

Algoma  
UNIVERSITY

MARCH 2020

PRESIDENT'S  
REPORT





# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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The past few months have been marked by continued institutional progress mixed with unprecedented challenge. As we were actively moving forward with a number of key strategic initiatives, including the finalization of our Campus Master Plan (CMP), the COVID-19 pandemic forced us to immediately refocus our collective efforts to ensure the health and well-being of all members of our community while finding alternative means to support short- and long-term student success.

As I write, we continue to respond to the evolving situation and have successfully transitioned to an “Essential Services Only” campus operations model in Brampton, Sault Ste. Marie and Timmins that will continue into the immediate future. I am confident that by continuing to work positively and collaboratively, we will keep people within our community safe while ensuring that the academic needs of our students are met. These remain our top priorities over the short-term as we work alongside the Ontario government to support the public health care system to “flatten the curve” in the global strategy to reduce the overall impact of COVID-19.

Although this situation is forcing the creation of a “new normal”, we must continue to follow our long-term strategy, guided by our core institutional priorities. During their February retreat, the Algoma University Board of Governors (supported by members of the Senate Executive and Senior Leadership Team) re-examined our five institutional priorities. Although we will make some minor adjustments as we navigate our path to success heading into 2020-21, the initiatives currently underway will continue to be our focus.

This month’s report highlights key accomplishments since January for each current priority, while reinforcing related initiatives moving forward over the coming months. In all cases, we are ensuring such activity aligns with the content emerging from the CMP. The Campus Development Committee has extended the timeframe for the completion of the final CMP to align with the Board’s Annual General Meeting in June.

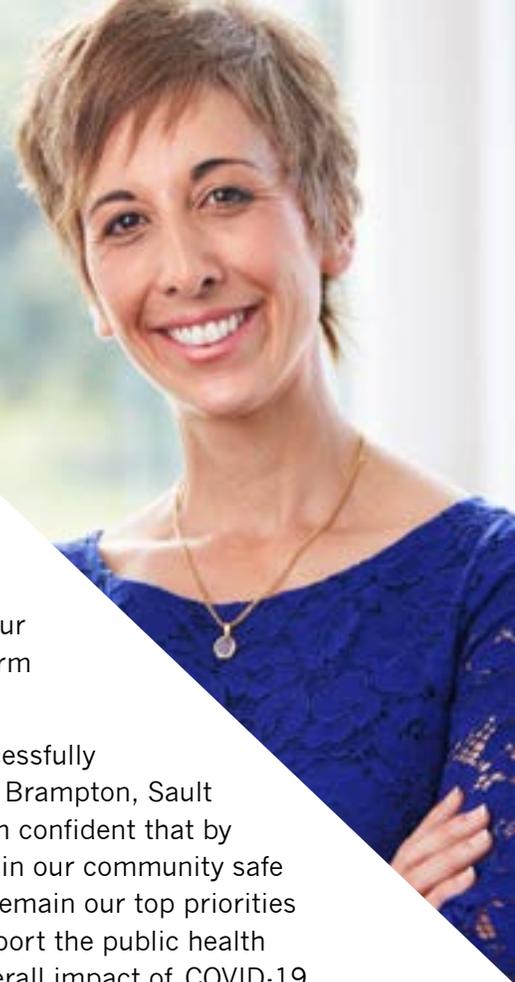
With the support of an ever-growing number of partners, as well as all levels of government, the positive short- and long-term economic and social impact Algoma has on the communities we serve continues to grow.

In closing, I want to thank our faculty, staff, and students for their support during this unprecedented time in our history. I also thank the Board and Senate for their continued leadership; it is making a positive difference.

*Chi-Miigwech - thank you!*



Asima Vezina, *President and Vice-Chancellor*



# ENHANCING THE OVERALL STUDENT EXPERIENCE

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Although the COVID-19 situation has resulted in a reprioritization of efforts to address the immediate needs of our students, Algoma continues to move forward with long-term plans to renovate a number of existing spaces to improve the efficiency of the space, as well as the academic and non-academic experiences of our students.

Development of new spaces in Sault Ste. Marie and Brampton to support the growth of our new School of Computer Science and Technology are underway. This is one of the fastest growing programs at the University. The new facilities will be critical to the Computer Science program, but will support and provide exceptional facilities to all students and faculty in the University. Funds provided by the City of Brampton will support the Brampton campus expansion.

Planning continues in Sault Ste. Marie on the redesign of the Speakeasy as well as relocation of the AUSU office and campus bookstore. The funding for the Speakeasy has been allocated by AUSU and it is expected the project will move forward in the near future.

Our recent Brampton Campus Showcase allowed community partners, including the Mayor and other political and educational leaders in Brampton, an exclusive opportunity to view the progress made to date by the School of Business and Economics and the School of Computer Science and Technology; as well as the chance to see the new home for the Centre of Social, Cultural and Economic Innovation. There was a lot of excitement by the community to see the opportunities this will bring to both local and international students, as well as the overall impact on the community.

In Brampton, we are actively planning the layout of our new Student Life Centre as part of our overall expansion. We anticipate these areas will also be complete in time for Fall 2020 start-up. All efforts are being guided by the Campus Master Planning consultation that occurred at both campuses.





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# STRATEGIC ENROLMENT MANAGEMENT

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The Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) Committee and Senior Leadership Team continue to focus on long-term solutions while attempting to minimize short-term pressures.

Our strategic focus in this area include:

- Supporting academic expansion currently underway in Brampton
- Further diversification of international enrolment
- Development and delivery of online programming
- Enhanced retention strategy development

Some SEM related highlights from the past two months include:

- New partnership agreements with Beaconhouse School System (BSS) in Pakistan
- Pathway agreement signing with Cambrian College (6 pathways), working through final approvals with Conestoga College (2 pathways), and Centennial College (11 pathways)
- Updated partnership agreement with ApplyBoard - International Recruitment Agency
- Establishment of [Northern Business Fundamentals Co-Registration initiative](#), partnership of all Northern Ontario Colleges and Universities supported by the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT)



# MOVING FORWARD WITH INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENTS TO TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION AND THE UNIVERSITY'S SPECIAL MISSION

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The work being done to support our Special Mission continues to be of critical importance to our strategic initiatives and long-term goals.

## **Key areas of focus continue to include:**

- Building and strengthening community relationships
- Integrating the seven Grandfather Teachings
- Positioning Algoma U and partners Shingwauk Kinooamaage Gamig (SKG), Shingwauk Education Trust (SET) and Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association (CSAA) as national leaders in the work being done on truth, healing and reconciliation

The continued increase in awareness of Algoma's leadership role in this area, including global recognition, would not be possible without the tremendous work being done by our Anishinaabe Initiatives Division (AID) and Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre (SRSC) teams.

## **Recent activities of note include:**

- Assuming a lead role in the successful hosting of meetings with Deputy Premier and key Provincial Ministers to raise awareness of priority initiatives including the;
  - National Training Centre
  - Ontario Mental Health and Addictions Research and Training Institute - in partnership with Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM), the Sault Area Hospital (SAH), Shingwauk Kinooamaage Gamig (SKG) and Sault College.
- SRSC was recognized by the City of Sault Ste. Marie with a [Municipal Heritage Award](#).
- SRSC was recognized as "[Best Cultural Organisation](#)" at International LCD Berlin Awards Ceremony
- Successful hosting of the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Gathering at the Rapids Pow Wow
- Although the current COVID-19 situation has forced the cancellation of all University sponsored events until at least May 1<sup>st</sup>, planning continues for an event to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Residential School closure; currently scheduled for July 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup>.







# ENHANCED WORKPLACE READINESS AND INCREASED EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS

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**The Experiential Learning (EL) team, with increased collaboration from those associated with the Office of Research and Innovation, continues to focus on the:**

- Development, evaluation and improvement of signature EL programming for all campuses
- Nurturing partnerships with faculty and employers to build quality and breadth of opportunity for students
- Expansion of the quality and quantity of course-based EL in all disciplines
- Development of outcome-based action plans for graduate employment, recruitment, and retention
- A few recent highlights in support of these objectives includes:
- A few recent highlights in support of these objectives includes:
  - Student EL excursion to our newest US partner school, Emory & Henry College, located in Virginia
  - Successful Student Leadership Conferences in Sault Ste. Marie (hosted in Garden River) and Brampton
  - Speed Networking night supported by RBC FutureLaunch

The Experiential Learning team is actively examining the impacts of COVID-19 on student placement and other EL activities and is committed to identifying solutions that are in the best interests of our students and the University.



# OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

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Efforts to support ongoing improvements to improve operational efficiency and administrative practices continue to be a focus of the Office of the Vice President of Finance and Operations and the broader Leadership Team. In particular, the Financial Services team continues to make progress on the automation of processes and refinements of policies and procedures to modernize past practice.

The 2020-21 budget development process is well underway, with the final budget moving forward for approval by the Board of Governors on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Board Finance and other stakeholder groups are being consulted as per budget development timelines.

Recent highlights that reinforce the outcomes of our efforts to support organizational excellence include:

- Algoma U received 3 of 7 awards announced during the annual Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre's SSMart Awards Gala. Winners included:
  - Innovative Project of the Year – SRSC for Reclaiming Shingwauk Hall
  - Innovative Youth of the Year – Jake Alphonso (AU Biology Student)
  - Women in Leadership Award – President and Vice-Chancellor, Asima Vezina
- Following a presentation by our Provost and Academic Dean, Dr. Donna Rogers, Algoma was voted in as the newest member of the [University of the Arctic](#) co-operative network
- Algoma's faculty continue to showcase their research and artistic talents through articles in academic journals, public art exhibits, and concerts. One recent example is the release of Dr. Warren Johnston's new book, [National Thanksgivings and Ideas of Britain, 1689-1816](#)
- SRSC Director, Elizabeth Edgar-Webkamigad, was nominated for the SSM Chamber of Commerce's annual Athena Award as well as Indigenous Professional of the Year (note, awarded to Mitch Case from our partners at Shingwauk Kinooamaage Gamig)
- President Vezina received the Chamber of Commerce President's Award which recognizes someone who makes an exceptional effort, going above and beyond the call of duty, in any area of business and community development
- Five members of the Algoma University Thunderbirds Wrestling team competed at the [2020 USports National Wrestling Championships](#) hosted by Brock University with Brody Collison (54 KG) taking home a Bronze medal
- The Thunderbirds Athletics Department successfully hosted the 2020 OUA Nordic Ski Championships at Hiawatha Highlands
- Dr. Teni Araba was a keynote speaker at the ACCANO Black History Celebration

The impact of COVID-19 on institutional finances and risk management factors are paramount during this period. We continue to analyze these impacts in relation to all plans moving forward.





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