



**Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee
Report 20-19(2): Report on Bill 30: *An Act to Amend the Aurora College Act***

Background

The Standing Committee on Social Development (Committee) presented Committee Report 20-19(2), "Report on Bill 30: *An Act to Amend the Aurora College Act*" (Report) on November 30, 2021.

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) thanks the Committee for its Report. The passage of amendments to the *Aurora College Act* is a critical milestone in the transformation of Aurora College into a polytechnic university. As outlined in the *Aurora College Transformation Implementation Plan*, amendments to the *Aurora College Act* also mark the completion of Phase One of the transformation.

On December 7, 2021, the Report was considered in Committee of the Whole and the recommendations contained in the Report were adopted. The recommendations from the Committee along with GNWT's corresponding responses are outlined below.

Recommendation 1:

"The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends that the GNWT speak to questions on co-drafting legislation and co-management beyond resource management-based legislation and discuss this concept with the NWT Council of Leaders."

GNWT Response:

Meaningful engagement with Indigenous governments is a central focus of the Aurora College transformation process. The development of Bill 30 benefitted from input from Indigenous governments in advance of its presentation to the Legislative Assembly and during Committee's review of the Bill.

Committee references the protocol under the intergovernmental agreement regarding the co-development of land and resource legislation in this recommendation. The management of land and resources is of fundamental importance and collaboration with Indigenous governments through this process has been extremely valuable.

At this time, the protocol does not apply to legislative processes initiated by social envelope departments. However, the GNWT continues to learn from the new approach to land and resource legislation and it may inform approaches to other types of legislation in the future.

The GNWT agrees to explore the interest and potential for early engagement in legislative processes beyond the area of land and resources with its Modern Treaty and Self-Government Partners. We are committed to examining processes that establish common priorities and opportunities for cooperation and collaboration.

Recommendation 2:

“The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends that the Department of Education, Culture, and Employment and Aurora College take note of this request that engagement timelines are respectful and sufficient for stakeholders to support meaningful consultation and ensure that the timeframes for engagement and consultation concerning the polytechnic university are adequate.”

GNWT Response:

Over the past five years, direct and indirect input has supported the transformation. This includes engagements during the development of the *Aurora College Foundational Review Report*, the *Government Response*, and the *NWT Post-Secondary Education Strategic Framework 2019-2029*, as well as during the legislative process leading to completion of the *Post-Secondary Education Act* and the development of approaches that are included in the amended *Aurora College Act*. These engagements have allowed for input on a wide range of issues that are directly related or significantly overlap the system of governance.

Knowledge shared by Indigenous governments helped to strengthen amendments to the *Aurora College Act* and will inform the development of a polytechnic university that is reflective of the people it serves. To support respectful and meaningful engagement, the GNWT and Aurora College developed an *Aurora College Transformation Approach to Indigenous Engagement* (March 2020) which outlines the GNWT’s and Aurora College’s approach to engagement with Indigenous governments during the transformation process.

The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action* provide the basis for the approach and how GNWT and Aurora College will engage.

Specific to informing the system of governance and amendments to the *Aurora College Act*, the *Aurora College and Polytechnic University Governance Discussion Paper* (August 2020) was shared with Indigenous governments, campus communities, post-secondary stakeholders, students, College employees and the public. Dialogue with Indigenous government leaders to help strengthen the proposed system of governance was also sought.

Once the amended *Aurora College Act* comes into force later this year, it is expected that the Board of Governors and the Indigenous Knowledge Holders Council will play prominent oversight roles in ensuring meaningful engagement processes as the College moves towards operating as an arm's length institution.

The GNWT agrees to continue to seek perspectives from partners and stakeholders at the earliest opportunity and to provide adequate timelines for informed input.