

The Algonquin Experience

Creating a 21st century learning environment

An Academic Area Thought Leadership Paper
in Response to the College Strategic Plan 2008-2013

March 2009



The Algonquin Experience is based on a series of Academic Area white papers that includes:

- Academic Technologies
- Accommodating Increased Enrolment
- Applied Research
- Apprenticeship
- Community and Business Integration
- College Programming Strategy
- Enrolment
- Internationalization
- Interprofessional Education
- Sustainability

These papers can be found at:
www.algonquincollege.com/VPAAcademic

MESSAGE FROM THE VICE-PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC

At this point in the history of postsecondary education – in this time of incredible change and at a moment when we are experiencing the most challenging economy in generations - Algonquin College brings forward 40 years of evidence that it can change, produce change and confront the changes necessary to meet the evolving needs of our students and the communities we serve.

The life of a college reflects the life of the community, or communities, it serves. Over the past four decades, Algonquin has grown and evolved to keep pace with the needs of its many communities: external and internal, local and international. In the coming years, the College must continue to do so, addressing challenges as they emerge and capitalizing on new opportunities.

As Algonquin carries out its current five-year strategic plan, I have asked the Academic Area to look ahead at how we can maintain and build on the College's traditions of academic excellence and student success. Our goal is to ensure that Algonquin engages its students fully from enrolment through to work-force entry, ensuring they are prepared as best possible for the careers that await them and supporting them after graduation when they require professional training and continuing education.

Moving forward, the question is not, "Can we imagine a different future?" but rather, "As a College, what are we prepared to do to create a better future?". I believe that even the best colleges can change, our learning systems can be perfected, and our programs can be improved. While aspects of today's learning experience can be traced back through Algonquin's 40-year history, today's environment demands that we provide our students with an experience that responds to the needs of learners and an evolving workplace. With insight from our faculty and staff, we are enhancing the postsecondary experience at Algonquin – providing our students with a unique postsecondary learning experience.

This paper captures our thinking. It weighs a range of strategic considerations and culminates by defining 'The Algonquin Experience' - the type of learning experience the College must offer to meet the demands of learners in the 21st century workplace. Framing key issues in terms of capacity, demand, delivery, and programming, this paper identifies critical decision points and offers recommendations on how the College can realize its strategic aims and maintain its exemplary reputation.

Ultimately, the aim of this work is to provide a road map for the Academic Area. It is our response to the College's Strategic Plan 2008-2013, and it is meant to provide the foundation upon which Algonquin can continue to stand out as an innovator and leader in Ontario's postsecondary education system.



Kent MacDonald
Vice-President, Academic

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A COMPLEX POSTSECONDARY ENVIRONMENT

The external factors affecting today's postsecondary institutions are numerous and complex. New policies from Ontario's Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) may require Algonquin to adapt its operational and academic approaches. The current economic downturn may limit available resources, impose financial pressures on students and constrain the ability of corporations to partner on educational initiatives. As technology continues to advance, Algonquin must focus on better integrating technology into the learning process to ensure student satisfaction and success.

Outside the College walls, labour market realities—particularly, shifting demographics and an intensifying skills shortage—are requiring Algonquin to reach out to under-represented groups such as first-generation learners, aboriginal students and persons with disabilities. Algonquin is measuring its success through its Multi-year Accountability Agreement (MYAA) with the provincial government, while in the workplace, expectations are also changing. People must not only be skilled, but also versatile—quick to adapt to new conditions, and comfortable working in interprofessional teams rather than in isolation.

The world of the College is now literally the world: the global economy demands international perspective and reach. Awareness of the need for environmental and social responsibility is forcing institutions to consider not only how they will carry out their mandates, but also, more specifically, how they will do so in a sustainable way.

For Algonquin College, the challenge is how to continue delivering on its commitment to student success amid these forces of change.

IDENTIFYING THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

For the past 40 years, Algonquin has defined itself by offering innovative, relevant, and high-quality programs. It has been committed to continually enhance and expand its facilities, offering students exceptional applied-learning opportunities and preparing them to make significant contributions to their fields of work.

Algonquin has cultivated a culture of inclusion, providing educational opportunities to the widest possible range of potential students. Increasingly, this has come to include those from under-represented groups, as well as, newcomers to Canada who will play a key role in the future of our country, our region, and our economy.

Acting as a leader and pioneer in the college system, Algonquin has repeatedly broken ground and paved the way for other colleges to pursue new initiatives. Today, it hosts the Algonquin Innovation Program for joint applied research projects with local business and community partners. It was the first Canadian college to truly 'go green', having implemented practices that are expected to yield hundreds of thousands of dollars in annual energy savings over the next decade.

All of this has helped the College provide students with the education and skills training demanded by the marketplace. Algonquin has measured its success by how prepared its students are for their careers—and how ready they are to contribute to society upon graduation. With ten graduates receiving prestigious recognition through programs such as the Ontario Premier’s Awards (since 1992) and Colleges Ontario Awards (since 2002), and with an average work placement rate of 92%, the College has met the high expectations it has set for itself.

Algonquin must now ensure it has the capacity to meet demand and deliver its programs effectively in order to maintain its tradition of excellence. Each of these considerations — **Capacity, Demand, Delivery, and Programming**— is associated with both challenges and opportunities.

1. CAPACITY

Increasing enrolment

In its 2008-2013 strategic plan, the College set a full-time enrolment target of 20,000 students by 2020. The key steps Algonquin will have to take to reach this target include:

- increasing domestic and international enrolment
- increasing enrolment in apprenticeship programs and collaborative degree programs
- raising the graduation rate
- capturing a larger overall share of the domestic market through high-demand and first-choice programs
- retaining greater numbers of existing students and ‘laddering’ graduates from one program into another



Enrolment at Algonquin: Recent trends

- Between 1993-94 and 2006-07, Algonquin’s full-time student population rose by 35%— more than the 5% total population growth of Ottawa, Perth and Pembroke.
- In that same period, certain segments of the student population grew, including previously under-represented groups and those from life paths other than directly out of high school.
- In the Fall 2008, enrolment climbed by 4.5%, due largely to new programs and the General Arts and Science offerings

No growth; a non-option

One of the challenges of growth is that it often requires investment, a difficult proposition in uncertain economic times. For example, while the College's Multi-Year Accountability Agreement (MYAA) with the province may make programs accessible to a broader range of learners, it will also require the College to provide extra support to under-prepared students, such as those from non-traditional groups or those with weak math and English skills. A higher population of international students and newcomers to Canada will also create a need for additional supports.

In addition to the cost of growth, the College has to consider the effort involved. Choosing to grow means choosing to compete. Local universities are actively seeking to enlarge their shares of the overall student population. They and other institutions, such as the many British Columbia colleges changing their status to universities, are competing with Algonquin for international students who would prefer degree or graduate programs. Private colleges and universities are expanding their offerings and promoting laddering internally. Algonquin, of course, has the option to attract students with an expanded range of degree programs developed in collaboration with universities and through more graduate certificate options.

Instead of actively seeking growth, some have suggested increasing enrolment through greater retention of existing students alone. While this might reduce overall costs and avoid competition, it would also lose the College millions of dollars in annual grants. Today, Algonquin receives about 8% of the total MTCU General Purpose Operating Grant for Ontario Colleges, roughly \$62 million. The 8% corresponds largely to the proportion of Ontario's 15 to 24 year-old population residing in Algonquin's main service areas. That figure will fall as the Greater Toronto Area grows, between now and 2020, reducing Algonquin's annual grant share by at least \$3.5 million. In other words: while growth has a cost, so does not growing.

Meeting the need for space

Physically accommodating growth presents a further challenge. Algonquin has exhausted its academic space between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. In the Fall 2008, the College had to use general-purpose classrooms after 6:00 p.m., non-voluntarily, for the first time ever. Changes to program delivery—such as online and hybrid courses (those combining online and in-class learning) and flexible timetabling—will help Algonquin better meet student needs and expectations and, at the same time, address space issues. If students are to be our primary focus, more evening classes, weekend offerings, summer semesters and additional virtual opportunities must be offered to students to meet their program preferences and learning needs.

2. DEMAND

In pursuing growth, Algonquin must offer programs that meet the demands of applicants by offering, where possible, more programs that are their first choice. Algonquin must bear in mind the interests of its key stakeholders—industry and the broader community—all of which look to the College to produce graduates who are truly prepared for the 21st century workforce and who have a well-established sense of community and their role within it.

New organizations such as the College’s Academic Health Council and Business Innovation Centre show a creative spirit and desire to improve the way Algonquin serves its communities. The College has also been successful with integration projects such as the district school board partnerships and access program initiatives, which have enhanced the reputation of Algonquin and produced several best practices to build on.

By collaborating more closely with business and community partners, Algonquin will increase the relevance of its programs, attract more applicants, improve graduates’ job preparedness and employment prospects, and will be able to grow its revenues through higher enrolment and stronger industry support. It will also generate more opportunities to engage in applied research.

Applied research at Algonquin

Applied research helps prepare workers for today’s demanding, diversified and technology-based work environment and, at the same time, contributes to Canadian research and development.

Algonquin’s involvement in applied research began in 1998, focusing mostly on technology. It has since broadened. The School of Media and Design is now involved in applied research. A number of smaller projects related to Health and several linked to research in education are underway. A growing number of professors are showing an interest in doing research, and more grant applications are being prepared. Externally, demand has spiked: in 2008, inquiries about applied research opportunities from external companies, individuals and organizations tripled.

Despite this appetite for applied research, fewer than 5% of full-time faculty and just 1% of students are currently involved in applied research projects. If Algonquin is able to integrate applied research directly into its culture and curricula, it stands to increase the proportion of students and staff participating and establish a reputation as a ‘go-to’ centre for competent and competitively priced applied research. Differentiating the College from other institutions, applied research will foster interprofessional and multidisciplinary collaboration, forge stronger community connections, create opportunities for sustainable development and international research, and improve students’ employment prospects. All of these will attract learners to the College and position it as an institution that produces desirable and capable graduates.

If Algonquin does not expand its involvement in applied research, it risks losing credibility with internal and external stakeholders who have received the College’s message that it is “open for applied research business” and seeking to grow its program. More importantly, students, faculty and staff will miss

out on opportunities to develop new skills, gain real-world experience, work with external partners, and contribute to social and economic growth.

Putting learning into practice: Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship is another direct, practical way of strengthening the College's ties with industry and the community, and helping solve the skills shortages in the trades.

Today, governments across Canada are seeking to deal with the shortage of skilled workers that is expected to result from the retirement of the aging workforce. Ontario sees apprenticeship as an important contributor to the economy and has set a growth target of 25% for new apprentice registrations over the next three years. It has also announced plans to proceed with compulsory certification and a new regulatory College of Trades in Spring 2009.

Algonquin must be mindful of this government direction as it moves to achieve its strategic goals. The College has a long record of providing quality apprenticeship training within four traditional sectors: motive power, construction, industrial, and service. Its apprenticeship enrolment has increased consistently since 2002-03, with associated revenue growth of \$1.7 million.

Aiming to grow that enrolment further, Algonquin received \$1.5 million in equipment funding from the Apprenticeship Enhancement Fund (AEF) in 2008-09. These monies will support the College's planned increase of 400 seats by 2011. When compared to the current maximum plan of 2,600 seats, and when considered alongside potential growth in other areas, adding 400 seats would bring the government-set goal of 25% growth within reach.

Algonquin can play a proactive role in promoting apprenticeship, even though meeting the new provincial target is a responsibility shared by government, industry and training delivery agents. While apprenticeship registration requires an employer or sponsor and an apprentice to enter into a formal agreement, the Ministry is increasingly supporting new pathways, such as pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship/co-op/diploma programs. Furthermore, while access to apprenticeship is tightly controlled in traditional occupations, such as the construction trades, opportunities are increasing in new occupations in the service sector.

During an economic downturn, some employers may be reluctant to commit to apprenticeship because of the associated costs. However, historically during such time periods, the Ministry has supported College innovation designed to assist students to successfully complete their apprenticeships. Back-to-back, in-school sessions, the delivery of simulated workplace experience, online and hybrid learning, and skills enhancement programs are all options that are supported by the Ministry to ensure that apprentices continue to be trained to address the demand for skilled workers when the economy begins to grow again.

As Algonquin proceeds, it will have to plan strategically—leveraging the supports provided by the provincial government, engaging in off-site partnerships, and ensuring it has the capacity to accommodate predicted growth for both existing and new trades.

3. DELIVERY

As Algonquin seeks to meet the expectations of students, industry and the community, it must consider how best to deliver its programs and provide a flexible, high-quality, educational experience. Integrating technology more seamlessly and universally into the learning environment is an essential starting point, both for the flexibility it brings and also because students expect it, given the ways they use technology in all aspects of their daily lives.



Technology@Algonquin

- First computer access centre: 1996
- First wide-area wireless network: 2000
- First eclassroom: 2000 (current total 230)
- First student laptop computing program: 2000 (today 9 programs and 700 students)
- Introduction of VoIP telephony: 2000; extended to all classrooms: 2007
- Campus-wide standardized adoption of Blackboard™ course management system: 2001
- Number of students reached by online general education: 3,000 per semester
- Introduction of faculty laptop computers: 2001
- Introduction of “The SAM, Assessment and Training for Microsoft Office Program” to School of Business students: 2004 (today deployed to nearly 1,500 learners)

While Algonquin has been a technology leader, other colleges have closed the gap and in some cases moved beyond (for instance, using podcasts and YouTube-style videos to market programs). Competition for limited internal resources has made it difficult for the College to maintain technological momentum. At the same time, the decreasing cost of ownership has made it easier for other institutions to adopt technologies: network access, high bandwidth, email and calendaring applications are now the norm, not cutting-edge novelties.

Online learning and hybrid courses

Algonquin started developing online and hybrid courses for full-time, daytime students in 2000. Since then, nearly 6,000 students each year complete one fully online general education elective as part of their program of study. In 2002, Algonquin began offering hybrid courses in addition to the online offerings. Hybrid courses are a blend of in-class and online learning. In Fall 2008, hybrid course enrolments exceeded 21,000 student registrations and accounted for 8.5% of the term’s total program activity.

The College, however, remains short of its online learning targets. The 2003-08 Strategic Plan set out, that by 2008, 20% of full-time, daytime, scheduled program hours would be conducted online.

As of September 2008, the overall College average is just over 12%. The 2008-13 Strategic Plan restates the 20% online commitment. To meet it, Algonquin will need to maintain all current online activity and continue to develop new hybrid course offerings in those programs that have not yet achieved 20% online activity.

The College must increase the volume of online learning. As well, to improve the overall quality of its online offerings, the College must take advantage and use the new and emerging Web 2.0 tools to further enhance delivery of learning in its online programming.

Proposing a 'virtual college'

To remain current, Algonquin must take advantage of innovative program-level technologies that will better prepare students for their careers and provide a rich, engaging, flexible learning experience. The ultimate realization of that experience may be embodied in the Algonquin College Virtual Campus. Outlined in a September 2008 capital request to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, the proposed Virtual Campus will be a fully online learning institution aligned with Algonquin's classroom-based programs. Online learning, in itself, has become a critical workplace skill and prepares our graduates to be lifelong learners. More virtual learning opportunities, will allow the College to maintain its commitment to student success while increasing its enrolment capacity, addressing issues of access, and enabling employed individuals to continue working in the Ontario economy while acquiring new knowledge and skills.

It will also create the opportunity to attract international students with combined remote study/on-campus offerings—for example, combining a year of online learning and a year of attending classes at one of Algonquin's campuses.

Fostering interprofessional education

Technology, while important, constitutes just one aspect of the learning experience Algonquin must provide as a 21st century postsecondary education institution. Another is increasing students' exposure to multiple disciplines. Today's graduates are expected to work effectively in complex, fast-changing interprofessional environments, yet most academic programs do not reflect this reality. Instead, programs and courses are developed and delivered largely in isolation from one another.

A good foundation for interprofessional education (IPE) exists at Algonquin. The Simulation Centre for Health Studies is perhaps the best example. In its mock hospital environment, Nursing, Respiratory Therapy and Paramedic students work together—responding to simulated real-world experiences and acquiring technical and non-technical skills through carefully planned scenario-based learning. The new Environmental Demonstration Centre for Construction Trades and Building Sciences will provide program facilities with labs and projects shared by students who are training in a variety of professions.

Algonquin has the opportunity to demonstrate leadership and further innovation by introducing IPE across the College. By doing so, the College will be able to attract students who currently choose other institutions where IPE is well established; reduce costs by eliminating duplications of effort involved in delivering identical material separately to different programs; improve the preparedness of Algonquin graduates for the workplace; and, in so doing, increase the relevance of programs; and raise student and employee satisfaction levels.

Becoming a college to the world

Just as they must be prepared for the workplace, students must also be prepared for the larger work context awaiting them. As workers in the global economy, they need to develop not only the skills to compete, but also the attitudes and knowledge to deal with others in a cross-cultural environment. Recognizing this, Algonquin has set a strategic goal to expand "...the comprehensiveness of its international activities and opportunities to better prepare students for the global market realities faced by many organizations by 2013."

Algonquin is ideally positioned among Canadian colleges to be a leader in internationalizing its curricula. Located in the Nation's Capital, the College sits in the midst of federal government departments such as Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, international agencies such as the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), foreign embassies, and many local firms that have a significant global presence through export markets.

Welcoming international students and newcomers to our community

Today, the College is a leader in developing and adopting programs that help recent immigrants adjust to the local workforce, examples of which include the Settlement to Employment Program (STEP) and various Colleges Integrating Immigrants to Employment (CIITE) initiatives. Its language training programs for international students and recent immigrants are well recognized in Canada and abroad.

Algonquin has successfully delivered its own programs overseas, principally in India, China, and Montenegro, and participated in a number of Canadian College Partnership Projects involving two to three-week visits abroad for students and faculty. Projects, such as the successful Small World, Big Picture, have exposed the Algonquin community to the world beyond its borders and, at the same time, shown prospective Canadian students the extent of Algonquin's reach.

Algonquin has acknowledged recent newcomers and international students as important sources of growth. In Fall 2008, Algonquin attracted more than 450 international students to its post-secondary and graduate certificate programs. A major factor for the academic success of these students is Algonquin's ability to create a curriculum and an overall educational offering that are inclusive and respectful of their non-Canadian experience. Efforts to do so have been limited to date; faculty require further professional support to truly internationalize their programs.

Reaching out to the international community

The College is currently engaged in a number of international activities and has developed an international strategy which focuses on increasing the number of international students on campus, providing an environment for international and newcomer students that supports their academic success, broadening faculty knowledge of the international context in their professional area, and helping staff model appropriate cultural awareness and interpersonal behavior.

The College has started to develop more graduate certificate programs and to offer additional January program intakes, both of which are in demand by our International students. In addition, the College should also venture into the, as-yet, largely unexplored territory of short-term-for-credit international education opportunities for students; international exchanges of students and faculty; twinning Algonquin with another college or university overseas; adding to the College's overseas training program offerings; and increasing international co-op placement opportunities for students.

Environmental responsibility

Being globally engaged and aware requires a sense of corporate social responsibility. Algonquin's Strategic Plan states that the College will embed environmental sustainability into both program delivery and operations. The goal of doing so is to create a sustainable environmental footprint and to prepare students to live in, work in, and contribute to environmentally sustainable communities.

Algonquin has taken firm steps toward its environmental objectives. In November 2007, it became the first college in Canada to sign the Talloires Declaration, which is a 10-point action plan for incorporating sustainability into higher education. The College has set goals for implementing environmentally sustainable best practices into its operations and increasing the environmental sustainability content of its programs. Current 'green'-focused programs include:

- Green Architecture (Woodroffe Campus)
- Green Business Management (Woodroffe Campus)
- Water and Waste Water Technician (Woodroffe Campus)
- Construction Carpentry - Advanced Housing (Perth Campus)
- Forestry Technician (Pembroke Campus)

To successfully establish a culture of sustainability, the College must change behaviours, values and attitudes, weaving sustainability into its vision and mission statements, core values, operations and program curricula. Algonquin's Centre for Organizational Learning (COL) will be instrumental in identifying the necessary resources required to provide professional development and direction to faculty for curriculum modifications.

Given the current climate of economic uncertainty, Algonquin must develop a viable financial model that will allow it to support further sustainability initiatives with savings achieved through sustainable practices.

4. PROGRAMMING

To address the opportunities and challenges associated with capacity, demand, and delivery in a consistent and strategic way, Algonquin will need to standardize its approach to program development and design. Of note, the number of new programs proposed over the past academic year decreased slightly because dedicated new space could not be provided, underscoring that dealing with the issue of capacity is clearly important to ongoing program development.

Formalizing the process

While the College has made improvements in recent years, the initiation of new program ideas remains largely ad hoc. The result is that new programs tend to be initiated and approved according to their individual merits rather than in the context of community need or student demand. Traditional delivery modes are heavily relied on, and available space and infrastructure are not always used optimally.

An Initial Scoping Review process has been launched as the first step toward a more deliberate approach. Through it, the Vice-President, Academic's management team assesses new program proposals and recommends which should be developed in light of the College's strategic direction and resource capacity. Even with this strategic focus, the Initial Scoping Review still responds to ideas brought forth rather than identifying key areas for development. Further efforts to broaden Algonquin's programming perspective are needed. To this end, in Spring 2008, the College began establishing formal guidelines for proposing academic programs in a more proactive manner.

A formal, replicable programming strategy should ideally begin with capturing 'market intelligence', in other words, defining stakeholder needs. Based on such information, decisions about newly proposed programs and about the evolution or continuation of existing programs can be made soundly. As programs are further developed, strategic considerations (about technology, for example, or partnerships, or laddering opportunities) would be weighed and ultimately factored into the final program design to ensure alignment.



Better information for better decisions

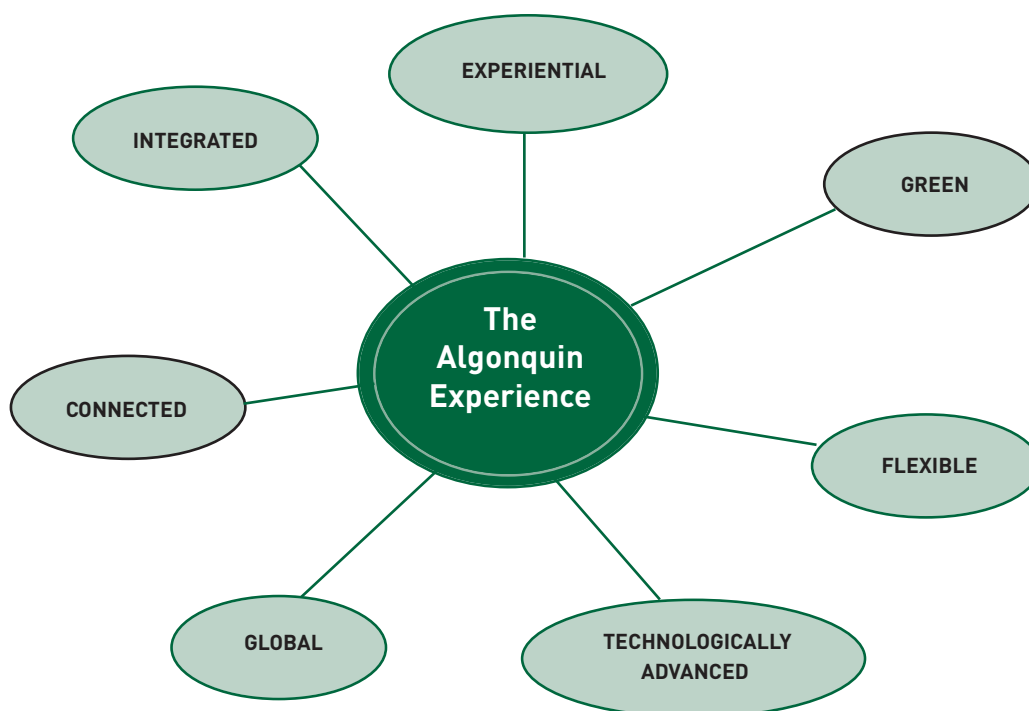
Improving the quality of information for decision-making goes hand-in-hand with the need to establish a more considered 'big picture' approach to programming. In this spirit, Algonquin recently undertook a 14-month study of the methods used to evaluate employment and applicant demand to gain an understanding of the tools that would best inform stakeholder demand for its programs. Of employer attitudes, the study found that comprehensive labour market analyses would provide solid data related to employment demand. To more clearly define applicant needs and expectations, existing *ontariocolleges.ca* data was found to be as effective as surveys of random populations. In other words, where applicants are concerned, existing, available information seems to be sufficient.

To effectively address the challenges associated with capacity, demand, delivery and programming, and to respond to the opportunities facing the College in each of these key areas, Algonquin must define the experience it intends to consistently offer its students. That definition will provide a set of criteria to help Algonquin assess every new program idea from concept through implementation to ensure it upholds the College's vision.

DEFINING THE ALGONQUIN EXPERIENCE

While aspects of the Algonquin Experience can be traced back through the College's 40-year history, today's postsecondary environment demands the experience be provided consistently across all programs and enhanced with additional elements that respond to more recent demands of learners and the evolving workplace. By clearly defining its offering, the College can set targets and identify criteria for assessing, designing, developing and introducing new programs with the intention for every student experience to be:

- Integrated—linked with industry and the community through applied research, apprenticeship and advisory committees
- Experiential—characterized by practical, hands-on learning through co-operative education, clinical/field placement, work placement, field work and internship opportunities
- Technologically advanced—using the latest tools to support learning and to reflect the ways in which students are accustomed to communicating and engaging with information
- Connected—providing interprofessional learning experiences through interaction with related disciplines
- Global—offering opportunities for international work experiences and exposing students to other cultures by being part of a multicultural Algonquin population
- Green—instilling a greater understanding of sustainability principles and green practices
- Flexible—timetabling and delivery to accommodate student needs and life circumstances



RECOMMENDATIONS

To enjoy continued success as a leader in postsecondary education in Ontario, Algonquin must embrace the vision it has defined and take the necessary steps to transform its culture and achieve its objectives. With input from staff and faculty, the following seven recommendations summarize, at a high level, the perspective of the College's Deans Council on what those objectives need to be. From these, detailed action plans can be defined, evaluated, costed and evolved.

1. The Algonquin Experience: Integrated

Building on existing connections already in place, expand Algonquin's partnerships with local businesses and community organizations across all College programs to ensure the relevance of programming and optimal job preparedness of graduates. These connections focus on expanding applied research activities to involve a greater number of programs, students, faculty and partners, leveraging provincial funding to expand apprenticeship and, enhancing business representation on advisory committees for relevant input to program curricula.

2. The Algonquin Experience: Experiential

In tandem with integration efforts, expand student involvement in the community through enhanced opportunities for co-operative education, field work, field or clinical placement, service learning, simulation exercises, international learning opportunities, and volunteerism.

3. The Algonquin Experience: Technologically advanced

Enhance the tools of learning and modes of delivery available to students, including increasing the number courses delivered in the hybrid (online/in-class) format across all programs and introducing a virtual (i.e., online) campus that offers students in Ontario and around the world greater, more flexible access to Algonquin programs.

4. The Algonquin Experience: Connected

Increase the number of interprofessional educational opportunities across the College to offer students a greater amount of interdisciplinary exposure as a reflection of the evolving workplace.

5. The Algonquin Experience: Global

Increase the number of international work and study exchange opportunities available to students across all programs to ensure students are fully prepared to operate in the global marketplace and comfortable interacting with other cultures. In addition, embed internationalization learning outcomes into College curricula.

6. The Algonquin Experience: Green

As a good corporate citizen, embed sustainability into College programming itself and, where applicable, into learning outcomes.

7. The Algonquin Experience: Flexible

Transform the College's approach to programming to ensure it is more consistently relevant to industry trends and student demand, for example, by offering an expanded range of degree programs developed in collaboration with universities, and more graduate certificate options. Facilitate laddering from one program to another for existing students so they can easily advance their educations. Ensure also that programs are planned and structured in a way that reflects the experience Algonquin intends to offer all students, and adopt greater flexibility in program planning to maximize space usage, expand the learning timetable and increase the number of intake periods.

THE LEARNING ROAD AHEAD

Algonquin College is fortunate to enjoy a position of strength in Ontario's postsecondary environment, a position from which it can contend with current and emerging challenges, and capitalize on opportunities through shrewd, strategic decision-making.

Taking as a whole, the observations, conclusions and recommendations offered in this paper, Algonquin can create purposeful, achievable academic action plans that will serve to increase its capacity to accommodate increased enrolment, meet the demands of the industries and communities it serves, adopt a more strategic approach to programming, and deliver an Algonquin learning experience that can more consistently be characterized as: integrated, experiential, technologically advanced, connected, global, green and flexible.

Student success remains the ultimate goal. Working together, the Academic Area can lead the way in carrying forward this vision and begin the cultural and operational transformation required for its realization.

EXPERIENTIAL

characterized by practical, hands-on learning through co-operative education, clinical/field placement, work placement, field work and internship opportunities

INTEGRATED

linked with industry and the community through applied research, apprenticeship and advisory committees

GREEN

instilling a greater understanding of sustainability principles and green practices

CONNECTED

providing interprofessional learning experiences through interaction with related disciplines

FLEXIBLE

timetabling and delivery to accommodate student needs and life circumstances

The Algonquin *Experience*

GLOBAL

offering opportunities for international work experiences and exposing students to other cultures by being part of a multicultural Algonquin population

TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED

using the latest tools to support learning and to reflect the ways in which students are accustomed to communicating and engaging with information

