



Comox Valley Elder College 2025-2028 STRATEGIC PLAN

January 20, 2025

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PURPOSE:

The Strategic Planning Working Group (SPWG) is mandated to develop an updated strategic plan, intended to assist and guide in setting direction and establishing priorities for continuous improvement of Comox Valley Elder College (CVEC), its Executive and its Standing Committees, during the next three to five years. The plan undergoes a yearly review by members of the Executive and the SPWG, usually in August, as the next program year begins.

PROCESS:

Every third to fifth year the CVEC Executive undertakes a planning exercise with a five-year horizon. The resulting plan is reviewed in intervening years, with updates as appropriate. The process is the responsibility of the CVEC Vice-Chair, using such resources as deemed appropriate.

The SPWG for this 2025-2028 plan was established in September 2024. The SPWG was guided by CVEC Bylaws, Policies and Procedures, as detailed in the current CVEC Governance Manual (4.1.1 May 2024). Previous plans, recommendations, updates and addenda were considered and an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) was undertaken, which included input from CVEC Standing Committees and the Executive. In addition, a review of member surveys conducted in Spring 2023 and 2024 provided data.

The SPWG process included a review of CVEC's Mission, Vision, Critical Success Factors, Key Performance Indicators and Operating Values, as defined on page 5.

OBSERVATIONS:

The CVEC success story continues as is evidenced by strong demand for courses, member feedback and the celebration of the 25th anniversary in September 2024.

Much to the credit of many dedicated volunteers, recommendations made in the 2021 Plan have largely been successfully addressed. There remains, however, more work to be done in the areas of volunteer management and leadership, particularly in the recruitment and/or development of volunteers capable of and willing to direct and coordinate the work of our standing committees.

MISSION:

We continue to believe that the current Mission Statement remains relevant and adequately describes CVEC. It should be readily quotable by most volunteers: ***“Enhancing the quality of life for older adults in our community, by offering affordable opportunities for continued learning”.***

VISION:

The SPWG concluded that CVEC's vision statement as stated in the Governance Manual is current and relevant. ***“That CVEC is seen as a leader in providing programs that inspire and enable older adults in our community to continue learning and sharing their knowledge and skills”.***

VALUES:

A review of our values/guiding principles, which are intended as guides to the Executive, resulted in no recommendation for change. They are restated here:

- High ethical standards;
- Volunteer-driven, in terms of management and delivery;
- Delivery of high quality, enriching instruction in all areas;
- Responsiveness to member needs and interests;
- Inclusive and accessible: open to all, across our community and demographic;
- Collaborative – across all areas of CVEC and within NIC.

SWOT ANALYSIS:

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
A variety of courses and lectures which are well-planned, well-attended and provide opportunity for socialization	Few checks on quality of teaching and materials
Well-defined roles and procedures help volunteers to feel recognized and supported	We create demand we cannot meet, resulting in over-subscribed classes in certain areas
Financial contributions to NIC Foundation in support of student learning	The registration process causes stress on NIC personnel and frustration for members
Recognized within the community for leadership in life-long learning	Lack of data regarding member loss and retention
Positive relationship with NIC staff as a result of the revised Memorandum of Understanding; e.g. scheduling, finance, facilities, technology	Requirements to meet CVEC expectations and NIC administration processes may lead to loss of course leaders
Strong IT support from knowledgeable and professional CVEC volunteers	Complexity of IT equipment and processes at NIC leads to difficulties for course leaders
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Increase outreach to newcomers and the community at large to determine interests and encourage participation	Volunteer retention and succession; possible burnout or not willing to take leadership roles; dissatisfaction of course leaders
Work with other local Elder Colleges (MIEC, Campbell River) to provide a greater variety of course offerings	Declining support for CVEC; e.g.; NIC personnel changes, expanding NIC programs, lack of space
Take advantage of various media channels and NIC marketing team	Retaining members in light of opportunities from other online courses
Expand open and clear communication with NIC personnel	

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS:

Critical Success Factors (CSFs) are the necessary areas of focus where CVEC must get things right to successfully deliver on its mission and move towards its desired future. Our Recommendations below are aimed at strengthening the attention to these CSFs as well as to our analyses of member/volunteer feedback.

We reviewed the previously identified CSFs and found them to be essentially current. We repeat and redefine them as follows:

- **Course/Program Offerings:** CVEC must cater for a wide range of interests with high-quality programs and instruction, appropriate to the membership demographic and at reasonable cost. These opportunities must be regularly reviewed to ensure continuing interest.
- **Volunteer Support:** CVEC must provide an environment which consistently demonstrates a high-level of support and appreciation to ALL volunteers (whether instructor or operational) such that they derive high levels of satisfaction and inspire the participation of others.
- **Operations:** CVEC must demonstrate skillful, flexible management and a willingness to try new approaches and processes.
- **Member Engagement:** CVEC must maintain effective two-way communication channels and keep our membership well informed. We must strive to renew and increase our membership and promote awareness of our programs within the general community.
- **NIC Relations:** CVEC must continue to recognize that NIC support is essential to its operation and maintain a relationship such that the College and CVEC openly demonstrate their support of and commitment to each other and to the community at large.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Strategic Planning Working Group recommends that we:

1. Continue an excellent working relationship with NIC at all levels, being mindful of our actions and requests. We must review our internal processes to improve efficiency and effectiveness with NIC staff.

2. Establish a process to ensure that quality instruction of plentiful, diverse courses is delivered; e.g.,
 - develop a team for instructional and technical support;
 - offer a separate instructional orientation for interested course leaders;
 - monitor attendee dropout from individual courses;
 - investigate the reasons that course leaders do not return.
3. Address the difficulty of recruiting and retaining members and volunteers, to support a viable succession plan; e.g.,
 - standing committees develop short-term projects to encourage volunteer participation;
 - committee chairs identify and mentor a successor;
 - member survey results reported in the Connector to affirm positive support;
 - survey sent in April to all those on the mailing list (approximately 1500) with questions related to non-renewal and non-participation.
4. Widen the channels of outreach to newcomers and community at large; e.g.,
 - posting on social media, and local news media;
 - Active marketing of CVEC, directed toward home buyers via realtors, the CV Chamber of Commerce and other seniors' organizations;
 - A fillable Comment Form on the website that could act as an 'Enquiry desk', to address questions on CVEC structure etc.;
5. Engage other Elder Colleges to provide a greater variety of course offering, both in-person and online.
6. Expand the social aspects of taking courses by
 - promoting the use of the cafeteria for informal follow-up;
 - class participants voluntarily exchanging contact information to further their involvement

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

Key Performance Indicators (KPI) should be established and routinely monitored. It is recommended that only a small number of parameters be selected as KPI, for each of which the data should be easy to collect, meaningful and closely relevant to the Critical Success Factors. The following KPI are suggested:

Critical Success Factor; Corresponding Recommendations	Key Performance Indicator Measurements (trended with annual counts over a four-year span)
<p>CSF: Course/Program Offerings.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>2. Process to ensure quality instruction is delivered.</p> <p>6. Expand the social aspects of taking courses</p> <p>5. Engage other Elder Colleges</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Count courses by Subject Area, waitlist, delivery method, new courses. Suggested goal: maintain the same numbers. Total members registering for courses, total registrations. Suggested goal: maintain the same numbers. Count attendance at lecture series by delivery method. Suggested goal: maintain the same numbers. Student satisfaction ratings from surveys for courses and lectures; Suggested goal: Maintain a rating of 4.5 out of 5 or above. Add to current survey: Registrant annual survey question of CVEC value for cost. Suggested goal: Maintain a rating of 4.5 out of 5 or above.
<p>CSF: Volunteer Support.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>3a. Address difficulty recruiting.</p> <p>3b. Support viable succession plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New survey: Volunteer satisfaction ratings from surveys broken down by committee; Suggested goal: Maintain rating of 4.5 out of 5 or above. Volunteer vacancies by committee. Suggested goal: not to exceed one vacancy per committee. Volunteer turnover by committee. Suggested goal: year over year turnover less than 50%.

Critical Success Factor; Corresponding Recommendations	Key Performance Indicator Measurements (trended with annual counts over a four-year span)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course Leader (not lecturers) satisfaction ratings from surveys; Suggested goal: Maintain a rating of 4.5 out of 5 or above.
<p>CSF: Operations.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>3. Support a viable succession plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key volunteer role coverage (e.g., executive positions, committee chairs, key support personnel) when appropriate. Suggested goal: Every key position is identified and has one designated replacement person.
<p>CSF: Member Engagement.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>4. Widen channels of outreach.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Membership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggested goal: Annual membership count reflects Comox Valey population growth. Membership communication satisfaction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual member survey: Satisfaction rating of communications. Suggested goal: Maintain a rating of 4.5 out of 5 or above. Membership list email distribution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggested goal: Open rate not below 25% Suggested goal: Unsubscribe rate 5% or less.
<p>CSF: NIC Relations.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>1. Working relationship with NIC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NIC relationship satisfaction. Suggested goal: positive as gauged from the NIC Liaison and the NIC/CVEC Executive Meetings.

DEFINITIONS:

Terminology used by SPWG:

These terms can be open to interpretation and usage; however, it's important for common understanding that any strategic planning group agree to, use and report using a common interpretation. The following definitions were used in developing the present Strategic Plan in 2023/2024:

Strategic Plan: A long-term framework that helps an organization align its mission, vision and values with actions to address current challenges and future opportunities.

Mission: Communicates the purpose of an organization; the mission may be self-generated or imposed by a higher authority.

Vision: Describes a desired state - what an organization wants to look like or achieve in the future. Provides the basis/underpinning for strategies designed to assist in bringing it about.

Values: Principles that will underlie actions, describing what an organization deems essential as they carry out their operations.

SWOT: An analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats to the organization.

Critical Success Factors (CSF): Factors that an organization must get right to be successful in delivering on its mission or mandate.

Key Performance Indicators (KPI): Objective and quantifiable measurements which will allow effective monitoring of Critical Success Factors.

Recommendations: Suggestions or proposals as to the best course of action to be undertaken by members of the organization.

STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM:

This report was prepared, and is respectfully submitted by, The Strategic Planning Working Group:

- Craig Bassett – Former CVEC Vice Chair and Member of 2021 SPWG
- Geoff Battimelli – CVEC Member at Large
- Sheila Borman – CVEC Vice-Chair
- Martha Gerow – Former Curriculum Committee Member
- Mary Gray – CVEC Executive Secretary and Curriculum Committee Secretary
- Terry Hooper – Course Leader; Former CVEC Executive Member and Curriculum Committee Chair
- Norm Mathew – Course Leader and former Curriculum Committee member
- Liz Morris – CVEC Finance Officer

DATE: January 20, 2025