With a genuine enthusiasm for student success and an unwavering dedication to his college and the community, Dr. Dan Patterson has been Niagara College’s President since 1995. Under his leadership, the College has tripled its enrolment to over 13,000 full time students in over 130 programs with an operating budget of over $210 million.

Patterson has overseen significant improvements to Niagara College’s two world-class campuses over the years. The College is currently nearing completion of a $64 million Campus Redevelopment project that has given both campuses innovative new student spaces, such as the Walker Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre, a Green Automotive Technologies Lab, Canada’s first Teaching Distillery, and the Marotta Family Innovation Complex. Since 1995 through fundraising, Federal and Provincial grants, Patterson has overseen investments totaling over $300 million in college facilities.

He has played an integral role in establishing and strengthening partnerships with a variety of industries and public sector organizations — a key priority under his leadership. Prior to joining the college system, he held senior executive positions within the federal and provincial governments.

Known as a leader in the Ontario College system, Patterson is former chair of the Committee of Presidents, which advocates on behalf of Ontario’s 24 Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology. Patterson led the Committee of Presidents through a critical time for the College system, resulting in the introduction of baccalaureate degrees in Ontario Colleges and a new provincial mandate.

The long-time advocate for post-secondary education has a keen sense of service and shares his knowledge and expertise on a number of boards at the national, provincial and local levels including OCE, the Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan) and the Regional Economic Panel. He is also a strong proponent of experiential learning for students preparing for the work world. As president, he has overseen the creation of innovative learning enterprises at Niagara College, including Canada’s first teaching winery, teaching brewery, and teaching distillery, and has helped introduce pioneering programs that serve the needs of emerging industries, like Canada’s first post-secondary credential in Commercial Cannabis Production. His tenure has also seen the development of research and innovation centres for advanced manufacturing, food and wine sciences, and agriculture and environmental technologies.

Patterson’s public service has been recognized with various awards including the Canadian Red Cross Power of Humanity, Niagara-on-the-Lake Citizen of the Year, RBC Business Citizen of the Year, St. Catharines Rotary Club’s Paul Harris Fellow, Community Leadership Award, and the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal as well as a Visiting Fellowship at Green Templeton College (Oxford University, U.K.).

Patterson received his BA from the University of Windsor, his MSc from The London School of Economics, and his MEd from the University of Toronto. He later attended Oxford to complete its Senior Management Development program. Committed to lifelong learning, he earned his PhD from the University of Toronto in the field of higher education. In recognition of his achievements within the college system, Patterson was conferred an Honourary Doctorate from Niagara University in 2003 and an Honourary Doctorate of Laws from Brock University in 2009.