

May 5, 2020

Dear Colleagues and Learners:

As we enter into our eighth week of physical distancing, I would like to share a couple of pieces of information that you may find helpful as we continue to plan for the time when we can come together again. I am pleased to announce that applications will open on May 15 for our COVID-19 Emergency Student Fund. This new \$1 million fund will help learners who are in the most need of assistance to continue with their studies. On May 13, students will receive a message from Laura Stanbra, Vice President Student Services, that provides more details on how to apply to this fund. If you are a student in immediate financial need, please reach out to Financial Aid and Student Awards at [bursaries@algonquincollege.com](mailto:bursaries@algonquincollege.com).

Of course, financial issues are only part of the struggle facing many within the Algonquin College community. Yesterday marked the start of the Canadian Mental Health Association's [Mental Health Week](#) (May 4-10). I recognize that this is a uniquely difficult time for mental health as people deal with stress, anxiety and personal challenges. Employees can find helpful resource information in our [Employee Toolkit FAQ](#) and via our [Employee Assistance Program](#). Students can find mental health resources [here](#).

On a related note, the federal government recently announced new funding for mental health tools, including an investment in [Wellness Together Canada](#), an online portal that provides Canadians with free resources, tools, and professional support services. I encourage you to explore the link for tools and services that are available.

Despite this period of uncertainty, there are positive signs. The provincial government [announced](#) the first steps in the gradual re-opening of Ontario's economy. Select businesses were permitted to re-open yesterday under strict public health and safety guidelines. This included the resumption of essential construction projects at colleges and universities. As time progresses, further restrictions will be lifted in several different phases depending on various factors, including how COVID-19 cases trend in Ontario. We will continue to update all of you on the lifting of restriction measures and any potential impacts on our current and future plans as information becomes available.

Government authorities continue to say the best and most important thing we can do to help with this recovery plan is to practice physical distancing and only leave home if it is essential. However, just because we are at home does not mean we cannot wholeheartedly welcome new students to Algonquin College. My sincere greetings to those AC Online students who started their spring studies yesterday.

Spring has always been a time of new beginnings and I look forward to the launch of our Spring Term on May 19 – and our first-ever [Virtual AC Day 1](#).

While this term will be taught remotely, there are plenty of virtual opportunities for students and employees to connect and stay engaged. I encourage everyone to visit our [Virtual Events page](#), that includes links to Student Support Services calendar and Library Workshops, as well employee professional development sessions offered by our [Learning and Teaching Services](#) and [Centre for Organizational Learning](#) teams.

Algonquin College's Coronavirus Resources site also features an increasing breadth of resources. Please visit our [Student page](#) or [Employee page](#) subpages for the information that is most relevant to you.

While spring is upon us, our Academic teams also diligently continue to prepare for the Fall term and make plans for our new and returning students. While the situation remains fluid, we will release a framework for the fall by the end of this week. This framework will lay the foundation for detailed plans that will be built throughout the month of May. Like all of us, I look forward to a time when we will all be back together again on our campuses. Until then, stay well and healthy.

As we head into the second weekend of May, our thoughts turn to Mother's Day and spending time with our families. Although many of us will be celebrating virtually this year, I know that we will all find meaningful ways to bring joy to those we cherish on this special day.

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