international basis to bring back best practices and improve based on others' experience.
- Professional Development should allow you to advance into other careers; it should not be only to make you more efficient in your current job. I am bored out of my skull and under utilized in my current position, but unable to get the training need to advance through PD.

- As stated earlier, no assumption of honesty for expense claims - too much time and hassle regarding details. Vigilance is always required, but control freaks and bean counters always leave a bad taste.
- I wish more consideration would be given to full time staff to attend day classes.
- I have been teaching at Keyano for 15 1/2 years, and I know that I am still here because of the PD opportunities that have been available to me over the years. Our community is richer because of the connections I've made with experts in our field - thank you!
- The whole PD process should be streamlined. I suggest an online form and database, using digital signatures, etc. There is way too much paper being wasted.
- PD has worked fine so far with this college. Keep up the good work for PD for instructor's and others administrative people at Keyano.
- Time should be given and training encouraged for all instructors. Better instructors make better programs. Walk the walk, not talk the talk.
- I think if employees had the opportunity to access PD opportunities during the workday, perhaps with the missed time-or 1/2 of it- made up, more people would participate. I appreciate having the opportunity to participate in this survey
- I really hope Senior Admin. hears our concerns about PD. They need to be more supportive of the PD we choose.
- Simply, that Admin. needs to be sure to evaluate the PD request on the merit of the activity and not use the power to hold off approval to persuade their point. Take it out of the political cycle.
- I would like the opportunity to attend one or more to advance my skills and networking opportunities. As a contract employee who doesn't know if I'll even be here in a few months, no one wants to support my PD, professionally or otherwise. How then do I build loyalty and dedication to a position that doesn't demonstrate the same to me?
- I do not want PD to simply become an addition to current workloads. If release time is granted, it is often difficult for instructors to take that time off. Some would be working at home on their time off instead of coming in to the college. Classes have to be prepared even if release time is given. Release should be given during non-teaching times; for example, during spring session (if the instructor is not teaching at this time). Again, no compulsory PD without adequate release time. Thanks.
- Make funded participants more accountable.
- PD is necessary and valuable.

Appendix E: Focus Group Agenda

NADC Professional Development Utilization Project

Focus Group Sessions

February 25 and March 1, 2010

1. Objectives

The purpose of the focus groups is to:

- Provide staff insights and possible explanations of some of the findings from the PD online survey
- Review the challenges, issues and opportunities, and identify any that may have been missed
- Assist the consultant to develop suitable recommendations for the research report.

2. Agenda

- a. Welcome, brief overview of the project and introductions
- b. Overview of the draft report
- c. Review of the survey findings with group discussion as to:
 - other analyses that should be done
 - possible reasons for the findings
 - implications of the findings for future action
- d. Review of the issues with group discussion as to:
 - identify other issues, obstacles and barriers to PD
 - suggestions for ways to resolve issues
 - implications and impact of these issues
- e. Suggestions for practical and feasible recommendations regarding strategies, policies, programs and activities to enhance professional development in the College.
- f. Focus group wrap-up, next steps and thanks to participants.

NOTES