COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Collaboration and engagement between NIC and the communities we serve.

NORTH ISLAND COLLEGE

NIC

North Island College is honoured to acknowledge the traditional territories of the combined 35 First Nations of the Nuu-chah-nulth, Kwakwaka'wakw and Coast Salish traditions, on whose traditional and unceded territories the College's campuses are situated.

INTRODUCTION

At North Island College (NIC), community engagement refers to the collaboration between NIC and the communities we serve in the equitable sharing and creation of knowledge, resources and experiences to build healthy and thriving communities. NIC is committed to working together to build healthy and thriving communities as we have done for nearly 50 years.

NIC is a publicly funded comprehensive community college[1], serving students and communities predominantly on Northern Vancouver Island and the central BC mainland coast region[2]. Our mandate is to deliver high-quality, relevant and responsive education and training to the region's people and communities. Both NIC's mandate and mission position the practice of community engagement as an approach to research, teaching and learning, and service to contribute to the public good. By working together, we're better equipped to mobilize community-based and college-based resources to tackle the region's shared social and economic development issues and opportunities.

NIC's strategic plans *BUILD 2026* and *Working Together*, NIC's Indigenization Plan, include community engagement commitments, actions and outcomes. Through NIC's Community Engagement Strategy, NIC commits to "being at the heart of civic conversations" (BUILD 2026 Strategy 9.2 Community engagement outcome) and "building relationships and accountability to Indigenous communities in support of self-determination through education, training, and applied research" (*Working Together*, p.39).

The founding 2023-24 Community Engagement goals were developed through broad in-person and online external community feedback in Summer and Fall of 2022 (see Appendix A).

Mission
Working together, NIC builds healthy and thriving communities, one student at a time.

Vision
By 2026, NIC will deliver BC's best individualized education and training experience.

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[1] College and Institute Act, Objects of a college
[2] 80% of NIC students are from within the NIC region (2020-21)

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

We enter relationships knowing that we each belong. **Trust** is cultivated when we share our diverse stories and engage with one another with great compassion and care.

HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

We commit to **ethical, transparent and accountable** systems and processes that clearly identify, plan, implement, measure, evaluate and celebrate our shared goals and actions. Our partnerships will include any agreements of participation that outline our roles and responsibilities.

HUMILITY

NIC is committed to the journey of working together. Being on the journey requires that we make adjustments based on evaluations of our processes and in response to changes in the communities we serve, the environment and the world. It requires acknowledgment of where we went wrong and the **courage** to build on best practices that move us toward our goals. It is a commitment to learning, evolving, improving and being better. Humility leads to curiosity, openness and collaboration.

RESPECT AND RECIPROCITY

We have and show deep **respect and love** for people, culture, language, history and the environment. Reciprocity in this context, asks us to listen, share and understand the experiences and needs of people of the region we serve in order to create **relevant and responsive** solutions. We hear students and communities when they say "nothing for us, without us" and will ensure inclusion of those impacted by our decisions and actions. Finally, respect extends to the value of time invested in **building and sustaining relations**, whether informal or formal.

TRUTH AND RESPONSIBILITY

NIC acknowledges the damaging role educational systems have played in the lives of many people across the region (*Working Together,* 7).

We also realize that post-secondary institutions can be intimidating places of power and privilege. We work to address the legacies of colonialism through listening, understanding, acknowledgment and action.

WISDOM

We will use the breadth and depth of our knowledge and experience equitably to meet our shared goals. This commitment includes research, opportunities, knowledge and information. When sharing information and knowledge, we will use clear and accessible communication so that all partners are working with the same information. When we need further expertise, guidance or information, we will work together to ensure that we have the knowledge resources to lead us to thoughtful, informed action.

**AT NIC, OUR VALUES WILL BE ANIMATED INTO ACTION. WE WILL "WALK THE TALK" OF COLLABORATION, RECIPROCITY AND ACCESSIBILITY. WE WILL BE RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE.
– NIC Community Engagement Framework**

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GOALS

- → Improve access to NIC.
    a. Improve access, navigation, and openness to NIC campuses and facilities, NIC information and NIC personnel.
    b. Enhance accessibility and inclusivity on all campuses and learning centres.

- → Strengthen NIC–community relationships through community outreach, participation and partnerships.
    a. Identify and support opportunities for NIC to be engaged in strategically important community initiatives.
    b. Develop partnership agreements and memoranda of understanding of equitable benefit with community organizations (singularly or as inter-agencies).
    c. Commit to Indigenous consultation in a manner that acknowledges First Nations' rights, interests, priorities and concerns through distinctions-based approaches that respect and acknowledge their unique cultures, histories, rights, laws and governments.

- → Facilitate connection between NIC students/alumni and community organizations and businesses.
    a. Facilitate and communicate community organizations' interest in supporting student experiential learning and community engaged learning.
    b. Facilitate NIC students' opportunity to connect with community-based organizations.
    c. Develop NIC's alumni relations capacity and alumni network

- → Facilitate greater knowledge and practice of accessibility and inclusivity across NIC and the communities we serve through sharing our efforts and learning in striving for greater accessibility, diversity, equity, inclusion, reconciliation and sustainability.
    a. Share the great work that NIC students, alumni and faculty are doing with the communities we serve.
    b. Promote the NIC Principles of Community Engagement as a foundation for building relationships externally and internally.
    c. Foster opportunities for connection and interaction between employees and students across all departments and programs.

- → Assess and learn through our practice of community engagement
    a. Establish NIC Community Engagement Advisory Committee to learn about and offer direction to NIC's community engagement activities.
    b. Evaluate and communicate our impact and outcomes of NIC's community engagement activities.
    c. Recognize and celebrate community engagement successes.

WHAT'S NEXT

The overarching purpose of the Community Engagement Strategy is to develop NIC's community engagement activities into a self-sustaining dialogue between external communities and internal communities. The dialogue model, as illustrated below, demonstrates how the strategy guides engagement. Engagement with external communities allows for the sharing and leveraging of both NIC and community-based resources, research and knowledge to tackle shared social and economic development issues and opportunities.

In developing the Community Engagement Strategy, we are mindul of the pre-existing, current and ongoing community engagement practices and experiences. Thus, we have already taken action on the above goals which informs further engagement activities. NIC is committed to an iterative cycle of dialogue, action and reflection, continuously tweaking as we go along.

NIC COMMITS THAT COMMUNITIES' CONCERNS, REQUESTS AND INTELLIGENCE ARE DELIVERED TO THE PROPER NIC CONTACTS IN A TIMELY AND ONGOING MANNER.
– NIC Community Engagement Framework

THERE ARE ALWAYS OPPORTUNITIES TO TWEAK THINGS. ALWAYS IN RELATIONSHIPS, WE DON'T ALWAYS KNOW ALL THE PIECES – WE ARE ATTRACTED TO THE POSSIBILITIES.
–Indigenous Education Council member

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY DIALOGUE MODEL

For more information on NIC Community Engagement, please go to: nic.bc.ca/about-us/community-engagement/.

APPENDIX A: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

To consult with members of the communities North Island College serves, we travelled physically and virtually across the traditional and unceded territories of the Nuu-chah-nulth, Kwakwaka'wakw and Coast Salish traditions. We enter and engage within these territories with respect, humility and responsibility. Thank you to all community members, students and employees who took the time to talk about their relationship with North Island College and who offered their experiences and ideas in the development of the community engagement strategy.

Consultation activities were both in-person (meetings and events) and online (email correspondence and online anonymous survey) during the Summer and Fall of 2022 (see table below). Responses from participants were recorded into three areas (what is working well, what is not working well, and opportunities). Every response gathered during the consultation was collected, transcribed and organized in a database.

There were 175 individual respondents. Because some respondents mentioned more than one strength, challenge or opportunity, an individual response could yield more than one data line.

In the end, we analyzed 228 lines of unique data for common themes. These are (in order of response weight):

1. Access to college campuses and accessibility on campuses

2. Outreach and coordination

3. Community connected learning

4. Partnerships and collaboration

5. NIC systems, structures and processes

In-person consultation outweighed our digital survey (80% in-person versus 20% digital). Fifty percent of our data lines (total 228) were from community members. There were a total of 47 internal NIC meetings and events attended and 47 external meetings and events attended across the North Island. The following table includes groups and individuals that we connected and consulted with either once or multiple times.

FALL 2022 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES

Organization or group	Activity (meeting or event)	Community
Students	Orientation	Campbell River
Campbell River Learning Council	Meeting	Campbell River
City of Campbell River Economic Development	Meeting	Campbell River
Literacy Campbell River	Meeting	Campbell River
LIFT Fair – Volunteer Campbell River	Event	Campbell River
Vital Conversations – Housing	Event	Campbell River
Campbell River Coalition to End Homelessness	Meeting	Campbell River
Students	Orientation	Comox Valley
Coalition to End Homelessness	Meetings	Comox Valley
Comox Valley campus neighbours (School District 71, Hospital, Aquatic Centre, developers)	Meeting	Comox Valley
Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce	Event	Comox Valley
Social Planning Society	Meeting	Comox Valley
Comox Valley non-profit meeting (organized by CVSPS)	Meeting	Comox Valley
Immigrant Welcome Centre	Event	Comox Valley
K'omoks First Nation	Event and meeting	Comox Valley
Ukrainian Support Group	Meetings	Comox Valley
Strathcona Sunrise Rotary	Presentation and meeting	Comox Valley
Comox Valley Community Foundation	Meeting	Comox Valley
Comox Valley Health Network	Meeting	Comox Valley
World Community Education Development Society	Event	Comox Valley
Comox Valley ElderCollege	Meeting	Comox Valley
Comox Valley Accessibility Committee	Meeting	Comox Valley

Students	Orientation	Port Alberni
Port Alberni Learning Council	Meeting	Port Alberni
City of Port Alberni – Manager of Planning Services (OCP engagement)	Meeting	Port Alberni
Safehaven	Meeting	Port Alberni
Work BC Port Alberni	Meeting	Port Alberni
Literacy Alberni	Meeting	Port Alberni
Port Alberni Campus Planning Community Engagement event	Event	Port Alberni
Mixalakwila President's Lunch	Event	Port Hardy
North Island Crisis and Counselling Centre and North Island Foundry	Meeting	Port Hardy
Mount Waddington Literacy Society and Food Hub	Meeting	Port Hardy
NIC Board of Governors	Presentation	Region wide
North Island Students Union	Meeting	Region wide
Indigenous Education Council	Meeting	Region wide
NIC Employees (multiple)	Meetings	Region wide
Habitat for Humanity	Meeting	Region wide