ALGONQUIN COLLEGE

Algonquin College
College Academic Council
Annual Report 2013-2014

I would like to start by thanking my colleagues for the opportunity to chair the College Academic Council. Their diligence and commitment through volunteered efforts has made it both a pleasure and privilege to work alongside to fulfill our mandate.

The College Academic Council held its first meeting on September 23, 2013. Council welcomed comments from President Kent MacDonald, who acknowledged that this Council through its membership offered a forum to stakeholders from all constituencies to address the challenges the College faces going forward.

Council held elections for the academic year and the results were as follows:

K. Hill, Chair

Executive Committee:
E. de Francesco, Past Chair
S. Heckbert, Academic representative
J. Degan, Administrative representative
J. Hanson, Support Staff representative
M. Campbell, Student representative

At the November 4, 2014 Council agreed that members would survey their constituents and bring forward one item for consideration as a priority for this academic year. On November 18, 2013 a special meeting was convened so that the necessary amount of time could be set aside for a meaningful discussion on Council setting its priorities. The following list was submitted by representatives:

- Lab Safety and Rules
- Workload Implications of AA13 and AA42
- Mobile Learning Initiative
- Room or Lab Sponsorship
- Student Course Feedback
- Academic Freedom and Faculty Consultation
- AODA

- E-Text Initiative
- Mobile Learning Initiative – Support
- Regarding Students with Disabilities
- Academic Equivalencies

As could be expected, a very lively and productive discussion ensued with some items being referred to alternate committees and some items being combined under one heading which eventually led to the top three priorities for this academic year:

1. AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act)
2. Mobile Learning Initiative
3. Student Course Feedback

Council received many informative presentations and reports throughout the academic year. Most notably were reports and updates regarding:

Starting the Conversation – Raising our Awareness of Student Mental Health:
A. West-Armstrong reported that the module "Starting the Conversation" was launched January 2013 and to date 250 people have accessed the site. She asked members to encourage their colleagues to complete the module, noting that 20% of a faculty member's class are expected to have a mental issue.

CSD Online Booking System for Test and Exams:
T. Comerford, Intake and Assessment Advisor, Centre for Students with Disabilities (CSD) provided an overview of the implementation of the CSD Online Test Booking system process. Students who are registered with the CSD and require test/exam accommodations are now able to schedule their tests and exams with the CSD test room via an online portal using the software "Clockwork".

Policy AD18 Social Media Account Management:
A host of social media accounts are associated with Algonquin College; the majority are managed independently by department leads, faculty marketing officers, program coordinators and others. In consultation with social media account holders, this policy was created to ensure the continuity of existing and future social media accounts affiliated with the College while also ensuring the College's Brand Identity Guidelines are adhered to on social platforms. The policy was reviewed and approved by the College Leadership Council.

AA32 Use of Electronic Devices in the Classroom vis-a-vis Mobile Learning Initiative:
J. Aubut, Dean, Academic Development and G. MacDougall, Director, Learning and Teaching Services spoke to Council regarding Policy AA32 vis-à-vis the implementation of Mobile Learning (MLP). AA32 was created in 2000 and last revised in 2011. It is not possible for faculty to monitor their students to stay solely on the evaluation instrument and not stray to the

internet or eTexts or other eResources to obtain answers. This is frustrating for faculty who are trying to uphold academic integrity and at the same time are trying to keep within the spirit of our digital strategy. Discussion resulted in agreement that the policy needs to be reviewed. However, it was recommended that faculty would be surveyed so that they can comment on challenges they are having and propose solutions. This will help to inform the review process.

AA03 Program Council:
K. Stanton, Vice President, Students' Association (SA) spoke to concerns the SA has with Policy AA03 Program Council. She advised that the SA would like to review the policy in collaboration with Council. They would like ensure that there is benefit to the Program Council meetings and that feedback/input is valued and used.

Faculty Performance Development (FPD) Program – Update on Pilot:
R. Volk provided an update on the Faculty Performance Development Program Pilot. The program objectives are to:
- Recognize excellent faculty professional performance
- Provide faculty and administrators with a formal opportunity to reflect and discuss teaching and learning practices and subject matter expertise; and
- Support collective accountability through careful, judicious, transparent, and evidence-based faculty performance

All faculty will participate in the program once within a three year cycle, with the information gathered across the previous three years. The Committee created a toolkit which includes a manual, FAQs, Chairs' Resources for writing the report, conducting the learning environment visit, and using student course feedback

AC03 AODA – Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation:
A presentation was made by K. Coffey, AODA/Diversity Advisor, on this topic. The presentation was thorough and well received by Council. A question and answer period followed which resulted in a healthy conversation. It was agreed to strike a small working group to be chaired by K. Hill to review and better understand immediate and long-term impacts of the legislation. Members were asked to identify items they wish the working group to address. In a follow up meeting Council was advised that no input had been submitted on this item as of last meeting. CAC supported the recommendation that the working group be disbanded and recalled only if needed.

Student Course Feedback (SCF):
R. Heaton provided a presentation to update the College Academic Council on the progress of the Student Course Feedback (SCF) Working Group and outline the upcoming initiatives.

In 2012-2013, C. Brulé, Vice President, Academic initiated a working group to review the SCF process. The broad mandate is to examine and enhance processes and procedures associated

with the course feedback received each term from the student body. The primary objectives of the working group are to:
- Develop strategies for demonstrably improving the student survey response rate
- Improve accountability for actions to be taken on major feedback by developing a roll-up reporting mechanism from Chairs to Deans to Vice President, Academic

The following supporting documents were distributed with the transmittal:
- Student Course Feedback Working Committee – Progress Report – January 2014
- Student Course Feedback Working Committee – Mandate

Social Media Best Practices for Students:
L. Babiak and K. Kavanagh presented to Council on behalf of the Social Media Sub-Committee. They were provided feedback and approval on the updated Social Media Best Practices for Students developed by the Social Media Sub-Committee. Council was reminded that this was a priority from the 2011-2012 academic year and at the April 30, 2012 meeting, the working group was struck to create student guidelines for their social media presence.

School Academic Council Terms of Reference:
Claude Brulé spoke to a possible amendment to Policy AA02 College Academic Council (CAC) to include an additional appendix which would be the Terms of Reference (ToR) for School Academic Councils (SACs). Discussion at Deans Council revealed a need to have a consistent mandate which could be used as a guideline across the Academic Area to support the conduct of School Academic Councils that would provide a forum similar to that of CAC for Schools. The draft ToR was reviewed. It was noted that historically SACs were held in all School, however, with change in leadership and practice in some areas has resulted in this council falling away.

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) (previously Mobile Learning) and eText Initiatives:
G. MacDougall, L. Weatherdon and F. Karimi provided an update on the 2013-2014 programs and the planned 2014-2015 programs. In 2013-2014, there are 148 BYOD programs and 34 eText programs. The plan for 2014-2015 is to expand both initiatives to include 171 programs going BYOD, and approximately 120 programs going forward with eTexts.

A short presentation on the current status of existing BYOD and eText programs was provided along with an update on the planning for 2014-2015 which includes classroom and wireless upgrades. The current websites for both initiatives were introduced and reference to the resources and supports available to prospective students, current students and faculty were highlighted.

AA13 Evaluation of Student Learning:
At the December 13, 2012 College Academic Council meeting, the School of Health and Community Studies spoke to concerns with procedural statement 1.4 of Policy AA13: "Provide students with the results of each evaluation along with meaningful feedback in a course within

ten working days." The concern was specific to the turn-around time specified as it relates to class size and the assignment and assessment type. The recommendation was to provide some flexibility. The topic was discussed at length at College Academic Council, and it was determined that this was not necessarily a college-wide concern.

However, concerns were identified specific to policy statement 1.8 and procedure statement 1.4 resulting in revisions being presented and approved by CAC at the May 06, 2013 meeting, and then by Chairs Council, Deans Council and the President's Council. The revised policy was posted to the Policy website effective Fall 2013. Subsequently, concerns were identified that the activity referenced in policy 1.8 and procedure 1.4 is conducted differently from one School to the next and to recognize work patterns already in place the following amendments were recommended:

> Add to Policy 1.8: Typically, professors are asked to submit cumulative student course grades at mid and end of term.
> Add to Procedure 1.5: The process will typically require submission of cumulative student course grades at mid and end of term.

It should be noted that the purpose of reviewing student grades at mid-term is to provide an opportunity to identify students at risk and put in place remedial actions to assist them successfully complete the term.

Online Courses and Quality Control:
J. Wilson asked what processes the College had in place to ensure that online courses are meeting quality standards and if there are standards, what are they? Concerns have been identified by faculty about possible high attrition rates in online courses. S. Heckbert raised questions about the College plan to move a select number of full-time day programs to a full-time online format. He was interested in knowing how those programs were selected and how full-time faculty were going to be involved.

C. Brulé advised that the Program/Curriculum Alignment Guidelines provide the framework for ensuring consistency when delivery programs of varied delivery modes. One aspect of those guidelines is Program Quality Review such that when a program is designated for PQR; all delivery modes of the program are reviewed. Development of standards is an ongoing process and we continue to enhance them as we go forward.

Kaleidoscope 2014:
Council received a verbal report from R. Volk highlighting this year's upcoming Kaleidoscope Conference 2014. Rebecca drew Council's attention to the opportunity for professional development through the numerous workshops and keynote speakers proposed for this year's conference. Council thanked Rebecca for her update and hard work and shared with her a

thought to eventually conducting a second Kaleidoscope program in January of each year to accommodate those Professors that are engaged in teaching throughout the Spring semester.

New Initiatives:
At the request of the Chair, Council endorsed two new initiatives for CAC. The first was endorsement of the Chair to communicate with the College community more frequently to build awareness of the work performed by Council. Unfortunately, the Chair was not able to capitalize on this initiative but moving forward the foundation is now in place to allow for greater transparency and communication.

Secondly, Council adjusted their monthly agenda to include "One Minute Thoughts", a round-table sharing of ideas and information, that if warranted could be brought forward for future discussion. This was well received by Council and some of the discussion brought forward included: Safe Talk Workshop, GAS Fundraiser, Student Placement papers should be available for distribution when they register, Work Placement Management System, encouraging students to participate in upcoming Forums, Research monitor database, nominating students for student's awards, and whether student timetables could be produced for the academic year.

Conclusion:
In conclusion, I trust the hard work and commitment of staff from all areas is demonstrated through this report. As I conclude my mandate as Chair, I reflect on the level of dedication, the quality and expertise found within our members and sense of satisfaction that we have fulfilled our mandate for this year. Moving forward I look forward to continuing with the CAC in our discussions that foster good policy making and a proactive approach to turning challenge into opportunity. I would like to thank all members around the table for their dedication including Claude Brulé, Vice President, Academic for his experience, professionalism and guidance.

A very special thank you to Nancy Makila for her support and understanding. From behind the scenes, she alone creates the order from chaos and ensures that Council can function as a group. Her unfaltering level of precision is only seconded by her caring and gentle approach to guiding the process. Nancy is quick to meet or communicate in any way to assist this Chair with her corporate knowledge and experience and for this I thank her most humbly and sincerely.

Respectfully,

Kenneth Hill
Chair
College Academic Council