

Jan. 30, 2020

Dear Colleagues and Learners,

I am writing this to share some concerns surrounding the novel coronavirus and reported behaviour towards some of our international students. There have been troubling reports from our International Education Centre that students of Chinese heritage are encountering hurtful messages on social media, and are being ostracized by their fellow students.

While I understand there is increasing anxiety surrounding this virus, I want to stress that the Public Health Agency of Canada has assessed the public health risk as “low for Canada and Canadian travelers.” Only those people who become ill within 14 days of having visited Wuhan or who have been in close contact with someone who has a respiratory illness who has been to Wuhan within 14 days prior to the onset of their illness are considered at risk for the coronavirus.

Algonquin College is a diverse community with a variety of nationalities calling the College home. This type of discrimination is hurtful and unhelpful and we all have a responsibility not to spread misinformation. We continue to uphold our values of caring, learning, integrity and respect, and pride ourselves in ensuring our community is welcoming to all students and employees. Our College is and needs to remain a safe space, even in difficult times.

It bears repeating that it is recommended to follow the Ottawa Public Health’s guidelines to reduce the spread of illness, such as washing your hands frequently, and staying home if you are sick.

We will update you again should new and important information become available. Until then, you may wish to refer to the following sites for additional details:

- Province of Ontario’s coronavirus webpage (updated daily): <https://www.ontario.ca/page/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>
- World Health Organization: <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>
- Government of Canada Public Health Agency: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus.html>
- Government of Canada Travel Advice: <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories/pneumonia-china>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (U.S.): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Claude Brulé", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Claude Brulé