



January 5, 2026

The Honourable Nolan Quinn
Minister of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security
5th Floor, 438 University Avenue
Toronto, ON M7A 1N3

Re: Supporting Ontario's Colleges to Strengthen Our Economy and Protect Ontario

Dear Minister Quinn,

On behalf of the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM), representing 110 municipalities across Northeastern Ontario, I am writing to express our strong support for Ontario's public colleges and the essential role they play in developing the skilled workforce our province requires to remain competitive and resilient.

Colleges are currently facing significant financial pressures that threaten their ability to deliver on their core mandate: providing practical, career-ready education aligned with Ontario's most critical industries. For Northern and rural communities in particular, colleges are not optional institutions — they are foundational economic infrastructure.

FONOM supports the implementation of a fair, predictable, and sustainable post-secondary funding model that enables colleges such as Northern College to continue fulfilling their mandate. Strong colleges help ensure municipalities have access to the local talent pipeline required to sustain economic growth, deliver essential services, and support community well-being.

Municipalities already play a significant role in contributing to Ontario's prosperity by delivering core services including infrastructure, health and social supports, public safety, land-use planning, and economic development. Ontario's colleges complement this role by supplying the skilled workers required across sectors such as health care, emergency services, skilled trades, mining, engineering, business administration, technology, and community services.

In many Northern Ontario communities, employers — from small businesses to major industrial operations — rely heavily on graduates and students from regional colleges to fill in-demand roles. Through strong collaboration with municipalities and industry partners, colleges continue to deliver responsive, career-specific training that directly supports local and regional labour market needs.

We commend your government's ongoing commitment to Protect Ontario. At this critical moment, protecting Ontario also means making strategic investments in the college sector to ensure it remains strong, accessible, and future-ready. FONOM looks forward to continued

collaboration with your ministry to ensure colleges remain well-positioned to support employers, students, and communities across Northern Ontario and the province as a whole.

Sincerely,



Dave Plourde
FONOM, President

Cc'd Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario Hon.
Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance
Hon. Rob Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Mitch Dumas, Chief Executive Officer and President of Northern College
John Vanthof, MPP Timiskaming-Cochrane

WHEREAS access to post-secondary education is a cornerstone of community development, economic growth, and social well-being;

AND WHEREAS community colleges create local opportunities for youth, adult learners and newcomers seeking further education, skills training and career advancement;

AND WHEREAS education is fundamental to the prosperity and sustainability of our municipality;

AND WHEREAS the presence of a college will provide residents with increased opportunities for academic and vocational training, support local businesses through workforce development, and enhance the attractiveness of our community to families and employers;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) formally recognizes the positive contributions to the economic development of Northern Ontario Colleges;

AND FURTHER THAT Council supports the presence of Northern College in Kirkland Lake and advocates for future funding streams for community colleges;