

# Your Culture Book

A COLLECTION OF EMPLOYEE STORIES





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# Employee stories.

We want to thank those who shared their stories — as well as those who contribute, in their own way, to our inspiring AC culture.



## Mission



To transform hopes and dreams  
into lifelong success.

## DEBBIE ROBINSON CLERK ACADEMIC

"I have been an employee of Algonquin College for 20 years. I am also a graduate of the dental program: class of 1976. At that time, the Dental Clinic was the old Registrar's Office in C Building.

I met my husband at the College when we were both students. He was in the tech program in A Building.

When I walk by that area I am reminded of the past. This is where the tech students used to hang out and the dental assistant students used to walk down there to get coffee from the vending machines. Yes, vending machines were our main source of coffee. I was hired on as a receptionist in the Dental Clinic and I'm now working as a receptionist for the Student Massage Clinic.

I have always considered Algonquin College to be my second home. It is here where I found my purpose. I guess you could say that I have come full circle."



*“I felt supported  
and respected...”*

**LAURIE ALPHONSE**  
ACCESSIBILITY ADVISOR

“My parents never let me use my disability as an excuse not to strive for the very best I could be. They recognized my potential, choosing to ignore the school system and a number of the professionals — medical or otherwise — that they had come across throughout my life. As immigrants to Canada, they strived to give their kids strength and perseverance.

At my parent’s insistence, I registered for classes at Algonquin College in the fall of 1988. I had no confidence and no direction, but I knew I needed to go to school or find work because those were the rules my parents set, despite my disability.

During those two years in General Arts and Science, I felt supported and respected, two things I had not previously experienced in school. My program experience gave me confidence, direction and the tools I needed as I embarked on my university career that followed. This would eventually lead me back to Algonquin in 2009.

My journey back to Algonquin is due in large part to the late Wayne McIntyre. I had the honour to work with him on community initiatives in Ottawa for years before starting at Algonquin. His encouragement and pure persistence was a driving force in my return to Algonquin as a professor.

It is my honour and privilege to see this institution grow. I cherish the opportunity I have been given to champion the success of students in the spirit and shadow of my struggles to achieve success.”



**ABHAY SHARMA**  
FULL-TIME PROFESSOR

“

My story starts with my first interaction with Canada when I came here as a student. The only thing I knew was that I was going to Algonquin College to study. I did not know anyone in Ottawa except for my girlfriend, who came with me as a student. We did not even have accommodation and spent our first night at a hotel.

The next morning I came in for the orientation. I was walking through the busy hallways with mixed feelings of amazement, shock and confusion, when I ran into my childhood friend from India. He moved to Canada when we were in Grade 6. We were out of contact and suddenly we recognized each other in the crowd. We exchanged numbers to connect later and have kept in touch since then.

During my first few weeks at the College I was going through culture shock, homesickness, and couldn't find a job on campus. I wanted to move to Alberta with my cousin so I would be close to some family. I got the withdrawal form from the registrar, filled it and went to talk to the International Education Centre. The person I was talking to asked me why I wanted to leave. She helped me get a

part-time job with Recruitment to keep me busy, which helped a lot with the issue of homesickness. I felt welcomed and accepted by the Recruitment team and was always happy when working with them.

A year later, my girlfriend and I decided to get married. The ceremony was at City Hall at 4 p.m. I had not told anyone about it, and Recruitment had a campus tour scheduled with me which I had to cancel. When they found out the reason, they arranged for a surprise reception in the Recruitment office.

I was in a tough situation with my landlady and the International Education Centre helped me understand my rights and provided me with a reference for assistance.

These are just a few instances I am writing about, but the connection I built with Algonquin College is deep and intimate. I am grateful and honoured to work for Algonquin, to contribute to its spirit and support students in their journey.

”



“For such a big place,

*it still feels like  
a small community...”*

“Algonquin College is woven throughout so many of my life events.

I moved away from home to attend school here and didn't know that I'd be joining such a strong community — a second home. I felt so empowered by my education and it blew my world wide open.

I loved this community and city so much that I stayed in Ottawa after graduating.

Years later, I beamed with pride when I got to come home as an employee and walk these halls again. It is a dream come true to work here every day and support students as they pursue their studies. I'm energized by the passion, transformation, and courage that I see in our students.

Algonquin has always demonstrated its core values when I was in need. My mom died when I was in school and my professors and classmates rallied to show their support. Later, as an employee, I learned of my dad's death while at work and the Algonquin community rose up yet again. Soon after, my Algonquin family helped me celebrate the circle of life as I welcomed my first child . . . and a colleague even named him!

For such a big place, it still feels like a small community, where so many people know your name, have a warm smile, and share a passion for higher education. I know my life wouldn't be the same without it.”

**LIZ BABIAK**  
FULL-TIME PROFESSOR



**KELTIE JONES**  
DEAN,  
PEMBROKE CAMPUS

"I am new to Algonquin College, but have been extremely impressed with the welcoming environment since my first visit. As I walked into Pembroke's Waterfront Campus for my initial interview, I spotted LGBTQ2S+ literature on display in the library window. In the lobby, the Pride flag was prominently displayed and many offices had "Positive Space" stickers. Imagery matters. People may not comment on it, but seeing images that say 'you belong here' is important to so many historically marginalized groups. I knew from the outset that I would be welcomed and safe, and the Algonquin College community has lived up to that promise."

“...you  
belong  
here”

*“I’m going to teach there no matter what it takes.”*

## **CHRIS MARTIN** FULL-TIME PROFESSOR

“When we found out we were going to have a baby in 2016 I realized it was time to (finally) finish school and become a dad. For me, this meant finding a way to show that I could make use of all of my education in the 13 years of post-secondary I had endured, and to provide for my blooming family.

Step 1 of nest-building meant moving farther west in the city to an affordable apartment.

Step 2 was not about gathering leaves and twigs. It was time to buckle down and write my thesis, get it done, and become Dr. Daddy.

And so, with my books, papers, and laptop in tow, I would bounce from one coffee shop to another, vastly overstaying my welcome each time.

On my new driving route in the city’s west end I kept passing Algonquin College. Perhaps I was pulled in by the sight of book bags and students sharing that day-late paper pressure on their faces, but I thought it would be best to give it a shot.

I pulled in and was instantly drawn by the silver boat that is the E Building. I walked the stairs to the ACHub, pulled up a chair, and logged into the guest Wi-Fi. Free Wi-Fi? What more could an overbearing house guest ask for? Words were flowing and ideas began to jump onto the pages. Eventually I was disrupted by a smiling face in a grey t-shirt who tapped me on the shoulder: ‘We are serving free pancakes over here if you are hungry,’ she said. I quickly realized that she must have assumed I was a student of the College.

I was so satisfied with my previous experience of internet connectivity and free flapjacks, that I returned a few days later to do more writing. This day, free massages! The next day I brought my wife, April, (and my baby in her belly) to show her how amazing this place was. We walked the whole campus. It was wonderful. I specifically remember the ducks in the courtyard with their babies and how much this meant to us. I said to April, ‘I am going to teach here no matter what it takes!’”



# Ishkodewan

— THERE IS FIRE —  
IN THE ALGONQUIN LANGUAGE

Ishkodewan — which in the Algonquin language means “there is fire” — was created as part of the initiative to integrate Indigenous traditions and knowledge into the Algonquin College experience. The courtyard is used for ceremonies and events and is intended to be an outdoor classroom. But individuals and departments have come to use the space for meetings and huddles as a way to vary and refresh office routines.

The roughly 1,000 bushes, flowers and other plants — comprising more than 100 species in total — transformed Ishkodewan almost from the day students of the Horticulture program began planting them. All the plants are native to southern Ontario and many have cultural and historical significance to Indigenous Peoples for their medicinal, nutritional or cultural properties. Ishkodewan is believed to be the largest Indigenous-themed garden in the Ottawa area.

## **SHERI LEVINE** COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

“Algonquin College has always been a special place for me. The Ottawa Campus holds fond memories from my time as a student; I studied Radio Broadcasting and returned to study Print Journalism. For purely nostalgic reasons, I’ve chosen to focus this piece on my time in Radio.

In 1995, as I entered my second year in the Radio program, I was part of the first group of students to study in the new Media Centre — N Building. At the time, this was the College’s newest building. I’m clearly dating myself here, but this gives you an idea how much this place has evolved.

It all started in C Building. In my first year, that’s where all of my classes were. Today, on the second floor of C Building, there’s a room that’s home to the faculty union. To me that space will always be CBRT. These were once the call letters of the College’s campus radio station exclusively for the Radio Broadcasting program. Its frequency didn’t reach beyond the College’s doors — it barely reached past C Building.

This tiny space was where all of us aspiring radio announcers developed our on-air personalities, learned and honed our skills, and discovered a new era of music. The other place we spent most of our time was on the ground floor of C Building — home to all of the radio and TV studios. Today, this is Student Central. It’s hard to believe. The difference is staggering.

My connection to this place is found in what it gave me as a student (twice!) and what it gives me now as an employee. I was hired in the summer of 2019 and it felt like coming home.

As a student, I loved coming here to learn, work hard, have fun and meet interesting people. As an employee, I love coming into work every day to a place where I continue to learn and meet interesting people. In all of my years in media and communications, this is the best team of people I have worked with. I am grateful to once again be part of this special community.”

*“I love coming to  
work everyday  
to a place where  
I continue to learn...”*



1967

Algonquin College was named after the First Nations Peoples who first inhabited the Ottawa Valley. A green tree, naturally reflective of the region, was the logo's centrepiece.



1987

Twenty years later, the College kept the original green, but opted for a wordmark to simply read "Algonquin"; later adding "College" and a monogram in 2002.



2012

Another ten years later, the wordmark and brand as a whole were modernized. The curved line with varying widths aimed to reflect that education was no longer a straight line. The green, however, remained (and remains).





## IZABEL ESNARD SUPPLY EDUCATOR

“My connection with Algonquin College spans three generations.

Algonquin has always had a special place in my family. My grandfather immigrated to Canada, studied at Algonquin in its early years, and moved his pregnant wife and four children here as he completed his studies and began working as an architect.

Years later, my father Gordon attended Algonquin College for computer programming in the 1960s.

As he studied, he worked as a dishwasher in a hotel and eventually moved into catering. After a few years of experience, he was offered a position in Food Services at Algonquin in 1974. He dedicated more than 41 years to the Algonquin College Food Services department until he retired in 2016.

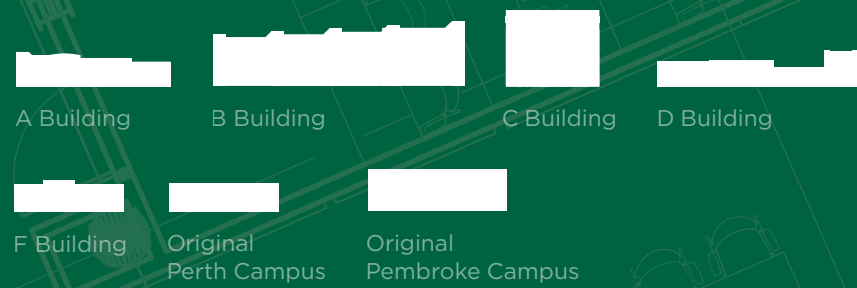
His contribution to Algonquin continues with a bursary in his name for Radio Broadcasting, and he received a lifetime achievement award in 2015. During his years working at Algonquin, he met my mother who also worked at the College and was an Office Administration alumna. They married in 1992.

My father’s passion for serving at the College inspired my brother and me to pursue post-secondary studies at Algonquin.

While studying, my brother worked for the Students’ Association and I was able to do some supply work at the Early Learning Centre. Following in our parents’ footsteps, we took on the roles of students, staff, and eventually, alumni. Algonquin College’s dedication to support students in all departments has motivated my family to complete our own studies and contribute to the College Community. For me, Algonquin has always given me opportunities to develop my skills as I grow as a professional.

The Esnard name extends generations into the past at Algonquin, and had it not been for the services of Algonquin College, we would not be where we are today. My family will always be proud to be part of the Algonquin College Community.”

1960-1970



1980-1990



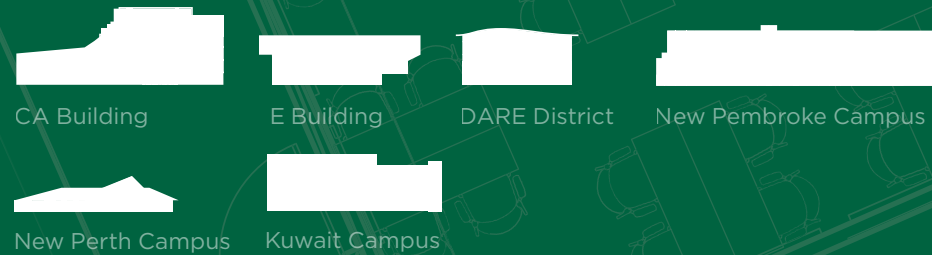
1991-2000



2001-2010



2011-2020



people  
shape  
buildings  
shape  
people

*“...we take the bus to  
‘Grandma’s work.’”*

## KRYSTYNA RYBCZYNSKA PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

“My story is about my grandson, Isaac, who is just a little over three-years-old. Almost every Friday night he sleeps over and on Saturday mornings we take the bus to ‘grandma’s work.’ It’s a simple routine, which over the last couple of years involved watching the construction throughout the campus, watering my plants in the office and visiting the mural. Part of our routine includes getting two Timbits and a snack at Tim Hortons.

Whenever we go by the (Ottawa) campus Isaac recognizes it and always exclaims ‘grandma’s work!’ Since it began, Isaac was fascinated with the construction of the Ishkodewan courtyard. The work often continued on weekends and involved some of his favourite construction equipment. When we visited the courtyard in the summer it was the first time Isaac had seen it since the construction was complete and all of the snow was gone. He was thrilled and brought his little excavator to put his finishing touches on the centerpiece!”





“  
*It's like  
coming  
home...*  
”

**ALYSSA FERNS**  
FULL-TIME PROFESSOR

“The thing about coming back to the Ottawa-area, it's like coming home to me. I left Ottawa in 2011 and have always been looking to return. I am thrilled to have started as a full-time faculty member in the Police and Public Safety Institute in August 2019.”

“*AC has allowed me*”  
to stay up-to-date...”

“I teach Science and Risk Assessment in Regulation at Algonquin College. Teaching part-time at the College has allowed me to stay up-to-date on many topics in relation to my full-time job outside of teaching. My students benefit from my experiences in industry and I benefit from their questions and in-class interactions.”

**AL RAMPUTH**  
PART-TIME PROFESSOR

**REBECCA VALERIO**  
STUDENT SERVICES  
REPRESENTATIVE

“I moved to Ottawa from Queensland, Australia almost two years ago. When I was still in Australia I would study the map of Ottawa to get to know it a little. I saw Algonquin College, looked at the website, and told my husband that I wanted to work there. So, in early 2019 I got a job in Student Support Services! I am so lucky to be working at Algonquin College and couldn't be happier! In general, there is a great feeling of optimism in the College and it's a very positive work environment.

Working hard and studying hard are two qualities that I greatly admire about Canada. Culturally, Australia and Canada have a lot in common, but I find Canadians very open minded, warm and welcoming.

I miss home — the beach, friends and family — but love it here (in particular the seasons) and wouldn't change a thing!”



**JAMIE BRAMBURGER**  
MANAGER, COMMUNITY STUDIES  
AND STUDENT AFFAIRS

## *“The Pembroke Campus is a special place.”*

“My Algonquin story has kept me part of this amazing institution for the past 20 years. Trained as a broadcast-journalist, I spent 14 years in radio and television, primarily as a news director and newscaster.

I joined the college in 1999 as the Manager of Community and Student Affairs, overseeing student services, government employment services contracts and managing media and public relations for the Pembroke Campus. Through this work I have been able to see the extraordinary benefits the campus brings to all of Renfrew County. So many lives have been positively changed by having a campus in Pembroke, as it supports access to post-secondary education for rural residents.

The highlight of my career has been the building of the new Waterfront Campus, which opened in 2012.

It is a remarkable story of community engagement, visionary thinking and partnership building that has transformed the city of Pembroke. As enrolments have hit record levels at the Pembroke Campus, new privately owned and operated student residences have been built, developers have invested in the city's downtown creating wonderful new stores and services, and programming has expanded to support the labour market needs of the region, the province and the country.

The Pembroke Campus is a special place. I'm very proud to work with such a committed group of faculty, support staff and administrators who understand that everyday we transform hopes and dreams into lifelong success.”

*“Time and space  
have moved on, but  
Algonquin College  
will always be a part  
of our family.”*

**PENNY DOCKRILL**  
MANAGER, HR PROGRAMS

“

In 1999, I was a student in the Social Service Worker Intensive Program when my older brother passed away unexpectedly. My brother was 27 with two young sons, Brandon, six, and Eric, five. To say this was devastating is an understatement. My brother was one of the funniest, silliest, and most energetic people I've ever known. When we were kids he was always making faces and funny voices. He was the class clown; he made everyone laugh which inevitably got him into trouble. He never lost that ability to make people laugh, even when the situation was difficult. It's probably one of the things I miss most about him.

When my brother passed, Algonquin College and in particular, Shelley Styles and Lisa Shaw-Verhoek, supported my family and me in ways I never expected. They set up bake sales so they could raise money to help my family pay for my brother's funeral. He had insurance but at 27 wasn't expecting to use it, and so he had named his older son as his beneficiary. Of course, Brandon was only six at the time so that money was put in trust for both of my brother's sons until they were 18.

Twenty years later I still struggle to put into words how their caring actions helped my family cope at a

time when we never thought we could; to know there were people out there who cared about my nephews and my whole family even though they had never met them. The absolute sense of love that has lived on in my family to this day from those simple bake sales can never be properly put into words.

I graduated from Algonquin College in 2000, became a Program Advising Committee member in 2009 until 2012, and became a full-time employee of the College towards the end of 2013. I have never forgotten how Shelley's and Lisa's actions made me feel . . . made my family feel. My nephews know how Algonquin helped our family and they will be forever grateful, as will the rest of my family.

A lot has changed since my brother's passing. His sons are now in their mid-20s and live in British Columbia. I'm married with children of my own and have worked at the College for more than six years.

Time and space have moved on, but Algonquin College will always be a part of our family.

”



## Vision



To be a global leader in personalized, digitally connected experiential learning.

## ANONYMOUS

“An organization’s culture is created by many different things, including shared values and beliefs, behaviours, ceremonies, stories, myths, rites, symbols, language, heroes and heroines.

In my many years at Algonquin College, I’ve immersed myself in all these elements of our rich culture. For me however, it is the heroes and heroines that define our culture best:

- *the student who gives up a promising career in his field of study to return to Ottawa to support his partner, still studying at Algonquin, who is battling mental-health challenges;*
- *the employee who comes in weekend after weekend to ensure that the learning lab for her program is set up and ready for her students;*
- *the graduate who never, ever refuses a request to come back and share his experiences in the profession and encourage aspiring students;*
- *the employee who cancels a long-awaited vacation to fill in for a colleague who suddenly becomes ill;*
- *the student who overcomes marginalization because of her severe dyslexia to become a class leader and graduate with honours;*
- *the employee who buys a train ticket so that a student with limited means can travel to Northern Ontario to attend a friend’s funeral.*

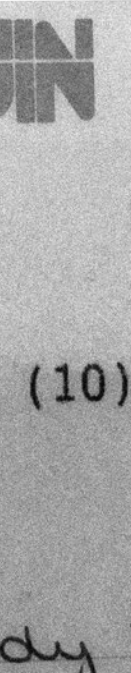
This is my Algonquin College. I am proud to be a member.”

## CARMEL LARKIN ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

“I chose this quote because it sums up how I feel about my job here at Algonquin College. I love coming to work every day.”

*“If you love what you do  
you will never work  
a day in your life.”*

– Confucius



## MELODY MCLAUGHLIN FOOD SERVICE COORDINATOR

“

I am super proud of my Algonquin story!

I first attended the College at the Pembroke Campus in 1988 at the tender age of 18. My mom was an employee at the College running the bookstore (and still is to this day, 32 years later!) Her stories of students studying at the College always intrigued me.

I had a real thirst for learning so I started with a French class. From there I decided to take the Ontario Management Development Program (ODMP) through Continuing Education and successfully obtained my certificate in 2012.

From 2010 to 2012 I completed the Cook Apprenticeship program at the Algonquin Pembroke Campus. The knowledge and skills I had gained from the College gave me the confidence to obtain my Red Seal Chef certification in 2012, the year I graduated!

A year later, I received a call from the coordinator of the culinary program asking if I would be interested in teaching the baking and pastry portion of the program. I was ecstatic! Completing my Cook Apprenticeship through the College and obtaining my government Red Seal had qualified me for a position as a “professor” in the culinary program. I was so excited!

I taught at the Pembroke Waterfront Campus for five amazing years before the program was unfortunately suspended. Lucky for me, I was asked to take on the

job of Baker in the Food Services department at the Waterfront Campus.

In 2013 my son, Derek McLaughlin, enrolled in the Automotive Power Technician program and obtained his certificate in 2014. He then attended the Waterfront Campus to get his Registered Practical Nursing license. He was successful and graduated two years later in 2016. We are so “Algonquin Proud” of him!

This past June, my sister, Kelly Barr graduated from the PSW program. The program was delivered at the Bonnechere Manor in Renfrew through the Pembroke Campus as a pilot project that was very successful. Kelly was able to obtain work upon graduation at both the Manor and the Renfrew hospital.

And I am super proud to say that I am now the Food Services Coordinator at the Waterfront Campus!

The College has been a HUGE support and provider for me and my two family members!

We are “Algonquin proud!”

Thank you, merci, and Miigwetch, Algonquin College!

”

## ARUNA DILAWRI HUMAN RESOURCES GENERALIST

“My connection with Algonquin College started many years ago. My parents arrived in Canada as new immigrants from New Delhi, India in the early ‘70s with two young children.

My mother didn’t know how to speak English and her writing skills were also very poor. She decided to take language training. She decided to leave my brother and me with a babysitter, which was culturally difficult for her and caused her grief, but she realized she needed the training in order to communicate with her children as well as with the public.

The only school at the time that offered the language training was Algonquin. We lived in the east end of the city and twice per week she had to take multiple buses to come to Algonquin. She became very engaged in her learning and enjoyed the camaraderie with other new immigrants in similar situations as her own. She was then practising her English with her children as well.

Her connection with the College became my connection. Now I see international students, 40+ years later, in a similar situation. Listening to their stories reminds me of my mother’s story. I am very proud and feel very privileged to be part of the Algonquin College family, since it helped create a bond amongst my own family.

Thank you for letting me share my personal culture connection with Algonquin College.”

“*...dedication to student success...*”

“I began my Algonquin College experience as a student. From there I pursued volunteer and career opportunities due to my interest in the College’s leadership in post-secondary education, dedication to student success, and core values. I now have been part of the College community for more than eight years and consider it family!”

## VICTORIA JENNINGS SUPPORT OFFICER





*“...you’ll find  
the support  
to create it.”*

**LISA LANGTON**  
FULL-TIME PROFESSOR

“Algonquin College is an inspiring campus, filled with ambitious, creative and brilliant people. I was hired in 2005 and continue to be impressed with the great things our College community accomplishes.

I came here to fulfill my own dream of becoming a Veterinary Technician Educator. Algonquin gives me the privilege of supporting students as they pursue their own dreams, provides a platform for me to make meaningful contributions to my profession, and encourages me to grow as a professional in veterinary medicine and education, all leading to a very rewarding career.

One of the best things about working at Algonquin is that we are surrounded by opportunity. If there is something you’re interested in and want to pursue, you’ll most likely find it on campus, and if you don’t, you’ll find the support to create it. I’ve been part of many initiatives and projects, within my program and beyond, where I’ve had the chance to work with brilliant and ambitious students and staff who have created and accomplished something outstanding for our community. These initiatives have inspired and encouraged me to continue to dream bigger. What I’ve learned over the years is that when you’re surrounded by these great people on campus, anything is possible.

Thank you to all for the joy and inspiration you bring each day. I’m lucky to be part of this dynamic college community.”

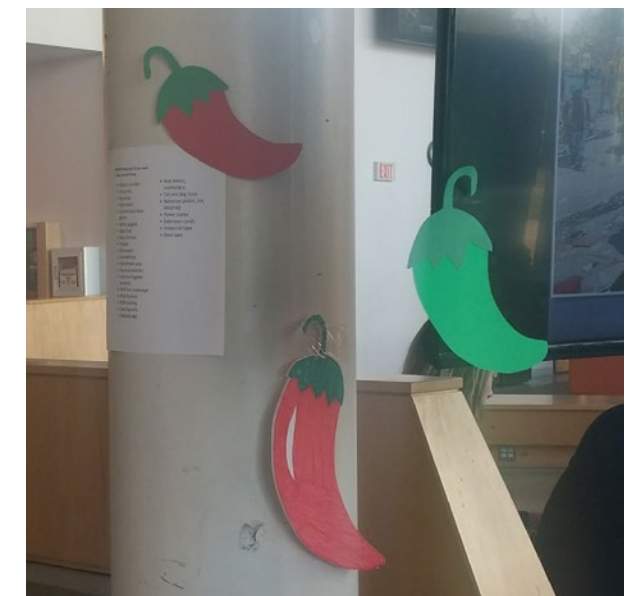
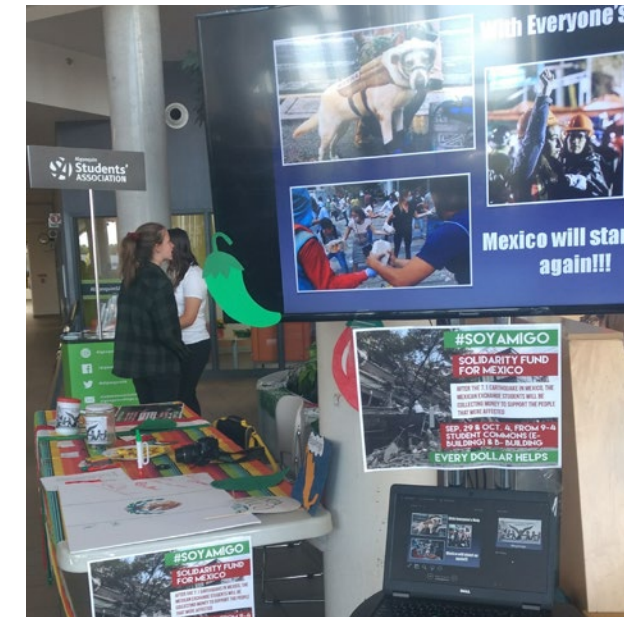
## YAZMIN GONZALEZ PALACIOS BUSINESS ANALYST

“In my second week studying here at Algonquin College — fall 2017 — a massive earthquake happened in Mexico... my home country. That scared me. Algonquin helped me connect with other Mexican students and do a fundraiser event in the school. Michelle Cameron, from the International Education Center, helped me organize the event. She was my support the whole time.

I am very thankful to all of the community and students who did not have much money to give, but would give me one dollar or 50 cents and say, ‘I am a new international student and I do not have money, but I want to help at least with what I have.’ Some of my professors asked the students to help and also allowed me to ask my classmates for help.

It was a moving experience being able to witness the greatness of a human being without considering differences in culture, language, country or traditions. The only goal... to help.

I will always be thankful to Algonquin College and all of the students, professors, and staff who supported this cause.”



## ANDREA EMERY FULL-TIME PROFESSOR

“About 20 years ago, I went to a portfolio review at Algonquin College to help critique work from graphic design students. I was immediately taken with the quality of the work and asked if I could contribute and teach in the Graphic Design program. Now in my 18th year of teaching, I have met many talented people and have made many lasting friendships.

When our eldest daughter, Katrin, decided to follow in my footsteps and become a graphic designer I had little doubt she would be successful. As she sat in my classroom, listening to my lectures, we tried to keep our mother-daughter relationship under wraps. Katrin worked hard, freelanced, graduated with honours, and found a full-time design position at a local advertising firm, Banfield.

Not only did Katrin excel in her studies and work part time for the Students' Association, but in her second year she met and fell in love with another student in the program, Christina. This past fall, on a picturesque sunny Sept. 14th, Katrin and Christina were married in a beautiful, heartfelt outdoor ceremony.

Another wonderful part of this story is that at least one third of the wedding guests were friends from the graphic design industry. Some of these friends were once my students and now Algonquin alumni who have either taught, or continue to teach, in the (Graphic Design) program.

What an absolute honour and privilege it is to work in a place that brings people together. To have friends and mentors who are special to my daughter and her new wife, as well as myself, is something we are thankful for. We have alumni who are happy to volunteer at our events, come to portfolio reviews, present to our students, hire new grads, and even bring their skill set to the classroom and teach for us.

Algonquin has helped enable me to make some life-long friendships that I might never have made otherwise. I am forever grateful to be able to teach people and inspire them and to share these cherished connections with my family.”

*“I have met  
many talented  
people and  
have made  
many lasting  
freindships.”*



## *“A treasure of remembrance now for me.”*

“My story is about another AC employee, the late Lindsay Harris. Lindsay was legendary in the Police and Public Safety Institute so I thought I'd offer the speech I gave at his memorial. A professor of 28 years at Algonquin College, Lindsay was to teach his last class the morning after he passed away on April 27, 2017 at age 71. He was due to retire that June.”

– Jill Reeves

*It is an honour to be speaking to you today about Professor Lindsay Harris.*

*A treat, as well, to be in the beautiful town of Almonte!*

*The necklace I'm wearing arrived on my desk one morning at Algonquin College, where Lindsay worked for 28 years. Only 'lkh', a married man to lovely Ingrid, could give a gift of jewelry to another man's wife in the workplace and get away with it.*

*A treasure of remembrance now for me.*

*We lost Lindsay on the cusp of what likely was to be the most serene time of his life. He had but one class left to teach. I find something poetic about that, it seems right that lkh would leave them all longing.*

*We were, as well, to have a faculty meeting that afternoon. Lindsay hated meetings, especially faculty meetings. I remember thinking at the time, though no one was ready for the joke, that he really pulled out all the stops to get out of this one.*

*We met anyway, with our dear Lindsay being the only item on the agenda and did what we could to make each other feel better in the face of such a shock.*

*I did not know Lindsay nearly long enough but was certainly aware of his commanding presence in the classroom. He tackled difficult subjects head on through courses like Human Sexuality and Contemporary Social Problems. An ever-changing subject matter, Lindsay was always current, passionate and unbridled, which kept intact his reputation for having one foot firmly planted in deep trouble.*

*He taught as he spoke, in a “shoot first ask questions later” kind of way. At times he was frightening, and more often than that, inappropriate.*

*Occasionally, he would come forth with a confession. Our chair, Laura Cohen, is a quick study and figured out right away that the best way to tame Lindsay was to insist that he confess his wrongdoings to Ingrid. A lion at the College, I take it he could be reduced to lamb status at home.*

*In anticipation of his retirement, I began to collect student testimonials which I had planned to share at another occasion, but I’ll divulge a few now:*

*“Grande lactose free, half sweet, no whip cream, sugar free mocha!” is indelible in the minds of the Starbucks girls on campus.”*

*“Always offering advice, willing to help in any way possible, and a great motivator. If it were not for you, I would not be where I am now.”*

*“Even amnesia would make it impossible for me to forget Lindsay.”*

*“Not a day goes by when I do not fall back on something Lindsay taught me.”*

*Lindsay was a gifted, award-winning teacher. However, it was his work as a coordinator and academic advisor where he really left his mark. Equally cantankerous as he was compassionate, he was a mentor to many, including me.*

*At his elbow I learned to respect the rules (on a sliding scale), to go the distance where the welfare of a student was in question, to speak the necessary truth no matter how realistic the impact but to do so with tenderness. Lindsay did not just change lives with his advice, he undoubtedly saved some. In a place of academia, it is commonplace to celebrate achievement, recognize greatness and to align oneself with the top tier, but these were not Lindsay’s people. Lindsay’s people were the downtrodden, the most challenged and vulnerable, those who perhaps had no chance to finish our program, but whom he felt were the most worthy of his time.*

*Rules be damned, if students were brave enough to come and see him, he hugged them freely. He would visit their workplace just to make sure they were still vertical. He calmed parents he probably wasn’t supposed to be talking to, and gave out his personal phone number to those whom he sensed might need someone when there was no one else.*

*The miracle of his way with students was something to behold. He was utterly fearless in his advocacy and had no patience for protocol, as evidenced by his occasional calls straight up to the president if matters didn’t sit right.*

*Sometimes when we come together at a funeral or celebration of life, as this day is, it marks a long life . . . a life complete. This is not one of those times. Lindsay did not, as Dylan Thomas wrote, “go gently into that good night.” I for one, take wicked comfort in imagining the profane and violent protest which most certainly left St. Peter in tatters at the Pearly gates.*

*Lindsay my friend, I know that you are not at all where you wanted to be. But I hope wherever you are, that someone needs your counsel, that technology never fails you, that everything offered is gluten-free, that a garden in total disarray lays before you requiring your touch, and that our love, best wishes and gratitude are enough to bring you peace and tranquility for eternity.*

*I dare not offer the last word, rather, I leave that up to Lindsay’s student, Jon Carlson, who wrote: “Everyone needs a push to get out of a bog; Lindsay packs a hell of a shove.”*

**JILL REEVES**  
**FULL-TIME**  
**PROFESSOR**

## BEN BRIDGSTOCK DIRECTOR, STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

“On Sept. 21, 2018, the tornado destroyed my neighborhood in Dunrobin. It blew my garage away, blew out windows, and ripped holes in the roof. My wife’s car was written off. The house was damaged by flying debris, everything was covered in glass, insulation and green mulch was running down the walls both inside and outside the house. As this was happening I was on the phone with my kids driving home from work. They stayed on the phone with me all through the tornado and as Ottawa Fire rescued them from our home.

Within one hour an Algonquin College manager texted me saying, ‘How can we help? What do you need?’ Another texted, ‘We have room for you and your family.’ And another, ‘Take my apartment. I can move in with my parents.’ Then a Dean texted: ‘My home is your home.’

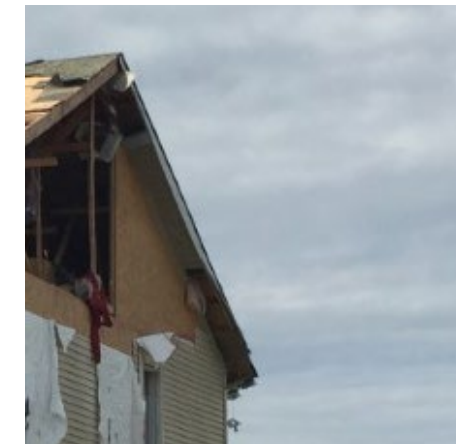
I was inundated with offers of help and support.

On the Monday after the tornado struck, my wife and I and our three kids had no place to stay for the next week while we waited for our rental to become vacant.

All the hotels were full. I was standing in the yard of West Carleton High School talking to my neighbors when I saw Shelley Styles, my retired Director from Algonquin, walking across the parking lot. I asked her what she was doing at the school. She replied, ‘I felt compelled to come and find you and help.’

Shelley insisted we come and stay with her and her husband Phil until our rental was ready. Shelley and Phil were the perfect hosts. They made us hot meals and if they were out they would leave kind notes and treats to eat. Shelley brought lunch bags for my two youngest kids and made their school lunches every day. Every morning and night, Phil took my son to feed their pigs and donkeys. He loved it so much and it really helped him at a critical time.

Shelley and Phil told my kids stories, made them laugh and provided a loving friendly environment that was so critical after they had been through the tornado. They were amazing.”





“Apply at Algonquin College *it is a great place to work.*”

“In 1989, my husband and I moved to Ottawa from Toronto. I asked a family friend to suggest a good place to work and he said: ‘Apply at Algonquin College it is a great place to work.’

So I applied and was fortunate enough to be hired.

This year, I will be celebrating 30 years at the College. I have worked as part-time support staff, part-time academic, full-time support staff and a full-time administrator. I am privileged to hold the position of Vice President, Human Resources, and serve this amazing institution. I am always thankful that I listened to that advice so many years ago and applied at the College.

The values and our mission have kept me engaged and proud to give my contributions to the College and to the college system.”

**DIANE McCUTCHEON**  
VP, HUMAN RESOURCES

## SHELLY SUTHERLAND STUDENT SUCCESS SPECIALIST

“My mother, Dawn Sutherland, worked at the Pembroke campus of Algonquin College for more than 25 years. Algonquin College was part of the fabric of my years growing up. I struggle to remember a time that an Algonquin College T-shirt was not part of my summer attire. My mother’s work friends became her best friends — The Golden Girls — a group of strong women who supported her, and luckily me, through all of life’s journeys.

Today the legacy continues. I work at Algonquin College, my work friends are some of my best friends — strong, supportive men and women — who have followed me through more of life’s journeys. Proudly, my two sons are graduates of Algonquin College and proud Alumni. For them the journey continues. And for all of us, our Algonquin family grows!”





## **BEN DINH** MANAGER, ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

“Short Story Version: I graduated from university with thousands of others. Many of us had student loans to pay off and pressure from our families to find a job. I found my way to Algonquin College and never looked back.

Some people asked why I would want to go to college after I just graduated from university. I told them it was to further my education and be different than those with only a degree.

Here are some roles I've had at Algonquin over the past 10 years:

- *part-time student job*
- *full-time student*
- *full-time residence advisor*
- *part-time contract role*
- *full-time Students' Association position*
- *part-time professor*
- *full-time contract role*
- *partial-load professor*
- *full-time support staff position*
- *full-time administrative role*

In these roles, I've had the opportunity to work with some influential people who helped me grow and become the person I am today. I am very fortunate for my journey; from student to professor to manager. As a student, I tried to create my own story and learn as much as I could. Now, I am the manager of Alumni Engagement where I get to share alumni success stories. I also taught, which enabled me to give back to the students.

Algonquin College has changed my life by transforming my hopes and dreams into lifelong success.”

“  
AC has  
changed  
my life...  
”

*“Algonquin College  
guided the path  
and made this  
dream possible.”*

“I’ve always wanted to make a positive difference in my profession. Algonquin gave me the opportunity to do just that when I was seconded from The Ottawa Hospital to develop the Diagnostic Medical Sonography (DMS) program. An amazing leader, Joan Degan, and great mentors from all over the College provided an extended family to the DMS team as it guided the path and made this dream possible.”

**JANE ST. GERMAIN**  
FULL-TIME PROFESSOR

**HELEN HUANG**  
LABOUR RELATIONS  
SPECIALIST

“As a university graduate, already three years on a path that was not my calling, I was feeling stuck. A promotion opportunity at work did not excite me, but rather filled me with panic because I could not envision professional fulfilment in my future. After some serious work on a pro/con list, I decided to go back to school and study Human Resources (HR). However, I knew my studies had to be streamlined and intentional with the end goal of a new job. Research led me to an accelerated course at Algonquin College. This program would lead to the Certified Human Resources Professional designation, while enabling significant networking with HR professionals in the Ottawa area.

One year later, I was working in the HR department of a major chartered bank, and with colleagues I had met in class at Algonquin!

In 2015 I accepted a job in HR here at the College, and it felt like a true full circle moment. I have no doubt choosing Algonquin was the best investment I’ve ever made — an investment in myself.”



### The Algonquin College Coat of Arms

The Coat of Arms was carefully designed over a two-year period in consultation with the Canadian Heraldic Authority, part of the Office of the Secretary to the Governor General.



#### — THUNDERBIRD —

REPRESENTS OUR QUEST TO CREATE AND SHARE KNOWLEDGE



#### — EVERGREEN TREE —

REPRESENTS THE RICHNESS OF NATURE, RESILIENCE, AND LONGEVITY



#### — TWIN WOLVES —

SUPPORTERS THAT SYMBOLIZES POWER AND LEADERSHIP



#### — WAMPUM BELT —

SYMBOLIZE STORIES PASSED DOWN BY GENERATIONS



#### — LIGHTNING BOLTS —

SYMBOLIZE THE SPARK OF INSPIRATION, INNOVATION AND TRANSFORMATION

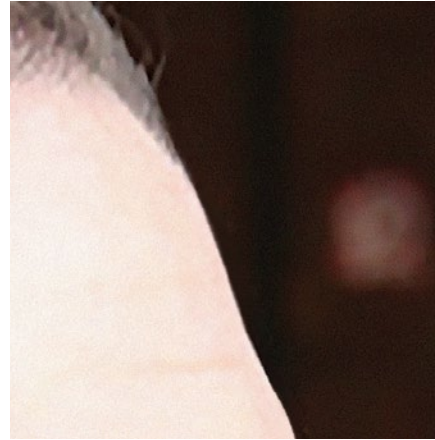


#### — MOTTO —

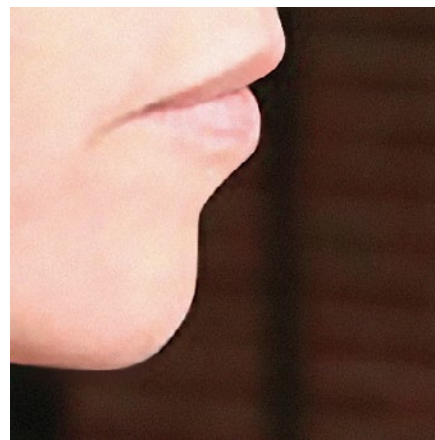
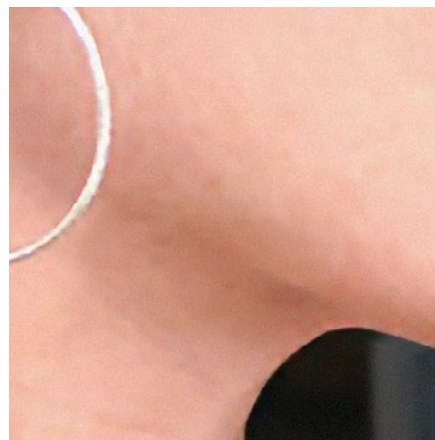
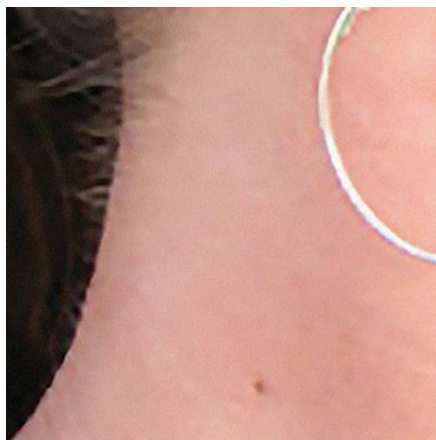
OUR VALUES OF CARING, LEARNING, INTEGRITY AND RESPECT

### The Elements

“While many of its symbols reflect Indigenous culture, their messages in many cases are truly universal.”  
 – Ron (Deganadus) McLeester, VP, Truth, Reconciliation & Indigenization



*“I am our slogan. Literally.”*



## **KIMBERLY BISHOP** SENIOR GRAPHIC DESIGNER, MARKETING

“‘Changing Lives.’ I am our slogan. Literally.

I am a Senior Graphic Designer in the AC Marketing Department. I have been an employee for nine years and I feel grateful every day to be a part of the AC story. And I’m proud to say I’ve have been part of the creation of the College’s look, feel and brand, and am a champion of that brand.

I have a passionate belief in the message as I live it. Algonquin changed my life and in many ways I feel I was meant to be a part of this community and proud to help change the lives of others.

I am a graduate of both the Ontario College of Art and St-Lawrence College and had more than 20 years’ experience working as a graphic designer, working mainly in the high-tech industry. For 15-plus years I worked daily with (web) developers but never actually coded. After a corporate layoff in 2009, I was out of work and freelancing. I was a 40-year-old single mother with two toddlers and a mortgage and was seeking full-time employment in a company where I could hang my hat and gain security. The industry

had changed, and although my experience and talent were in high-demand, my credentials were dated, and I needed to have multi-media on my CV. I was also on contract with a temp agency that got me a lot of work in high-profile institutions, but I was getting paid a fraction of what I could make if I could get in somewhere on my own. My CV needed that one word. I had no choice but to return to school full-time... at 40.

Through the Second Careers program, I qualified to attend the one-year Intensive Interactive Multimedia Graduate Certificate program. I was the perfect candidate and had full funding to live, upgrade my qualifications, become marketable, smile, breathe, stand with pride, provide again for my children and gain confidence. All of which led to a part-time, fill-in position as a Senior Graphic Designer with the AC Marketing team, where I was needed and had support and respect from my colleagues. Eventually, I found that full-time employment and a place where I could hang my hat.

Forever grateful. AC changed my life.”



# Miigwetch

— THANK YOU —  
IN THE ALGONQUIN LANGUAGE

# Kwe

— HELLO —  
IN THE ALGONQUIN LANGUAGE

## WADHAH AL-MONAIFI ONLINE LEARNING, ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR

“My journey at Algonquin College started about a decade ago. I was an international student in the School of Business with a goal to pursue a career in the business world. While Algonquin College was an amazing community to me as a student, working here was never something I considered.

Fast forward a year into my studies, something was still missing and just being a student was not enough. That’s when I decided to get involved in extracurricular activities. I applied to become a student leader. In my first few days volunteering, I had a memorable experience when Drew Dudley spoke to the student leaders about “Everyday Leadership” from his famous TED Talk. He talked about the “the lollipop moment —” a moment where someone says something or does something that you feel fundamentally changes your life —” more on that later.

After a summer of training for the fall term orientation, I received an email asking if any student leaders were interested in applying for the last spot on the Resident Advisor (RA) team. Due to the timing, this opportunity was exclusive to the student leader team. I applied and was the successful candidate. Working (part-time) in residence exposed to me to student affairs and gave me a glimpse into working in higher education. Lo and behold, I was discovering a new passion of mine working with students, which had never crossed my mind.

Post graduation, I was offered an advancement opportunity at a college residence in the Toronto area. A year and a half later, Ottawa — which I considered home — was calling. Algonquin College was the only place I wanted to work, the place where it all started. That was almost five years ago and I haven’t looked back since.

While key moments and decisions in my life led me to where I am today, I can’t take all the credit myself. One person has been instrumental in helping me navigate this path and leading to who I am today as a member of the college community and as a person. Joel Nethercote-Devlin has been there from the beginning, every step of the way. I consider him a mentor and a friend. But the spark that started it all was the “lollipop moment”, and the catalyst of that moment was no other than Sophia Bouris. In her role hiring student leaders for orientation ten years ago, she believed in me and gave me an opportunity. That student leadership position led me to start working in student life and altered the path I was on, unbeknownst to me at the time. It was the day that changed the rest of my life.”

*“Algonquin college  
was the only place  
I wanted to work,  
the place where  
it all started.”*



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WLA

We Love  
Acronyms

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*“...the promise of adventure  
I could not afford to miss.”*

**ERIC DAWSON**  
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

“Retirement was clearly a mistake. There was only so much time in mid-life — even late mid-life — that I could happily spend reading, travelling and socializing. I needed more purposeful activity. So when a friend and former colleague emailed to say Algonquin College was looking for a writer in the Communications department, my steps forward were clear. Re-reading the classics, latte in hand, could wait: joining the Communications team at Algonquin College offered the promise of an adventure I could not afford to miss.

I expected it to be interesting. What I didn’t anticipate was how surprising and varied this adventure would be. Most of the stories I have been lucky to tell have been about transformation and the people who make remarkable change happen. Change on the scale of the

move of multiple departments into Student Central, the extraordinarily complex launch of Brightspace and Adaptive Insights, and much more — all of it fascinating, all achieved by expert, innovative teams.

My work has also allowed me to get to know many members of the faculty, hear about their work and, through interviews with their students, come to understand the transformative effect they have on the College’s learners. Working here has changed me from a passive admirer of Algonquin College to an advocate for everything this school strives to accomplish. It ensures that while I’m on staff, and long after I have left, I will be spreading the word about the College’s singular value to our community.”



“  
*...this is a place  
where opportunity  
and innovation  
grow.*  
”

**ELICIA KIRK**  
SPECIAL PROJECT  
COORDINATOR

“I started working at Algonquin College at the age of 20, just recently out of my teens and still completing a degree at the University of Ottawa. I was thrilled to be working in an environment that had more to offer me than just working a few hours per week.

Now full-time and having completed a Diploma at Algonquin, I look back on the past six years and acknowledge with gratitude how much the College has helped me — directly or indirectly — over the years. It has been, and still is, a place for me to thrive and gain excellent life and work experience. From hiring great employees who support each other and turn into ‘outside-of-work friends,’ to the extensive support and encouragement from management, this is a place where opportunity and innovation grow. I am so grateful to be a part of this family.

Through its various initiatives, and fostering employee involvement in those initiatives, Algonquin has proven itself to be a trailblazer in the college community. And this makes me incredibly proud to be in the centre of it all.”



## JENNIFER FIELDHOUSE PART-TIME PROFESSOR

"I am an ESL Instructor with the Language Institute, focusing on OSLT Business Language courses. I graduated from Algonquin College's Teachers of English as a Second Language (TESL) program in 2017. Prior to this, I followed my passion for international development and worked for more than 25 years in office administration, recruitment and management with various development organizations. I also volunteer with Aga Khan Foundation Canada, engaging youth in discussions on Canada's role in international development.

In 2016, I was invited to visit AKFC development projects in Mozambique and Tanzania. In preparation for this trip, I asked youth and other Canadians to join in a global conversation. I filled my notebook with more than 100 questions, from "what's your favourite colour?" to "what does your community need?"

The people I met were always happy to share their stories, answer my questions, and even asked some questions of their own for me to bring back to my Canadian community. I now feel privileged to be able

to share these interesting and thoughtful stories from the people I met. Through this experience, I learned that sharing each other's stories has the power to build a strong and understanding community.

So what about the lions? At the end of the trip, I took a safari in the Serengeti and was thinking about my amazing experience meeting so many people. I sat looking at two lions and was inspired to make the decision to follow one of my dreams . . . to become a teacher. I don't know what it was about those lions that inspired me. Maybe their fearless nature helped give me the courage to pursue teaching. One year later, I was graduating from Algonquin College with my TESL Degree and heading into the classroom. I wish all Canadians had the opportunity to meet and interact with my students and see that as global citizens, in many ways, we are all the same. We all have hopes and dreams for ourselves, our families and our communities.

Algonquin College helped make my dream into a reality and for that I will always be grateful."

## CHARLES NASMITH FULL-TIME PROFESSOR

“This personal story occurred in November of 2016, during my first full teaching load at Algonquin College. I was seated in an empty B Building food court at about 6:45 a.m., a time I could be alone, to mark my first-year homework.

As I was marking, a shadow caught my attention to my right-hand side, and as I looked up, I engaged a vaguely familiar face. Before I could respond or react, the person said, ‘My, you are a busy beaver!’

To which I responded ‘I like the morning,’ to which there was a response, ‘I am the same.’

There was a short exchange of information, and it became clear that the President of the College, Cheryl Jensen, had intentionally deviated from her normal path to talk with me. Kind of blown away, I said, ‘I am very interested to have a discussion about the Indigenous initiatives at the College, and what that actually looks like, and how I can be involved.’ From there, Cheryl invited me to a meeting in her office where we had some tea, which was great. Further, Cheryl guided me to my first conversation with Ron (Deganadus) McLester — now Vice President, Truth, Reconciliation and Indigenization — whom I have grown to know well. Ron later graciously spoke with my first-year class in the fall of 2017.

I continue to connect with other like-minded colleagues through other opportunities, and it all tracks back to those few kind words involving a beaver and a well-intentioned path less travelled.

This conversation easily helped me feel that I had one more reason to be here at Algonquin College. Therefore, I would simply leave a thought: No matter how high-level and comprehensive we attempt to be in our policies, whether it be our management styles or philosophies, our teaching strategies, our vocational outcomes, or in life, we all have access to the rich possibilities created by a simple conversation. A conversation with some kind words on a road less travelled.

Having taught at Algonquin College since 2015, I have been given the great privilege of working with many talented, caring and inspiring mentors. These mentors include colleagues, associates, and students, who have inspired me by what they have accomplished, the obstacles they have overcome, and the time they have shared, in thought or in deed, to make this world a better place.

Here are a few words gathered to identify the good ways that people can follow. It is a choice.”

*“The world upon a thin edge stands  
And yet we can with outstretched hands  
Plant a tree, and clear the shores  
And look up asking if there’s more  
To make this world a better place  
and add with that a smiling face :)”*

– Charles G. Nasmith, inspired by others

**DIANNA McALEER**  
FULL-TIME PROFESSOR

“I was told of a part-time teaching gig at what was then the Colonel By Campus in 1989. I thought, ‘Why not?’ The interview went smoothly. The standout question was, ‘Do you have a sense of humour?’ I loved that question, although as it turned out, I did not fully understand its purpose until I had been teaching for a few terms.

First day: 8 a.m. class. I’m in the room at 7:15 a.m. Briefcase unpacked (hideous black faux-crocodile item - seemed professorial at the time), my name and course name on the board. Plenty of time to relax, to have second thoughts, to panic. What was I thinking? I can’t teach. I’ve never taught. I must get out of here! I erased the board, packed up my bag, put my sweater back on and headed to the door. At the door I was met by two students coming into class.

I greeted them, went back in, unpacked, wrote on the board and then proceeded to have the most fantastic work experience of my life to that point. I fell in love with the profession. I still love it.

Oh, and that sense of humour question? That’s really about being able to be amused when students say: ‘This is really not bad for an English class.’ ‘Are we doing anything important today?’ ‘Why did you fail me on this midterm?’

Without a sense of humour, the other option is to say what we really think, and that won’t do at all.”

*“Do you  
have a  
sense of  
humour?”*

## DANIELLE ALLARD FULL-TIME PROFESSOR

"I found myself in a room filled with Ottawa music.

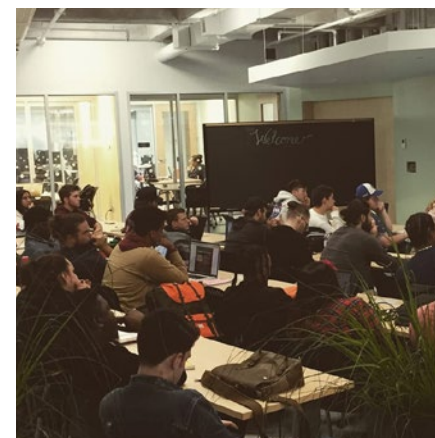
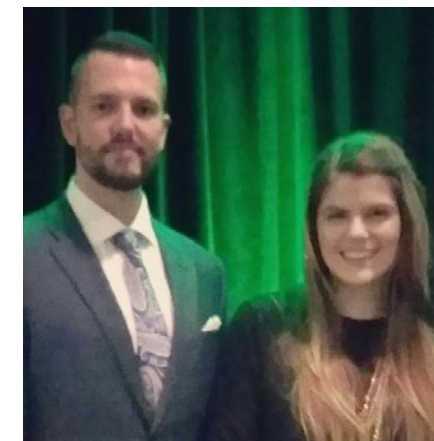
It was a song-writing workshop. To my surprise, though, there were so many musicians in one room and only one other woman standing there. I knew we had to connect. In the spirit of lifelong learning, I always ask questions of my fellow musicians and so I asked this woman my favourite question: 'Are you a full-time musician, and if so, how?' She laughed and said no and that she graced the stage at night and taught at Algonquin College by day. I was surprised again to meet someone who shared my two passions. She said (Algonquin) needed more teachers. Two days later I found myself at the College and on a path I hadn't foreseen.

Fast forward six years and I have found my home in Media and Design thanks to dozens of incredible people in our community. My friends in Technology and Trades took me under their wing. They shared content and strategies that helped me get through my first year. I found myself in the T.A.L.L. program where I met new friends from across the College who thought of me and reached out with opportunities, which I am grateful for to this day.

I made new friends in Media and Design and started teaching in the Public Relations and Music Industry Arts programs. I get to share my passion with incredible, driven, and compassionate students who are working to make the world a better place. I didn't know when I walked into that song-writing event all those years ago that my life would be changed by one woman. I didn't know that teaching would be my chosen career, but I come to work every day knowing this is where I'm meant to be.

I am surrounded by inspiring and kind people everyday.

I know I'm one of the lucky ones."



“*Here I am, Mom.*”

“My parents moved from Regina, Saskatchewan to Ottawa in 2000. As they waited for their home to be built, they stayed in the apartments on Baseline Road overlooking Algonquin College. My mom missed us dearly and would often say, ‘Why don’t you move to Ottawa and work at Algonquin College?’ I remember saying, ‘What? Never heard of it, Mom.’

I enjoyed my professorship at the college in Regina and had no intention of moving. I did, however, come to Ottawa for all three of my maternity leaves to spend time with my parents, and every time mom would say, ‘Why don’t you move to Ottawa and work at Algonquin College?’ And I would say, ‘What? Never heard of it, Mom.’ In 2008, my mom died and left my dad alone. In 2014, I had the opportunity to move to Ottawa for several reasons but especially to be near Dad. I applied to Algonquin College and was blessed to be hired here.

Here I am, Mom. I hope you are looking down on me and smiling.”

**SATWINDER KAMINSKI**  
FULL-TIME PROFESSOR

**CHRIS LACKNER**  
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

“*An ex journalist  
Found an inspiring new home  
With stories to tell  
AC Garden walk  
Refrehing my eyes and brain  
Second wind to write  
A green, green campus  
Like St. Patrick’s Day all year  
Glad brand not yellow*”



## Values

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### Caring

We have a sincere and compassionate interest in the well-being of the individual.

### Learning

We believe in the pursuit of knowledge, personal growth and development.

### Integrity

We believe in trust, honesty and fairness in all relationships and transactions.

### Respect

We value the dignity and uniqueness of the individual. We value equity and diversity in our community.



*“Growing up I always knew that I wanted to be a teacher.”*

**SARAH HASSAN**  
RECRUITMENT OFFICER

“

I graduated high school at the age of 16, and had no idea what I wanted to do with my life (except that I wanted to teach). I joined uOttawa the following year and dropped out soon after. It was so different from high school and too hard for me to wrap my head around everything involved with being in university.

I decided to join Algonquin College’s Early Childhood Education (ECE) program. It was such a fantastic program, but after starting my placement I knew that it wasn’t the right fit for me. Regardless, I graduated and continued on to Carleton University’s Child Studies program. Little did I know that it was very similar to Algonquin’s ECE program, so I switched to psychology. Unfortunately, nobody told me that it would be extremely difficult to get a job in the field of psychology with only a Bachelor’s Degree. So I returned to uOttawa and earned my Masters, in Education. I then went on to teach Adult English as a second/Foreign Language at post-secondary institutions and language schools in the Ottawa region.

A few years later, I took an overseas teaching contract at the American University of the Middle East. In 2017, I came back to Canada and started working at a language school. However, I felt I needed a career change and started applying to different jobs.

One posting on Algonquin College’s website that really caught my eye was a six-month non-reoccurring contract as an Early Outreach Officer at Student Recruitment. I applied for the job, thinking that I probably wouldn’t even get a call for an interview. To my surprise, I not only got an interview, I also got the job! The funny thing is, the credential that helped me get the job was my ECE diploma. After completing that contract, I was quickly recycled into the system and worked at the Registrar’s Office for a short time, and then moved back into Student Recruitment as a Recruitment Specialist.

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“There is  
*no better  
feeling...*”

**VIGINTHINY  
PARAMANANTHAN**

“As a contract worker here at Algonquin College, I always remember the impact from interacting with just one student. And that one student is enough to make a difference in this world. There is no better feeling than knowing you have helped one student feel like they belong and are understood. If I can spread that feeling of belonging and understanding with all students I meet, then I know I have done my job for the day. I can go home feeling proud and happy for making a difference in my everyday interaction with students.”



**RON (DEGANDUS) McLESTER**  
 VICE-PRESIDENT, TRUTH,  
 RECONCILIATION & INDIGENIZATION

“

There are many stories about the Three Sisters in woodland Indigenous cultures. While the details of these stories differ from nation to nation, there is almost always one shared common thread that weaves them together — working together for the benefit of our communities.

Today we recognize Corn, Beans and Squash who have always worked together in order to sustain our communities.

Today, we recognize that these Three Sisters are bound together by three tenets: peace, friendship and respect.

Today, we recognize that these three tenants are what make the Sisters special.

And so today, we bring our minds together as one as we give thanks to these traditional teachings that remind us about working together, for the benefit of our communities. We ask our family to wrap ourselves in the Good Mind, as we turn our attention to peace, friendship and respect.

## *Three Sister's Soup*

*2 cups canned white or yellow hominy, drained*

*2 cups fresh green beans, trimmed and snapped*

*2 cups peeled and cubed butternut squash*

*1 1/2 cups diced peeled potatoes*

*5 cups water*

*1 1/2 tablespoons chicken bouillon granules*

*2 tablespoons butter, melted*

*2 tablespoons all-purpose flour*

*1/4 teaspoon pepper*

”

*“To me, it’s  
not work;  
It’s something  
I find very  
rewarding.”*

**ASHLEY MURFIN**  
FULL-TIME  
PROFESSOR

“My Algonquin College connection started in 1993 when I was accepted to the Paramedic program.

Back then, the Ambulance and Emergency Care classes were taught at the Lees Campus (which was sold to the University of Ottawa in 2007).

I recall enjoying the program from Day 1, as it was hands-on and intense, all the way to the end.

Prior to this program I received a Bachelor of Physical Education degree, but it was what I took away from my Paramedic courses that truly set me up for success.

I have always enjoyed teaching, sharing knowledge and helping others succeed. To me, it’s not work; it’s something I find very rewarding. A year after I graduated from Algonquin I started teaching with the Paramedic program.

I taught the lifting and fitness course and helped with the practical lab courses for many years. In 2000, two colleagues approached me about developing Algonquin’s first Advanced Care Paramedic program.

I wanted to be engaged with the students and Algonquin as much as possible, so I continued to help the program as a lab instructor.

It was around this time when I realized I would benefit from learning more about teaching. I completed the Teacher and Trainer of Adults program at Algonquin, and as I suspected, it benefited me greatly and has helped in many areas of my career.

Our careers are not often a straight line to the perfect fit. On Aug. 13, 2018, I started as a full-time professor with the Paramedic program at the Ottawa Campus. I have come full circle and now proudly teach with people who taught me and whom I have taught. It is exciting to start a new chapter with the program that launched my 25-year career.

The other fabulous connection to Algonquin, which is very special, is my daughter has followed in dad’s footsteps and graduated from the Paramedic program in 2019. Thank you, Algonquin!”

**LAURA JARRELL**  
ASSOCIATE REGISTRAR,  
ENROLLMENT SYSTEMS  
SERVICES

“I came to Algonquin as a student in 2000 in the Business – Marketing program. After not finding the right fit at university, I came to college looking for a different academic experience – a shorter program, smaller classes, and an applied education. From the beginning, I knew that I had found that and so much more. I found a supportive and caring community of employees, knowledgeable and engaged faculty, and friendships that have lasted almost two decades. After finishing my program, I went on to complete a Bachelor of Commerce at university. This truly gave me an education that was the best of both worlds, but my connection to Algonquin as an alumna has always been so much stronger. This is where I found my path.

I came back to Algonquin in 2012 as an employee. I was so thrilled to return to the College and the School of Business and to support prospective students in coming to Algonquin for the same life-changing experience that I had here. Since then, I have been privileged to work in many different areas of the College and to contribute in my own way to the vibrancy of our community and the success of our learners. I am grateful every day to be an Algonquin College employee.”

“*I was waiting to  
pay it forward...*”

“I started out as an apprentice hairstylist in British Columbia. My salon enjoyed competing in hair shows. During my two-year apprenticeship, I had the opportunity to be mentored and successfully placed in both men’s and women’s events.

I was waiting to pay it forward in my career. Algonquin College gave me that opportunity.

In 2013, my colleague Sue Lefebvre and I coached Hair Styling student Shelby Tymchuk for Skills Ontario. At the competition, Shelby won Gold for Algonquin and Ontario. It was such an awesome experience to then move on to compete at the national event, Skills Canada, in Vancouver with all of Team Ontario.

I will never forget how proud I was of our student and to be a part of a college that fully supported skilled trades. My colleague Tara Ettinger and I have since coached Elyse-Marie Smith and Jasmine Ebery to win bronze at the provincial competition. I look forward to many more competitions in the future.”

**DEANNA DOUGLAS**  
FULL-TIME PROFESSOR

## CLAUDE BRULÉ PRESIDENT & CEO

“When I left the Canadian Armed Forces to join Algonquin College in 1999, it was in part because I wanted more stability for my family. I wanted to have a home where my family and I could put down some roots, a place where our daughter would have the opportunity to make long-term friends at school and in the neighbourhood. At the same time, though, I had mixed feelings about leaving the military. The experience and camaraderie one develops with colleagues on tours of duty last a lifetime. Moreover, serving our nation has and remains a fundamental calling to me. This was not an easy decision.

I wanted to make sure the organization I would join was the right fit for me, and the values I hold dear. I wanted to further develop my management and leadership styles, use my creativity, and to continue being of service to the community. I found all of this and more at Algonquin College. It was the perfect fit for me, an amazing place to begin my second career. Now, 20 years later, this wonderful place and its amazingly dedicated employees continue to energize me and fulfill my drive and passion. Frankly, it does not get better than this, and that is what keeps me going!”





