

# LOCAL LINES

OPSEU LOCAL 415



**“People, not buildings, make a school.”  
— William Butler Yeats**

# The Hollowing Out of Algonquin College

There is a particular kind of feeling that comes from being told you are no longer needed. Not directly, of course. Institutions rarely say it plainly. Instead, it comes wrapped in restructuring language, carefully rehearsed platitudes delivered by administrators reading from scripts written by consultants. But the sentiment still lands the same.

In March, I was told that I had no SWF for Spring 2026. This was surprising to me because I teach communications, which is run in various iterations and course offerings across the college. “Can I teach in another department?” I asked. “That’s what the College Employee Stability Committee will decide,” said my chair.



My path at Algonquin College started in 2011 after seeing a posting for part-time teaching work. At the time, a successful tutoring business kept me busy, but nothing could have prepared me for how much of myself I would pour into this place.

Building a career at Algonquin meant doing it all at once: raising a family, completing a master’s degree while teaching a full course load. When I went on EI maternity leave, stepping away felt terrifying — back then, partial-load faculty weren’t even part of the union. There was no guarantee of coming back. No security. No stability. Just hope and hard work.

In 2018, when my chair called to tell me I won the full-time position, I jumped into my parents’ swimming pool. My daughter was 18 months old. All of the years of hard work had finally paid off. Like most new professors, I hit the ground running: Developing resources, researching new technologies, and delivering professional development (R.I.P. [Kaleidoscope](#)). There was work on the ECC, chairing CAC and TLAG, revamping FLP, developing ITAC, and so many more acronym-y things.

I was nominated for the Diane Bloor Award as a part-time faculty member. And again nominated again for the Isabelle Laurent Award as a full-time faculty member. In 2019, a colleague encouraged me to apply for a secondment role with Learning and Teaching Services (LTS). In that role, March 2020, as part of the Covid-19 Academic Continuity Project, I helped keep courses running.

In 2021 I created the Seedlings for Students bursary project, which has since raised thousands of dollars for single-parenting students at the college. It later received recognition through the college’s philanthropy award.

I’m telling my story not because I think it’s unique, but because I know you all have similar ones. Because working at Algonquin College is not for the lazy. It takes expertise, emotional labour, adaptability, diplomacy, resilience, and an extraordinary amount of unpaid care work. This has always been a hard-fought job. And a good job. Not because the administration has made it so, but because generations of union members fought for fairness, stability, workload protections, benefits, and dignity.

Now we are watching those things erode in real time.

So what, if anything, can be done?



Have you registered for the President’s Town Hall on June 4<sup>th</sup> yet? We’ll be there. If you’ve got a specific question or issue you’d like raised, send us an email and we’ll add it to our list. [comms@locallines.org](mailto:comms@locallines.org)

**Governments** need to hear, clearly and repeatedly, that properly funding postsecondary education is not optional. That message has to reach them through votes, through advocacy, and through public noise that is impossible to ignore.

**College administrators** need to stop quietly managing decline and start resisting it. Leaders who accept raises while overseeing the hollowing out of their institutions are not leading – they are complicit. A college cannot claim transparency while withholding information or reducing meaningful consultation. They need to share the data and stop thoughtlessly doing what consultants are advising them to do.

**The public** needs to wake up to what is actually being lost. The college you or your child attends, the one your tax dollars support, is already a shadow of what it was. With OSAP changes and rising tuition, you will soon be paying significantly more for significantly less. Dead campuses. Empty classrooms. Exhausted people grieving an institution that is disappearing in plain sight.

**Faculty and staff** need to make austerity harder, not easier. Every accommodation, every workaround, every effort to smooth the path for cuts makes the next round of cuts more likely. Collective resistance – loud, visible, and sustained – is not just a right. It is a responsibility.

That is to say: don't let the college grind you down. I know that your story is like mine – long, personal histories tied to classrooms, students, programs, campuses, and communities that matter deeply to the people who built them. Tell your story proudly, because this college was built by all of us.

-IS  
Kim Bosch  
Editor, *Local Lines*



# ALGONQUIN COLLEGE SUNSHINE LIST - 2025



Ontario's Sunshine List is an annual disclosure of salaries and total compensation for employees in the provincial public sector who earned \$100,000 or more. It promotes transparency and accountability by showing how public money is spent on compensation.

NAME	POSITION	2025 SALARY	NOTABLE CONTEXT
Claude Brule	President	\$388,125	Highest-paid employee at Algonquin College.
Mark Savenkoff	VP Advancement and Strategy	\$271,897	Salary increase of <b>11.4%</b> compared to 2024.
Julie Beauchamp	Senior VP, Academic	\$263,522	Salary increase of <b>6.2%</b> compared to 2024. Oversaw academic portfolio during major program reductions.
Grant Perry	VP of Finance and Administration	\$256,819	Salary increase of <b>18.7%</b> compared to 2024. Senior financial leadership during cost-cutting measures.
Krista Pearson	VP, Student Services	\$255,757	Salary increase of <b>10.2%</b> compared to 2024. Executive compensation growth amid institutional restructuring.
Kin Choi	VP of Human Resources	\$253,177	N/A – Newly listed or insufficient comparable prior-year data.
Cory Haskins	Dean, School of Business and Hospitality	\$225,943	Salary increase of <b>38.4%</b> compared to 2024. School cut 9 programs in February 2026, in addition to cuts made the prior year.

**i** Salaries reflect total compensation as reported on the Ontario Sunshine List for the 2025 disclosure (covering the 2024 calendar year). Increases compare 2025 compensation to 2024 compensation. N/A = not available.



# Support and Compassion in Value-Challenged Times

By Tracy Henderson & Judy Puritt

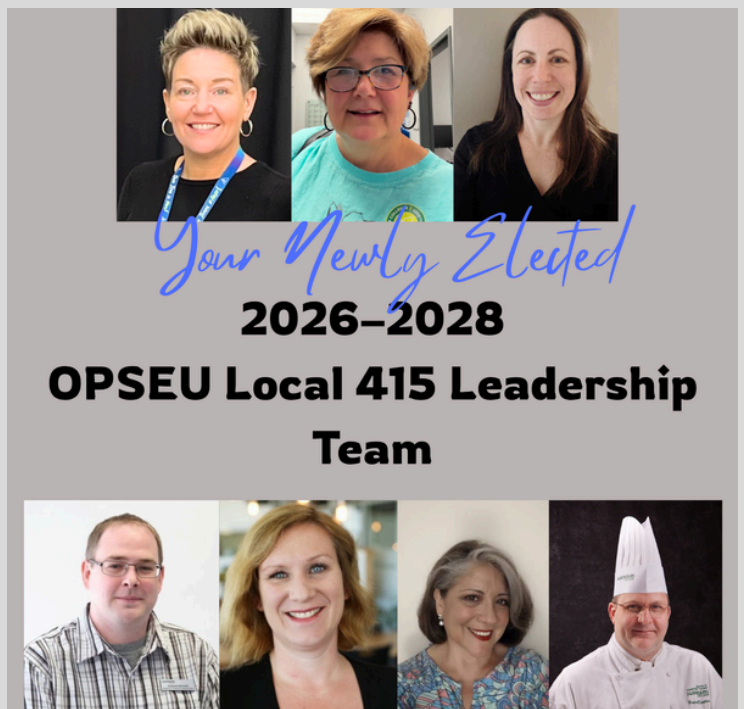
Algonquin's core values, central to the college's "organizational philosophy," are identified as Caring, Learning, Integrity, and Respect. As faculty, most of us enact and live these values in our classrooms and communications with colleagues and students, daily. On the other hand, there seems to be a distinct shortage of those values enacted by our employer. Too many times recently, we have heard Algonquin employees lament, 'This is not the employer who hired me.'

Algonquin College was an institute with a proud history of providing programming to meet community needs, as well as introducing learners to a wider world of opportunities. However, between program cuts last year and this year, removing learner support features from academic work, reclassifying counsellor work, and generally stirring up a climate of fear and uncertainty among employees and learners, the college's reputation has been severely damaged. Beyond this broad deterioration of work quality, the way in which employees are treated has shown increased signs of strain. Everything from concerns about individual well-being to classroom sizes to assigning factors of evaluation to coordinating responsibilities to accessing PD—the focus on a caring approach. Our Collective Agreement has clear guidelines for what is and is not appropriate, and lately, we've had to encourage members to exercise those rights.

Your Local Executive are committed to the college values, and we're committed to following the CA. We live both.

**Caring** – When you have questions and stop by or call/email the Local office, you will be greeted by Jaclyn, our incredible office administrator. She will forward your question to one of the officers and/or set up a meeting for you with the most appropriate individual. Your concerns will be considered, and you will be given the respect of time and an authentic engagement. We will support you, as you navigate challenges with your manager or in your department, whether you are facing a workload issue, considering retirement, or seeking clarity on a manager's direction. We will listen and attempt to provide you with guidance that follows the Collective Agreement and addresses your situation. We will also encourage you to take action – advocate that the college start following that CA legitimately.

**Learning** – The Local Bylaws outline the core pillars of our union as "Advocacy, Education, and Activism." This past winter, the Local provided more than a dozen College Employment Stability Committee (CESC) workshops, plus two open town hall sessions on the CESC. Both of us sit on the CESC, meeting with the college side, advocating for members identified in "affected areas," and arguing for the stability of maintaining a talented workforce to educate tomorrow's workers. For those who are stewards, we commit to supporting learning opportunities, bringing delegates plus alternates and observers to major regional, divisional, and provincial sessions. We have supported stewards as they learn about dismantling systemic racism and develop their skills related to providing accommodations and justice-oriented communication. Have an idea? Reach out. Want to become more active? Come talk to us!



On May 21<sup>st</sup>, your 2026-2028 OPSEU Local 415 Leadership Team took shape during the Election General membership Meeting (EGMM). Congratulations to Tracy Henderson (President), Judy Puritt (1st Vice President), Elizabeth Von Moos (2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President), Jordan Berard (Secretary) Melissa Spears (Lead Steward), Gabriela Lopez (Officer-at-Large) and Patrick Kostiw (Treasurer).

Integrity – Foundational to our approach with any member is to engage with integrity. Ethical approaches and conduct are not just something for the public eye—a commitment to confidential discussions, means just that. No random sharing or discussing. Further, when we promise to gather information, evaluate options, and consult knowledgeable individuals across the province, all to provide answers in a timely, respectful manner, we follow through. In addition, we are engaging more intentionally with our sister Local 416, marching with them in solidarity in the fall, and building more connections moving forward, with a joint Collaboration Retreat day later in June. Solidarity is a conscious group activity that requires all of us. We must stop the erosion on public education. That has to involve all of us!

Respect – Of course, respect, that core approach of valuing one another is critical in building trust. To get respect, you have to give respect. It’s not just a cliché, it’s a genuine, empathetic, inclusive, and courteous way of living and behaving. We respect ourselves, and we respect individuals who work, study, or just pass through the college. We remember those early rules from kindergarten, say please and thank you and don’t steal or damage somebody else’s toy. And, we respect early union activists by not lying down and accepting these intolerable conditions. We demand respect; we do not just cower in fear. Speak to your steward or an officer—we’re listening.

At some point, maybe the college’s values will resurface more broadly in our working lives and in college leadership. For now, you can count on finding those values, coupled with support and compassion when you talk to members of your Local Executive and officer team. We still find reason to believe in and practice those core values of caring, learning, integrity, and respect. And, we challenge the college to do better. We demand better treatment of all employees, and we insist on the college following the CA. Yes, we’ll grieve any unjust situation and support you.



# To Be, or Not To Be: When Is a College No Longer a College?

By Martin Lee

There was a time when a college was, quite inconveniently, a place where people gathered to learn. Naturally, we've outgrown that.

The word itself gives it away. "College" – from the idea of "colleagues." People together. Equals in pursuit of knowledge. Messy, inefficient, human knowledge. The kind that requires classrooms, debate, disagreement, and the occasional dangerously original idea. We are far more sophisticated now. We understand that a college is not a place but a brand alignment. It's a carefully managed narrative in which "learning" happens just adjacent to program cancellations, and "community" is best experienced through a well-designed webpage rather than an actual location.

Which brings us to Algonquin College: a case study in what happens when an institution courageously asks, "what if we removed the college from the college?"

Programs have been disappearing at an impressive pace. Indigenous Studies. Journalism. Horticulture. Music. Hospitality. Paralegal. Fitness and Health Promotion. Entire disciplines – not reimaged, not meaningfully consulted on – just swiftly concluded. The support staff and systems that kept everything else afloat went with them.

The elegance of this approach deserves appreciation. Fewer programs mean fewer students to worry about, fewer faculty to consult, fewer messy human variables complicating the delivery of a clean institutional vision.

That vision? A surplus-driven education machine, unburdened by academic rigor or community need. Students enter, move through a corridor, and emerge on a stage with a diploma. What happens after that is no longer the college's concern. Remember the "Learner Driven Plan"? It seems we shuffled away from that concept rather quickly.

And if those decisions happen to bypass the committees and governance structures outlined in the Collective Agreement, well, one mustn't get bogged down in the process. Process is, after all, just collectivism with paperwork.

Instead, we have "values."

Algonquin College proudly upholds its core ideals: Caring. Learning. Integrity. Respect.

These are not merely words. They are aspirations currently floating well above observable reality.

"Caring" now operates at scale. Rather than caring for individual programs, communities, or people, the institution has achieved a generalized caring measured in contribution margins and students shuffled through seats.

"Learning" has been liberated from the constraints of actual teaching. It is no longer tethered to classrooms or curriculum, but existing in a more conceptual space where the institution itself learns how to do more with substantially less.

"Integrity" has been redefined as consistency of messaging. No matter what changes on the ground, the language remains steady, almost heroic in its refusal to acknowledge contradiction. \*Transparency\*, notably, has been quietly redefined to indicate its absence.



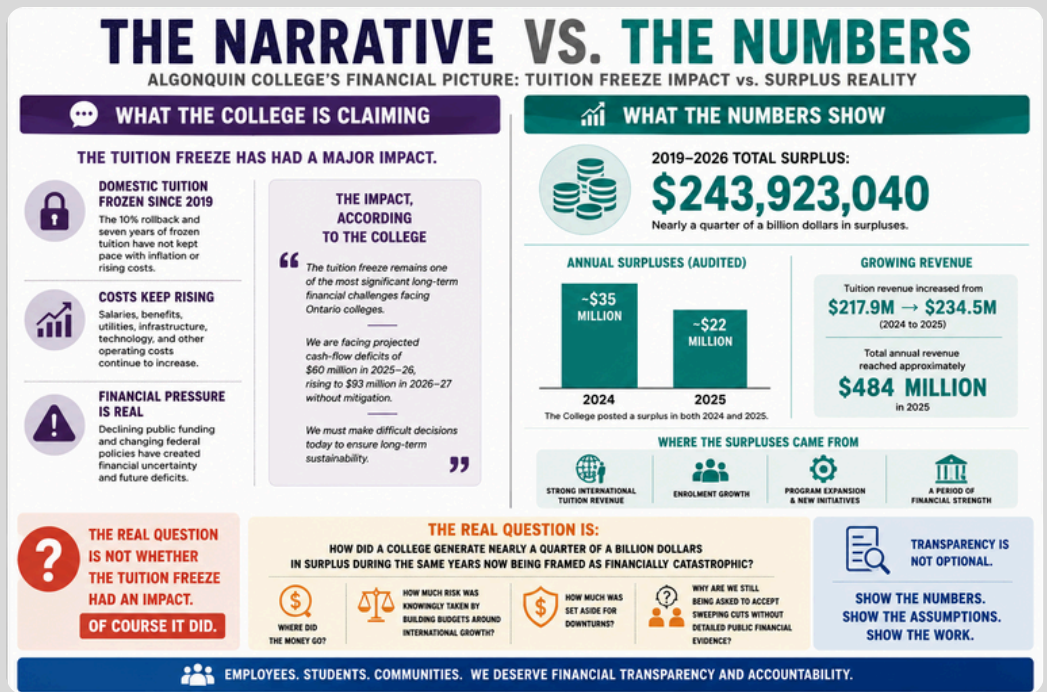
Since 2012, Algonquin College has promised "to transform hopes and dreams into lifelong success." But after years of cuts, the loss of roughly 15% of faculty, and continued refusal to release detailed financial reporting, many in the community are left asking: whose hopes and dreams are being protected?

“Respect” has evolved into a form of institutional self-respect - a quiet confidence that consultation, collaboration, and shared governance are admirable in theory but unnecessary in practice. And then there is the promise of "Turning Hopes and Dreams into Lifelong Success."

A transformation is indeed taking place. “Hopes and dreams” are going somewhere. It's just that "lifelong success" now appears to include the decimation of employees, students, and the communities left behind. But we shouldn't be cynical. This is progress.

The original idea of a college – a collective of people learning together, shaping their community – was always a bit unwieldy. It required trust in faculty, input from students, engagement with the communities the institution was meant to serve. It required, above all, a belief that education is a public good rather than a logistical challenge.

Far better to streamline. To centralize. To decide. To announce.



And yet, a stubborn truth remains: a college is, fundamentally, its people.

It is the faculty who build programs, the students who inhabit them, and the communities that see themselves reflected in what is taught and valued. It is argument, collaboration, dissent, and shared purpose. It is, by definition, a collective – remarkably close, in fact, to the definition of a union.

Which makes the current moment less a transformation than a contradiction. You can remove programs and bypass governance. You can reduce education to an ever-narrowing band of activity. But at some point, you are no longer refining a college.

Colleges were never meant to function without collectivism. They were built on it. What will it take to remember that a college belongs to all of us? Because if that premise still holds, then what we are witnessing is not the end of a college -- it is a test of whether the people who make it a college are still willing to act like one.

**"CONSOLIDATED PROGRAM SUSPENSION RECOMMENDATION"**



During the first round of program cuts, something troubling happened at the Board of Governors. The administration broke its own policy (AA30) by “consolidating” multiple program suspensions into a single vote. Instead of allowing the BoG to consider each program on its own merits, the fate of dozens of programs was bundled together. The college was called out for these actions.

So in July 2025, the College quietly changed the fine print of AA30 to allow a single consolidated vote to “expedite” the process. Then, on March 2nd, 2026, it happened again.

What were labelled “consolidated program suspension recommendations” were pushed through in one motion. One vote. Thirty programs decided at once. All of it took place online. Over break week.

Changing a policy after being challenged so the same maneuver can be repeated may make it procedurally defensible, but ethically problematic. Major academic decisions deserve real scrutiny, not expedited consolidation and dishonest business tactics.

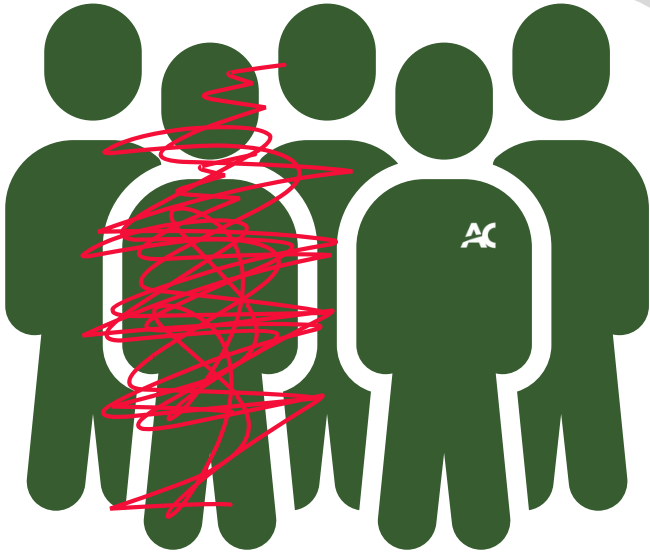
# What We've Lost

By Carolyn Côté

The Prof invited me to visit their class in December. They had been working all term on a simulation-style final assessment, and when I asked for an update, they told me to stop by and see it in action.

I was excited. How often do we get to see our colleagues work their magic in the classroom? I hoped to see something I could share with others developing similar assessments, and to pick up tips for my own teaching. I've run simulation-style assessments in the past and am always looking for ways to improve them.

What I saw in The Prof's class was wonderful. I arrived during the second hour, and the students were fully engaged, running the simulation entirely on their own while The Prof sat back unobtrusively, taking notes.



**As of May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026 approximately 20% of Algonquin College workforce have lost their positions. That's 1 in 5 faculty members.**

The energy was high, and the atmosphere was fun. Students were taking the simulation seriously, but there were also moments of laughter as some of them hammed up their responses based on their assigned roles. Aside from the student speaking, you could hear a pin drop as the events unfolded. The audience was attentive, with very little side conversation, and when it did happen, it related to what was happening in the room. Students who needed to step out did so as quietly as church mice. While a few occasionally checked their phones, most were watching closely and paying attention. I was impressed by the level of engagement, the preparation – every student had notes to refer to, some more heavily than others – and the overall buy-in. The classroom felt like a genuine community built over 15 weeks, with clear expectations, mutual respect, and regard for one another.

When I left the room, I immediately wanted to debrief with The Prof. I wanted to know what they thought of the assessment, whether they felt the students had demonstrated achievement of the course learning outcomes, how they had structured and managed the exercise – so many things. I eagerly sent an email to connect.

The following week, The Prof replied. They wanted to debrief with me, but they had just been laid off. It was a week before Christmas, right after they had submitted their final grades.

The Prof's email hit me like a gut punch. It reminded me how silent and random these layoffs can seem. And it made me afraid. Afraid that my own position could suddenly be eliminated. Afraid that my seniority and the protections of the collective agreement no longer matter. Afraid to go on vacation and return to an HR meeting on my first day back. Afraid that an innocuous department meeting could turn into a bait-and-switch where I'm told my department has been dissolved. Afraid of bounce-back emails, suddenly empty desks, and whispered rumours about who is gone and who might be next.

But even greater than my fear is my anger and sadness over losing colleagues like The Prof. The college is losing talented faculty members with deep pedagogical knowledge and experience. When I look at the program suspension lists or hear about layoffs across the college, I immediately see the faces of teachers. I think about how hard they work to engage students and improve their teaching. I think about the creative assessments they design and the opportunities they create for students to connect with industry. I also think about how they learn from their challenges and share their experiences and ideas with other faculty members. I grieve what we have lost: teachers and colleagues, stories that will never be told, and work that we will no longer have the chance to share in or learn from.

# What's Happened to Accessible Learning at Algonquin College?

In February, thirteen of our colleagues in the Centre for Accessible Learning – seven full-time and six part-time – were called into a meeting and told they would be laid off. Their positions are being eliminated and replaced by lower-paid support staff. The service will continue to exist, but the people delivering it, and the qualifications required to do so, are being gutted.

These cuts were never publicly announced. Unlike academic program closures, CAL restructuring did not need to go through the Board of Governors. Students registered with CAL received only a vague email reassuring them that their supports would continue uninterrupted. Many students, faculty, and parents still do not know what is changing, or what is being taken from them.

## What Is Actually Changing

The new Accessible Learning Advisor positions will no longer require a master's degree. Management has decided that accommodations can be determined using templates, and that professional judgment is no longer necessary. Most new positions have been assigned to Payband I, a salary cut of over \$45,000 per year, lower even than other support staff already working within CAL. The new roles will also collapse the distinct work of Accessibility Counsellors and Learning Strategists into a single position, with management airily suggesting that staff will need to "get creative."

Let's call this what it is: *social dumping*. Experienced, qualified colleagues are being pushed out so the college can replace them with cheaper labour.



## what is “Social Dumping”?

It's when employers lower labour standards – especially wages, benefits, or working conditions – by replacing existing workers with cheaper labour.

### This takes the form of:

- Replacing higher-paid, more secure workers with lower-paid workers
- Circumventing collective agreements or labour standards
- Exploiting regulatory gaps to reduce labour costs
- Creating downward pressure on wages and working conditions

## What Will Be Lost

Supporting students with disabilities is not a checklist exercise. It requires expertise, professional judgment, and a deep understanding of how disability functionally affects an individual student across their entire program. The institutional knowledge being eliminated has been built over years, that's knowledge of specific programs, of faculty relationships, of the complex and often sensitive situations that arise throughout a student's time at this college. That knowledge walks out the door with our colleagues.

Learning strategy support will take a direct hit. Without dedicated specialists, that work becomes reactive rather than proactive. Students will have fewer opportunities to build the skills – time management, study strategies, test-taking, attention – that help them succeed before problems escalate into crises.

This is not speculation. Accessibility staff at other colleges have reported that similar restructurings led to ballooning caseloads and service gaps that were never recovered. Algonquin has already handed us a preview with the June 2025 closure of the Transition Support Centre, which supported students on the autism spectrum.

The result has been delays, increased caseloads, and silent attrition – students who would once have found timely help quietly slipping away instead.

## What This Means for Everyone

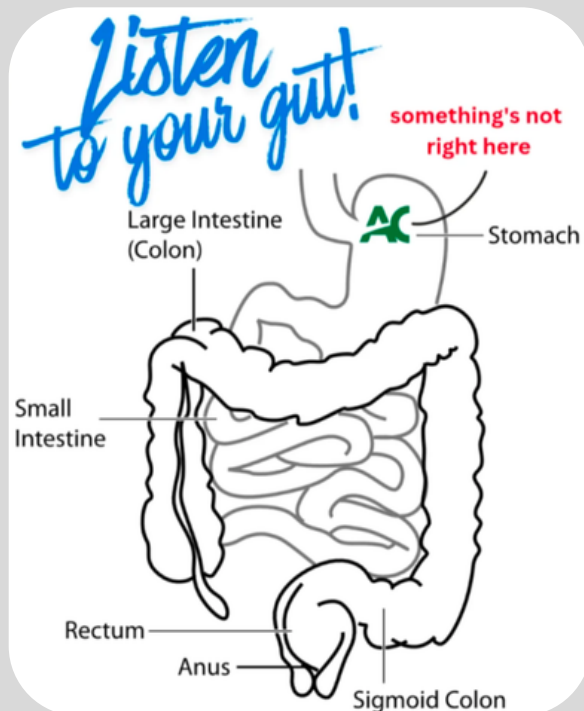
CAL doesn't just support students. It protects the college and its faculty from human rights complaints by ensuring students are appropriately accommodated and that the institution can demonstrate it has done its due diligence. That protection depends entirely on qualified, experienced professionals who understand the nuances of those situations.

When that expertise is gone, the work doesn't disappear. It simply lands on someone else's shoulders.

Our CAL colleagues have spent years being the filter between complex student needs and the classroom. They have handled situations most of us never see, quietly and professionally. That is the work management has decided can be done with templates and a pay cut.

The students most affected will be those with the most complex needs; The people whose lived experience of disability cannot be reduced to a checkbox. They deserve better. And our colleagues, who built something valuable and necessary over many years, deserved better too.

**Editor's Note** - Algonquin College leadership has framed changes within the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) as operational restructuring necessary to address financial pressures. However, the process has lacked transparency with faculty roles quietly being eliminated without clear public accounting of who was lost, what expertise disappeared, or how services may ultimately be affected.



Cuts rarely arrive with an official announcement. Sometimes they show up in ways that are harder to spot – like a meeting with your Chair about your SWF that doesn't quite sit right. A shorter conversation, a shift in tone, or expectations that feel... off. They also show up as larger classes, fewer student supports, reduced coordinator hours, and fewer opportunities for preparation and PD. Because the college isn't sharing information, we are asking faculty to help connect the dots. If you're seeing programs flagged for closure, teach-outs, changes in course loading, or anything out of the ordinary, reach out. We can't access departmental loading data directly and member insight is essential to defending jobs and programs.

If it feels off, trust your gut. Tell your Local. Email us anytime: [comms@locallines.org](mailto:comms@locallines.org)



# SHOW YOUR WORK!

The "Show Your Work" rally was held at Algonquin College on March 10th, 2026 in response to program suspensions and layoffs approved by the Board of Governors earlier that month. Students, faculty, staff, and community members gathered to demand greater transparency around the cuts and the financial reasoning behind them.

The slogan "Show Your Work" reflects the idea that if students are expected to show how they arrived at an answer, the College should also publicly show the data and calculations used to justify program closures.

The Call of Action continues for the College to **RELEASE** the Efficiency and Accountability (EA) Report, the Board of Governors to **RECONSIDER** the suspension of programs, and for the Ford government to **REINVEST** in Ontario colleges through stable public funding and transparency.



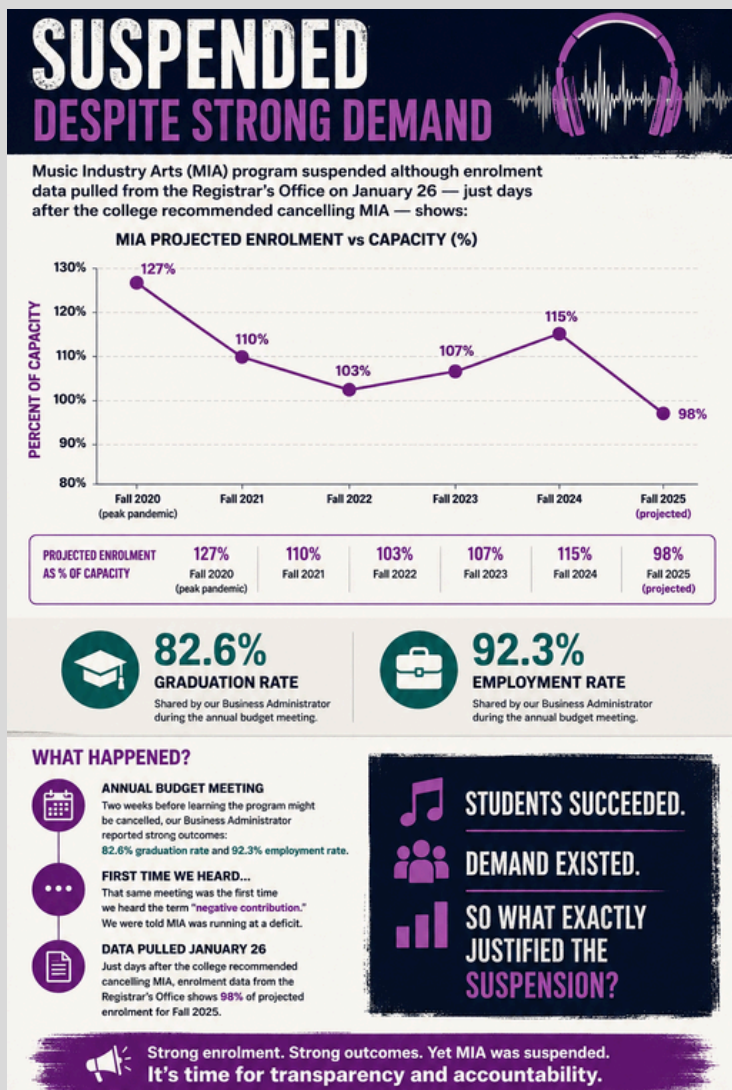
# Enrolment Strong, Graduation Rates High – So Why Was Music Industry Arts Cancelled?

By Colin Mills

Music Industry Arts wasn't just a program I coordinated and taught in for the past 16 years – it was part of my identity. I first proposed MIA to Algonquin in 2003, and after seven long years of research, proposal revisions, course outlines, advisory committees, learning all the AC acronyms, sourcing faculty, and even addressing the Board of Governors in person, we welcomed our first intake in Fall 2010. We were waitlisted nearly every fall for the first ten years and had built a great team of industry professionals willing to share their knowledge and experiences with students. This whole journey began 23 years ago, almost to the day.

When the pandemic disrupted post-secondary education, our enrollment dipped, but it still exceeded post-Day 10 net projections every year. In fact, data pulled from the Registrar's Office on January 26th – just days after the college recommended cancelling MIA – showed impressive projections.

The program also showed a 82.6% graduation rate and 92.3% employment rate as we heard about from our Business Administrator during our annual budget meeting – held just two weeks before learning the program might be cancelled. That same meeting was the first time we heard the term "negative contribution." We were told MIA was running at a deficit.



How was this possible, and why now? We hadn't made a new hire since 2019, hadn't made a large capital equipment purchase since 2013, and our enrollment had been consistent. Any new equipment or software was purchased using incidental fees collected from students. Our Business Administrator didn't have all the data at that meeting but said he would investigate and follow up. A week later, he resigned.

During the January 23rd Town Hall, I asked the executive team whether the individual program metrics being presented to the Board of Governors could be shared with the program coordinators. I received a non-answer, though I was told the "program health dashboard" was "making its way through the Deans, Chairs, and Program Coordinators." I've asked multiple times since and never received anything.

We had been assured at the Town Hall and in college communications that nothing was final, and that these were only recommendations to the Board of Governors. Yet it appeared the college had effectively made the decision for the Board and cut off any possibility of new applicants for these 30 programs. Was this a mistake? Was the Board of Governors aware that their upcoming vote would be rendered meaningless?

After reaching out to my Chair – who also seemed surprised – she confirmed with the Registrar's Office that the programs recommended for suspension had been marked as closed on OCAS. No explanation was given.

On Saturday, January 24th, I received an email from a prospective student who had been on the OCAS website. It included the line: "When I try to submit an application, it says that the courses are not available." When I checked myself, OCAS was showing Music Industry Arts – Fall 2026 as "Closed." I then checked several other programs included in the recommendation – all closed. This is when the anger set in.

After 37 programs were suspended in 2025, I knew anything was possible given the broken provincial funding model, but I felt our program was safe. At our June 2025 Convocation, our Dean mentioned wanting to discuss the space vacated by the recently cancelled Radio Broadcasting program for potential use by MIA – suggesting expansion. We were preparing to launch a Winter 2026 intake, and a new program promotional video was scheduled to be filmed on January 27th, just days after the announcement. None of that came to pass, but it had given me some comfort that the department was at least looking toward MIA's future.

When the announcement came, members of our industry and Program Advisory Committee mobilized immediately. They were concerned about the impact the cancellation would have on the industry. We don't teach "music" – we train audio engineers, help creatives monetize their art, and supply a skilled workforce pipeline that drives venues, festivals, arenas, and audio production facilities. Within days, an open letter to the Board of Governors was signed by the Ottawa Music Industry Coalition, the Ottawa Festival Network, the Canadian Live Music Association, and local production company Optimal Show Experience (OSE), which has hired over 65 MIA alumni.



One of the most common explanations for program cuts is something called "contribution margin." A contribution margin is the tuition revenue left after paying the direct costs of teaching a program. If money remains, the program is helping support the college financially. But then things get complicated. Colleges often add "allocated fixed costs" afterward – things like buildings, administration, and institution-wide services. Those costs don't disappear if a program closes. In fact, remaining costs are often redistributed across the programs still standing. That means a program can cover its own teaching costs, attract students, and still be labelled "unsustainable" once overhead is assigned to it on paper. This is why contribution margin is controversial in post-secondary budgeting. It can be used selectively to justify decisions that are ultimately about restructuring, downsizing, or shifting institutional priorities.

If a program covers the cost of teaching students, the program itself is not the problem. Closing programs shrinks the college. It does not fix the underlying financial issue.

The music and entertainment industry in Ottawa will feel the effects of Algonquin's decision to close Music Industry Arts. Future students will no longer have the opportunity to learn the specialized skills we taught or explore the career paths available to them.

I have given everything to my role as coordinator and professor in this program since day one. For over a decade, I have volunteered with the Ottawa Music Industry Coalition – not as part of my job, but to build a strong community for MIA alumni and stay connected to what's happening beyond the classroom. I proudly attend student and alumni events, and I'm even prouder when I show up to perform with one of my bands at a festival, arena, or club and spot MIA alumni working the event.

When the heartbreak finally softens, I'll look back with immense pride on the 16 years we spent building something that mattered – on the lives changed, the careers launched, and the community strengthened. But I will always carry the question of why something so vital was allowed to end.

**Editor's Note:** Music Industry Arts was among 38 programs suspended by Algonquin College following a single consolidated vote in February 2026.

# Pre-Health Program Closures are Ill-Considered

By Jean Timbury

After almost 40 years of teaching in preparatory programs at Algonquin College (I retired this past fall), I am deeply saddened by the College's lack of foresight in closing yet another pathway to success for young people in our communities.

Algonquin's Pre-Health programs have been, by any measure, a resounding success. They grew from an annual cohort of 70 students in 2001, when the program was known as General Arts and Science or "GAS" Pre-Health, to 772 students in 2025. Over 25 years, almost 10,000 students have registered in the program. Many of these students have gone on to successful careers in a range of health-related professions. Others have found their calling in different fields but credit Pre-Health with putting them on a pathway to further education and helping them find their footing in the world. Isn't this what college is supposed to do?

So what is Pre-Health? Formally, the programs are called Pre-Health Pathways to Advanced Diplomas and Degrees and Pre-Health Pathways to Certificates and Diplomas. It is a bit of a mouthful, but the word "pathways" is key to understanding what they are all about. Each program offers two semesters focused on building the skills needed to enter further post-secondary training.

Students entering the program — some directly from high school, many with workplace experience — often have gaps in their knowledge of science, communication, and how to learn in a post-secondary environment. They graduate ready for the rigours and challenges of their next steps, feeding into the health programs so needed by our communities. This year alone, students have submitted more than 650 applications to over 30 Algonquin College programs for Fall 2026.

Graduates access articulation agreements with Algonquin College programs including Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Cardiovascular Technology, Dental Hygiene, Medical Radiation Technology, Occupational Therapy Assistant/Physiotherapy Assistant, Paramedic, Practical Nursing, Respiratory Therapy, and Veterinary Technician. Externally, their credentials are recognized and credited by Queen's University's Bachelor of Health Sciences program and the University of Ottawa's Bachelor of Health Sciences and Bachelor of Human Kinetics programs. For Fall 2026, there are currently 789 applicants to Pre-Health, and another 410 students applied for entry this spring. As one graduate asked me last week, "What happens now to students like me?"

Graduates tell their stories most eloquently. We recently heard from RNs working in operating rooms, NICUs, stroke units, and emergency departments; a paramedic in a supervisory position with Ottawa Paramedic Service; a practical nurse with 10 years of experience in palliative care; a nutritionist working in quality control and product development at a distillery; and a corporate medical representative and First Nations support worker.

Without exception, they described how the support, encouragement, and skills developed through Pre-Health changed their lives. They spoke of returning to school uncertain of their direction and lacking the skills to move forward.

The College indicates that the program is closing because of financial concerns and because it does not lead directly to the labour market. But the numbers tell a different story.

"The Pre-Nursing program was amazing for individuals like myself who had a passion for health and health sciences but did not have the right credentials to enter practical or registered nursing programs directly. As a First Nations person from Quebec, this was essential to my transition from high school into post-secondary education."

They show a program that is in demand, achieves success, and serves a clear need by providing students with a two-semester bridge to build skills, address readiness gaps, and prepare for the College's most expensive and highly regulated programs, where late-stage attrition is both costly and disruptive.

In a corridor-funded environment, that kind of stability supports a more efficient use of resources and helps protect the sustainability of core health programs. Applications to the program have climbed steadily over the past four years, from 1,701 in 2022 to 2,160 in 2025. Day 10 enrolment figures have shown similar growth, rising from 691 in 2021 to 772 in 2025.

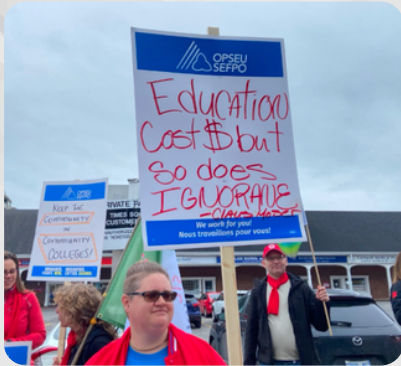
Learners include Indigenous students, first-generation learners, newcomers, and those returning to education – the very students most vulnerable to being left behind without the scaffolded approach that Pre-Health provides.

Graduate and RN Sara Flatla says it best:

“Programs like Pre-Nursing don’t just produce students who can pass exams; they create access. They catch capable, motivated people who might otherwise fall through the cracks of traditional academic pathways. Cutting a program like this doesn’t just reduce options – it quietly closes doors for future nurses before they even know those doors exist.”

Is anyone listening?

# PRE-HEALTH PROGRAMS MATTER



On April 30th, members, students, and supporters gathered outside MPP Nolan Quinn's Cornwall office as part of a province-wide day of action calling for investment and transparency in Ontario's college system.

Supporters travelled from across Eastern Ontario and beyond, with strong turnout, honking support from passing drivers, and solidarity actions taking place across the province – including the larger “All Out for Education” rally in Peterborough.

Speakers from multiple colleges reflected on what's at stake: accessible local education, affordable pathways for students, and a public college system that supports the next generation.

JOIN US TO RALLY FOR EDUCATION, AND SAY

# NO WAY NOLAN!

12 PM  
29TH APR

But you guys, I totally fixed education!



120 SECOND ST W,  
CORNWALL, ON

PRIZES FOR BEST SIGN!  
WEAR RED!

EMAIL  
COMMS@LOCAL  
LINES.ORG  
FOR DETAILS



# An Historic Weekend for Part-time/Sessional Faculty

By Gabriela Lopez

On May 23rd and 24th, 2026, the OPSEU CAAT-A Part-time/Sessional (PT/SL Faculty) hosted its FIRST-EVER Divisional meeting!

This Divisional meeting marks a historic milestone, laying the foundation for the future. During the meeting, the first Part-time/Sessional Load (PT/SL) Divisional Bylaws were approved, and the six members of the Precarious Work Committee were elected. There were discussions and conversations about our colleges' working conditions, common experiences and differences, and experience-sharing on the importance of job security, wages, and actions to strengthen this division.

We agreed that unionization means we have the legal and organizational structure to be represented and negotiate, but that does not mean there are quick fixes. The process takes time and requires our members' engagement.

PT/SL Faculty Delegates and alternates, and representatives of the Divisional Executive and Bargaining Teams of PT/SL and FT/PL Faculty, and PT/SL and FT/PL Support were present, and are working together.

It is important to remember that, after decades of hard work, PT/SL Faculty were not able to unionize until April 2025. The Divisional Executive and Bargaining Teams for this division were elected at the Pre-bargaining conference in June 2025, and the Bargaining team confirmed dates to meet with the College Employer Council (CEC) on April 28 and 29, May 27, and June 2, 2026.

If you are a PT/SL professor, instructor or librarian, we invite you to get involved by attending meetings, joining committees or volunteering. Do you have questions or want to have a conversation? Want to share your own experience with your local? Connect with us. Send me an email to [officeratlarge@opseulocal415.org](mailto:officeratlarge@opseulocal415.org).



# CONNECT WITH US

## Local 415 Executive Officers

Tracy Henderson - President ([president@opseulocal415.org](mailto:president@opseulocal415.org))  
Judy Puritt - 1st Vice-President ([firstvp@opseulocal415.org](mailto:firstvp@opseulocal415.org))  
Liz Von Moos - 2nd Vice-President ([secondvp@opseulocal415.org](mailto:secondvp@opseulocal415.org))  
Gabriela Lopez - Officer-at-Large ([officeratlarge@opseulocal415.org](mailto:officeratlarge@opseulocal415.org))  
Melissa Spears - Lead Steward ([leadsteward@opseulocal415.org](mailto:leadsteward@opseulocal415.org))  
Jordan Berard - Secretary ([secretary@opseulocal415.org](mailto:secretary@opseulocal415.org))  
Patrick Kostiw - Treasurer ([treasurer@opseulocal415.org](mailto:treasurer@opseulocal415.org))



## Local 415 Stewards

Ala' Qadi, Buno Rocha, Calvin Climie, Carl O'Toole, Carolyn Côté, Charles Lynch, David Mowat, Don Moen, Doug Blad, Eric Torunski, Geraldine Dion St. Pierre, Greg Mapp, Howard Rosenblum, Islam Gomaa, Jamie Baynes, Kim Bosch, Landyn Blais, Louise Boudreault, Maher Mounzer, Malek E Kouzi, Marisa Spicer, Melanie Smith, Mridul Dubey, Nicole Priatel, Oumel Sallahi, Robin Potts, Shawn Anthony, Shelley Robertson, Susan Stranks, Tanya Hawley, Taofiq Al-Faesly, Tony Bejjani

**General Questions/Comments:** [comms@locallines.org](mailto:comms@locallines.org)

**Health and Safety (JOHS):** [healthandsafety@opseulocal415.org](mailto:healthandsafety@opseulocal415.org)

**Accommodations:** [accommodations@opseulocal415.org](mailto:accommodations@opseulocal415.org)

**Big thank you to everyone who contributed to this issue.**

**Special thanks to Jack Wilson and Jordan Berrard for their invaluable proofreading services.**

**Want to know what's going on in real time?**



**FOLLOW US  
ON  
SOCIAL MEDIA!**

