

# Contact North | Contact Nord

Ontario's Distance Education & Training Network

**Contributing to  
Strengthening Ontario's  
Centres of Creativity,  
Innovation and Knowledge**

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## **Strengthening Ontario's Centres of Creativity, Innovation and Knowledge**

On June 27, 2012, the Honourable Glen Murray, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, released a discussion paper titled Strengthening Ontario's Centres of Creativity, Innovation and Knowledge on ideas for post-secondary education in Ontario.

For the past 25 years, Contact North | Contact Nord, as part of its mandate to support access and outreach to small, rural and remote communities throughout Ontario, has supported the province's 24 public colleges, 20 public universities and over 250 literacy, basic skills and other training providers to expand access to high quality learning opportunities for Ontarians no matter where they live.

Contact North | Contact Nord supports the post-secondary education and training sector to reach and serve more students in small, rural and remote communities throughout Ontario in a cost-effective, efficient and productive way through its province-wide support including:

- 112 online learning centres, primarily in small, rural and remote communities, including Aboriginal communities, across the province providing every college and university with local support and recruitment services
- Three synchronous learning technologies platforms; related technical support services; and instructor training available at no charge to every college and university
- Since 2010, the Ontario Online Learning Portal for Students promotes the online and distance education programs and courses from every college and university through a single web portal

In 2012-2013, within its current budget, Contact North | Contact Nord is undertaking nine major initiatives to step up and do more to support the sector in direct response to the call for more innovation, productivity and collaboration by the Minister and the Ministry.

The graphic on the next page illustrates how Contact North | Contact Nord is, within its mandate and within its current budget, contributing in concrete ways to the vision being considered for post-secondary education in Ontario through the Minister's discussion paper. By building on its existing services to do more in the future, Contact North | Contact Nord is in the unique position of literally "*hitting the ground running*" and ramping up these enhanced services, as it has successfully done in the past.

### **Maxim Jean-Louis**

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## Supporting Access and Outreach to Small, Rural and Remote Communities for Ontario's 24 Public Colleges and 20 Public Universities

### CURRENT SERVICES

- Operating 112 online learning centres in small, rural, remote and Aboriginal communities across Ontario
- Supporting almost 34,000 course registrations from residents in small, rural, remote and Aboriginal communities who would otherwise not have access to post-secondary education
- Providing 3 learning technologies platforms at no charge including audioconferencing, videoconferencing and web conferencing
- Operating the Ontario Online Learning Portal for Students ([www.studyonline.ca](http://www.studyonline.ca)) showcasing over 18,000 online courses and 1,000 online programs from 24 public colleges, 20 public universities and 250 literacy, basic skills and other training providers since 2010
- Operating the Ontario Online Learning Portal for Faculty & Instructors ([www.contactnorth.ca](http://www.contactnorth.ca))
- Offering Trends, Directions, and Tips & Tools for faculty and instructors teaching via distance education and online learning
- Delivering training for faculty and instructors
- Providing assistance with strategic planning for online learning to six college and university partners
- Operating the Centre of Excellence in Aboriginal Online and Distance Education supporting Aboriginal learners, communities and colleges and universities

### IN ADDITION TO THESE SERVICES

### DOING MORE

- Expanding to Far North Aboriginal communities including Attawapiskat First Nation and Bear Island First Nation
- Targeting 10 % growth (approximately 3,400) in the number of courses registrations supported from residents in small, rural, remote and Aboriginal communities who would otherwise not have access to post-secondary education
- Providing enhanced information and resources for students based on feedback from Student Portal Reference Group comprised of representatives of student associations
- Offering new and improved Emerging Technologies Training Program for faculty and instructors
- Offering new resources and supports for faculty and instructors
- Enhancing the automation of the program and course data for Ontario Online Learning Portal for Students
- Facilitating communities of interest on specific topics such as collaboration amongst researchers in online learning
- Expanding provision of assistance with strategic planning for online learning to partner colleges and universities
- Launching province-wide promotional campaign around the slogan "Make Your Learning Fit Your Life" to highlight the quality of distance education and online learning and counter negative myths.