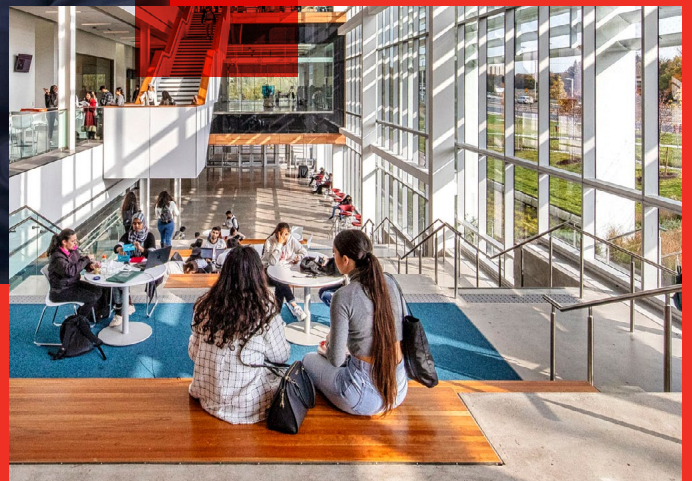


THE NEXT

A Strategic Plan for Seneca Polytechnic

2023-2026



Seneca
POLYTECHNIC



Land Acknowledgement

Seneca's campuses are located on the land stewarded by Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Wendat Nations. We acknowledge Treaty 13 (Toronto Purchase) signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, and the Williams Treaty, signed with multiple Mississauga and Chippewa First Nations. We are all interconnected as treaty people with shared obligation to learn, respect, honour, and sustain. Through this acknowledgment, we pay honour to the First Peoples (First Nations, Inuit, or Métis) and the history of the land upon which all Seneca campuses are located. This is a small but significant action towards truth, reconciliation and the strengthening of relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. Acknowledgments enable us to give thanks and recognition of our relationship to Indigenous lands, treaties, the original inhabitants and the history they have shared with this land for thousands of years. They also encourage reflection about the past, the resiliency of Indigenous Peoples and what individual and collective changes can be made to further the reconciliation process. Today, this land continues to be home for many diverse Indigenous Peoples, including First Nations, Métis and Inuit. We are grateful for the continuous and unceasing Indigenous stewardship of these lands and waters.

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The Consultation Process

At Seneca, we develop our strategic plans with input from a wide variety of stakeholders, both internal and external. For this plan, we received feedback from literally hundreds of people through individual consultations, in-person and virtual meetings, dedicated email exchanges and online surveys.

We heard from students, student government, faculty, support staff, administration, union locals, alumni, retirees, government officials, industry and community representatives, employers, donors, thought leaders and our Board of Governors.

Supporting our approach for the Next Strategic Plan, we heard these emerging themes:

- ▶ No boundaries – there are no boundaries to our aspirations and intentions of being Canada’s pre-eminent polytechnic that provides career-ready graduates for employers and positioning ourselves as such;
- ▶ Challenge the status quo – if the pandemic has taught us anything, it’s that we succeed when we are innovative, nimble, and willing to adopt new strategies to adapt to our constantly changing world;
- ▶ We are better and can do better – Seneca leads the way in polytechnic education, but we always strive to be even better;
- ▶ Seneca is highly regarded by students, employees and employers – our reputation is critical to our success, and we continue to strive for excellence in everything we do to protect our standing in higher education;
- ▶ Resources don’t match up with our ambitions – in a time of restrained provincial government support, it is imperative that we remain focused on our priorities and develop funding solutions that allow us to realize our ambitions.

Values

Student success is Seneca's core purpose. All aspects of our operations – inside and outside the classroom – are focused on ensuring our students have the best possible student experience. An experience that not only prepares them for the workplace but also inspires them to be involved citizens in an increasingly complex world.

We aim to instill the following core Seneca values in all our students, and modelled by all our employees:

Respect

In everything we do, in all ways, we treat each other with respect.

Quality

While we will always be flexible in our approach, we never compromise on quality and standards.

Innovating

We understand now more than ever that the world is in constant evolution. We are always improving, innovating and looking ahead.

Collaboration

Everything we do – within Seneca and with our communities at home and abroad – we do best when collaborating with others. Working together, we are more creative, see more opportunities and find better solutions.

Diversity

Seneca celebrates our extraordinary diversity as an enriching strength and a competitive advantage in today's global economy.





TO THE HORIZON HORIZON





In 1967, the year Seneca opened our doors for the first time, President T. Newnham heralded the arrival of a new kind of postsecondary institution that was “imaginative in concept, flexible in scope and vast in promise”.

More than 55 years later, the boldness and innovation that vaulted Seneca into the front lines of higher education continue to drive us. We went into the pandemic strong and are emerging stronger. With the agility, resilience and resourcefulness that have always been our hallmarks, Seneca accepted the challenge of a world turned upside down. We leaned into the

possibilities presented by a forced, instant and comprehensive conversion to remote learning and working. One of those opportunities was to engage our community to ask how Seneca could continue to thrive in the post-pandemic world of postsecondary education. And the result was Seneca Au Large – Seneca to the Horizon – as the foundation of our renewal.

The renewed Seneca, the Next Seneca, will be built on these three pillars:

Equitable

Seneca has a unique opportunity – indeed, an obligation – to help build an equitable world through the many roles we play in people's lives. We teach, we employ, and we are a community gathering space that embraces our responsibilities for reconciliation, diversity and inclusion.

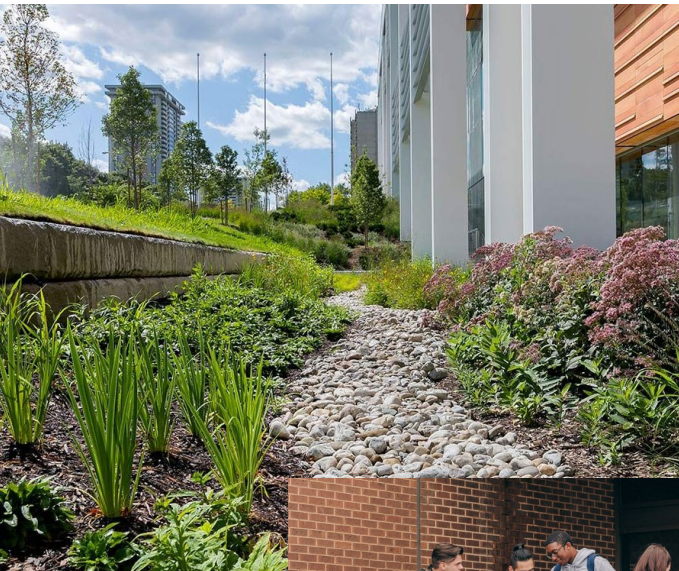
Sustainable

We take a broad definition of sustainability and commit to it – by building thriving, diverse and resilient communities through an approach that incorporates environmental health, social equity, cultural vitality and economic responsibility.

More Virtual

Our transformation to virtual during the pandemic has helped us define new and flexible ways of operating. We are innovating service delivery and offering more choice for students and employees while continuing to value in-person learning and working.

With this solid foundation in place, it's time for The Next, our new Strategic Plan that will guide us over the next three years and beyond. And we have learned – or relearned – some important lessons that will be key to a successful Strategic Plan:



Focus. We succeeded through the pandemic because Seneca embraced innovation, focusing on the challenges like a laser, not trying to be all things to all people. Priorities became everything. Focus is our watchword.

The experience matters. The student experience. The employee experience. The community experience. The Seneca experience will be a differentiator.

Purpose is always at the heart of what we do. As Canada's leading polytechnic, our core mission is our North Star: we provide a great education that builds great careers for our graduates. We make a difference so they can make a difference – for the communities they serve, for the industries they work in, for themselves.



We have the foundation for renewal. We have principles to guide us. So, what's Next?

The Next is calling ourselves Seneca Polytechnic: an explicit declaration of our uniqueness as a postsecondary institution committed to offering students a valuable combination of practical and sophisticated skills underpinned by theoretical knowledge.

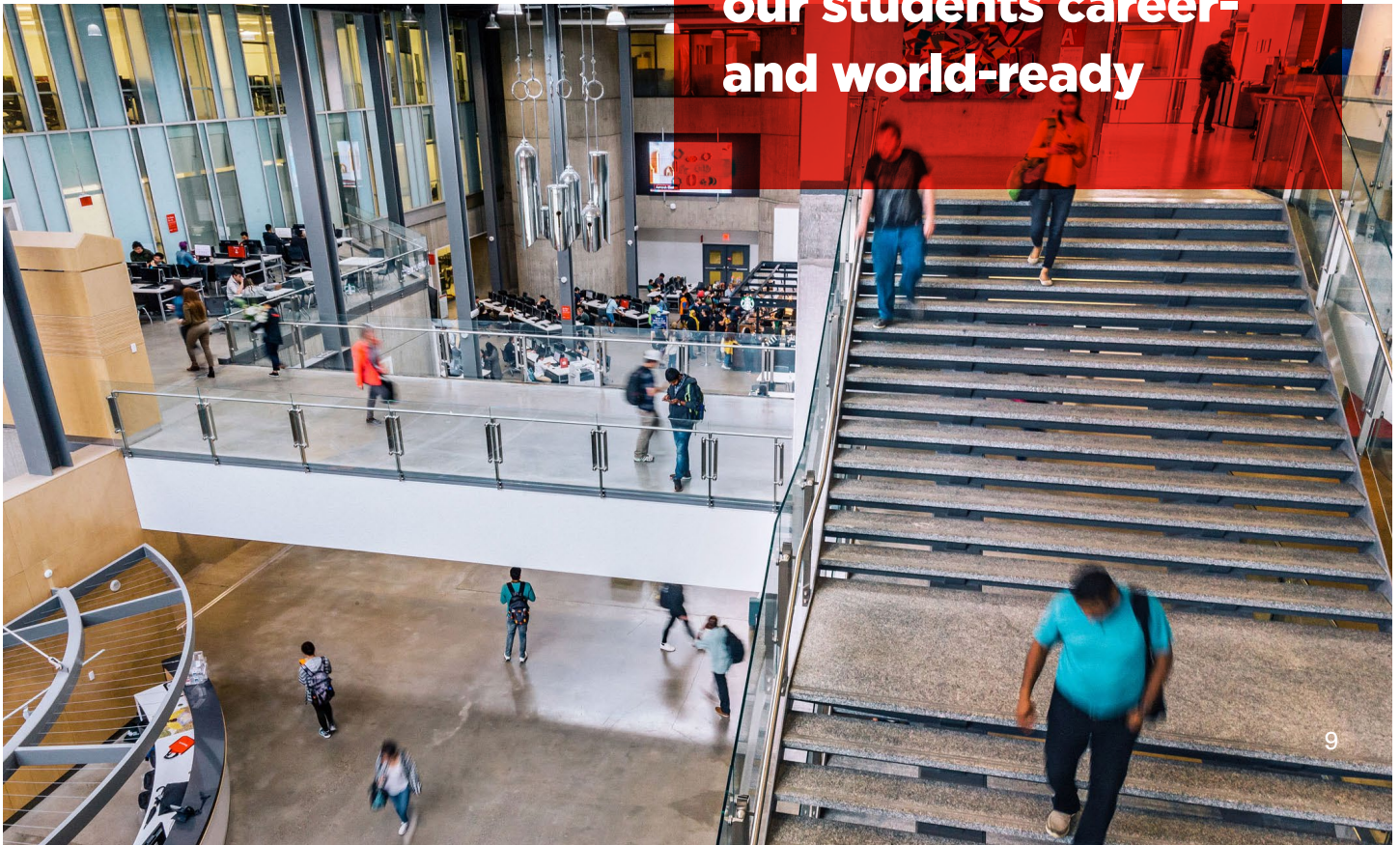
For years we have offered a polytechnic education. Seneca Polytechnic is a name that reflects our evolution from our roots as a college. It also reflects our leadership role in higher education in Ontario through the expansion of career-based degrees, growth in graduate certificates and superior work-

integrated learning opportunities, including industry-friendly applied research.

Seneca Polytechnic is dedicated to getting our students career- and world-ready. We offer an education that has no boundaries. And we create great flexible experiences for those who study and work here. By combining the best of college and university approaches, Seneca Polytechnic offers a seamless transition from education to employment.

Come help us build The Next for Seneca Polytechnic.

**Seneca Polytechnic
is dedicated to getting
our students career-
and world-ready**



THE WORLD TODAY ! UVA !





It's impossible to set the context for this Strategic Plan without reflecting on the all-pervasive impact of COVID-19. By definition a global event, the pandemic reached into every corner, every activity and every home, causing untold misery. Millions died. Economies ground to a halt, forcing widespread joblessness and business closures.

In education, as with other sectors, it seemed as though the pandemic picked us up and hurled us five years – perhaps 10 years – into the future. Underlying trends already producing seismic shifts in higher education were accelerated, fast-forwarding us into uncharted territory.

Yet, some certainties have emerged:

The forces of digitization and automation are unceasing.

With every passing year, the relentless march of technological innovation continues to upend industries and sunset entire job classes. The impact of artificial intelligence and robotics is accelerating across virtually every sector. In every moment of wrenching change there can also be promise, and we see opportunities abounding.

How we work, and the nature of work, are constantly being redefined.

The conversation about the future of work used to focus on the impact of technological change, such as the shift to the gig economy in many industries and workplace changes because of automation. Now, as the pandemic recedes, what remains is the issue of remote work – also known as hybrid or flexible – as the numbers of those who can do their work outside the office environment has exploded. Remote work is not new, but it is now at a scale that is unprecedented.

The student body – both current and prospective – has never been more diverse in every measure, including what, when and how they want to learn

The diversity of Seneca's students is extraordinary on every count, from ethnicity to language to education

level to age and more. The new diversity is how students learn. Online learning has gone from a minor share of the educational scene to a favoured delivery option for many. Another product of the pandemic is more focus on hybrid and flexible learning options, where students can alternate their time between remote and in-person learning. There is no better proof of the saying “one size does not fit all” than learning style.

The entire globe has become one big market for advanced learning.

Another example of the massive acceleration of an underlying trend during the pandemic has been the opening of borders to online learning from anywhere and to anywhere, if a student has reliable Internet access. In some ways harkening back to the old days of correspondence courses, a student in Toronto now has the choice of learning from the school next door or the one halfway around the world. Add in microcredentials – the short bursts of focused learning in a particular industry or skill – and it's a mix that creates exciting new opportunities for students and institutions, even as competition increases exponentially.

Historically low government financial support for public education must now compete against the demands of an aging society and an ailing healthcare system.

Governments at all levels value higher education, even elevating it to being key to Canada's economic future as employers feel the pinch of a tight and globally competitive labour force. While money is being directed at some skills development areas, core operating funding lags. As a result, all public institutions are seeking diversified and innovative revenue sources, such as contract training, campuses abroad or new markets for existing programs. The same demographics that are challenging education with lower birthrates producing fewer students are also challenging the health-care system with our greying population. Given the nature of political priorities, any available public dollars will likely be directed at hospitals, long-term care and other elements of health care that are under enormous pressure.

A “made-in-Seneca” response

We are building a more virtual and nimble learning model that allows us to not only respond quickly to our changing environment but also helps us take advantage of emerging opportunities. We are playing to our strengths: our culture of innovation and our focus on providing the best student and employee experience in postsecondary education.



NO BOUNDARIES BOUNDARIES BOUNDARIES





1. Our job is to get our students career-ready and world-ready

Our work in educating students is driven by employer demand.

Yet, we know that labour markets can change in an instant. We also know that multiple careers in a lifetime are now the norm, giving an edge to self-directed learners with a cross-disciplinary education. Underpinning our credentials is strong engagement with employers to determine their needs, now and in the future, so that we can best prepare our students for a great career.

Beyond career-based education, Seneca also takes to heart our responsibility to help students become engaged citizens, active participants in building strong, vibrant communities that foster tolerance, diversity in all forms, and respect. That is why we aim to instil the principles of reconciliation and inclusion in our graduates. We are also determined to reflect that goal across our organization, building the equitable Seneca, committed to reconciliation and free of systemic racism and bias.

We are working with faculty across the broad range of Seneca's programs to incorporate sustainability into curriculum and learning activities. That reflects our commitment to build the sustainable Seneca throughout our academic areas and operations.

As a polytechnic, Seneca is uniquely positioned to provide high-quality, experiential programs – based on labour market trends – that broaden a student's horizons and prepare them for what's next.

Experiential learning for all

Experiential learning is a defining characteristic of a Seneca Polytechnic education. It is a critically important partnership of students, employers and Seneca that delivers skilled and career-ready graduates across all sectors – private, public and non-profit.

- WE ARE:**
- ▶ Ensuring that all students have an opportunity to gain exposure to their chosen careers before they graduate;
 - ▶ Through timely advising, working with students when, or even before, they start at Seneca on choosing a pathway – courses, programs and activities – that will best prepare them for their careers;
 - ▶ Providing students with entrepreneurship and applied research opportunities to advance their employability skills.

Expanded career and employment services

One of the most valuable services Seneca provides is connecting students and graduates with employers. It happens formally and informally, through faculty, alumni, job fairs and the employment portal that links employers to tens of thousands of full- and part-time students in our more than 300 academic programs. The continued success of in-person and virtual employment and career services, now and in the future, depends on more direct connections with the employer community and industry leaders.

WE ARE: ► Creating a more centralized employment and career service hub that is dedicated to:

- Engaging with employers to identify not just their current demands, but also their future skills and workplace-related needs;
- Working closely with employers to ensure they have access to well-prepared and high-quality co-op students and graduates;
- Influencing curriculum development by establishing a central liaison between Seneca's program advisory committees and employers.





Human skills for the workplace and life

Our consultations with students and employers identified the importance of helping our students develop strong human skills alongside their technical competencies so that they can thrive in the workplace and life.

Collaboration, communication, empathy, resourcefulness, agility: these are some of the human skills required in every sector today and are critical to building a successful career as an employee or an entrepreneur. We also see these skills as essential to playing leadership roles in communities.

Included in the concept of being an active citizen is the notion of giving back, sharing time and knowledge to better the communities in which we live, work and play. Seneca can create new opportunities for our students, alumni and employees to contribute and participate by establishing networks and ways of connecting that allow everyone to play positive roles in their communities.

- WE ARE:**
- ▶ Imbedding human skills development in curriculum and providing learning opportunities in less formal settings to prepare students for the day-to-day work environment;
 - ▶ Expanding the curriculum review to include reconciliation, equity, diversity and inclusion, and sustainability to reflect these core values and principles in the student experience;
 - ▶ Establishing a network to connect the Seneca community of students, alumni and employees with opportunities to contribute to building strong and dynamic communities.

A recent Seneca marketing campaign had the theme

‘The Proof is in our Graduates’

It wasn’t hyperbole. In the workplace and in the community, our graduates prove everyday the value of a Seneca education. We see a larger role for alumni in many facets of Seneca’s activities, and we will increase the engagement of the nearly 300,000 Seneca alumni around the world as guest lecturers, mentors, program advisors and ambassadors for our more recent graduates.





2. A Seneca Polytechnic education is for life

In a world where jobs, work and workplaces are always changing, our role is to be a constant.

At Seneca Polytechnic, we offer our students a life-long commitment that they carry with them as alumni. We have the courses, programs and partnerships they need to succeed in a fast-changing world in which new careers emerge in a heartbeat. We call it meeting students where they are in their lives and in their careers.

We have heard the clear message that students want increased flexibility in two ways. First is in their choice of courses in building their credential. Second is in how and where they learn – in a classroom or lab, virtually, or through a flexible model that allows students to choose.

As a leader of pathways, both internally and through external partnerships, Seneca builds a lifelong education based on whatever learning a student has done as a foundation for more – whether it's a diploma-to-degree pathway inside Seneca, a baccalaureate degree-to-master's degree route with a partner or assembling credits to build a credential. The keys are choice, convenience and flexibility. That is the enduring takeaway from the pandemic: students want and deserve access to education that respects how they learn, their work schedule, family responsibilities and commuting challenges. That's the real world students live in. They don't want to have to fit into somebody else's box – they want to make it their own. Call it bespoke education.

Increasingly, learning will be in limited bursts – microcredentials, in-service learning, professional certifications. As part of our commitment to education for life, we will continue to expand short courses that focus on upskilling and reskilling. That's how we will be the education hub where anyone at any point in their careers can get the necessary professional skills, theoretical knowledge and workplace experience, when and how they need it.

- WE ARE:**
- **Providing students with more flexibility in building programs, choosing courses and learning modes to better accommodate their needs, day or evening, full- or part-time;**
 - **Encouraging seamless and continuous learning by increasing pathways within and outside of Seneca and ensuring that no student, no matter where they are in their program, leaves without credit for what they have completed;**
 - **Eliminating the distinction between full-time and continuing education to provide a seamless experience for students while providing lifetime incentives for alumni to return to Seneca to continue their education.**

3. A great student and employee experience

A successful community is one where everyone feels valued and supported.

Communities thrive when people are engaged and participating. Everything that we do for our students and employees – from academic programs to physical spaces to communications to on-campus and virtual services – must start with a commitment to building the best possible experience, regardless of how they connect with us. Part of meeting students where they are is listening to and understanding what’s important to our diverse and large population. Here’s what we’ve heard: wellness supports, extracurricular activities and events, flexible academic programs, timely interventions for at-risk students, a focus on academic integrity, informative and accessible communications, and access to financial aid. These are all important elements of strong user experiences that Seneca commits to delivering to our students.

A key part of this commitment is Seneca’s new Service Hub. This is an innovative, more virtual approach to service delivery, offering access to support and advice across nine channels: web, ChatBot, email, text, video, intranet, apps, social media and in-person locations on campus. Its sole focus is to help students and graduates access information and get support, anytime and from anywhere.

FOR STUDENTS WE ARE:

- ▶ Ensuring students have the mental health, wellness and advising supports they need to succeed, when they need them;
- ▶ Promoting experiences that students want and need, on and off campus, to help them feel connected to the Seneca community;
- ▶ Continuing to broaden access to financial aid through scholarships and bursaries, and other supports to reduce financial stress.

For employees, our role is to enhance the employee experience and create the conditions that allow them to be successful at Seneca. In turn, they will model that success for our students and the broader Seneca community. As we do with students, we want employees to feel valued and connected to Seneca throughout the life of their career.

Our consultations also told us employees value innovation and measured risk-taking, and saw those as a strong reason for being part of Seneca. In addition, employees want a healthy work environment that provides flexibility, opportunities for professional development and supports for mental health and wellbeing. We take inspiration from the traditional Indigenous medicine wheel and see wellbeing in all its forms – physical, mental, emotional and spiritual – to support the whole person.

FOR EMPLOYEES WE ARE:

- ▶ **Cultivating a healthy work environment that motivates and supports our employees by empowering them to focus on strategic priorities;**
- ▶ **Rewarding excellence with recognition, training, developmental and growth opportunities;**
- ▶ **Building employee experiences on- and off-campus and through virtual channels to provide opportunities for meaningful connections.**



4. Strong foundations

The pillars of the equitable Seneca, the sustainable Seneca and the more virtual Seneca are woven throughout this plan. As well, several foundations are essential to achieving our goals and to power our constant innovation:

- ▶ Our focus on academic quality through rigorous and frequent review – in collaboration with our industry-led program advisory committees and professional accreditation bodies – of curriculum, outcomes and graduate success;
- ▶ Our robust and constantly evolving Digital Strategy providing the tools, data and emerging technology that allows innovation to flourish;
- ▶ Our embrace of international education in all its forms: a diverse population of students enriching our campuses; partnerships with educational institutions, organizations and governments around the world; training and consulting to international clients; global experiences for students and employees; and, programs that prepare students for internationally focused careers;
- ▶ Our commitment to communicate clearly, consistently and continually with our internal and stakeholder audiences, telling our stories in the many ways that different audiences want to consume information;
- ▶ Our enrolment management approach that allows us to continue to evolve our programs to meet the changing needs of students, employers and the community;
- ▶ Our capital program, providing world-class spaces for the Seneca community through new construction and updated facilities.



**Each in their own way,
these strengths of Seneca
inform our culture. We
are never satisfied unless
Seneca is demonstrating
leadership in all that it does.**



THE NEXT ! ! ! ! !





If there is one word that sums up our direction and our promise, it is flexibility. Career- and world-ready graduates, education without boundaries, great experiences for those who study and work with us – in all these, we have embraced flexibility as a delivery mode and, just as importantly, an attitude.

None of this happens without the exceptional employees of Seneca – the faculty, support staff and administrators – who show their commitment to our students and their success every day.

They are the heart and soul of Seneca. Taken together, the priorities and commitments in this Strategic Plan represent a bold direction for Seneca Polytechnic, building on more than five decades of experience and leadership in postsecondary education.

This document will inspire the business and operational plans, across all faculties and departments that will deliver on our commitments to Seneca's community.

We are excited by what the future holds. We are ready for The Next.

Measuring Success

While we track hundreds of metrics to measure our progress against our goals, these are five key areas that provide a high-level dashboard:

Academic Quality

Ensuring that Seneca's strong reputation for high-quality academic programs continues.

Student Satisfaction

Meeting student needs both inside and outside the classroom.

Employee Engagement

Continuing to build a valued and dedicated workforce.

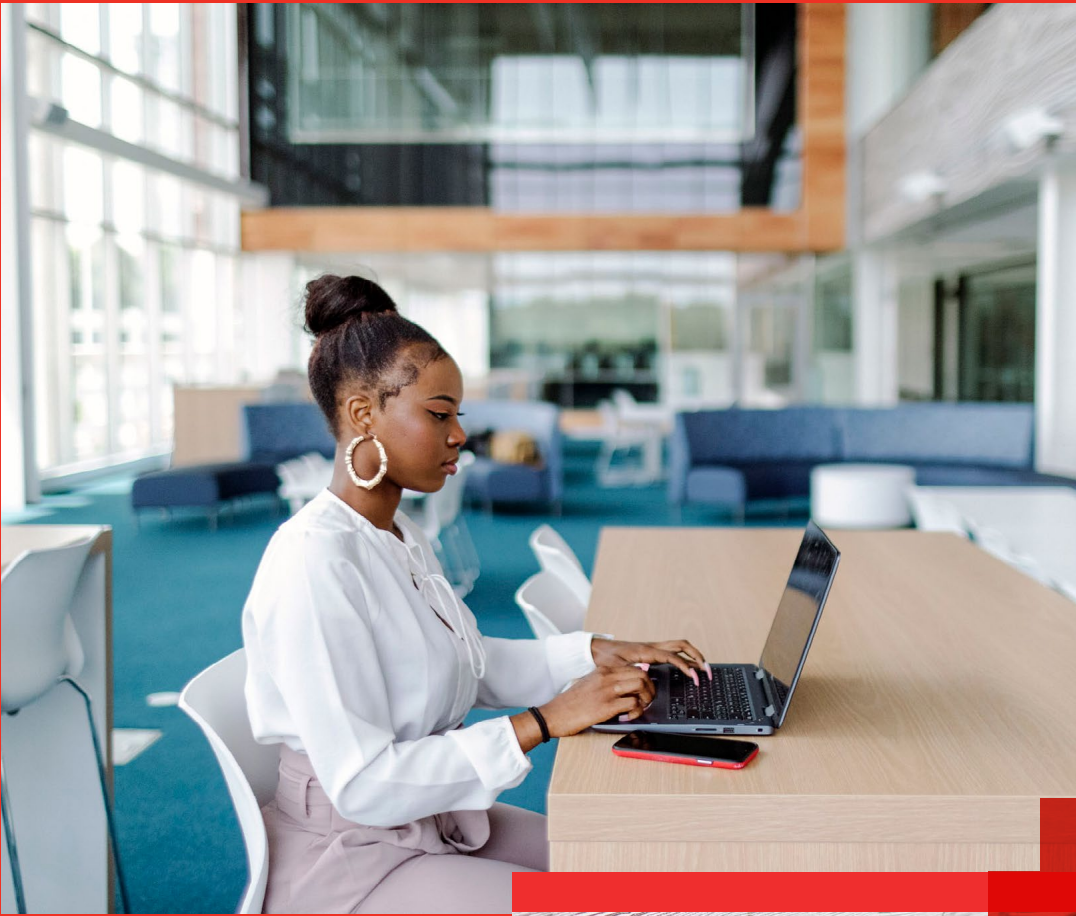
Enrolment Health

Smart growth in enrolment during a time of demographic challenge.

Financial Sustainability

Operating results that provide the necessary resources to continue to offer great teaching and learning.





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