Enrolment & Retention
President’s Listening Tour Task Force
Interim Report

DRAFT

March 15, 2015
INTRODUCTION

In general, the practice of strategic enrolment management (SEM) is to seek to align the campus mission, vision, and values with shifting market needs and expectations to promote stability, sustainability and excellence.

There are a variety of reasons why SEM is particularly important to Algonquin at this time:

1. Our traditional demographic of young students, in particular the 18 to 24 year old segment, is declining. Therefore, we need to maximize this market as well as seek new target markets of students.

2. Government funding is anticipated to continue to decline. Therefore, every dollar counts, and we need to maximize our recruitment, enrolment and retention efforts.

- With the Province’s goal to eliminate the deficit by 2017/18, the Ontario broader public sector is faced with absorbing many ‘provincial budget measures’ that in effect amount to funding reduction
- Operating Grant reductions – about 1% reduction in Weighted Funding Units (WFUs) per year over the past 3 years. This practice is forecasted to continue.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provincial Budget Measures</th>
<th>Algonquin Impacts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2013/14</td>
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<tr>
<td>International Student Recovery Fee</td>
<td>$ (442,125)</td>
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<td>Elimination of Small Northern and Rural Grant</td>
<td>(922,425)</td>
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<td>Policy Levers - Operating Grant Reductions</td>
<td>(807,909)</td>
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<td>Estimated reductions announced in July 2014 Provincial Budget</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>International Student Municipal Tax</td>
<td>(63,093)</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ (2,235,552)</strong></td>
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3. Ontario continues to experience a gap between full-time enrolment, as well as receive the least amount of government funding for operating grants.

Figure 3. Enrolment and revenue changes, 1998-99 to 2013-14 (Indexed to 1998-99)

Reference: Colleges Ontario
The Enrolment and Retention Task Force is a sub-committee of the College-wide Strategic Enrolment Management Committee (SEMC). SEMC sets the strategic direction for the College.

The subcommittees of SEMC include:
- Melt (students who confirm they will attend, but do not register)
- Student Success
- Communications & Contact
- Enrolment & Retention
- SEMC Annual Conference

Membership of the SEMC includes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aubut, Jo-Ann</th>
<th>McCormack, Wilma</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bramburger, Jamie</td>
<td>Mulvey, Ernest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dempsey, Cathy</td>
<td>Ramseier, Nadia</td>
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<td>Donaldson, Dave</td>
<td>Ramsey, Claire</td>
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<td>Doyle, Jack</td>
<td>Ranieri, Joe</td>
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<td>Fraser, Sheryl</td>
<td>Rees, Linda</td>
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<td>Fortura, Peter</td>
<td>Schumann, Lynn</td>
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<td>Hahn, Chris</td>
<td>Stanbra, Laura</td>
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<td>Hollebone, Eric</td>
<td>Styles, Shelley</td>
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<td>Kalil, Anne</td>
<td>Topp, Duncan</td>
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<td>Karimi, Farbod</td>
<td>Volk, Rebecca</td>
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<td>Macnab, Jeff</td>
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Algonquin’s Strategic Enrolment Management Committee Mission

To strengthen student access, progression, and completion, in pursuit of lifelong career success and meaningful community engagement.

Algonquin’s SEMC definition of student success is

The knowledge, skills and abilities to enhance their potential for career success and meaningful community engagement

(statement that is outcomes, not process, focused)

SEMC Planning Model
PRESIDENT’S LISTENING TOUR SUMMARY
The President’s Listening Tour reported the following observations regarding retention:

1. **Opportunities**
“RETENTION - Considered the most elusive of opportunities, many spoke of the need to focus more attention to the issue of student retention. Our numbers bear this out. For all our excellent efforts, Algonquin’s retention rates are slipping. Students and employees recognize that if we could make a difference in this all important area, it would have a tangible positive effect on the College’s future sustainability. Helping students succeed is why we are here.”

2. Focus
“RETENTION - The College community is also looking for a coordinated approach to retention. They realize that conquering retention is a major challenges, and at the same time, they know that improving retention could have the greatest impact in the lives of our students. All recognized the complexity of this challenge. Improvements in retention have the potential to give the College more control over our fiscal health. The community wants us to give retention renewed focus.”

3. Establishment of Task Forces
“The President’s Council team will support the creation of three task forces, each one running no longer than six months. Each will be required to hold public sessions, draft and release to the community an interim and final report.”

The Retention/Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) Task Force: To address changing demographics; tasked with raising first term (Fall to Winter – all program levels) retention by 1.5%. This task force is to be co-chaired by Claude Brulé, Senior Vice President Academic and Laura Stanbra, Vice President Student Services.

TASK FORCE TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Purpose
To address changing demographics and falling college retention, the Enrolment & Retention Listening Tour Task Force is asked to review the College’s enrolment and retention efforts and identify courses of action which will deliver on our 2015-16 Business Plan commitment to increase first term student retention by 1.5%.

2. Deliverables
- Draft an interim report identifying the current state, due by March 16, 2015.
- Draft a final report outlining the actions to be taken to deliver on the goal outlined in the purpose, due on June 15, 2015.
- Facilitate a minimum of one public meeting to discuss the subject.
- Report to President’s Council bi-weekly on the task force’s progress.
- Post all pertinent updates and support materials to myAC and the President’s website.

3. Accountability
- The Task Force reports to the President’s Council.

4. Authority
The Task Force has the authority to:
- Review all college data and documents related to relevant to its purpose.
- Draft a work plan for approval by President’s Council.
- Meet regularly to implement the work plan.
- Determine best practices relative to its work and report regularly.
- Make recommendations to President’s Council in relation to its purpose.
- Regularly assess its progress and adjust the work plan.
- Document its work and progress and share this information with members the Algonquin community.
- Regularly review its Terms of Reference and make recommendations for changes to the President’s Council.
5. **Support**  
Business units and staff will support the task force as required. If issues concerning staff capacity arise, the employee or task force member should raise the issue with one of the Task Force Chairs for resolution.

6. **Task Force Membership**  
- The Task Force will be co-chaired by Claude Brulé, Senior Vice President Academic & Laura Stanbra, Vice President, Student Services.
- The Task Force will be comprised of:  
  - Senior Vice President Academic  
  - Vice President, Student Services  
  - All Deans  
  - Acting Executive Director of Academic Operations and Planning  
  - Registrar  
  - Associate Registrar  
  - Director of Marketing & Recruitment  
- The Task Force may ask other members of the College community to join the Task Force in a resource capacity, as deemed appropriate by the Co-Chairs.

7. **Duration**  
The Task Force will complete its work no later than June 15, 2015.

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**CURRENT STATE**  
The Task Force meets every Wednesday morning, from 8 to 9am for one hour.

**Environmental Analysis is being conducted**
Questions asked in this analysis are:
What is the desired enrolment profile relative to the institution’s mission and vision for the future?
What external forces present threats and opportunities to the institution’s enrolment and financial vitality?
What institutional capacity is available, or potentially can be expanded to realize the desired enrolment goals?

Based upon historical trends and projections, what is likely to happen without intervention?

- For the first time in many years, the College has not met enrolment growth projections. The actual 2014-15 enrolment growth was 1.8% whereas the 2014-15 budget was approved on a projected enrolment growth of 3.7%.
- Efforts continue to increase the number of applications for 2015 Fall so as to achieve a measured increase over 2014 Fall numbers, as well as achieve a 2% margin over college system average in applications.
- Faculties and Schools are assisting in the confirmation process (implementing measures to get candidates to confirm earlier and in higher numbers), and the College continues to find optimal methods to maximize the number of students who register after they have confirmed they will attend Algonquin. We are currently tracking the fall semester melt rate (i.e. the number of candidates who confirm but do not register) and exploring ways to reduce it significantly in the future.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

The College also had initiated a number of retention initiatives, but continues to strive to find evidence-based successful retention measures that will provide a meaningful impact on overall retention, and particularly retention between level 01 and 02, and level 02 to 03.
From Level 01 in the Fall to Level 02 in the Winter, there is 16% attrition, which equates to approximately 1,600 students who leave the College. Surprisingly, perhaps, there is an additional 18% attrition from Level 02 in the Winter to Level 03 in the Fall, which equates to another 1,500 students approximately.

**How does the overall College retention rate vary by Level?**

Using the latest year’s data (2014W-to-2014F for Levels 02, 04, 06 and 2014F-to-2015W for Levels 01, 03, 05, 07), the retention rates by Level are:

- Level 01-to-Level 02  84.0%
- Level 02-to-Level 03  82.0%
- Level 03-to-Level 04  90.7%
- Level 04-to-Level 05  88.4%
- Level 05-to-Level 06  95.3%
- Level 06-to Level 07  89.0%
- Level 07-to-Level 08  100%

**What is the potential revenue impact of retaining an additional 150 level 01 students after Day 10 of the Fall semester?**

Assuming that they otherwise would have withdrawn before November 1, and that they stay until March 1 as full-time students, this translates into an additional 150 weighted funding units (WFU’s) in a standard 2-year business diploma program (with a Funding Unit of 2.0 and a Program Weight of 1.0).

In-year, there would be an additional full-time tuition fee revenue of approximately $207,600 (150 students in the Winter * $1,384 base tuition).
NEXT STEPS

- Build a stronger and more engaged culture of strategic enrolment management (SEM).
- Establish enrolment goals with a heightened emphasis on return on investments.
- Develop strategies and tactics to address and mitigate the enrolment gap between actuals and projections for 2015-16 in order to ensure no negative impact on 2015-16 budget and beyond.
- Ensure programming (outlook and performance) projections, intakes, cycle of approvals and suspension provide the appropriate enrolment to sustain future budget projections/pro-forma.
- Establish all key performance indicators, how and when they are evaluated, acted on, and modified.
- Conduct a gap analysis in Recruitment -> Admission -> Registration -> Student Orientation cycles.
  - Streamline and improve communications and touch points in this cycle.
- The Student Success Committee will complete a number of projects as indicated the 2014-15 Business Plan:
  - Inventory of College Services is completed, maintained, and accessible by students through varied means;
  - Top two student success strategy projects are completed.
- SEM Retreat on March 20, 2015:
  - Focus on “melt rate”
    - Students who confirm but do not register;
    - Business Intelligence (BI) has compiled the data to determine melt by program;
    - Academic Operations has approved contracting Academica to conduct an Acceptance Declined Study;
    - This working group will provide recommendations to SEMC on initiatives to reduce the melt rate.
- Online survey to the College community in April for feedback on retention initiatives or ideas.
- 2nd Annual SEM Conference on May 22:
  - Will include an open forum on this report as well as survey results from the April college community survey on this topic.
  - Keynote speaker on best practices in retention initiatives.
  - Working groups to share best practices, identify projects, engage more employees in the process and set expectations of reporting back results at next year’s conference.
- June Report to establish goals, initiatives and measures of success:
  - Short term – can be implemented in 3 - 6 months
  - Midterm – can be implemented within 6 - 12 months
  - Long term – implemented in 12+ months