

# **Toward Prosperity**

## **Nova Scotia Community College Consultation**

May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2000

### **Discussion**

#### **Strategy:**

- It is going to be helpful in consultation process. It gives a reasonable picture of the situation in the province.
- The document does not crystalize what are the key areas.
- In regards to Community College role there is a gap on what Economic Development and what document says. Community College is not noted a lot in the document.

#### **Problem of Labour Market/Economy mismatch:**

- Major problem is that with all these new knowledge jobs, there is no capacity for people to attain these jobs outside of metro. There is an economy vs. labour market mismatch.
- This problem creates huge gaps and is probably the biggest issues facing our economy today. Ex: In Ontario's "Road Map to Prosperity" they said on the education and training side-Ontario had one of the most educated and least skilled people. In Nova Scotia we must concentrate on skills training.
- HRDC did a study on labour force in Cape Breton. It found that the unemployed labour force in Cape Breton is highly skilled and educated when indexed against the general population. This speaks to the mismatch.

#### **Community Colleges:**

- There is great potential in the Community College system. In our legislation, we have a commitment to economic development in this province. The Community College system covers one end of this province to the other.
- If there is going to be a labour market/economy match, there has to be willingness and capacity to figure more predominately in resolving the mismatch. We are willing to share data sets with Economic Development.
- There are uneven pockets of success in Nova Scotia. Needs to be a stronger commitment from government and colleges to really address the problem. Ex: Escalator Analogy. At the top of the escalator is the knowledge economy jobs. At the bottom of the escalator is the post secondary education and training. We have a large amount Nova Scotians that have a moat of boiling oil between them and the bottom of the escalator. (literacy and education levels) The challenge is to broaden the system. There needs to be concentration on low literacy levels. Irish example; participation and completion rates rose as the economy increased. We are never going to have enough activity at the top of the escalator if we can't get people to the bottom of it.
- When the NSCC created their mission statement, they did not do it lightly. Government must see look at it seriously.
- The 13 campuses across Nova Scotia can be incubators for innovation. Ex: In Lawrencetown, there is probably the highest concentration of geo-matic expertise in the world. But the economy has not capitalized on this. Barriers that impede this is infrastructure, business climate and regulations.
- Must target growth areas and specialize campuses to fit these needs. This is where the gap

- between Economic Development and NSCC lie.
- Long term plan for NSCC to is renew infrastructure. The buildings they have now are beyond their educational capacity. The idea of business incubation would be incorporated in these new buildings. It will take a while, but it will happen.
- NSCC must be a featured element in the strategy. To move forward without taking advantage of the Community Colleges would not make sense.
- The Community College system in Nova Scotia is unique in the world. All of the campuses are networked with each other. We must take advantage of this fact. The Economic Growth Strategy is a plan to use it. It is a major structural advantage, instead of sitting down with 13 different institutions there is only one.
- Community College can play a greater role, **only** if strategy opens the door. Don't want to lose competitive advantage that we have. NSCC is a business advantage for Nova Scotia.

### **Human Resource Issue:**

- With emerging sectors, even high skilled workforces will have to be trained for the specific sectors. There needs to be a Human Resource strategy. Innovation and training should not be distinct from the Human Resources context.
- Need to crystalize innovation to speak of Human Resource implications.
- The needs of small/medium enterprises (SME) and business experience have to be looked at in the HR context.
- Management Issue:
  - In these emerging sectors, we don't have management expertise. There is some tremendous HR challenges

### **Infrastructure:**

- There is a problem with communication infrastructure in the outer areas. They have to be connected to the modern communication structure. Businesses could be more competitive if communications were improved.

### **Research and Development:**

- Ex: Quebec is very innovative with R&D. (Tax holidays). Their college system sets up shop in rural communities. They create an innovative environment in a certain area to work in speciality areas to benefit the community.
- In Nova Scotia we have a first class aquaculture facility in Shelburne. In Quebec they would set up shop and develop it to its potential. We do not do this in Nova Scotia.

### **Government Role:**

- Key initiatives must be identified by government. There has been little direction for NSCC.
- It is extremely important that Economic Development and Community College keep technology leads so if an industry goes sour, we are ready to develop and look for other markets. Adaptability is important. We have to be competitive not only when an industry is booming, but all the time.

### **Partnerships:**

- Need better linkages with other provinces in the Atlantic region. We can't do it all

ourselves.

### **What holds us back?**

- Constant change in government:
  - This leads to instability to strategically move ahead. We don't prioritize in Nova Scotia.
- We are slow on initiatives all of the time. Nova Scotia is uniquely sticky to the rest of the country.
- We don't have the Frank McKenna's of the world as premier. There is no political will.
- Private sector economy is dominated by wealthy families and big business from outside Nova Scotia..
- There is a lack of entrepreneurial leadership, focus and initiative.
- Nova Scotian's have an aversion against risk-taking in this province. This is a result of government bringing in big business to solve our problems. There is dependency mentality in Nova Scotia. We are gun shy when it comes to innovation.
- We have a history of being very closed in Nova Scotia. This has something to do with the wealthy family businesses. We can't get together as a business community to focus on exports.
- Media does not understand competitive nature of the environment we know live in. We can't compete with incentives in other jurisdictions. Must turn around negative image.
- There is a problem with the bureaucracy in the province. We are jealous of one another. Ex: In Texas they celebrate the success of others. We don't do that here. There is a lack of self-confidence. There is no easy way to change these feelings, but we must recognize they are there.
- Government must recognize a good idea when it lands in their lap and act on it. There is an inability on the part of bureaucracy to take risks in developing programs.
- Public and private sector should exchange executives to get a feel for different organizations.

### **Oil/Gas Sector:**

- In the last 15 years there has not been a hard strategy on the emergence of oil/gas sector. NSCC can help in this aspect.
- How can we maximize potential? Community Colleges can tie in this future by being part of the strategy.
- We must consult outside sources to get good advice on this sector.

### **Management Education System:**

- We must develop a strong management education system.
- There has to be continuing management education in Nova Scotia. This can be accomplished by one/two/three/four day seminars.
- Major industry sends top executives away for training.