

March 20, 2020

Dear Colleagues and Learners,

I want to update you on the latest news regarding our College community. It has been quite a week for everyone as we adapted to the realities of the spread of the COVID-19 virus. First, a BIG thank you to everyone who has helped us make these transitions — those of you who remained on campus to help with critical services and those of you who returned home to put social distancing into practice. To all of you, and your families (who, in their own way, have also played a role in supporting our College), my heartfelt thanks.

Although I have a few updates to share, one thing has not changed: we encourage everyone to refrain from visiting our campuses unless performing a critical service or to complete a specific task (such as retrieving a vital item from your locker or work space). We need to follow the advice of Ottawa Public Health, which is simple: remain at home.

This Monday, March 23, our academic delivery will pick up where we left off, but now we will shift to an entirely online delivery. To be clear, for most of our learners, there will be no more face-to-face instruction until at least the end of the Winter 2020 term – whenever we declare the term to end. Academic continuity plans are different for each department, each program and even each course in some cases. These plans have been shared with all our program coordinators, and they are now in the process of contacting our learners to make sure each of you has the continuity plan for your program of study. For this reason, I ask all our learners to watch their email and BrightSpace accounts for the latest information.

To our students: We understand that online delivery is not ideal for all of you. That's why earlier today we sent an email to all of you to assess your needs regarding internet access. Our academic teams will be doing everything they can to make sure all of you have the support you need to complete your studies.

I know you still have many questions like: what are our plans for the Spring term, what about convocation ceremonies and so on. Many more decisions are to be made and communicated to you in the days and weeks to come. I wish I had the ability to accurately predict the future, but there are so many variables in play, and we are receiving new information around the clock. In many cases, we have set internal deadlines to provide final decisions on all these matters, and we will communicate them as soon as we are able.

Finally, I know that so much uncertainty is causing great anxiety for many people. I urge everyone to take time this weekend for much-needed self-care. It is critical that we pay attention to our mental and physical health, especially in these times of isolation. If you need help, please don't be afraid to reach out. To make this easier, we have compiled a list of mental-health resources on our COVID-19 web page (www.algonquincollege.com/coronavirus). Just look under the "Resources" tab and you will find emotional and mental-health supports for both learners and employees. The site itself has an incredible amount of information — all tailored to Algonquin College. If you would like us to add additional information to the site, there is even a place where you can submit questions or suggestions.

As a College, we have come through this difficult week exceptionally well and I am so proud of what we have accomplished under such challenging circumstances. There is still much to do, but from what I have seen so far, we are up to the task. I ask you to take this weekend to rest and recharge so that we are ready to face a new week, and new challenges, on Monday.

Sincerely,

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

Claude Brulé
President and CEO