

June 3, 2020

Dear Colleagues and Learners,

It is difficult to believe that it has been almost three months since we temporarily closed our campuses and began to transform how we go about our work and our studies. We concluded our Winter term, launched our Spring term, and now plans are well underway to take us into the Fall term. I know our teams are working hard to ensure we have everything in place to respond to a number of potential pandemic recovery-related scenarios, and the College will be releasing more details regarding our Fall term academic activities by Friday, June 12.

The province's State of Emergency [will be extended](#) through the end of this month, and while this means there are still many restrictions that we must follow, we are still actively planning for the future. The presidents of the Ontario colleges, myself included, endorsed a statement released on Monday that outlines our collective strategies for approaching the Fall term. Together, we have reaffirmed our commitment to protecting the safety of students and employees and have described some of the options we are considering in order to continue providing excellence in programming through remote learning. Our statement also looks at how the colleges are developing guidelines to promote physical distancing in cases where hands-on instruction is delivered on campus, as well as protocols for cleaning, and rules for using personal protective equipment (PPE). You can read the full statement [here](#).

There has been a great deal of very difficult news this week, particularly related to violence and racism. I posted [a communiqué](#) on this topic earlier this week, but I want to emphasize again that diversity and inclusion are core values of Algonquin College.

For this reason, I am proud that we take every opportunity to celebrate our diversity, and to make sure that everyone feels included. Our Human Resources team is working on a number of virtual events, learning opportunities and discussion forums that will provide the College community with occasions to discuss how racism can be combated within Canada, in our personal and professional lives and on our campuses.

June is a time to observe Pride Month, and on June 28, our campuses will proudly fly the Pride flag. I know that celebrations for Pride Month will be a bit different this year due to the pandemic, however, we can all pause to reflect on the spirit of Pride, what we can learn from it from a diversity and inclusion perspective, and what it means to so many people.

This week also marks [National AccessAbility Week](#), a time to celebrate the contributions of Canadians with disabilities. Our federal government also aims to recognize those “individuals, communities and workplaces that are actively working to remove barriers to accessibility and inclusion.” I would like to be sure that we can count Algonquin College among them. Our Centre for Accessible Learning is committed to ensuring our students have equal access at Algonquin College — I encourage you to see the many resources the Centre offers [here](#).

Our Inclusion and Diversity Circle, a group of very dedicated employees, advises and assists us in the identification, development, and implementation of mechanisms to ensure everyone is included in the structure and systems at Algonquin College. For students, the [Wellness and Equity Centre](#) provides invaluable support to our 2SLGBTQ+ (2-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer) learners, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour), and students facing other barriers.

This month also marks [National Indigenous History Month](#), a time for us to learn more about the history and culture of Indigenous peoples and to reaffirm our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation. I especially thank Vice President of Truth, Reconciliation and Indigenization Ron (Deganadus) McLester for his leadership in this area. We will share details soon on our own virtual plan to mark this special month. At a time when we are reminded that our society remains deeply affected by racism and discrimination, we also acknowledge the continuing impact of both on our Indigenous peoples and communities. As a College, as individuals, and as a society, there is so much work to do to create lasting, positive change.

The times in which we currently live will most likely be remembered as a turning point in the history of humanity for many reasons. It is my hope that together we can build a legacy to be proud of, showing that Algonquin College remained true to its mission — to transform hopes and dreams into lifelong success — and to its values of Caring, Learning, Integrity and Respect.

Stay well and healthy, everyone.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Claude Brulé". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Claude Brulé
President and CEO