

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Priorities Report - Fall Term



# Our Board Members

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*

# Mission & Philosophy

The Student Association's mission is to create an environment that inspires a passion for student success. To be successful, every part of a student's life needs support, not just academics. If one area of support is lacking, then it negatively affects their entire experience.

There is no question that the world has changed drastically over the last five years. Not just in the professional world, but in almost every area of life. These changes have impacted many aspects of the college community as well, but **what hasn't changed is what we value.**

Algonquin College and the Algonquin Students' Association have a shared set of core values that have guided us to a successful, close, and productive working relationship. It is the shared belief in the importance of **Caring, Learning, Integrity, and Respect** that guides our pursuits to provide a learning and life experience for students that stands out on a global stage.



# Feedback Collection

Each year, the Algonquin Students' Association (SA) Board of Directors spends the first few months of their term connecting with students in Ottawa, Pembroke, and Perth to learn about the factors that could be impacting their success.

This year's directors spent the summer collecting feedback through tabling sessions, where students were able to come speak to directors directly, class representative meetings, focus groups, and face-to-face interactions with

students. In total, the board spent over 150 hours over the first months of summer interacting directly with students and listening to their concerns.

The data and feedback were then collected and reviewed to determine what issues are affecting students the most, and what areas needed the most improvement. The Board then discussed the results and together decided on what their priorities for the year needed to be to best represent the students.

**150+** *Linking Hours*

**2** *Focus Groups*

**3** *Class Rep Meetings*

**4** *Tabling Sessions*

**300+** *Students*

**650+** *Feedback Points*

# Priorities 2024/25

Throughout our feedback collection, there were three areas that clearly rose to the surface as significant and recurring themes:

- Academic Quality
- Transportation Availability
- Mental Wellness

Based on our conversations with students we chose these three themes to build upon and chose the following three priorities for the 2024/2025 academic year.

## Our First Priority **Academics**



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

The Board of Directors is committed to working with the College to make sure that program curriculums properly reflect industry standards – not just for today, but also for emerging trends.

Part of this review will be ensuring that classes are assigned the appropriate amount of time and that faculty are well-prepared, present, and teaching for the period reflected on students' timetables.

We are also looking at the specific challenges that face job support programs, such as co-op and internship-based programs. It is important that students have the

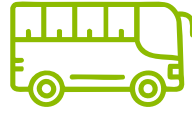
proper supports and resources available, and that the job placements found during the program are meaningful and relevant.

Ultimately, we want to ensure that students are receiving a high-quality experience that prepares them for life outside of the College.

“ The structure with the professors creates a lot of disorganization in the program. Especially when one teacher makes all the material and then another comes in and teaches the material, but maybe doesn't have time to go over the course material before they teach it. ”

*Algonquin College Student, Spring 2024*

## Our Second Priority **Transportation**



### **Ensure that students have accessible and affordable quality transportation across all campuses.**

A lack of reliable and accessible transportation has a huge impact on the quality of a student's college experience, and it extends far beyond on-campus matters. Access to transportation affects where a student can live, how much free time they have, their ability to get a job to help pay for school, their ability to get to classes in all weather conditions, and many other areas that can cause significant stress.

In Ottawa, we have access to the U-Pass and services through OC Transpo, however, we know that there are many issues with frequency and consistency. As OC Transpo continues to make cuts in other areas of the city, we are determined to ensure that they are meeting the service level agreements that are established with the College so students receive the service they pay for.

For Perth and Pembroke, public transportation doesn't exist. The

Students' Association has already been working with Lanark County and the City of Pembroke to establish new transportation options that will benefit both our students and the greater communities of the area. We will continue this work and look for ways to provide more transparency and updates on the progress. We know this will be a long-term project, so we are also looking at other alternative methods of transportation such as community bike programs for more immediate relief.

“ There's no options in Pembroke and taxis are really expensive so I end up walking to school and work every day. It takes me between 30 and 50 minutes, which is fine during the warm weather, but it's a problem in the winter or the rain. I'm looking at other schools to finish my program because I need to be able to get to school and work reliably. ”

*Algonquin College Student, Spring 2024*

Our Third Priority

## Mental Wellness



**Ensure that student services identify and support specific issues that can impact student wellness, fostering an environment that encourages mental wellbeing.**

In recent years, we have added mental health support services such as WeConnect to our health plan, and other support services to campuses to boost support for mental wellness. This year, we want to make sure that the supports and services being offered match the student demand.

We know that there is high value in counselling, and we understand that there are unique factors that can compound to create mental health crisis. These factors need to be identified and addressed at a root level. There are also many barriers that

may prevent a student from seeking help, even if the opportunity is there. These can range from cultural sensitivities and stigma to a general lack of awareness for available services.

We are working on creating a system to identify and address these considerations so we can lower wait times for counselling services and provide more effective and efficient support to all students. An environment that fosters success is one that provides for all its participants, domestic or international.

“ Struggles finding a co-op is stressing a lot of my compatriots out right now. Like a lot of them. Because there's a deadline. A bunch of my classmates have said they've dropped out of co-op and they're just taking the break because they just literally can't take the stress of not knowing their life is going to be in like six, eight weeks. Because you also have to then pay the school to go back to do a full term instead of working, which is financially a very different image. ”

*Algonquin College Student, Spring 2024*

# Looking Forward

The Students' Association is working with Algonquin College to build realistic, detailed, and actionable plans that are supported by both organizations. The next few months will lay the foundation for the success of these priorities. Progress will be monitored through the fall term and evaluated in November to ensure progress is on track. Our goal is for the fall term to be process-oriented and focused on planning and development to set the stage for a winter semester that can be driven by action and change.

The most important factor in this period will be working together and keeping communication open and often. We will work with the College to implement these plans and be there to make sure the student voice is being heard every step of the way. We strongly believe that we can

create changes that will greatly improve the experience of the students attending Algonquin College.

We want to make sure that students, both current and future, receive a high-quality experience that sets them up for success in their future. Doing so will require a lot of work to ensure that resources are being used as effectively as possible, but we don't believe in only doing something if it is easy. We believe in doing them because they make us stronger as a community – together, as a pack.



**Maria Silveira**  
President

