

April 21, 2020

Dear Colleagues and Learners,

Before I discuss College-related issues, I first want to acknowledge the devastating news from Nova Scotia this past weekend, when many innocent people lost their lives or were injured in several acts of violence. This is a Canadian tragedy, and one that I know will affect many of our employees and learners with family and friends in Nova Scotia. As an institution with one of the best Police Foundations programs in the country, we also join that program, its faculty, students and alumni, in mourning the loss of Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Cst. Heidi Stevenson. I know our entire College community sends condolences to those who have lost loved ones, and our very best wishes for the full recovery of those who were injured.

I also know that we are already dealing with so much right now, that news like this is all the more distressing. I remind our employees that immediate and confidential Employee Assistance Program services are accessible around the clock by calling 1-844-880-9137 or visiting workhealthlife.com. Students seeking support will find mental-health resources and tools on our website at www.algonquincollege.com/coronavirus — just click on the student page and follow it to the links for “Health Services and Mental Health Resources.”

While our campuses remain closed, we want to make sure that we have everything in place so that, when it is safe to do so, we can return without delay. As we continue to prepare for a modified Spring/Summer term, we know that many students in Ottawa rely on the U-Pass program as their primary means of transportation. We are pleased to advise that it will continue to be available for the Spring/Summer term. U-Pass cards for the upcoming semester will be mailed to all students who otherwise do not opt-out prior to April 23, 2020 at 12 p.m. (noon). For new students, U-Pass cards will be valid starting May 1, 2020. For returning students, you will automatically receive a new U-Pass card in the mail, which will replace the one you have from the Fall/Winter term. Please note that your existing card will no longer be valid after April 30, 2020. As before, the U-Pass program is mandatory for all full-time Algonquin College students at the Ottawa Campus. There are, however, some categories in which a student may opt-out with a full or partial U-Pass fee assessment — these can be found [online here](#). To apply for a U-Pass opt-out for the Spring/Summer term if you qualify for one of the categories, please visit [this link](#). If you have any questions about your Spring/Summer term U-Pass, please contact upass@algonquincollege.com.

Looking ahead, I know many of our learners are having great difficulty trying to plan for summer employment. Earlier this month, the federal government announced an expansion of the Canada Summer Jobs Program — we anticipate still more aid for post-secondary students seeking summer employment, and I will share any information I receive on that subject.

As we have reached the end of the Winter term, I want to congratulate those who have successfully completed their courses to graduate from their program of study. I also want to acknowledge those who still have some academic requirements to complete, especially those who are patiently awaiting the time when they can finish their required face-to-face academic work. While we still hope that we will be able to return to face-to-face instruction on July 6, our Academic teams are meeting regularly to discuss possible alternative dates and scenarios. As you know, the pandemic situation continues to be fluid, in particular as it relates to the easing of existing measures and formulating a definitive pandemic exit plan. I know this uncertainty is difficult on everyone, and so that's why we will announce a decision regarding our Spring/Summer term plan by May 1, 2020 at the latest. We hope we will be able to go with our existing plan, but we will be prepared to set a new date if required. Either way, you can expect direction on this by May 1.

Yesterday, the Ontario government released information that shows that the enhanced public health measures, including staying home and physically distancing from each other, are working. Together, our College is doing its part to contain the spread of the virus and flatten the curve. We are not out of the woods yet, but we are starting to see some encouraging signs that our efforts are paying off. Planning for our return is well underway, and although we don't yet know for certain when that will be and what that will look like, I know that as a College community, we will all do our part to be ready.

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