

April 1, 2021

Dear Colleagues and Learners:

This afternoon, the Premier announced that Ontario would move into a 28-day province-wide shutdown on the province's COVID-19 response framework as of Saturday, April 3 at 12:01 a.m.

Our campuses can continue to operate under the new restrictions – similar to the previous Ontario shutdown that ended in early February.

While the vaccine rollout strategy is well underway, our communities are now dealing with a third wave of COVID-19 – as evidenced by rising case rates, rising hospital ICU admissions and the increasing emergence of variants of concern.

All of our campuses have previously operated under similar restrictions during the previous lockdown. In Ottawa, Pembroke and Perth, these restrictions include a cap of 10 persons within instructional spaces, but allow specified, prioritized programs to continue as they have been with a cap of 50 persons, provided physical distancing is possible. (Any academically-related changes will be communicated on a program-by-program basis as required next week.)

In addition, there will be required changes to our on-campus services – including a prohibition on indoor dining services and indoor fitness activities. See the complete details [here](#). (Again, a reminder that you should not visit campus unless you are a student participating in hands-on instruction or an employee who has been authorized to attend campus in support of these activities.)

As the Premier himself stated: “the cost of inaction is simply too high.”

Just a reminder that the College is closed tomorrow, Friday, April 2 for the Easter long weekend and will resume normal operations on Monday, April 5. I wish a happy, safe celebration to all those marking the Easter holiday this long weekend. Please take some time to refresh and recharge with your loved ones in a safe and socially-distanced manner.

The Premier stressed the need to avoid social gatherings with those beyond our households over the holiday weekend. Under the new lockdown restrictions, indoor gatherings outside of one's own household are not permitted – and outdoor gatherings are limited to five people (while still practicing social distancing measures).

The government has asked the public to limit trips outside of the home to essential purposes only. Given this recommendation, the College community is advised to avoid non-essential travel during Easter weekend. For those required to travel to their home communities, you can find Ottawa Public Health's COVID-19 holiday and travel guidelines [here](#). Our Risk Management team also reiterated key tips for infection prevention and information on illness, testing and reporting in a [recent message](#).

I know many people may be experiencing COVID-19 fatigue, but we must continue to show self-restraint and stay 100% committed to health and safety guidelines during this critical phase of the pandemic. Our collective vigilance is the key to protecting our college community and wider campus communities.

Dr. Vera Etches, Ottawa's Medical Officer of Health, summed up the challenges we face on Wednesday: "We are at a point that we have never seen before in this pandemic. We are seeing what we feared. The vaccine hasn't arrived in time to outpace the growth in our community."

Please follow the latest information regarding the vaccine rollout. Educate yourself through resources such as the [Ottawa Public Health vaccine information website](#) and be prepared to prioritize receiving the vaccine as soon as it is available. For people living near our Pembroke and Perth campuses, you can review the vaccine rollout strategies for [Renfrew County & District Health Unit](#) or the [Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit](#) respectively. Even as more Canadians are vaccinated in the coming weeks and months, it is important to remember that ongoing health and safety vigilance will still be required for the foreseeable future.

In closing, I want to thank the outgoing Students' Association Board of Directors for their tremendous leadership and achievements during a very challenging year, and congratulate the incoming [Students' Association Board of Directors; I look forward to working with you this coming year](#). Finally, I wish to recognize the SA's [official naming](#) of the Jack Doyle Athletics and Recreation Centre, a fitting tribute to their long-time General Manager and CEO.

As always, stay well everyone.

Sincerely,

Claude Brulé
President, CEO
Algonquin College