CONESTOGA
Connect Life and Learning

2024 | 2025

Annual Report

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Message from the President

The 2024-2025 fiscal year was challenging due to Canada's rapidly declining popularity as an international education destination. This was caused by significant ongoing changes to the international student program and the introduction of enrolment caps by the federal government in 2024. No Ontario college was able to reach their enrolment cap for level one international enrolment which made the fiscal situation more problematic. Conestoga's 2024-2025 Business Plan was aggressive, and we had strong enrolment from international students already in country by maintaining our academic programming and offering the largest number of programs that met the government's definition of labour market focused programming [Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP)]. We were rated as the best college in Ontario and the best trades school in Canada by CourseCompare for 2024-2025.

We were able to invest in a number of new initiatives with partners such as the Grand Erie District School Board that will redefine educational collaboration in Ontario. The agreement between Grand Erie and Conestoga will allow for significant renovations at the Tollgate Technical Skills Centre in Brantford including a dedicated wing of the school.

Through a new partnership with Conestoga, Guelph General Hospital announced plans to expand access to care with a new medical centre at the Guelph – Speedvale campus. The collaboration presents an opportunity for Conestoga to further its commitment to supporting the healthcare sector by training in-demand professionals in areas of critical need.

Leveraging its expertise in health education and state-of-the-art learning infrastructure, Conestoga will play a vital role in addressing the growing skills shortages in health care. We invested significantly in phase two of the Conestoga Skilled Trades Campus in Cambridge and in capital projects that enhanced our facilities and equipment at both the Waterloo and Doon campuses which also allow us to offer new programming. Although our surplus was projected to be $90 million, we ended the 2024-2025 fiscal year with a surplus of $121 million by reducing labour and operational costs as international student numbers declined.

While balancing the impact of reduced international enrolment and prioritizing labour force needs, the college remained dedicated to program development, new campus expansion and sustainability measures as well as enhancement of existing facilities to serve our students and the community now – and in the future.

Looking back, it was still a significant year of "firsts" for the college as we continued to chart our path forward with unique collaborations, community

partnerships and learning opportunities that demonstrate our commitment to fostering growth, innovation and thought leadership.

Last fall, the college welcomed trades professionals and industry partners to the inaugural Skilled Trades Safety Fair hosted by Conestoga's Canadian Institute for Safety, Wellness & Performance (CISWP) to learn more about safety practices in the skilled trades. The fair included the announcement of a new four-year partnership between CISWP and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board to support research advancing health and safety in Ontario and creating safer workplaces.

Conestoga's School of Applied Computer Science & Information Technology hosted the inaugural Artificial Intelligence Machine Learning Symposium in November. Themed: AI Horizons: Catalyst of Innovation, the event brought together industry experts, educators and students to explore the transformative impact of artificial intelligence (AI) across various sectors, focusing predominantly on AI in education.

Last spring, the college hosted the first Indigenous Education Symposium at Conestoga to share information about Indigenous approaches to education, using culture and experiential learning opportunities to encourage college employees to think about how they can integrate those unique perspectives into classrooms.

Currently under development at our Waterloo campus is the new 10,000-square-foot esports arena that will be strategically located within one of the fastest-growing tech sectors in North America. The space will allow for high-performance play, high-quality streaming and production, and innovation in gaming and simulation. When complete later this year, it will be the first of its kind in the region.

And these events and accomplishments have all been broadcast through CCDTV – the college's first digital television station, operating out of the Doon campus and providing students with access to the most current tools and technology for applied learning opportunities.

Through all this, we continued to prioritize the student experience at Conestoga, ensuring housing, food security, wellness, academic and employment supports and tools were in place to help our students thrive throughout their journey at Conestoga. Continued strategic investments in campus expansion and renewal projects, ensures students have access to cutting-edge facilities that host the labs and workshops required to develop the skills today's employers demand.

Our facilities and capital development projects also keep Conestoga well positioned to support growth in the communities it serves. Waterloo Region alone is expected to increase to a population of one million by 2050 so health care, trades and STEM programs remain priority sectors here and across the province. A report released by the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario in April 2025 indicates demand for domestic post-secondary education spaces in Ontario is expected to grow by 45 per cent over the next 24 years, requiring an additional 225,000 seats.

John Tibbits
President

Vision

A recognized leader in applied learning and research that enables student success in meeting workforce demands.

Mission

To promote the prosperity and well-being of the communities we serve through the delivery of programming, workforce development and industry-focused research that meets local, regional and international demands.

Values

STUDENT FOCUS

We create the environments for students to realize their potential and graduate as individuals who can make meaningful contributions to their communities.

COLLABORATION

We work with government, industry, community and international partners to reach our strategic goals and create a vibrant working and learning environment built on excellence, quality and respectful interactions.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We fulfill our commitments to the organization and the broader college community by assuming responsibility for our individual conduct, action and results.

SENSE OF BELONGING

We cultivate inclusive, welcoming environments where individuals feel valued, respected and empowered to succeed.

INNOVATION

We constantly strive to improve, enhance and rethink the programs and services we provide to achieve ongoing improvement and higher standards of performance.

Annual Report

This Annual Report details our progress against the 2024-25 Business Plan and is aligned with the strategic priorities and the three pillars of Conestoga's 2021-2024 Strategic Plan.

SUSTAINABILITY
Develop and enhance stakeholder relationships and partnerships and support employers in responding to changing social and economic conditions while optimizing organizational performance and supporting environmental sustainability.

QUALITY
Demonstrate excellence in programming and services while providing an outstanding learning and working environment for students and employees.

CAPACITY
Continue campus growth with enhanced access to programming for diverse learners and increased enrolment to meet the workforce needs of the communities we serve.

2024-25 ACHIEVEMENTS

PILLAR 1

Sustainability

Develop and enhance stakeholder relationships and partnerships and support employers in responding to changing social and economic conditions while optimizing organizational performance and supporting environmental sustainability.

Conestoga's Alumni Community

Conestoga's more than 225,000 graduates are known around the world and in our community for their drive, talent and entrepreneurial spirit. Conestoga alumni, nearly 8,000 of whom are entrepreneurs in Ontario, add more than $6.2 million to the province's economy annually.

Conestoga graduates are consistently recognized for the outstanding contributions they make. In November 2024, Fiona Coughlin, a 2000 Business Administration - Management Studies graduate, was honoured with a Premier's Award in the community services category.

As CEO of Habitat for Humanity Windsor-Essex, she led the construction of 52 affordable houses, including the first-ever 3D-printed residential home in Canada; launched one of the most successful ReStores in Canada; and reimagined the Windsor Furniture Bank to help more than 650 community members a year remain successfully housed. Fiona is also offering 220 youth a year skilled training opportunities and championing the renewal of Windsor's marginalized communities.

SIX OTHER CONESTOGA GRADUATES WERE ALSO NOMINATED FOR 2024 PREMIER'S AWARDS:

- **Business nominee:**
  Troy Miller, Business Administration – Marketing, 1993
- **Creative Arts & Design nominee:**
  Jolene MacDonald, Graphic Design, 1999
- **Health Sciences nominee:**
  Daniel Chen, Respiratory Therapy, 2019
- **Recent Graduate nominee:**
  Dima Aldera, Graphic Design, 2022; General Arts and Science: English Studies, 2019
- **Science, Technology and Engineering nominee:**
  Alison Carden, Software Engineering Technician, 2006
- **Skilled Trades nominee:**
  Brandi Ferenc, Women in Skilled Trades, 2005

In addition to this year's recipient, 12 other Conestoga graduates have been honoured with Premier's Awards since 2012.

OTHER ALUMNI AWARD WINNERS

DATE	AWARD WINNER
MAY 2024	Two 2023 Respiratory Therapy graduates received national honours at the Canadian Society of Respiratory Therapists Educational Conference: Jenna-Dee Toffoli won a gold medal for the highest score in Canada on the national credentialling exam, and Gustavo Ricardo Perez with a bronze medal for the country's third-highest score
MAY 2024	Neha Juwale received a 2024 Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest Rogers Women of the Year award in the Health & Wellness category
MAY 2024	Brandi Ferenc was honoured in the Skilled Trades category of the 2024 Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest Rogers Women of the Year award
MAY 2024	Martha George received the 2024 Lifetime Achievement Award - KW Oktoberfest Women of the Year
JUNE 2024	Three Conestoga entrepreneurs won an Equitable Life of Canada Community Venture Award: HOOD, co-founded by Briana Burton and Sunraj Sharma, and ContractApp, founded by Taylor Francis
OCTOBER 2024	Yarmouth and Area Chamber of Commerce Small Business of the Year Award, Mile East Productions, owned by Conestoga graduates and husband and wife team Rick Allwright and Candice Phibbs
NOVEMBER 2024	Avery Brohman, 2024 40 Under 40 Winner by the Association for Healthcare Philanthropy
NOVEMBER 2024	Fiona Coughlin, a 2000 Business Administration - Management Studies graduate, was honoured with a Premier's Award
JANUARY 2025	AET Group Inc., founded by Scott Freiburger, won in the Health and Wellness in the Workplace category of the Greater KW Chamber of Commerce 2025 Business Excellence Awards
JANUARY 2025	Cass Construction & Renovation Inc., founded by Jon Cassaubon, won for Business of the Year (11-50 employees) in the Greater KW Chamber of Commerce 2025 Business Excellence Awards
FEBRUARY 2025	King Charles III Coronation Medal awarded to Mandy Bujold
MARCH 2025	Corinna Fleet among the 2025 Top-30-Under-30 Award winners - Foodservice and Hospitality Magazine

Conestoga is working to build a strong and engaged alumni network and continues to make strides in fostering meaningful connections with graduates, ensuring ongoing engagement, career support and contributions to the college's broader strategic goals. By creating opportunities for alumni to stay connected, Conestoga fosters a sense of belonging and pride, which strengthens the reputation and success of the college.

During the reporting period, the Alumni team launched a college-wide initiative aimed at supporting soon-to-be graduates. Grad Launch prepares students for the transition to the workforce with alumni-led sessions and professional networking opportunities. This initiative saw a registration of over 1,100 final-term students, highlighting the strong interest and engagement from our students.

To better connect with our alumni community, an updated alumni brand identity was launched and a social media strategy developed. Informed by audience insights and engagement goals, the strategy focuses on four key content pillars to ensure the delivery of relevant, useful and meaningful content.

An inaugural alumni engagement survey was conducted involving 140,000 alumni via email. With a response rate of 10 per cent, the feedback will help shape future programming and communications.

Leveraging Power BI, the team also created a comprehensive dashboard to track alumni engagement. This tool has been instrumental in updating more than 870 alumni records, providing accurate and actionable data.

To engage alumni, curated invitation lists were developed specific to various school and department initiatives to ensure a targeted approach so alumni are informed and involved in events that matter to them most. Working closely with college departments and schools to enhance our alumni data collection processes has enabled the college to update alumni records and track their interest in events, ensuring a more personalized engagement experience.

The Alumni Office and Talent Hub have expanded student-alumni mentorship opportunities. These programs are designed to foster connections and provide valuable guidance to current students, leveraging the experience and expertise of our alumni. We have also expanded opportunities for our distinguished alumni to increase their reach and influence. This includes roles as convocation speakers and participation in alumni events, allowing them to share their experiences and inspire the next generation.

A graduate-first focus at the alumni convocation reception provided an enhanced experience for our newest graduates. Follow-up digital communications further supported brand differentiation, ensuring our graduates feel valued and connected to the Conestoga community.

Brand Enhancement and Differentiation

Conestoga's most recent brand campaign showcased the authentic experiences of real students at the college, highlighting the facilities and spaces in which they learn and develop their skills. It uses a mix of commercial video, digital and static billboards, radio spots and transit ads to tell a cohesive story that resonates with prospective students and their families.

The commercial was produced entirely in house to provide an engaging and student-focused marketing tool. The commercial plays in Cineplex cinemas, is available on television and has been posted to social platforms including YouTube, Instagram, Facebook and Twitch.

Digital billboards targeted the 400-series highways and static billboards and transit ads were placed in Waterloo Region, Cambridge, Milton and the Greater Toronto Area. These out-of-home marketing tools used similar imagery – real students in real spaces to showcase our wide range of program offerings to underscore our commitment to providing the most up-to-date learning facilities. This imagery was also used on pop-up banners, displays, print material and other collateral distributed at events throughout the year.

Wrapped buses were deployed in Guelph and Milton, and ads were also supported through radio spots and through the Ontario Hockey League.

To promote Conestoga's new Stratford campus which will open to students in fall 2025, the college hosted community events, secured arena ads and used advertising spots on internal bus screens and cards.

New program videos were developed across all academic schools and photo galleries were established as well so that program areas have a collection of curated images to use for promotional pieces.

Work was completed on a comprehensive set of brand guidelines which set out to ensure usage of the Conestoga logo and brand remain consistent across all program areas, service departments and campuses.

Community and Government Partnerships

As federal policy changes surrounding international enrolment continued throughout 2024, it was essential for Conestoga to actively engage all levels of government to have meaningful discussions about workforce development and the challenges that may exist due to lower international enrolment as well as the important role Conestoga plays in delivering programming in the key priority sectors identified by the federal government: healthcare, trades, STEM, hospitality and early childhood education.

Throughout 2024-25, Conestoga connected with municipal governments and economic development offices across our campus communities to strategically address talent development needs and strengthen relationships with municipal partners.

Federal and provincial members of government were also approached through letters, meetings, campus tours, on-campus government funding announcements and community collaborations to boost relationships with key decision makers and influencers and proactively share the social and economic contribution Conestoga makes as well as demonstrate our commitment to quality and to the well-being and success of our students, employees, graduates and the communities we serve.

The college's essential contribution to the local workforce and our efforts to address critical skilled labour shortages through investment in state-of-the-art teaching and learning facilities, program development and responsiveness to industry needs was also highlighted.

Conestoga shared key messaging through development of a government relations newsletter to highlight positive Conestoga news related to campus expansions and renewals and new program offerings.

To support development of a fulsome government relations strategy, internal consultations and external discussions with community leaders and industry partners took place to understand their current relationship with Conestoga, areas of improvement and opportunities to align advocacy efforts with respect to local and college government relations objectives. This project has been expanded to include the development of a community engagement strategy that supports and is closely linked to the government relations strategy, to be referred to as the GCR strategy.

Donor Relations

Over the last few years, the college has been in the midst of an expansion that will solidify our reputation as the premier institution for education and training for industry-relevant careers.

We continue to move forward with strategic investments in state-of-the-art facilities, including the second phase of the Conestoga Skilled Trades Campus in Cambridge and the Milton Education Village, a master-planned community incorporating institutional, residential and commercial development. Our footprint in Milton already expanded in 2024 with the opening of our Parkhill and Steeles Avenue campuses, and we continue to broaden programming. The college welcomed the first cohort to our standalone Bachelor of Nursing degree program to the Doon campus in fall 2024 last fall and will launch several new degree programs in fall 2025.

The Donor Relations & Stewardship strategic plan aims to retain current partners and investors while attracting new ones through a coordinated institution-wide stewardship and donor recognition program. The college has utilized donor-focused communications that highlight the impact of donors' gifts, inspiring them to continue investing in Conestoga. By showcasing the tangible benefits of their contributions, we aim to foster a deeper connection and commitment.

Existing Conestoga events have been leveraged to encourage donors to visit campus sites and witness firsthand the impact of their giving. These visits provide a powerful opportunity for donors to see the positive changes their support brings to our community.

To retain our valued donors, we employed digital and video communications that inspire and demonstrate the impact of their support. These tools help convey our gratitude and the significance of their contributions. Customized communication plans developed in collaboration with Corporate Communications ensure the recognition and stewardship of major gift donors. These tailored approaches help maintain strong relationships and ongoing support.

Quarterly meetings have been established to update major gift donors on the progress of projects and initiatives. These regular updates ensure transparency and keep donors informed about the impact of their contributions.

Relationship ambassadors within schools have been assigned to coordinate outreach between major donors and various programs across campus. This initiative also aids in the annual reporting of Conestoga's obligations to donors, ensuring consistent and meaningful engagement.

The donor relations team has also engaged with senior leadership, program chairs and coordinators about the importance of donor relations. These efforts deepen connections and ensure donors are ready to be invited to support new initiatives.

In 2024-2025 Conestoga received over $11.7 million from donors, partners and friends. Their generosity remains instrumental in helping achieve our goals and contributes immensely to the success of the college and our students.

Employer Engagement

The Conestoga Talent Hub consists of Co-operative Education, Career Services, the Community Career Centre, Employer Services and Work-Integrated Learning. This accessible and inclusive community resource provides life-long talent development support to a network of Conestoga students, alumni, community job seekers and employers.

THE TALENT HUB IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Supporting 6,300 stakeholders per year with career planning, employment preparation and job search assistance
- Building highly skilled talent pipelines and providing support for recruitment strategies for more than 1,500 employers annually
- Coordinating 3,000 co-op work terms involving 1,300 employers and 12,000 work-integrated learning placements per year involving 2,000 host organizations
- Driving growth and economic prosperity in Kitchener-Waterloo and across the province

Guided by a comprehensive employer relations strategy that ensures alignment with labour market needs, the Talent Hub is supported by a team of employment specialists who contribute their time, talent and resources to ensure best-in-class service delivery and programming across the career development continuum.

The province of Ontario is facing critical labour shortages across multiple industries, an increasing threat to the prosperity of communities throughout the province. The Talent Hub has become indispensable to the local community by supporting a diverse pool of workers as they enter the workforce, adapting to the demands of industry today.

The Talent Hub actively contributes to the betterment of community across a broad continuum of employment, career and workforce development services based on community and industry collaboration and engagement. Using a holistic approach, Talent Hub provides a comprehensive suite of easily accessible support and referral services designed to address the challenges and complex needs of students, alumni and community job seekers. The Conestoga Talent Hub continues to respond to the needs of the region's most vulnerable workers by:

- Coordinating financial support available to eligible clients to pay for education through government funding
- Reducing barriers to employment by sourcing funding for work-related clothing, adaptive equipment, tools and equipment, emergency childcare, credential recognition, licensing fees and transportation
- Offering financial incentives to employers
- Ensuring industry access to a diverse pool of skilled talent needed to meet skills gaps
- Supporting the integration of international talent into the local workforce

Highlights

- Conestoga's Co-op Education program was named among Canada's best in 2024 and 2025 by CourseCompare, ranking third out of 20 colleges and universities on the list. In 2024, there were 85 programs with a co-op component, resulting in 3,000 co-op work terms involving more than 1,300 employer partners.

- Employers value Conestoga talent: in 2024, 91% of applied computer science and IT co-op employers rated students' overall performance as either "exceptional" or "above average".

- Through the Conestoga Talent Hub, the Career Services team supports 32,000 students across eight cities and provides lifelong career and employment support to nearly 200,000 Conestoga graduates.

- In 2024, Career Services guided students and graduates through 4,140 career advising appointments; facilitated a total of 140 workshops for approximately 4,300 participants; and hosted 14 employer-lead events that engaged 435 students. In addition, Career Peer Mentors provided peer-to-peer support on part-time job search and resume review to 1,000 students. Leading-edge digital tools and resources are available 24/7 to assist with resume development, interview preparation and job search. This comprehensive suite of advising, programming, resources and peer support, addresses the needs of the diverse student body and alumni.

- The Employer Services team hosted 52 employers from a wide range of industries for on-campus networking and recruitment in 2024, reaching 1,153 students. Nine major job fairs were held in 2024 with 472 employers and 5,972 Conestoga students, alumni and clients participating.

- The Helena Webb Mentorship Program is a 28-hour blended experiential learning opportunity that pairs a student mentee with an experienced professional to assist the student in developing their career readiness competencies such as critical thinking, communication, leadership, teamwork and professionalism. A total of 48 mentorship pairs participated in the program in 2024. In addition to guided mentorship interactions and reflections, student mentees were required to complete an online equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility learning module, attend a career planning workshop, and utilized the VMock platform, an online platform that uses AI to help individuals create professional resumes, improve their resumes, and customize resumes based on a specific job description. Individuals can also use VMock to practice their personal pitch and answer interview questions while getting immediate feedback to enhance their resume and develop their elevator pitch.

- The Leadership Trades Toolbox program is a five-year initiative funded by RBC with the goal of developing the "soft skills" of the next generation of skilled trades people. This six-part workshop series explores critical thinking, career development, employer expectations, equity, Diversity and Inclusion, communication and teamwork. A total of 278 Conestoga students completed the series in 2024.

- The Work-Integrated Learning team supports 43 academic programs that include a work-integrated learning component. In 2024, over 5,000 students participated in a placement opportunity that in one term alone exceeded 500,000 hours. The impact on the community is far-reaching: from health and life sciences to community services, business to creative industries, trades and apprenticeships to culinary arts, Conestoga students are making a difference.

Environmental Solutions

Conestoga is committed to investing in sustainability and creating a culture where our community is empowered to make positive change. The college is developing a sustainability action plan that aims to position the college as a leader in campus sustainability. The comprehensive plan will outline strategies to infuse sustainability principles into academic programs, research endeavours, operational procedures and governance.

In addition to development of the plan, Conestoga made its commitment to sustainability official by joining the SDG Accord, the post-secondary sector's collective response to global Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The SDG Accord was launched in 2017 in response to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

Endorsed by the United Nations along with other global partners, the accord enables the sector to publicly demonstrate its collective commitment to playing a part in meeting the SDGs. Currently, 49 Canadian colleges and institutions have signed the accord.

Conestoga became a signatory at the end of SDG Month Canada (March), a national initiative that invites colleges and universities to increase awareness of and engagement with the SDGs. The college celebrated SDG Week March 3 to 7 with a host of workshops, panels and other interactive programming to showcase the college's commitment to a sustainable future, mobilize knowledge and encourage collaboration.

An event hosted by the School of Hospitality & Culinary Arts focused on reducing food waste while enjoying healthy and flavourful foods. It was held at the college's student-run Bloom restaurant which is dedicated to fostering education and action towards sustainable food systems, including reducing single-use plastics and supporting sustainable practices in the restaurant industry.

Bloom won top honours for its green initiatives last year when it was awarded the 2024 Green Leadership Award by Kostuch Media Ltd., publisher of Foodservice and Hospitality magazine and Hotelier magazine. The award recognizes environmental excellence and innovation within Canada's hospitality industry and businesses that are leading the way in environmental sustainability.

Sustainability practices have also been supported by the college's School of Business which became a Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) signatory in 2020. Since then the school has been named to the PRME Champions cycles for 2023 and 2024-25, launched a carbon literacy micro-credential completed by over 70 faculty, plays an ongoing leadership role in the PRME North

America Chapter, and has actively participated in PRME initiatives such as Carbon Literacy Action Day. The college also has a working group that currently includes over 30 faculty interested in advancing PRME in their teaching, research and engagement practices.

In June, the school received additional recognition with two awards at the PRME North America Chapter Biennial Meeting: Most Engaged Signatory and the Dean's Excellence Award for Institutional Leadership.

An initiative of the United Nations Global Compact, PRME is a collegial learning community that aims to raise the profile of sustainability in schools worldwide and equip business and management students with the skills and knowledge to handle the sustainability challenges of the future.

Last fall, Conestoga employees and students met virtually to learn about sustainability initiatives taking place within the college. The Sustainability Showcase featured speakers from across the college to share the work they are leading – an indication that sustainability is both a common goal and a shared responsibility at Conestoga. The event was open to all Conestoga employees and students, and sponsored by the college's Community of Practice for Sustainability, a growing group that encourages a grassroots approach to promoting sustainable practices at the college.

This expertise that exists within the college has been sought after to support community initiatives. Construction trades educators can easily incorporate eco-friendly learning and Indigenous perspectives into their courses with new free training modules from Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan), developed in part at Conestoga.

Conestoga's Robert Carder, professor in the Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Technician program, developed the content and curriculum for the HVAC module. Educators across Canada are encouraged to integrate the modules into their curriculum, preparing students for pivotal roles in the green economy by teaching climate-smart construction techniques.

The initiative is part of CICan's ImpAct-Climate program, funded by Environment and Climate Change Canada, which raises awareness of greenhouse gases and provides CICan members with tools and resources to green campus infrastructure, culture, applied research and curriculum.

In February, the Accelerator Centre (AC) in Waterloo, Ontario -- recognized as one of Canada's top startup incubators, dedicated to nurturing early-stage and scaling companies across a wide range of industries -- launched the UN Sustainable Development Cohorts of the AC:Studio program in collaboration with the Conestoga Entrepreneurship Collective's Gig Lab. Backed by $3.9 million in funding from the Government of Canada through FedDev Ontario, this pioneering initiative is set to empower 46 early-stage startups dedicated to transforming global challenges into groundbreaking, market-ready solutions.

At the heart of this initiative is a commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) — a global blueprint for a more sustainable, equitable future. Aligning the program with the goals means not only nurturing innovative technologies, but also ensuring startups contribute to solving some of the world's most pressing challenges in areas like clean energy, sustainable agriculture and inclusive economic growth.

Conestoga is committed to promoting sustainability across campuses and the college community including employees, students and alumni. Sustainability initiatives and research underway encompass energy efficiency, waste management, transportation, water conservation and biodiversity. The Gig Lab will provide vital support to the startups as they launch, grow and scale their sustainable solutions.

Conestoga's commitment to environmental sustainability is also demonstrated through several initiatives and projects across college campuses and facilities. All aspects of managing current facilities and planning new infrastructure are approached with a sustainability lens to work towards improving energy efficiency, reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and implementing waste reduction strategies.

Work continues on the college's GHG reduction roadmap, with a formal action plan and report available in 2025. As that work nears completion, a formal commitment was established to reduce GHG emissions by 40 per cent by 2023 and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

To achieve this, Conestoga has prioritized environmental sustainability in our campus operations and programming and made significant strides toward the decarbonization of our facilities. Activities in 2024:

- Conestoga has installed a ground source heat pump, also known as geothermal, for heating and cooling at the Cambridge – Fountain Street campus and Conestoga Skilled Trades Campus as part of our journey to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Upcoming geothermal projects are also planned for Waterloo and the Kitchener – Doon campus.
- LED lighting replacements (F wing, Cambridge amphitheatre)
- Three new electric vehicles added to the college fleet
- A flock of sheep joined the Cambridge – Fountain Street solar field as part of Conestoga's solar grazing initiative -- a landscaping method using grazing sheep to control vegetation under solar panels where it's difficult to mow. This method eliminates the need for herbicides and gas-powered landscaping equipment, integrates urban agriculture into our operations, and provides education and engagement opportunities for the college community. Future integration of college-raised resources into programs, such as sheep's milk, cheese, wool, etc., are also being explored.
- Expansion of electric-vehicle charging stations with the addition of nine new stations installed at the Milton - Parkhill campus. The college has 18 EV charging stations across five college sites.
- Conestoga has three large-scale solar projects in Waterloo, Cambridge – Fountain Street, and Kitchener – Doon campuses that generate sufficient renewable energy (kWh of electricity) equivalent to electricity use for 228.7 homes for one year.

Conestoga's 2024 Energy Conservation and Demand Management Plan was released in July 2024, renewing the college's commitment to creating a culture of sustainability through energy preservation and monitoring of energy usage.

KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE 2024-2029 PLAN INCLUDE:

- Finding opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Measuring energy performance over time
- Developing formal energy conservation and demand management process and policies
- Efficiently managing energy use and costs
- Identifying energy-saving and cost-saving opportunities

Conestoga has also launched an energy team to coordinate energy management initiatives across the college. The cross-departmental employee committee focuses on identifying energy-saving opportunities and promoting energy efficiency throughout the organization.

New sustainable procurement guidelines are available as well for Conestoga employees to provide guidance when looking to purchase goods and services at the college. Developed by Procurement and Contract Services in collaboration with the School of Business, the guidelines support Conestoga's commitment to sustainability.

Sustainability Metrics

121M

YEAR END FINANCIAL SURPLUS

811

EMPLOYERS REPRESENTED ON PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEES

215

NUMBER OF ACADEMIC AGREEMENTS

14.1M

DOLLARS SPENT ON GREENHOUSE GAS (GHG) REDUCTION MEASURES IN PAST 4 YEARS

CURRENTLY IMPLEMENTING PLAN

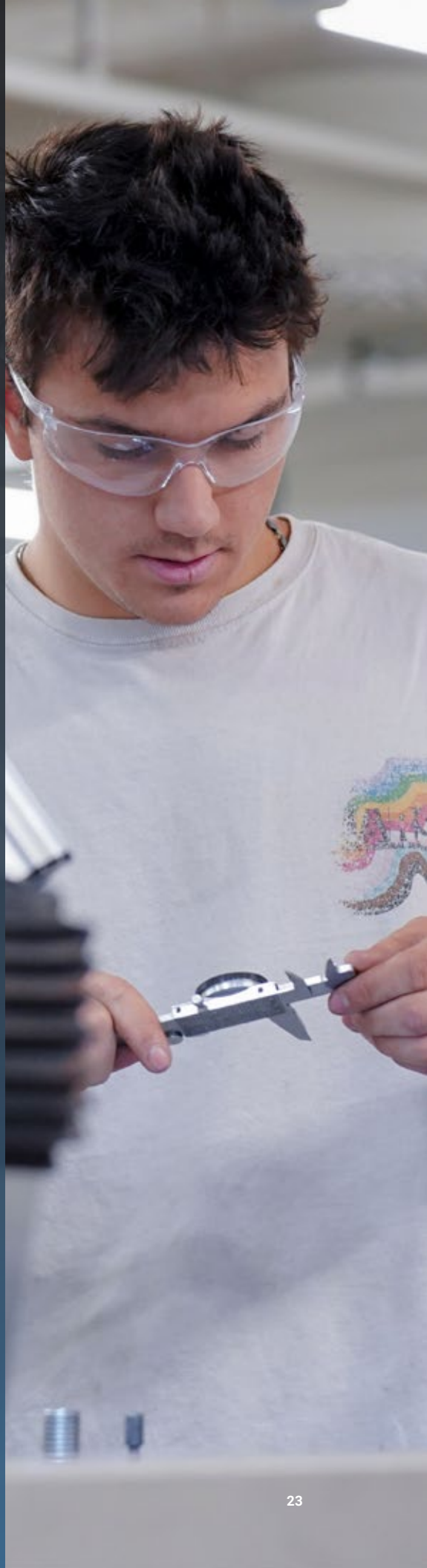
DEVELOPMENT OF CONESTOGA GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION ROADMAP AND ACTION PLAN

2024-25 ACHIEVEMENTS

PILLAR 2

Capacity

Continue campus growth with enhanced access to programming for diverse learners and increased enrolment to meet the workforce needs of the communities we serve.



Research, Innovation & Entrepreneurship

Conestoga has built its research capabilities to provide invaluable opportunities for students, faculty, industry partners and businesses. The growing scope and impact of Conestoga's applied research activities have placed the college in the top tier of Canada's research colleges.

Conestoga's research centres work with industry and community partners to develop innovative products, improve processes and support informed decision-making. Through applied research, technology development and knowledge transfer, our research teams help businesses grow, strengthen communities and build a better future.

In 2024, Conestoga ranked among the top 20 research colleges in Canada by engaging with 152 industry and community partners, 171 active projects, and hiring 248 students.

CONESTOGA RESEARCH CENTRES:

- Canadian Institute for Safety, Wellness & Performance
- Centre for Commercialization
- Centre for Health Care Research & Innovation
- Conestoga Entrepreneurship Collective
- Conestoga Food Research & Innovation Lab
- Conestoga Social Innovation Lab
- SMART Centre

Funding, Awards and Highlights

- The Conestoga Entrepreneurship Collective's Gig Lab will partner with the Accelerator Centre in Waterloo to power sustainability solutions with $4 million in funding from the Government of Canada through FedDev Ontario to empower early-stage startups dedicated to transforming global challenges into groundbreaking, market-ready solutions.

- Conestoga was awarded $3 million over five years from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) College and Community Innovation program to bolster innovation in Waterloo Region.

- The Conestoga Entrepreneurship Collective will receive up to $1.75 million in funding through the Scale-Up Platform, an initiative funded by the Government of Canada through the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario), delivered in the region by Communitech. This investment will allow the CEC to incubate 300 tech ventures over the next four years, providing critical support for entrepreneurs as they scale their businesses.

- Conestoga was awarded $300,000 from Intellectual Property Ontario to launch the Centre for Commercialization to support regional businesses with commercialization and intellectual property support.

- The Conestoga Food Research & Innovation Lab received a $25,000 grant from Dawn Foods for research on sustainability ideas for bakeries. The grant will fund an applied research project to support the bakery industry's understanding of sustainability in light of new federal legislation that will prohibit single-use plastics and a provincial initiative that will shift responsibility for blue box programs from municipalities to producers.

- Conestoga will expand training opportunities for science innovation with a share of $22.9 million in funding from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada's (NSERC) Lab to Market program to expand the award-winning Invention to Innovation (i2I) suite of programs over the next five years.

- The college-led Southern Ontario Network for Advanced Manufacturing Innovation (SONAMI) received $4 million from the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario) to build capacity in southern Ontario's advanced manufacturing sector. The funds support SONAMI as it continues to bring technical and industry leadership, equipment, expertise and solutions to participating manufacturers across southern Ontario with a focus on clean growth.

- Conestoga's Canadian Institute for Safety, Wellness & Performance (CISWP) has been awarded funding for applied research equipment through the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada - Applied Research Tools and Instruments grant program. The funding will support new applied research equipment for CISWP that will enable the institute to expand its capacity to support diverse organizations seeking innovative, evidence-informed solutions to support workers.

- CISWP also received $834,550 in funding from the Canadian Foundation for Innovation and the Ontario Research Fund to help find creative solutions to addressing workplace hazards and injuries in the Skilled Trades. The funding will be directed to CISWP's newest initiative, the Centre for Ontario's Network of Skilled Trade Researchers, Unions, Contractors and Tradespeople (CONSTRUCT).

- CISWP launched a four-year partnership with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board to support research advancing health and safety in Ontario and creating safer workplaces.

- Two Conestoga projects received nearly $568,000 in funding from the provincial government's Ontario Research Fund dedicated to supporting made-in-Ontario innovation at colleges, universities, research institutes and research hospitals. Conestoga received grants for two research infrastructure projects - CONSTRUCT: Centre for Ontario's Network of Skilled Trade Researchers, Unions, Contractors, and Tradespeople ($333,500); and robotic welding and metallurgical analysis ($234,408 from the ORF - College Fund Ontario First Award).

Awards

- Colleges and Institutes Canada Award of Excellence in Applied Research and Innovation

- Conestoga's Research, Innovation & Entrepreneurship team was presented with the Innovation Award from the Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce

- Conestoga was presented with a silver Applied Research and Innovation Excellence Award from Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan) during its annual connection conference. This is the second year in a row the college has been honoured with the award.

Highlights

- Two Conestoga research centres joined the Canada Plastics Pact as a knowledge partner to contribute expertise toward the national effort to eliminate plastic waste by keeping plastics in the economy and out of people, animals and nature.

- Conestoga's Office of Research Services has been leading the development of open education resources to help staff and faculty at colleges and small universities understand key aspects of research data management (RDM). Conestoga led the project that included a group of Ontario institutions and colleges that partnered to develop training modules for researchers and staff aimed at increasing their awareness of RDM best practices.

- Conestoga Students Inc. in collaboration with the Conestoga Entrepreneurship Collective launched new award for entrepreneurs. Three students were recognized with a CSI x CEC Venture Award on April 19, each receiving $1,000 to put toward their business goals.

- Conestoga was confirmed as a new member of the UArctic network at the UArctic Assembly 2024 in Bodø, Norway. The University of the Arctic (UArctic) is a cooperative international network involving more than 200 colleges, universities, research institutes and other organizations concerned with education and research in and about the North.

An outline of each research centre is available in the appendix.

Campus Expansion and Facilities Revitalization

Conestoga has directed its operating surpluses to capital development projects and facility renewal projects to modernize buildings, expand campus locations, invest in new equipment and labs, develop a comprehensive suite of support services for our students, purchase additional student residences, and develop programming to meet the needs of employers both today and over the next two decades.

Over the last five years, we have used our revenue to invest more than $500 million back into the communities we serve to build state-of-the-art facilities in key sectors like health care and the trades.

This transformative journey continued throughout 2024-25 with several projects underway across the eight communities we serve.

Milton

In June, the Conestoga community celebrated the official opening of the Milton-Parkhill campus. Located at 8160 Parkhill Drive, the site opened to 800 students in January 2024 and provides another site towards the establishment of a comprehensive range of programming and services to meet the workforce and community needs of the region.

The campus includes a renovated two-storey building and an attached one-floor modular building for a combined total of 11 classrooms and more than 25,000 sq. ft. Programming currently includes areas of study in Applied Computer Science & IT, Business, Community Services, Creative Industries, and Engineering & Technology.

Among the programs offered at the campus is the two-year Commercial Flight Operations program. Delivered in partnership with Spectrum Airways out of a Burlington airport, the program combines theory provided by Conestoga and practical training from Spectrum for careers in the aviation industry as pilots, flying instructors and dispatchers. Simulators are located right in the classroom, enabling students to learn the theory and then practice immediately.

In addition to the Milton-Parkhill campus, the college opened the Conestoga Centre of Excellence in Healthcare Education at its Milton-Steeles Avenue site in May. The centre supports in-demand nursing and personal support worker training.

Kitchener

An original building at the Kitchener - Doon campus was transformed from an administrative building into the Therapeutic Services Building – a sleek new space for pharmaceutical programs and Massage Therapy students. The first phase of the $6.85-million project started in winter 2024 created the new massage therapy space, including two clinics.

The renovated building's entrance opens into a large reception space and lounge area. This area is a key part of allowing the program to invite the public into the space, giving students the opportunity to practice their clinical skills and prepare for their registration exams, which permit them to practice in Ontario.

Community partners, supporters and friends joined representatives from Conestoga on October 29 for the official launch of a new a high-tech Centre for Pharmaceutical Studies. The centre is part of a major expansion of Conestoga's healthcare facilities and training programs. To ensure career-ready graduates are available to support the healthcare needs of local communities, the college has invested approximately $50 million in cutting-edge laboratories equipped with the latest instruments, tools and infrastructure for expanded programming in health sciences, biomedical studies, expanded Personal Support Worker training, and the college's new stand-alone Bachelor of Nursing degree.

Kitchener

New state-of-the-art classrooms, studios and labs were on display for alumni, partners and members of the Conestoga community during a grand opening celebration in February. Hosted by the School of Creative Industries, the new learning spaces in have been designed to provide students with authentic, hands-on, experiential learning opportunities which mirror real-life working environments in industries such as gaming, VR production, animation, motion graphics, digital media and visual merchandising.

The revitalized classrooms located on the fourth floor of B wing at Doon, represent a $4.3 million investment from the college.

In downtown Kitchener, the college is converting a 12-storey vacant office building on Frederick Street into a mix of student residences and classroom space.

Guelph

Conestoga and Schlegel Villages celebrated the grand reopening of the Living Classroom at the Village of Riverside Glen in Guelph on December 5.

The revitalized space is home to an innovative model that integrates education directly into a long-term care home to support workforce development in senior living. Conestoga students and faculty engage in a culture of shared learning alongside Riverside Glen residents, visitors and staff.

In December, Guelph General Hospital announced plans to expand access to care with a new medical centre at the Guelph – Speedvale campus. Fully managed and operated by GGH, the centre is expected to open in December 2025 and will initially provide diagnostic imaging services.

For Conestoga, this collaboration presents an opportunity to further its commitment to supporting the health-care sector by training in-demand professionals in areas of critical need. Leveraging its expertise in health education and state-of-the-art learning infrastructure, Conestoga will play a vital role in addressing the growing skills shortages in health care. The partnership will also offer new avenues for professional development, allowing Conestoga to provide continuing education for GGH's clinical staff, helping to ensure they stay at the forefront of medical advancements.

Cambridge

Named the top trades school in Canada for 2024 and 2025, a key project in Cambridge is the 41-acre Conestoga Skilled Trades Campus. The college invested $115 million in the first phase of the campus and another $155 million is earmarked for phase two which is now underway. The second building of the campus is under construction and set to open for students in September 2026. Conestoga currently trains 5,000 apprentices each year. The Conestoga Skilled Trades Campus will provide additional training capacity to allow for additional trades and technology workers to enter the labour market.

Brantford

In January, the Grand Erie District School Board and Conestoga announced a partnership that will redefine educational collaboration in Ontario. Starting September 2025, the two institutions will launch a College-Within-a-School (CWAS) program.

The licensed agreement between Grand Erie and Conestoga will allow for significant renovations at the Tollgate Technical Skills Centre (TTSC), including a dedicated wing of the school, additional parking and storage facilities. Conestoga will invest $5 million in renovations, incorporating technology and resources to ensure a high-quality learning experience at TTSC, located at 112 Tollgate Road.

Relocating the programs Conestoga currently delivers at the Brantford Airport to TTSC provides students with a seamless transition into post-secondary education and enables the college to offer an even broader range of programming. Delivering hands-on practical training to an increasing student population in the Brantford/Brant County community will help address local needs and support the area's economy.

Stratford

Conestoga's expansion in Stratford marks a significant milestone in our commitment to fostering innovation and growth while addressing the evolving needs of today's workforce. Our new location at 60 Erie Street will welcome students in September 2025 for practical training and hands-on experiences aligned with current industry demands.

Programs will bridge the skills gap, equipping learners with the knowledge required for success in today's dynamic fields like business, health and life sciences, community services, hospitality and culinary arts, interdisciplinary studies and creative industries.

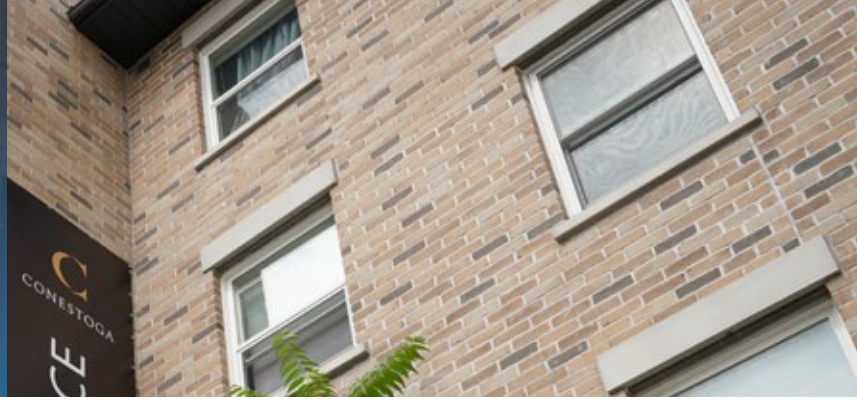
Waterloo

Conestoga's new 10,000-square-foot esports facility is set to open in fall 2025 and will be strategically located within one of the fastest-growing tech sectors in North America and home to the college's School of Applied Computer Science & Information Technology. The space will allow for high-performance play, high-quality streaming and production, and innovation in gaming and simulation with top-tier gaming PCs, a premier console station, immersive virtual reality and simulation stations, a full production suite, premier competitive stage, and athletic team operations room.

The new arena will build on the college's commitment to provide opportunities for student engagement while also engaging the broader community. Conestoga continues to work with Explore Waterloo Region through the Waterloo Region Esports Commission to engage and attract top talent to help establish the region as a renowned esports destination and drive economic impact and growth.

The two-year investment of $40 million for the Waterloo Backfill project included revitalization of former shop spaces, the transformation of the central courtyard that incorporates Indigenous culture and design elements and the reconstruction of the pedestrian landscape area at the north boundary of the campus into a vibrant and welcoming natural environment. The new spaces will be heated and cooled with a zero-carbon open loop geothermal plant.

Housing



Conestoga has made significant investments in our student housing portfolio, securing several properties to increase student accommodation capacity in Kitchener, Waterloo, Brantford and Milton.

In September 2024, Conestoga welcomed students to its new student housing at 60 University Avenue East in Waterloo. The Inn of Waterloo, a leased property at 475 King Street North, also opened to accommodate an additional 300 students. Conestoga boosted the number of beds by approximately 170% over the previous year. Even with a housing guarantee in place for first-year students, the college still had a surplus of 470 beds at the start of the fall term. In winter 2025, the college opened its student housing in Milton – a collection of fully furnished townhomes. A housing guarantee exists there as well for our first-year students.

OUR CURRENT STUDENT HOUSING PROPERTIES INCLUDE:

- 99 Conestoga College Boulevard, Kitchener
- 180 Dalhousie Street, Brantford
- 60 University Avenue East, Waterloo
- 475 King Street North, Waterloo
- Milton townhomes: 1259 Lily Crescent
- Coming 2026: 22 Frederick Street, Kitchener

Domestic Enrolment

Conestoga has established and continued to build partnerships with high schools, community organizations and other stakeholders to promote college programs and services. Liaison officers represented Conestoga at more than 300 events in high schools, colleges, universities and community organizations in fall 2024. Through focused recruitment in the Greater Toronto Area, Conestoga attended 39 new high school events with the support of a dedicated liaison officer.

Conestoga also reviewed existing financial aid packages, scholarships and bursaries to attract and increase enrolment. A new Degree Scholarship was established for fall 2024 and was enhanced for winter 2025. The Big Giveaway Contest provided a $2,000 tuition credit, a lead capture incentive, and was used to grow our prospective mailing list. More than 2,700 entries were received.

A special incentive was offered to Level 1 students starting a program in Stratford in fall 2025. They will receive $200 in Condor Cash and a Conestoga hoodie to celebrate the expansion.

To attract and retain domestic students from underrepresented groups such as Indigenous students, students with disabilities, new Canadians and first-generation college students, the college launched additional initiatives.

The college attended various Indigenous events where more than 670 full-time calendars were distributed. Student recruitment also launched Nanda Giikenim (Seek to Learn), an experiential recruitment event welcoming 60 Indigenous high school students to participate in nine workshops representing the majority of our academic areas.

Progress is also underway to establish a policy for Indigenous seats in high-demand programs.

A student recruitment advisor has been tasked with focusing on new Canadians, connecting with multicultural centres in Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge and Guelph to build relationships and offer workshops.

Additional outreach has taken place across academic schools to welcome young community members to our campuses to experience our facilities, learn about programming options and connect with Conestoga faculty and students.

- In April, nearly 200 high school students from across southern Ontario came to a health expo held at Conestoga's Kitchener - Doon campus to learn more about careers in health care. The inaugural event was hosted by the School of Health & Life Sciences with support from Student Recruitment for Grade 11 and 12 students primarily enrolled in a Specialist High Skills Major - Health and Wellness stream. The specialized provincially approved program allows students to gain credits toward their high school diploma while focusing their learning on a specific economic sector.

- Creative Lab: Coding Your Future was held at the Kitchener - Doon campus in collaboration with Recruitment, the School of Applied Computer Science & Information Technology, Creative Industries and the School of Interdisciplinary Studies - Dual Credit, welcoming 200 high school students from 12 schools for interactive workshops.

- In May, Conestoga's School of Trades & Apprenticeship joined the Epic Jobs event in Brantford where students in Grades 7 and 8 learned about a range of career options in the trades. Employees from the college's Heavy Construction Equipment Operation program ran a hands-on activity, giving the students a chance to operate a backhoe.

- Conestoga's first Girls in Gaming event gave girls and non-binary youth the chance to try game art and design. The School of Creative Industries, the School of Applied Computer Science & Information Technology, and the Virtual and Augmented Reality Lab (VARLab) and Esports Hub hosted the free event for Grades 7 to 10 students in May at the Waterloo campus. During the hands-on workshop, participants learned about the elements of game design and took home a copy of what they created and additional resources to continue exploring the world of gaming.

- A similar event, Go ENG Girl, was held in May at the Cambridge - Fountain Street campus. The morning started with talks by women in engineering, followed by hands-on workshops for 43 young participants and information sessions for their parents. Go ENG Girl started in 2005 in recognition of the need to bring more women into the field, and is now held on campuses across Canada to give young women in grades 7-10 and their parents/caregivers the opportunity to learn more about engineering.

- Go CODE Girl provides an opportunity for girls in grades 9 to 11 to learn about coding and software development as well as explore potential opportunities in the computing and engineering fields.

- Conestoga's School of Hospitality & Culinary Arts hosted its first-ever culinary competition in October showcasing the talent of local high school students. The event provided an opportunity for teens to show off their skills and compete for the grand prize: a full year's tuition valued at approximately $4,500. Four students won the grand prize with an overall value of approximately $16,000.

- Conestoga's Waterloo campus hosted a youth baking contest in February that attracted 16 participants through Muslim Empowerment and Unity (Me&U), a grassroots organization in Kitchener dedicated to supporting Black Muslim youth. For many participants, it was their first time baking, meeting a judge and being in a culinary institution. They walked away not only with new skills but a sense of accomplishment and confidence as well.

- Jill of All Trades (JOAT) launched in 2014 to introduce young women in Grades 9 through 12 to the possibilities of a career in the skilled trades. Trademarked by Conestoga, JOAT is now offered across Canada and the USA in partnership with other post-secondary institutions. These annual events are made possible with the support and funding of many private sponsors.

Digital and Systems Transformation

Conestoga is moving forward with its Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) efforts – a technology journey aimed at replacing our human resource, finance and Student Information Systems (SIS) platforms. Following the RFP process, the college signed a partnership agreement with Ellucian for a SaaS ERP solution. The Information Technology & Systems (IT&S) team has been preparing for this transformation journey by capturing the college's process landscape and integrations to ensure readiness for ERP implementation planning.

Other projects helped optimize technology and digital processes to drive transformation across the college:

UPASS INITIATIVE FOR GRAND RIVER TRANSIT

This includes integration of the college's ONE Card system to allow students to use their ONE Card as a transit pass, providing increased mobility for students to explore the city, participate in off-campus activities and attend part-time jobs. It also allows for more efficient management of student services and transit partnerships through a unified system.

UPGRADED LASERFICHE, THE COLLEGE-WIDE DOCUMENT REPOSITORY AND AUTOMATED WORKFLOW SOLUTION FOR STUDENT FORMS

The upgrade enabled single sign-on, improving security and seamless student access experience and allowed for additional form configuration options, improving form accessibility. The upgrade will allow for service continuation and support Conestoga's needs during the ERP implementation.

PRINT REDUCTION INITIATIVE

In mid-2024, Conestoga implemented a print reduction initiative to reduce printing volumes across the college. The goal is to reduce our printing by two million pages, saving 10 tonnes of paper, or the equivalent of 240 trees. The initiative also aims to reduce our environmental impact by conserving 111,000 kWh of electricity and improving overall air quality. Printers were installed in common areas with integrated ONE Card tap release capabilities to safeguard the confidentiality of printed materials.

DIGITAL SIGNAGE

To support Student Success' digital signage program, IT&S sourced and arranged installation of 45 screens across nine campuses. This includes screens throughout campuses, the Recreation Centre and four digital regional transit displays. The goal of the program is to provide digital signage in areas of the college that are accessible to all students. These screens will rotate student-focused content to share information relevant to events, key academic information and services and support. IT&S support for this initiative includes: project management, display design, procuring, installing and provisioning all hardware.

Artificial Intelligence

AI is rapidly evolving and transforming education in profound ways, evolving teaching practices and enhancing the way students learn.

Last spring, Conestoga students were provided with access to our licensed version of CoPilot. Student resources for the use of AI were compiled by Library Services, and a Generative AI Guidebook for Teaching & Learning at Conestoga was developed that provides information and activities to build understanding and skills for the wise integration of AI into teaching and learning. A faculty guide and Community of Practice are also available for employees. The college's AI SharePoint site continues to be revised with the addition of new resources as needed.

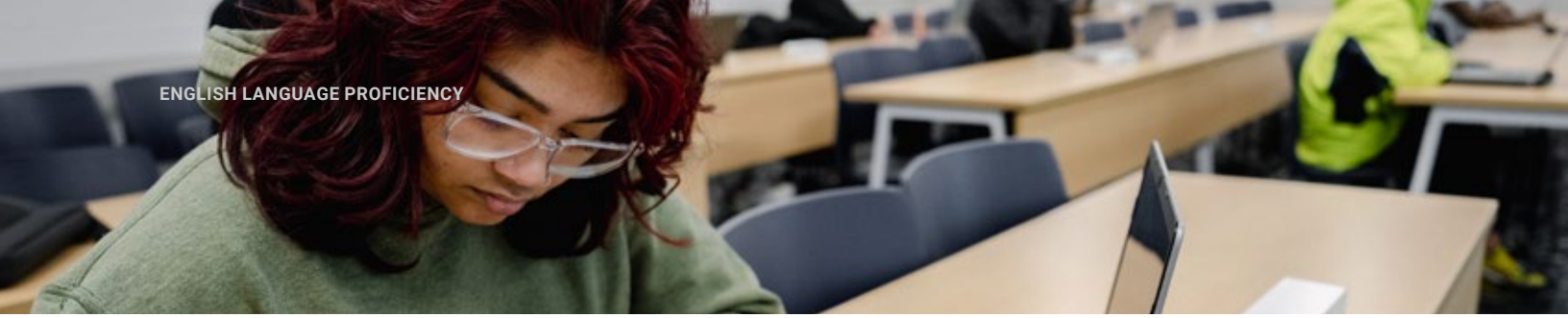
To guide development of resources, Institutional Research conducted a survey with the college's Program Advisory Committee members and industry to better understand how AI was/is impacting industry so we can better prepare our students.

Through a College Equipment and Renewal Fund Grant, the college received $1 million from from MCU to support building Conestoga's AI infrastructure (Data Centre and a new AI and Machine Learning lab) for the School of Applied Computer Science & Technology to support advanced programs in Big Data, AI, data analytics, data science and cybersecurity. The college will direct an additional $1.2 million to this project for construction costs.

Conestoga's Virtual and Augmented Reality Lab (VARLab) was named in an international report that profiles key trends, challenges and opportunities shaping the future of teaching and learning. The EDUCAUSE 2024 Horizons Report identified Conestoga as a post-secondary institution that incorporates educational practices with technology in meaningful ways, focusing on VARLab projects as examples that support mental health and well-being for students.

The report focused on how VARLab's virtual Firefighting - Search and Rescue modules replicate real-world rescue situations, helping students to practice critical decision-making scenarios and better understand the emotional duress they'll face on the job. The report also noted how VARLab's VConestoga - Virtual Community Learning and Climate Change modules create a positive virtual space to facilitate discussions and collaborations on important topics.

In November, the School of Applied Computer Science & Information Technology hosted the inaugural Artificial Intelligence Machine Learning Symposium. Themed: AI Horizons: Catalyst of Innovation, the event brought together industry experts, educators and students to explore the transformative impact of artificial intelligence (AI) across various sectors, focusing predominantly on AI in education.



English Language Proficiency

International students planning to attend the college work directly with Conestoga's transition coordinators in Canada who host a broad series of webinars to share information and field questions about living overseas.

A team of housing coordinators, transition coordinators and international student advisors keep students and parents informed about the range of support and services available through the college and share practical information about topics like housing and health insurance as well as what to expect from our campuses, facilities, student supports and the community itself.

As part of its commitment to diverse learners Conestoga offers several initiatives to support English language proficiency for its students and community members.

General Arts and Science: English Language Studies is designed for students who need to improve their English language skills before entering full-time post-secondary programs. It covers various levels of proficiency and prepares students for academic success

Funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada program offers free English classes for adult newcomers to help improve language skills for daily life, work and further education. The program is available at multiple locations and offers various levels from literacy to Canadian Language Benchmarks Level 8.

Occupation-Specific Language Training provides language training tailored to specific professions, helping newcomers improve their English skills in a work-related context. It is useful for those looking to enter the Canadian workforce in their field of expertise

Conestoga offers preparation courses for the International English Language Testing System which is essential for students who need to meet specific language requirements for academic programs

The college also provides testing services for the Canadian English Language Proficiency Index Program, which assesses English language skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing

Capacity Metrics

123.4M AMOUNT SPENT ON CAPITAL PROJECTS

17 NUMBER OF NEW PROGRAMS APPROVED BY BOARD OF GOVERNORS

125 NUMBER OF CAPITAL PROJECTS

62 NUMBER OF PART-TIME CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS OFFERED IN ONLINE FORMAT

-16% PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN FULL-TIME ENROLMENT*

104 NUMBER OF HYBRID AND ONLINE-SYNCHRONOUS COURSES SUPPORTED BY ONLINE LEARNING CENTRE

3,435 NUMBER OF APPRENTICESHIP STUDENTS

213 NUMBER OF HYBRID AND ONLINE-SYNCHRONOUS COURSES SUPPORTED BY OLC INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNERS AND QA PROCESSES

11,398 NUMBER OF PART-TIME & CONTINUING EDUCATION STUDENTS

248 NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENGAGED IN APPLIED RESEARCH

152 NUMBER OF INDUSTRY/ COMMUNITY RESEARCH PARTNERS

159 NUMBER OF FACULTY ENGAGED IN APPLIED RESEARCH

* Full-time unique student enrolment, including students on co-op terms. Does not include Continuing Education registrations.

2024-25 ACHIEVEMENTS

PILLAR 3

Quality

Demonstrate excellence in programming and services while providing an outstanding learning and working environment for students and employees.

Programming

Conestoga is committed to supporting the needs of the communities we serve. We have fostered growth and innovation to respond to evolving workforce needs. We strive for excellence in the development and delivery of our programs and services and have developed formalized processes to support our ongoing commitment to quality and continuous improvement.

Conestoga's programs – from apprenticeships to diplomas, degrees to post-graduate certificates, continuing education and part-time studies – all reflect Ontario's changing job market and have been designed and developed to help students build the skills and knowledge that today's employers seek.

Conestoga now delivers over 300 career-focused full-time programs in various disciplines, including more than 30 degree programs, that combine theory, practical skills, paid co-op opportunities and other work-integrated learning experiences to prepare students for success in their future career. By leveraging pathways, students can also complete additional diplomas or degrees in a shorter time frame through bridging opportunities

Our faculty bring expertise from their field, and our classrooms and labs allow students to practice their skills in leading-edge facilities equipped to today's industry standards. Opportunities also exist to participate in applied research and develop solutions for real-world industry clients.

Our programs are developed in consultation with more than 1,000 Program Advisory Committee members comprised of employers pulled from key sectors who help inform curriculum.

Conestoga has a long history of degree delivery. We were the first college in Ontario to offer accredited engineering degrees, and now find ourselves celebrating the milestone. Conestoga's Integrated Telecommunications and Computer Technologies and Bachelor of Electronic Systems Engineering programs recently brought together more than 100 students, alumni, faculty, staff and industry representatives to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the programs.

At a time when the post-secondary sector is forced to cancel programs, Conestoga continues to meet evolving community needs and workforce demands through expanded program offerings. Micro-credentials, custom training solutions, a broadened selection of diploma and Bachelors programs have been developed to address needs in key sectors and disciplines. This fall the college will welcome students to six new degree programs. Conestoga also has three Masters programs under review.

Conestoga strives for excellence in the development and delivery of programs and services and has developed formalized processes to support the college's ongoing commitment to quality and continuous improvement to ensure programs meet the needs of students and the workplace.

Conestoga is committed to a multi-faceted program review process that identifies program enhancement opportunities and contributes to student success. This process is designed to reflect the needs of learners and meet government and external accreditation requirements.

The program review process includes annual monitoring, reflection and action for all programs as well as a major review for each program at least once every five years. This process supports our ability to positively impact the learning of current and future students and supports our graduates' ability to meet the needs of employers. Our ongoing review process also allows for the identification of additional program development opportunities and needs.

Conestoga engages in the provincially-legislated College Quality Assurance Audit Process (CQAAP) on a five-year cycle. CQAAP is an opportunity to share current processes and future plans with an externally-trained panel that reviews the college's quality assurance processes at an institutional level. The external review provides a formal report that includes commendations, affirmations and recommendations for the college.

COMING FALL 2025:

- Bachelor of Emergency Management
- Bachelor of Applied Technology - Construction Management
- Bachelor of Community Mental Health & Wellness
- Bachelor of Risk, Threat and Crime Analysis
- Bachelor of Data Analytics
- Bachelor of Hospitality Management

Conestoga completed a College Quality Assurance Audit Process audit in spring 2025. Preparations for the audit were a true demonstration of Conestoga's collaborative spirit. Six working groups were established to support the development of the college's self-study report which also included over 1,000 individual pieces of evidence. Over the course of the two-day audit, more than 150 individuals met with the auditors speaking to the culture of quality in place at Conestoga.

The annual Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) survey, conducted since 1998, collects and reports performance data for Ontario colleges in a number of areas. Graduate employment rates, graduate satisfaction and employer satisfaction are among the indicators the Ministry of Colleges and Universities uses to assess and recognize colleges' achievements in preparing students for the labour market.

Colleges Ontario last released a KPI performance report in February 2024. Data showed Conestoga holds a graduation rate of 72.9 per cent.

Conestoga also posted strong numbers in the areas of graduate satisfaction and graduate employment.

Within six months of graduation, 90 per cent of Conestoga graduates were able to find employment, and more than 80 per cent of graduates reported they were very satisfied with their experience at Conestoga.

More than 92 per cent of employers reported being "very satisfied" with Conestoga graduates, in line with the provincial average of 91.8 per cent.

At the time of publication, the release of KPI data for the 2024-25 reporting period is pending. Once available, they can be found through the Colleges Ontario website: www.collegesontario.org

Conestoga Achievements

- Conestoga placed among Canada's top 20 research colleges for 2024 (Research Infosource)
- Conestoga was named among Canada's best engineering technology schools in 2024, ranking number 6 out of 10 institutions that made the list (University Magazine)
- Conestoga was among Canada's best culinary schools in 2025, ranking third out of 30 colleges and universities (University Magazine)
- Named best college in Ontario for 2024 and 2025 (CourseCompare)
- Named best trade school in Canada (CourseCompare)
- Named Canada's Best Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program of 2025 (CourseCompare)
- Placed second in Best Cybersecurity Certification Programs of 2025 (CourseCompare)
- Placed third in Canada's Best Co-op Programs of 2025 (CourseCompare)
- Placed third in Best Massage Therapy Schools in Canada of 2025 (CourseCompare)
- Placed eighth in Canada's Best Culinary Schools of 2025 (CourseCompare)
- Placed eleventh in Best Coding Bootcamps in Canada of 2025 (CourseCompare)
- Placed twelfth in Best Nursing Schools in Canada of 2025 (Course Compare)

2024-25 INSTITUTIONAL AWARDS

April 2024	Bloom awarded the 2024 Green Leadership Award by Kostuch Media Ltd., publisher of Foodservice and Hospitality magazine and Hotelier magazine
April 2024	Stratford campus nominated for a Stratford & District Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Award
April 2024	Conestoga presented with a silver Applied Research and Innovation Excellence Award from Colleges and Institutes Canada - the second year in a row the college has been honoured with the award
June 2024	Jim Galloway awarded the 2023 Gold Award from the Canadian Welding Bureau Association recognizing the best research paper presented at the annual CanWeld conference
May 2024	Conestoga's Virtual and Augmented Reality Lab (VARLab) was highlighted in the EDUCAUSE 2024 Horizons Report, which recognized Conestoga as a post-secondary institution that incorporates educational practices with technology in meaningful ways
May 2024	Jill of All Trades received the Group Achievement award in the 2024 Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest Rogers Women of the Year Awards, recognizing Rosie Hessian and Brenda Gilmore
May 2024	Media & Design Services in Conestoga's Online Learning Centre was recognized with top honours for projects submitted to the 2024 Communicator Awards
August 2024	Conestoga selected as an Excellence Awardee for the 2024 Canada's Safest Employers Awards
August 2024	Conestoga named a finalist for a Milton Chamber of Commerce Community Excellence Award in the innovation excellence category
September 2024	Conestoga shortlisted for five 2024 Open Education Awards for Excellence, recognizing three of the college's open education champions and two resources for their innovative contributions to the international open education community
September 2024	Conestoga was the only Canadian institution recognized at the PIEoneer Awards, receiving the Highly Commended designation in the Business School of the Year category
September 2024	Conestoga's Cowan Centre for Medical Sciences and Biotechnology received national recognition for innovation, design and functionality with a Best of Canada Award from Canadian Interiors magazine
September 2024	Professor Homeira Ekhtari named a 2024 Paul R. Lawrence Fellow to continue developing her case research skills, granted by the Case Research Foundation
September 2024	Keith Müller named to the Ontario Hostelry Institute Hall of Fame
October 2024	Kirsty Bradley-McMurtrie named 2024 Security Director of the Year by Canadian Security magazine

2024-25 INSTITUTIONAL AWARDS

October 2024	Research, Innovation & Entrepreneurship presented with the Milton Chamber of Commerce Innovation award
November 2024	Dea Watson honoured with a Faculty Award of Excellence at the Ontario Colleges Marketing Competition
January 2025	Chris Lamarucciola nominated for an esports Educator of the Year award through Scholastic Esports Awards
February 2025	King Charles III Coronation Medals awarded to Ivan Luksic, a professor in the School of Business, and Norma McDonald-Ewing, associate vice-president of Employee, Experience & Development
March 2025	Two Conestoga development projects recognized with Grand Valley Construction Association Building Excellence Awards
March 2025	Jim Galloway, a professor in the Welding Engineering Technology programs, was honoured with the 2025 CWBA Fellow Award

2024-25 STUDENT AWARDS

April 2024	Three students in Conestoga's Financial Planning Services graduate certificate program placed third at the national CIFP Case Challenge 2024
April 2024	Four students in the Police Foundations program recognized with industry and fitness awards, including awards established in memory of Conestoga graduates killed in the line of duty
May 2024	Conestoga students finished with 10 medals at the 2024 Skills Ontario Competition
May 2024	Four Conestoga students named as a Global Top 100 team in Google's 2024 Developer Student Club Solution Challenge
May 2024	Conestoga's newly founded electric vehicle team joined a challenge hosted by the University of Waterloo for students to showcase their engineering skills, placing first among the participating colleges and third overall
May 2024	Two Conestoga students finished with silver and bronze medals at the 2024 Skills Canada National Competition: Cameron Krause was recognized with a silver in the brick-laying competition, and Jackson Macor finished with a bronze in welding
June 2024	The Ontario Colleges Athletic Association named Conestoga Condor Malachi Ramsay its 2023-24 Male Athlete of the Year - the first-ever student-athlete from Conestoga to earn the honour
June 2024	Conestoga Condors esports honoured with five National Association of Collegiate Esports (NACE) award nominations, marking the first NACE nominations for the program launched in 2020

2024-25 STUDENT AWARDS	
August 2024	A team of Packaging Engineering Technician students won the household products category of the 2024 Student AmeriStar competition hosted by the Institute of Packaging Professionals
September 2024	Design student Alexa Flikkema won the first-year student category in the 2024 RGD Student Awards
September 2024	The Conestoga Condors men's cricket team placed third at the Canadian College and University Cricket (CCUC) national championships
September 2024	Two teams of Conestoga Bachelor of Interior Design students awarded second and third-place prizes in an annual student design competition hosted by Construction Specifications Canada (CSC) Grand Valley and Toronto chapters
October 2024	A team of Conestoga students won second place in a case-study competition hosted by the Toronto chapter of the Association of Supply Chain Management
November 2024	Condors Esports varsity esports teams competed in the annual Canadian Esports Nationals, claiming second place in Rocket League, Call of Duty and Valorant Game Changers women's, and also placing Top 4 in Valorant men's
November 2024	Four Bachelor of Public Relations students represented Conestoga in the PrimeTime Sports Business Competition in Toronto, advancing to the semi-final round

Student Health and Well-Being

Student health and well-being is a priority for Conestoga and we remain committed to ensuring students have access to a supportive environment where they are empowered to succeed. This commitment is reflected in the inclusive programming and services delivered through the Student Success team that enrich the college experience, maximize student potential and support the achievement of individual goals.

Through education, programming and opportunities to get involved, Conestoga is committed to welcoming and including all members of our diverse college community through initiatives that allow each student to develop a sense of belonging and connection.

During the past year, the following initiatives were implemented by Student Health and Wellness Services to support students' academic success through promotion of their health and well-being:

HEALTH PROMOTION: Developed an affordable recipe cookbook with meal planning tips and resource tables offering healthy food and nutrition education.

INDIGENOUS COLLABORATION: Partnered with Indigenous Services to integrate Indigenous knowledge into Peer Wellness Services, aiming to hire an Indigenous student peer wellness navigator.

MENTAL HEALTH COORDINATION: Introduced a mental health coordinator role for immediate risk assessment and intervention, serving as a liaison with hospitals and community resources.

ATHLETICS AND RECREATION COLLABORATION: Partnered with Athletics and Recreation to enhance counselling support access for varsity athletes. The mental health coordinator dedicated a half day each week at the recreation facility to increase visibility and facilitate direct appointment booking. Tailored educational materials on specific mental health issues were developed and promoted to varsity athletes.

PEER WELLNESS SERVICES: Continued to offer drop-in wellness support, weekly virtual workshops, wellness resources, and classroom presentations on mental health.

SUICIDE PREVENTION: Delivered several Safe Talk training sessions to college employees and student leaders, emphasizing suicide prevention.

CAMPUS WELL-BEING SURVEY: Participated in the Canadian Campus Wellbeing Survey (CCWS) with over 2,225 students providing feedback to improve programs and services. Analysis of the data will identify key action priorities.

COUNSELLING AND MEDICAL SERVICES: Ongoing treatment of students' health and mental health needs to ensure academic success and fulfillment of WIL and co-op placement requirements.

A comprehensive Student Success Mental Health plan is under development to strategically align mental health initiatives with broader college goals, enhancing student well-being and academic success. Key components include:

- Conducting thorough research to leverage evidence-informed approaches and best practices.
- Facilitating focus groups and launching the Canadian Campus Wellbeing Survey to gather diverse perspectives and insights from Conestoga's employees and students.
- Developing a framework consisting of strategic pillars and corresponding recommendations to prioritize mental health initiatives, projects and programming for the 2025-26 year.

Renovations are also underway to create a revitalized, centralized space at the Kitchener - Doon campus ensuring all Student Success services and the student wellness lounge are easily accessible. This initiative aims to optimize service delivery and help students find the support they need more efficiently.

The new Student Life Centre will provide seamless and accessible support by inviting students to one common space for holistic student support services across multiple teams. The new space design will help embody the Student Success ethos of "Every Step" as it facilitates a better way of working and promoting success in the student body. Additionally, an updated space will help students find the support they need on their first visit, removing any uncertainty related to where to find support.

Other student spaces include the E Wing Exchange which opened in January 2025 at the Doon campus featuring a variety of seating, from informal lounge chairs and sofas to bar stools and ledges to dining and café-style tables. Planters were integrated to add greenery, and acoustic panels have been added to reduce noise.

Inclusive Services

Conestoga is committed to increasing Indigenous learners' access to and success in post-secondary education and closing the participation and achievement gap. The college's response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action continues through ongoing emphasis on improving education and attainment levels and success rates of Indigenous learners.

Developing culturally appropriate curricula, including the teaching of Indigenous languages, as well as offering a range of programming, services and research opportunities that promote Indigenous ways of knowing and reconciliation remain a priority.

In April 2024, the first Indigenous Education Symposium was held at Conestoga to share information about Indigenous approaches to education, using culture and experiential learning opportunities to encourage college employees to think about how they can integrate those unique perspectives into classrooms.

Hosted by Indigenous Initiatives, in partnership with Program Planning and Pathways and Teaching and Learning, the symposium also touched on the college's focus on expanding supports and services for educators to incorporate Indigenous knowledge into their teaching practices.

New renovation projects at Conestoga reflect the college's commitment to fostering a learning environment that recognizes and honours Indigenous culture. Two existing classrooms were transformed into Indigenous-inspired learning spaces to provide an inclusive and culturally rich educational experience for students.

The new classrooms were designed to integrate native materials and offer a flexible space for learning. The moveable desks and chairs allow for various configurations, supporting diverse teaching and learning styles, and the intricate circular wood ceilings incorporate the four colours that represent the cardinal directions: North, South, East and West. The classrooms are equipped with advanced exhaust systems to allow for traditional smudging ceremonies, making them respectful and reflective of Indigenous traditions.

The classroom renovations represent Phase One of a larger project that will see more Indigenous-inspired elements incorporated into Conestoga's learning spaces. Phase 2 of the Indigenous Classroom Project includes the creation of a large gathering circle between the two Skilled Trades Campus buildings. Conestoga has engaged Indigenous artist Jackie Traverse to design the soffit and fascia elements of the gathering circle structure, which is expected to be complete when the second phase of the new Conestoga Skilled Trades Campus opens in 2026.

At the Guelph – Speedvale campus, a new mural by Indigenous artist Isaac Murdoch was launched in October in the central courtyard of the newly renovated building. The mural, stretching across one wall of the courtyard, and reflected in the windows opposite, includes people alongside various animals and plants to capture the wide diversity of this world.

Through Conestoga's website, virtual tours of Conestoga campuses are now available in the Indigenous language of Anishinaabemowin, considered an endangered language because it is no longer the primary language spoken by Anishinaabek children.

Indigenous Research Highlights

- The Office of Indigenous Initiatives at Conestoga, in partnership with Mississaugas of the Credit and the School of Creative Industries, was awarded a $1-million grant from the federal government for an Indigenous-led applied research project to revitalize the endangered Indigenous language of Anishinaabemowin. Gi-inwewin Gi-naazikaanag / The Returning to our Languages Project was chosen for one of six grants - with Conestoga being the only college receiving funding. This is the largest Indigenous research grant awarded to Conestoga. The funding comes from a joint initiative between the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council to establish a national research program to advance the collective understanding of reconciliation as explained in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Call to Action 65.
- In December, the Wiijindamaan Indigenous Land Futurity and Gdoo-naaganinaa garden at Conestoga received an honourable mention for urban agriculture in the 2024 Excellence in Agriculture Awards. The Wiijindamaan Indigenous Land Futurity and Gdoo-naaganinaa garden focus on exposing students and the broader Waterloo Region community to Indigenous agricultural practices.

Accessibility Plan

During the reporting period, the college launched its 2024-2029 multi-year accessibility plan.

The plan was developed through engagement with students and employees through interviews, focus groups, drop-in sessions and surveys to identify areas of strengths and improvement. The plan reflects that feedback, and the college is committed to actioning it.

The accessibility plan outlines concrete actions Conestoga plans to take over the next five years.

Also available to employees is a new workshop series developed by Teaching and Learning: Teaching to Promote Belonging, Equity, Diversity, Accessibility, Justice and Inclusion. This new five-part Recognition of Learning series builds on the workshops offered through the Teaching for Student Diversity Series. In this series, participants go beyond understanding student diversity, offering growth in your knowledge and teaching skills to foster belonging and equity, enhance accessibility and strive towards justice and inclusion-orientated learning spaces within our diverse student body.

Engaged Employees

Conestoga has a long-standing commitment to the professional growth and development of its employees, rooted in over four decades of intentional investment in learning. Our annual strategy for professional development follows a research-informed approach, incorporating clear learning objectives, inclusive design methodologies and continuous evaluation. Offerings align with strategic institutional goals, ensuring employees have the knowledge, skills and professional competencies needed to thrive in a dynamic, learner-centred post-secondary environment.

In 2024–25, more than 400 professional and personal development workshops were offered through the Employee Experience & Development (EEXD) team, resulting in 9,685 registrations. These offerings are the result of strong collaboration between EEXD, Teaching and Learning, and the Student Success team, leveraging both internal expertise and strategic external partnerships.

Broader educational goals were also supported through $165,000 in professional development funds and $280,600 in tuition assistance for 43 employees seeking post-secondary credentials underscoring Conestoga's dedication to fostering a culture of continuous learning.

Conestoga continues to enhance the employee experience through targeted, inclusive initiatives that support well-being, growth and connection.

One-on-one coaching provided personalized support, helping employees align their strengths with professional goals through a confidential and customized approach.

Initiatives like the United Way campaign encouraged community involvement. Activities were designed to be accessible and inclusive creating a meaningful engagement opportunity for all employees. Take Our Kids to Work Day welcomed 46 Grade 9 students for hands-on exploration in high-interest fields, supporting employee caregivers and sparking early career interest.

To continue support of employee mental health and well-being, guided sessions on the Homewood EFAP were offered to increase awareness of available resources and encourage well-being.

External awards nominations celebrate employee contributions, fostering loyalty and recognition.

Get to Know Conestoga modules increased interdepartmental engagement, helping employees build connections and enhance collaboration. This series saw a 50 per cent increase in participation over the previous year.

The Collaborative Connection workshop equipped convocation staff with tools to navigate cultural differences and de-escalate emotional situations while supporting graduates and their guests. Participants reported increased confidence and reduced stress.

Employees engaged in inclusive learning through the EDI Series, Intercultural Customer Service, Rainbow Diversity Training, Accessibility Fundamentals and Indigenous-focused workshops. A new partnership with the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion expands access to national Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging resources.

The international leadership team engaged in a *Strengths Deployment Inventory* debrief, strengthening trust, inclusion and team effectiveness.

One of Canada's Safest Employers

Conestoga employees have the benefit of working with one of Canada's safest employers.

In August, the college was selected as an Excellence Awardee for the 2024 Canada's Safest Employers Awards honouring outstanding health and safety professionals and companies for their achievements, leadership and innovation.

The awards have been recognized as the leading independent awards program in the occupational health and safety profession for 14 years.

The awards team emphasized Conestoga's dedication to employee well-being.

Community Engagement Here and Abroad

For nearly 60 years, Conestoga has been deeply integrated and essential to the identity of Waterloo Region, fostering meaningful connections with the community to create lasting impact through collaboration, education and service. As the college's footprint has increased, so has its power to drive positive change across the communities it serves.

Conestoga actively engages with seven local chambers of commerce as well as the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. Increased engagement has been prioritized with hospital foundations, food banks, community and industry associations and member organizations. Through these efforts each academic school and department has been given the opportunity to engage with leaders from their respective sectors to build relationships and secure support for college priorities.

Across our eight campus communities, we sponsored nearly 50 community events, attended and hosted chamber events, participated on governance boards and business advisory councils to support initiatives that engage elected officials, government and community leaders and industry partners.

Hosting on-campus events throughout the year provided a unique opportunity for community members to tour the college's facilities and created opportunities for internal teams and academic schools to network and engage with industry and community leaders to explore partnerships.

Through a partnership with the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce, Conestoga is supporting the development of video series to highlight Vision 1 Million – an initiative to ready Waterloo Region as its population grows to one million by 2050.

Beyond our campuses, the college's employees, students and alumni have positioned Conestoga as a vital partner in addressing local challenges and promoting social well-being through ongoing and diverse community engagement initiatives that span across academic schools and service areas.

In June, Conestoga celebrated the opening of the City of Cambridge's new outdoor soccer complex, made possible through a partnership with the college. Conestoga contributed nearly $2 million towards the complex to provide field conversions and upgrades, improved benches and audience seating, the installation of a digital scoreboard, a storage area and other related amenities. The complex will allow Conestoga to enhance its hosting capabilities within the provincial and national collegiate associations and provide a first-class tournament and fan engagement experience for Conestoga and the local community.

Celebrating its 14th year in 2024, Creative Day for Social Good (CD4SG) is a two-day event where Conestoga Graphic Design and Public Relations students and industry volunteers work together on projects for charitable organizations that can benefit from free creative services. Since its inception, CD4SG has helped 175 charities by providing $1.5 million worth of marketing materials. More than 1,300 students have joined the social initiative alongside art directors, writers, account managers and other industry volunteers.

The 40th Annual Oktoberfest Family Breakfast attracted thousands to Bingemans conference centre in Kitchener last October. The event featured over 40 students from Conestoga's School of Hospitality & Culinary Arts who prepared pancakes for the community. Admission was free, with donations to the Grand River Hospital Foundation or the Food Bank of Waterloo Region encouraged.

Culinary students also prepared and packaged 1,000 meals in support of the Cambridge Food Bank. The initiative is part of La Tablée des Chefs, which mobilizes teachers and culinary students to prepare meals for distribution to food banks across Canada. Through another initiative, the School of Business spearheaded a fundraiser to assist the Cambridge Food Bank after it incurred damage and food loss from a fire. Conestoga employees collected more than 530 pounds of food and raised $6,570.

Through the Centre for Health Care Research & Innovation's Building Intergenerational Connections between Seniors and Students program at Trinity Village Care Centre in Kitchener, Conestoga students are volunteering with people living with dementia, guiding them through art sessions designed to foster meaningful connections and a sense of belonging between the students and seniors.

In November, Be-Dah-Bin Gamik, Indigenous Services at Conestoga, hosted the 15th annual traditional Pow Wow at the Kitchener - Doon campus which drew about 2,500 community members to celebrate culture that is Indigenous to Canada. The all-day event featured 144 registered dancers and eight drums. Conestoga is home to one of the largest Pow Wows held in Waterloo Region, providing the Indigenous community with a safe space to celebrate and share their traditions with each other and the wider community.

Support of other community events included the Lumen Festival in Waterloo. Conestoga helped light up the popular festival as both a sponsor and participant. The School of Creative Industries attracted visitors interested in trying out two virtual reality headsets at the light festival held in September.

In January, Conestoga Event Management students hosted a fundraising event at THEMUSEUM in downtown Kitchener to benefit the Dr. Anne Innis Dagg Foundation and pay tribute to the Waterloo giraffologist's legacy. The students worked for two months to organize, market and execute the event to support the foundation and its efforts in giraffe conservation.

Through another initiative at THEMUSEUM, second-year students in Conestoga's Visual Merchandising Arts program designed and built a Nutcracker-themed display for the public to enjoy over the holiday season. The project is part of a partnership that began when the college's Kitchener - Downtown campus opened in 2020.

To elevate this year's work, the Conestoga students partnered with professors and students from Trier University of Applied Sciences in Trier, Germany through a Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) program -- an international network of virtual student exchanges, joint coursework and knowledge sharing. The German team travelled to Waterloo Region to help with the installation of the display.

In December, staff and students in Conestoga's School of Trades & Apprenticeship designed and built a new float for Santa to use in the KW Santa Claus Parade. The college team volunteered their time to craft the float, replacing the old one that had been in use since 1979.

The annual Dodgeball for Danny event enjoyed a record-breaking year, raising $10,000 for the Shine Foundation and its mission to support children with life-threatening health challenges. Conestoga students in Advanced Police Studies have organized the fundraiser annually for 15 years to commemorate the life of Danny Holmes, son of fitness instructor Colleen Holmes-Cummings who died of cancer when he was only four.

At Conestoga, community engagement also includes a global perspective. The college's Global Initiatives office focuses on education abroad programming, academic and research partnerships and exchanges, as well as virtual and on-campus activities to help internationalize the Conestoga community and create new global opportunities that support student engagement and demand.

In April, three Conestoga faculty participated in learning and knowledge sharing through an international study week in the Netherlands. The theme was vitality, health and well-being, and was hosted by the Windesheim University of Applied Sciences at Zwolle. Professors were invited from institutions around the globe to discuss solutions to United Nations Sustainable Development goals, with the aim of bringing together bright teaching and student minds to share knowledge on how to solve the world's pressing issues.

Last April, Conestoga students embarked on a study abroad experience to Costa Rica to become immersed in and learn about Indigenous communities and cultures. Many students on this excursion enrolled in the Costa Rica: A Case Study on Happiness course, offered through the School of Interdisciplinary Studies, and were able to participate in the trip as part of their curriculum. The course examines the cultural, social and linguistic make-up of present-day Costa Rica to help address the question of how happiness is achieved.

Conestoga has also joined Academics Without Borders (AWB), a network of Canadian post-secondary institutions that assist low and middle-income countries build the capacity of their post-secondary institutions to drive development and improve the quality of life in communities around the world.

Through its membership in the network, Conestoga faculty and staff will have special access to volunteer partnership opportunities provided by AWB through the organization's existing relationships with institutions and countries around the globe. Faculty will also be able to propose projects to AWB in conjunction with their post-secondary partners in the developing world.

Quality Metrics

90% GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT RATE*

72.9% GRADUATION RATE*

92.3% EMPLOYER SATISFACTION*

406 NUMBER OF WORK-SHOPS OFFERED BY EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE & DEVELOPMENT (EED)

9,685 NUMBER OF REGISTRATIONS IN WORKSHOPS OFFERED BY EED

100% PER CENT OF ANNUAL PROGRAM REFLECTIONS COMPLETED

49 MAJOR PROGRAM REVIEWS COMPLETED

98 NUMBER OF PROGRAMS WITH AN ACCREDITOR RELATIONSHIP

* Reflects 2022-2023 KPI data released by Colleges Ontario.
The release of 2023-2024 KPI data is pending at the time of publication.

Appendicies

KPI Performance Report

The following pages include required reporting items as established by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities' Governance and Accountability Framework.

	2017-18		2018-19		2019-2020		2020-2021		2021-2022		2022-2023		2023-2024	
	Conestoga	Ontario Colleges	**Conestoga**	Ontario Colleges	**Conestoga**	Ontario Colleges	**Conestoga**	Ontario Colleges	**Conestoga**	Ontario Colleges	**Conestoga**	Ontario Colleges	**Conestoga**	Ontario Colleges
	%		%		%		%		%		%		%	
Post-Secondary Graduation Rates	**72.8**	66.8	**74.1**	67.2	**72.4**	N/A	**73.7**	65.9	**68.2**	65.2	**72.9**	65	**NA**	NA
KPI Provincial Survey:														
KPI Employment Rate	**89.3**	85.7	**88.4**	86.2	**86.9**	85.5	**83.2**	77.0	**86.2**	83.4	**90**	85.8	**NA**	NA
KPI Employer Satisfaction	**92.8**	92.5	**88.2**	89.6	**92.9**	91.1	**90.5**	90.6	**92.9**	88.9	**92.3**	91.8	**NA**	NA
KPI Graduate Satisfaction	**82.7**	79.5	**80.7**	79.9	**81.6**	78.9	**80.9**	78.0	**79.4**	75.4	**80.7**	76.8	**NA**	NA
Program-Related Student Satisfaction	**80.4**	80.0	**82.3**	82.2	**83.4**	83.2	**84.1**	82.3	**86.4**	84.4	**87.4**	87.4	**NA**	NA

The release of 2023-2024 KPI data by Colleges Ontario is pending at the time of publication.

2021-22 Conestoga graduation rate was the SMA rate while history was KPI rate.

2021-22 Program-related Student Satisfaction rates modified slightly based on new methodology.

2021-22 program related SS rates modified slightly based on new methodology. Note: 2021-2022 was the first official year for the OCSES

SUMMARY OF ADVERTISING AND MARKETING COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

Conestoga received no advertising or marketing complaints in 2024-25

2024-2025 GOVERNORS

Okechukwu Abah
Frank Boutzis
Amanda Brennan
Martha George
Helen Jowett
Daniela Lee
Joanna Loebach
Bob Magee
Heather McLachlin
Aaron Scheewe
Erin Sleeth
Jan Stroh
Real Tanguay
John Tibbits, President
Matthew Thibodeau

REPORTING ITEM: FULL-TIME POST-SECONDARY ENROLMENT BY SCHOOL

	2018-19*±	2019-20*±	2020-21*±	2021-22*	2022-23*	2023-24*±	2024-25*±
Applied Computer Science & Information Technology	919	1,067	1,262	1,675	2,092	3,230	5,359
Business & Hospitality	5,666	6,664	5,661	7,562	7,744	13,323	8,815
Community Services	1,556	1,646	1,534	1,558	1,660	2,342	2,788
Creative Industries	898	926	762	774	864	1,231	1,164
Engineering and Trades	3,167	3,266	2,757	2,656	2,643	3,239	5,907
Health & Life Sciences (and Nursing)	2,492	2,466	2,379	3,100	2,559	3,761	6,047
Interdisciplinary Studies	768	820	850	736	989	2,276	2,120
Workforce Development, Continuing Education & Online Learning	1,043	2,411	2,402	4,459	6,028	11,244	-----
Total	**16,509**	**19,266**	**17,607**	**22,520**	**24,579**	**40,646**	**32,200**

*These numbers do not include co-op students or Continuing Education registrations.

± Year-over-year enrolment comparisons have been impacted by the creation or dissolution of college schools. Notably:

- The creation of the School of Community Services resulted in the redistribution of programs from Health & Life Sciences.
- Similarly, the creation of the School of Applied Computer Science & InformationTechnology and Creative Industries resulted in the redistribution of programs from Engineering & IT and Trades and Media & Design
- School of Workforce Development, Continuing Education and Online Learning was dissolved in 2024-25, resulting in programs being reassigned to the school most closely aligned with program content

REPORTING ITEM: FULL-TIME POST-SECONDARY ENROLMENT BY CREDENTIAL

	2017-18*	2018-19*	2019-20*	2020-21*	2021-22*	2022-23*	2024-25*
Certificate	11%	10%	8%	7%	12%	9%	13%
Diploma	36%	36%	36%	34%	29%	29%	33%
Advanced Diploma	21%	17%	14%	14%	9%	8%	7%
Graduate Certificate	16%	24%	30%	31%	41%	46%	41%
Degree	16%	13%	11%	13%	9%	8%	6%

*These numbers do not include co-op students or Continuing Education registrations.

REPORTING ITEM: APPRENTICESHIPS

2024-25 Achievements

Conestoga is a provincial leader in the delivery of trades and apprenticeship training to serve industry needs and the growing community. Comprehensive programming includes a wide range of post-secondary trades programs that provide pathways to employment in skilled trades careers as well as pre-apprenticeship training and in-school training for apprentices.

Phase 1 of the Conestoga Skilled Trades Campus opened in 2022 and was an important step towards the modernization of trades training and education. Over the coming years, the campus will provide much-needed capacity to address some of Ontario's urgent skills shortages as well as create opportunities to introduce more diverse learners to the vast potential of careers in the trades.

There are estimates that about 700,000 skilled trades workers are expected to retire across Canada in the coming years, creating an ever-growing need to recruit and train thousands more.

We are committed to addressing the skilled trades shortage by providing training for thousands of apprentices and future tradespeople.

The first phase of the campus features a 322,000 sq ft building with more than 150,000 sq ft of shops and labs, designed and equipped to meet the unique requirements of trades education and training.

Phase 2 of the project began in 2023 and is expected to welcome students in September 2026. When finished, the campus will serve as home to all the college's skilled trades programs and help position Conestoga as Canada's premier destination for skilled trades education and training.

The new building will be 220,000 sq. ft. and home to a variety of trades in a purpose-designed space. There is also a focus on making the building as sustainable as possible from the ground up - starting with geothermal energy to offset heating and cooling costs to the use of renewable materials.

Remaining trades programs at other Conestoga sites will move to the new building: both post-secondary and apprenticeship motive power trades programs from Guelph and post-secondary carpentry programs from the Dearborn site in Waterloo to create a comprehensive trades campus.

The campus hosts several events that welcome the community on site to explore careers in the trades.

Last spring, a unique collaboration between Conestoga and the Laurier Centre for Women in Science (WinS) created the first photo-research exhibit of its kind spotlighting women in the skilled trades.

Titled Building Equitable Trades, the exhibit exploring identity, representation, and inclusion in the skilled trades was unveiled at an event at the Conestoga Skilled Trades Campus in Cambridge on May 16.

Portraits of women working in the skilled trades were incorporated into individual displays to match their trade that were specially built by Conestoga employees, and accompanied by an explanation weaving together personal experiences with research findings from WinS.

Delivered annually through the college's School of Trades & Apprenticeship, Jill of All Trades is designed to help girls better understand the potential of skilled trades careers. This year's event drew nearly 300 participants joined from 11 school boards across southwestern Ontario and were supported by volunteers that included industry partners, faculty and graduates. Students participated in a selection of hands-on workshops in the construction, industrial and motive power sectors.

Since its inception in 2014, Jill of All Trades has expanded to institutions across Canada as well as the U.S.

A new initiative, Girls with Tools and Toast, welcomed young girls, trans or non-binary youth entering Grades 6 to 10 to an event that included a keynote address from Megan Dobbin, Conestoga graduate and welding specialist with Magna International, followed by a hands-on trades activity. The girls also toured the Conestoga Skilled Trades Campus and tried the college's state-of-the-art virtual reality welding simulator.

Another event, Teens Try Trades, gave teenagers who identify as girls or gender diverse the opportunity to try their hands at carpentry and plumbing.

On June 6, the Conestoga community gathered at the Conestoga Skilled Trades Campus to celebrate the 15th annual Trades & Apprenticeship Awards which recognize outstanding student achievement in the motive power, construction and industrial trades. More than 270 awards valued at a combined $500,000 were presented.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING DAYS

	2017-18 6 hour days	2018-19 6 hour days	2019-20 6 hour days	2020-21 6 hour days	2021-22 6 hour days	2022-23* 6 hour days	2024-25* 6 hour days
Block Release	68,769	69,053	80,488	47,479	91,820	113,000	117,669
Day Release	36,409	36,076	37,604	42,301	38,184	34,000	37,343
Total # of days	105,178	105,129	118,092	89,780	130,004	147,000	155,042

*Final information for 2024-25 to be confirmed by the Ministry.

REPORTING ITEM: DIPLOMA TO DEGREE PATHWAYS

2022-2023 Achievements

Conestoga continues to explore pathway development opportunities with post-secondary institutions from across Canada and around the world. In 2024-25, Conestoga completed 32 academic agreements – 15 domestic and 17 international – including academic agreements with Breda University of Applied Sciences (Noord-Brabant, The Netherlands), Capacity Canada (Waterloo, Ontario), City of Stratford (Stratford, Ontario), Guelph General Hospital (Guelph, Ontario), Hamilton Health Sciences (Hamilton, Ontario), Technical University of Liberec (TUL), (Liberec, Czech Republic), University of Jamaica (St. Andrew, Jamaica), and Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (Guelph, Ontario).

REPORTING ITEM: APPLIED RESEARCH

Conestoga's team of innovators, problem solvers and industry experts are driven by a shared passion to make a meaningful impact on our society. By collaborating with industry and community partners, we are able to create new solutions that have a lasting influence on our community, and we are proud to be a leader in research.

In 2024, Conestoga ranked among the top 20 research colleges in Canada.

OUR RESEARCH PILLARS:

- To give students meaningful and real-world engaged experience
- Give faculty an opportunity to connect and practice skills
- Have a positive impact on the communities we serve through economic and social impact

CANADIAN INSTITUTE FOR SAFETY, WELLNESS & PERFORMANCE

Established in 2019, the Canadian Institute for Safety, Wellness & Performance (CISWP) is an applied research centre that focuses on addressing complex real-life challenges faced by workers and businesses in Canada. CISWP is the only institute of its kind in Canada and one of few institutes worldwide with the mandate and vision to conduct applied, industry-driven, health and safety research.

CENTRE FOR COMMERCIALIZATION

The Centre for Commercialization (C4C) plays a pivotal role in supporting entrepreneurs and small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) unlock the full potential of their intellectual property (IP) and enhance their commercialization outcome. The centre offers a comprehensive suite of IP and commercialization services and offers SMEs and entrepreneurs a structured approach to manage and leverage their IP assets to gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace. C4C was created, in part, with support from Intellectual Property Ontario.

CENTRE FOR HEALTH CARE RESEARCH & INNOVATION

The Centre for Health Care Research & Innovation partners with industry, researchers, faculty and students with the overall goal of strengthening the health care system through collaborative, community-focused research.

CONESTOGA ENTREPRENEURSHIP COLLECTIVE

The Conestoga Entrepreneurship Collective (CEC) empowers members of the Conestoga community to pursue their entrepreneurship potential and participate in the innovation economy. Programming supports new venture founders, freelancers, and high-growth sales professionals.

CONESTOGA FOOD RESEARCH & INNOVATION LAB

As an applied food research lab, the Conestoga Food Research & Innovation Lab (CFRIL) meets the needs of industry through education, training, research and technical expertise. Our advanced facilities are essential in providing solutions for small, medium, and large businesses in the food and culinary sector. Our focus is to work with partners to provide innovative solutions and support throughout the product development cycle, including formula development, shelf-life studies, packaging testing, and scale-up using our pilot plant equipment.

CONESTOGA SOCIAL INNOVATION LAB

The Conestoga Social Innovation Lab launched in 2023. The lab fosters social innovation research that meets the needs of people locally, regionally and internationally. Our community-based approach to research is undertaken on behalf of and in support of communities, organizations, and change-makers. These partnerships focus on placemaking and developing structures that lead to actions with a societal impact. The lab is structured to facilitate partnerships between Conestoga College and local cooperatives, non-profits, social impact organizations and change makers.

SMART CENTRE

The SMART Centre was established in 2020 to support applied research, technical services and training in the areas of advanced manufacturing, advanced recycling technologies and cyber security. With over 13,000 square feet of space containing state-of-the-art equipment, the SMART Centre engages faculty and students to connect industry with the expertise necessary to address manufacturing, recycling, and cyber security challenges. The SMART Centre is part of Canada's 60 NSERC-funded Technology Access Centres (TACs), a network of state-of-the-art applied research and innovation centres spanning the country.

Financials

Revenues generated from international student enrolment have allowed the college to invest significantly in the economic well-being of the eight communities we serve. Over the last few years, Conestoga has invested approximately $500 million to expand and enhance building infrastructure and equipment. The college has completed phase one and commenced phase two of the Conestoga Skilled Trades Campus, acquired several student housing properties in Kitchener, Waterloo, Brantford and Milton, and completed campus renovations and enhancements of the Waterloo, Doon, Guelph, Stratford and Milton locations to accommodate new programs and encourage domestic enrolment growth.

Although international enrolment has dropped considerably over the past 12 months, the college ended the 2024-25 fiscal year with a surplus of $121 million. This year, the college plans to invest $145 million in capital projects that include phase two of the Conestoga Skilled Trades Campus, phase two of the Waterloo campus renovation, renovations of the Tollgate Technological Skills Centre in Brantford to expand skilled trades programming and Doon campus renovations to accommodate new programming such as the animal care suite of programs. The college is also enhancing its operational capacity by investing in applied research centres and innovation hubs across priority sectors, including engineering, healthcare, information technology and skilled trades.

The continuous drop in international student enrolment over each term since spring 2024 and the inability of Ontario colleges to achieve their allotted international enrolment caps have put serious pressure on college finances. Conestoga's primary focus for 2025-26 will be the rightsizing of an organization that has lost thousands of international students to ensure we end the fiscal year with a balanced budget.

Over the past year, the college hired fewer part-time faculty, froze hiring where possible and had a number of employees take early voluntary retirement packages. Due to financial constraints in March and April 2025, the college released some full-time administrative staff and gave notice of layoffs to the support staff union. The college has not renewed leases of some buildings in Waterloo, Kitchener and Brantford to reduce operational costs.

The full audited financial statements can be accessed at:
https://www.conestogac.on.ca/about/corporate-information/reports