**Report Accompanying the 2025-2026 Budget for RTAM Members**

As we look ahead to the 2025-2026 fiscal year, RTAM is embracing positive and future-building changes that will strengthen our organization and ensure long-term sustainability. Below are highlights of the material changes on the expense side of the budget, as well as strategic steps the Board is taking to safeguard these transitions.

**Key Expense Changes**

1. **French Translation Expansion ($25,000 Commitment)** To better serve our bilingual membership, RTAM is investing in French translation services. This initiative will ensure our member portal, website, documents, and communications are fully available in both English and French. This step enhances accessibility and inclusivity for all members.
2. **Increased Office Expenses ($9,000 Rent Increase)** Office expenses are rising due to two factors:
	* **Increased Staffing Requirements:** Investments in essential equipment, such as desks, computers, and laptops for additional staff.
	* **Rent Increase:** Our office rent will increase by at least $9,000 annually, bringing the total to $52,000 per year.
3. **Reductions in Website and CRM Expenses ($24,000 Savings)** With the completion of our new website and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, RTAM will save $24,000 annually. We now fully own and manage our website, allowing for comprehensive updates and enhancements without third-party expenses.
4. **Staff, Legal, and Accounting Expense Increase ($18,700)** As RTAM takes on broader organizational changes and hires a new staff member, these expenses will increase to support operational growth and strategic initiatives.
5. **Student Awards ($29,000 Top-Up Donation)** To fully fund all four RTAM awards at a new level of $1,250 per award (previously $1,000), a top-up donation is being made to the Winnipeg Foundation. This strategic move ensures that RTAM no longer needs to contribute $500 from our budget annually to cover shortfalls, thereby securing these awards for the long term.
6. **Scholarship Support for University College of the North ($66,000 Contribution)** RTAM will contribute $66,000 to the Winnipeg Foundation to protect four $1,000 scholarships awarded annually to University College of the North students. This contribution removes these scholarships from future RTAM budgets, securing their sustainability similar to the path we followed with the RTAM awards and the Winnipeg Foundation.
7. **Chapter and Special Interest Group Funding ($2,000 Per Group)** Funding for RTAM chapters and special interest groups will increase significantly. Groups that previously applied for $250 grants two years ago, received $500 in funding this year, will now receive guaranteed funding of $2,000 per group.
8. **ACER-CART Meeting Support ($10,000)** RTAM has increased funding to $10,000 per year to support two Board members attending two annual meetings of the Canadian Association of Retired Teachers (ACER-CART). This includes the AGM and a regional meeting for Western Canadian provinces.

**Safeguarding Financial Stability**

The RTAM Board is committed to responsible financial management and has implemented two key strategies to safeguard these positive changes:

1. **Conservative Approach to New Membership Revenue** The Board will not allocate any spending related to the new Education Community Pathway membership in this year’s budget. All revenue from this initiative will be tracked separately to ensure that we do not spend more than we grow during the first year of offering this new membership. This prudent approach allows for more accurate financial predictions for next year’s budget and AGM.
2. **Delayed Implementation of Major Financial Contributions** The two largest increases in expenses—the contributions to the Winnipeg Foundation for student awards and University College of the North scholarships—will not be made until June 2026, the final month of the fiscal year. This ensures that the necessary funds have been received by RTAM before these contributions are made, reducing financial risk and ensuring a secure transition.

**Looking Forward**

These thoughtful and strategic changes position RTAM for a bright and sustainable future. The Board remains committed to transparency, responsible financial stewardship, and investing in initiatives that enhance the value we provide to our members. Thank you for your continued support as we build a stronger RTAM together.