

March 24, 2020

Dear Colleagues and Learners,

I want to start with some positive news today. Not so long ago, if you had told us all that we would be delivering our courses entirely online, and that we would only have a few days to prepare, and that our preparations had to be done remotely, I think most of us would have found it difficult to believe such a feat would be possible.

I am happy to report that we have achieved this goal, on time and with tremendous grace and professionalism. A resounding thank you to everyone in Learning and Teaching Services (LTS) and our Academic teams for all that they have accomplished in record time and in unprecedented circumstances, and to all of our service areas that have been able to continue providing their outstanding support and assistance during this extraordinary situation.

To our learners, I also want to offer my gratitude — on this, your first week back in a new online world, you have stepped up to the challenge. Thank you for your patience and understanding as we fine-tune our course delivery. We know there are still unresolved questions, and I want to give you my word that we are working to get you answers as soon as possible. By now, you should have received word from your program coordinators about how you can continue your studies. You should have also received an email asking for details about your Internet access and connectivity — we want to make sure you have the information and tools you need to be successful. Please watch your email and Brightspace accounts for updates from your professors, and be sure to reach out if you are unsure of your path forward. We are all here to support you.

This is the start of a new week for all of us. We need to continue helping one another, being resilient and recognizing that we all need to do our part to keep our College community, our city and our country, safe. This means we are going to need to continue with social distancing for some time. I strongly urge you to follow the self-isolation and social-distancing guidance that our government and public health agencies have been stressing for everyone. It is the best way to keep us all safe and avoid putting others at risk.

During this time, I urge you to stay connected with each other as best as you can and to take care of your mental health. If you are feeling overwhelmed, you will find resources at www.algonquincollege.com/coronavirus (just look under the “Resources” tab). I also

want you to know that my virtual door is always open — please don't hesitate to contact me if you have feedback or concerns.

As you may have heard on the news, to further contain the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the Ontario government has ordered the mandatory closure of all non-essential workplaces effective today, March 24, at 11:59 p.m. This closure will be in effect for 14 days with the possibility of extending this order as the situation evolves. A full list of workplaces that are permitted to stay open has been released (<https://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2020/3/list-of-essential-workplaces.html>) and although educational institutions are not directly listed, this new order provides for organizations where the work and services are delivered online to remain open. Since we have adjusted our academic delivery and service offerings to online platforms, Algonquin College will continue to operate in our present manner.

On a another positive and final note, I also want you to know that our College is working with health care and community organizations to share our resources, whether it is providing personal protective equipment, adapting and loaning much-needed equipment, or offering expertise. I will share some of these good-news stories with you in the days ahead.

The wolves that are the supporters of our Coat of Arms symbolize both strength and the bonds of family. I truly believe our Algonquin family is stronger than ever as I continue to hear reports of our learners and employees pushing forward under the most trying of circumstances. Even though you may feel alone, you are part of something much bigger — I thank each and every one of you for your efforts.

Sincerely,

Claude Brulé
President and CEO