

March 11, 2021

Dear Colleagues and Learners,

Nearly one year ago, on [March 13, 2020](#), the College temporarily suspended classes due to COVID-19 in order to give time for our faculty and staff to pivot and start delivering curriculum and services remotely. In those early days of the pandemic, we faced many unknowns, ever-evolving public health recommendations, and difficult decisions. In fact, the Prime Minister has designated today, March 11, a [National Day of Observance](#) to commemorate those who have died and the significant impacts we have all felt because of COVID-19.

While much has changed, those core challenges remain the same. Since last March, COVID-19 has had a major impact on our College community. In particular, Campus Services has been significantly impacted due to limited on-campus activity, and because the level of on-campus activity is anticipated to remain limited over the spring/summer term, we have made the difficult decision to close Food Services at the Ottawa campus as of May 1, 2021. This closure is indefinite until there is more clarity for planned campus activities. Food will be available at [Students' Association locations](#).

In this unprecedented year, I want to acknowledge the multitude of sacrifices made by our community – the reinvention and resiliency required to allow us to continue our mission. We continue to chart a path forward thanks to our employees and learners' ability to adapt and innovate. The road has been long – with many hills climbed and many unexpected turns. There is hope and optimism in our future as spring is on the horizon and as the vaccination strategy in Ontario and across Canada is taking shape, however, a vital stretch of our journey together lies ahead.

Late last week, Ottawa's Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Vera Etches, urged us to remain vigilant and cautioned that a third wave of COVID-19 could lie ahead. She emphasized the need to continue maintaining health and safety practices like physical distancing, wearing masks and washing our hands – especially amidst signs that more contagious variants of concern are active in our communities.

“COVID levels ... are rising at alarming rates and we can't vaccinate our way out of this,” Etches said. “But we can turn this around with our actions. Every action, by every person, matters.”

[Ottawa Public Health](#)'s data shows the city trending towards the Red Zone on the province's [regionalized pandemic response system](#) – which could see the return of greater

restrictions. (See here for the latest updates from the [Lanark District Health Unit](#) and [Renfrew County and District Public Health](#).)

On our campuses, we currently have three active COVID-19 cases – all of which are isolated and did not involve on-campus transmission. I am incredibly proud of our College community's ongoing commitment to one another's health and safety.

Our [Fall 2021 planning](#) efforts continue. With vaccination rollouts, we remain optimistic and hopeful for increased face-to-face teaching delivery options. The safety and well-being of our students and employees remains a top priority and we will adjust our teaching methodology based on changes in public health guidance.

Of course, the impact of COVID-19 goes far beyond any one individual or institution – it has changed the way we live and work, our families and friendships, our personal and professional lives, our mental and physical health. As we recognize the year behind us, we can also cautiously look ahead to a future time when in-person connections and group activity are again common – and where we can all play a role in the reconnection and rejuvenation of our campuses and communities.

As always, stay well and safe everyone.

Sincerely,

Claude Brulé  
President and CEO