

# TURNING THE DIAL 2.0 (vs. flipping the switch)

A RENEWED FRAME TO SUPPORT A PACED AND CAREFULLY STAGED TRANSITION AS ALBERTA RE-OPENS SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF INCREASING LEVELS OF VACCINATIONS, AND THE HOPEFUL LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT OF COVID-19 (OUR “NEW NORMAL”)

June 7, 2021

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*NAIT must prepare our workforce, students, industry partners as well as our facilities and technology for a carefully staged transition as Alberta gradually re-opens.*

*We use the term “transition” to describe our continued movement towards a new normal at NAIT, building on the learnings from the past many months, and recognizing that while signs are exceedingly positive, the pandemic is not yet behind us.*

*This continues our careful turn of the dial, not a quick flip of the switch, recognizing the 2021/22 academic year as one of transition.*

*As we do this work, we will use a both/and approach to respond to the evolution of COVID-19 while **at the same time** anticipating how we will continue to enhance and evolve polytechnic education and industry solutions, and the support areas that serve both, once COVID-19 is no longer at the centre of our decision making.*

*Foundational to our work is a technology-enabled mindset and a continued commitment to excellence, in keeping with our renewed vision.*

*This is about a continued, safe and intentional recovery for our NAIT community, and how to increase organizational resiliency for our polytechnic education and industry solutions. Over these past months, NAIT has adapted and learned to operate under a “new normal for now” approach. Overall, things were different. In the longer term, once COVID-19 is no longer a hazard, NAIT will shift from “new normal for now” to a truly “new normal,” building on all we’ve learned through our response to the pandemic.*

*As we have done since the start of the pandemic, NAIT will prioritize the health and safety of our community as we now plan for increased activities on campus.*

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*In our decisions and actions, we will continue to protect and preserve the trust we have earned from learners, staff, industry, government and other stakeholders. This trust is the foundation of our four promises – to learners, staff, industry, and Alberta.*

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## HOW THIS DOCUMENT IS ORGANIZED

This document is organized into five sections.

### **1. FUTURE-FOCUSED GUIDING STATEMENTS**

We have created guiding statements for our two core mandates of polytechnic education and industry solutions. We have also created a guiding statement for the support areas that serve each. These statements are intended to serve as guideposts for the future. They provide future-focused direction to help guide decisions.

### **2. OBJECTIVES FOR TRANSITION**

We have identified a number of objectives for our transition. These objectives must be accomplished with a view towards our long-term future, understanding the transitional nature of the 2021/22 academic year. In our work, the intent is to guide action as NAIT responds to Alberta's gradual re-opening. Our objectives will evolve as Alberta's context evolves, and as we learn what works and what doesn't.

### **3. PRINCIPLES**

We have created a set of principles to guide decision making. These principles represent what we believe. We must apply our principles to our transition decisions, recognizing there may be a need to pivot if the pandemic continues in unexpected ways.

### **4. PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS**

We have created a set of assumptions to guide decision making. These assumptions represent our current understanding of the context of COVID-19 and Alberta's re-opening. Our assumptions will evolve as Alberta's context evolves and as we learn what works and what doesn't.

### **5. EMPOWERMENT, ACTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

We intend to rely on a structure that encourages a nimble adaptive approach to a paced, carefully staged transition of NAIT activities as Alberta gradually re-opens, learning from the success of the past many months. We continue to build on lessons learned through our rapid campus closure and subsequent relaunch, and will use a similar approach to empower leaders and teams to determine what is and what is not possible as Alberta gradually reopens.

## 1. OUR FUTURE-FOCUSED GUIDING STATEMENTS

*We have created guiding statements for our two core mandates of polytechnic education and industry solutions. We have also created a guiding statement for the support areas that serve each. These statements are intended to serve as guideposts for the future. They provide future-focused direction to help guide decisions as we transition.*

### POLYTECHNIC EDUCATION GUIDING STATEMENT

NAIT provides education and learner supports across the entire career span of a learner. NAIT learners achieve a first, second, or sometimes even third credential to launch or change a career. They also come to NAIT for mid-career professional education to stay at the leading edge of their professional/work practice and industry change.

NAIT's future depends on our ability to create a unique brand of polytechnic education that combines technology-enhanced *and* traditional approaches for every educational program and student support at NAIT.

Our future also depends on our ability to fundamentally shift the way we use technology in support of the entire student progression funnel – from our first connections with students, to the ways we offer education and support the achievement of student learning goals, to our continued connections with students as alumni and returning learners. In this work, we must dramatically improve our ability to connect and share resources and capabilities across all parts of NAIT.

As an institute of technology, we must embrace the rapidly advancing virtual world. At the same time, we remain committed to our polytechnic differentiators including deep industry involvement, experiential learning, and close connections between students and instructors. We believe we remain true to our polytechnic roots while, at the same time, stepping more fully into the virtual world as we educate and support students on their journey towards career success.

Ours is not a vision to move fully from the physical to the virtual. It is not a vision to move from instructor-supported to fully independent learning. It is a vision to blend the physical and the virtual in ways that provide strong supports to students and better prepares them for an evolving world.

We will offer the physical, hands-on learning that has always been foundational to a NAIT education, and we will blend this with highly engaging education that students can participate in at a distance using a combination of instructor-supported and independent learning. Our learners will feel strongly connected to their instructors, their programs, and NAIT staff, regardless of whether education and services are being offered physically, virtually, or a combination of both.

A NAIT education prepares students to succeed “out there” with the business and industry skills they need. More than ever, this includes developing skills related to the virtual world. This skill development must begin with how students experience their time at NAIT.

### INDUSTRY SOLUTIONS GUIDING STATEMENT

The phased and planned approach to relaunching post March 2020 shutdown has helped Industry Solutions evolve. Though not each line of business has performed well financially during COVID-19 restrictions, the challenges we faced have shaped our business to be leaner, more focused, and in step with the industry clients we serve. As we look to the future, we reaffirm our commitment to iterating and shaping our business to best serve our clients and empower our staff.

Our targeted investments in market research, sales enablement and product development are showing positive initial returns by building stronger business intelligence and guiding data-driven decision making that shapes our longer-term strategic plan. We will stay current with the changing global trends, especially related to the supply chains of our clients and the lasting acceleration to digital adoption that is driving industry needs around new skills and training. We will quantify as much as we can with available information while recognizing the need to iterate as more complete information becomes available. We must stay abreast of potential federal and provincial funding and incentive programs related to reskilling our workforce to support our communities and industries in Alberta.

Deep insights and connection points with our current and prospective clients are critical. We have seen the importance of up-to-date, easily accessible client records. We experienced many challenges without a central repository of quality client information. We continue to invest in accelerating our efforts to fully embrace a technology-enabled solution to customer relationship management.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to update some of our business models, particularly those focused on reskilling and upskilling. We have fully embraced strategic staffing approaches (using internal and external secondments, talent exchanges, selling agents etc.) and business models that allow for better contraction and expansion relative to business cycles. We continue to structure ourselves to be more resilient to global shocks and allow us to develop and grow business remotely with solutions planned and delivered in alternate forms (versus having a heavy reliance on face-to-face delivery).

There will be a continued focus on our researchers helping to solve the greatest societal and economic needs of our province and our industry partners with a focus on Energy, Environment, and Sustainable Development. We will remain focused on identifying and building on our core strengths, unique abilities, assets and technical expertise. We will invest in and develop what we do best and divest or partner with the rest.

We will measure and manage our efforts. We will share and repurpose our resources and assets to ensure our greatest needs are met.

We will approach our work always keeping our clients at the centre. We will empower and inspire our staff so they can bring enthusiasm, creativity, discipline, innovation and collaboration to our work. Flexible, agile and adaptable working environments will be embedded in our core.

Our business continuity plans will be built and refined so that we better respond to the next crisis.

## SUPPORT AREAS GUIDING STATEMENT

Many areas across NAIT support the ability of the institute to achieve objectives within our two main lines of business: polytechnic education and industry solutions.

All support areas will firmly align with the priorities of the polytechnic education and industry solutions areas to drive the desired academic and business outcomes. This will require all involved to stretch and strengthen their skills, with leadership that points the way to a dynamic new environment of close collaboration and trust.

Foundational to everything NAIT does is its people, principally our staff. As we increase our on-campus presence, we will do so with an altered culture and with fewer people due to our intentional transformation planning. With this in mind, we will elevate the importance of creating operational efficiencies through an adoption of agile principles and practices – and an ongoing investment in automated technology and applications that will help to reduce the heavy reliance that currently exists on staff. As strategies become more data-driven this will

also reduce the pressure on people and elevate the importance of thoughtful, distributed work practices. Human Resources, with an enhanced approach to strategic HR practices, will support both shifting the culture and ensuring strategic HR decisions are made.

NAIT support areas come in many forms. First are those supports that are very close to front-line service delivery to customers, such as ensuring facilities are operated and maintained effectively, classrooms are appropriate and contain appropriate technology, and that staffing is appropriate for service delivery.

Second are those supports that are further away from front-line delivery, such as providing financial reporting, legal support, and maintaining contracts with suppliers.

Third are those supports that provide wraparound services (whether virtual or physical) that students and customers need to ensure a successful and rewarding experience when they are at NAIT. These can be front facing and revenue oriented, such as providing food services, the bookstore or parking. Or, they can be administrative, such as providing IT help desk support or providing refunds in a timely manner.

Regardless of the support services being provided, NAIT's vision is to have supports that are efficient, technology-enabled, and lead to rewarding relationships. Support services should enable staff who provide front-line services, and act as a catalyst for driving improvement in a positive fashion. The vision for support services includes the removal of unnecessary barriers and, by improving approaches to provide supports, enabling increased nimbleness going forward. The improvement of communication and alignment of priorities is key to achieving this vision. Support areas want to ensure the focus of supports and improvements are strongly aligned with the priorities in the main lines of business. Support services will seek opportunities which are less reliant on previous resource allocations to support NAIT's core mandates and still achieve the greatest results.

## 2. OBJECTIVES FOR TRANSITION

*We have identified a number of objectives for our transition. These objectives must be accomplished with a view towards our long-term future, and they are intended to guide action as NAIT responds to Alberta's gradual re-opening. Our objectives will evolve as Alberta's context evolves, and as we learn what works and what doesn't.*

### PLANNING AND PIVOTING

The Alberta government has communicated that their goal is to “return to in-person instruction as much as possible for the fall of 2021.” As a result, NAIT’s academic leaders have revised their approach to planning for the fall. As government direction can change at any time, we must be prepared to pivot. To effectively pivot, we need to plan for ongoing changing government direction based on the changing realities of COVID-19.

Each business unit requires business continuity plans to pivot to an alternative delivery model or at minimum understand the benefits and challenges of those changes. This will help guide the organizational decisions on the opportunities and consequences for increasing activities on returning to campus throughout the various scenarios.

As we have pivoted over the past year, we have also learned a great deal about how intentional changes in our structure, processes, and culture have built stronger, more innovative portfolios. NAIT strives to maintain innovation, deep connections with industry and strong student engagement, while driving future trends. Creating those opportunities can transform NAIT and boldly reimagine what our educational experience can be.

### TASKS AND OBJECTIVES FOR INCREASED ACTIVITY ON CAMPUS

We have identified key tasks and objectives for our increased activity on campus framework. These tasks and objectives will be a guide for NAIT to respond to Alberta’s gradual staged re-opening.

### POLYTECHNIC EDUCATION TRANSITION OBJECTIVES

Phase 2 of Alberta’s [Open for Summer Plan](#) includes in-person learning for post-secondary education. This is a broad direction, and specific guidelines for post-secondaries have not yet been provided by government. We recognize government may continue to shift their approach to the pandemic as vaccine rates increase or as hospital rates shift and change and we are committed to responding in ways that best serve our community.

NAIT has been providing select in-person learning and student services throughout the pandemic. While students have been attending online classes and accessing services virtually where it was possible to do so, we also safely offered many face-to-face shops, labs and student services where required to support student success.

Our health and safety protocols have been working, and we have had limited learning disruption due to COVID-19. Where disruptions have occurred, we have been able to support the vast majority of students to catch up on their learning and seek the support they need.

In general, and in keeping with the highly successful “turn the dial” approach we’ve been taking throughout the pandemic, our response recognizes the fall semester will be a transitional term. Our planning approach is one that responds with hope to a further easing of restrictions while providing as much predictability and reassurance as possible to students and staff.

The recent announcement by government means we can stay the course with our current approach to fall planning, which includes increasing levels of in-person activity as provincial guidelines allow, and in a way that best serves students and our entire NAIT community.

**OBJECTIVES:**

- We are committed to creating an increasingly vibrant campus community.
- We will continue to make decisions that will minimize disruption to students and staff as much as possible. While signs are positive, there is still some uncertainty about what the pandemic will look like come fall.
- Our approach will acknowledge staff are in very different situations depending on the nature of the programming they offer, and whether or not they were engaged in on-campus activity over the past year. Some have been working on campus throughout the pandemic, feel comfortable doing so, and would like to see even more on-campus learning and services for students. Others have been working exclusively from home and are nervous about returning to campus—even as provincial restrictions continue to ease. And still others are somewhere in between.
- We will continue to proactively communicate to provide reassurance and as much clarity as possible about how decisions are being made.
- We will continue to communicate the what and why related to program offerings in a timely manner, and prior to the opening of program enrolment.
- Decisions about which programs will be offered and how they will be offered will be made at the appropriate level and in a timely manner. These decisions will be made by program chairs/portfolio managers in collaboration with department heads/Director Continuing Education, prioritized as necessary.
- Decision frames will continue to be used to guide decisions related to:
  - how programs will be offered, taking into consideration the achievement of learning outcomes, impacts to student progression, international student success, student financial aid, and scheduling considerations; and
  - how to best increase on-campus presence for student services.
- While COVID remains a hazard, we will assess each term as it approaches and make timely decisions about how to offer education to students. These decisions will be based on what will best position us to achieve our future vision in the context of what is possible given the state of the pandemic.
- Looking ahead to winter term:
  - We anticipate further revisions to schedules for winter term as our external environment continues to change—we will communicate as soon as we have more to share. We are confident we will be able to have more face-to-face programming and on-campus activity for the winter term and beyond.
  - We encourage programs to collaborate with Student Progression to find a creative solution to support international students virtually as required during winter term, while offering more face-to-face programming for domestic students.
- In the longer term, once COVID is no longer at the centre of our decision-making, we will collaborate with our education community to determine the principles that will guide how we implement our future blended approach to education and student services.

Our planning is guided by 4 themes:

## SAFETY

- The health and safety of our community remains our number one priority and we will continue to prioritize the health, safety, and well-being of our community as we make decisions about fall and beyond.
- Our increase of on-campus activity will be phased and carefully planned, and, as always, will follow all safety and public health guidelines.
- Our plans will be flexible enough to ensure we can rapidly shift back to virtual education and student services in the event the pandemic is not yet under control this fall. It appears the likelihood of this is low, and at the same time we know the consequences would be severe if we did not plan appropriately.

## STUDENTS

- We will ensure students can be taught the program outcomes needed to complete their credential, and we will ensure students can access the supports they need.
- Our planning considers student success and student progression data, to allow for high failure or high dropout courses to be prioritized for in-person delivery.
- We will not disadvantage international students who require an online pathway to continue to study from their home country due to federal and provincial travel restrictions and delays in paperwork processing.
- We will not disadvantage students who require timely admission information in order to successfully acquire financial aid.
- We will provide as much predictability as possible for students, to ensure they can put work and childcare plans in place prior to September. Predictability for students is an ongoing request from NAIT's student association.
- Our planning will align with what we are learning about changing student preferences. Our most recent data from surveying nearly 4,000 students show increasing numbers of students prefer online (up 14%) and blended learning (up 4%) over fully face-to-face learning (down 18%).

## STAFF

- As much as possible, we will allow staff to plan in advance, so they can take a much-needed break this summer. This will also allow staff more flexibility to reduce their vacation days, aligned with NAIT's vacation liability initiative and related financial sustainability goals.

## STRATEGY

- Our planning reflects an iteration towards our strategic imperatives by building on our learning this year and applying these lessons in support of our blended learning future. Through our community's resilience and creativity, we've been able to adapt our programming even in areas previously viewed as very difficult or even impossible. We are committed to meaningful engagement as we continue this journey.

## INDUSTRY SOLUTIONS TRANSITION OBJECTIVES

1. We will communicate regularly and transparently with all our funders and clients, providing updates on current project deliverables.
2. We will work to maintain all applied research activities wherever feasible and possible, ensuring strict adherence to provincial guidelines and standards.

3. We will attempt to fulfill our domestic contracts (those currently on hold) as soon as possible and wherever feasible, ensuring strict adherence to provincial guidelines and standards. Where not possible, we will work with our clients to create new solutions that will fulfill our contract deliverables, potentially using alternate forms of delivery.
4. We will work with our international clients (new and potential) remotely to develop alternate forms of delivery for training and capacity building.
5. We will communicate and collaborate with industry associations, post-secondary institutions, supply chain partners, government agencies and others to stay abreast of our clients' most important needs.
6. We will work with speed and agility to create and/or modify solutions and capabilities that we can bring to the market to best respond to their needs.
7. We will ensure space allocation, specifically in PIC, is balanced across the needs and priorities of the various business units in Industry Solutions.

## SUPPORT AREAS TRANSITION OBJECTIVES

### *Advancement and Alumni Relations:*

1. We will align our fundraising efforts to support the priorities of the polytechnic education and industry solutions areas to drive the desired academic and business outcomes, and we will continue to raise funds in support of students with the greatest financial needs.
2. Our alumni relations will focus on staying connected, providing value through benefits and learning opportunities, and recognizing the achievements of our alumni.
3. Our donor relations will focus on sharing gratitude and impact with our donors and the NAIT community, ensuring our donors remain connected and engaged.

### *Marketing and Communications:*

1. Just as we ensured timely, transparent and thoughtful communications through the multiple waves of COVID-19 and changes in provincial health restrictions, we will ensure coordinated and transparent communications guides our fall 2021 transitions efforts. Providing students, staff and industry partners with timely, accurate information will continue to be a top priority. Building and protecting NAIT's reputation as a trustworthy, well-managed, student-centric and safe institution will be a key focus throughout all our plans.
2. As we shift to focus on an increased campus presence in fall and an eventual return to a "new normal," Marketing is developing campaigns – consulting with Academic leadership – for fall programs, with many incorporating blended approaches to learning. Our communications now, and over the course of the next several months, will lean on our brand attribute of trust and will focus on reassuring students and staff that we will be doing everything possible to ensure their health and safety and the delivery of quality polytechnic education outcomes.
3. Our communications will demonstrate that we have been listening to our stakeholders and understand they now value both virtual and in-person learning, working, connecting and contributing.
4. Our communications, marketing and web/digital services will reflect new, and perhaps lasting expectations for more virtual communications, connections and experiences. This may require changes to how we resource work, especially given increased demands for video content to support virtual experiences.
5. Our efforts will be focused on supporting all areas of NAIT to ensure transparent, trusted, coordinated and consistent communications. We will work diligently to ensure no erosion of our brand reputation.
6. Our marketing efforts will be focused on driving the priority business objectives of the academic, continuing education and industry solutions areas.

### *Facilities Management and Development (FMD)*

1. Our main effort will be ensuring that campuses will be properly ready for reopening. This may mean realignment of capital projects to, for example, work being completed in labs that will allow a fall re-entry and meeting limited gatherings and social distancing. Other future priorities that are beyond the responsibility of the Coordinated Response Team, but useful for the team to know in carrying out their responsibilities include the following:
  - a. Providing updates to the PIC building to support Industry Solutions refinement of their vision, governance and product delivery will be a priority.
  - b. FMD will consider the best approach to rethink capital footprint with enhanced opportunities to use space differently and more efficiently from COVID-19 learnings, particularly through the rapid development of the blended learning model and the increased distributed working opportunities for staff.
  - c. Projects will be launched to move forward more rapidly on consolidation of campus.
2. Coordinating with leaders of programming, FMD will continue to monitor outcomes and implement enhanced cleaning procedures as activity on campus increases during the transition. Hand sanitizer will continue to be made available on campus. In addition, FMD will continue to optimize building systems performance to provide indoor air quality, including consideration of fresh air intake and filtration.
3. The “Maintenance Request” process will continue to be a direct way that the NAIT community can communicate cleaning and others issues directly with Facilities Management. The process can be triggered via NAIT.ca and the intranet.
4. FMD will modify temporary signage in common areas and take other measures that assist with communication of any physical distancing measures that are in place on campus as they evolve. This will be done in collaboration with Communications staff.
5. During the transition and per standard procedures, FMD Campus Planning will review space management issues raised by the Scheduling Office in response to the needs of program leaders.

### *Information Technology Services (ITS)*

1. ITS will focus on providing the right information and technology investments and support required by NAIT’s emerging distributed working/learning environment. NAIT’s office spaces, meeting rooms, classrooms, laboratories, and simulation centres require a procedural and frequently technical enhancement to perform in a hybridized state ready for the gradual return of staff and students.
2. ITS will continue to work with the Schools and CED to plan and enable a roadmap for data and technology to support the persistence of blended delivery. Investments will remove friction from services, provide scale beyond the constraints of a physical campus, and ensure the right technology is available to support a blend of traditional and digital learning platforms.
3. ITS will continue to refine tools, provide technology, and support staff through the ambiguity likely to be present post-pandemic and amidst a backdrop of radical technological advances. Investments will ensure distributed working and teaching are flexible but secure experiences.
4. ITS will remain committed to managing demand, matching capacity to the needs of business units and co-creating digital strategy with business units. As a future direction, beyond the responsibility of the Coordinated Response Team, ITS will work to increase the agility and alignment of the application delivery process to improve the relevance and response to administrative supports, academic requirements, and the specialized needs of Industry Solutions.

### *Finance and General Counsel*

1. The main focus will be to provide support for the transition and increased campus activity. Other future priorities that are beyond the responsibility of the Coordinated Response Team, but useful for the team to know in carrying their responsibilities include:
  - a. Our efforts will focus on process improvements and to adopt automation wherever possible.
  - b. Another focus will be as a catalyst for process improvements and refinements across NAIT.
  - c. A third focus will be further development of strategic information and partnerships that will help leaders across NAIT improve decision making.
  - d. Continue to provide accurate and timely financial information so leaders can make informed decisions about how to spend scarce resources or when financial sustainability is threatened.

### *Retail and Ancillary Services*

1. Our main focus will be to support increased on campus activity during the transition and providing the services that ensure staff, learners and industry partners have successful and rewarding experiences at NAIT.
2. Develop partnerships with providers that can support the changing customer base and can scale up and scale down effectively and efficiently.
3. Provide centralized conference and event services to all of NAIT whether internal or external focused using various methods of blended and face to face platforms.

### *Supply Chain Management*

1. Our main focus will be to support the increase of on-campus activity.
2. The group will look to secure supply chains for key products that will be hard to procure in this COVID-19 world.
3. Other future priorities that are beyond the responsibility of the Coordinated Response Team, but useful for the team to know in carrying their responsibilities include:
  - a. The group will pursue potential efficiencies in NAIT's procurement supports.
  - b. Another large focus will be to develop partnerships with other Alberta PSIs to get more efficient and effective procurement of goods.

### *Risk Management Services*

1. Our efforts will be to continue to provide the NAIT Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) function and heavily support the gradual increased activity by all business units on NAIT campuses.
2. Health, Safety and Environment will provide up-to-date guidance of public health restrictions to the NAIT community and review business unit safety plans with supervisors and leaders to ensure consistency, continue to monitor and assist staff and students with the case management of any COVID-19 cases and support supervisors and leaders with other health & safety incidents and issues as activity on campuses increases.
3. Risk Assurance will provide support to leaders in managing their risk objectives.
4. Emergency Management & Business Continuity will continue to direct the activities of the Coordinated Response Team, provide support to the COVID-19 Advisory Committee as well as work with business units to refine their business continuity plans and contingency plans as required.
5. Health, Safety and Environment will play a key role in reviewing safety plans to ensure they are in line with all relevant public health restrictions and guidance and continue to monitor and assist staff and students with all COVID-19 incident reports, and other incidents as activity on campuses increases.

6. Protective Services will continue to maintain a safe and secure campus and monitor campus activities through a “education & awareness” strategy to ensure all public health restrictions and guidance protocols are adequately followed.

#### Human Resources

1. We will align with what best serves the academic and industry solutions needs. For the near term, our objective will be to support leaders and staff with the operational logistics of our transition (e.g. recalling staff from temporary lay-off, implementing alternative/flexible work arrangements, etc.). For the mid and long term, our objective will be to provide strategic advice, support and resources to assist the organization in achieving its outcomes in a rapidly changing environment.
2. We will support leaders in making and implementing decisions on future work arrangements with the people they lead to ensure service delivery is of the same or better quality.

HR will differentiate its attention into 4 phases as we increase our presence on campus:

1. Current
2. Short-term – Limited restrictions in place (possibly NAIT-determined restrictions)
3. Med-term – No restrictions, but still a gradual shift to our long-term state
4. Long-term – No restrictions – it's not about COVID



Human resources will focus on 4 pillars which will reflect our NAIT Values

- Cultural – Use multiple data sources to identify trends and create actionable initiatives to improve engagement and culture. Significant attention will be placed on the evolution of the culture given the changes in the workplace.
- Leadership - As leaders are the conduit to improved organizational performance, the focus will be on leadership development that encourages flexibility, distributed decision making and autonomy while maintaining or improving quality. Leaders will also be provided the opportunity to hone their remote leadership skills.
- Staff - Supporting staff through the phases by clear articulation of providing mental health and wellness resources; supporting and encouraging the development of staff through career opportunities, training and educational initiatives.
- Operational - To provide the required resources and supports to our staff and leaders ensuring a seamless experience as we transition through the phases.

### *Organizational Development*

1. Efforts will reflect the direction the organization aims for (i.e. efforts will be carefully applied to assist the organization in achieving its goals), with a primary focus on supporting the movement of culture. Emphasis will be on *build back better* and not doing things the same way. A strategic, future-focused approach is important, as is saying goodbye to the past.

## 3. PRINCIPLES

*We have created a set of principles to guide decision making. These principles represent what we believe. We must apply our principles to our short- to medium-term transition decisions, recognizing they also apply to decisions we will make over time as we contemplate our long-term future.*

1. We will place the health, safety and wellbeing of students, staff, and industry partners above all other considerations.
2. NAIT will continue to *build back better*, aligned with our [Shining a light on the road we're on](#) vision, as we capitalize on lessons learned to enhance operations, sustainability and service delivery.
3. All decisions will be aligned with directives and guidelines given by provincial and federal public health officials and what best serves our staff, students and industry partners.
4. Decisions regarding the appropriate blend of virtual and physical learning will be driven by programs, considering quality and fairness across all student demographics, and our continued learning about changing student preferences.
5. NAIT will provide as much certainty as possible to students, staff and industry partners by making and communicating decisions as early as possible, whether these decisions are related to our response to COVID-19, or our broader path to the future.
6. NAIT support services, which are both on campus and virtual, will align with on-campus and distributed activities.
7. NAIT will cooperate with peer institutions to explore opportunities for collaboration and resource sharing to enhance efficiency and maintain quality.
8. NAIT's culture has and will continue to change. Staff will be encouraged to say goodbye to past approaches that are no longer applicable and celebrate new approaches and our next chapter.
9. We will balance costs with opportunities, with a view to the continued sustainability of NAIT. We will use our existing resources in different ways to achieve our objectives, strategically adding additional resources or using partners to support critical needs as identified.
10. Decisions will be guided by research and best practice, as well as our promises to learners, staff, industry and Alberta.
11. NAIT will take the opportunities and lessons learned throughout the pandemic and use them in our efforts for continuous improvement.
12. Academic decisions will be informed by impacts to student progression and related considerations such as student funding and the requirements of external bodies such as regulating bodies, accrediting bodies and Apprenticeship and Industry Training (AIT).
13. Our approach to communication will continue to be timely and open to maintain confidence in our staff, students and stakeholders; we will continue to build relationships of trust. This is one of our core attributes.
14. Leaders at all levels will be empowered to make decisions related to their business areas in line with these principles.
15. Decisions around work location – virtual, on campus or a blend – will focus on the needs of students and our industry partners, be informed by the bona fide operational requirements of the position and the need to

maintain or improve standards of service delivery, and, within the context of these things, will endeavour to consider staff preferences.

#### 4. PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

*We have created a set of assumptions to guide decision making. These assumptions represent our current understanding of the context of COVID-19. Our assumptions will evolve as Alberta's context evolves and as we learn what works and what doesn't.*

1. Most of the general public will be vaccinated against COVID-19 in mid to late summer of 2021.
2. COVID-19 will remain a hazard in the workplace through the end of the 2021/22 academic year, and perhaps beyond. Some form of public health guidance may remain in effect at the start of the Fall Term.
3. NAIT will prepare for a return to our facility using a conservative, risk-informed, staged process based on what is best for NAIT, and in alignment with government direction, and our strategic direction. We will work to limit the number of times we need to “turn the dial” up or down, with a goal of becoming efficient and effective in managing through uncertainty.
4. Decisions may need to be revisited if and when health-related restrictions or guidelines change.
5. NAIT will be heavily challenged to shift the mode of delivery mid-way through a semester, therefore we will look at ways to take advantage of any reduction in public health restrictions as they occur, keeping in mind the impacts on students, particularly those who may not be residing close to our campuses.
6. The pandemic may continue to have negative impacts on some enrolment, particularly international student enrolment.
7. Most revenue streams, including through ancillary operations, will continue to be negatively affected.
8. All categories of staff will be challenged by the changes and limitations forced by the pandemic and will need expanded supports. Further, staff will adjust to our new normal at different rates, with some feeling more comfortable than others.
9. Economies will begin to recover.
10. Students and industry partners who continue to experience elevated financial and other challenges and will seek financial supports and other accommodations from NAIT and/or governments.
11. The provincial government will not be in a position to provide emergency financial assistance directly to NAIT.
12. Virtual and physical approaches to education have associated costs. NAIT's approach to combining technology-enhanced with traditional approaches will not result in any ability to reduce tuition, fees, or other related costs/service fees.
13. As NAIT increases technology-enhanced education, we will need to assess increased program expenses to determine impacts to programs fees and/or exceptional fee increases.
14. NAIT values and will pursue both digital and physical infrastructure supports and recognize governments will provide financial incentive programs to support infrastructure renewal.
15. NAIT must continue to drive toward the expenditure reductions and revenue diversification mandated by the provincial government to support the sustainability of the organization.
16. NAIT will continue to implement, build on and accelerate planned transformation initiatives.
17. We recognize not all staff will be able to return to work due to personal/family circumstances. Strategic policies and approaches, including future workplace policies and our approach to polytechnic education will be solidified prior to the start of the 2021/22 academic year.

18. We recognize that some staff will have individual circumstances (personal/family) that might require additional supports or considerations when planning their return to work on campus, and we will work with them to support their successful transition back to the workplace.
19. NAIT supports and will enable flexible work arrangements where business outcomes allow.
20. Enabling flexible work arrangements will require that staff and leaders make accommodations that anticipate our space, and our technology will require additional investment beyond the 2021/22 academic year to match the demands of hybrid work, meetings and collaboration.
21. Leaders will adopt management practices that enable flexible work arrangements which protect institutional systems and data.
22. The strength of our partnerships with NASA, AUPE and NAITSA will be crucial in the path forward.

## 5. EMPOWERMENT, ACTION & ACCOUNTABILITY

*We will continue with the agile structure and coordinated approach that has been successful over the past months. This will continue to enable a paced and carefully staged transition of NAIT activities as Alberta gradually re-opens, recognizing we will do so in the context of a “new normal”. Our aim is to build on lessons learned through our rapid campus closure and relaunch and use a similar approach to empower leaders and teams to determine what is and what is not possible at each stage of Alberta’s re-opening. As we make decisions, we will identify and act upon staffing, budget, political and other considerations that emerge.*

*Organizational Chart for COVID Coordination*

