



**Northwest Territories** Legislative Assembly / ᓄᓇᓕᓯᐱᓂᓯ ᐱᓕᓕᓂᐱᓂᓯ  
Standing Committee on Agencies, Boards and Commissions  
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## 12th Assembly

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## Standing Committee on Agencies, Boards and Commissions

## FINAL REPORT ON ARCTIC COLLEGE

**Fred E. Koe, M.L.A.**  
Chair



Northwest  
Territories Legislative Assembly / ᓄᓇᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ ᑭᓕᓕᓕᑦᑦᑦᑦ  
Standing Committee on Agencies, Boards and Commissions  
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1 DECEMBER 1993

THE HONOURABLE MICHAEL A. BALLANTYNE, M.L.A.,  
SPEAKER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Speaker,

Your Standing Committee on Agencies, Boards and Commissions has the honour of presenting its Final Report on Arctic College, and commends it to the House.



Fred E. Koe, M.L.A.  
Chair

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## INTRODUCTION

The Standing Committee on Agencies, Boards and Commissions, under the authority given to it by this House, has completed a review of Arctic College.

Throughout the review process, the Committee focused on the following aspects:

- the mandate, composition, organizational structure and function of the Board of Governors of Arctic College and its various Committees;
- the working relationships between the Board of Governors and the Department of Education;
- the operation of Arctic College, particularly related to administrative planning, the establishment of priorities, and the development of a framework for the delivery of educational services and programs;
- strategic planning and funding allocation system developments;
- pertinent legislation, regulations and policy;
- the statutory relationship between the Minister and the College;
- the role of the Science Institute;
- adult education programming at the community level; and
- the future direction of Arctic College in post-secondary education in Nunavut and the new western Territory.

The Standing Committee on Agencies, Boards and Commissions met on several occasions during the Second and Third Sessions of the Twelfth Legislative Assembly to consider these subjects.

The Standing Committee held public hearings on matters related to Arctic College in Fort Smith in January, 1992, followed by informal consultations with Board members and College officials, students and faculty at Thebacha Campus in Fort Smith in January, 1992, and in Yellowknife in May, 1992. The Standing Committee held additional public hearings and informal discussion meetings in February, 1993, in Inuvik, Iqaluit and Cape Dorset. Members of the Standing Committee also toured the College campuses and Community Learning Centres in each community visited, which proved to be very informative.

The Standing Committee received a presentation from the Minister Responsible for Education, Culture and Employment Programs, and Department and College officials in Yellowknife in March, 1993. A final meeting was held in September, 1993, with the Minister, Department officials, the Chair of the Board of Arctic College, the President of Arctic College and the Chair of the Board of the Science Institute of the NWT.

The Standing Committee wishes to acknowledge the participation and input of the Arctic College Board of Governors, and Arctic College and Department officials, staff and student representatives throughout the review. As well, the Committee appreciates the comments of members of the public who appeared as witnesses or provided written submissions during public hearings.

## INTERIM REPORT

The Standing Committee on Agencies, Boards and Commissions tabled its *Interim Report on Arctic College* [CR. No. 08-12(2)] on March 25, 1992.

In its *Interim Report*, the Standing Committee observed that the Arctic College Board of Governors had for some time been operating within a policy vacuum. While the *Arctic College Act* gave the Minister of Education the responsibility for determining policy respecting the operations, programs and priorities of the College, little direction had been provided to the Board from Cabinet. As a result, the Arctic College Board has operated with a degree of autonomy that was not entirely supported by statutory authority. This included activities such as the establishment of campuses without the appropriate statutory instruments, the determination of operational and program policies and the preparation of a mission statement. This concerned the Members this Committee, as it appeared that Arctic College policies and priorities had evolved as responses to largely unrelated events, rather than having been tied to long range educational planning.

The Standing Committee placed a priority on the need for the Minister to provide direction to the Arctic College Board of Governors, particularly with respect to the Board's proposed Strategic Plan and Funding Allocation System. While the Board had responded to the "policy vacuum" by attempting on its own to set a future direction for the development of Arctic College, it had never received a formal response from the Minister on its policy documents.

The Standing Committee also identified that a structure for ongoing communication between the Minister and the Board was urgently required, and that the Minister should indicate whether the Funding Allocation System proposed by the Board would provide the appropriate accountability mechanism. As well, the Standing Committee noted that a framework for cooperative work between the Minister and the Board on independent fundraising was clearly necessary.

The Standing Committee on Agencies, Boards and Commissions reported to the House that, given the importance of the issues before the Government of the Northwest Territories in the delivery of education services through Arctic College, its review of the College would be extended and expanded.

### RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The Standing Committee continued its hearings and consultations on matters related to Arctic College. It became increasingly clear that the College was entering into a period of significant change. It was recognized by many of the parties that the College would be required to meet new challenges, with the impending division of the Northwest Territories, and with new regional priorities being identified. From all regions, the Standing Committee received the clear message that Arctic College would be expected to take a lead role, with the communities, in planning and training for the future.

On March 9, 1993, the Minister Responsible for Education, Culture and Employment Programs, the Honourable Richard Nerysoo, delivered a Minister's Statement in the Legislative Assembly to announce a significant new direction for Arctic College. The Minister stated that the College would be decentralized into two separate college systems, with head offices in Iqaluit and in Fort Smith. Decentralization was scheduled to be completed by June 1994. Further, a new model was to be developed to provide a framework for the structure of the two college systems, their Boards, and their relationship to government, for legislative changes, and for agreements to be made between the two institutions.

The Minister also announced in the House on that the newly consolidated Department of Education, Culture and Employment Programs had started work on the development of a new Strategic Plan which would shape the direction of the Department over the next ten to fifteen years. Consultation with the various groups involved in the delivery of education in the Northwest Territories was to begin over the summer months, with a draft plan to be prepared for review by the Legislative Assembly during the Fall 1993 Session.

Early March 1993, the Minister publicly announced his intention to explore options for the integration of the Northwest Territories Science Institute with Arctic College.



Recent developments point to the evolving nature of planning for the post-secondary and adult education needs of the Northwest Territories. There have been significant changes to the College during the review period. However, the Standing Committee feels there are still areas of concern. Certain observations and recommendations should be made concerning the proposed plans for Arctic College and its role in the future of the Northwest Territories.

## OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### I PLANS FOR ARCTIC COLLEGE DEVELOPMENT

#### Creation of Two Colleges

The Standing Committee fully supports the proposal to establish two separate College systems, with head offices in the east and in the west. During their travel, Members of the Committee consistently received expressions of support for division, even prior to the official announcement by the Minister. Individuals in the eastern NWT clearly identified a focus on training for the implementation of Nunavut as the highest post-secondary educational priority of the region. In the west, concerns have been expressed that the training needs associated with the implementation of land claim agreements have not been fully met within the current Arctic College framework. With division and a more clearly identified focus within each region, the specific needs of each region may be met.

In the view of the Standing Committee, the division of Arctic College must be a priority of the Minister. Members were assured that the new structure would be fully implemented by July, 1994.

Clearly, legislation to establish the new system must be introduced in the Legislative Assembly quickly, to allow full analysis and public debate on the proposal. Therefore, this Committee recommends:

#### **Recommendation #1**

**THAT THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, CULTURE AND EMPLOYMENT PROCEED ON A PRIORITY BASIS WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION TO IMPLEMENT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TWO COLLEGES FOR THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES.**

#### **Organizational Structure**

The Standing Committee also gave consideration to the current organizational framework for Arctic College, and the proposals for the structure of the proposed two College system. Although operational problems exist, it is the Standing Committee's opinion that the current structure, consisting of a head office, regional campuses and community learning centres, is appropriate. The Committee was informed that the Minister proposes to retain the current structure following the College split, and the Committee supports this plan.

#### **Strategic Planning**

The Minister indicated in his March 9, 1993 Minister's Statement in the House that work had begun toward the development of a Departmental Strategic Plan for Education, Culture & Employment Programs. Following consultation with interested groups over the summer, a draft plan was to be prepared for review in the Assembly in the fall of 1993. The Minister Tabled a Discussion Paper, *Towards a Strategy to 2010*, (TD 33-12(4)) on November 30, 1993.

The Standing Committee questioned the Minister in September 1993 as to his progress in this area. Members were concerned that very little concrete planning appeared to have been completed, notwithstanding that the tabling of the plan was anticipated in approximately two months. Although the Minister had announced the project in March, 1993, the issue had been raised much earlier. In September, 1992, the Standing Committee on Finance recommended in its *Report on the Review of the Main Estimates* that a Departmental Education Strategy be completed by October, 1993. This Committee feels that after a full year, much more tangible progress should have been apparent.

### Long-Range Planning for Colleges

Throughout the Standing Committee's review, it became clear that Arctic College was functioning within constraints resulting from the lack of long-range planning by the Department of Education. As noted in the Committee's *Interim Report*, the Arctic College Board attempted to fill this policy "vacuum" through the development of a College Strategic Plan. However, by September 1993, the Board had not received a formal response by the Minister setting out which aspects of the Plan, if any, were acceptable. The Standing Committee emphasized the importance of this response, and was informed by the Minister and his officials in September, 1993, that the Plan had been reviewed by the Department. The Department advised that the Plan is considered to be conceptually sound, but that it needs further work in developing a framework so that it more directly relates to planning for physical infrastructure and operational funding.

The Standing Committee wishes to support the work that has begun on this issue. The Standing Committee continues to hold the view that strategic planning must be geared towards the needs of each of the Colleges. This is important if each College is to fulfill the role that is clearly expected of them.

### **Recommendation #2**

Therefore, this Committee recommends:

**THAT THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, CULTURE AND EMPLOYMENT TABLE IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY A DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN FOR EACH OF THE PROPOSED COLLEGES PRIOR TO THE INTRODUCTION OF THE LEGISLATION TO ESTABLISH THE NEW COLLEGE SYSTEMS.**

## **II STATUTORY MANDATE**

### **Clarifying the Mandate**

The Standing Committee considered the current mandate of the Arctic College Board of Governors within the *Arctic College Act*, and the division of authorities between the Board and the Minister. As the Standing Committee noted in its *Interim Report*, the Board has responded to the lack of Departmental direction by carrying out activities that were outside of its statutory authority. While the Minister is able to delegate some responsibilities to the Board, no formal process had been instituted to do so.

As legislative amendments will be required to establish the two college system, the Standing Committee questioned the Minister as to whether any changes to the statutory mandate of the Board were planned. The Standing Committee was informed that specific amendments are proposed to give the Board the authority to hold property, as do other colleges, and to address staffing issues.

Again, this was identified as being a part of the Department's strategic plan, so that further areas for amendment might yet be identified.

The Standing Committee is of the opinion that where statutory authorities of the Minister are to be exercised by the Board, a formal delegation of the specific function must be made.

### **Recommendation # 3**

Therefore, this Committee recommends:

**THAT A FORMAL PROCESS FOR THE DELEGATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES FROM THE MINISTER TO THE NEW BOARDS BE PREPARED AND TABLED IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR DISCUSSION.**

### **Fulfilling the Mandate**

The Standing Committee found that it has been difficult to determine the extent to which the Board of Arctic College is fulfilling its statutory mandate.

The *Arctic College Act* provides that the purpose of Arctic College is to deliver adult and post-secondary education. The Board is given specific powers which are to be exercised in accordance with the direction of the Minister. The Board has the authority to determine administrative policies; recommend program and course priorities to the Minister; prepare an estimate of the revenues and expenses of the College for each fiscal year that does not produce a deficit; present budgets to the Minister; maintain bank accounts; and ensure monies received by Arctic College are deposited.

The Board may also carry out other activities such as recommending the establishment or closure of a campus, and, with the approval of

the Minister, setting student admission requirements, and tuition and other fees.

The President of Arctic College is responsible for administering the operation of the College, monitoring and evaluating programs and courses, and ensuring the effective management of the programs and courses of the College, among other duties, in accordance with the direction of the Board.

While the requirements of the *Act* may be relatively clear, functions and responsibilities have been blurred in practice. The assessment of College programs in relation to labour market needs was not taking place. As the Standing Committee pointed out in its *Interim Report*, clear mechanisms for the evaluation of College performance by the Department and for the communication of priorities, were not in place.

The Standing Committee was advised by the Minister during the September, 1993 meeting, that a new unit, *Colleges and Continuing Education*, had recently been created within the Department. This unit is responsible for planning and monitoring activities in cooperation with the college.

The Standing Committee also urged the Minister to provide a formal response to the Funding Allocation System proposed by the Board, which provides for an increased level of accountability. The Department reported that work was underway to formalize their response.

### III ROLES OF THE "PLAYERS"

The Standing Committee was informed by the Minister in September, that the Department will be playing a more active role in relation to the two Colleges than has been the case in the past. However, a framework for instituting this role has yet to be developed.

The Standing Committee heard concern during its community visits that Community Education Councils were feeling that they presently have very little opportunity for input into Arctic College program design and delivery. With the adult educators reporting directly to Arctic College, and third party funding driving many of the program development decisions, some Community Education Councils believe that they are at risk of being left out of the College's consultative process.

The Standing Committee recognizes that historically, adult educators were accountable at the community level. The current structure, whereby they report to the regional Arctic College campus, does provide professional support to the educators, but some communities feel that opportunities for local input have been diminished. The Committee also recognizes that members of the Arctic College Board provide a means for including regional views, and heard from Arctic College representatives that real efforts are made to involve Community Education Councils in decision-making. However, these mechanisms do not appear to be working in all communities. The Standing Committee holds the view that a formal process should be instituted through which the Community Education Councils would provide direction to Arctic College regarding priorities at the community level.

## **Recommendation # 4**

Therefore, this Committee recommends:

**THAT ARCTIC COLLEGE DEVELOP A FORMAL PROCESS FOR OBTAINING THE INPUT OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCILS ON LOCAL PROGRAMMING AND PLANNING.**

## **IV THE SCIENCE INSTITUTE**

In early March, 1993, the Minister announced at a public meeting of the Arctic College Board of Governors that he was considering the integration of the Science Institute and Arctic College. During subsequent questioning in the House, the Minister indicated his desire to give credibility to Arctic College in the area of scientific and technological research. He advised that a committee had been formed with representatives from Arctic College, the Science Institute and his Department to plan how to proceed. Later in March, the Minister advised the House during questioning that the Science Institute had withdrawn from the committee.

During the March, 1993 meeting with the Standing Committee, the Minister advised that planning was still in the very early stages. He recommended continuing with both an Arctic College and Science Institute Board linked to each College, but with a number of common members. The Arctic College President would be the Chief Executive Officer for each body.



The Standing Committee explored this issue again in September, 1993. The Standing Committee was disconcerted to find that little progress had been made during the past months in terms of a concrete plan. In fact, the fundamental purpose and direction of an amalgamated Science Institute from the perspective of the Minister and the Department was not clear. Primary questions such as whether there would be two Institutes or one following the decentralization of the College, whether the Institute would fulfill a function similar to a faculty, or that of an advisory/research council, and lines of accountability following amalgamation had not been worked through.

## **V FUTURE CHALLENGES**

It became apparent during the meetings between this Committee and the Minister and President of Arctic College in September 1993, that there is not a long-term vision or plan of Arctic College in the future. The Standing Committee feels that the College should be focusing on the future; the impact on resource requirements for the two colleges; the identification of new needs in terms of regional aspirations, and the educational priorities with the division of the territories.

The Standing Committee believes that the major focus for future programming should remain in adult education. The development of successful programs such as the Teacher Education Program, must be a top priority. The College must set some goals and strive for them.

The Standing Committee suggests that the Minister and the Board look to the past for direction in the future. The challenge will be to recognize the short-comings in the past and determine how the north can best be served in the future.

## Comprehensive Response by the Executive Council

### **Recommendation #5**

Finally the Standing Committee on Agencies, Boards and Commissions requests:

**THAT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH RULE 93(5), THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL TABLE A COMPREHENSIVE RESPONSE TO ALL THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT TO THE ASSEMBLY WITHIN 120 CALENDAR DAYS OF THE PRESENTATION OF THIS REPORT TO THE HOUSE.**