

Friday, January 7, 2022

Dear Colleagues and Learners,

As we prepare for [AC Day 1](#) to kick off our 2022 Winter term, the Province of Ontario has recently announced [new public health measures](#) aimed at slowing the spread of the highly transmissible Omicron variant. This is in addition to the safety measures we had already put in place for the Winter term.

The announcement temporarily moves the province into [Step Two of its Roadmap to Reopen with modifications](#) and comes as Ottawa Public Health reported this week that we are facing a significant challenge with Omicron “rising exponentially” across the city.

Included in this week’s Provincial announcement is that social gathering limits have been reduced to five people indoors and 10 people outdoors, capacity at organized public events is limited to five people indoors, and employees are required to work remotely unless the nature of their work requires them to be on-site.

These new Provincial measures align with the College’s decision last month to have the majority of our academic programming begin as scheduled on January 10, but in a primarily virtual (remote) delivery mode until March 6th 2022 (until the end of Winter mid-term break).

It also underscores our continued strict adherence to public health guidelines, limiting all unnecessary on-campus activity to reduce the risk of transmission, following our [Mandatory Vaccination Policy](#), and pausing non-academic, in-person events on our Ottawa, Pembroke and Perth campuses. For your own safety and the safety of others, if you are not required to attend campus for work or class, please remain at home. Our Ottawa Campus Residence remains open.

As a result of the Provincial measures announced this week, please be advised of the following changes to College operations:

- Restaurant International, the Jack Doyle Athletics and Recreation Centre, and the Algonquin Commons Theatre will be closed until further notice.
- Food locations at the Ottawa Campus will continue to operate for take-out only. Location details and hours of operation can be found on the [Students’ Association](#) and [Food Services](#) websites.
- Employees and learners may eat in common spaces while adhering to physical distancing and mask protocols.
- Please check here on updates at the [Perth campus](#), and here for the [Pembroke campus](#).
- The Mamidosewin Centre, Spiritual Centre and the AC Hub will be offering services virtually for the next three weeks.

- We will continue to monitor for any updates to Provincial and public health directives; any changes to our operations will be communicated in a timely manner.

Prior to the holiday break, health officials reiterated the need to wear adequate face coverings and recommended a minimum two-layer, but preferably a three-layered mask. As such, the College is making available a supply of American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) level 3 masks to employees and learners who are required to be on campus. You can find more details [here](#).

To our learners preparing for the start of the new term, and particularly those studying from home, please know that virtual does not mean you are alone. Whether you are seeking academic, financial, or personal support, a social or recreational activity, there are a range of options available – all of them accessible to you safely.

I know these are difficult and challenging times that can lead to heightened anxiety, stress and depression for some of us. If you are in need of support, please reach out to the [many resources](#) that are available via [Student Support Services](#) for learners and [Human Resources](#) for employees. A number of helpful apps and online tools can also be found [at this link](#). You can also find our full range of virtual events [here](#).

As we begin the new year, I thank you for your patience, resolve and resiliency as we continue to adapt and meet these challenges together. I wish everyone well as we begin our 2022 Winter term.

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
Algonquin College