



Algonquin College  
College Academic Council  
Annual Report 2018-2019

As outlined by [AA02 – College Academic Council](#), the College Academic Council (CAC) is comprised of academic, administrative, and support staff, as well as students, with the purpose of establishing a forum for students and staff to discuss issues and provide advice to the college president. This is only possible with a committed, diligent, and highly engaged group of individuals. It was my privilege and great pleasure to serve as Chair of CAC this past year, working alongside such dedicated Algonquin people, meeting our mandate and introducing new approaches to streamline procedures. Eight CAC meetings occurred in 2018-19, and they are summarized in the following discussion.

Prior to the first meeting in **September** 2018 (#1), and based on a recommendation from the previous year, an orientation for new members was organized. Anecdotal feedback from new members was positive on the orientation which is now a regular pre- and welcome-back-meeting. At the actual September meeting, Steve Neumann thanked the Council for the opportunity to have chaired this broadly representative, college-wide, stakeholder group in 2017-2018.

This year's Executive Committee, responsible for following up on Council recommendations and reporting to the president on 2018-2019 recommendations, was established as:

- Judy Puritt, Chair
- Steve Neumann, Past Chair
- Jonathan Parker, Academic representative
- Erin Stitt-Cavanagh, Administrative representative
- Lisa Lamb, Support Staff representative
- Deijanelle Simon, Student representative

The Students Association (SA) outlined their seven priorities for the year: operating an effective and thriving class rep system; ensuring that learners drive the 'learner driven plan;' partnering with AC to warmly welcome and support international students; supporting the advancement of a Truth, Reconciliation & Indigenization plan; promoting technology as a facilitator for learning, rather than barrier; and committing to an athletics and recreation complex that serves and benefits all students.

For the second year, the CAC distributed electronic surveys in Spring 2018 to gather information about priorities more efficiently and effectively. At the **October** meeting (#2), the *work plan* was introduced as a simple overview tool for all to see the year at a glance. Based on the key themes extracted from the responses and an energetic discussion, three core priorities were established for Council:

- 1) TRANSPARENCY/COMMUNICATIONS: information is gathered and then what happens about/to:
  - LMS
  - Retroactive Accommodation
  - PQR
  - KPI
  - Internationalization
  - Indigenization
  - PACs
- 2) PHYSICAL SPACE FOR TEACHING:
  - Scheduling (long, late days): student experience; faculty support
  - Overcrowding
  - All campuses (e.g., issues re: labs on Woodroffe, Pembroke, and Perth)
- 3) PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

- LMS
- Online and hybrid courses
- Internationalization
- Indigenization
- Pedagogy

Claude Brulé (VP, Academic) and Jeremy McQuigge (Manager, Course Material Services) assured Council that the *Institutional Pay Model* (IPM) was being dismantled. A remaining question related to [AD04 – Ordering Course Materials](#), *Required* versus *Suggested* resources, remained unresolved, and so a sub-committee was struck to investigate best practice and provide a recommendation to Council by year-end.

Claude Brulé, Laura Stanbra (VP Student Services), and Lynn Schumann (Associate Registrar) provided an update about the *Learner Driven Plan* (LDP). They explained that this initiative aligns with the College's [2017-2022 Strategic Plan, 50+5](#), meeting the first of the overarching directions. Emphasis was given to the meaning of *personalized learning* as related to personalizing learning for success, not just making learning convenient or customized.

At the **November** meeting (#3), faculty concerns about cyber-bullying opened the way for Laura Stanbra to introduce the new version of [SA07 – Student Conduct](#), scheduled for release later in November, noting that conduct is addressed in physical and cyber spaces. No employee or student should feel unsafe by association to the college; all were reminded to report incidents to security, their respective unions, and the ombudsman office. Police typically defer to college protocol on college-related incidents as a first step, unless a criminal offense occurs.

With the full first semester roll-out of Brightspace this fall, Farbod Karimi (Chair, Learning and Teaching Services) reported that adoption of the new learning management system is unfolding relatively smoothly. Support for faculty and students continues to be available in-person, online, and via phone at extension 2501. Hours are Monday-Thursday 8-8, and Friday 8-4 on Woodroffe. Faculty remain concerned with extended hours as the college shifts to a 14-week schedule and support for Pembroke and Perth. Various questions about glitches, consistency across calendar and assignment details, and student views were raised, with promises that updates and information-sharing would be ongoing.

Laura Jarrell (Associate Registrar) and Marie Theriault (Manager, Scheduling and Systems Support) provided a presentation explaining the scheduling process, starting with the required guidelines. That is, timetabling must consider course scheduling hours, quality student timetables, program and course constraints, and faculty scheduling parameters; the challenges in F'18 (i.e., unexpected enrolment growth, inadequate number and size of classrooms, and new software) should not re-occur this year. The aim for W2019 is to follow the registration maximum numbers more strictly and adopt Infosilem (a scheduling software used by other Ontario colleges), which should improve and smooth out operations.

Jim Kyte (Dean, Hospitality and Tourism) delivered an update on the 14-week project explaining the consultation process and pilot roll-out that occurred in the School of Hospitality and Tourism in Spring 2018. Faculty support is available via [Learning and Teaching Services \(LTS\)](#) for modifying courses, which will involve an overall 6-7% reduction of the teaching schedule. Concerns about professional development under the new model were addressed as happening during the break week, with notes that this model of delivering PD in the break week has been working effectively at Seneca College since 1994. Workload questions related to the transition process for the shared 14-week period and potential significant reduction for part-time faculty work dominated discussions. Student concerns included worries about funding distribution (currently OSAP is distributed two times in the year). Further, clarity was requested around off-cycle program progression.

In the new year, the **January** meeting (#4) started with a presentation by Patrick Devey (Dean, Centre for Continuing and Online Learning) and Farbod Karimi explaining proposed changes to [AA42 – Learning Management System](#). The changes were much more extensive than replacing “Blackboard” with “Brightspace,” and after considerable discussion around [Article 13 on Academic Freedom](#), the policy was taken away again for further revisions.

Dave Donaldson (Dean, School of Business) provided an update about space use across all three campuses, including an update on the four new classes being used on Woodroffe (after the Registrar relocation and the opening of the new library in F2018). Marie Theriault added that there had been a reduction of very late classes, with more classes ending at 8 pm, rather than 10 pm. No satisfactory explanation was provided around lab shortages for programs such as nursing, environmental studies, etc.; further reporting on space will be provided to the 2019-2020 Council.

George Cole (Ombudsman) presented the [Annual Report](#), noting that the considerable increase in cases and files could largely be attributed to the 2017 work stoppage. He emphasized that the role of the Ombudsman Office is to provide a safe space and encourage resolution. He noted that some of the increased discordance is related to the office’s ‘shuttle diplomacy’ role. Many times, the focus comes back to the requirement that the policy be followed. As much as students are not to plagiarize, faculty are to provide timely feedback. Since many cases coming forward to the Ombudsman relate to plagiarism, Claude Brulé proposed a working group be established to look at college-wide approaches to academic dishonesty.

Claude Brulé discussed the previously embargoed (because of the 2017 work stoppage) KPIs (Key Performance Indicators), noting that of the 87 questions, the province dictates 82 and Algonquin only gets to contribute the last 5. The lengthy reports are available at [2017 KPIs](#) and [2017-18 Apprenticeship KPIs](#) and the new 2018 KPIs were distributed in February.

At the **March** meeting (#5), Claude Brulé, Laura Stanbra, and Lynn Schumann presented highlights from the [Learner Driven Plan: Faculty Stakeholder Results](#), which included 1,529 employee participants, 337 faculty, and over 2400 students. The intent is to enhance and personalize learners’ experience, and by

June, the Board of Governors will receive the presentation, including the transformational intent and examples of concepts.

Karen Barclay Matheson (Counsellor, CAC Rep) and Jonathan Parker (GAS faculty, CAC Rep) led a discussion looking at some of the confusion surrounding the *retroactive accommodation* process at the college. The goal of the discussion was to bring awareness to the lack of alignment between college policies and a memo directing action related to students. Ben Bridgstock (Co-chair, Accommodations Advisory Committee & Director of Student Support Services), as well as Trina Budd (Manager, CAL Services), were available for input as well. Ben Bridgstock's role of supporting faculty with retroactive accommodations is a new position. Although [AA21 – Deferred Evaluation](#) and [AC01 – Students with Disabilities](#) dominantly guide the college approach, confusion comes in as related to [SA16 – Sexual Assault / Sexual Violence](#) and the VP Academic memo on student absences (January 15, 2018). Both Claude Brule and Laura Stanbra verbally committed to taking action on the policy/procedural conflict for retroactive accommodations, deferred evaluations, sick notes, etc.

Ernest Mulvey (Director, International Education Centre) presented the [International Strategic \(Refresh\) Plan](#), an update on the 2014 International Education Strategic Plan. Highlights included a current standing of 18% international students with a projected 25% international population by 2022, at which point Algonquin should be at 42,000 students. Our current international numbers are comparable to Centennial and Sheridan. Further, retention (2018F-2019W) and grade point averages (2018F), comparing international to domestic students, show international students performing stronger. The goal is to embed internationalization into Algonquin College's culture and processes; this includes increasing domestic student international experiences.

The **April** meeting (#6) was focussed on information sharing. Krista Pearson (Registrar) announced that the Registrar's Office had received the schedule for student fees via the updated policy. The new supporting OSAP documents were expected late in April.

The committee responsible for reviewing and updating the *Priorities Survey* shared the new streamlined survey for 2019-20, with the expressed hope that this format will attract greater participation.

Maggie Cusson (Dean, Academic Development) and Shannon Findlay (Program Quality Assurance Administrator-Acting) provided information on the [program quality review](#) renewal process at the college. In F2018, the new Program Quality Assurance Committee was launched. The new governance structure, updated reporting template, and modified funding/time approach should make the PQR process more manageable. The renewal process will involve listening to team leads and incorporating recommendations and ideas about removing unnecessary data collection pieces. Further action will be needed in solving integration problems with [AA26 – Course Outlines and Course Section Information](#) and other "interconnected" pieces such as [AA27 – General Education Courses](#). The process is aiming to be more transparent and incorporate more feedback.

Since Claude Brulé was not at this meeting, Maggie Cusson also presented about the *Education City* initiative across Ottawa. This new initiative includes Algonquin, Carleton, La Cité, and uOttawa and will be renewed another year as both Ottawa and the ministry support the idea. The goal is to encourage students/potential students to think of Ottawa as an *education destination*, and so there will be greater integration and sharing of credential information among the city's higher education institutions.

Ron Deganadus McLester (VP, Truth, Reconciliation & Indigenization) shared an update of the progress and current state of the *Indigenization Plan*. He was given a [mandate letter](#) to research, review, and report with consideration to indigenous entrepreneurship, curriculum, personal and specialized support, art and expression, physical space, and outreach and community relations. Sessions have been ongoing, and people were invited to provide feedback. In bringing an indigenous framework to Algonquin, the college is essentially 'building a canoe as a community.' Currently, there are 1412 identified indigenous students at AC, but only 100 accessing the Mamidosewin Centre.

The **May** meeting (#7) opened with Claude Brulé sharing information about the Multi-College Collaborative Model (MCCM) initiative, which involves Algonquin College, Northern College, Sault College, and Lambton College. The Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities provided one year of seed funding to investigate potential around a "hub and spoke model." The MCCM goal was for Algonquin (as the strong and stable polytechnic institution) to act as the "hub" for smaller and more remote "spoke" institutions to relieve administrative burdens and duplication. To date, the collaboration has been on limited small step activities, such as (1) sharing ESL/EAP (English as a Second Language/ English for Academic Purposes) material, knowledge, and best practices from Algonquin to Northern and Sault and (2) sharing PD offerings as in the first one scheduled for June 11 around the topic of retro-accommodation. Whereas rich discussion centered on job security concerns, Claude assured CAC that the intent is not to risk jobs but to create healthier programs.

Robyn Heaton (Dean, Faculty of Arts, Media, and Design) provided an overview of the current state of *Program Advisory Committees* (PACs) and their effectiveness. The investigation revealed a general lack of clarity as to the role of a PAC, and each school has a unique approach and use of PACs. The new PAC Working Group has revised the information on the [website](#) and prepared a general procedural guide for program leaders to pick and choose elements as they develop their PAC working arrangements. So far, the new guideline has resulted in positive responses from PAC members, although it is unclear how widely the new guidelines are in use. (The use of PACs is a hallmark that distinguishes colleges from universities.)

In policy work, Council accepted [AA01 – Advisory Committees](#) and [AA42 – Learning Management System](#) (with the concerning clauses 1.5 and 1.6 removed entirely).

Robyn Heaton who chairs the *Ombudsman's Working Group* reported on the group's mandate to review the use and application of policies, procedures, and sanctions across the college related to [AA18 – Academic Dishonesty and Discipline](#), [AA20 – Plagiarism](#), [AA19 – Academic Appeal](#), and [AA37 – Review of Final Grade](#). The group has looked at processes and sanctions within Algonquin, reviewed websites at

other colleges, and had a discussion with Conestoga which has a very systematic, proactive, and college-wide approach to academic honesty and plagiarism. The library at AC has also introduced a workshop and self-guided modules to help students with academic integrity and plagiarism issues. The Working Group will continue investigations into next year as this situation needs to be addressed in a transparent, centralized, and consistent manner.

Jonathan Parker spoke about the *Required vs Suggested Working Group* reviewing materials as tied to [AD04 – Ordering Course Materials](#), noting this item has been on the CAC agenda for over a year now, based on an initial application to CAC in Spring 2018. Originally, the discussion had come to CAC based on concerns raised by the Students' Association and the Ombudsman around the *Institutional Pay Model* (ending in September 2019). This group has worked on preparing a set of "Core Principles" that will be attached to the revised AD04 policy, to help faculty make principled decisions on course materials. An early draft of these Core Principles was presented to CAC, and discussion focused on the key headings: Value for Money, Sustainability, Availability, Transparency and Accountability, Accessibility, Utility, Academic Freedom, Publishing with Principles, and Right to Fail/Bundling. The Group will return to CAC with revised documentation.

The Board of Governors has initiated the search for a new college president. It is hoped that a new president will be in place for September 2020.

The last meeting of the 2018-19 CAC was held in **June** (#8) and started with the 14-week scheduling plan, specifically the Spring-Summer 2020 term. Jim Kyte reminded Council that the 14-week model, with the Week 8 break each semester, originated out of mental health and well-being concerns combined with a desire to maximize college use. Concern around the "consensus" versus "seniority" solution was voiced, and the response was that each school will approach this matter independently and will strive to reach a consensus position. Discussion moved to include Claude Brulé around enough work, limited specializations, pedagogic integrity, holistic planning, peripheral service support with expanded course offerings, fear of rotations that will have some faculty teaching 12 months in a row (violation of the Collective Agreement), and how transitions or course hand-offs will occur. There will be PD and ongoing consultations to support this change through Spring2020. Rumours about coordinators not teaching were dismissed with the explanation that managers would ensure distribution is equitable and fair. Final discussions looked at broadening teaching schedules to include general education courses.

The AD04 Required vs Suggested Working Group set of *Proposed Core Principles* was approved. However, [AD04 – Ordering Course Materials](#) was not accepted by Council, since inadequate time had been given for review. This policy will come back to the 2019-20 Council.

In conclusion, the College Academic Council had a very busy year, working diligently, consulting with our constituent groups, and targeting the three priorities of transparency/communication, physical space for teaching, and professional development, while also addressing the standing agenda items and college initiatives. The experience has been challenging and rewarding, and it is encouraging to see people

dedicated to maintaining a high level of integrity and critical accountability to discussions, research, and decisions related to learning and working at Algonquin College.

Lastly, on a personal note, I would like to add my thanks to everyone who sat at the table this past year – your commitment to this forum is what makes it a valuable and respected forum. Also, I would like to thank Claude Brulé for his respectful, informative guidance, and professionalism and thank Nancy Makila for her support in planning, following procedures, arranging guests and presenters, taking minutes, and managing the administration of the SharePoint site with all incoming documents.

Thank you for having let me serve as Chair of CAC in 2018-2019.

Judy Puritt  
2018-2019 Chair, College Academic Council  
Professor, School of Business