

## **A Framework for Collaboration**

### **Introduction**

The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) and Colleges and Institutes Canada bring together 228 postsecondary education institutions which educate more than 2.5 million students each year. The postsecondary landscape in Canada is evolving rapidly and institutions are responding to these dynamic changes to ensure that they benefit students. Through collaborative academic programs; joint research activities; and credit transfer, articulation agreements and foreign credential recognition, our institutions are partnering to offer Canadian students a continuum of pathways and choices, aimed at leading to greater satisfaction and learner outcomes that build the human capital Canada needs to succeed in the global knowledge economy. These partnerships across the postsecondary sector also help advance social inclusion, including the integration of new immigrants to Canada, and enhancing participation, retention and success in graduation rates among Indigenous learners. Universities and colleges commit to building opportunities and further leveraging these partnerships to prepare students for labour market success and for active engagement in a diverse and dynamic society, making Canada more competitive, prosperous and socially cohesive.

The postsecondary sector has an important foundation on which to build collaboration and partnerships, given the network of university-college linkages and pathways that already exists, but we must challenge ourselves to do more and do better. While building a stronger postsecondary system by committing to collaboration, institutional leaders also recognize that student choices and opportunities are optimized in a landscape that celebrates institutional diversity and different approaches and missions. AUCC, Colleges and Institutes Canada and their respective members are taking steps to expand collaborations and pathways to create a greater diversity of opportunities for students and to raise awareness of the potential such partnerships offer learners, partners in the community, business and governments.

In the spirit of advancing these opportunities, maximizing benefits for students and recognizing the urgency of this issue across the country, AUCC and Colleges and Institutes Canada commit to advancing and promoting the following joint principles among our respective member institutions in order to enhance institutional collaboration and partnerships, including more pathways for learners.

## Principles

- Be student-centered: focus on the learner, learning outcomes and learning ability, and create collaborative linkages that align with institutions' missions and promote student success, including research and practical experiences for students.
- Ensure institutional commitment at every level to collaborate and develop appropriate partnerships, including enhanced pathways for learners.
- Build on the strengths of each sector and successful experiences, partnerships and collaboration already in place among and between universities and colleges.
- Continue to innovate how we learn: respond to an increasingly complex world and new pedagogical approaches by committing to the development of a range of diverse partnerships, including joint and collaborative programs, block credit transfer, articulation and flexible learning pathways for students, appropriate to each institution's mission.
- Commit to sharing and learning from promising practices and models: create an environment of openness to experimentation and addressing unnecessary barriers to student mobility, while recognizing there are complexities and differences in jurisdictions and institutional missions.
- Recognize the authority of appropriate institutional governance bodies in academic decision-making, including the development of joint programs, transfer partnerships and articulation agreements, while also recognizing the role and requirements of the regulated professions.
- Recognize the responsibilities of institutions relative to each other: as appropriate to each institution's mission and goals, develop means to complement each other with respect to program offerings and audiences served; recognize students' prior learning via formal and informal means whenever possible to minimize "rework" required; cooperate where possible and desirable to pool resources, achieve efficiencies and to provide opportunities for student mobility and for faculty members to create cooperative joint programs.
- Demonstrate the importance of measuring progress by enhancing the collection and sharing of institutional data, where appropriate, especially related to student transfers.

Recognizing that other stakeholders have a role to play – governments, businesses, provincial and regional sector organizations, provincial admissions and transfer councils – AUCC and College and Institutes Canada also commit to the following actions to support member institutions in bringing these principles to life:

- Promoting with government partners the real need for enhanced resources to help institutions build and strengthen pathways for student mobility, create a more seamless learning environment and ensure sustainable partnerships between universities and colleges.
- Promoting the need for greater sharing of information and data among key stakeholders to track, measure and evaluate progress in student mobility through pathways and other partnerships.
- Raising awareness in public discourse of positive collaborative efforts across the postsecondary sector.
- Developing resources to profile success stories in student pathways and share promising collaborative practices among member institutions.