



New Report Examines the Potential for a University in Timmins

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The latest research to come from Northern Policy Institute finds the prospects of Timmins securing a stand-alone English university to be limited based on a number of factors, including demographic considerations, the availability of other institutions, and the provincial government's financial realities.

While there may not be a strong case for a new post-secondary institution in Ontario's Northeast, Dr. Ken Coates puts forward several innovative alternatives for community leaders in his report, *A University for Timmins? Possibilities and Realities*. These include developing a satellite campus of an existing university, developing an expanded, coordinated Northern College-University partnership and considering alternative approaches to traditional university programming such as an Indigenous institution for Ontario or a work-focused institution for the province.

"Opening a new university, in Timmins or any other northern community, has to be tied to the educational needs and employment opportunities of the future. Within this environment, it is clear that the City of Timmins, Northern College, and Algoma University have a unique opportunity to develop a post-secondary collaboration that would be of substantial importance to Timmins and Northeastern Ontario," states author Ken Coates in the report.

The NPI report was written with the support of the Timmins Economic Development Corporation, who, together with other community leaders and provincial officials, will review and determine the best path forward in their efforts to diversify the regional economy, serve the people and businesses in the area, and improve the quality of life in Northeastern Ontario.

According to Fred Gibbons, Chair of the TEDC, "Timmins has been trying to secure a local university campus for over fifty years. The TEDC approached NPI to research some options for developing a university here because we see this as a significant way to help build a more skilled and diverse labour pool for our area."

Coates explores several factors when making his recommendations, including Northeastern Ontario's population and demographics, the educational and post-secondary environment, models of university program delivery, and recent transitions in Ontario's northern regions. In addition to his analysis of Northeastern Ontario, Coates also includes profiles of other Northern institutions and draws on their experiences in the report.

In his report, Coates provides four alternatives, including:

1. **Develop a Stand-Alone University:** The combination of demographic considerations, the availability of other institutions with regionally appropriate program mix, and the provincial government's financial realities argue against taking on the substantial financial and sustainability risks associated with a new stand-alone university.
2. **Develop a Satellite Campus of an Existing University:** There is a stronger, but not entirely compelling, case for the establishment of a satellite campus of a current regional institution, such as Laurentian University or Algoma University. This approach would limit administrative costs and allow for the rapid establishment of a new institution.
3. **Develop an Expanded, Coordinated Northern College–University Partnership:** Northern College offers university programming to Timmins and the region through the provision of a brokered university degree program. The development of a permanent and more substantial collaboration between Northern College and a single-partner or two or more northern institutions could serve to capitalize on the regional program mix.
4. **Consider An Alternative to Traditional University Programming**
 1. **An Indigenous institution for Ontario:** It is possible that Ontario would respond favourably to an Indigenous-led and widely supported proposal for a university built on Indigenous principles, pedagogy, and programming.
 2. **A work-focused institution for Ontario:** A small, specialized institution with strong connections to regional and local employers could attract government attention and alter the standard approach to a university education. This institution would place students with an employer after high school or during university admittance for a work-focused education.

Since the report was written, Algoma University and the City of Timmins have begun preliminary discussions about the possibility of developing a satellite campus in collaboration with Northern College. Early discussions have been positive and encouraging, but both sides understand that a great deal more work is required to bring this initiative to fruition.

It is important to state that this report was commissioned as a non-partisan overview, and was not intended to advocate for any specific outcome or proposal.

To read the full report, including all four recommendations, please visit www.northernpolicy.ca or www.timminsedc.com

About Northern Policy Institute:

Northern Policy Institute is Northern Ontario's independent think tank. We perform research, collect and disseminate evidence, and identify policy opportunities to support the growth of sustainable Northern communities. Our operations are located in Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, and Sudbury. We seek to enhance Northern Ontario's capacity to take the lead position on socio-economic policy that impacts Northern Ontario, Ontario, and Canada as a whole.

About the Timmins Economic Development Corporation:

The Timmins Economic Development Corporation is a non-profit organization dedicated to community and business development. We are a key liaison between the public and private sectors for business development activity. We act as expert advisors in economic development, strategic planning, and project

management. In addition to promoting growth opportunities, we also monitor economic trends and implement strategies to overcome development barriers.