

# STRATEGIC MANDATE AGREEMENT

Nipissing University  
Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development  
2017-20

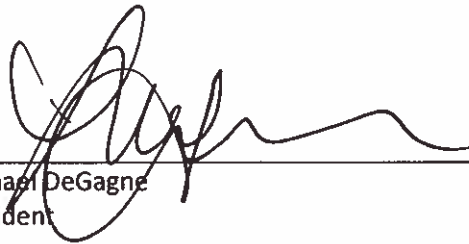
SIGNED for and on behalf of the Ministry of  
Advanced Education and Skills Development  
by:



Sheldon Lew  
Deputy Minister

Date

SIGNED for and on behalf Nipissing University by:



Michael DeGagne  
President

Date



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# Preamble

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This Strategic Mandate Agreement between the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development and Nipissing University outlines the role the University currently performs in Ontario's postsecondary education system and how it will build on its current strengths to achieve its vision and help drive system-wide objectives and government priorities.

The Strategic Mandate Agreement (SMA):

- Identifies and explains the shared objectives and priorities between the Ontario government and the University;
- Outlines current and future areas of program strength;
- Supports the current vision, mission, and mandate of the University and established areas of strength within the context of the University's governing legislation;
- Describes the agreed-upon elements of the new university funding model, including:
  - a University's enrolment plans as well as their projections of their enrolments relative to their corridor midpoint and any desired changes to their corridor during the period of this SMA; and
  - differentiation areas of focus including metrics and targets.
- Provides information on the financial sustainability of the institution; and
- Informs Ministry decision-making and enables the Ministry to align its policies and processes to further support the University's areas of strength.

The term of the SMA is from April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2020.

The agreement may be amended in the event of substantive policy or program changes that would significantly affect joint commitments made in the SMA (e.g. Major Capacity Expansion, Highly Skilled Workforce, etc.). Any such amendment would be mutually agreed to in writing, dated, and signed by both signatories.

# Ontario's Vision for Postsecondary Education

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Ontario's colleges and universities will drive creativity, innovation, knowledge, skills development and community engagement through teaching and learning, research, and service.

Ontario's colleges and universities will put students first by providing the best possible learning experience for all qualified learners in an affordable and financially sustainable way, ensuring high quality and globally competitive outcomes for students and Ontario's economy.

## Nipissing University Vision, Mission and Mandate

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### **Vision**

Nipissing University will provide an exceptional and personalized student experience within a collegial and diverse learning community.

We will focus on excellence, innovation and creativity in scholarship and teaching. Graduates will embrace lifelong learning and will make a difference locally, nationally and internationally.

### **Mission**

Nipissing University will exemplify the highest standards in scholarship, teaching and research.

In addition, Nipissing University will encourage students, faculty and staff to realize their full intellectual and personal potential to the benefit of our local, national and international communities.

Nipissing University will recognize our particular role in supporting northern communities and Aboriginal, first-generation and international learners.

### **Values**

Nipissing University students, faculty and staff exemplify a values-based culture in their pursuit of excellence. As reflected in our coat of arms, we believe that *Integritas*, defined as principled, honest and sincere, is a motto upon which all else is built. We are committed to collegiality, respect and transparency in working together and with our community partners.

We embrace academic freedom.

# Aspirations

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*The Ministry recognizes the importance of supporting institutions to evolve and acknowledges the strategic aspirations of its postsecondary education institutions. The SMA is not intended to capture all decisions and issues in the postsecondary education system, as many will be addressed through the Ministry's policies and standard processes. The Ministry will not be approving any requests for capital funding or new program approvals, for example, through the SMA process.*

## **Institutional Aspirations**

Nipissing University's SMA reflects the words found in its Act, which states, "the University's special mission is to be a teaching-oriented institution that offers programs in education and in liberal arts and science and programs that specifically address the needs of northern Ontario". The university has evolved over the years to embrace a stronger research culture but remains committed to its founding principles.

Nipissing University has a select number of graduate programs in areas of strength and excellence in research. It will continue to strengthen existing graduate programs and develop a limited number of new Masters programs in areas of emerging research strength.

Nipissing University will continue to be flexible, creative and innovative, delivering education to many geographically dispersed learners, including those from Aboriginal communities. Nipissing University is committed to student mobility and offers flexible and comprehensive credit recognition for university students wishing to transfer from other universities. In addition, Nipissing has negotiated numerous transfer agreements with colleges in fields including nursing, business, environmental technology, criminal justice, child and family studies, fine arts and information technology. Nipissing University consistently receives high rankings among Canadian universities for student satisfaction and provides experiential learning opportunities.

Nipissing University will continue to have as one of its key objectives the issue of access to postsecondary education. This is reflected in its relationship to Indigenous communities and its successful transitional program for Indigenous students. Nipissing University's commitment to Indigenous communities is evidenced by specialized summer programs in Aboriginal Education, which have been offered by the Schulich School of Education for over 30 years, and has also led to the creation of a Chair in Indigenous Education.

Consistent with its focus on access and community and regional development, program offerings at Nipissing University have revolved around what could be described as public-sector employment skills and programs. Most of the students enrolled at Nipissing University are enrolled in programs leading to public-sector employment. The two largest programs are Education and Nursing.

Nipissing University has consistently attracted students interested in an education that will help them serve the people of Ontario and beyond. From our historic beginnings as the North Bay Normal School to a widely

respected program preparing teachers, to being the most nursing-intensive university in the province, Nipissing University has provided education for students with an eye towards good citizenship and social contribution. Programs in social work, criminal justice, and the environment make a significant contribution to the theme. Moreover, a large number of students in our strong Arts and Science disciplines are planning to pursue their studies in the Consecutive Bachelor of Education (BEd) program.

The second element of Nipissing's mission reflects responsiveness to the specific needs of northern Ontario. In 2007, the OECD published a report entitled *Higher Education and Regions: Globally Competitive, Locally Engaged* that examines the role many modern universities are playing in regional development. Nipissing University is clearly among the group of universities that has embraced the concept of community engagement. This area of commitment enhances the more traditional role of teaching and scholarship and adds a third important component, often referred to as the "third mission" of universities. This concept of community and regional engagement and development as a role for universities informed the creation and development of Ontario's northern universities.

Nipissing achieves its objectives by partnering and collaborating with many educational and non-educational organizations, including Indigenous communities, healthcare providers, community colleges, universities and industry associations throughout the province.

# Shared Objectives and Priorities for Differentiation

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## 1.0 Student Experience

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*This section captures institutional strengths in improving student experience, outcomes and success. This section recognizes institutions for measuring the broader learning environment, such as continuity of learning pathways; retention; student satisfaction; co-curricular activities and records; career preparedness; and student services and supports.*

### **Institutional Approach to Improving Student Experience**

Nipissing University is a young and dynamic institution making a positive impact in the lives of its students, graduates, faculty, staff and communities. Through innovation and a continued commitment to students, it has grown significantly from its century-old roots in teacher education to become a destination of choice for students seeking to reach their full personal, academic and professional potential. Primarily an undergraduate institution, Nipissing is renowned for providing a personalized education within a supportive community and with a dedicated faculty who engage in important research that has an impact – locally and globally. Small classes provide students the ideal setting for meaningful interaction with faculty and collaboration with peers. Nipissing University is committed to responding to the postmillennial generation’s different learning styles by offering an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary curriculum that focuses on non-linear approaches to learning that include applied, experiential learning.

Nipissing University scores well in terms of key performance indicators. The results of the 2016 Ontario University Graduate Survey (OUGS) indicate that employment rates, both six months (89.84 per cent) and two years after graduation (94.68 per cent), are consistently above the Ontario averages (88 per cent and 93.95 per cent respectively). Student surveys confirm that Nipissing’s undergraduate experience is excellent. The results of the 2015 Canadian University Survey Consortium showed that student satisfaction at Nipissing was significantly higher than the Ontario average. As an example of that, 92.4 per cent of Nipissing students said they were “satisfied or very satisfied” with the overall quality of education, compared to 84.7 per cent for all Ontario universities participating in the survey. On the question of whether or not they “received good value for their money”, 77.7 per cent of Nipissing students answered “yes” compared to 60.7 per cent for all Ontario universities.

Notwithstanding its already excellent student experience, as measured by NSSE and other student surveys, Nipissing University will continue its efforts to improve the overall student experience and engagement. Part of

that improvement will include the development and implementation of a space plan that will assist the university respond to the identified need to create more cohesive departmental groupings and additional student space. The university will work collaboratively with the Nipissing University Student Union (NUSU) to provide students with an enriching, holistic experience. Nipissing University has partnered with NUSU to develop plans for a state-of-the-art student center to be funded by the students.

Nipissing University has enhanced its student services and supports significantly over the past few years, including the development of an early warning system to ensure that students at risk receive appropriate assistance early — before a potential issue escalates — which will be implemented in the fall of 2017. These new initiatives are designed to help with the University’s overall retention strategy. Nipissing will be enhancing these systems over the next three years in order to provide additional assistance to students in distress.

Nipissing University undergraduate students are exposed to a wide variety of High-Impact Practices during their program of studies. Students have significant opportunities to participate in classroom discussions, to make presentations and have access to seminar courses. Undergraduate research is integrated into curriculum delivery, and the University has been organizing an Undergraduate Research Conference (URG) for the past ten years. In recent years, the URG has attracted student participants from other universities across Ontario.

Nipissing University students have access to many experiential learning opportunities, including work-integrated opportunities. Arts and Science programs, as well as professional programs such as Education, Nursing, and Social Work, all have significant work placements as part of the curriculum. The Faculty of Arts and Science has created practicum courses at the second, third and fourth year levels to allow students to participate in experiential activities and to provide students with exposure to their professions before they graduate.

## **Examples of Institutional Initiatives**

- 1) Biidaaban Community Service Learning (BCSL) plays an important role in providing experiential learning that meets community needs as well as professional opportunities with the Near North community.
- 2) Professional Day Workshops— The Faculties of Arts and Science, Education and Applied and Professional Studies, in collaboration with the student union, participate in annual professionalization workshops and panels that provide career guidance for students interested in pursuing careers outside academia.
- 3) International Learning Experiences – Our international learning experiences focus on rural communities and on culturally diverse locations. The University’s international placements and partnership with Free the Children encourage students to practise and synthesize their learning in diverse environments in Australia, Cameroon, China, Ecuador, Egypt, England, Germany, Italy, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico and the US.
- 4) NU SUCCESS— This is a three pronged retention strategy focusing on providing proactive support to students at the University. This includes the use of interactive voice response campaigns directed to students, the



initial launch and planned further enhancement of an online portal for faculty and staff to submit student concerns for follow up, and the launch of the “I (HEART) NU” program which provides opportunities for students to build their affinity with the University.

## Metrics and Targets

System-Wide Metrics	2019-20 Target
Proportion of fourth year students with two or more High-Impact Practices (HIPs) (from the National Survey of Student Engagement)	Target Range: 52-58%
Year 1 to Year 2 retention (from the Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange)	Target Range 80-86%
Proportion of operating expenditures on student services, net of student assistance (as reported in the Council of University Finance Officers data)	8.2%

Institutional Metrics	2019-20 Target
Percentage of NSSE Senior respondents with a response of "Excellent" or "Good" for question 18: How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?	86%
Percentage of NSSE senior respondents with a response of "Definitely yes" or "Probably yes" on question 19: If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?	82%
Percentage of CUSC Graduate Survey respondents with a response of "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied" for question 4: How satisfied are you with your decision to attend the university"?	92%

## 2.0 Innovation in Teaching and Learning Excellence

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*This section focuses on innovative efforts including pedagogical approaches, program delivery and student services that contribute to a highly skilled workforce and ensure positive student outcomes.*

*This section captures institutional strengths in delivering high-quality learning experiences, such as experiential, entrepreneurial, personalized and digital learning, to prepare students for rewarding careers. It includes recognition of student competencies that improve employability.*

*It begins to identify indicators of quality that are currently available and within an institution’s control.*

## **Institutional Approach to Innovation in Teaching and Learning Excellence**

As one of the Northern universities, Nipissing University is a leader in spearheading innovation in teaching and learning excellence. An important player in Education and Applied Studies, Nipissing has also developed niche strengths in the humanities, social sciences and science areas that advocate student-focused learning, integration of research at the undergraduate level and alternative learning methods via diverse modes of delivery — onsite, blended and online.

Nipissing University will continue to increase access to postsecondary education and support for students from small, non-urban communities across Ontario with a special focus on the north, including first-generation and Aboriginal learners. Nipissing University offers both professional and liberal arts and science programs at the undergraduate level, covering a range of disciplines. Programs are designed for flexible delivery with use of in-person, online, blended, summer residency and institutes to accommodate the needs of all students, including those in the workforce.

As the home university to many mature, first-generation students and students with a grade point average lower than the provincial average, Nipissing University prides itself on bolstering students' success through one-on-one engagement and alternative learning that takes into account students' diverse needs and backgrounds. The faculty at Nipissing provide individual and collective guidance and mentorship that assist students on their path to success. Mentorship, small classes and an engaged pedagogy that includes alternative modes of learning underpin Nipissing's teaching and learning methodologies. These emphasize innovation in teaching and learning excellence through:

- a. Expanding alternative learning modes of delivery, e.g., the Faculty of Arts and Science has doubled the number of online course offerings over the past two years;
- b. Blended learning opportunities, including: using a combination of onsite and online delivery modes; using Blackboard Collaborate to provide one-on-one engagement with students; and providing online writing support via academic writing service courses);
- c. Using electronic platforms and modules to enhance student experience. The university is engaged with eCampusOntario , exploring the University's potential growth of open content material/s to bolster students' access to learning;
- d. Fostering innovation – Nipissing University has been trailblazing new interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary programs that provide students with a wide range of learning opportunities, including experiential learning and a holistic approach to education;
- e. Responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action, Nipissing University is in the process of implementing new curriculum policies and initiatives to increase Indigenous content. The University is in the process of expanding its Native Studies faculty complement. It has also recently hired the Chair of Indigenous Education to facilitate the process of indigenization, a process with support from faculty, administration and community members. In this way we better prepare all students for their future professions working with Indigenous peoples and communities;
- f. Nipissing continues to develop unique online and onsite certificates to expand its educational reach and to

- include specific target groups that include part-time students, Aboriginal and adult learners;
- g. Nipissing University is innovative, both from the perspective of program design and the use of technology and social media as a learning resource. Nipissing strives to provide students with quality educational choices that include experiential, flexible, affordable and delivery-efficient program options;
  - h. Nipissing is implementing policies about experiential learning courses that vary from intensive condensed learning (i.e. summer institutes and practicals) to co-op and internship opportunities for which students receive regular credits.

## Examples of Institutional Initiatives

Beginning 15 years ago with the iTeach Program in the Schulich School of Education and now extending to the Faculty of Applied and Professional Studies (iLEAD) and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (Digital Humanities; Game Design and Development; and Digital Classics), Nipissing is committed to applying the latest technology, software applications and tools (e.g., PCs, Macs, iPads, applets, SMART Boards and Wii-Motes) to promote student achievement. Nipissing's graduates are technology-literate and well prepared with skills that make them sought-after employees. For example, graduates from Arts and Science programs such as Computer Science, English Studies and Fine and Performing Arts are sought out by local businesses, specifically FDM4, as a high-quality workforce.

Nipissing will grow and support student access to education through flexible and innovative programming and applied degrees that capitalize on multiple college partnerships, cross-sector partnerships (e.g. with health care organizations, local adult literacy groups, etc.), diploma/degree completion strategies that involve laddering opportunities (modules/certificates/diploma/ degree/Masters/PhD); blended learning and online models of delivery and access; credit transfer recognition; and relevant student placement opportunities.

Student surveys, such as the NSSE and CUSC, demonstrate that students value their experience at Nipissing University. For example, in the NSSE survey, first-year Nipissing students rated their educational experience on average 3.37 out of 4.00 compared to the Ontario average of 3.11. On the key CUSC-CCREU question regarding satisfaction with their decision to attend their university, 97.2 per cent of Nipissing student stated they were satisfied or very satisfied with their decision, compared to the Canadian average of 93.2 per cent.

Nipissing University undergraduate students are exposed to a wide variety of High Impact Practices during their program of studies. Students have significant opportunities to participate in classroom discussions and to make presentations, and they have access to seminar courses. Undergraduate research is integrated into curriculum delivery, and the University has been organizing an Undergraduate Research Conference (URG) for the past ten years. In recent years, the URG has attracted student participants from other universities across Ontario.

Nipissing University students have access to many experiential learning opportunities, including work-integrated learning opportunities. Professional programs such as Education, Nursing and Social Work all have significant work placements as part of the curriculum. The Faculty of Arts and Science has created practicum courses at the second, third and fourth year levels to allow students to participate in experiential activities.

The Schulich Teaching Fellow Awards honour faculty members who represent outstanding achievement in teaching at Nipissing University. Schulich Fellows commit to working with colleagues to increase teaching excellence across faculties and are engaged in developing innovative learning materials to share with others.

Additional examples of institutional initiatives include:

- 1) iLEAD in the School of Business – The iLEAD Business Experience Certificate is a unique way to **Learn through Experience, Action and Discovery**. It offers Business students the opportunity to earn credits toward their degree through directed study, honours thesis, workplace internships, overseas study and service to others, all in an effort to provide “More than Just a Degree.”
- 2) Scholar Practitioner Program (SPP) – Launched in 2011, the SPP is offered in partnership with three of Canada’s leading Academic Health Centres (the University Health Network, Hospital for Sick Children, and Toronto Public Health). This intensive two-year, six-semester program is open to students who already have a degree in any field of study, and it provides a unique and accelerated path to graduation and Nursing credentials. This advanced apprenticeship model of education is designed to provide a rich academic learning experience that maximizes resources, allowing students to work and learn in a variety of health care settings, receive hands-on, practical experience and direct their own learning with support from qualified nursing academics. The program includes an e-portfolio that plays an essential role in the process of narrative inquiry and building evidence-based scholarly practice and ensures understanding of core program learning outcomes.
- 3) Canadore College Collaboration: Nipissing University has developed a number of fully integrated program offerings with Canadore College whereby students can obtain a Bachelor’s degree from Nipissing as well as a diploma from Canadore. These programs are: Criminal Justice (Nipissing) and Foundations of Policing (Canadore); Social Welfare and Development (Nipissing) and Social Services Worker (Canadore); and Science (Nipissing) and Environmental Technologies (Canadore).
- 4) The university is also spearheading pathways with colleges to expand its curriculum offerings as well as to complement students’ increasing demand for education that combines theory with practice. Nipissing’s recent pathway with the Toronto Film School taps into the growing potential of the film industry in North Bay, connecting with the City of North Bay and the Near North Media Lab. The connection to the film production/media industry provides Nipissing students with a unique opportunity to combine their academic interests with professional aspirations. We are currently working with Canadore College to explore pathways into a new Media Studies Program which is still in its development stage.

## Metrics and Targets

System-Wide Metrics	2019-20 Target
Composite score on National Survey of Student Engagement questions related to students' perceived gains in higher order learning outcomes	Target Range: 27 – 29 and better than average of Ontario Peer Group (Lakehead, Laurentian, Trent & UOIT)
Proportion of programs with explicit curriculum maps and articulation of learning outcomes	Target Range: 85% - 90%
Graduation rate (from the Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange)	Target Range: 63.5% - 72%

Institutional Metrics	2019-20 Target
Community based learning/research initiatives and student participation	TBD as tracking system needs to be created
Composite score of NSSE senior respondents on the engagement indicator: Reflective and Integrative Learning	38.4 and better than average of Ontario Peer Group (Lakehead, Laurentian, Trent and UOIT)

## 3.0 Access and Equity

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*This section recognizes institutions for their efforts in improving postsecondary education equity and access. Institutions play an important role in providing equitable and inclusive environments that make it possible for students from diverse communities to thrive and succeed.*

*Institutions will also be recognized for creating equitable access opportunities that can include multiple entrance pathways and flexible policies and programming, with the focus on students who, without interventions and support, would not otherwise participate in postsecondary education. Examples include outreach to marginalized youth, transition, bridging and access programs for adults with atypical education histories and who do not meet admission requirements.*

## **Institutional Approach to Improving Access and Equity**

Nipissing University will continue to increase access to postsecondary education and support for students from small, non-urban communities across Ontario with a special focus on the north, including first-generation and Aboriginal learners.

Nipissing has a large percentage of female (72 per cent), first-generation (10 per cent) and Aboriginal (10 per cent) students, as well as students following non-traditional pathways (e.g., college transfers, professionals and mature students) who want flexibility and just-in-time learning options (over 8,800 online, correspondence and blended registrations annually). Nipissing University's philosophy reflects a friendly, safe, personalized student experience, with meaningful access to student service supports and faculty who actively engage undergraduate students in their research – one element that differentiates the Nipissing undergraduate experience from others.

To facilitate the transition of Indigenous learners into postsecondary studies, Nipissing's Office of Indigenous Initiatives is collaborating with the Faculty of Arts and Science on the Aboriginal Advantage Program. It supports a cohort of Indigenous learners, providing them with ample academic, cultural and personal supports to complete 24 credits with the goals of successful transition and retention. The cohort approach allows students to build support networks with their peers during the program that extend beyond their successful completion of the academic year. The Office of Indigenous Initiatives actively facilitates a deep sense of community through cultural belonging, peer-to-peer mentorship, experiential learning and intergenerational programming with Elders in Residence. The program courses are focused on transition to university and establishing strong writing skills in the first year. Currently, one course focuses on leadership with a strong cultural component that incorporates Indigenous pedagogical approaches. Future directions for the Aboriginal Advantage Program include relationships with the Faculty of Applied and Professional Studies to build pathways to these fields for Indigenous students. Nipissing is working with Kenjgewin Teg Educational Institute on Manitoulin Island and the Mushkegowuk Council in James Bay on pilot projects for the delivery of courses in First Nations communities, allowing students to remain in their communities while studying. Currently, Nipissing's Schulich School of Education is partnering with the Bimose Tribal Council in Kenora on community-based delivery of the Aboriginal Classroom Assistant Diploma Program in their region for Indigenous learners.

The choice of new programs to be developed is shaped in part by the needs of the community. One of Nipissing's objectives is the development of programs and initiatives that support First Nations. Over time, Nipissing has built and strengthened relationships with First Nations and urban Indigenous communities, a critical approach to regional development in Northern Ontario. The Nipissing University Aboriginal Council on Education (NUACE) is consulted in the development of programs and initiatives that impact Indigenous peoples and communities, as NUACE members are well-situated to identify regional needs. The NUACE has also approved two Aboriginal Strategic Plans to guide priorities for the university to support Indigenous learners. Among the programs currently in development are programs in the area of Aboriginal Education as well as Aboriginal Governance/Public Administration, Rural Nursing (with a focus on Aboriginal Nursing), Indigenous Archaeology, Environmental Geoscience, Human Rights and State Violence and Social Work.

In addition to Indigenous student success programming, the Office of Indigenous Initiatives offers exceptional experiential learning opportunities through our programming that impact Nipissing University students as well as First Nation, Métis and Inuit youth in the local community, including students at Nipissing First Nation. Biidaaban Community Service-Learning (BSCL) is a curricular/co-curricular, experiential learning opportunity offered in collaboration with faculty members, community organizations and Nipissing University students. A specialized focus of BCSL is support for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students in K-12 in the local school boards and at Nipissing Secondary School on Nipissing First Nation through classroom support and Biidaaban After School Homework Support programs. The university students who participate in BCSL are primarily non-Indigenous and there is a strong cultural awareness component to the program, broadening their understanding of Aboriginal communities and peoples. On average, 100 Nipissing University students participate in BCSL annually for thousands of volunteer hours with 45 community partners locally and at Nipissing First Nation.

The university is pursuing a partnership with the Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of Canada (AFOA Canada) to provide educational opportunities for Aboriginal public administration professionals. The University has held discussions with both the CEO (Terry Goodtrack) and the Director of Training (Dr. Paulette Tremblay) regarding both the delivery of online courses as part of their certification programs as well as transfer agreements to enable the graduates of their certification programs to complete a university degree from Nipissing.

Nipissing University has a very high number of students (405) transferring in from community colleges or participating in joint programs with community colleges. It offers a fully integrated BScN with Canadore College. Nipissing has also partnered with a number of community colleges to offer a degree completion pathway for college graduates wishing to complete a Bachelor of Commerce or a Bachelor of Business Administration degree. Nipissing has also partnered with Canadore College to enable students to complete both a university degree and a college diploma in the areas of Criminal Justice as well as Social Welfare. Articulation agreements are also in place for college transfers in most university programs. ]

## Examples of Institutional Initiatives

- **Aboriginal Advantage Program:** This transition program for Indigenous learners provides an access point to university studies with ample academic, cultural and personal support. With the help of a team of Elders, staff, faculty and a Student Success Coach, the Aboriginal Advantage program provides supports that wrap around the student and facilitate student success. It supports Ontario's goal of a 70 per cent postsecondary attainment rate.
- **Wiidooktaadwin Indigenous Mentorship Initiatives:** Through experiential learning opportunities framed with strong cultural support by Elders and community knowledge keepers, upper-year Indigenous students at Nipissing University volunteer to mentor First Nation, Metis and Inuit students in grades 9-12 in local schools. In 2016-2017 twenty Indigenous university students mentored 95 Indigenous youth in local secondary schools, and we hosted 160 Indigenous youth on campus for Aasgaabwitaadwin, Nipissing

University’s Indigenous Youth Leadership Conference. Mentorship builds a sense of community for all participants and peer mentor relationships are significant contributors to Indigenous student success. In 2011, Nipissing’s Aboriginal Student Links program (a precursor to WIMi) won a Martin Aboriginal Education Initiative Award from the Change-makers Initiative of Ashoka Canada.

- **RPN to BScN:** Nipissing enables college-trained RPNs to complete a BScN through a fully online RPN to BScN degree, the only such program in the province. With approximately 1,000 learners throughout the province, and partnerships with over 300 healthcare facilities, this allows RPNs to complete their nursing degree while maintaining their employment and with limited disruption to their family lives. Most of these learners are mature students with family commitments. Without this program, these learners would not have access to this type of professional development and career enhancement.
- **Scholar Practitioner Program:** The SPP is a fully accredited, highly innovative second degree entry program that accepts qualified students with a university-level degree. The program is targeted at individuals who already hold a university degree and wish to move into the healthcare sector in the field of nursing. This program is designed as an apprenticeship that is primarily delivered in the healthcare sector in downtown Toronto with three partner institutions — University Health Network (UHN), SickKids and Toronto Public Health. The program will be partnering with the Michener Institute at UHN to provide a practical program that utilizes high-quality simulation resources in the three institutions and the Michener Institute.
- **Summer Institutes:** The Faculty of Arts and Science offers condensed two-week institutes in the spring/summer that combine academic content with experiential learning. The diverse modes of delivery (online, blended and onsite) provide students with opportunities to opt for a learning style that best addresses their needs and gives them the flexibility to condense their studies within a relatively short period of time. This year, one of the Summer Institutes took students to Poland to examine war heritage sites. The Institute combines theory with experiential learning, providing students with an opportunity to learn on both a national and an international scale.

## Metrics and Targets

System-Wide Metrics	2019-20 Expected Value
<i>Number and proportion of the following groups at an institution:</i>	
Indigenous students	10% (240 students)
First generation students	10% (350 students)
Students with disabilities	10% (410 students)
Francophone students	2% (80 students)



Share of OSAP recipients at an institution relative to its total number of eligible students	66-70%
Number of transfer applicants and registrations, as captured by the Ontario University Application Centre	220-240 students. Transfer students representing 20% of incoming class

Institutional Metrics	2019-20 Target
Number of students registered in an integrated college/university program	8% of student population

## 4.0 Research Excellence and Impact

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*This section captures institutional strengths in producing high-quality research on the continuum of fundamental and applied research through activity that further raises Ontario's profile as a globally recognized research and innovation hub. It also acknowledges that research capacity is strongly linked with graduate education.*

### **Institutional Approach to Research Excellence and Impact**

Undergraduate programs that offer honours specialization (e.g., English, History, Sociology, Psychology, Mathematics, Computer Science, Biology, Classical Studies, Environmental Geography, etc.) engage students in research, providing them with unique scholarly opportunities that prepare them for graduate studies and/or research-oriented careers. Nipissing is one of only a few universities to engage students in research at a very early stage of the undergraduate curriculum.

Complementing its undergraduate programs, Nipissing University has a strong research culture, demonstrated by the fact that its faculty have an impressive publication record and obtain peer-reviewed research grants as well as government and industry funding. Moreover, the University has been allocated four Canada Research Chairs and faculty have won research awards/distinctions at the national and international levels. Faculty's research success justifies the development of a select number of graduate programs in areas of research strength and relevance to Nipissing's mission. These include a PhD program in Educational Sustainability and Masters programs in Education, History, Environmental Science/Studies, Mathematics Sociology and Kinesiology. Over the next five years, Nipissing anticipates the creation of three to five new Masters level graduate programs.

Nipissing researchers are working with industry associations to facilitate development of the region. In partnership with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and local farmers, Nipissing researchers have been

undertaking important research to help enhance the viability of the farming industry in northern Ontario. Other researchers are involved in an initiative to enhance the environmental viability of Lake Nipissing, an initiative spearheaded by the City of North Bay and Nipissing First Nation.

Nipissing University professors have been receiving an increasing total dollar amount and number of grants as the university matures and starts to develop graduate programs. Nipissing University researchers received \$1,459,853 in external funding in 2011-2012. This increased substantially in 2016-2017 when external funding totalled \$2,053,069. Peer-reviewed Tri-Council (Canadian Institutes of Health Research [CIHR], Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council [NSERC] and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council [SSHRC]) research grants are a critical component to establishing a sustainable research culture at Nipissing University. Nipissing has experienced past success with NSERC and SSHRC. With new tenure track hires and research clusters being developed on campus, researchers have experienced recent success with CIHR, resulting in Nipissing now able to host CIHR grants. Since 2011-2012, Tri-Council funding has increased by 47 per cent, with the most rapid gains happening in 2012-2013. Since that time, Nipissing researchers have sustained annual Tri-Council funding at approximately \$500,000.

In the most recent competition, Nipissing researchers matched the national average for success in SSHRC funding, at 42 per cent. In addition, the amount of the awards was significant (approximately \$200,000). The results for recent NSERC competition were not as positive, with only one discovery grant and one Conditional Discovery Development Grant being secured. The Office of Graduate Studies and Research is in the process of developing a peer mentoring system to help increase the number of grant submissions and success rate. Nipissing University recognizes the importance of Tri-Council grants and is committed to supporting all researchers in applying for external funding.

With the increase in research funding, Nipissing University has committed to providing space for new and emerging scholars to conduct their research. The laboratories in the Centre for Physical and Health Education and the newly established Social Neuroendocrinology Laboratory are two examples of Nipissing University's commitment to research and scholarly activity. Nipissing University has four Tier II Canada Research Chairs who serve as mentors and contribute greatly to establishing a strong research culture. Their areas of research are diverse and span issues locally, regionally, nationally and globally.

## **Examples of Institutional Initiatives**

- Summit to Discuss Unified Vision for Lake Nipissing: Area leaders, Nipissing First Nations and community members came to Nipissing University in April 2012 with a common interest to share concerns and gain a better understanding of the issues facing Lake Nipissing at the Lake Nipissing Summit. The presentations from experts and researchers in the field provided the impetus that resulted in a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed by all mayors of communities bordering the lake, including the mayor of Nipissing First Nation.

- Research Laboratories to Support Regional Priorities in Health and Wellness: Nipissing is currently expanding its facilities to add research laboratories to facilitate the many clinical and health-related research initiatives involving faculty and students, experts at the North Bay Regional Health Centre, One Kids Place Children’s Treatment Centre, the OPP and other regional health and social service agencies and sports organizations. Undergraduates interested in becoming highly qualified personnel work with researchers on applied research projects.
- Undergraduate Research Conference (URG): Nipissing’s annual URG celebrates the contributions of undergraduate research at Nipissing University and at other institutions across Ontario. It provides an opportunity for students to present their research and to engage in scholarly debate. Students are invited to present an original poster, make an oral presentation of a paper or make a panel presentation of a series of related papers. In 2017, over 100 students presented at the conference. Over 40 faculty and graduate students volunteer for the conference.
- Centre for Interdisciplinary Collaboration in the Arts and Sciences (CICAS): CICAS has been working closely with SSHRC to provide feedback on Near North institutions and the support necessary to provide and implement interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research hubs. The Director of CICAS led a multidisciplinary workshop at the SSHRC Leaders’ Plenary in 2017. Nipissing’s participation and leadership in this workshop will help expand Nipissing’s Near North research agenda and raise awareness about the kind of supports needed from the Tri-Council Research agencies.]

**Metrics and Targets**

<b>System-Wide Metrics</b>	<b>2019-20 Target</b>
Tri-council funding (total and share by council)	Target Range: 0.12% - 0.13%
Number of papers (total and per full-time faculty)	Target Range: 0.47% - 0.52%
Number of citations (total and per paper)	Target Range: 3.5 – 3.85

<b>Institutional Metrics</b>	<b>2019-20 Target</b>
Number of graduate degree awarded (Highly Qualified Personnel)	Target Range: 75 - 100
Tri-council funding per university faculty (eligible for tri-council funding)	Range: \$4,200 – \$4,400

# 5.0 Innovation, Economic Development and Community Engagement

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*This section recognizes the unique role institutions play in contributing to their communities and to economic development, as well as to building dynamic partnerships with business, industry, community members and other colleges and universities. It focuses on regional clusters, customized training, entrepreneurial activities, jobs, community revitalization efforts, international collaborations, students, partnerships with Aboriginal Institutes and a program mix that meets needs locally, regionally and beyond.*

## **Institutional Approach to Innovation, Economic Development and Community Engagement**

As stated in the Nipissing University Act, Nipissing was created to address the needs of northern Ontario. Although Nipissing University is not unique in this regard, this additional regional mission has an impact on the specific objectives of the institution and the decisions it makes in the pursuit of those objectives. Nipissing recognizes that it has a role to play in the economic, social and cultural development of northern Ontario. Nipissing works closely with the City of North Bay and other municipalities in the region, including First Nations communities. Nipissing University offers a number of professional programs such as Education, Nursing, Social Work and Business which prepare graduates to enter those professional fields.

Nipissing University also collaborates with various local communities and industry sectors to foster economic development. Nipissing University professors have undertaken research in collaboration with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the agricultural sector to enhance productivity. Others have collaborated with Nipissing First Nations and local municipalities to work on Lake Nipissing environmental and fishing issues. Nipissing University's School of Business will collaborate on a local incubation centre proposal. The university is also involved in a Biomass Innovation Centre project involving its School of Business and local industry.

Although most of Nipissing's programs make positive contributions to its local community as well as to First Nations communities, some of its programs and initiatives contribute to the development of other communities throughout the province, especially smaller communities.

The Nipissing University Student Union is very active in the community. NUSU collaborates with various community organizations to provide funding and resources to advance worthy causes. NUSU has also been very active with the local police service to develop awareness of sexual violence issues. |

## Examples of Institutional Initiatives

1. Nipissing is partnering with Oshki-Pimache-O-Win Education and Training Institute to offer a community-based Aboriginal Classroom Assistant Diploma program.
2. Agriculture Research Project in Northern Ontario (Interdisciplinary focus): A team of researchers and students from Nipissing’s Geography, Computer Science and Mathematics departments, together with researchers from Agriculture and Agri-Foods Canada (AAFC), are conducting field work as part of the ongoing crop research project using remote sensing and environmental monitoring to increase agricultural productivity in Northern Ontario.
3. The Arts and Science faculty is working closely with the City of North Bay on a pathway that will connect film producers interested in North Bay film projects and cater to the needs of the film industry by providing courses in screen writing, film analysis, digital and film production as Summer Institutes, standalone certificates and/or non-credit continuing education.

## Metrics and Targets

System-Wide Metrics	2019-20 Target
Graduate employment rates	At least 90% and 1% higher than ON average (2 Year)  At least 85% and 2% higher than ON average (6 months)
Number of graduates employed full time in a related job	Target Range: 90% - 92%

Institutional Metrics	2019-20 Target
Number of Indigenous community partners	15

# 6.0 Enrolment Strategy and Program Direction

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## Enrolment Plan and Corridor Midpoints

*This section also establishes the agreed-upon corridor midpoint that will form the basis of enrolment-related funding over the course of the SMA period.*

### Corridor Midpoint

For funding purposes **7,874.74** Weighted Grant Units (WGU) will be the corridor midpoint value for Nipissing University. This value was determined using the institution's actual enrolment (expressed as WGUs) from the 2016-17 academic year. Nipissing University will receive funding consistent with this level of enrolment and subject to the policies contained within the *Ontario University Funding Model Technical Manual, May 2017, Version 1.0*.

### Projected Funding-Eligible Undergraduate Enrolments

*Below is the institutions projected enrolment of funding-eligible undergraduate enrolments for Nipissing University.*

	Projected 2017-18	Projected 2018-19	Projected 2019-20
<b>Undergraduate Full-time Headcounts</b>	2,730	2,750	2,890

*Note – for this table, Full-time Headcount should be reported for fall term only.*

### Graduate Allocation – SMA 2017-2020

*Below are the allocation of funding eligible graduate and PhD spaces for Nipissing University*

	Target 2017-18	Target 2018-19	Target 2019-20
<b>Masters</b>	96	125	136
<b>PhD</b>	30	30	30
<b>Total</b>	126	155	166

*Note – allocations shown in FTEs*

## Projected International Enrolment

Below is the institutions projected enrolment of funding-eligible undergraduate enrolments for the Nipissing University.

	Projected 2017-18	Projected 2018-19	Projected 2019-20
<b>Undergraduate</b> Full-time Headcounts	25	30	40
<b>Masters</b> Full-time Headcounts	1	2	2
<b>Doctoral</b> Full-time Headcounts	1	2	3
<b>Total Enrolment</b> Full-time Headcounts	27	34	45

*Note: International enrolments include all funding ineligible international students.*

## International Enrolment Strategy and Collaboration

Nipissing University currently has few international students, except for students on exchange from one of its numerous international partner institutions. For both sustainability as well as diversity goals, the university has set a goal to increase international enrolments. The long-term goal is to increase the number of international students to between 300 and 400 students, representing approximately six per cent to eight per cent of Nipissing's total student population. The short to medium term goal (over the next five years) is to recruit 150 to 200 international students, particularly in programs with capacity to grow.

In terms of managing risks, the University will focus its efforts on a number of international markets. The University Senate has recently revised the University's English Language Proficiency policy, and the University has entered into negotiations with a partner to provide English Second Language training on campus.

## **Strategic Areas of Program Strength and Expansion**

### **Program Areas of Strength**

1. Humanities and Liberal Arts
2. Environmental Studies/Biology
3. Nursing
4. Education
5. Criminal Justice
6. Bachelor of Physical and Health Education
7. Social Work
8. Administration/Management

The proposed areas of program strength are intended to inform program approval processes.

### **Program Areas of Expansion**

1. Native Studies
2. Digital Humanities
3. Data Science
4. Nursing – new programming will focus on rural, Aboriginal and Northern contexts
5. Education
6. Social Work
7. Administration/Management– focus on experiential learning, social innovation and SMEs
8. Criminal Justice



# Financial Sustainability

*The Ministry and the University recognize that financial sustainability and accountability are critical to achieving institutional mandates and realizing Ontario’s vision for the postsecondary education system. To this end, it is agreed that:*

*It is the responsibility of the governing board and senior administrators of the University to identify, track, and address financial pressures and sustainability issues. At the same time, the Ministry has a financial stewardship role. The Ministry and the University agree to work collaboratively to achieve the common goal of financial sustainability and to ensure that Ontarians have access to a full range of affordable, high-quality postsecondary education options, now and in the future.*

*The University remains accountable to the Ministry with respect to effective and efficient use of provincial government resources and student resources covered by policy directives of the Ministry, or decisions impacting upon these, to maximize the value and impact of investments made in the postsecondary education system.*

<b>System-wide Metrics</b>	<b>2015-16 Actuals</b>
• Net Income / (Loss) Ratio	(2.31%)
• Net Operating Revenues Ratio	4.34%
• Primary Reserve Ratio	15 days
• Interest Burden Ratio	2.40%
• Viability Ratio	0.09

# 7.0 Institutional Collaborations and Partnerships

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Nipissing University is a leader in the development of partnerships. It is currently partnering with Canadore College for the delivery of collaborative programs in Nursing and Criminal Justice, and is sharing a campus, human resources and space. The sharing of a campus benefits both partners in terms of efficiencies and the reduced cost of some support services. Nipissing also partners with many colleges throughout the province for the delivery of degree-completion pathways, enabling college graduates of a three-year diploma to complete a Bachelor of Commerce in three consecutive semesters. Through the use of flexible teaching and learning strategies, students are able to complete the degree where they completed their college diploma. The School of Nursing has over 300 partners throughout the province for the RPN to BScN degree program as well as an experiential second-degree entry program in partnership with three leading academic health care centers in Toronto.

Recently, Nipissing developed a new pathway with the Toronto Film School. The pathway responds to North Bay's and the Near North region's growing film industry.

Nipissing University has over 50 partners throughout Ontario for its BEd program. Its Criminal Justice program partners with various police and correctional agencies throughout the province and does research for both the federal and provincial governments. Moreover, Nipissing partners with many Aboriginal communities.

Overall, the proportion of Nipissing students involved in either a collaborative/partnership program offering or transfer arrangement in 2013-2014 was between 30 per cent and 40 per cent of its student population. Nipissing University intends to continue to develop these collaborations and partnerships and to lead in the area of collaboration and partnership

## 8.0 Ministry/Government Commitments

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- The SMA2 process has focused on implementing the first stages of the new funding model and demonstrating the ongoing commitment by all colleges and universities to student success. Future growth will only be funded through negotiated changes to an institution's funded enrolment corridor. Through the SMA2 cycle, the ministry will continue to work closely with institutions to ensure all dimensions of the funding model are implemented.
- In a memo to colleges and universities dated March 7, 2017, the ministry committed to using the SMA2 (2017-20) process as a transitional phase to commence the collaborative and joint development of performance metrics and targets, tied to funding, for SMA3 (2020-23). The ministry reiterates this commitment and reaffirms that metrics and targets included in SMA2 are not tied to funding at this time and are a beginning point for further discussions with the sector prior to their application in SMA3. Colleges and universities will have the opportunity to reset and realign metrics prior to the application of metrics in SMA3. The ministry will also engage other stakeholders as part of discussions on a broad metrics strategy.
  - The ministry commits to establishing a joint working group with each of the sectors and to begin detailed discussions in fall 2017 on metrics/targets and to seek input on the performance measurement methodology for SMA3.
- Colleges, universities and the ministry all benefit from processes that are transparent and non-duplicative. The ministry commits to work with colleges and universities to continue to streamline processes and seek opportunities to further reduce red tape (in part through increased access to other tools), including reducing or eliminating duplicated reporting requirements.
- Through SMA2 discussions, the ministry has heard concerns about the challenges of delivering breadth in programming for Francophone and Francophile students, including the cost and funding of such delivery. Starting in fall 2017, the ministry commits to consulting institutions who have a formal mandate for bilingual and/or French-language delivery to review the delivery of French-Language programming and consider these concerns.
- In 2016, an extension of the existing tuition policy framework was announced to support a major reform in OSAP. The ministry will engage with both the college and university sectors around the next tuition policy framework, including examining the issue of tuition anomalies in certain professional programs as a result of past changes to tuition policy, and, for colleges, examining tuition levels relative to competitive college tuition frameworks in Canada.
- In recent years and during the SMA process, there has been an increased interest in the creation of a new polytechnic designation in the Ontario postsecondary education system. Starting in fall 2017, the ministry commits to undertake a review that examines whether improved benefits for students and employers are sufficient to make such a change. The ministry commits to working collaboratively with institutions across the sectors on this review.
- The ministry commits to continue to work collaboratively with universities to assess the anticipated need for additional graduate spaces related to programs that are currently under development.

- Starting in fall 2017, the ministry commits to undertake a review of the university Northern Grant working collaboratively with universities to examine whether the criteria for access and allocations of the Northern Grant represent an equitable approach.