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Faculty Stakeholder Results

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Executive Summary

This report is an analysis of research conducted with faculty over the Fall 2018 term on the development of the Learner Driven Plan at Algonquin College. A total of 337 faculty members were interviewed in peer-to-peer sessions. These sessions consisted of conversations built around seven questions, designed to elicit input and suggestions from faculty on the development of the Learner Driven Plan and personalized learning. Each section of this report will address one of these questions and discuss the relevant findings. Throughout the report, quotes from faculty respondents are noted in **bold italics**.

At the beginning of each session, respondents were asked to provide their first impressions on personalized education and the Learner Driven Plan. Their answers fell into six key priorities: class environment, technology, professional development, college experience, course delivery, and faculty roles. Respondents both noted concerns in those areas and provided input on how to deliver personalized education in them.

Next, respondents were asked to describe anything currently personalized at the College. The noted trends included the following: the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL), support services and counselling, flipped and hybrid class models, and Academic Upgrading. Respondents described that these systems provided good examples of personalization already existing at the College.

Respondents were then asked for future recommendations on providing personalization. This question typically made up the bulk of the peer-to-peer session. The major topics and trends in faculty recommendations are as follows:

- A more flexible weekly class schedule, including breaks and the ability to schedule online
- Ability for students to take courses outside current program or build their own courses
- Use modules for learning and reward mastery of a subject
- Create a physical classroom environment more conducive to learning
- Smaller class sizes
- Better technology for learning and support services
- Improved academic advising centre, and partner each student with an advisor
- More robust peer tutoring

Following these suggestions, respondents were asked to describe their future classrooms in a personalized learning environment. Faculty described that the Learner Driven Plan implementation would have to be program-specific, and that there should be a pilot program used for testing before institution-wide implementation. Respondents also described that the role of faculty should change to that of a content expert, and that technology will play a larger role within the classroom. Finally, respondents explained that circular seating would be preferable to rows, and that in-person classes should remain a priority.

Respondents were also asked about what forms of professional development (PD) they would need to support personalized learning. The majority of respondents described that PD should be more robust, be more accessible, and be offered throughout the entire year. Respondents
also suggested that, if the College is offering personalized learning to students, it should also offer personalized PD to faculty.

Finally, respondents were asked about what students would excel at and struggle with in a personalized learning environment. Faculty tended to agree that students would be more engaged, more independent, and less stressed in a personalized environment. They also expressed concerns that students would struggle with too much choice, time management, and soft skills.

Overall, faculty responses during peer-to-peer sessions ranged from skeptical to optimistic. When asked for final thoughts, respondents typically summarized their suggestions and then provided high-level feedback. Respondents often described that, however the College decides to implement the Learner Driven Plan, it should strive to take its time and implement it correctly. More skeptical respondents asked if the College could provide examples of other institutions providing personalized education or provide literature backing the initiative. Some respondents expressed concerns about the College listening to their input.

Ultimately, respondents were happy to have been consulted. They noted their gratitude at being included in the conversation on the development of the Learner Driven Plan.
Introduction

The following research report offers a detailed review of the data collection approach followed by the faculty leaders and results gathered from peer-to-peer faculty meetings at Algonquin College throughout Fall 2018.

These research sessions with both part- and full-time instructors were conducted in order to explore and discuss the main concept for the College’s Learner Driven Plan: personalized learning. The purpose of each session was to generate in-depth feedback and recommendations from one of the College’s key stakeholders, the faculty team.

Personalized education, that encapsulates activities that take place within a classroom or course delivery, activities using learning technologies and events related to the experiences students have outside of their courses (but still within the College’s environment), were all explored.

Research discussions were held in person with all faculty respondents and at all three campuses, to ensure optimal stakeholder representation. Faculty were highly encourage to be honest and reflect openly about the opportunities for the College as it related to personalization.

All data was transcribed and added to a centralized online database for analysis and reflection. Following the question order outlined in the Interview Guide (see Appendix A), the results are outlined and summarize for each along with pertinent and poignant faculty quotations.

Sessions with faculty were completed on December 19, 2018 and the results have been carefully reviewed. The key trends have been identified in order to support the next phase of the development of the Learner Driven Plan at Algonquin College.
Research Objectives

In August of 2018, a research methodology proposal was presented to senior management and the Learner Driven Plan’s project manager for review. The proposal was approved and became the working guide for faculty researchers to study the attitudes and opinions of current faculty at Algonquin College related to the concept of personalized learning.

Below, are the key research objectives that were included in this methodology approach and which aided to guide the team on its activities during the course of the data collection:

- To uncover ideas, methods and approaches toward personalized learning that will support learners, acquired directly from full- and part-time faculty at Algonquin College from all departments.

- To determine the level of education on the meaning of personalized learning required to engage Algonquin College faculty members.

- To investigate the level of change from the current method of instruction that faculty members would be comfortable with.

- To determine the feasibility of transitioning to a personalized learning model, from a faculty member’s perspective, with special emphasis on perceptions regarding time needed to make the required changes, resources required to help faculty prepare and the training deemed necessary to ensure success.

- To ensure that the data collection process is conducted in a professional, credible and transparent manner.
Research Methodology Overview

The chosen method to collect peer-to-peer faculty data was qualitative in nature. This methodology permitted more in-depth data sharing, along with the ability for moderators to probe for additional details to uncover underlying information from respondents. Unlike a quantitative (i.e. a sample survey) study, qualitative research is designed to allow for open dialogue and freedom of expression. This methodology is less structured than quantitative; however, it can provide richer insight and understanding toward a study’s research objectives (Malhotra, 2015).

Research Population

Using data (population size and breakdown) provided by the Learner Driven Plan project management team, a plan was put into place to connect with instructors throughout the Fall Term (September to December 2018). Faculty respondents could have been teaching their first term or be more experienced professors and non-teaching faculty (15+ years, for instance). They may also have been full- or part-time.

Data was also collected from faculty from all three Algonquin College campuses (Woodroffe, Perth and Pembroke).

Data Collection Devices

An in-depth Interview Guide (see Appendix A) was developed by the researchers and approved in advance. This Guide was used in every session to meet the research project’s objectives. The questions were all open-ended, to allow for top-of-mind comments, dialogue between respondents and honest reflection and to permit higher levels of detail.

Researchers also employed an online scheduling tool, Doodle, to aid in effectively and efficiently presenting to the faculty population, all the available session options offered in a given timeframe (i.e. two weeks to a month in advance). A Doodle scheduling online link was advertised in all LDP Faculty Session communication including email messages, invites, posters, postcards, email signatures, etc. On average, there were three to five unique session times each day (Monday to Thursday, and the occasional Friday) from the start of September until the last day of November (including Perth and Pembroke campuses). Faculty were offered sessions that varied in times to accommodate unique teaching schedules. The maximum number of faculty per session was normally four; however, for some groups or various departments who wished to attend together, exceptions were made. Sessions would always be conducted, whether there
was one person signed up, or four. The same questions were also used and the same process was always followed.

**Drop In Sessions** were also held weekly at Woodroffe Campus to allow faculty to stop by the faculty research offices (C151) and spend some time with a moderator discussing the Learner Driven Plan before heading to a meeting or their next class. This did not require a commitment of time in the online schedule and offered additional flexibility for those who could not dedicate a full 30-minutes.

Researchers also employed **iPads** for the purpose of recording the audio of each session to permit more accurate and in-depth transcription later. All data was uploaded during each transcription to a database developed using **Survey Monkey**. Researchers worked hard to provide ample and detailed verbatim results which will be shared during the Findings section of this report.

**Research Fieldwork**

Upon approval of the research methodology proposal, researchers generated a number of communication tools to assist in reaching and generating interest with the faculty population. On August 29, 2018, Claude Brulé, Senior Vice President of Academics, sent an email to all faculty advising them of the upcoming peer-to-peer sessions and encouraged all to volunteer and participate.

Researchers then followed up the next day, with a specific message to all faculty regarding the process and how faculty could expect to get involved. The first two weeks of the Fall term were also the first two weeks of the faculty stakeholder data collection. These sessions were dedicated to meeting and hearing from any and all faculty, keen to share their ideas, thoughts and opinions, regardless of what Department they currently taught in. These sessions were called “Early Bird Sessions” and were held daily in various boardrooms throughout Woodroffe campus.

Upon completion of the Early Bird Sessions, the research team began to target each faculty group (or School) separately and offered unique times and dates for those particular faculty. This approach was followed for higher levels of awareness and for more targeted email and promotion (i.e. Good Morning Algonquin and MyAlgonquin) campaigns. Below is the order of the data collection process by academic area:

1. *Faculty of Technology and Trades and ACCE*
2. *School of Business*
3. School of Hospitality and Tourism
4. Faculty of Health, Public Safety and Community Studies
5. Faculty of Arts, Media and Design

It is important to add that faculty sessions were held at both Perth and Pembroke campuses as well. Researchers visited in person, for two days each. Formal sessions (arranged in advance and using a unique Doodle schedule link developed to suit each campus) as well as Drop In Sessions were held in each location. Perth faculty were visited in September, while Pembroke faculty participated in October.

Finally, researchers were also engaged with arranging and presented to larger groups of primarily “non-teaching” faculty through the research data collection phase. Such meetings included a short presentation of the Learner Driven Plan objectives and interactive discussions to collect information on their attitudes and recommendations. These were normally arranged with a manager of a team and researchers visited groups at their meeting spaces and offices. Below are examples of such larger sessions:

- CAL Services
- Counselling Services
- Academic Development
- Learning and Teaching Services
- CCOL

Overall, researchers held more than 131 peer-to-peer sessions including 337 faculty (teaching and non-teaching). Faculty researchers included Carolyn Côté, Valerie Hill and Robert Sullivan.
Research Findings

Question 1: First Impressions about Personalization

At the beginning of each session, respondents were asked to provide their immediate thoughts on personalized education using a Word Association technique. Based on the most common trends, responses were sorted into six main faculty priorities: class environment, technology, professional development, college experience, course delivery, and faculty roles. Responses that did not fit into the above scheme were sorted into a miscellaneous “other” category.

Priority 1: Class Environment

This priority encompasses all aspects of the class environment. Respondents commented on the current state of the class environment, including topics such as class size, physical resources, and teaching methods, and offered input regarding the implementation of personalized education in this area.

The input received from respondents touched on three major topics: flexibility and choice, teaching style, and space and grouping.

Flexibility and Choice

Respondents offered more input regarding flexibility and choice than any other topic relating to class environment. Respondents described that, in order for personalized education to be successful, the system must be flexible and students must have choice. Respondents explained that professors must be prepared to be creative in how they offer flexibility to students.

Many respondents described that this already occurs throughout the College; they explained that professors naturally adapt to their students and restructure the class environment accordingly. In providing flexibility and allowing the students choice and the opportunity to provide feedback, professors create a meaningful class environment that is conducive to learning.

Many respondents also described that the class environment should be specialized or tailored to its students. To this end, respondents offered that class environments should be open-ended, fluid, unstructured, and student-focused (for example: Put students at the centre of learning).
Additionally, many respondents also indicated that students should be able to learn at their own pace. This form of learning, possibly delivered using modules, would offer students more flexibility and choice in their education.

Finally, several respondents stated that universal design for learning (UDL) must be considered in the implementation of personalized education.

Teaching Style
Respondents often provided input regarding teaching style in a personalized learning environment. Many respondents described that a personalized teaching style should include one-on-one with students and allow students to be independent and learn individually.

Respondents described that such a teaching style would include interactive elements and cater to the students’ needs and the students’ goals. They explained that professors in a personalized learning environment should adapt to the students’ learning styles and how different they can be. Respondents said that professors should be able to offer material that allows students of any learning style to succeed. One respondent commented that personalized education should mean the death of lecturing.

Many respondents also offered that in-person classes should be offered as much as possible. One respondent commented that losing face-to-face would be terrible.

Respondents also described that professors should strive to build positive relationships between faculty and students and encourage engagement. In getting to know students, respondents said, professors will be better able to personalize and adapt for them.

Space and Grouping
Respondents often commented that, in order to deliver personalized education, smaller class sizes are mandatory. One respondent said the class should be a loose affiliation of learners rather than a class. Respondents described that any implementation of personalized education would be less effective in larger groups. Respondents described that, currently, class sizes are often unmanageable, and that they do not have time to offer one-on-one attention.

Similarly, many respondents also commented on classrooms. Respondents often stated that more classrooms are required, and that these classrooms need to be more open. A recurring comment stated that moveable furniture would be a great asset to the implementation of personalized education. Respondents also commented on needing better lighting and classrooms with windows.

Respondents also discussed that personalized education should be collaborative, and that smaller class sizes and more positive learning spaces would encourage this.

Other Comments
Other recurring comments included discussion about lab applications and interest. Several respondents also answered that personalized education should be fun. One respondent commented that personalized education should mean never asking why I’m learning this.
Some respondents also expressed concerns about this area. Such comments included questions like *will we ever meet all learners’ needs?*, *how do we manage with so many students?*, and *how do we ensure quality?* Other comments included cautions such as *watch too much freedom, difficult to manage, consider other responsibilities*, and *conflict between theory and practice*.

**Priority 2: Technology**

This priority received a lower volume of responses than others; however, the responses received were concentrated on a narrower range of subtopics than other priorities.

Many respondents described that *technology* is necessary for personalized education. Some provided more specific examples, including *modern software, better laptops*, and *more online options*.

One respondent went into detail: *Artificial Intelligence. Computer-assisted learning—learns student gaps and tailors learning to student.*

A recurring topic was the use of technology as a *support*. Several respondents mentioned *student systems* that can be *personalized to student needs*.

Two respondents both described a very similar idea: *Student portal? More advisers and personalized advisers* and *Student wellness one-stop-shop, bio/psycho/social*.

Some respondents commented on *tracking* and *data* being useful tools for personalization. Other tools or resources mentioned included *digital resources*.

Other respondents pointed out that faculty currently experience *software limitations*. For example, one respondent answered: *My students can’t use Brightspace or Blackboard.* Another respondent said: *E-texts? Is this really learner driven?*

Additional concerns were also expressed, such as *technology replaces teaching?* Another notable comment described that *online learning is doomed to fail without personalization.*
Priority 3: Professional Development (PD)

This priority received the lowest volume of responses, and had a narrow scope of input. The majority of responses expressed similar ideas. One notable comment summarized this feedback: I feel that I don’t have enough techniques or time to implement personalized learning effectively.

To the same effect, many respondents answered that they would need help to implement personalized learning. One respondent said that we need training, even part-time while others described specific areas of training, such as diversity training, language training, and faculty training for hybrid/online.

Other responses regarding professional development included SWF training, one-on-one training, and time for profs to learn new systems.
Priority 4: College Experience

This priority represents the College outside the classroom. It encompasses support services, food services, security, and other such areas of the College.

The input received in this area fell into two key subtopics: support services and community.

Support Services

Among the most common answers from respondents were support and support services. Faculty commented that, while support services in the College are already strong, they must play a key role in the implementation of personalized education.

A major trend from respondents was the need for 24/7 support services. One respondent noted that the College needs more evening availability for support! Throughout the study, respondents commented that the College’s support services should be available whenever classes are being held (up to 10 pm at least).

More specific responses in this category included academic support for students, help with picking courses, counselling and advising, and support for Indigenous learners.

Some specific comments from respondents regarding support services included:

- more advising! Not enough time now
- analyze the specific needs of each individual student
- improve supports for students with anxiety, mental health issues

In addition to providing support, respondents described that the College and its systems need to be adaptable, especially for students’ needs. Furthermore, many respondents commented that the system needs to be able to support international students and provide cultural competency to students.

Finally, a common support system described by respondents was learning strategists. Many respondents noted that learning strategists need to be available for all students, not just CAL students. Respondents described that this would be a key method to provide personalized education.
Community
Respondents often commented on the sense of community at the College in a personalized environment. Many respondents expressed concerns about such an environment having less community or having bored or lost students.

Similarly to concerns regarding loss of face-to-face time in the class environment, respondents commented on needing more face time outside the classroom. Respondents noted that students prefer interacting with other people when navigating the College’s support services.

Several respondents also noted that a personalized system could result in gains of independence in students. One respondent said that such a system might encourage people to go to school who otherwise wouldn’t. Similarly, several respondents noted that personalization could increase retention.

Other Comments
One notable idea described by a respondent was to allow students to register themselves; ghost registration. Such a system could allow students to test out programs before enrolling to see if the fit is right for them.

Another trend was a push for stronger recognition of previous experience early on, allowing students to earn credit for other courses or life experiences they have had in the past.

Other respondents commented on staffing and hiring, with notes such as increase support staff numbers and staff appropriately for any increase in student support.

Finally, one respondent commented on the implementation of personalization in the College’s various campuses: When making changes for personalization, please consider how it will affect the students who are at Pembroke and Perth, as things are usually Ottawa-centric.
Priority 5: Course Delivery

This priority encompasses the processes surrounding courses, assignments, and evaluation. Respondents’ comments in this category fell into three major subtopics: scheduling, delivery methods, and evaluation.

Scheduling
The most common trend in this category was the need for flexible or customized schedules. Respondents repeatedly expressed the need for students to be able to schedule around their needs and choose their own schedules.

However, several respondents also noted that this could pose the issue of too much choice.

Delivery Methods
Many respondents noted the importance of having multiple delivery methods and flexible delivery methods. A recurring idea was to allow students to change delivery methods throughout the semester to suit their needs. Respondents also noted the importance of this aspect being technology supported.

While commentary on delivery methods did not span a wide scope, this category received a high volume of responses. Respondents noted that the critical aspect would be to give students the choice of delivery method rather than imposing strictly face-to-face, hybrid, or online courses.

Evaluation
With regard to evaluation, respondents often commented on the need for different methods of evaluation. One respondent described the need for different ways to show mastery of course material. Another respondent commented that personalization could mean that students have more say in demonstrating learning outcomes.

Several respondents commented on the need for skills-based learning and a focus on soft skills. However, this led to a concern summarized by one respondent: Competence based model = students reading ahead for wrong reasons? This touched on the recurring trend of the need to remain aware of academic standards while delivering personalized education.
Other Comments
A concern raised by many respondents was whether or not personalization aligns with industry. Respondents described that, ultimately, the College’s goal is to prepare students for the workforce. They noted that such a model may not reflect industry and that the system must be industry advised.
Priority 6: Faculty Roles

This priority represents respondents’ comments on the faculty side of personalization. These responses largely fell into two subtopics: workload and faculty needs.

Workload
Often, the first thought of a respondent is that personalized education means more work and requires time. Respondents express concerns about existing workloads, especially for coordinators. A recurring comment was the need to define the role of the coordinator.

Respondents described that properly implementing personalization would mean hiring more faculty, coaches, counsellors, and learning strategists. Respondents also noted the necessity of more hours for part-time faculty. They also described the need for faculty providing increased office hours to personalize for students.

Several respondents expressed concerns about job security. One respondent noted that personalization could mean losing job opportunities for some teachers like me. Another respondent commented that it will reduce faculty time to work on other projects, noting especially the needs of coordinators and part-time faculty.

Faculty Needs
Respondents expressed the idea that faculty will need support to provide personalized education to students, with comments such as challenging for educator and hard to manage. Another respondent commented: Faculty accommodation? One notable comment summarizes the bulk of these concerns: “What about my needs?”

Another trend was the concern of how will it affect part-time staff? Respondents repeatedly stated the need for support for faculty. Similarly, the need to engage faculty and ensure faculty buy-in was also mentioned.

Other Comments
Several respondents commented on how the relationship between faculty and students could change in a personalized education environment. One respondent described a concern about adult babysitting if the experience caters too much to the student. Another posed the question: Am I right or is it a student who is right?

Finally, one respondent noted that a great necessity will be a passion for education.
Other Responses

Responses that did not fit a specific category were sorted into a miscellaneous “other” category. Such responses were typically comments on the bigger picture of personalized education, rather than specific notes regarding implementation.

While many respondents reacted positively to the idea of personalized education, some were skeptical. These respondents often commented that personalized education was vague, not realistic, or difficult to achieve. A number of respondents simply commented: How? or why? One notable response described that the respondent was horrified at the idea. Another described it as a short-term fix.

However, other respondents commented that personalized education was future-focused, out-of-the-box, innovative, or interesting.

Many respondents expressed concerns about the cost of implementing personalized education. They described that it would be expensive; one respondent asked who pays for it? Similarly, questions about the logistics of personalized education. One respondent noted that it would be logistically difficult within current parameters, while another stated that it sounded big-brother-ish.

More specific questions included the following:

- How much personalization is too much? How much is feasible based on available resources?
- Has this been tested before in real scenarios? On colleges?
- How is something like this structured?

One notable respondent, rather than writing a thought, drew the following picture, representing the mathematical sign for “change:”
Question 2: Current Personalization Examples

Following the first activity, during which respondents shared top-of-mind thoughts on personalized education, respondents were then asked to describe anything the College currently does that is already personalized.

Several topics recurred with frequency: the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL), support services and counselling, flipped and hybrid classes, and academic upgrading. A number of other topics were also mentioned.

Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL)

This topic occurred with the greatest frequency, with roughly 30 percent of respondents mentioning it. Respondents noted that CAL provides personalization for students who seek it out and make use of its services.

Support Services and Counselling

Respondents often mentioned the College’s support services as personalized. They described that students are able to access help that caters to their needs and provides options to ensure their success.

Flipped and Hybrid Classes

Many respondents also noted that, in the area of course delivery, flipped and hybrid classroom models provided a degree of personalization to students. In these formats, students are able to learn and study on their own time, offering flexibility and options. Students then come into a face-to-face class environment with the learning required for application exercises.

Academic Upgrading

A notable area of current personalization is academic upgrading. Respondents described that students in this area do module-based learning and can progress at their own pace. Students are able to personalize their learning to fit their needs.

Other Responses

Many respondents explained that, while there may not be institution-wide procedures for personalization, many programs (i.e. Wellness Research and Innovation) and individual professors who are already personalizing in the classroom. Respondents described the process of meeting and getting to know the students, then adjusting teaching methods and assignments to better suit that particular class.
Question 3: Future Recommendations on Personalization

Algonquin College faculty provided a robust response to the question posed regarding what the institution could do in the future, to provide further personalization to its learners. The answers provided were significant in number and quite diverse in nature. As a result, responses were divided by the priorities noted previously (Priorities 1 to 6) and then further divided based on content categories (grouping similar responses together).

In total, 66 unique category codes were generated and tagged to faculty responses (both summarized and verbatim). Below is a review of the top 10 responses and recommendations offered by Algonquin College faculty during the recent peer-to-peer sessions held at all three campuses:

1: Provide Learners with a More Flexible Weekly Class Schedule (Priority 5)

This was the number one most shared response by faculty. It was strongly suggested that the College permit students to select their own course schedules and that this would greatly improve overall student satisfaction. *Give them the options to go to classes in different sections or at different times.* Some faculty respondents identified that this would mean a cultural shift at the College, but it was long past due compared to the schedule flexibility offered in other local post-secondary institutions (i.e. Carleton University). One faculty stated it this way: *The watchword is more flexibility—on all levels, for all stakeholders.*

A number of faculty indicated that providing flexible timetables was an easy issue to address but that the College would have to commit to a new system of weekly schedules for learners. *Let’s be realistic, when terms (i.e. Fall) lose two Mondays (for orientation and Thanksgiving), how do we really make up those hours?*

In one program in particular, the Early Childhood Education Program, where students may begin courses in either the Program’s September or January intake, faculty shared this response when asked about what could be done to provide more personalization: *There has to be more flexibility when students can take a class. Much more flexible schedules (are needed)—our students have children of their own. We are losing students because classes are too late or too early. It would make a huge difference to 40% of the class in our January intake. Offer up all the available sections to students to select from (like the universities offer).* Another faculty member stated it this way: *Students with many adult responsibilities are pressed to make everything fit; how do we make them feel supported?*

A number of faculty clearly suggested that the College consider generating weekly course schedules for students based on the program and learner profiles. For example, if a significant percentage of a program’s student population are parents, the College should resist full-time programming that occurs before 8:00 a.m. and after 5:00 p.m. Moreover, the professional profile should be considered; for example, those learners looking to build a career in
hospitality: *Don’t book culinary students one day with one course that starts at 8 pm at night. That’s when they work and they work in the industry typically (restaurants).*

All of the above will challenge a student’s level of commitment and success according to faculty and may impact ultimate retention in a program. *Classroom schedules have to improve—having one class on a Friday from 4:00–6:00 p.m.—is not going to work.*

It is interesting to note the degree to which faculty had specific recommendations for the College on exactly what form “flexibility” in scheduling could take. Below are some select approaches shared at recent peer-to-peer sessions:

- **More flexibility in schedules (is needed in the future).** I need a system in place that allows students to create their own timetables. Give them a morning and evening option for the majority of their courses. Offer a more intense semester (shorter) where they take 3 courses, instead of 5. And then in the next half, they take the additional courses. Don’t put full-time students in evening classes. This isn’t reasonable for mature students with children. Offer more part-time programs (offer part-time in the evening). This is where the private colleges are picking up potential students because they offer this.

- **Consider block scheduling**—half of the program’s students in the morning, compressed, and the other half in the afternoon. Or blocked by days. Two full days of classes and the rest off. This would allow students to not have schedule gaps, it would address the space issue, and it would create more predictable schedules for students and faculty. Timetables need to be more efficient.

In some cases, faculty were supportive of the option to also permit students the chance to move from an in-class delivery to an online delivery, based on choice and schedule demands.

However, there also existed concerns about the impact upon faculty workload: *The more flexibility we give students, the more work there is for faculty* but overall, this was not the majority of respondents.

**2: Class Environment / Technology / Course Flexibility (Priorities 1, 2 and 5)**

Three topics tied for the number two position in the top 10 responses from faculty on the future of personalization at Algonquin College. These three results were equal when assessed quantitatively. Each of these is reviewed below based on peer-to-peer sessions.

**Provide Learners with Schedules That Permit a Universal Break/Meeting Times with Faculty/Ability to Connect With Peers**

Similar to the number one comment, faculty felt strongly about how a schedule was developed in a given day and week. It was held by many instructors that students deserve a regular time in their week or even day, when they had no classes and when they could connect with peers, faculty, counsellors, advisors, etc. *Flexibility would allow students to not have (significant)*
schedule gaps (throughout the week), it would address the space issue, and it would create more predictable schedules for students and faculty.

Both teaching and non-teaching faculty from all three campuses agreed that a “universal block” of time for students in a given program would be highly advantageous. “What if there were no classes from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.? Students could eat or join a club or have some communal activities.” This time would also be available for attending more professor office hours for additional content coaching.

Perhaps the members of Student Support Services were the most emphatic about this recommendation. They reported that students carry heavy levels of stress and anxiety and some of this relates to schedules that are too challenging (too many hours in one day, disconnected class hours, etc.) Similarly, employees from the Centre for Accessible Learning indicated that students they meet, often share that it is significantly challenging to find open time slots in which to meet with their faculty.

Faculty also shared these two ideas related to methods to initiate more meaningful collaboration with learners outside of regular class hours:

- **Let’s be sure there are weekly blocks of time that are out of class but are like interactive-study module/lab times. A designated time that is protected in the week. Even if they had to show up and sign it, and have the opportunity to connect with a faculty member, coach or peer tutor. They need weekly protected time!**

- **My dream is to have allocated time – time to meet with students and a healthy student to teacher ratio. What about an hour per student per semester event that is dedicated time, where we meet?**

This aligns closely to additional recommendations, offered by faculty and employees alike, suggesting the College consider adjusting the format of current faculty offices and reorganize space so that Department faculty teams are kept together and offices are combined (rather than spread out throughout the campus). **Faculty should be in one place (office space) with a receptionist at this location where students can connect with someone and get assistance when looking to meet with a professor. Let’s build a “community” for faculty teams where students can engage and feel comfortable when they stop in and are seeking help.**

Another respondent said: **Perhaps it is where faculty offices are all located for this Department, and there is a receptionist even - who can greet students and help confirm a faculty meeting, etc. It promotes collaboration among faculty and it is easier for students to connect with instructors - especially students who are away from home, first-year, etc.**

**Offer Online Course Scheduling for Learners**

Faculty were invested in the concept of permitting students the opportunity, responsibility, and flexibility to book their own courses and to be able to do so online. It was encouraged that the College permit students to see all versions of a single course (online, hybrid, in-class offerings) and select the method of delivery as well as the day and time of their preference. **Students**
should be able to select the delivery of each course and not be penalized for taking a mix (the learning outcomes and text books, etc. are all the same for each mode).

One specific suggestion from Academic Development included the concept of creating an online platform that not only allowed a learner to apply and select courses fully online but moreover, to complete a “ghost registration” whereby the student could look at a variety of options for courses and view (before confirming) what the potential weekly schedule would look like, before fully committing and registering. Students can register themselves; situate themselves in the program without actually registering—I think we can free up a lot of people’s time if we invested in technology so that people had time to do the human interaction stuff.

Online registration and schedule development could also be utilized to aid a student in determining their academic goals. We could be using the VLOs in level 1 to create these goals into Levels 2 and 3. We could guide them in setting up the goals they wish to have when they leave, and we map the proper courses to align with their goals. A goal inventory!

A common debate occurred in the faculty sessions about whether or not students have the skills or “readiness” to select their best mode of course delivery. Might students who are best suited for in-class courses choose more online because they wish to be off campus more? How could the College mitigate this potential issue and ensure learners who are registering and reviewing their options online, make the best academic choices for modes of course delivery? It would be great if they had some choice. Let’s help them determine what type of courses are best for them though. I don’t think you can learn people skills without being around people (in a class).

Here is an example of a solution suggested by faculty respondents: Have a pop up quiz or assessment for people as they register that helps them determine the best mode of course delivery. This could be real-time and allow the student registering to consider their course delivery options carefully based on their learning style. They can still decide to go against the advice but at least the College has offered some direction.

It was also suggested that one-on-one counselling could be offered at this point as well, for new students seeking assistance in course delivery when registering online.

Overall, this was an extremely popular idea from faculty on how to better personalize the experience for future learners: Students should be able to select the delivery of each course and not be penalized for taking a mix (the learning outcomes and text books, etc. are all the same for each mode).

Offer the Ability to Take Courses outside Current Program Description/Allow Students to build their Own Program/No-more Off-Cycle Student Stigma

Faculty highly encouraged the College to work toward a model that permitted flexibility in programs of study. In fact, many were against continuing with the concept of mandated “programs” and prescribed length of study. So often, faculty, especially those who are also coordinators, indicated that they are regularly asked about how to take courses such as French or Aboriginal Studies when neither are currently part of a particular Program of Study. Students
want to take electives that will aid them in their career path as well. **Give students more flexibility in choosing courses. Let them take additional courses outside their program, like a minor in university.**

The key themes in this recommendation included:

- The simplest suggestion from faculty was related to removing the barriers within a current program of study: **If a course is not sequentially structured, why not let students select when they take it. (i.e. various electives).**

- Opening up the lines of communication and cooperation to permit students to change programs of study within the College: **Reduce the barriers to transfer between programs.**

- Creating a method by which enhanced and fully campus-wide supported course auditing could occur: **Right now, students can’t just take a course. They have to take an entire program. What if they could take one course, or audit courses, to see if something is a good fit for them? And, offer more online equivalents!**

- Allowing students to take a course from a variety of post-secondary institutions. **We also need to allow students to be able to take courses in any post-secondary institution in the city and have those all be credited to a program.**

- Designing programs of study that fully accommodate the learner’s lifelong goals and career aspirations: **Some course choices (all from the same "tier") so they have some self-direction. If they feel they are taking a program that meets their end goal (career) they’ll be more engaged. So we have to ensure that all the courses offer current skills that are required in industry. Don’t teach a computer program (for instance) that isn’t being used in the industry any longer.**

- Stop mandating the “length” of a program of study but recognize that each student studies and succeeds at their own pace. Reduce the stigma of the term “off cycle” student as well. A way to expedite this came from one faculty member who shared: **Still follow pedagogy. Let students do programs longer if they want or faster. Use publisher LMS - they are quite good (from larger publishers). Maximize the new e-text offerings where publishers are offering interactive text tools for students.**

- Ensure employability is a strong objective for Algonquin graduates: **Make sure it (unique program of study for a unique learner) aligns with employer expectations. Students need to be able to function in the workplace.**
In conclusion, personalized education is the students saying “this is what I want my education to be” and we design things to support that, rather than us saying what we want them to do. I think of it as “my career goals”. What can I do to get to my career goals? Maybe I want to start a business, well I want to take some courses from Media and Design, maybe Psychology from GAS. We aren’t a university, but how can we help students who have a natural drive and curiosity to experience everything that’s at the College?

3: Use Modules for Learning/Reward Mastery of a Subject (Priority #5)

Flexibility was one of the most popular words used by respondents during the faculty sessions but there was another word that had almost equal representation: Recognition. Algonquin’s courses should include skills-based modules and recognition for achievements.

Every day during the research data collection phase, faculty acknowledged how the changing demographics (more mature students, second-career learners, university graduates continuing their studies, etc.) had showcased the opportunity for offering modules and showing mastery of a topic. (Algonquin College) Should offer more options for students to demonstrate mastery - recognizing where students have abilities and not making them perform in certain ways. All learning ways and learning styles are legitimate. It would empower students.

Moreover, PLAR (Prior Learning Assessment) was not deemed as the appropriate strategy to recognize current skills of a learner. PLAR applications are pretty intense and not all students have the desire to fill them out - even if they should be recognized for prior learning or skills sets.

One faculty member stated that the College should offer: Self-paced individual learning plans.” They went on to explain that students should be pre-tested in a simulation environment, with lessons built on results.

In another session, one professor shared that the College should: Use the decision-tree to help students determine their fit in a course and then use modules. Start with foundational courses and then go deeper in higher levels.

Not only would module-based learning and recognition of mastery potentially allow a student to complete a program at a pace that is most suitable for their learning style, but with better mapping for student learning and (potentially) smaller class sizes...I really hope students can see themselves in the whole process in the future. So they are really part of the College and not just a program.

One faculty member took this a step further and suggested the concept of “streams”. It would be great to have streams within our program that are tailored to students’ interests. Short modules combined with different programs. I’d love it if students could take a great web design course or a Museum Studies display course.
Despite the excitement about modules building on a student’s mastery of a topic, it was also met with strong concern. Faculty clearly indicated that many attempts at solid academically-sound flipped classroom teaching models for example, had not succeeded at the College recently and had been met with serious resistance from learners. It was shared that the majority of students are not willing to learn “off line”, outside of class hours whether it is reading a chapter, watching a video or completing a short hybrid written assignment. Compounded on this, is the strong sense from professors that the direct entry learner is especially challenged by a flipped classroom model in post-secondary. In order to achieve the style that permits modularized lessons and movement up a course based on mastery, regular out-of-classroom learning exercises will have to be used and this was met with doubt of success. *They are given all this time in class to do their work right now. To them, they feel all the work happens in the class (not outside). There is a disconnect between our expectations and their level of preparedness. And in the past 10 years, it has not been addressed. So, if this is going to happen, there has to be work with our school boards or some kind of gap year or transition time given to student coming right out of high school.*

Second, faculty overwhelmingly felt that class size (see #5 of the top 10 recommendations) would have be addressed to ensure instructors had time to track students, create engaging models of delivery and coach learners. In order to fully adjust current courses – significant preparation time would need to be awarded to faculty to design and test courses based on detailed modules and testing for each level of mastery. *I’d like to generate more industry-based, in-class activities but I would need time to develop and grade these. I’d like to offer a greater mix of assessments too. I’d like to try more unique technologies for in-class discussions. Let’s go beyond PPT (with our delivery).*

Another major challenge posed by faculty related to the equity of the program delivery. *Does individualized learning mean that you can opt out of courses you don’t want to take, and then get the diploma but with a note on it or your transcript that says you missed those courses? If people are moving at their own pace, how does that shift how diplomas are earned and how credits/credentials are applied? Maybe only upper years and not first year. Maybe not in every course or in every program. Don’t just apply it to all areas.*

4: Classroom Environment (Moveable Furniture, Collaborative Spaces, etc.) *(Priority #1)*

Early on in the peer-to-peer sessions, an emotional theme arose from faculty respondents regarding the topic of Algonquin classroom spaces. This theme maintained itself until the end of the data collection and was emphatically addressed by many, many faculty. Perhaps this is due to current concerns and challenges they were facing in their classes during the Fall 2018 term, but clear and direct feedback about what would need to change in order for the College to be personalized, came to light regarding this unique topic. *(We need) better collaborative spaces. Some current spaces are not dynamic and quite honestly, they are oppressive.*
Classroom format was the first key recommendation to be changed: Stop with the rows in classrooms - "let it go!" Faculty went on to discuss the impact that so many of the current spaces are having on their ability to provide a more personalized, fully interactive and collaborative class session. I would revamp the classroom. We keep talking about the benefits of group work but I’m always in these classrooms where you can’t move the desks and they (students) are all sitting in rows. And then you try to change your room and that is another uphill battle. So, we need to really look at that. Even the chairs are uncomfortable for students for three-hour classes. Rooms that accommodate circular seating (would be ideal).

Whether the class is large or small, concerns and suggestions for improvement were well-thought out and clearly presented in support of better learning outcomes. Look at the classroom environment before we do anything in Personalized Learning. We need rooms that we can configure. We need space with furniture that we can arrange and that suits 100+ students. We need a collaborative classroom for 120 students. We can’t do this in an amphitheater.

Another faculty member suggested the following: Reduce class sizes! Help us to build a culture of learning with our students. Have us in the same classes or at least (the same) building with our Department. Space matters! Give us dedicated space that we can set up and keep set up, day after day. Offer moveable furniture.

Another faculty member suggested break out rooms that allowed for smaller tutoring sessions in classes that are larger than 85 students.

If the College adopts #3 in the list of top 10 future recommendations, faculty were concerned that classrooms would not evolve with this in the Learner Driven Plan. Faculty are very open to increasing and improving collaborative learning activities and moving toward a more personalized teaching approach, but feel significantly impeded by the current physical space. Many felt that face-to-face time with learners would still be required within a personalized learning model and therefore, the meeting or classroom space should reflect and support this. Faculty implored the need for rooms that accommodate group discussions, small team-based exercises, and critical-thinking activities. I would like better classrooms. Period. We need rooms that aren’t broken. Random brutal furniture that is not accessible (isn’t in the future of personalized learning). Students need to feel like the space suits what they are paying for. More accessible technology and screens throughout a classroom is also needed. The physical room can help us change our delivery! We need to invest money into changing all the rooms set up in rows of desks and chairs. Allow us as faculty, to choose the classrooms we need and this may change throughout the term. It could be so exciting! Dynamic scheduling!

Despite regular consultation with management on the current space issues, it was a significant doubt of the faculty members that they would see this change. Classrooms have to match class lists. We shouldn’t have to go looking for chairs in other rooms to teach well. We need flexible spaces. Look at the current rooms and make it work for group work. Students don’t all need to sit in rows.
5: Address Current Class Sizes/Smaller Class Sizes Required for Personalized Learning *(Priority #1)*

Without a doubt, class size was one of the first pieces of data that trended in terms of specific recommendations toward more personalized education. *We need smaller class sizes but I don't think the College is going to support this. Provide either smaller classes or more hours for a class - we can't meet the students' needs in large classes without enough time.*

Faculty felt that the College’s mission to provide real, hands-on career preparation was being lost in the growing class sizes of late and that maintaining this approach would impede the sense of personalization in the future. *We need smaller classes. Students come here to for applied and hands on-learning - this happens best in a small group.*

Similarly, this faculty member shared the following: *We can't lose the one-to-one aspect, the personal aspect. We can't let it get too big. Smaller class sizes. Students need feedback to learn effectively.*

A number of professors mentioned that the College’s objective should be less about filling seats and more about long-term student retention—that if we taught students with personalized modules and detailed feedback all while allowing them to learn at their own pace, they would stay and finish their courses. *We need smaller classes to ensure we can give more attention to our students. Executing something like this (personalized learning in the future) with the current class sizes...that's a big undertaking. Follow the client-centred care approach!*  

Similarly, regarding admissions, faculty indicated a desire to have the College consider assessments in advance of admission to ensure fit and skills. *Our gates are wide open. Let’s gate keep a little bit better. Let’s provide higher entrance standards, more pre-testing, and smaller classes. Pre-screening is important. Get smaller, get more hands-on! We currently start in my program with 110 students. They graduate 30-40 by the end of third year. If that’s all you’re getting, pre-screen the students so that you’re only losing 10%. We could easily do this if I didn’t have 60 students in my class. Compare two class sizes – smaller class are always better.*

6: More Engagement between Students/Courses with Industry *(Priority #5)*

Faculty were very keen to see increased commitment in Departments, programs and courses at Algonquin College for more enhanced industry collaboration. *Prepare students for the actual industry profile.* Faculty recommended a number of ideas in support of this including, more *field trips* for students to visit professionals and workplaces within the city of Ottawa, increased representation of industry speakers on campus, higher levels of co-op programs and placements and overall career preparation efforts for learners. *But what about a classroom outside of the campus? What about more guest speakers with small compensation (gifts, parking passes, etc.)*?
Instructors respected the College’s goal to teach and prepare students for inspirational careers in Ottawa, in Ontario and abroad. Let's get the students outside of the College walls (every term) to have those extra experiences. I’d love to get them out! They can try to apply what they’ve learned and also network. I think it is what students come to a college for...and are we currently delivering this? Let's give them more opportunities to get into industry, even a field trip.

Entrepreneurship, as an objective, was alive and well with the faculty who participated in the peer-to-peer sessions. Ensure that all the first-floor offerings in DARE District are included and woven into the Learner Driven Plan (especially those fostering and supporting entrepreneurial students).

Improving student readiness for the workforce was a key aspect as well. Students need to be ready to go to interviews for employment upon graduation. They have pre-employment readiness needs. We need more career prep courses and offer in all programs. Offer more industry connections, more co-ops, and more client projects. This helps them build life-skills and experience.

Many felt that Algonquin had the chance to move beyond what it has already accomplished with career training, and take the institution to a new level of preparing students for optimal job readiness and more importantly, enhanced life-long learning. Students come to us because they want the job! Some programs offer co-ops and that differentiates us. We are kind of "wannabes" - we want to say we are different from universities but really, we are not in all programs. We need to define what we mean by "hands on". What are we doing to really help students to find jobs? At the end of the day so many are here to find work. We need to help with better industry connections. The LDP needs to be driven to help you find that job in all programs.

Another suggestion regarding career paths and employment support from faculty was stated in this manner: Transferability: think about students’ abilities to change careers. We need to promote Algonquin as a place to come to for your second, third, fourth career needs. Align our content and programs with the job market. We need to have quality labour market data, industry needs, and government data, as well as more connection and feedback with co-op. We need to tailor our programs for student needs, industry needs, and market trends. On the job training equals motivated students. We need to tap into this market.

Some faculty, however, alerted researchers to the fact that they believed the personalized learning model may, in fact, be counter-productive in training students for the “reality” of current workforce expectations. Faculty shared that some workplaces do not offer an abundance of flexibility (i.e. schedules, expectations, etc.) and concern was raised in many academic areas to be very, very mindful of this. They asked the question: how realistic is personalized learning in preparing students for today’s marketplace?
Enhanced Technology-based Teaching Tools to Provide Learning Supports (Priority #2)

Experienced and new teachers alike brought interesting and dynamic suggestions to the sessions regarding tools that would enhance the personalized model of education at the College. *We need tools - multiple tools to be effective. We need to be creative and the tools need to help us with this.* These were tools that could be used both in the class and out, to engage with learners in a more individualized, creative and efficient manner.

Commonly expressed, was a need for a different approach to both e-texts—*e-text is a tool that needs better incorporation into the learning environment*—and video technology and the desire for faculty to provide live representation of their lessons to learners. As one faculty member in the School of Business explained it: *We need to be able to offer different platforms and tools so that a student can be comfortable in how they are learning. Let students read and access materials online. We need to respect their own desires, their own interests and we need better software to offer video content to students.* On the same topic of video technology, the School of Hospitality hair stylist instructors suggested *better video - synchronized learning—to demonstrate hair style techniques.*

Avatars were noted as well as potential instructional aides to enhance personalization. *Why couldn’t we use virtual reality to do both online delivery and face-to-face delivery at the same time? Students could create their own virtual avatar and log into the classroom while still being at home or wherever they’re comfortable.*

Faculty were open to technology tools to aid in better and faster student assessments as well. *We are still using old technology models—we must change!*

A number of suggestions offered by faculty centred on real-time assistance and tools that would connect students to educators faster. *So when a student is online working and needs help—can they not look to see what professor is online with the specific competency to help and then reach out immediately? Kind of like Uber for academics ‘searching for Profs’? They would get the help immediately and on-demand. What if students could see when other students are online? Or when a facilitator logs in? That might be a helpful feature so they can send a quick text while I’m online or to other students who are looking/reading a specific lesson plan- thereby enhancing college experience.*

Employing the technology that students already own and utilize seemed to be a natural recommendation for a number of faculty when it comes to increasing the personalized methods of education. *Better online interaction, for example—better virtual classroom software (is needed here). This is the future of educational communication. Students spend a lot of time on devices, online. It’s natural. We should provide more ways for them to learn on their devices.*
Three topics tied for the number eight position in the top 10 responses from faculty about personalization at the College. These three results were equal when assessed quantitatively. Each of these is reviewed below based on peer-to-peer sessions:

**Student-Centred Tool (MyAC Page) / One Stop Location for Student Needs**

After just one month of data collection, a trend emerged that identified the need for a savvy solution on how the College might best provide daily, personalized support to its learners. *Make sure to approach students and education more like customer service. It is about the students, not us.*

The data pointed to an approach (or rather, a tool) that would be easy for students to find, easy for them to use, completely tailored to their learning needs and built to enhance their experience at the College (not slow it down). It would strive to offer efficiencies that would significantly reduce student stress, frustration and anxiety and answer their questions in a timely manner.

Many faculty shared stories about how difficult it seemed for students to navigate the College both within the four walls of a given campus (way-finding technology was duly and eagerly suggested for Woodroffe Campus) and online. Empathy and concern was evident when instructors shared numerous examples of how many of their students were struggling when they have to go to so many places, make so many calls, visit and mine so much data online, to get to solutions to their questions or manage unique learner challenges. Time management is a significant barrier for some learners, so a tool that could also assist in this manner was suggested.

In response, the research team generated the idea discussed below, and did further testing with faculty to determine its feasibility during the peer-to-peer sessions. The concept was met with overwhelmingly positive support from both teaching and non-teaching faculty.

Comments highlighted the suggestion from instructors that Algonquin College’s personalized education model should be one that is *client-centred*—or, in this case, *student-centred*. In response to these comments and following the health care model utilized in most Canadian hospitals, the idea grew of a page, online, that modeled a social media home page (in terms of layout, visuals, ease of use, tailoring, etc.) and would be completely personalized for each student registered at the College.

Each student would have an online, customizable page: their “MyAC Page,” with multiple links provided to them and added *by* them as well. These links (or tabs) would connect them to their semester schedule, their academic advisor, their course outlines, their Brightspace portal, and the Students’ Association Events page, just to name a few.

The MyAC Page would also provide a place for various announcements that would be visible and updated real-time (on a daily newsfeed on the same page). This could include a mix of
desired information from announcements from their Dean and Chair, upcoming exam schedules, student orientation updates, career fairs, employment opportunities, etc.

It should also be possible to include an Academic Planner similar to the one offered currently by CCOL. *Look at CCOL's Academic Planner to provide support to all students.*

This page would be the first thing a learner would connect with to start their day at the College. No two student pages would be completely alike (just like social media personal pages), but each would centralize all needed information into one easy-to-find and easy-to-use hub.

It would also continue to add value by tracking a student’s accomplishments in courses. It would be designed to build a student’s portfolio as well, which supports the previous goal to continue to enhance a learner’s ability to prepare successfully for industry. *Have a gallery for student work. More emphasis on portfolios.*

As noted above, this solution development arose as a direct response to comments such as: *Streamline the (Algonquin College) website. Increase customer service (to students). Offer a live chat for students to get help. Improve AC crisis line.* Another faculty member stated it this way: *I wish that the AC home page had a more user-friendly access to campus events and news. I am thinking of a student portal that can populate a calendar, and can be more organized. Are all the ongoing events posted on the AC page? Can students access the home page that I see? Those are a few extra questions themed with access to AC News/Events for employees and students.*

If the College is personalized, one concerned raised was the belief that learners may become isolated and separated from the community and support services. Algonquin College therefore needs a tool that would bridge this concern. *Make sure students know where to go when they need support help (AC Web site is too dense, too busy, too confusing) - they need a more streamlined, central method/source.*

**Better Classroom Technology (Computers, Video/Audio)**

Similar to the discussion regarding classroom spaces (environment) faculty had specific comments and recommendations regarding the technology being offered within the classroom for enhanced personalized learning. *Better IT support; the equipment needs to work.*

Computer technology, offered in all the current classes, requires a full review in terms of quality and functionality. *We need to teach instructors on better ways to deliver content and we need better spaces. Better class spaces and technology exist here—we just don't have enough of it.*

Faculty are open to new methods but expressed reticence to try based on past poor experiences (audio not performing, etc.). *We need better tools to increase good online learning. Such as Google Hang Out. I would like to be able to set up a digital learning space to meet with students in an easier format.*

Some have gone to the publisher support tools and would recommend this in a personalized model. *Maximize the new e-text offerings where publishers are offering interactive text tools for students.*
In some lab-based courses, faculty expressed interest in providing in-class video recording. If we did more to offer more training with video support (on hair styles) students could watch and re-watch - and we could even sell this to other post-secondary institutions.

Even the LMS was noted in this dialogue: Hire student ambassadors to support us by training other students on their LMS. They can come to class and mentor as a TA in this manner. Our Brightspace is so different from their Brightspace view.

**Academic Advising Centre/Each Student Partnered with an Advisor/Accommodate More**

Student support was a key topic in most faculty-led sessions. A learner’s success cannot be measured by academics alone, and while the College has a strong reputation in this area, instructors were keen to suggest additional methods of possible support when discussing the future of personalized learning at Algonquin College.

It became a trend that what the counselling professionals provide today could be and should be shared among more learners than only those with accommodations or those at risk. It was recommended by many faculty, that the College should consider offering counselling support or advising support to every student, not just those who identify a need. A Pembroke faculty member highlighted a concern that he spends 80% of his time (as a faculty member and coordinator) helping the bottom 20% of his class cohort. The other students receive less attention as a result. So man faculty asked: How could this be altered?

First, faculty dissected the role of Academic Advisor and, while the need seemed to be acknowledged as high, the complexity of the position in its current state was noted strongly:

- **Academic Advisors need to be advisors, not faculty. Faculty are not trained counsellors.**

- **Offer a dedicated advisor for each student to help streamline the process. Like a "client-care" representative.**

- **More enhanced student advising - not coordinators but someone else (Athabasca University model).**

- **We need to really figure out what the role of the Academic Advisor's role is. We can't do all the same tasks if we are tracking students individually. Our faculty role has to change.**

- **Academic advisors' jobs need to be rewritten and formalized for consistency.**

- **Provide a "delivery consultant" for students to help them determine best mode of delivery and then how the student might manage a set of courses at any given time (know when to switch to online or in-class for a few weeks etc.).**
Not only did faculty deem it important to provide increased counselling support to new student registrants to help them in the selection their program but, it was also highlighted that the counselling support shouldn’t end after the first term. Academic Advising that starts in Week 4 is often too late. They need help if they don’t have someone in their life who can assist them. This can be appropriate for both younger students and the more mature student.

Faculty were very, very supportive of the assignment of a consistent advisor to each student long-term. Provide someone (advisor, counsellor) that are assigned to a student from the start of their time in the College, until they graduate—"accompagner l'étudiant."

Discussion regarding faculty roles often came up when student support and academic advising topics were raised. As faculty have been asked to fulfill the advising roles, there was much conversation about the fit of this and the lack of training provided to professors. Moreover, many suggested that it was not the right role for an instructor and that our learners would, in fact, benefit more from an advisor who was not teaching but rather, a trained coach and advisor for the College. There is so much value in the human piece and interaction is so critical. I wouldn’t want to lose this. All those soft-skills are employability skills. More efficient use of faculty time could occur if we use the classroom well and use it to guide and coach.

Along this same point, many faculty shared how intense the current coordinator role can be and that some of this time is spent coaching students on program choices, career path advice and personal counselling. Perhaps if each student had a coach of their own (not a coordinator or professor) then that would aid professors and co-ordinators to have more time on content-specific activities.

Similarly, both teaching and non-teaching faculty (i.e. CAL Services, Academic Development, Support Services, etc.) were all in favour of the concept of possibly offering learning strategists to all students—not just those with unique accommodations. Increase student access to learning strategists (not just for CAL students).

9: Increase Guidance to Students on How to Do Well in Higher Ed (Priority #5)

Training students on how to be students was a popular and strongly-held perspective for Algonquin faculty. They shared a deep understanding of the barriers and challenges Algonquin learners face when they first begin at the College. Level 1 needs to be reassessed to help improve success rates. We need to put more effort in Level 1 around supporting the transition into college. Right now, we give students a course outline and that is not self-directed in its format. It is not a good model for adult education.

Another faculty member said it this way: I want Level 1 students in the classroom more so I can help them prepare for flexible delivery in future semesters. Hybrids, in-class, and labs, all in one term, is creating so much anxiety for students. Define the term hybrid. Does it have to mean a 1% assignment every week? Perhaps we have to train students on how to be an "independent learner."
A number of faculty members recommended that Algonquin College increase its connection with the secondary school stakeholders. *Increase the partnerships with high schools where AC could offer mini-courses developed by us and branded with AC. This could provide a bridging experience to help them start preparing for higher ed. It would cost AC a lot of money, but the high school teachers would love it! More first-year tools for new learners!*

Concern was raised by some who believed the personalized learning would possibly negatively impact first-year students. *Online delivery options should not be the focus or largest component of a Learning Driven Plan. LDP model should be offered to students in level 2 and above, allowing opportunity to develop foundations skills in level 1 and strength as a post-secondary learner.*

The topic of orientation was consistently discussed and debated as well amongst faculty. In the end, the clear consensus was: increase orientations (in terms of number of days in the beginning of a term and offer more additional sessions, throughout a program of study).

*Revised Orientation Sessions are needed that help students manage program and course choices. Then do follow up orientations (staggered orientation sessions). Add a module on Personalized Learning within the skills and success strategy courses. With certain learning outcomes expected on this topic. We need to ensure it is developed for the program and is integrated as part of the course. It could be a module that is divided throughout the course. This allows for follow up questions.*

Another instructor offered the following idea on the topic of how the College could better prepare new students to the reality of post-secondary expectations: *Have a full week of Frosh Week to help better orient students. Students can sample classes. They can learn more about college support systems. Make them attend four or five different workshops to ensure they are getting info. Have faculty run these workshops! It also creates a sense of community early on!*

Even simple suggestions such as this: *Offer first year students a combined CSI—that includes all their course deliverables and deadlines in one document* could help increase student engagement and overall first-year success at Algonquin.

Pre-testing arose again when discussing this item but this time, as a way of ensuring the College is fully aware of each student’s current status (strengths and skills). *Pre-testing for students prior to coming in—know their levels, let them know if they will be ready, maybe have remedial courses or academic upgrading offered.*

**10: More Robust Peer Tutoring (Priority #4)**

The final suggestion for the future in the top 10 list includes the belief that students learn best from other students. *Lots of peer support is essential! The power of peer support is amazing. We are more likely to ask peers questions than they would with their instructors. Upper level student offering support to first year students would be good.*
Offer **peer study periods. It can really increase student confidence. More visible peer tutors on campus.** It was even suggested that tutors be “mobile” and highly visible daily throughout campuses so that a student could approach a tutor even without a scheduled appointment, for instance. **Have trained students to support potential students to select good programs or even after the courses began, to be peer mentors. Have them wear a t-shirt (like the Brightspace shirts) to help identify them! Have them be visible all over the campus! Accessibility is key. Provide a live, online chat that students can use to ask questions and clarify issues.** Another faculty member suggested **pop up shops for coaching students. Either have graduate students set up pop up areas for coaching in a subject or have profs with coaching hours.**

It was recommended that tutoring expansion be formalized and compensated. **Students need more support past orientation week. Student mentors should be compensated (i.e. credit on transcript). Mentors can be a funnel back to the prof and a funnel back to Student Services.**

Instructors also suggested that greater efforts were needed in the way of consistency and recruitment of peer tutors. **We need to find a way to get students who need Peer Tutoring/Faculty Coaching to get involved in this more. But we also need more consistency in Peer Tutoring (ensuring we have the minimum number of qualified students who can assist and have that minimum in place every term). We need to encourage more peer to peer collaboration overall.**

Faculty were also open to engaging with **Tutorial Assistants/Program Assistants** in a more consistent manner. This would be beneficial to offer more coaching inside the classroom and also, support in grading assignments with detailed feedback. These could be higher level students assisting first-year courses for instance, or perhaps, depending on the program, recent graduates returning to the College to offer guidance and tutoring. This would alleviate the instructor concerns for time-management and allow them to increase office hours, one-to-one coaching and tracking of students in the various modules.

**Question 4: A Description of the Classroom of the Future**

It became clear early on in the data collection phase that the way to true personalization at Algonquin College would be and should be, through a well-developed **Program-specific** manner. The ways of personalization and what the futuristic classroom would be like strongly varied based on where an instructor taught.

In a similar light, faculty were also very keen to see the personalized learning model tested in a **pilot study** before it was shared across the institution. It was suggested that a pilot could be done at a campus such as Pembroke (due to its size) or alternatively, in a few select programs that are currently facing difficulty with retention (to test if personalization would increase student numbers in the end).

When discussing what the future at Algonquin College would look like and, in particular, the way courses would be delivered after it was in place, respondents had much to share. Faculty were overwhelmingly in agreement that increasing the level of engagement in critical thinking
activities and enhanced coaching among students was an exciting prospect to the personalized learning model. Faculty were often enthusiastic about the opportunity to lecture less and coach more. When asked about their course delivery in the future after personalized learning was adopted at the College, one faculty member shared this picture of the future: **Students prepare in advance of class but classes are held every week. Class activities involve many levels of difficulty and test for critical thinking. Class discussion helps students to enhance communication and presentation skills. Faculty guide and coach during workshops. Responding to the student questions and emails in a timely manner—this also teaches them the good practices of professionals. Professors should "moderate" class discussions.**

Some faculty envisioned more industry-related activities being more prevalent in their class time in the future, while others dreamed of wonderful mobile and online options to increase the applied learning outcomes. Rarely did a group of faculty say they wanted less time with their learners or less face-to-face time. The assurance that this would be maintained was a popular response (especially from those faculty who attended the Early Bird Sessions). **The classroom environment is more interesting and engaging (than online). I'd love to do lots of things differently in the future!**

One faculty member described an ideal futuristic, personalized environment which emulated what so many others shared as well: **Courses are developed by one person and the (individual) teachers don't have to develop themselves. It already works in Media and Design. This allows the teacher to spend time with the students rather than the LMS, etc. Let's share the skills—and share it across programs. Have content experts and they can teach it for any program. Take core material and turn them into modules. Have various instructor experts for various modules. Use 90% automated course grading. Students would get help from other students (either at level or PA) first, then faculty after. I would spend more of my time coaching and helping students. Offer lab times and Program Assistant times so that the students have multiple occasions to gain help in between classes. Many small assignments to encourage repetition and practice.**

Technology was seen as significant partner in moving into the future in a personalized way. **I'd be testing more online, in class with open books. I'd offer more options for delivery. I'd ensure all classes were video-taped and available for students to review and re-watch. But the video quality has to be really good. We need better technology for video recording our classes. Modularized learning for sure. This will make them more accountable for their own learning. And all are working at their own pace. Less small assessments.**

Faculty often included circular seating in their description of the future of their classroom environments. **The ideal classroom is circular. With cabinets for storage and it is dedicated. Students sit in a circle and it is very democratic in nature. We can have democratic teaching and learning. Because we are faculty and we are sitting in the circle. And everyone stays involved because no one can sit in a back row.**

Faculty from Health and Community Studies, who experience significantly larger sections traditionally, often didn’t vote for smaller class sizes, but rather envisioned the use of larger interactive spaces that permitted strong engagement, even with groups of 100 or more.
students. *We will work (in the future) in a room that is mobile and interactive and fits 150 students. The room has 12 tables of 10 (round tables) and the faculty can walk around in the centre). There are screens and technology for showcasing results and slides, etc.*

The role of faculty was also discussed significantly in this area of questioning. Many felt time-strapped in the current model of teaching and many looked for ways to alleviate this going forward. Some offered suggestions such as: *I'd maintain or increase face time with students. It is a relationship-based setting. More of our faculty "admin" should move to online. If we could reduce the admin side of our jobs, we'd have more time for PD and more time for students. Let's ask ourselves, what's the best use of our time?*

Faculty members also offered suggestions about other time-saving, collaborate model options. For instance, it was discussed by many that Departments should have comprehensive teams generated to support student learning. These teams would include faculty along with learning strategists, a Learning and Teaching Services professional, IT and Brightspace representatives, etc. *A mix of people on content, delivery, IT, LMS, etc. working together for a Department.*

In this same context, tutorial assistants were also prevalent in the future classrooms at Algonquin College: *Teaching Assistant support is required. Faculty are content experts but in terms of administration, processing the information, etc. that should not be landing on faculty. It is a key resource that is being used in the wrong manner.*

Another faculty member said it this way: *I would be the quarterback, managing a course with three different deliveries. I would manage the faculty (i.e. part-timers, TA) team and the content.*

Increased lab time and flexible assessment models was a consistent theme. *I would allow students to select their preferred format for exam testing: select from multiple choice testing, essay format testing or oral presentation. I would have Level 4 (graduating level) students assisting us in the classroom with Level 1 and Level 2 students. Everything that needs to be completed outside the classroom has to be graded to keep them motivated.*

Emphasis on helping first-year students succeed and learn how to cope in a college-environment continued to be voiced in this area. Faculty have extreme empathy for first-year learners and it is important to note how often this topic was raised.

This instructor worked out a full plan for the future classroom which did an excellent job in summarizing what many were sharing: *All I focus on (in the future) is my teaching and coaching students on applied and critical thinking activities. A way to support all the levels of students without running out of time would be tutors. A peer tutor or TA assigned to my course to help answer student questions and guide them on approved techniques would be excellent. Everyone would do module one together, and at the same time (start of the course). Then I'd have an assessment at the end of this set module and split the students into 2 or 3 streams based on their mastery of the module 1 content. With the help of a TA, I could then develop and deliver three different class activity sets for each week. We would have administrators (i.e. Brightspace tech, academic advisors, etc.) to support each Department and program.*
Faculty wanted more time to collaborate with publishers and suggested a **Publisher Centre** on campus where representatives from the various publishing houses could visit on a regular basis for faculty and student support sessions. *It would be nice to hear more from textbook vendors. They have all those great tools but it would be nice to have them more on hand to assist us throughout the term. Publisher "Hub" on campus! More face time with our publisher reps.*

One faculty member even re-designed instructor work spaces for the future. *(Introduce) Mobile offices for staff - get rid of the private/combined offices for faculty and give common meeting areas. Be a paperless environment. Everything is digitized (just like the Banks are doing right now).*

Finally, this faculty member summed up her ideal future class in the future in the following manner: *My class would be a very self-directed class with topics on the whiteboard. The outcome will be listed (for what is required at the end of the session). They can stay or go if they wish. At the end, they have completed research toward the assignment or at least, the foundation is there that can be completed at home. Some students would work in pairs, some would leave and work on their own and others would sit right next to my desk. Students will have had the choice of delivery for a course - one of them may be lecture style, and one is all group work style, one is all interactive and hands-on etc. teaching the same material. Lots of technology in the class so they can learn on the spot with in class assignments. But I am not sure if they will still need me then. Scheduling issues are gone! Classes are smaller!*
Question 5: Professional Development

Faculty brought a dynamic mix of suggestions to the discussion regarding instructor professional development (PD) and how it would support the move toward more personalized education at the College. All respondents were asked to reflect on what they felt they would need, in the way of training and development, in order to deliver a stronger personalized course delivery in the near future. There were clear themes that resonated over the weeks of peer-to-peer data collection and these included the following:

- Make faculty PD fully available 12 months a year (respect all times of the year for training, not just an emphasis on May/June). **Offer PD all year-round, especially for faculty who teach in Winter and Summer. So much is offered in the Spring when I am so busy teaching. The school has to break out of the current model.**

- Make PD a required element and have it appear in faculty SWFs. This faculty summarized her wish list regarding professional development in this manner: **Time, time, time. Time to prepare. Time to develop my courses. Ongoing PD - educators teaching educators. It depends how we personalize to determine PD. We could cross train each other if possible.**

- Make faculty PD personalized. **We need a personalized approach for our learning (as professors)—for example FLP could be better personalized. It should be competency-based as well. I would love a range of PD that we can select from more. A lot of PD now, is really geared toward first and second year teachers.**

- Make PD relevant. **PD that is really worthwhile. Not just "enriching" but something more for professors - especially for our part-time instructors.**

- Make PD easy to source, register and attend.

- Return to the original Kaleidoscope Conference approach (longer, more in-depth training sessions).

- Encourage faculty to increase time spent off-campus in order to build good industry connections via associations, conferences, etc.

- Performance Evaluations where future training and career planning was emphasized. **A new model of performance evaluations is needed here. It has to be more than a bunch of boxes that need to be checked off. It is not personalized. And it is a waste of time.**

The final recommendation is ambitious but at the same time, dynamic: make Algonquin College a top provider of: **faculty development in the province!**
Faculty in this session termed it: PD U or Professional Development University! This creative acronym was shared as a way to emphasize how a strong commitment to development of its faculty on an ongoing basis, would enhance the learning experience for students and at the same time, aid in generating high quality applicants for part- and full-time positions. Moreover, the College brand could also be enhanced by this status in the post-secondary community.

The concept of a representative from Learning and Teaching Services within each School or Department was often noted by faculty as a needed solution to support faculty training and development. Workshops are fine but unless you use the skill sets right away, it doesn't really work. I prefer to have someone who is part of the department and is there on a full-time basis, to teach and train us. Someone who mentors and provides ongoing support.

Additionally, faculty members often shared how much they enjoyed participating in the research sessions on the LDP. These peer-to-peer sessions allowed them to stop for 30 to 45 minutes, engage with other faculty (many of whom they’d never met before), share ideas and learn something new. Many indicated that this model of peer engagement, was ideal for future personalized PD for faculty. More time to collaborate with other faculty. I want to know more about how we can integrate students with disabilities. I’d also like to know more about how our grads are doing in industry.

This faculty member supported the above point as well when she said: More access to fellow faculty in small discussions. We need the time to do this often. More emphasis on that would be great! Not just fed information by management. Faculty meetings could be managed differently in the future—it is not often collaborative, it is just information (that could be sent to me in an email). It’s not personalized at all.

A Pembroke campus faculty member shared an extremely simple yet incredibly easy solution to the above discussion point—schedule a lunch hour for instructors. He had additional comments on the topic of professional development so his full response is provided here: We need a lunch hour. Just open our schedule to 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. with one hour in the middle where we can do personalized learning with our students, where we can have lunch with somebody (fellow faculty) we haven’t spoken to in two months—it is a zero cost solution to a situation where the community is disintegrating. We need to be up to date on the industry trends. We need access to professional conferences as well. And don’t ask us to compete for PD funds.

The final comment is from a group session where a number of the topics in this section were clearly identified and articulated by them: Program-level support is needed—Brightspace for instance. Let faculty focus on teaching and less on all the other tasks. Why make faculty learn a system when a BS professional could do it in 30 minutes. But there are trade-offs. We have a big gap in educational training. Do we really know how to work with our students? If we are spending all these hours learning how to use a LMS, why aren’t we spending the same amount of time with our students? Professors need more on course design and delivery. Let’s support our faculty with the knowledge and training. We have a narrow definition of PD. It’s old fashioned. PD happens a lot—it just isn’t always acknowledged. Teaching is very individualistic so it is important to bring faculty together regularly. Promote collaboration at
the College! Build the expectation to collaborate. We can't just tell professors to teach differently—especially if management hasn't actually experienced it themselves.
Question 6: Student Performance in A Personalized Model

Toward the end of each session, respondents were asked for their thoughts on how students would perform in a personalized education environment. Respondents were asked two questions:

● What will students excel at?
● What will students struggle with?

Respondents considered their answers to earlier questions when providing input on this topic.

What Students Will Excel At

When asked what students will excel at in a personalized environment, respondents generally described that students would enjoy the College experience more. Respondents commented most often on three topics: engagement, independence, and stress management.

Engagement

Respondents often described that, in a personalized environment, students will be more engaged. One respondent commented: They will be more engaged. They’ll be waking up to something they like the idea of. It will be learner driven because the students will be motivated.

Other respondents noted that giving students choice will make them more motivated. One said that some students will love having more challenge and more options, and another said: The feeling of choice! They’ll like it! They will like that it is something they are doing because they like it and not because it is forced onto them.

Independence

Respondents also explained that students will become more independent in a personalized environment. They described that students will know how they learn and be more independent. With more choice available to them, students will be able to personalize their college experience to meet their needs and wants. They will have greater choice and control over where they take their program and what they want to get out of it in the end.

Stress Management

Many respondents stated that students will be less stressed, and that students will be healthier. They described that, with the ability to build their schedules and course loads around their needs, they will be able to get better sleep and will thus be more engaged in class. Respondents also noted that this could reduce the workload for support services.
What Students Will Struggle With

When prompted with this question, respondents expressed concerns about the potential negative effects of personalization. The main points described by respondents were the following: too much choice, time management, and soft skills.

Too Much Choice
Many respondents described that students could have too much choice. They may struggle with making choices that are actually beneficial to them. Respondents commented that there may not be enough structure in the choices available to students. One faculty member said that students may be challenged with developing stronger personal discipline to manage the choices and options.

Similarly, another respondent wondered if we offer them too much choice, will they feel like they have too much agency (feel a little lost)? One respondent expressed further skepticism: Students would have trouble with this open choice format. Learner Driven sounds great to someone who doesn’t know any better. Students don’t know what they need.

Time Management
A major concern of respondents, especially when considering the option of students choosing their own schedules, was that students will struggle with time management. Respondents described how students still have difficulty managing their time, adhering to deadlines.

The concern came up often, typically worded similarly. When asked what students will struggle with, many respondents simply answered time management. Others went into more detail, providing input such as procrastination or managing flexibility.

Soft Skills
Faculty also described their concerns of students’ soft skills in a personalized environment, including interpersonal skills, coping mechanisms, and other life skills. One respondent summarized this concern by saying that students may struggle with interacting on a personal level with peers, coworkers, and people around them. Another respondent noted that personal social skills are in the decline due to over emphasis on technology.

Additionally, respondents often described that they had concerns about the students’ transition to industry. For example, students could struggle with entering a work force where there are not choices. One faculty member asked: What are we doing to prepare them for the workforce if they have too much choice without structure?

A trend of “too much choice” or “too much flexibility” emerged from respondents’ answers to this question. Faculty explained that students could struggle with resiliency—adjusting to the ‘bumps in the road,’ situations where flexibility is not an option.

Overall, faculty noted concerns that a personalized system may cater too much to the students, and de-emphasize these soft skills.
Question 7: Final Faculty Thoughts

At the end of each session, respondents were asked for any final thoughts, ideas, or suggestions. Most often, respondents expanded upon and summarized ideas previously mentioned during the session.

Many respondents’ final thoughts amounted to advising that, no matter how the College decides to implement personalized education, it must do it right.

Some particularly notable quotes from respondents are as follows:

- **It doesn’t need to be chaos, but we need to do it right.**

- **Leadership is a big deal, we will have to ensure there is sufficient funding. We need more time to prepare and rework our courses to ensure full personalization. We need this consistently (not a one-time thing). We are excited! Could there be flexibility in Programs? Could we "share" or "blend" two Programs?**

- **I think you have to take some risks. I don’t think anyone is the same. What is a learner? You gotta have a bit of fun. Good sense of humour, share stories about yourself. Everything real starts with a conversation.**

- **Self-directed learners are good with any format of delivery. They'll excel, they'll master and they'll achieve. It’s the students who aren’t self-directed who I worry about most. For example some International students need more class hours, more teacher engagement and overall help. Moving things more online and expecting learning to take place independently outside the class may be asking too much for them.**

- **What are other colleges and universities doing and what can we learn from them?**

Respondents also often expressed concerns about how their input would be put to use, or about what the College’s goal was. For example, one respondent asked: **What is the difference between personalization and learner driven? What is the College actually trying to do?** Other such comments include the following:

- **Do we have a clear definition of “Learner Driven Plan” or a sample to review? What are the objectives?**

- **Learner driven sounds wonderful, but I just don’t see anything that’s going in that direction.**

- **The College says it’s listening, but there’s no evidence.**

Overall, while respondents varied from optimistic to pessimistic, faculty members were happy to have the chance to provide input on the development of the Learner Driven Plan.
Conclusions

Faculty data revealed detail and clear insight for the direction of the Learner Driven Plan. Overall, Algonquin College instructors are extremely committed to supporting learners and providing the best quality education possible now and into the future.

As noted in the results previously, College faculty provided dynamic thoughts and recommendations on methods to increase personalized in all three key desired areas of the Learner Driven Plan:

- **In the classroom**
- **Outside the classroom**
- **Technology practices**

This important stakeholder research probed further, however, and inquired about needed training and development for faculty to ensure top quality and highly personalized delivery. Without a doubt, instructors were asking for more published literature that the upcoming literature review will satisfy. Instructors also wanted to know more about how to support various learning styles within their courses. Faculty want additional assistance coping with unique student needs and challenges including mental health and language barriers presented with International students, to name a few.

Faculty also presented a plethora of interesting concepts on how to improve personalization at the College. Even those who expressed reticence with the concept at the outset of a session, often had one or two concrete and useful recommendations of practices that could indeed improve the level of personalization at the College. Recognizing student skills at the point of application and carefully guiding them on the best program choice, were strongly held beliefs from faculty that needed to be part of the Learner Driven Plan.

Then, offering various modes of delivery, competency-based learning opportunities and flexible schedules could all help to make learning at Algonquin significantly more personalized. Giving students options to take courses that they felt best suited their career aspirations (rather than a prescribed list of courses) were also strongly held views from instructors. Terms like entrepreneurship, competencies, and pathways were also popular themes in faculty sessions.

The level of change that faculty were willing to bear seemed quite high and quite “expected.” They seemed well-educated on the fact that significant change will need to occur to support this new and personalized education model at Algonquin. Although some shared that they would “change nothing” in their course delivery to support personalization, a significant majority offered specific ideas and effective methods by which they’d initiate change toward more learner-driven instruction in their courses.

Instructors are extremely concerned about two things when it comes to enhancing personalization with their students in the future:

1. **Time**
2. **Training**
These two items will greatly impact a faculty member’s ability to transition their current course content and delivery style to something with enhanced personalization. That is why strong results supporting the implementation of Peer/Tutorial Assistants for each course and Academic Advisors for every student along with ongoing and accredited professional development were so evident. Faculty want to be sure they have more networking opportunities within the College to share best practices and learn from others, while also participating in well-developed, relevant and readily available professional training on topics that really impact their course delivery and student engagement.

Instructors expressed concern about the importance of launching the Learner Driven Plan “well” in that the College’s brand could be greatly improved, or greatly damaged, if the plan was not strategically prepared and carefully tested in advance.

It is recommended by the researchers that the College socialize back proposed Learner Driven Plan strategies to key faculty at all three campuses before implementation. The research team created a representative list of “Bright Lights” throughout the data collection phase, made up of faculty who shared emphatic thoughts and ideas (both positively and negatively toward personalization) from a mix of areas at the College. It is suggested that all faculty from this list be invited to share input in the upcoming stages of the plan’s strategic development.

Finally, instructors clearly shared that they hoped to see the final Learner Driven Plan model tested in a pilot project before launching across all Departments in the future. As noted previously, faculty recommended selecting a campus such as Pembroke to test the plan or rather, select key programs with low or declining retention instead.
Appendices

Appendix A

Peer-to-Peer Faculty Sessions
Interview Guide Final

SPACE PLANNING IN ADVANCE:
- Set up Banner outside of the meeting room
- Use Table Top Sign inside the meeting room

Place on the meeting table:
- Post it Note Pads (4 to 6)
- 4 Pens (4 to 6)
- 4 Markers (4 to 6)
- Candy/salty snacks
- Napkins (just in case!)
- Session Sheet (labelled with session code)

ASK RESPONDENTS TO COMPLETE SESSION SHEET UPON ENTRY AND PRIOR TO THE START OF THE SESSION. (They can complete while we collect everyone’s drink order).

WELCOME AND INTERVIEW APPROACH EXPLANATION (2 mins.)

Hello and welcome to the Learner Driven Plan’s Peer-to-Peer Sessions! My name is Valerie Hill and I am a full-time faculty member in the School of Business (Carolyn Côté and I am a full-time faculty member in the School of Advanced Technology). I will be your moderator today. I really appreciate your interest in this initiative and thank you for offering your time to speak with me today!

ICE BREAKER! I’d like to take a quick moment to have you each say your name and where you work at Algonquin so we can all get to know one another today!

Today’s session is one of many taking place with all kinds of stakeholders here at Algonquin College regarding the Learner Driven Plan. In particular, the College is interested in hearing what we, as faculty members, have to say about personalized learning and the personalized college experience. The goal is to develop a plan built on significant feedback that will have three to four high-level recommendations that will have the most impact to implement.
We also wanted to share that both Carolyn and I created all the content for these sessions and we have had a great deal of freedom and flexibility in this project!

A few quick points that I ask everyone to consider before we begin are:
- Please feel free to share, and please be respectful of others’ comments today.
- Let’s be sure to listen to others while they speak and feel free to talk to one another as we move through the session!
- There are no right or wrong answers!
- However, we do ask that we work to stay on topic so that we can conclude our session on time!
- We don’t have to go in a particular order when we talk - I’ll ask some questions and we’ll open the floor for ideas and thoughts. At some points, I will ask you to write something down, and I will collect these for our notes!
- I may also call on you on occasion to ensure I have a full representation from everyone here today!

Does anyone have any questions about the process before we begin? (TAKE QUESTIONS AND THEN COMMENCE). Great! Let’s get started!!

Now, Carolyn (Valerie) and I had shared a short YouTube link in our recent email that does an excellent job outlining the details of Personalized Education. Did everyone get a chance to review this before today’s session? (ASSUME RESPONDENTS HAVE WATCHED VIDEO. IF SOME HAVE NOT, PREPARE TO SHOW IT ON THE IPAD HERE, BEFORE PART 1 BEGINS.) In our discussions, please note that the term “personalized education” refers to both personalized learning and the personalized college experience; in short – personalization both inside the classroom and outside of the classroom.

Terrific! Everyone ready to begin :)?

I will start the audio recording now.

MAIN QUESTIONS (WHAT DO YOU NEED/WANT/SEE?)

PART 1: Defining the Term! Post It Note Exercise (4 mins.)

We are going to begin by discussing personalized education in post-secondary education, in general (the big picture).

- Using the blank post it note pads in front of you and a marker of your choice, I’d like each of you to write down as many things/words/phrases that you think about when you hear the term “PERSONALIZED EDUCATION”. One word or thought per post-it please! Remember, personalized education means both learning and the overall college experience. (WHAT IS / COMPONENTS / FEELINGS)
- Stick your ideas here/pass them to me as you complete them (POINT TO OUR WHITE BOARD) as you write them.
- Okay - let’s begin!

Excellent! Now let’s discuss our choices (moderator try and organize post-its as they come in!)

(Part 1 Modification for one person: have them brainstorm ideas and we write them on the chart paper. We could offer some suggestions to get the ball rolling. Then, we could ask them to rank their ideas.)

DO WE FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH THIS AS A DEFINITION?

PART 2: Sentence Completion: The Four Areas of Personalized Education at AC Now and In The Future (10 mins.)

So now we would like to talk about what thoughts you have on how Algonquin College delivers personalized education currently the following areas:

- AC support systems
- in-class experiences
- out-of-class experiences
- online learning
- technology

What is 1 thing we are doing in your opinion – right now in the way of Personalized Education? (Just one!)

Let’s discussion your choices.

Okay – so now let’s talk about the future. What is 1 thing you would recommend Algonquin College do in the future to deliver personalized education in each of the following areas: AC support systems, in-class experiences, out-of-class experiences, online learning and technology.

Let’s discussion your choices.

PART 3: The Future....what and how... (12 mins.)

In our third and final exercise, we would like you to consider a bit of time travel! Into the future....and the year...2020. Let’s pretend that the College is launching the Personalized Education and College Experience approach College-wide, in the Fall Term.

In this scenario, let’s imagine that Algonquin College’s personalized education strategy contains
the top 3 (or up to 5 depending on responses in Part 1) things you noted in our first exercise today (Refer to: Part 1 Post It Notes).

If that’s our reality in 2020, let’s talk about you and your students two years from now...

**It is October 2020....**

- What is your average day like?
  - What is your classroom model like? Are you even in a classroom? If so, how much?
  - What is happening out of the classroom?
  - How did you assess your students in the past month?

- What did you **need professionally** (training/PD/publisher support, etc.) to help you deliver higher personalized education

- What is 1 thing that your **future students doing well** at?

- What is 1 thing your **future students be struggling** at?

**CONCLUSION and SATISFACTION SURVEY**  
** (2 mins.)**

Well, that is all the time we have for today! I thank you very much for your input and your honesty on this topic today. Again, your comments will be kept in confidence but will be used to make recommendations to the management team here at the College.

If you have anything further you’d like to share about personalized education, or this session, please feel free to contact me directly or visit the Learner Driven Plan website to email us there! I will follow up this session with contact information.

The Algonquin College management team would also like to know your level of satisfaction with the process we have followed to collect your thoughts and ideas on this topic.

So to further aid us in this, we would like to ask you to complete a short survey prior to your departure (it is a few simple questions on paper) with the time that we have left!

Once you have submitted the feedback survey you are free to go!

Enjoy a candy on the way and thank you again for your time.

Thank you again! Your feedback was very valuable.