**The Board of Governors of Portage College
Mandate and Roles Document**

Preamble

This Mandate and Roles Document for the Board of Governors of Portage College ("Portage College" or "The College") has been developed collaboratively between the Minister of Advanced Education ("Minister") and Portage College. This document is in furtherance of the parties' legal obligations under the *Alberta Public Agencies Governance Act* (APAGA) to reflect a common understanding of respective roles and responsibilities in governance of Portage College.

1. Mandate

Portage College's mandate is set out in the Investment Management Agreement entered into by the Portage College and the Minister.

1. **Type of Institution, Sector, and Governance**

   Portage College is a board-governed Public Post-secondary Institution operating in Alberta as a Comprehensive Community College under the authority of the PSLA.

2. **Outcomes**

   As a Comprehensive Community College, Portage College stewards its region providing adult education and training in its geographic service region in alignment with the strategic planning initiatives of the Ministry of Advanced Education. Program quality assurance processes ensure that training is relevant to employers and a balance of technical and soft skills is provided. Portage College undertakes in-depth consultation with all of its community stakeholders including community adult learning providers, school districts, current and past students, service and industry employers, Program Content Advisory Committees, and Municipal and Indigenous community leaders.

3. **Clients/Students**

   Open to all Albertans, focused in the Northeast of the province, Portage College's mandate is to serve learners typically underrepresented in post-secondary institutions. Portage College students are older, more likely to be married or single parents, and more likely to be Indigenous than the student body at other post-secondary institutions. Many students benefit from learning supports, smaller classes, and local campuses.

4. **Geographic Service Area and Type of Delivery**

   Portage College has campus locations in Lac La Biche, Cold Lake, St. Paul, Frog Lake First Nation, Saddle Lake Cree Nation, Boyle, and Whitefish Lake First Nation #128.

   Portage College excels in designing and delivering programs that respond to the learning needs of students and local employers. Portage programs utilize leading-edge learning technologies and are offered in multiple instructional modalities, including traditional face-to-face, online (synchronous and asynchronous), and a blend of online and face to face. The College's blended

learning offerings, outreach programming aimed at foundational and integrated learning, and service to small cohorts demonstrate its ability to make both instruction and learning supports readily available to students at times and places convenient to them. The College offers learning assistance counselling and other support services addressing the needs of disadvantaged learners.

As a Comprehensive Community College, Portage College's mandate includes regional stewardship. This is achieved through partnership, in-community customized training and direct delivery of Community Adult Learning Programs. The College partners with many organizations to support the learner as close to home as possible.

5. **Program Mandates and Credentials Offering**

Portage College offers foundational learning programs to meet regional needs. In addition, the College offers certificate and diploma programs in diverse areas, including: Natural Resources, Business, Health and Wellness, Human Services, Indigenous Arts and Culture, University Transfer, Power Engineering and Fine Arts. The College also offers trades and technical training delivered as certificates, diplomas, pre-employment or as apprenticeship programs. These include Heavy Equipment Operator, Electrical, Welding, Hairstyling and Culinary Arts.

Portage College expands its program offerings through articulation and transfer agreements, program delivery collaborations, brokering arrangements, and strategic partnerships. The College currently has agreements with the University of Alberta, University of Calgary, Athabasca University and NAIT to deliver degree completion programming. We are currently working with Lakeland College to bring tourism and agriculture programs to our region.

6. **Special Program Areas/Areas of Specialization**

Areas of specialization include: academic upgrading, pre-employment trades training, and continuing education customized training programs delivered in Indigenous communities in the region. Certificate and diploma programs in Indigenous Arts and Culture are unique to Western Canada. It is fully transferrable to Alberta University of the Arts and we are currently working with other universities in Alberta to obtain transfer for our students.

7. **System Collaboration and Partnerships**

Portage College works to maximize learning opportunities that support the economic growth and human development needs of diverse communities in northeast Alberta. A focus on community-based learning enables the College to partner with municipalities as well as First Nations and Métis communities. In addition, the College partners with training and support agencies, for example: Tribal Chiefs' Training to Employment organization known as TEAMS and Canadian Native Friendship Centres. We have extensive networks with the local school divisions for the provision of access to dual credit learning and other experiential activities. In addition, the College partners with local providers for recreation facilities, counselling, recruitment, and learning commons services.

Portage College uses a collaborative approach with communities, institutions and organizations as well as evidence-based demand analysis to prioritize opportunities. The College is focused on maintaining partnerships with other post-secondary institutions to ensure that students have recognized pathways to continue their studies beyond Portage. The partnerships include robust transfer agreements and shared deliveries to allow Portage College's program mix to include degree completion and additional certificates and diplomas.

8. **Research and Scholarly Activities**

   Portage College encourages applied research focusing on improvement of rural education, and supports scholarly activity strengthening our understanding of rural communities.

   Portage College has unique programs and highly skilled faculty members in niche areas therefore the, College embraces every opportunity to collaborate with communities and employers in our region when conducting research identifying economic development and learning needs.

9. **System Mandate**

   Portage College provides education and employment training programs that instill passion for lifelong learning, promote personal wellness, develop appreciation for cultural diversity, and inspire social engagement. A holistic approach to supporting our students is critical to ensure students are fully confident in their journey. "Connecting People with Knowledge Skills and Opportunities" is a way we see our supportive role in helping students surmount life's challenges. The outcome of our work is designed to empower students to transform and make a difference in their lives and communities.

10. **Other**

    Portage College's model of bringing learning to the learner has a direct impact on raising the numbers of Indigenous, single parent, first generation, and rural learners in general in a post-secondary system where these non-traditional learners are typically underrepresented.

    Additionally, Portage College is unique in its direct operation of several Community Adult Learning programs (CALPs) throughout the region. CALP-funded foundational learning programming is delivered in three rural communities and all seven First Nation communities in the College's stewardship region. The CALPs focus primarily on providing foundational literacy, numeracy, and digital skills to support individual employment or educational goals. These informal programs provide non-traditional learners with responsive, community-based learning that bridges learners into further post-secondary training. Our expertise has been recognized and we have been funded to develop and deliver training for CALP operators.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

The Board

The Board manages and operates the institution in accordance with its mandate and carries out the other duties and responsibilities legislated by the PSLA.

The Board sets strategic direction and monitors implementation.

The Board participates with the Minister in setting its long-term objectives and short-term targets, if any.

Board Members

All board members, regardless of the manner of their appointment, have the fiduciary duty to act in the best interest of the institution.

Board Chair

The Chair is the interface between Portage College and the Minister and provides leadership to the Board.

President

The President has general supervision over the direction of the operation of the institution and has other powers, duties, and functions that are assigned to the President by the Board.

Minister of Advanced Education

The Minister is responsible for the performance of all public agencies under Advanced Education, including Portage College.

The Minister's responsibilities as legislated by the PSLA and APAGA include:

- appointing, or recommending the appointment of, the Board members and the Chair;
- monitoring whether the institution is acting within its mandate and achieving its long-term objectives and short-term targets;
- advising the institution respecting any government policies applicable to the institution or its activities or operations; and
- reviewing the mandate and operations of the institution at least every seven years.

Department of Advanced Education

The Department supports the Minister and Portage College in meeting their legislated responsibilities.

Subsidiaries

Portage College has no subsidiaries.

3. Accountability Relationships of the Public Agency

The flow of accountability relationships at the agency is as follows:

- The President is accountable to the Board.
- The Board is accountable to the Minister through the Chair.
- The Chair is accountable to the Minister for the mandate and conduct of the public agency.

4. Process for Administering the Code of Conduct

Portage College's Code of Conduct is reviewed and approved by the Ethics Commissioner, and the Board ratifies and makes public the Code of Conduct. Updates to the Code of Conduct are submitted to the Ethics Commissioner for review. The Director of Human Resources administers the Code of Conduct on behalf of the College. For all Code of Conduct matters related to the Board Chair, the Ethics Commissioner would be engaged.

5. Mutual Expectations – Communication, Collaboration, and Consultation

The relationship between Portage College and the provincial government is an important one. Boards are accountable to the Minister, who has primary responsibility for the PSLA.

The Minister oversees strategic planning and direction setting for Alberta's advanced learning system, policy development, funding for general operations and specific purposes, and the promotion of transparency and accountability. The Minister is responsible for providing clear mandate direction to

boards, establishing clear expectations for oversight and accountability, and for participating in an ongoing dialogue with boards on important issues.

The board has a governance oversight role in relation to the institution it governs. Because the chair serves as the voice of the board, and is directly accountable to the Minister, the relationship between the Minister and the chair is critical.

Other officials, such as the Deputy Minister, who oversees the operations of Advanced Education, will typically be in closer contact with institution presidents and vice-presidents. Similarly, department staff may be in regular contact with staff of the institutions on areas of mutual interests.

6. Committee Structure

Committees of the Board include:

- **Finance, Infrastructure, Risk Standing Committee**. This Committee is responsible for providing oversight in the following areas:
  1. Finance, including:
  - fulfilling the role of the audit committee meeting with the auditors at entrance and exit meetings.
  - guidelines related to the management of financial resources, acquisition of goods and services, management of capital and other inventories and related accounting and performance reporting (accountability).

  2. Buildings and Properties, including:
  - guidelines related to the acquisition, maintenance, and use of College facilities and properties, and personal and physical security issues.

  3. Equipment, Supplies and Services, including:
  - guidelines related to the maintenance and use of the College's equipment and supplies and the provision of College services to staff, students and the community.

  4. Risk, including:
  - the College's Enterprise Risk Management program including providing policy for Risk Identification, Risk analysis, Risk Evaluation and Risk treatment, and Recording of Risk Activities.
  - guidelines related to the management of the College's records and information holdings, intellectual property rights, access and privacy issues, information technology systems.
  - alignment of the Information Technology Management (ITM) strategy with the College's strategic business.
  - availability of suitable ITM and ITM-related business resources, skills and infrastructure to meet strategic objectives.
  - recommendations to the Board with respect to fiduciary responsibilities related to ITM.
  - legislative compliance, ensuring College Management has appropriate processes and systems in place to ensure federal and provincial legislative compliance, reporting, and remediation of non-compliance.

- **Planning, Academic, Student Services Standing Committee.** This Committee is responsible for providing oversight in the following areas:

  1. College Administration, including:

- guidelines related to administrative and operational topics and/or issues that apply to the College globally and that describe the structure and organization of the College, including guidelines relating to communications/public relations, research, strategic directions, development priorities and stakeholder relations.

- annual review of all Board Policies and Board related guidelines.

2. Academic Programs and Services, including:
- guidelines related to the instructional and programming services which directly support programs and courses, student entry and exit, and recognition of learning outcomes.
- seeking input to ensure alignment exists with these items and activities, such as the annual program addition/deletion decisions, changes to academic processes, student success activities such as communication plans, follow-up on student feedback, etc.

3. Student Services, including:
- guidelines related to student issues and college services which support and promote the learning process, student development and academic success.

- **Human Resources Standing Committee.** This Committee is responsible for providing oversight in the following areas:
  - guidelines related to terms and conditions of employment, recruitment, health and safety, professional development, evaluation and employee recognition.
  - completion of the President & CEO's annual evaluation and goal setting.
  - annual review of the employment Terms and Conditions applicable to the College's management employees.

7. Financial, Staffing, and Administrative Arrangements

Portage College receives funding from the Government of Alberta via its Operating and Program Support Grant.

The Auditor General is the auditor of the Portage College.

Portage College is subject to sections 1, 2(5), 5, 6, 7, 13(3), 57.1, 80, and 81 of the *Financial Administration Act.*

While the *Post-secondary Learning Act* gives the Board of Governors broad authority to appoint employees, the President is the only employee that reports to and is directly accountable to the Board.

For Alberta's public post-secondary institutions, positions that are defined as "designated executives" by the *Reform of Agencies, Boards and Commissions (Post-secondary Institutions) Compensation Regulation*, are subject to the compensation framework and limits on total remuneration established thereunder.

Portage College partners with local services, employers and industry groups to provide space for limited or no costs. Portage College currently has space-sharing arrangements with:

- Inclusion Alberta
- Food Sciences Incubator Lab
- St. Paul Market & Catering

- Salon Sales & Services
- The Learning Network
- Community Adult Learning Program (CALP), St. Paul & Frog Lake
- Canadian Native Friendship Centre
- Tribal Chiefs Employment and Training Services Association
- Portage College Lease Space at Frog Lake
- Lakeland Industry & Community Association (LICA) Environmental Stewards
- Various schools, clubs and arts entrepreneurs for use of McGrane Theatre.

8. Planning and Reporting Requirements

The Board is required to enter into an Investment Management Agreement with the Minister that includes:
- the mandate of the institution,
- performance metrics for the institution, and
- anything else determined by the Minister.

Annually, Portage College provides the Department with a Capital Plan and a Budget Plan.

Each year the Board must prepare and submit to the Minister a report that includes the audited financial statements for the preceding year.

The Board is also required under the PSLA to submit to the Minister any reports or other information required by the Minister.

9. Administration

Three Year Renewal or Revision

The Mandate and Roles Document must be reviewed and renewed, amended or replaced within three years after the day on which the document or the most recent amendment to the document was signed.

Transparency

Copies of the Mandate and Roles Document will be filed with the Minister and the Public Agency Secretariat. This document will also be made publicly available on the Board's website and the Government of Alberta's website.

His Majesty in right of Alberta, as represented by the Minister of Advanced Education	The Board of Governors of Portage College
Original signed	Original signed
Minister	Randolph Benson, Board Chair
	February 14, 2023
March 26, 2024	
Date	Date

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