

August 25, 2020

Dear Colleagues and Learners,

This is my first communiqué in a few weeks and I have a few updates I would like to share.

The start of the Fall term is always a time of great excitement, and this year is no exception in that regard. It is, however, different in many other ways when compared to last fall. Our campuses look a little different, some of our course delivery is different, and when we re-enter the College with our masks – for those who are required to be on campus – we will all look a little different, too.

As much as we are anxious to resume all of the activities we associate with the start of a new academic year and a new term, we know that we must proceed with caution in order to continue to make the health and safety of our College community our number one priority. For this reason, we have made the decision to extend the suspension of all in-person events (celebrations, large gatherings, professional development, etc.) on campus at Algonquin College up to and including Dec. 31, 2020. This deadline may be revised mid-way through the Fall term and we will notify you of any updates as soon as they are available.

I know these differences can cause concern, and so I want to reassure you that all the changes you see and feel are part of a much broader plan to keep all of us safe and healthy. Our teams have been working very hard over the summer to make sure everything is in place, with safety always our top priority. We learned so much from our summer pilot program – which saw select students return to campus for hands-on learning activities. That experience has helped us build a plan for the Fall term that considers every detail, and we have shared that information in our [Return to Campus site](#) and [Campus Access guide](#). The guide covers important information on health and safety training and all the questions you might have on everything from how to safely use the elevators to the proper etiquette for coughing and sneezing.

This level of detail will stand us in good stead, as I learned when I met virtually with Dr. Vera Etches, Ottawa's Medical Officer of Health, to review our plans. Dr. Etches felt very comfortable with our safety-first approach and emphasized that we must continue to be very vigilant. COVID-19 is still present in the Ottawa region, and we must all be diligent about protecting ourselves and those around us by following public-health

guidelines: wash hands thoroughly, don't touch your face, make sure you practice physical distancing, and wear a mask.

These modifications to our behaviour will make a difference, and through it all, I believe we will still be able to offer academic excellence and a very positive learning experience to our learners as we always have. Support services for our learners, whether it is Health Services, Counselling Services or peer tutoring among others, have all been adapted for this new normal. Our Human Resources team is ready to assist employees with any questions or needs. Our Events team is exploring new ways of bringing our College community together through virtual events, and our Security Services and Facilities Management teams are making sure everything is ready for all of us to get to work in our classrooms, labs, and offices. If you still have questions, or concerns that you feel have not been addressed, please feel free to submit a question or comment [here](#), and remember that my virtual door is always open. Your feedback is important, and we want to make sure that every voice is heard.

I have full confidence in our plan for the Fall term, and our teams are prepared to be flexible and adjust as needed in the days and weeks ahead. I would like to ask that all our learners and employees take on this same attitude — we must move forward with resilience, optimism and a willingness to adapt and innovate. It is how we prepare our learners to face the world of work, and it is how together, we will successfully navigate these unprecedented times.

I wish you all the very best for a new academic year and the start to the Fall term. Stay healthy, everyone.

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