

Dear Colleagues and Learners:

The Province has [extended](#) its existing stay-at-home order and Ontario's state of emergency to a total of six weeks (April 8 to May 19) – while adding enhanced public health measures and travel restrictions to curb the spread of COVID-19.

Our campuses will continue to operate as they have, in very limited ways, under these updated restrictions. These new restrictions will not require us to modify our present academic delivery model (the current state of restrictions on our campuses' services are available [here](#).) But it is crucial that attendance on our campuses is absolutely limited to *only* those students participating in hands-on instruction – indoor or outdoor – and those employees specifically authorized to attend campus in support of these activities.

We continue to make the safety of our students and employees our top priority. Learners with any questions or concerns about their upcoming final assessment should contact their professor or instructor. Employees with similar concerns should reach out to their Manager.

The government's new restrictions – which include a ban on all outdoor social gatherings and organized public events (except for with members of the same household) and the closing of some outdoor recreation amenities – come in response to extremely concerning rising COVID-19 case rates, escalating hospital and Intensive Care Unit (ICU) admissions, and the increasing impact of variants of concern.

“Without taking immediate and decisive action, COVID-19 cases will spiral out of control and our hospitals will be overwhelmed,” Premier Ford said Friday. “That's why we are making difficult, but necessary decisions to reduce mobility and keep people in the safety of their own homes. We need to contain the spread of this deadly virus, while getting vaccines in as many arms as quickly as possible.”

As of 12:01 a.m. this morning, travel is restricted into Ontario for purposes such as work, health care and transportation of goods. [Regulation 265/21](#) does permit persons who are required to attend work or attend post-secondary studies to be away from their homes for these purposes.

Our adherence to the government's enhanced restrictions – and ongoing health guidelines – practicing physical distancing, wearing masks, washing our hands and staying at home – are crucial to flattening the curve of COVID-19 in this key phase of the pandemic.

The dire situation we face is reflected in comments made by Ottawa Public Health last week. “Our hospitalizations are doubling every 12 days and ICU admissions are doubling even faster. If this trend continues to double, our health care system will have extreme difficulty keeping up.”

Over one year into this pandemic, I know we are all experiencing COVID-19 fatigue, but we must meet this latest challenge head-on and double down on our efforts to protect ourselves, our friends, and our peers and colleagues. Our collective vigilance, patience and personal sacrifice will allow Ontario's vaccine campaign to continue its progress while easing the stress on our health care system and set the stage for future easing of restrictions on our campuses and communities. In a positive sign, the Ontario government has [announced](#) it is expanding the AstraZeneca vaccinations to those over the age of 40 as of Tuesday, April 20, 2021.

As this is the last week of the 2021 Winter term for most programs of study, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all students great success in their final assessments, and thank our faculty and staff for outstanding efforts to provide our learners with the best possible college experience during these challenging times.

Finally, I want to recognize [National Volunteer Week](#) and the volunteer efforts of so many across our community – from students to employees to our very own Board of Governors.

As always, stay well everyone.

Sincerely,

Claude Brulé
President, CEO
Algonquin College