



# The Next-Gen College

**D I G I T A L   S T R A T E G Y   2 . 0**



**JUNE 2015**



## What does it mean to be 'digital'?

*For Algonquin College, it means investing in and using technology to make the education we offer accessible to more students in more ways — with flexibility, mobility and personalization.*

It means transforming how we teach, how students learn, how we work and the ways we connect with our internal and external communities — automating and improving core processes to make them more efficient and cost effective.

Being digital is no longer just about technology. It's about how we live; how we innovate, through creativity and entrepreneurial endeavors. Those are the qualities we need in order to survive and thrive as a college — and that employers expect from our graduates.

This strategy outlines how Algonquin College intends to realize its digital vision over the next five years. It is a compass, not a map, setting the direction that will guide our technological decisions and investments. Our digital strategy will ensure Algonquin continues to be a leading digital post-secondary institution in Canada and internationally — for the benefit of our students, staff, partners and the communities we serve.

PREPARED BY LEARNING AND TEACHING SERVICES,  
ASCRIBE MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS INC. AND BUILD-GREEN SOLUTIONS



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# Executive Summary

*In 2009, Algonquin College declared its decision to become a 'digital college'. Six years — and many milestones later — the college has become that, recognized for its leadership among other post-secondary institutions.*

With a stake firmly in the ground, the college now looks ahead to the next five years. The technology landscape has changed and will continue to change; the post-secondary environment is shifting. A next-generation vision is needed to take Algonquin College forward.

## SEIZING THE DIGITAL OPPORTUNITY

This digital strategy sets the direction for the college's use of technology and identifies the need for a culture of innovation throughout the college and among all employee groups. Rather than specify technologies, this strategy concentrates on the processes and considerations for making decisions about tools, systems and approaches for delivering the educational experiences students expect, providing the services our employees require and connecting with our stakeholders and the communities in which we serve. It will inform and support other college strategies — including our 2017–2022 Strategic Plan and our Information Technology Services (ITS) Strategy.

Technology has reshaped student expectations of their college experience and creates unprecedented educational possibilities to enhance our approach to learning and teaching. From flipped classrooms, the use of open educational resources and eTexts, to engaging online learning activities or the 'gamification' of learning content, the shift to a truly learner-centred educational environment is achievable. It also gives Algonquin College and other post-secondary institutions the ability to serve an increasingly diverse and dispersed student body, ensuring college offerings meet accessibility standards and extend learning opportunities to the widest range of students possible.

## ADDRESSING THE FORCES OF CHANGE

Our digital strategy takes into account the forces that will shape Ontario's post-secondary sector for years to come such as: demographic shifts that will see the college's traditional student base shrink and non-traditional students become core, as well as pressures to operate more efficiently and cost effectively stemming from decreased public funding. Algonquin College has seen its grant funding decrease as a percentage of total revenues over the past 12 years, from 48

percent in 2001–2002 to 39 percent in 2014–15. Given the Ontario government's pledge to eliminate the provincial deficit by 2017–2018, further reductions are likely.

To continue to provide accessible, affordable and high-quality post-secondary education, we need to be excellent stewards of our resources while seeking efficiencies and productivity gains wherever possible. We also need to expand our service offerings to increase existing revenues and establish new sources of revenue where appropriate.

## A LEGACY OF PROGRESS

The college's 2009 Academic Technologies whitepaper, and the 2010 Digital Strategy crystallized efforts already underway to ensure staff and students would benefit from emerging technologies. Internal stakeholders reported their perception that the strategy has been successful. In a December 2014 survey, respondents said the college's investments in information technology (IT) infrastructure made a noticeable difference in the quality of education and services offered, and that the quality of hybrid and mobile learning delivery has improved as well with the aid of faculty support and training. They also felt the shift to more mobile and online learning had been well supported by investments and increased hours for student services.

That survey revealed some key areas of focus for the development of the college's next-generation digital strategy as well which include greater investment in employee support and engagement associated with digital initiatives, more technology support for students and simplification of digital applications and resources.

## ARTICULATING A RENEWED DIGITAL VISION

A nine-member working group led the process of defining a renewed digital strategy over the 2014-15 fall and winter semesters, synthesizing input from extensive consultations to arrive at a vision, guiding principles and key objectives for the years ahead. A Stakeholder Engagement Group involving over 35 Algonquin employees and students met five times for facilitated discussions to brainstorm core contents of the strategy. Perspectives were also gathered from the college Leadership Council, Chairs Council, President's Council, through online surveys and both a Student Forum and a Town hall, resulting in a total of 791 discrete inputs from 185 staff and students.

The following vision, principles and objectives resulted from that process:



## VISION

*Leverage technology and innovation to enhance quality and increase access to applied learning through a personalized experience*

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1

#### *Personalized experience*

Provide a seamless, integrated experience with an emphasis on mobility and anywhere, anytime access to services and support.

2

#### *Learning culture and digital preparedness*

Embed continuous learning, collaboration and professional development to empower staff and students to leverage digital technologies within the learning environment, the workplace and the communities we serve.

3

#### *Investment in innovation*

Make evidence-based strategic investments in agile, sustainable platforms and solutions.

### OBJECTIVES IN BRIEF

1.1 Enable access by any device.

1.2 Provide a single, college-wide online portal for all users.

1.3 Enable adaptive learning, service delivery and operations throughout the college.

1.4 Develop a systematic approach to accessibility.

2.1 Encourage and support an innovation mindset throughout the college.

2.2 Prepare students and employees to embrace Algonquin's digital culture.

2.3 Equip students for lifelong career success in the digital workplace.

2.4 Ensure policies and procedures reflect our digital reality.

2.5 Identify the tools, resources and competencies employees need to realize the College's digital vision.

3.1 Establish strong digital governance.

3.2 Aim for 100% IT availability.

3.3 Balance investments between industry-standard and differentiating technologies.

3.4 Use data and business intelligence to make informed decisions.

3.5 Streamline operations through digital automation and process improvement.

3.6 Adopt interoperable platforms.

3.7 Share innovation throughout Algonquin.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF STAYING AGILE

Given the unpredictability of technological innovation — and its rapid pace — this digital strategy must be a living document, the continuation of ongoing consultations that allow for adaptation as conditions evolve and new opportunities emerge. That agility is ultimately at the heart of what it means to be a next-generation college.

**Our digital strategy applies to every aspect of college activities and touches each of our user communities — students, staff, employers, partners — because all of these together play a role in student success.**

# Planning forward

*Our college mission is to “transform hopes and dreams into skills and knowledge, leading to lifelong career success”. This requires us to give the widest range of learners access to practical, hands-on preparation for the workplace reality of today and tomorrow.*

Being a next-generation digital college allows us to serve a larger, more diverse community of stakeholders more efficiently and in more ways — and ensure our students are ready for careers in a digital world. It is about more than technology, it is about applying innovative, entrepreneurial thinking to every aspect of our activities, academic and operational alike.

This Digital Strategy sets the direction for Algonquin’s use of technology and emphasizes a culture of innovation necessary to meet the needs of students, staff, partners and employers. It will be influenced by and help inform strategic planning documents such as the Five Year Woodroffe Campus Development Plan, and strategies developed related to Human Resources, Information Technology, Academic, International, Student Services, Ancillary, Finance and Administration areas. The relationships and interdependencies between all of the strategies will contribute towards the development of the college’s 2017–2022 Strategic Plan.

## READY TO SERVE NEW LEARNERS

Between 2008 and 2031, our traditional student base of 15 to 24 year-olds is expected to grow by just three percent in Ottawa and shrink in Lanark and Renfrew Counties by 11 and 15 percent respectively. This means non-traditional students are going to become our ‘traditional’ clients. These include international students, adult learners and seniors, Aboriginal and first-generation students and students with disabilities. Reaching and serving this broader spectrum of learners will

require the college to be more flexible and adaptable and able to accommodate diverse needs, schedules and learning styles.

## ACHIEVING GREATER EFFICIENCY

Providing a flexible, adaptable educational experience in and out of the classroom requires us to operate in flexible, adaptable ways. By using digital technologies strategically to automate and improve routine tasks, we will be able to deliver services faster and free up our talented personnel to focus on higher-value work. The efficiencies enabled by digital tools will allow the college to streamline costs as well, helping to relieve some of the financial pressure resulting from decreased public funding.

## THE FUTURE IS OURS TO SHAPE

Algonquin College’s commitment to being digital is embedded in its vision to be “a global leader in digitally connected applied education and training”. To reap the rewards of being digital, we must be prepared to take risks while abiding by the principles of our College Risk Management Framework. To ready our students for their futures, we must continually look past the horizon, ensuring our programs and services meet the needs of today’s learners and tomorrow’s employers. We cannot — and must not — “protect the present from the future.”

Rather than specify which technologies will be important to Algonquin over the next five years, this digital strategy concentrates on the processes, culture and criteria necessary for wise evidence-based decisions about tools, systems and approaches for delivering the educational experiences students want — and the skills employers require.

**On a typical day during the academic year, 14,000 students pass through Algonquin College’s Woodroffe Campus. Yet the college network, in that same day, will be tasked with supporting roughly 30,000 connections — more than double the number of people on site.**



# The new college reality

*The advances in educational practices, communications and digital technologies has radically transformed many student expectations of their college experience in just the past 15 years. Colleges that remain successful — and relevant — will be those that shift their emphasis from the act of teaching to fostering and supporting learning, equipping students to acquire knowledge continuously as lifelong learners. Colleges that thrive will be those that align themselves and remain responsive to the demand and realities of the industries and businesses that employ our graduates.*

According to the New Media Consortium's 2014 Horizon Report, "Education paradigms are shifting to include more online learning, blended and hybrid learning, and collaborative models." The dynamics of education are changing. That same report goes on to say:

Institutions that embrace face-to-face, online and hybrid learning models have the potential to leverage the online skills learners have already developed independent of academia. Online learning environments can offer different affordances than physical campuses, including opportunities for increased collaboration while equipping students with stronger digital skills. Hybrid models, when designed and implemented successfully, enable students to travel to campus for some activities, while using the network for others, taking advantage of the best of both environments.<sup>1</sup>

These trends imply the need for greater accessibility to educational opportunities and resources — with connectivity and mobility taken for granted, and personalization increasingly expected.

Different learners have different attitudes towards technology. Mid-career and other adult students understand that it plays a part in their future work environments while possessing varying degrees of technological sophistication. Those entering college directly from secondary school, on the other

hand, represent the world's first digital generation; they have spent their lives using computers, playing video games, listening to digital music, immersed in social media, talking on smartphones and communicating by text — and their college experience needs to reflect that. Regardless of the background however, all of Algonquin's graduates will enter an employment landscape where digital technologies, innovation and automation will continue to have a profound and ever changing effect. The employers of our graduates are looking for those unique individuals who are committed to lifelong learning and who can thrive in a competitive environment

## THE 10 SKILLS EMPLOYERS MOST WANT IN COLLEGE GRADUATES

1. Decision making and problem solving
2. Teamwork
3. Influence on others
4. Ability to plan, organize, and prioritize
5. Ability to analyze data
6. Technical knowledge of job
7. Excellent communication skills
8. Create and edit documents
9. Gathering and processing information
10. IT skills

*Top 10 Skills Required of College Graduates Sourced from Forbes.com. Leadership series, 2013, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/susanadams/2013/10/11/the-10-skills-employers-most-want-in-20-something-employees/>*

All programs offered at Algonquin College provide students with courses aligned with ministry mandated vocational learning outcomes and essential employability skills. In addition, graduates of Algonquin College to be successful in their careers will require these skills:

- Creative, innovative thinking
- Entrepreneurial, problem-solving orientation
- Adaptability to rapidly changing conditions
- Commitment to lifelong, continuous learning
- Comfort with current technologies and the ability to adopt new technologies quickly

<sup>1</sup> The New Media Consortium. *The Horizon Report: 2014 Edition*. 2014. <http://cdn.nmc.org/media/2014-nmc-horizon-report-he-EN-SC.pdf>



## NEW MODES OF EDUCATION

Shifting expectations demands new teaching approaches — and new institutional capabilities to deliver those approaches. One such approach is ‘gamification’. Immersive technologies like virtual worlds, augmented reality games, massive multi-player games, social networking tools and knowledge of fan communities offer highly active social learning experiences. Using these to create simulations or re-create historical and present-day events as games can produce more enduring or nuanced understanding and potentially deeper investments in learning on the part of students.<sup>2</sup>

The massive educational potential of digital technology prompted Diana G. Oblinger to write in the 2015 “Top 10 IT Issues” edition of EDUCAUSE that information technology “is enabling a learner-centered revolution”:

Ubiquitous Internet access — along with social, mobile, cloud and analytics capabilities — is freeing institutional leaders to think differently about how to meet the needs of individual learners, whether traditional or non-traditional, and how to help students accomplish their learning and career goals. Digital experiences provide feedback and reveal pathways that can move students forward to their next experience, making learning more engaging, personalized, and visible. This learner-centered revolution uses the best that technology has to offer, combining the physical and the virtual and engaging each learner.<sup>3</sup>

## INCREASED EXPECTATIONS OF ACCESSIBILITY

Being learner-centered positions a post-secondary institution to address the specific needs of individuals or groups of students — contributing to the ability to meet increasingly explicit accessibility standards. According to the Alliance for Students with Disabilities in Science, Technology, Engineering

and Math, “The development of computers, adaptive technology and electronic communication allows participation by all individuals, regardless of disability.”<sup>4</sup>

This is significant considering that one in seven Ontarians has a disability, a figure that will increase over the next 20 years as the population ages. Algonquin College is inherently committed, separate from its legal obligations, to set a high standard for compliance with standards for serving students with disabilities such as the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

Introduced by the Government of Ontario in 2005, AODA is aimed at “developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises on or before January 1, 2025.”<sup>5</sup> Algonquin is determined to achieve every standard — and exceed requirements whenever possible.

## DECREASED PUBLIC FUNDING

Algonquin College has seen its grant funding decrease as a percentage of total revenues over the past 12 years, from 48 percent in 2001–2002 to 39 percent in 2014–15. Given the Ontario government’s pledge to eliminate the provincial deficit by 2017–2018, further reductions are likely.

To continue to provide accessible, affordable and high-quality post-secondary education, we need to be excellent stewards of our resources while seeking efficiencies and productivity gains wherever possible. We also need to expand our service offering to increase existing revenues and establish new sources of revenue as appropriate. Digital technology has a part to play in all of these: for example, through automation, online programming, adaptive learning technologies and predictive analytics.



<sup>4</sup> *How technology can help students with disabilities in their social development*, AccessSTEM, January 2007

<sup>5</sup> *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*

<sup>2</sup> *Learning: Peering Backward and Looking Forward in the digital era*, MIT Press (2009)

<sup>3</sup> Oblinger, Diana G. “Ten Reasons to Tackle the Top 10 IT Issues”. EDUCAUSE. January/February 2015.





## WHERE DOES THIS LEAVE US?

Post-secondary institutions throughout North America are subject to many of the same drivers — changing student profiles, new learning needs, increased accessibility requirements, financial pressures — and are looking to technology for solutions. As a result, virtually all of the top IT issues for higher-education providers in 2015 resonate at Algonquin College:

1. Hiring and retaining qualified staff, and updating the knowledge and skills of existing technology staff.
2. Optimizing the use of technology in teaching and learning in collaboration with academic leadership, including understanding the appropriate level of technology to use.
3. Developing IT funding models that sustain the core service, support innovation and facilitate growth.
4. Improving student outcomes through an institutional approach that strategically leverages technology.
5. Demonstrating the business value of information technology and how the IT organization can help the institution achieve its goals.
6. Increasing the IT organization's capacity for managing change, despite differing community needs, priorities and abilities.
7. Providing user support in the new normal — mobile, online education, cloud and BYOD ("bring your own device").
8. Developing mobile, cloud, and digital security policies that work for most of the institutional community.
9. Developing an enterprise IT architecture that can respond to changing conditions and new opportunities.
10. Balancing agility, openness and security.<sup>6</sup>

This digital strategy reflects many of these considerations. While our experience is clearly not unique, our college is exceptional because it has been engaged with these types of issues since 2001, and today is regarded as a technology leader in the post-secondary education space.



**43% of higher education institutions say they tend to adopt new technologies at the pace of their peers. Only 3% identify themselves as early adopters.<sup>7</sup>**

<sup>6</sup> EDUCAUSE. "Ten Reasons to Tackle the Top 10 IT Issues". January/February 2015.

<sup>7</sup> Grajek, Susan. Higher Education's Top 10 Strategic Technologies in 2015. January 2015. (Republished in EDUCAUSE)



## Where Algonquin stands today

*It has been 20 years since Algonquin College first started assigning email accounts and network access to students — back when dial-up was the standard mode of connectivity and smartphones were still the stuff of science fiction. Since then, digital technologies have multiplied exponentially, network speeds have accelerated and connected devices have become embedded into virtually every aspect of daily life.*

The college's first digital strategy, in 2010, crystallized efforts already underway to ensure staff and students would benefit from emerging technologies. Evidence of the success of that strategy is visible on every Algonquin College campus and online: the overwhelming majority of students are now free to bring their own devices into their programs for example, and 10,000 students were enrolled in programs that used eTextbooks in Fall 2014.

The college is aware of the need to ensure its digital strategy reflects the fast-changing technology landscape and the current needs of students, staff and partners as users. For that reason, late in 2014, we surveyed 63 individuals across our academic departments and service areas to determine internal stakeholder perceptions of our digital successes and emerging needs.

Roughly 60 percent said they felt the college had made “good” to “great” progress toward being a digital college, while an additional 30 percent indicated we were “average”.

Respondents to the survey felt the college's investments in IT infrastructure had made a noticeable difference in the quality of education and services offered, and that the quality of hybrid and mobile learning delivery had improved as well with the aid of faculty support and training. Respondents also felt that the shift to more mobile and online learning had been well supported by investments and increased hours for student services.

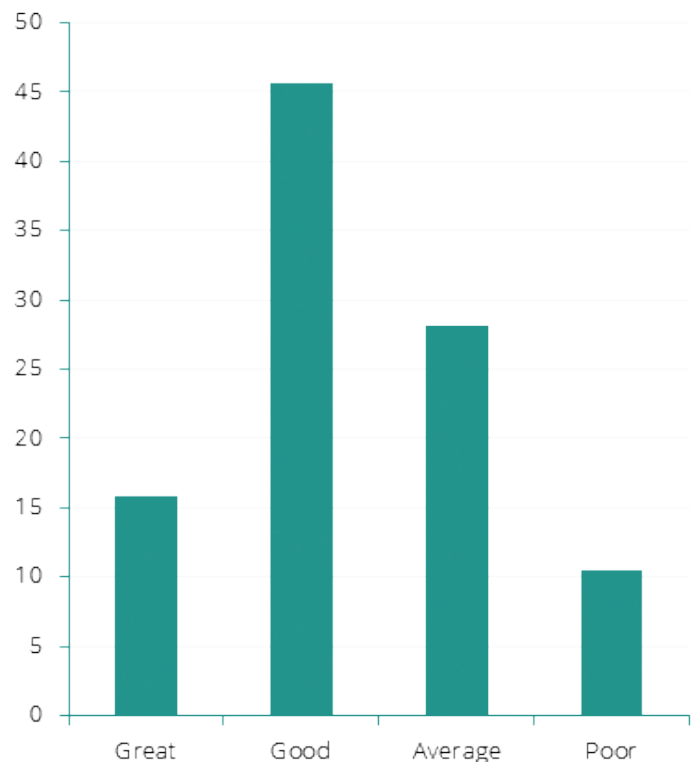
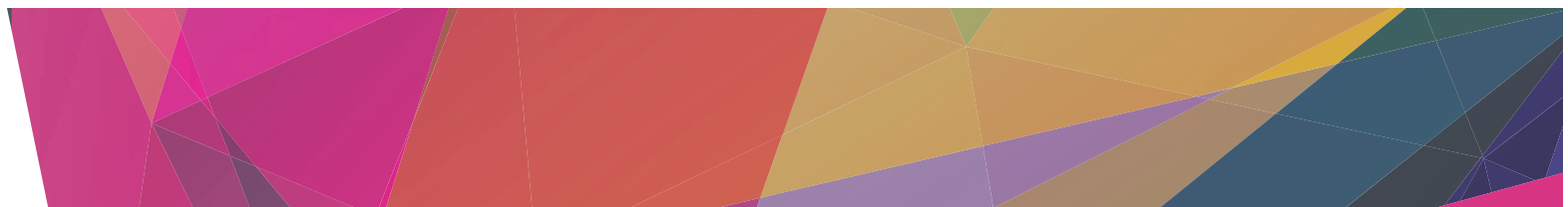


FIGURE 2. HOW INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS RATE OUR DIGITAL SUCCESS





### DIRECTION FOR A RENEWED DIGITAL STRATEGY

The survey also identified several areas for improvement. These had less to do with technologies than with the college's capacity to use technology effectively, and included the need for: more staff training and training options, better alignment between online and classroom-based learning and more consultation with employees before and after major initiatives are undertaken.

As the college looked ahead to renewing its digital strategy in 2015, it was clear from these findings that supporting internal and external user uptake of technologies would be a key component. Three specific 'themes' emerged to guide our renewal of the college's digital vision:

1. **Employee support and engagement:** Investments in better and flexible training will ensure employees are equipped to deliver quality education and services, while greater consultation will encourage support for major initiatives.
2. **Student technology assistance:** Even so-called "digital natives" don't always know how to use their technology devices in ways that will benefit them at school and in their careers. Focusing on proficiency versus simply promoting device use will contribute to greater student success.
3. **Simplification:** Simplifying instructions and navigation for digital applications and resources will make essential information easy to find and understand.

“What is the front entrance of the college?  
The real main entrance is our web page. It's the one the most people pass through. In thinking about our campuses, we need to think in these terms, how to shape our college for the future.”

*John Tattersall, Director, Physical Resources*

*Presenting the Five-Year Woodroffe Campus Master Development Plan*





## Our digital vision

*Under the leadership of Glenn MacDougall, Director of Learning and Teaching Services, and with Senior Vice President Academic Claude Brulé as Executive Sponsor, a nine-member working group guided the process of defining a renewed digital strategy over the winter of 2015. Synthesizing input from extensive consultations, the working group arrived at a vision, guiding principles and key objectives for the years ahead.*

Stakeholder input was essential to the development of the digital strategy — to ensure that every aspect of Algonquin College's academic and administrative operations were reflected as well as the needs of students and college partners. A Stakeholder Engagement Group met five times over the winter term for facilitated discussions to brainstorm the core contents of the strategy and vision. Perspectives were also gathered from the College Leadership Council, Academic Chairs, President's Council and through online surveys and a Student Forum, resulting in a total of 791 discrete inputs from 185 staff and students.

The consultation process concluded with a town hall on May 1 — delivered in conjunction with presentations on the college's Five-Year Plan for the Woodroffe Campus and Healthy Living Education (HLE) initiative, both of which are affected by digital considerations.

The Digital Strategy Stakeholder Engagement Group represented the following areas and groups of the college:

- Ancillary Services
- Students' Association Board
- Information Technology Services
- Faculty
- Pembroke Campus
- Deans and Directors
- Customer Relationship Management
- Physical Resources
- Learning and Teaching Services
- Marketing and Recruitment
- Academic Chairs
- Vice Presidents
- Curriculum Services
- Student Services



## THE VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Through a process of refinement and validation, the working group distilled all inputs from the winter 2015 consultations into the following vision for the college's digital evolution, supported by three guiding principles:

### LEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION TO ENHANCE QUALITY AND INCREASE ACCESS TO APPLIED LEARNING THROUGH A PERSONALIZED EXPERIENCE

**1**

#### Personalized experience

Provide a seamless, integrated experience with an emphasis on mobility and anywhere, anytime access to services and support

**2**

#### Learning culture and digital preparedness

Embed continuous learning, collaboration and professional development to empower staff and students to leverage digital technologies within the learning environment, the workplace and the communities we serve.

**3**

#### Investment in innovation

Make evidence-based strategic investments in agile, sustainable platforms and solutions.

## WHAT THE VISION MEANS

This digital vision contains a number of concepts that will be important to the college in meeting the needs of students, staff and partners going forward:

### "Leverage technology and innovation"

Technology alone does not make a college digital. Being digital also demands agile thinking and creative problem solving, i.e., an innovative culture.

### "Applied learning"

The hands-on, real-world, practical experience Algonquin College has always offered is the experience we must continue to offer in the digital, connected reality.

### "Enhance quality and increase access to applied learning"

This has far-reaching implications for how we deliver our programs and the standards we hold ourselves to — both academically and across the operations and services that support our core mission.

### "Through a personalized experience"

However we fulfill the other parts of our vision, the 'user' must be at the centre. Engaging digitally means having the flexibility to use the most convenient device, wherever and whenever, with courses, programs and other services adapting — to whatever degree is possible — to each individual's needs, for his or her individual benefit.

## OUR DIGITAL STRATEGY AT A GLANCE

The table on [page 14](#) provides, in full detail, the substance of Algonquin College's next-generation digital vision, with detailed objectives under each principle. These are intended to be pursued in consideration of the college's other key strategies and with respect for the college's fiscal reality.

## LEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION TO ENHANCE QUALITY AND INCREASE ACCESS TO APPLIED LEARNING THROUGH A PERSONALIZED EXPERIENCE

### 1. PERSONALIZED EXPERIENCE

#### 1.1 ENABLE ACCESS BY ANY DEVICE.

Take advantage of cloud and mobile technologies to allow users to transition seamlessly between devices, spaces and applications for maximum efficiency and convenience.

#### 1.2 PROVIDE A SINGLE, COLLEGE-WIDE ONLINE PORTAL FOR ALL USERS.

Provide every member of the Algonquin community with access to relevant college systems through a single online portal.

#### 1.3 ENABLE ADAPTIVE LEARNING, SERVICE DELIVERY AND OPERATIONS THROUGHOUT THE COLLEGE.

Adopt and deploy technologies that support and advance the college's academic direction, keeping pace as that direction evolves to ensure users have access to the information, resources and services they need where and when they need them.

#### 1.4 DEVELOP A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO ACCESSIBILITY.

Create accessibility compliance templates and issue-resolution mechanisms, supported by training, awareness-raising and performance measurement — with the goal of exceeding legislated accessibility standards where possible.

### 2. LEARNING CULTURE AND DIGITAL PREPAREDNESS

#### 2.1 ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT AN INNOVATIVE MINDSET THROUGHOUT THE COLLEGE.

Encourage and facilitate innovation at Algonquin, including comfort with taking well-managed risks and adopting an agile methodology across business units.

#### 2.2 PREPARE STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES TO EMBRACE ALGONQUIN'S DIGITAL CULTURE.

Develop tools and supports to ensure all students and staff are ready to engage with Algonquin's digital culture and environment.

#### 2.3 EQUIP STUDENTS FOR LIFELONG CAREER SUCCESS IN THE DIGITAL WORKPLACE.

Through their applied digital education, ensure students acquire the hard and soft skills to thrive, adapt and continually develop in the constantly evolving digital workplace.

#### 2.4 ENSURE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES REFLECT OUR DIGITAL REALITY.

Review, update and disseminate college policies and procedures regularly to reflect the possibilities and capabilities of the digital world.

#### 2.5 IDENTIFY THE TOOLS, RESOURCES AND COMPETENCIES EMPLOYEES NEED TO REALIZE THE COLLEGE'S DIGITAL VISION.

Ensure staff have access to the technologies and support they need to be successful, establishing digital competencies for staff and a faculty certification program to ensure high-quality hybrid and online course development.

### 3. INVESTMENT IN INNOVATION

#### 3.1 ESTABLISH STRONG DIGITAL GOVERNANCE.

Ensure existing governance bodies such as the College Technology Committee are equipped to oversee and strategically direct Algonquin's digital activities. Publish a college-wide IT standard, and develop frameworks for: a) measuring progress in line with the 2017–2022 strategic plan; b) making lifecycle technology decisions from acquisition through to decommissioning.

#### 3.2 AIM FOR 100% IT AVAILABILITY.

Manage IT as a utility like power and water, with the goal of 100% availability — respecting the college's fiscal reality.

#### 3.3 BALANCE INVESTMENTS BETWEEN INDUSTRY-STANDARD AND DIFFERENTIATING TECHNOLOGIES.

Purchase off-the-shelf technologies for commodity functions such as email and collaboration, and concentrate innovation investments on technologies that differentiate Algonquin College and its offerings (e.g., Sim Labs).

#### 3.4 USE DATA AND BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE TO MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS.

Adopt tools that generate better business intelligence and user analytics, and define processes for data-driven decision making.

#### 3.5 STREAMLINE OPERATIONS THROUGH DIGITAL AUTOMATION AND PROCESS IMPROVEMENT.

Bring greater efficiency to college operations by improving processes, leveraging technology for routine procedures and redeploying human resources to higher-value functions.

#### 3.6 ADOPT INTEROPERABLE PLATFORMS.

Simplify and better integrate college systems with interoperable platforms and systems of record.

#### 3.7 SHARE INNOVATION THROUGHOUT ALGONQUIN.

Promote college-wide awareness of innovative practices and solutions

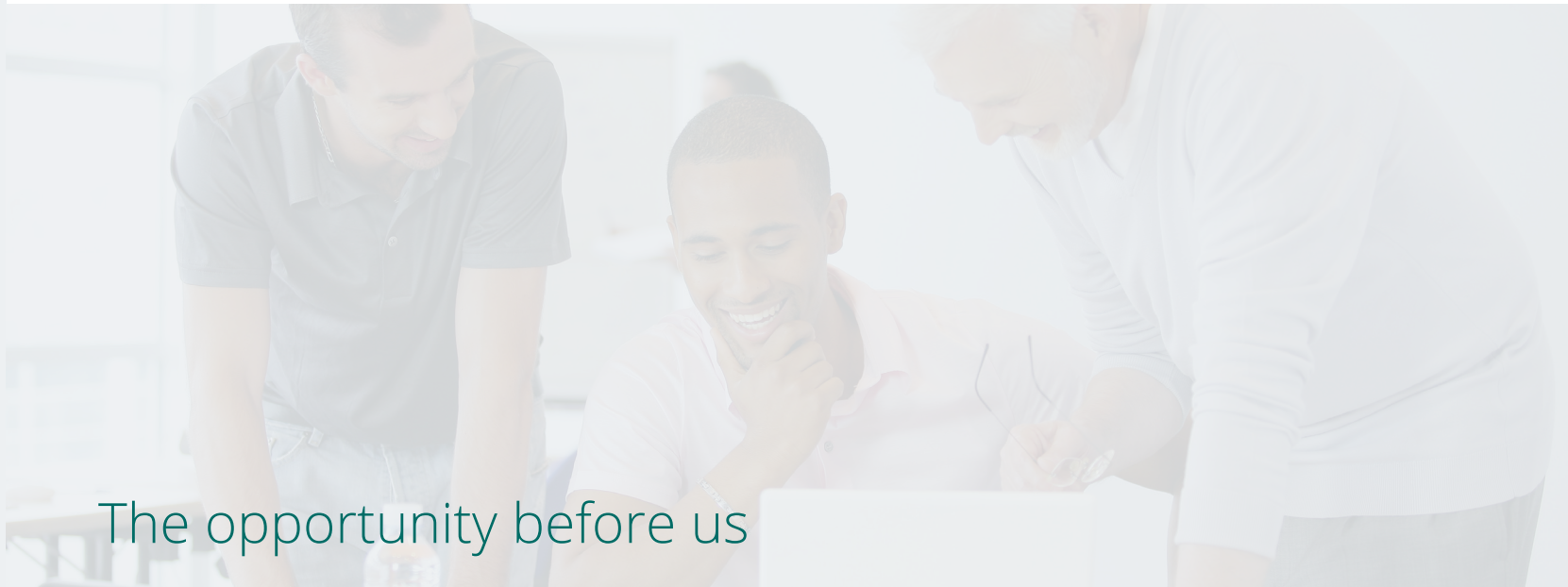
## FEEDBACK: ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

In May 2015, the working group initiated a survey to solicit feedback on the three principles and their objectives through an online survey. The majority of respondents agreed the three principles are “essential” to a digital strategy, with Principle two ranking highest at 88 percent.

In comments, several respondents stressed the importance of supporting digital initiatives with appropriate resources

and personnel. This aligns with the areas for improvement identified in the December 2014 Stakeholder Survey and underscores the need for strong user support and ‘digital capacity building’.

A few respondents also noted the need to streamline and centralize the college technology environment given the current situation of multiple different applications and tools being used to achieve the same (or similar) objectives.



## The opportunity before us

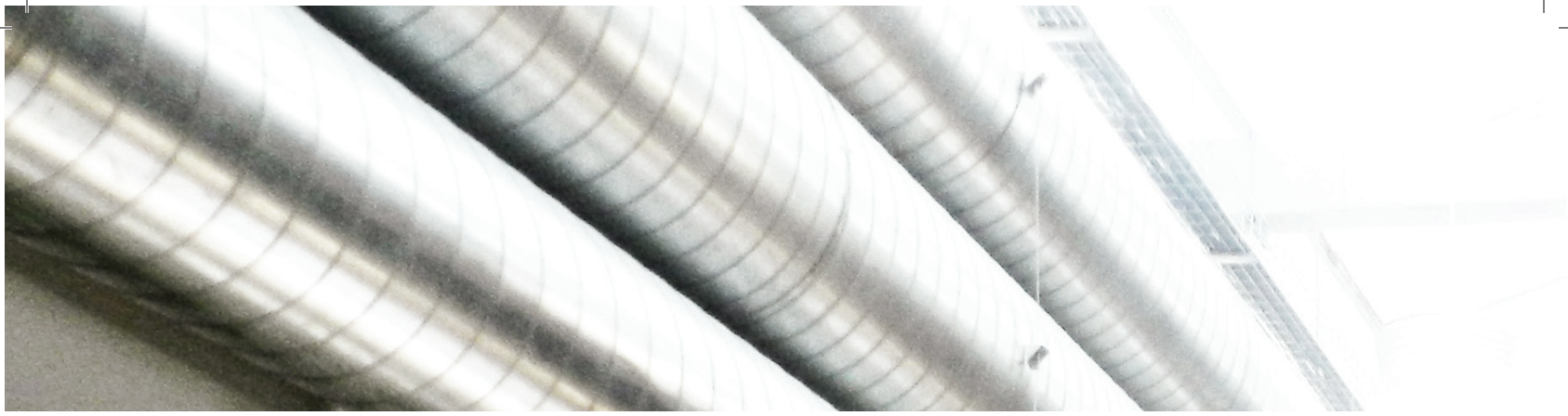
By building on its established leadership as a digital post-secondary institution, Algonquin College will ensure its ongoing ability to prepare graduates for lifelong career success, provide employers with innovative, adaptable workers, and deepen its connections to the communities it supports and serves.

Any institution tasked with equipping individuals to thrive in the digital workplaces of today and tomorrow must embrace

that digital reality itself. Our college’s digital vision represents the choice to do just that: to give the widest variety of learners the greatest possible access to post-secondary education, increasing enrolment and sustaining the college into the future; to provide flexibility and personalization for better quality and better outcomes; to operate efficiently and cost-effectively so that we can continue to deliver value to students, staff, employers and community stakeholders.

**“It is easy to imagine the kinds of technologies the future will bring — and hard to predict which will dominate. This digital strategy is not about preparing for any specific eventuality, it is about preparing for any possible eventuality so that we as a college can embrace technology as it makes sense to do so.”**

**Glenn MacDougall, Director  
Learning and Teaching Services**



We are already on that path. The success of our 2010 digital strategy and recent initiatives like the provisioning of our online Course Outline Mapping and Management System (COMMS), developed at Algonquin College, to six other Ontario colleges and our use of digital resources and eTexts are proof. In fact, the eText project reflects all the principles of this new digital vision in action:

#### Personalized experience

eTexts meet students where they live — in a world where life, work and school are interconnected and mobile devices create an anywhere, anytime expectation of access to information. Early findings suggest providing access to digital texts for all students improves student chances of course success. The sooner they acquire and begin using their texts, the better they tend to perform in their courses. Instructors can use the digital platform to prompt students to dig into their reading, an intervention that could contribute directly to higher rates of student success. As of September, 2014, that possibility of greater success extended to 10,000 students enrolled in programs using eTexts.

#### 1. Learning culture and digital preparedness

The eText initiative reflects good innovation practices and the kind of innovation culture Algonquin College seeks to develop. As an example of applied research and prudent risk management, it began with a small-scale, real-world rollout in 2013 and grew smartly based on lessons learned. In doing so, it has yielded valuable best practices for integrating new technology into programs and revealed potential new business models. The college continues to be approached by other institutions wanting to know how it has managed the deployment.

#### 2. Investment in innovation

eTextbooks represent a significant process improvement, students assigned eTexts had their 'books' on day one of classes for a fraction of what they would have paid for printed versions. The initiative has also opened up new opportunities: in 2015, the college joined technology provider Kivuto Solutions and publishers Pearson Canada and Nelson Education in launching Texidium — an end-to-end content delivery solution. Texidium provides a seamless, consistent experience to users regardless of device or point of access and enables online collaboration.

This digital strategy will help the college build on successes like these and remain a digital leader in the post-secondary field for the benefit of students, staff and partners alike.

*Given the unpredictability of technological innovation — and its rapid pace — this strategy must be a living document, the continuation of an ongoing process of consultation that allows for adaptation as conditions evolve and new opportunities emerge. That agility is ultimately at the heart of what it means to be a next-generation college.*







## APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY

*The following are definitions of key terms used in this strategy and in the wider dialogue about digital post-secondary education:*

### ACCESS

In the college context, 'access' refers to our mission to extend learning opportunities to the widest variety of students possible. Digital technologies support that mission by connecting students and staff to each other and to the knowledge and services they need to succeed. In the technology sense, 'access' refers to the ability of devices to connect to networks in order to use applications or data.

### ADAPTIVE

The ability of technologies to modify how they present information to users — and what information they present — based on user profile, device type, mode of access or other parameters.

### AGILE

A term that originated in the software-development industry but used more broadly today to describe ways of working that are collaborative, quick and adaptable to evolving conditions.

### APP

Short for 'application', and referring to software programs used by (mainly) mobile devices.

### ARCHITECTURE AND IT INFRASTRUCTURE

The structure and organization of an IT network.

### BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

Tools and processes for extracting meaningful, actionable information from raw data.

### BYOD

"Bring your own device", referring to a technology environment that includes a wide variety of different types of user devices.

### CLOUD

In cloud computing, data and applications are stored on centralized servers and accessed over the Internet or a private network instead of being stored on a device or in on-premises hardware.

### DIGITAL NATIVE

Individuals who have grown up with digital technology.

### ITS

Algonquin College's Information Technology Services group.

### MOBILE

Any device that does not require a wired connection to access the Internet or a private network.

### PLATFORM

The foundation — usually a combination of hardware and software — on which digital applications and services are delivered.

### ETEXT

A digital version of a traditional print based textbook.



Notes:

A series of 18 horizontal dotted lines for taking notes.



*The Digital Strategy 2.0 working group coupled with the stakeholder engagement group brought together 185 staff and students. For seven months, their long hours yielded wise advice and many thoughtful contributions. Thank you to everyone who made this possible.*

Algonquin College's Digital Strategy 2.0 is a result of the collaboration and innovative thinking by a community committed to the success of Algonquin learners.

**The Next-Gen College** / DIGITAL STRATEGY 2.0

PREPARED BY LEARNING AND TEACHING SERVICES,  
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