



Algonquin College
College Academic Council
Annual Report 2016-2017

The College Academic Council offers a forum to stakeholders from all constituencies to address the challenges the College faces. I would like to thank my colleagues for the opportunity to chair the College Academic Council. Their diligence and commitment has made it both a pleasure and privilege to work alongside them to fulfill our mandate. The Students' Association was represented at all our meetings and we were able to appreciate the student's perspective on the topics under discussion. The 2016-2017 academic year was a busy year for members.

The **September** meeting, focused on topics brought forward from the previous academic year. Maggie Cusson, Academic Development, presented and received feedback on proposed revisions to policy AA06 Prior Learning and Assessment Recognition and policy AA30 Program Suspension. She also presented and received feedback on the draft Exam/Evaluation Procedures Guidelines.

Rebecca Volk, Centre Organizational Learning, provided guidance on professional development opportunities for off-cycle faculty and encouraged members to refer staff with questions to speak with her directly. Claude Brulé, Senior Vice President, Academic reported that policy AA01 Program Advisory Committee would be reviewed over the course of the academic year with a view to strengthening oversight and functioning of advisory committees, their membership and activities. Members were invited to submit comments and feedback accordingly.

Brent Brownlee, Larry Weatherdon and Larry Cavanagh from Ancillary Services attended to respond to concerns about e-text and textbook issues that arose during the F16 term start-up. Sandra Heron and Jay Smith from the Student Retention Office responded to questions regarding academic advising and received recommendations to improve the processes.

At the **October** meeting, Council welcomed Marc Fares, Mike Gawargy, and Dave Loignon from Information Technology Services. They provided an update on the correction and mitigation plan to address ongoing concerns with the Learning Management System, Blackboard.

Connie Powers, Human Resources provided an update on the Faculty Performance Development Program (FPDP) following its first year in deployment. Colin Bonang and Luke Furmidge from Safety and Security Services presented a summary of the training, awareness, and communications activities related to the lockdown drills conducted in 2015-2016. Council provided valuable feedback and observations on the topic. Laura Stanbra, Student Services, provided Council with a status report on the process of seeking input on policy SA16 Sexual Assault/Sexual Violence. Council members were asked to create awareness in their respective areas for staff to provide input and were encouraged to provide feedback themselves.

The focus of the **November** meeting was on setting the priority topics for the 2016-2017 academic year which were:

- a) eText (value to student learning experience)
- b) Blackboard / Learning Management System
- c) Mental Health
- d) Classroom Management (related to use of technology, Blackboard, or recording devices, as well as accommodations)

Council also received updates on the status of the eText initiative and on Blackboard. The eText team were welcomed back to provide further updates on the eText initiative and to receive additional feedback. The Information Technology Services (ITS) team returned as well and were pleased to report that the Blackboard Learning Management System had been stabilized. Council were advised that an ITS team was in place, committed to providing ongoing Blackboard support for faculty and students.

At the **January**, Council raised questions about the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) initiative, classroom scheduling as it relates to student retention, professional development funding, the F16 Start-up Survey conducted by the Faculty Union, a review of the College Academic Council mandate, and student course feedback vis-à-vis bonus marks. These items would form the basis of future agendas.

Mark Leduc, Academic Operations and Planning provided clarification on the process for identifying 'at-risk' students as it related to the Education Policy Research Initiative. As well, Trina Budd, Centre for Assisted Learning, joined the meeting to provide information about and to lead a discussion on medical documentation guidelines for student accommodations and retro-accommodations issued by the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC).

At the **February** meeting, Patrick Devey, Centre for Continuing and Online Learning and Maggie Cusson, Academic Development reported on the creation of the Learning Management System Steering Committee and its mandate to provide a clear process for consultation and

communication going forward. Farbod Karimi, Learning and Teaching Services addressed questions about the BYOD. Jack Wilson, Police and Public Safety Institute representative reviewed the results of the F16 Start of Term Survey conducted by the Faculty Union.

Jon Parker, General Arts and Science representative led a discussion on reviewing and evaluating the efficacy with which College Academic Council is meeting its provincially mandated obligations with a view to make the committee more effective in terms of its time and the talents of its members. A working group was struck to follow up and develop recommendations for Council's review. Krista Pearson and Lynn Schumann from the Registrar's Office spoke to plans to remove cash as a payment option in the Registrar's Office. Council was assured that procedures would be in place to address situations such as a student arriving on the last day of registration with cash only.

At the **March** meeting, Kilmeny West, Academic Access Centre representative reported on the work completed to-date by the CAC working group struck at the last meeting. Connie Powers, Human Resources, returned to report on the current status of the Faculty Performance Development Program. Laura Stanbra spoke to the proposed changes to policy SA07 Student Conduct and asked for feedback from members. Krista Pearson and Juliana Hendriks from the Registrar's Office informed Council on the Ministry's Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) Transformations Project.

Further questions were raised around policy AA06 Prior Learning and Assessment Recognition (PLAR), while revisions to policy AA08 Course Load, policy AA14 Grading System and policy AA39 Program Progression and Graduation Requirements were shared with Council members

At the **May** meeting, Rebecca Volk of the Centre for Organizational Learning, and Farbod Karimi and Josh Garbo from Learning and Teaching Services reported on support resources available to address faculty's concerns about classroom management challenges and in particular the distractions/ disruptions caused by the use of mobile devices in the classroom.

The eText Team returned to answer a number of questions raised by members regarding the adoption timelines. They alerted members that there may be an impact on the adoption process by the Net Tuition Project. Sharon Fraser Pross, Counsellor representative, led a discussion on the OHRC directive regarding guidelines and accommodation for students with mental health disabilities and concerns identified to date. Reports were provided by the CAC subcommittee on Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and Priorities and by the CAC subcommittee on Policy, By-Law and Procedures. Members were asked to provide feedback on the reports directly to the subcommittee Chairs.

At the final meeting of the year in **June**, the agenda focused on the recommendations of the subcommittees. The following motion submitted by the Policy and Practices subcommittee was passed.

THAT the College Academic Council (CAC Working Group - Review of CAC policy and practices) has presented recommendations that reflect the results of the survey of members and reflect the will of its membership. Further, that the recommendations presented by the Working Group be included in the year-end Report to the President and:

- i. That working groups be struck as per Policy AA02 to pilot the implementation of the initiatives
- ii. That those working groups have the support of current Council members to carry out their work
- iii. That the Council receive periodic updates from the working groups as requested
- iv. That in Winter 2019 the Council review the work of the working groups
 - a. That the Council vote in Winter 2019 whether the working groups' initiatives should formally be added to the appendices of Policy AA02.

The recommendations from the Priorities subcommittee were supported and a survey would be conducted in June 2017 to identify priorities for Council to address in the next academic year.

In conclusion, I trust the hard work and commitment of staff from all areas is demonstrated through this report. As I conclude my mandate as Chair for the 2016-2017 academic year, I reflect on the level of dedication, the quality and expertise found within our members and sense of satisfaction that we have fulfilled our mandate for this year. Moving forward, I look forward to continuing with the Council in our discussions that foster good policy making and a proactive approach to turning challenge into opportunity.

I would like to thank all members around the table for their dedication. A special thank you to Claude Brulé, for his experience, professionalism and guidance and to Nancy Makila for her ongoing support of Council activities.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey Ross, OCT, RSE
Chair
College Academic Council