Algonquin College Strategic Plan

2022-2025





Becoming Again

We now turn our minds to the natural world, which renews itself every year as Winter turns to Spring, and it wakes up from the Big Sleep. As the snow melts, the world emerges. It looks familiar, but also different. Some trees and plants are gone, but some new ones are appearing. The wind and snow may have altered the landscape. Favourite places may be forever changed, new spaces may be waiting to become our favourites.

The world is also waking from a Big Sleep to find ourselves and the world around us changed - the way we work, the way we connect, the way we engage. We have the opportunity to choose new ways and let go of barriers from the past.

It is time to become again.

2

Message from Board Chair and President

As we near the end of our 50+5 Strategic Plan for 2017-2022, the world is emerging from an unprecedented period. Algonquin College finds itself in transition, along with other postsecondary institutions, as we consider the challenges and monumental shifts that have taken place. We decided it was time to pause and reflect on how the vision and values of our strategic plan should shape the direction we take over the next three years, as we recover from the undeniable impact of the pandemic and seize the opportunities that lie before us.

Since 2017, we have accomplished many of the goals set forth in our Strategic Plan. We elaborated on our commitment to our learners and our employees in our Learner-driven Strategy and our People Plan. We have also deepened our commitment to embracing Indigenous knowledge and practices and to understanding how they can inform and enhance what we do. You will find examples of these practices throughout this plan, and we are committing to ensuring that our work aligns with our refreshed strategic directions.

This plan is our roadmap for how we will recover and thrive as an institution, while helping our learners and the communities we serve recover and thrive in the new economy. Over the next three years, we will maintain our focus on being learner-driven and supporting our people, while nurturing innovation and quality in our programs, services and operations. We are committed to ensuring that all our initiatives are inspired by our deep-seated commitment to economic, environmental, and social sustainability while strengthening connections within the College and with our partners.

As we move forward, we are focusing our energy on a few key strategic initiatives that will ensure that we can continue to provide a best-in-class learning experience, while transforming hopes and dreams into lifelong success.





Jay McLaren Chair, Board of Governors

Claude Brulé



President and Chief Executive Officer

Refreshing Our Strategic Directions

This strategic planning process is rooted in the 50+5 Strategic Plan, which set forth the College's mission, vision and values, and identified goals aligned with five strategic directions.

OUR MISSION

To transform hopes and dreams into lifelong success.

OUR VISION

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

OUR VALUES

CARING	We have a sincere and compassionate interest in the well-being of the individual.
LEARNING	We believe in the pursuit of knowledge, personal growth and development.
INTEGRITY	We believe in trust, honesty and fairness in all relationships and transactions.
RESPECT	We value the dignity and uniqueness of the individual. We value the equity and diversity in our community.

At the beginning of the refresh process, the Board of Governors affirmed that the mission, vision, and values remain relevant for guiding the College over the next three years. Thus, the planning process focused on prioritizing and refining the five strategic directions and identifying relevant goals for the new plan.

The College engaged Deloitte to guide the planning process and identified an Advisory Team that would support the consultation and plan development while providing perspectives from across the College and externally.

50+5 STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR 2017-2022

LEARNER-DRIVEN

The personal and professional success of our each and every one of our learners

PEOPLE Being an exceptional place to work.

CONNECTED

Strengthening relationships with both alumni and employers, and their interactions with learners.

INNOVATION & QUALITY

Excellence in experiential learning, entrepreneurship, technology adoption, and continuous improvement.

SUSTAINABLE

Modeling and teaching socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable practices.

At Algonquin College, we begin many of our gatherings with the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address, known in that community as "the words we say before we do anything important." We take time to honour all of the elements and creatures of the world we are part of and recognize the role we play in maintaining harmony and balance. In doing so, we bring our minds together as we embark on our work.

While the Thanksgiving Address comes from the Haudenosaunee people, the fundamental principles it conveys are common to many Indigenous cultures. It reminds us of the interconnection between all things, and that everything we do impacts the world around us, so we must be mindful about the actions we choose to take. This guidance is especially important as we emerge from the pandemic, making conscious decisions about how we will recover and thrive.



At Algonquin College, we recognize that we live and work on the traditional territory of the Algonquin people, and that we welcome learners from all across Turtle Island. We are committed to respecting that heritage and making Indigenous values part of how the College operates.

Throughout the planning journey, we incorporated Indigenous knowledge and storytelling to help ground and focus our work. We adopted the approach of Two-Eyed Seeing, a research method developed by Albert Marshall, a Mi'kmag Elder, and researchers at Cape Breton University. With this approach, we examine the world around us with both Western and Indigenous perspectives. Just as when we see with two eyes at once, we discover more depth and detail by incorporating an Indigenous approach. According to Elder Marshall, the Indigenous perspective "is about life: what you do, what kind of responsibilities you have, how you should live while on Earth ... i.e., a guiding principle that covers all aspects of our lives: social, economic, environmental, etc. The advantage of Two-Eyed Seeing is that you are always fine tuning your mind into different places at once, you are always looking for another perspective and better way of doing things."

22INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP INTERVIEWS

278

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS

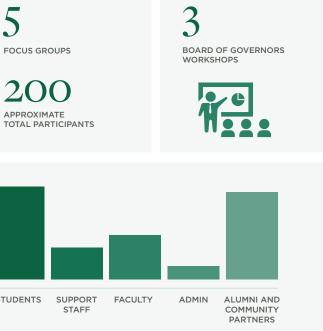
200APPROXIMATE

973 COLLEGE AND COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONSES

STUDENTS

We opened our strategic planning workshops and focus groups with Indigenous knowledge sharing, and we continually partnered the data we collected with storytelling. We are refreshing our Strategic Plan by looking at our accomplishments and goals with new perspectives.

The planning process included a variety of consultations and validation sessions from January through May, from one-on-one interviews to large group World Café sessions. We gathered data from existing sources and conducted a College-wide survey.

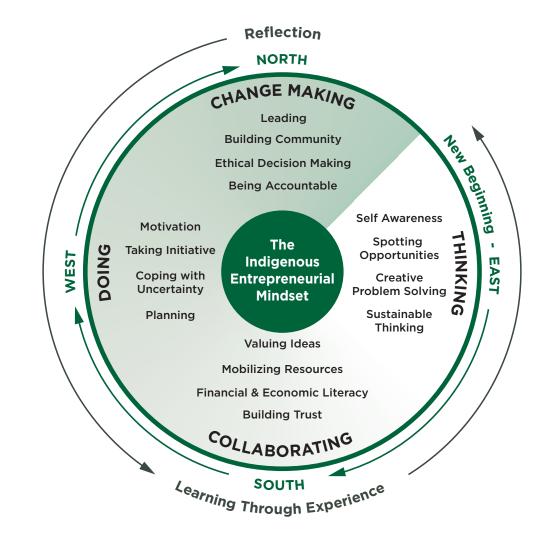


Read about Two-Eyed Seeing at: http://www.integrativescience.ca/Principles/TwoEyedSeeing/

When the Students' Association was establishing a new brand identity for Algonquin athletics, they wanted to integrate Indigenous stories into the brand in a good way. The students selected the Wolves as the new brand identity and are creating a new brand narrative in consultation with Ron (Deganadus) McLester, Vice President for Truth, Reconciliation and Indigenization.







In his work on Indigenous entrepreneurship, André O'Bonsawin, Director of Indigenous Initiatives, led a steering committee for the development of the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Mindset Competencies Framework in collaboration with Executive Sponsor Cristina Holguin-Pando, Director, Applied Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship. The framework is based on the Anishinaabe Medicine Wheel teachings. It sets forth a sequence of thinking, collaborating, doing, and change-making that has informed and will continue to influence a number of Algonquin College initiatives, including the Learner-driven Strategy.

COLLEGE MISSION - TO TRANSFORM HOPES AND DREAMS INTO LIFELONG SUCCESS

Who We Are

"The whole reason the College exists is for learners."

That statement may seem obvious, but it is one that was made repeatedly during the consultations.

Algonquin College is Ontario's largest community college outside the greater Toronto area, providing polytechnic-level education and training that serves learners and communities with a vast array of needs. In 2017, we recognized that Algonquin College's reputation as an education innovator and its deep commitment to quality uniquely positions us to respond to the changes occurring around us. The trends identified during the strategic planning process five years ago - changing demographics, learner expectations, the growing role of technology in the workplace and the urgent need for action on pressing environmental and social issues - inspired us to establish bold goals. We committed to deepen our learners' connections with industry through innovative approaches to work-integrated learning and to reach even higher on measures of quality, impact, and innovation within each school and service.

From 2017 to 2022, we accomplished many of the goals set out in the plan. We significantly increased our cooperative education programming and opportunities. We created a strong Advancement team that is building on our connections with alumni, donors, and industry. We adopted a Learner-driven Strategy that is committed to providing personalized, flexible learning experiences. We created a People Plan to help us empower and support our employees. We have embedded the AC Way approach to continuous improvement across the College, and we have made significant progress in our commitments to responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action.

Areas of challenge include streamlining goals and ensuring that commitments are realistically matched with the resources available to achieve them, as well as overcoming the bureaucracy and silos that exist in any complex enterprise. Stakeholders and board members expressed a strong desire to focus on efficient service delivery and inter-departmental communication and cohesiveness. Our learners want more flexibility, and our people want to be empowered and engaged. Continued development of employee engagement, adaptable work options and work/life balance is understood to be critical for a stable, inclusive and positive work environment.



The AC Way approach, which is informed by Indigenous knowledge, guides College units through process improvements, applying the plan-do-study-adjust process so that we are constantly innovating, testing and learning.



Who We Are Becoming

Common to both stakeholder and Board consultations is a desire to serve the learner by offering high-quality education that is characterized by innovation, flexibility, inclusiveness, compassion, and connection to people and opportunities. By embracing Indigenization across the organization, Algonquin College enhances its core commitment to foster learner and social prosperity. Passion for teaching, for the College, and for fellow employees emerged as key motivations for developing a Strategic Plan that keeps the mission, vision and values of the College at the forefront.

The importance of meeting the needs of mature, career-focused learners, especially our own alumni, is greater than ever. Labour-market disruptions have heightened the demand for flexible, individualized learning plans that help people and their employers adapt to the new reality and transition quickly and easily to new careers or new lines of business.

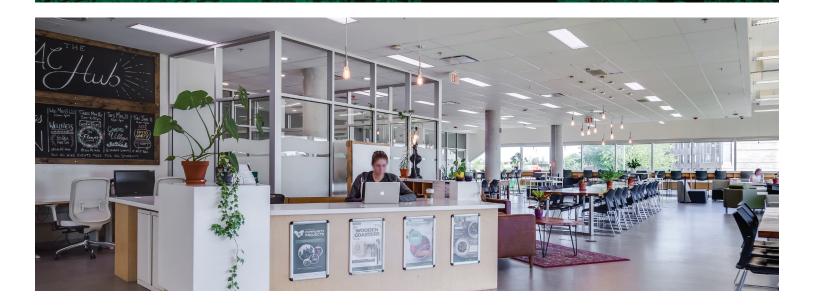
The expectations of these emerging groups of learners are different than those of the traditional, direct-from-high-school, domestic student of past decades, and Algonquin College must maintain its commitment to innovation in order to respond. If there is something that the pandemic has taught us, it is that we can respond to changing needs and expectations quickly, nimbly and creatively, while maintaining the core commitment to quality and individual students' needs. It was not always ideal, but we have learned so much and done so much - there is no going back. We are, indeed, becoming again.

Business needs have changed as well. The disruption caused by the pandemic has had devastating impacts on some Eastern Ontario industries, opened unforeseen opportunities for others, and accelerated the changes that technology is bringing to the workplace. Whether employers are reinventing themselves to ensure survival, shifting to move into new markets, or implementing new technology, the partnerships they have had with Algonquin College are more important than ever. Programs must adapt and learners need the experiential learning opportunities that connect them to employer needs from Day One.

As we move forward, the unwavering resourcefulness, creativity and resilience of our people will drive our success as we focus on the key initiatives that constitute Algonquin College's unique contributions to the postsecondary landscape in Eastern Ontario, across the province and throughout Canada.



Project In-Kind: Campus Edition is an AC Hub initiative to promote volunteerism that supports global sustainability. The team is planning a conference on volunteerism and has committed to engaging Indigenous facilitators for all the sessions to ensure that Indigenous perspectives are integrated throughout the event.



Our Focus for 2022-2025

Throughout our consultations, we asked the College community to identify the areas we needed to focus on during the coming years so that we could recover and thrive. Consistently, two strategic directions rose to the top: Learner-driven and People.

Learner-driven

Being learner-driven is a core strategic pillar of Algonquin College. It is key to our mission of transforming hopes and dreams into lifelong success. Because every learner has different needs, goals, expectations and life circumstances, we can only be learner-driven if we serve each learner individually.

We recognize that the College exists to serve the learner – anyone who is preparing to learn or is currently learning at the College. We will ensure that the needs of the learner are embedded into every decision at the College, and priorities are determined with the learners in mind. As a learner-driven organization, we will capture the learner's voice and act on it at every opportunity. All systems at the College should be optimized to increase value and efficiency for the learner. We want our learners to return to us throughout their lives to continue their educational journeys and truly become life-long learners.

In the 50+5 Strategic Plan, we made commitments to becoming a leader in flexible personalized learning and in co-operative education and experiential learning. We have made great strides in providing students with co-operative education opportunities and integrating experiential learning into our programs. In 2019, the Board of Governors adopted the Learner-driven Strategy, which reinforced our commitment to providing flexibility as we deliver outstanding personalized experiential learning. For the next three years, we believe that we need to focus our energy on personalized learning and flexibility for learners. We will ensure that our new Student Information System project will create a platform for the personalization our students are seeking. We will also examine the innovations we have adopted during the pandemic to identify best practices for program and service delivery moving forward.

To be a sustainable College in a competitive environment, we need to meet the learners where they are. Quality and continuous improvement should be the focus for all interactions with learners. Moving to the "new normal," we must continue to improve on the approaches that are working and remove the ones that are not. It is essential during the life of this plan to become again – simply reverting to all our past practices is not an option.



People

People

While the College exists to serve the learner, we cannot exist without our people. All the employees of the College, full-time and part-time, play a critical role in delivering upon our promise to learners. Our people drive the learner experience. We need to ensure our people reflect our communities and industries. Further, we need to empower them to achieve the goals of this plan, inspired by our shared commitment to creating a flexible, equitable, inclusive and welcoming environment to support learner success. As a learning institution, we need to equip our people to create an outstanding learning experience for all, by providing them with opportunities to continually learn and grow professionally. We are becoming again as an institution and as individuals.

In the 50+5 Strategic Plan, we set a goal of being recognized by our employees and the community as an exceptional place to work. We adopted a People Plan and an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Blueprint that have guided our efforts to improve and support our team. Since 2013, Algonquin College has been named annually as one of the National Capital region's top employers. Our employees report that they are passionate about the work they do but recognize a need for work/ life balance, work schedule flexibility, and the professional development support that will equip them to meet the challenges that lie ahead. They have also emphasized the importance of moving forward with the equity, diversity and inclusion work that we have begun. Therefore, we will focus our energies during the next three years on empowering our people to support our learner-driven goals and creating an inclusive and supportive work environment.

Over the next three years, we will look for opportunities to innovate and incorporate lessons learned about the ways we connect with each other and our approaches to work. Open and transparent communication will facilitate a culture of learning, idea exchange, innovation and quality. Throughout our programs, processes, and interactions with each other, we renew our commitment to embedding continuous improvement through the AC Way, Indigenous Ways of Knowing, and sustainability practices as we focus on recovering and thriving.







Foundational Themes

While Learner-driven and People were identified as our areas of focus, there was recognition that the other directions identified in the 50+5 plan were critical foundational themes. The message was clear that while our goals should focus on our learners and people, we needed to ensure that we are innovative and quality-focused, we remain connected - to each other and our broader community and that all our efforts support economic, social and environmental sustainability.

We also found consistent support for embracing additional foundational themes: Indigenization, agility and flexibility, and focus. We need to continue to integrate Indigenous practices throughout our work. Rather than having a single goal related to Truth and Reconciliation or Indigeneity, we must be committed to adapting our processes and practices to honour and reflect Indigenous ways of knowing. We need to extend the Two-Eyed Seeing approach into all that we do.

Additionally, as we work to recover and thrive, we will need to be agile and flexible, while focusing our efforts on our highest priorities. Therefore, the goals for this plan are built around the strategic directions of Learner-driven and People, with the expectation that the foundational themes will inform and be integrated in all that we do.



Goals

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PROVIDE FLEXIBLE, PERSONALIZED, AND LIFELONG LEARNER EXPERIENCES.

Desired outcomes:

- College-wide systems ensure that we are able to follow through on our promise of flexibility.
- A variety of academic and support services delivery modalities to meet the diverse needs of learners.
- A strategy for serving part-time learners that responds to their needs and educational goals.
- Innovative, high-quality, hands-on, applied learning that is aligned to industry needs.
- Learner experiences and pathways support enrolments that achieve financial sustainability.

02.

EMPOWER OUR PEOPLE TO FOSTER A HIGH-QUALITY, INNOVATIVE, LEARNER-DRIVEN CULTURE.

Desired outcomes:

- A culture of collaboration, continuous learning and improvement that promotes excellence in teaching and learning, and learner support.
- People have the necessary tools, systems, facilities, and support to create and deliver high-quality learner experiences.
- People have career and professional development opportunities to enhance their work and support their life-long learning.
- People have clear authority, roles, and responsibilities, enabling efficient decision-making.

03.

CREATE AN EQUITABLE, DIVERSE, AND INCLUSIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT.

Desired outcomes:

- practices, processes, services, and programs.
- equitable and inclusive work environment for all.
- Indigenous ways of knowing are integrated into College practices.
- Flexible, adaptive work arrangements that meet the needs of the College and our people.

Measures of Success

- Full-time and part-time enrolment and retention
- Course delivery options
- Learner satisfaction
- Program and process quality reviews and implementation plans
- Graduation rate
- Employment rate
- Employee engagement
- Employee retention
- Financial sustainability
- Professional and career development opportunities
- Employee and learner net promoter scores
 - Community and industry partnerships

• Equity, diversity, and inclusion principles are embedded into our College culture and reflected in

• Our team reflects the diversity of the population and the communities we serve and facilitates an

What's Next?

This plan sets forth our high-level goals, the directions we need to travel in as we allow us to make progress on our Strategic Goals. Each unit within the College will

Advisory Team Members:

Chair and College Project Lead:

Keltie Jones, Dean, Pembroke Campus

Faculty:

Lynn Cummings, Professor, Curriculum Consultant, Academic Development Jill Reeves, Professor, Coordinator, Academic Advisor, Police Foundations Abhay Sharma, Professor, Design Studies

Support staff:

Wadhah Almonaifi, Program Support Officer, AC Online Cathy Ross, Administrative Assistant to the Chief Digital Officer and Information Technology Services Jason Timms, Assistive Technologist, Centre for Accessible Learning

Administration:

Jordan Wong, Business Improvement Coach, AC Way

Student:

Geraldine Esparza, Director, Students' Association

External: **Christine Trauttmansdorff**

Project Support: Jessica Traynor, Executive Assistant, Advancement



COLLEGE MISSION - TO TRANSFORM HOPES AND DREAMS INTO LIFELONG SUCCESS

Algonquin College

1385 Woodroffe Avenue Ottawa, Ontario K2G 1V8 613.727.4723

algonquincollege.com/strategicplan