



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mid-Term Priorities Update

2024 - 2025



Mission & Philosophy

A student Board of Directors governs the SA and acts as your voice to the Algonquin College administration.

The Board is made up of full-time students in Ottawa, Pembroke, and Perth. Their job is to connect with students outside of the classroom, elevate student issues, and to help make critical decisions that impact the Algonquin College community.

It is crucial to the Board's work that they hear what is impacting student success, please feel free to share your concerns.



Maria Silveira

President

silveim@algonquincollege.com



Josh Ansaldo

Vice-President

ansaldj@algonquincollege.com



Yannis Affoum

Director (Perth)

affoumy@algonquincollege.com



Francois Belanger

Director

belangf@algonquincollege.com



Emily MacDonald

Director (Pembroke)

macdone@algonquincollege.com



Marilena Postolache

Director

postolm@algonquincollege.com



Kaitlynd Richard

Director

richark@algonquincollege.com

Executive Summary

Our goals this year are about efficiency and improvement. As part of the priorities process, the Board meets in November to review the status of each priority, and to determine what changes need to be made to accomplish our mission to create an environment that inspires a passion for student success.

Academic quality reaches far beyond the classroom experience. Several concerns about academic quality have been brought to the Board's attention, such as outdated course materials, expensive and unused textbooks, and poor or frustrating experiences with job placement programs. With the College, several plans have been made to improve how courses get updated, improve the Brightspace experience, properly address job program concerns, and improve the awareness of available support resources.

While students in Ottawa have access to public transit, many students in Perth and Pembroke live far from campus and have very limited transportation options. The Board is continuing work with Lanark County and the City of Pembroke to launch trial transportation initiatives in these regions. Meanwhile, the focus in Ottawa is on our relationship and agreements with OC Transpo. As the U-Pass is investigated, route 88 is being split in two, adding route 68 so buses will cycle through more frequently.

Finally, the College currently offers many mental health support options. We want to make sure that these services are being used effectively and that students are aware they exist. One of the biggest changes will be from Bill 166, a provincial legislation that mandates schools to have a specific student mental health policy and provide annual reports on its impacts.

The first half of the term for a Board of Directors is largely spent gathering information so realistic action plans can be made during the winter semester. The SA and College will then work to implement plans and changes pushed forward by this information. Change takes time, but these changes are best made together, as a collaboration between the students, the Students' Association, and Algonquin College.

Together, we can make the College a better place for all students.

Academic Quality

“Ensure that the academic experience prepares students to gain employment in an evolving job market.”

Progress Timeline Overview



Challenges & Issues

Co-op Process

- Phase 01 (co-op readiness) is online for flexibility, but many students struggle to stay engaged.
- While students are encouraged to apply to six jobs per round, many wait for their “dream job” and miss other potential opportunities.
- Students struggle with resume customization and how to tailor them to each job application.
- The job search portion of the co-op process is not visible in Brightspace or timetables.
- Students are unaware of the support services provided by the co-op department, such as job search assistance, resume reviews, and interview prep.

What's Next?

- Integration of co-op job search information with Brightspace.
- Information sessions between class representatives and the co-op team to discuss gaps in the process and provide direct feedback.
- A collaboration between the academic and co-op teams to set clear goals and explore how the SA can provide support in improving student engagement

Challenges & Issues

Academic Development

- Physical textbooks are still being required despite free versions being available online.
- Some required textbooks are outdated and don't align with class materials, yet are still mandatory.
- Inconsistent feedback and grading timelines create uncertainty for students.
- Lack of organizational standards creates frustration and confusion for students.
- Contract professors may not have sufficient time to properly review and update materials beforehand.

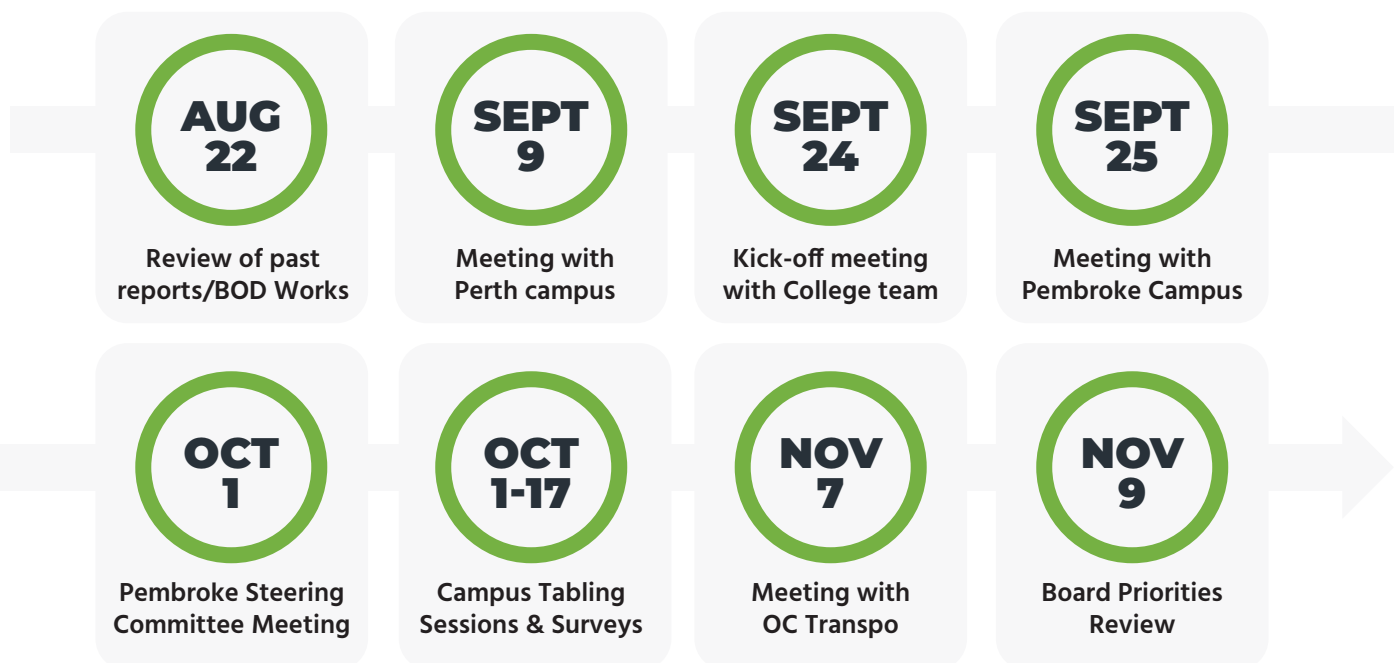
What's Next?

- Create more consistency in Brightspace class layout by providing shells and templates.
- A new initiative to improve course content updating is being implemented.
- The SA is pushing for more transparency on all costs to students, such as textbooks and lab fees.

Transportation

“Ensure accessible, affordable, and convenient transportation options that meet the needs of students across all campuses.”

Progress Timeline Overview



Challenges & Issues

Perth

- Students without personal vehicles face problems reliably getting to campus, work, and placements in all weather and seasons.

Pembroke

- Many students report safety issues with dark and unmaintained walking paths.
- Students often have trouble getting around Pembroke for basics such as groceries and work.

Ottawa

- U-Pass changes must be coordinated with Carleton University, the University of Ottawa, and Saint Paul's University.
- OC Transpo is experiencing difficulties with staffing and resources.

What's Next?

Perth

- Lanark County allocated funds for a transit service feasibility study.
- The Town of Perth is creating an Active Transportation Plan to improve non-motorized transportation methods.

Pembroke

- The City of Pembroke is working to implement a new transportation pilot program in 2025.

Ottawa

- OC Transpo will be shortening route 88 and introducing a new route 68 to improve reliability.
- The SA is investigating other transportation options to meet needs.

Mental Health

“Ensure that student services identify and support specific issues that can impact student wellness, fostering an environment that encourages mental well-being.”

Progress Timeline Overview



Kick-off meeting
with College team



Introduced to
Mental Health
Steering Committee



Brain-storming
Data Collection



MHSC Meeting
for Bill 166



Anti-Racism/Anti-
Hate Working
Group



Mental Health
Services Mapping
and Data Analysis
Initiative



MHSC update
meeting

Challenges & Issues

Mental health is complex and challenges can require many different supports. There are many support services on campus such as the Umbrella Project, Project Lighthouse, the Purple Couch, and the Food Cupboard.

Challenges arise in student awareness of support services and identifying where mental health factors are rooted. Factors such as tuition and textbook costs, housing, transportation, jobs, program stress, and other outside factors such as family-related stress all play significant roles in a students' wellbeing and identifying causes can be difficult, but critical, in ensuring that students receive adequate support.

Bill 166 was also introduced into provincial legislation. It mandates the college to have a student mental health policy, sets clearer rules on anti-racism and hate policies, and requires annual reports on the implementation and effects of these policies.

What's Next?

- The SA is collaborating with the College on the new Student Mental Health and Anti-Hate/Anti-Racism policies, to be finalized in early 2025.
- We are working with the College to see better data on how services are being used to determine which services need more resources.
- Work to improve student awareness of the available services offered.

Closing Remarks

These update reports are created to keep students informed, as many of the plans and changes made may not have an immediate or visible impact on current students. The Students' Association believes that this transparency and communication is extremely important. Students need to know that their voices are heard and that we are listening to their concerns.

We would like to thank the College for their support in our initiatives, and all the students who have taken their time to speak about their concerns, help each other out, and help make the campus experience better for everyone. We encourage anyone with any concerns or feedback to come share it with us at our office on any campus, or at any of the many events

that are held throughout the year. If you would like to be involved at a higher level, please consider checking out the nomination process for the Board of Directors.

Thank you for your support,



Maria Silveira
President

