

April 24, 2020

Dear Colleagues and Learners,

While I am mindful not to add too many messages to your inbox, I have some very important updates that I'd like to share with you, and I did not want to delay until next week to do so.

As expected, we have had some very good news from our Prime Minister, who on Wednesday announced \$9 billion in emergency support for young Canadians and permanent residents. This includes a new emergency student benefit and investments to create more jobs for students. This is going to be a great help to many of our learners and we are pleased that eligible students at our College will receive \$1,250 a month from May to August. Students who are taking care of someone else or who have a disability will receive \$1,750 monthly. You can read more about these initiatives [here](#).

We also want to do our part to help our learners, which is why we have established the new COVID-19 Emergency Fund of over a \$1 million that will help learners who are most in need of assistance in order to continue their studies at Algonquin College. I am very proud of this initiative, and am looking forward to the release of more details, including how our learners can apply, on May 1.

Also on Wednesday, our Senior Vice President, Academic, Dr. Chris Janzen let us know about some important changes to the Spring Term. Based on the most recent information and data, our Academic teams decided that returning to face-to-face instruction on July 6 was no longer possible. Turning to a new plan, we have decided to eliminate face-to-face instruction for the remainder of the Spring Term, resuming this instruction on a case-by-case basis much later this summer or in early fall. This will affect each learner and each course in different ways, depending on many factors. For this reason, the Registrar's Office will be communicating information about each program early next week so that each learner is aware of the impact on their program of study. Program coordinators will then follow up with students with more details, to make sure that we are all clear on the path forward.

While we are far from being able to return to the way things were, I am reassured that every day we are closer to a time when we can all be together again. For now, I am grateful that we are united in spirit — and that our spirit is strong.

This week, I was delighted to read that that Algonquin spirit was evident in the work of one of our learners, Molly Drinnan, a first-year student in Advertising and Marketing Communications Management. Under the direction of Professor Michael Zavacky, Molly created a public-service announcement [poster](#) related to COVID-19. She produced a brightly coloured piece of art that caught the eye of politicians, journalists and health-care workers on social media, and now her creation, which shows Canadians from all walks of life united in social distancing (complete with maple-leaf personal protection masks), is featured on billboards across the city.

“When I sat down to design it, I was brainstorming the concept and considering what people needed to hear in such a difficult time,” Drinnan told our Communications team. “The images that are already out there, and many of them are amazing, are usually focused on information and focus on darker messages. I wanted to provide something different: I wanted to bring comfort to people and inspire them to work together in these times.”

Molly’s message of working together, of choosing to focus on the positive, and of bringing comfort to others in difficult times is one from which we can all benefit as we head into the weekend.

Finally, I want to thank all of our employees who came out in record numbers to attend our first virtual town hall yesterday. Over 750 full-time and part-time faculty and staff joined in to hear of the College’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and our plans to deal with the situation from an academic, financial and people point of view. Your insightful questions and thoughtful comments made for an engaging and informative event.

I wish all of you, and your families, a chance to spend time together, even if this is only possible virtually, and to focus on all those things that matter most to you. I also wish all those who are observing Ramadan, a time of celebration and peace — Ramadan Mubarak.

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