

## Conference Board of Canada Leads Discussion on the Workforce Needs of Eastern Ontario

**Ottawa, ON, February 13, 2008** – Dr. Kurtis Kitagawa, Principal Research Associate, Education and Learning, Conference Board of Canada, led a discussion at Algonquin College regarding the critical need for skilled workers in Eastern Ontario. The event also included an update on the College's expansion proposals and the ongoing efforts to secure provincial and federal funding.

Dr. Kitagawa told attendees that Ontario could face a shortfall of 190,000 workers in 2020, rising to a potential shortage of 564,000 ten years later.

"Workforce participation rates are set to fall drastically with critical implications for the cost of economic growth," said Dr. Kitagawa. "In some sectors, we have already reached the point of transition from excess labour supply to excess demand for labour."

Together, in partnership with students, staff, alumni, municipal governments, industry, and union and trade associations, Algonquin College has developed and submitted an urgent request to fund unique proposals that are critical to the long-term sustainability of a skilled and educated workforce for Ottawa and the Ottawa Valley.

"Building tomorrow's skilled workforce requires action today," said Robert Gillett, President of Algonquin College. "As the largest College in Eastern Ontario, Algonquin College is committed to doing its part to ensure Ontario has the skilled workforce required to grow our economy and keep its citizens safe and healthy."

If government funding is provided, Algonquin's expansion proposal will provide close to 3,000 additional student spaces, helping address the looming shortage of construction and health professionals in Eastern Ontario and meet student demand for growth in other high-skill areas.

"In both health and construction there is a critical need for trained professionals, which if left unattended puts the economy of Ottawa and Eastern Ontario in jeopardy," added Gillett. "All levels of government have identified the skills shortage as a major impediment to the growth of the economy and 70 per cent of future careers will require post-secondary qualifications."

The \$35 million Health Sciences and Strategic Growth portion of Algonquin's expansion plans will expand the College's commitment to health education that focuses on prevention, health promotion and improved mental health. This expansion will extend the College's leadership in health and community studies, and encourage student success through simulation, innovative programming and applied research.

Algonquin's proposal for a \$69 million Centre for Construction Trades and Building Sciences Environmental Demonstration Centre will bring together all professional disciplines including architecture, interior design, engineering, building trades, as well as construction industry research, into one creative cluster dedicated to producing highly skilled graduates familiar with the team work requirements of today's modern construction site.

As Algonquin College in the Ottawa Valley (Pembroke Campus) is experiencing higher enrollments, the College requires a new "destination" campus to allow it to expand and create more learning opportunities for students. With appropriate funding and the necessary approvals, Algonquin plans to build "Renaissance Square" on land being made available by the City of Pembroke. As well, a facility planning process is currently underway to complete a renovation and expansion of the College's Perth Campus. Algonquin has committed funds to help accommodate the immediate growth of the Perth Campus and raise the enrollment capacity from roughly 250 to 350 students per semester.

**-More-**

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**Workforce Needs - 2****About Algonquin College:**

Algonquin College of Applied Arts and Technology is located in the Nation's Capital and the Ottawa Valley and is the fourth-largest college in Ontario. Algonquin is a leader in the integration of technology into learning. Algonquin College has a diverse population of nearly 16,000 full-time students and more than 39,000 part-time registrations in more than 140 programs and is committed to student success. For more information please visit [www.algonquincollege.com](http://www.algonquincollege.com).

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