

college administrator

The professional journal for Ontario college administrators | Vol. 19 No. 2 | Fall/Winter 2024

The *People* Issue

OCMT

Ontario Colleges Math Test

IS NOW

ALSM

Assessment & Learning
for Success in Mathematics

DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENTS

Identify strengths and areas for improvement

Project includes 24 publicly funded colleges and 72 district school boards in Ontario.

24
Colleges

UPGRADING MODULES

Elevate math skills through interactive modules

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS

Demonstrate proficiency and ensure mastery of Skills

10
years

Built upon 10 years of research.

 Vretta | vryx

Reach out to learn more.
info@vrettalvryx.com | vrettalvryx.com



contents

Vol. 19 No. 2 | Fall/Winter 2024



4 President's Message



8 Upcoming OCASA Events

9 The People Issue: Meet the New College Leaders

12 Durham's Barrett Centre of Innovation in Sustainable Urban Agriculture

29 Spotlight on New Beginnings for International Students

The PDF version of this digital magazine
can be found on our website at <https://ocasa.on.ca>.

**OCASA
APACO**

*Connecting, supporting and advancing
management and leadership in Ontario colleges.*

OCASA Executive

PRESIDENT Tammy Mackey

Campus Manager,
Haileybury Campus, Northern College

VICE PRESIDENT Michelle Tait Eburne

Association Chair, School of Business
and Hospitality, Algonquin College

TREASURER Barry Waite

Executive Dean, Faculty of Media,
Art & Design, Durham College

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Erin Roberts

866-742-5429 ext. 101

Editorial Board

Nicole Drake

Chair, Community Services
Conestoga College Institute of
Technology & Advanced Learning

Kurt Muller

Dean, Faculty of Communication, Art & Design at
Seneca, and Campus Principal, Seneca@York Campus

Marie Nathalie Moreau

Director, Diversity and Talent Development, La Cité College

Greg Yantz

Dean, Academic Quality and
Strategic Integration, Fanshawe College

OCASA

65 Overlea Blvd., Suite 240, Toronto, ON M4H 1P1
Phone: 866-742-5429 Fax: 866-742-5430
Email: info@ocasa.on.ca www.ocasa.on.ca

Published by
Craig Kelman
ASSOCIATES



Third Floor - 2020 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, MB R3J 0K4
Phone: 866-985-9780 Fax: 866-985-9799
Email: info@kelman.ca www.kelman.ca

Managing Editor: Monique Doyle
Design/Layout: Dani Goulet
Advertising Sales: Jeff Kutny
Advertising Coordinator: Stefanie Hagidiakow

*All rights reserved. The contents of this publication may not be reproduced
in whole or in part without the express consent of the publisher.*

LEADERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Tammy Mackey, OCASA President



We are pleased to share the Fall/Winter 2024 issue of *College Administrator* magazine with you. This magazine is *The People Issue*. In the pages that follow, you will meet three of the new Ontario college presidents: Elaine Popp at Durham College, Paul Armstrong at Mohawk College, and Lynn Casimiro at Collège La Cité. All three college presidents share their professional experiences and discuss their priorities as they settle in to their new roles this year.

College Administrator magazine also puts the spotlight on three international students in Ontario, their thoughts on the supports available, and what the future holds for them.

Thank you to everyone who shared their time and their stories – this magazine would not be possible without you.

As always, we want to continue to connect with our members on topics that are relevant to them. Please reach out any time with story ideas, exciting program news, and celebrations from your colleges.

As a member of our association, you are an important part of the OCASA community. Connect with OCASA on LinkedIn at www.linkedin.com/company/ontario-college-administrative-staff-association-ocasa-.

On behalf of the OCASA Board of Directors, we appreciate the work that you all do and wish you a successful year ahead. ■

Tammy Mackey,

Campus Manager, Haileybury Campus, Northern College
mackeyt@northern.on.ca



oecm

The Marketplace

COLLEGES: WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED

End-User Computing Devices and Services,
Software License Products and Related Services,
Networking Products and Related Services,
Custodial Supplies and Equipment,
Office Space Furniture and Related Services, and more!

Visit the OECM Marketplace.
<https://oecm.ca/marketplace>

OECM is a trusted not-for-profit collaborative sourcing partner for Ontario's education sector, broader public sector, and other not-for-profit organizations. Contact us to learn more:

Customer Hotline: 1-844-OECM (6326)-900
General Inquiries: (647) 800-8811 | **Website:** <https://oecm.ca>
Address: 2 Lansing Square, Suite 200 Toronto, Ontario, M2J 4P8
@OECMCollaborate | <https://www.linkedin.com/oecm>

LES LEADERS SOUS LES FEUX DE LA RAMPE

Tammy Mackey, Présidente de l'APACO



Nous avons le plaisir de vous présenter le numéro d'automne/hiver 2024 du magazine *College Administrator*. Ce magazine est l'édition axée sur les gens. Dans les pages qui suivent, vous rencontrerez trois des nouveaux présidents des collèges de l'Ontario : Elaine Popp au Durham College, Paul Armstrong au Mohawk College et Lynn Casimiro au Collège La Cité. Ces trois présidents de collèges partagent leurs expériences professionnelles et discutent de leurs priorités alors qu'ils s'installent dans leurs nouvelles fonctions cette année.

Le magazine *College Administrator* met aussi en lumière trois étudiants internationaux en Ontario, de même que leurs opinions sur le soutien disponible et ce que l'avenir leur réserve.

Merci à ceux et celles qui ont partagé leur temps et leurs histoires. Ce magazine ne serait pas possible sans vous.

Comme toujours, nous voulons continuer de former des liens avec nos membres sur des sujets pertinents pour eux. N'hésitez pas à communiquer avec nous pour nous faire part d'idées d'articles, de nouvelles sur des programmes passionnants et de célébrations au sein de vos collèges.



Merci à ceux et celles qui ont partagé leur temps et leurs histoires. Ce magazine ne serait pas possible sans vous.



En tant que membre de notre association, vous êtes un élément important de la communauté de l'APACO. Communiquez avec l'APACO sur LinkedIn : www.linkedin.com/company/ontario-college-administrative-staff-association-ocasa-.

Au nom du conseil d'administration de l'OCASA, nous apprécions le travail que vous faites, et nous vous souhaitons une nouvelle année scolaire pleine de succès. ■

Tammy Mackey,
gestionnaire de campus, campus de Haileybury,
Northern College
mackeyt@northern.on.ca



Are you lost when it comes to retirement planning?



We've packaged our most popular retirement planning resources to help you prepare for retirement with confidence. Additionally, we are happy to work with you to provide free customized materials and workshops for your team.

Download our resources at rtoero.ca/retirement-bundle
Request customized resources at media@rtoero.ca



To support education employees nearing retirement, start with 'quick wins'

Focus on employee well-being is a competitive advantage

You'd be hard-pressed to find an education organization in Canada not currently grappling with looming staffing issues – and the challenge isn't unique to education. According to [Statistics Canada](#), more than 21% of the workforce is within the 55- to 64-year-old age bracket – an all-time high.

A retirement boom is upon us. What does this mean for education leadership? It's time for a shift in thinking, says veteran education leader Jim Grieve, former assistant deputy minister of education in Ontario and now CEO of RTOERO, a national non-profit dedicated to supporting education workers and retirees.

"As educational leaders, we're responsible for creating experiences for the students we serve," says Grieve. "The quality of those experiences hinges almost entirely on the systems we set up and how we nurture the people who make those experiences happen – the staff. We advise organizations to follow the data and start with quick wins."

Grieve suggests beginning with what the workforce says it wants. For the last two years, RTOERO has [surveyed future retirees from the education sector](#), most of whom are within five years of retirement. They're clear about what they're interested in when it comes to retirement planning: practical support.

"Overwhelmingly, respondents told us they want information about health insurance options for retirement and support with practical to-do tasks to prepare," says Grieve. "This is something employers can do very easily, and it's an area we can help with at RTOERO."

RTOERO, Canada's largest provider of non-profit group health insurance for education workers and retirees, has been building up its [resource library](#) to make it easier for education workers to get that practical support. Its popular [retirement planning bundle](#) has been downloaded thousands of times in the last few months. And RTOERO is reaching out to colleges, universities, and other educational institutions to offer support in bringing practical tools to their workforce.

While it might seem counterintuitive to help employees prepare for retirement, Grieve cautions leaders not to think about it like that. "We should be supporting employees across all stages of their careers and life cycle – focusing on employee well-being is a competitive advantage in this market."

While retirement is often billed as an exciting time, there can be much stress leading up to it. Personal and financial stress can lead to distraction at work and other issues.

Financial stress may cause some workers to delay retirement, and others are planning to continue working

in retirement. Over 55% of respondents to the 2024 [Future Retirees Survey](#) said they plan to continue working full- or part-time, which could present an opportunity for forward-thinking leaders. With the retirement boom, the sector will also face challenges with knowledge transfer.

"We're living longer, healthier lives, and so there are many possibilities for what can come after retirement," says Grieve. "We know from RTOERO members that many will find part-time opportunities within education. Recognizing that your workers are looking for opportunities, education leaders can consider how they might use this reality to meet organization needs – through part-time mentorship programs, for example."

Grieve suggests also focusing on another significant area related to the aging labour force: workplace ageism. Ageism is one of the critical issues RTOERO is tackling through its advocacy efforts with partners. "Age diversity is an asset in an organization. We need to ensure we're fostering environments where older workers feel valued," explains Grieve. "Ageism should be included in your DEI work. Older workers bring experience that's essential to successful teams."

The retirement boom won't last forever, and Grieve points out that how organizations handle the shift that's underway will shape their future success. Statistics Canada suggests a higher labour force participation rate among those 50 and older could reduce the impact on the labour force. "It's an unprecedented time – we know our population is aging, and those aged 15 to 64 will make a smaller proportion of the overall population, even with immigration," says Grieve. "If your organization isn't evolving, it'll fall behind. We can embrace this challenge and keep Canada's education system one of the best in the world."



RTOERO

About RTOERO

RTOERO is a bilingual trusted voice on healthy, active living in the retirement journey for

the broader education community. With 85,000+ members in 51 districts across Canada, we are the largest national provider of non-profit group health benefits for education workers and retirees. We welcome members who work in or are retired from the early years, schools and school boards, post-secondary and any other capacity in education. We believe in a better future, together!

Your membership is free until you retire. Learn more at rtoero.ca. ■

Upcoming OCASA Events



Thank you to all who joined us recently at the OCASA regional events that took place at Conestoga College and Centennial College!

Please join us at our upcoming events:

- October 2: High-Level Leaders Panel at Cambrian College (in-person, open to all administrators)
- October 22: Regional event at Algonquin College (in-person, open to all administrators)
- Fall 2024: HR Leaders panel discussion (virtual)

For the most recent information on our upcoming events, please visit:
News – OCAN Ontario College Administrators Network (ocasa.on.ca)



The *People* Issue

Meet the New College Leaders

By Monique Doyle



Elaine Popp
Durham College



Paul Armstrong
Mohawk College



Lynn Casimiro
Collège La Cité

Four new Ontario college presidents have taken up the reins in 2024: Elaine Popp at Durham College, Paul Armstrong at Mohawk College, Lynn Casimiro at Collège La Cité, and Mitch Dumas at Northern College. As internal hires, all four leaders were already well known on their respective campuses. OCASA is pleased to congratulate each of them on their new role.

College Administrator magazine recently connected with three of the new college presidents to learn about their career paths, their priorities, and what's on the horizon.





Photo courtesy of Durham College

Elaine Popp Durham College

Elaine Popp began her term as President of Durham College on March 1, 2024. She was previously the college's Executive Vice President Academic, for eight years. Popp holds a Doctor of Philosophy and a Bachelor of Science, Honours in Biology and Kinesiology from York University. She is passionate about post-secondary education, mentoring and leading by example, and helping students succeed. She says her interest in these areas began during her own time as a student.

"Witnessing firsthand, and then seeing it in others, the transformative power that education can have for both individuals as well as society has always been a North Star for me, if you will, or a motivating factor that pushed me in the direction of starting a career in post-secondary education many years ago. Early on in my career I had leaders who believed in me, invested in me, saw something in me, maybe that I didn't even see in myself. And they encouraged me, they supported me to pursue various leadership training opportunities and to throw my hat in for positions that I would never have had on my radar, quite frankly. And so having these strong mentors, and champions really, as I started my career was what made it possible for me to be sitting in this chair here today now," explains Popp.

In her nine years at Durham College, Popp says she has enjoyed working with the employees on the academic side of the house, and is now working more closely with staff across the organization and establishing new relationships. "Just having a chance, sitting in this new chair, to deepen my engagement with students, with all employees, with our community partners in ways and at levels. I've always certainly admired the dedicated and creative individuals that we have here both on campus as well as in our community. This is just a real privilege to now be in the position as President to be guiding and supporting the collective goal for Durham College. And I'm looking forward to building on the strong foundation that we have here already and working together to achieve even greater successes," she explains.

In her new role, Popp identifies two main items as her immediate goals.

"While I've been here for quite a few years now, I am still making a transition into this new role and consequently, to some degree, others are also transitioning. So for me, the challenge of the transition lies in making sure I'm listening responsively in new ways, sitting in the new chair, to the many voices and the messages that I'm hearing. And, making sure for as smooth

a transition as possible by staying connected to the community and keeping my ears wide open."

In addition, the college's five-year strategic plan is expiring in the spring of 2025. "We need to begin the consultation process for determining what our new strategic plan can look like so we can build an even more sustainable, people-focused, equity-driven, future-proof, and community-connected college," she says.

Popp acknowledges that Durham College, like all other colleges, is navigating the complexities of adapting to the changes brought on by the international student cap. Tied in with that, she points to financial management as another big challenge to tackle.

"Reduced funding from the government [...] that's both the grant as well as that reduction and then freeze in tuition. And then you couple that together with this international student cap. It's certainly contributing to very challenging financial situations for the colleges. You know, we're operating in a much more competitive environment as well. So, spending more money on marketing and recruitment has to happen, at a time where you're trying to navigate these rising operational costs

as it is.” Rising costs include inflation, strategic mandate agreements, and collective salary increases, she explains.

Changing Student Needs

Evolving student needs is another challenge Popp identifies. “Their expectations are changing and evolving, requiring more from their post-secondary institutions. The pandemic certainly brought to light very quickly different delivery modes – online and hybrid flexible learning options. Now we’re looking at using our digital teaching and learning technology in very intentional ways: what is best delivered in person versus online versus hybrid versus flexible, and coupling that with what makes the most sense with ensuring that we’re looking to make education even more accessible.”

Being nimble to respond to changing student demographics is something else that is both a challenge and an opportunity, says Popp. A growing number of indirect students at colleges means that students often have more responsibilities and life commitments. “They’re older students and many come with children, family obligations, mortgages, and even jobs, full-time jobs, while they’re trying to be full-time students as well,” she explains.

Popp adds: “We’re in a region here in Durham where we’re seeing college-age students, that population, starting to continue to grow. And so, figuring out, with a scarcity of classrooms and space on campus, what the right number of students is that we have on campus, and what the right percentage of international students to domestic students is. We are, I believe as far as Ontario goes, the college with either the second lowest, or lowest international student to total student enrollment. We’re at approximately 30%. And so making sure that we have enough space for both our international students that are wishing to come to study with us and our domestic students that are wishing to come to study with us. There are so many other challenges: inclusivity and

sustainability, and stronger focus on EDIB [equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging] and Indigenization. Ensuring equal opportunities are there for all students is something else that we’re continuing to focus on and wanting to focus even more strongly on.”

Popp says programs that support the mental health of staff and students are also vital. “Something else that the pandemic really focused our attention on is evolving our mental health supports. While maybe our core mission or core mandate is not to be a mental health provider, without providing mental health supports for students, they’re not able to focus on their studies. And *that* is our core mission, to provide them with the education they need to succeed. It’s finding that right balance and making sure they have access to those supports,” says Popp.



We need to make sure our curriculum is changing so that our students are learning how to use Gen AI in the future jobs that they’re going to have.

Keeping Up with Emergent Trends

Durham college recently launched some new applied degree programs. These new degrees include artificial intelligence, behavioural science, and community mental health. And with the ongoing skilled trades labour shortage, Durham College has launched a construction management degree. “And then maybe one last degree I will mention is our paralegal degree, developing future practitioners and providing them with the knowledge they need to apply to the Law Society of Ontario to become licensed paralegals,” adds Popp.

“Perhaps one of the trends that is most significantly impacting higher education and, well, pretty much every other field and discipline on the planet is generative AI, of course. So remaining adaptive and responsive to how Gen AI

is impacting us, we need to make sure our curriculum is changing so that our students are learning how to use Gen AI in the future jobs that they’re going to have. Putting it into our curriculum so that it becomes part of the learning outcomes of their programs. And then making sure faculty know how to use Gen AI – upskilling faculty [...] and determining what we can do more efficiently, more effectively to free us up for some of the other more student-facing, people-facing, creative parts of our jobs,” she says.

The Barrett Centre

“One of the other kind of unique projects or initiatives that we do have going here at Durham College is our Barrett Centre for Urban Agriculture. Thanks to a generous donation from the Barrett Family Foundation, we have

formed the Barrett Centre for Urban Agriculture, and its vision is to become an internationally recognized hub of excellence in urban agriculture practices, research, education, and training to address society’s challenge of food insecurity, and ensuring that we have access to safe and sustainable supplies of fresh food, and that we are using our land in ways that contribute to regeneration of land, and local food production,” says Popp.

The centre’s farm features a number of different innovative ways of farming including container farms, vertical growing, hoop houses, hydroponics, and aquaponics. This is the second year of a five-year grant that Durham College has with the Barrett Family Foundation. The college recently hosted an open house at the Barrett Centre, and there are tours available on a weekly basis.

The Barrett Centre of Innovation in Sustainable Urban Agriculture

Photo courtesy of Durham College



The Barrett Centre's vision is to become an internationally recognized hub of excellence in urban agricultural practices, research, education and training.



With a \$5-million donation from The Barrett Family Foundation, Durham College has established The Barrett Centre of Innovation in Sustainable Urban Agriculture.

"Durham College is a recognized leader in urban agriculture education. The vision to modernize and replicate their current model of urban farming into a regional, national and global entity is very impressive and innovative. Our investment in the college and creation of The Barrett Centre will allow them to scale their operations into a global hub for urban agriculture knowledge and best practices."

—Bob Barrett, The Barrett Family Foundation

The Barrett Centre's vision is to become an internationally recognized hub of excellence in urban agricultural practices, research, education and training, to address some of society's biggest challenges including food insecurity, access to safe and stable supplies of fresh food, and economic stability and regeneration of land for local food production.

It includes a new urban farm that will be developed as a community-based living lab, replicating and scaling the

successful farming operations already established at the college's Whitby campus as a model for other urban farms.

Barrett Centre Urban Agriculture Community Portal

Facilitated by Barrett Centre staff and experts, this community portal welcome teachers, students, community leaders, families, and individuals to support food security, education, innovation, and sustainability.

The Barrett Centre Urban Agriculture Community offers a space for community discussion, Knowledge Centre resource downloads, and the opportunity to ask an expert your specific questions. From stories on the blog to practical how-to guides, recipes for seasonal produce and horticulture education activities, there is a range of resources available.

<https://durhamcollege.ca/the-barrett-centre-of-innovation-in-sustainable-urban-agriculture>



Paul Armstrong

Mohawk College

Paul Armstrong began his role as President of Mohawk College on July 1, 2024. But Paul has a very long history and connection with Mohawk College. He was a student at Mohawk College in the late 1980s, then joined as a faculty member in 1992 in the Department of Medical Imaging, and later became the college's Chief Operating Officer, in 2020. Armstrong has a Master of Business Administration from Queens University and has completed the Advanced Management program from the Harvard Business School.

"I chose Mohawk to get my education in the area of medical imaging, radiology, and ultrasound. I came here for that and to work clinically. I was actually working in a large clinical teaching hospital and found that I really enjoyed the opportunity to be involved in the education process and helping people develop their own learning and then, shortly after that, I had an opportunity to teach some courses formally in the program that I graduated from. And again, it just sort of really solidified for me that as much as I enjoyed the work I was doing clinically and it was making an impact that, you know, it was a good match. I think I was a pretty decent educator; I think I was making an impact for people. And so I set my journey on

what I was going to do to become full-time faculty, and that opportunity arose. I don't think I ever thought in my wildest dreams that, well, I think where I want to culminate my career is the president of Mohawk College," Armstrong says.

"So far, the thing that I have enjoyed the most has just been the sort of support that I've received from the employees inside the college. You know, change is tough; no matter when that happens, change always creates uncertainty. But it feels like there's this really strong sense of relief in some way that, from the people that I've been working with for so long, I understand what we do. I think there's this real sense of energy right now and people are really open with me about that. The welcome and sort of the confidence that people have in me and that they've been telling me has been great," he adds.

Armstrong acknowledges that even as an internal hire to the role, there is always a period of transition with a new leader. "One thing I think you have to be careful with as an internal candidate is that you don't assume that you don't have any work to do around the relationships that you have within the organization. My first priority is I'm going to be going out and I'm going to be creating as many opportunities as I can

to hear directly from all of the employees around what's important to them, as we try and move our strategic plan forward, where should we be focusing, what barriers are they having to making the impact they want to. It's sort of a resetting [...] over the next couple of months," he says.

Changes, Challenges, and Opportunities

In the span of 30 years with Mohawk College, Armstrong has witnessed and experienced a lot of change.

"I would say that some of the biggest changes I've seen over [...] maybe 10 years or so, has been the role that Mohawk College is playing related to the broader community as more of a community partner outside of the educational role we've played. What hasn't changed is the commitment we make to the learners. What hasn't changed is how we respond and support our employers and our community around their workforce needs. But I've seen more lately that Mohawk, by setting some really aspirational goals, is making an impact more broadly. We made a commitment that we were going to do everything we could to advance climate action and sustainability. We're obviously doing that

in our own buildings, we're doing that in our programming, in our research. But we've actually leveraged that to create a national coalition, which is starting to help other colleges, other communities all across Canada do the same sort of work," he says.

Armstrong adds: "Where we think about the work we have committed to through Truth and Reconciliation, it's the same thing – we've developed a really strong internal culture around how we authentically engage and listen and make direction and develop our strategy from Indigenous ways of knowing and being. And that is now translated out into us having opportunities in the community more broadly," he adds.

The college is working on plans to significantly expand its health care programming, and other strategic areas. "Mohawk is heavily focused in health care programming. And we know

that meeting those workforce needs is going to be pretty important as we move forward. We are going to ensure that we actually do what we said we're going to do around launching a whole new school of climate action. And we have five new programs ranging from post-grad certificates to honours degrees that are all focused on both the sustainability from a policy perspective, the sustainability from a technology perspective. And then the other areas we're always looking at: how do we create capacity at our skilled trades and apprenticeship campus, because the evolution of areas of strengths we have around zero emission vehicles continues to be a focus. But we're large trainers in a lot of the construction trades and we know the pressures right now around creating more opportunities there. So that's another area that we're highly focused on," says Armstrong.

"We have some fairly immediate goals to sort of reinvigorate a whole bunch of programming to look at how do we address the needs that society has right now around artificial intelligence and machine learning, and cybersecurity. We actually have a suite of 10 new programs at the degree level just in those areas that we're now moving forward with approval processes," he adds.

Another challenge that Armstrong sees as an opportunity is how the needs of employers, the type of training available, and the way in which training is accessed is evolving. "We have typically, for the last 55 years, had programs where you bring people in at one point, they do education, it's great, they get opportunity, and then they go out into the workforce. And there will always be a place for that sort of formalized, credentialed, semester-driven, cohort-based education. But as things are

BRIDGING THE NUMERACY GAP

FORTIFYING FOUNDATIONS & BUILDING FUTURES!

Discover how Elevate My Math can prepare your students for success in math.

Reach out to learn more.
info@vrettalyrx.com
elevatemymath.com

ELEVATE MY MATH

Vretta | yrx

changing more quickly than ever before, it's that responsive need that we need to fill around: how do people get upskilled, how do they re-skill?" he says. "Because if the college system can't do that, the training will get done by somebody else. And I think that's the biggest challenge that we have to pay attention to."

Recent Restructuring at Mohawk

In addition to the development of Mohawk's new strategic plan, the Mohawk College Foundation recently completed a restructuring.

"Mohawk College has a mature and well developed foundation component. And the foundation, even though it aligned into Mohawk College proper, had always sort of been its own entity. We actually consolidated all of the operations of the Mohawk College Foundation back into the college. The previous president [Ron McKerlie] had sort of dual roles where they were

president of the college and president of the foundation, whereas now with it integrated my portfolio includes both. But for me, the nice part is that all of the foundation operations, all of the staff, are now part of Mohawk College proper. And so we start to have more opportunities around that collaboration, the integration of strategy," says Armstrong.

"It came into effect with my tenure starting on July 1, and we'll obviously have a little bit of work to do over the year, but it's been very, very positive so far," he explains.

Sharing the Story

Armstrong stresses the importance of continuing to share and publicize the value of college education.

"We need to continue to tell that story. And so for me, as someone who made a first-choice decision to choose a college education, because it's what I wanted to do, because it was going to

give me a career opportunity – and now to be able to in real time and in real life tell the story of the power that that had to get me into a great career within two years of finishing high school. To equip me with the other knowledge I needed to develop as a leader. And then now to be able to validate all of that as now the leader of an institution that continues to make that and be able to tell that story with true authenticity," he says.

"For me personally, it's an honour and a privilege to be able to take on this role, because I think I have a big responsibility and duty not just to make Mohawk the best we can be, but to make sure that I can continue to help tell the story, build the value, and create sort of the messaging that will hopefully drive more people to our colleges, create more opportunities for people to participate, and continue to build that sort of general sort of knowledge of how great our colleges in Ontario are," he adds.



Lynn Casimiro **Collège La Cité**

Lynn Casimiro took over as President and CEO of Collège La Cité on July 1, 2024. Casimiro's career includes being executive director of the Academic Health Council at the University of

Ottawa and director of education at the Institut de recherche at Montfort Hospital. In 2016, Casimiro became Vice President Academic at Collège La Cité. She holds a PhD in education from the

University of Ottawa and a certificate in public service management.

Casimiro's pathway to this leadership role was a bit different. "I'm a physiotherapist by background.

I worked in the healthcare field, and worked as a physiotherapist, but then later on as an adjunct professor at the University of Ottawa. I've always worked in French. For me, first and foremost is the fact that I'm a Franco-Ontarian. I've always worked in the defense of French language services, and did a lot of research in the field. And I ended up working at the Montfort Hospital, another organization that's dedicated to French language services."

"I had worked with the colleges, in terms of some of the work that I was doing at the time, with another organization that was called le Consortium National de Formation en Santé. It's a national organization that increases access to French language education for healthcare professionals. Because of that, I was in contact with many of the educational partners across the country, including La Cité. And so, when I worked at the Montfort Hospital, I was working again very, very closely with La Cité. I was helping the Montfort really take on its new academic mission – which meant more training for students, residents, medical, and allied professionals as well. We worked very, very closely with La Cité for all of their health programs," Casimiro explains.

When she joined Collège La Cité in 2016, Casimiro says she was "gobsmacked" at how fast, nimble, and responsive things could be at the college. "I was always impressed with how colleges seemed, in my mind, to have education right. The focus was on the students, and it was on making sure that they had employability skills. And it's something that I found lacking, I would say, when I was in a university setting. I found sometimes that when we were educating our students that we were losing track of why we were educating them for, which was eventually to become

productive members of society and work. And I really liked the fact that colleges were focused on that, and they were focused on the students first, whereas the universities were focused on the research and advancing knowledge first. That's really the premier mission of universities. But in colleges, it's like 'What does the learner need? And how can we help them realize their aspiration?' And it's all focused on society's needs and the workplace needs. I just found that there was this energy that was really interesting. When I ended up working at the college, well, it was what I anticipated – times 10."

In her new role as President and CEO, Casimiro continues to appreciate the teams she collaborates with. "I worked for eight and a half years as Vice President Academic, and we realized we achieved so much together. The teams were just fantastic and we did a whole sort of pedagogical transformation. We were able to move forward so many aspects of the academic side together, and the research side as well. It's a testament to the quality of the staff that we have, the engagement that they have within the organization, and even their creativity. So I just thought, 'I want to continue with this organization' and just had the pleasure of being selected as the new CEO. And for me, it's just, tapping into this wonderful team that we have and going further as an organization."

Balancing Priorities

Casimiro identifies a number of priorities for the college, and for colleges in general. One of her main goals is to look at La Cité's strategic direction and revisit it before it expires in 2026.

"But in the short term, there's some things that need to be looked at immediately. And that's the financing of colleges. With what happened with

the international students, the lack of public funds to fund colleges, the fact that we can't increase tuition fee, and we are capped in the ministry funding source. Colleges have to be creative and we have to be entrepreneurial and we have to find other sources of financing. And so it is a risk, and it's an immediate risk," she says.

Long-term viability will continue to be a challenge. "We are heading for financial crisis for all colleges in the system. That was already being looked at by my predecessor [Lise Bourgeois], but I need to continue keeping the teams focused on this and making sure that our strategic direction takes that into account. So that's the long-term viability of the college – our college, but the college system as a whole – that needs to be addressed immediately," says Casimiro.

Casimiro explains that colleges will need to remain viable because of the role they play in the economy and how they help address issues that are affecting Ontarians. Those issues of concern include housing, applied research towards innovative and more cost-effective ways of building, healthcare training to workers needed for long-term care, etc.

"We're working very, very closely, but that requires us to pivot really fast, because we have only a limited capacity of space. So we're coming up with living classrooms; we're doing remote learning to be able to use facilities elsewhere, to be able to train. These are sort of the priorities that we need to continue working on because they're the ones mattering to the workforce and to Canadians. And they are priorities that require us to refocus resources internally to make sure that we're prioritizing those things that are important to Canadians and Ontarians," she says.

If you have a suggestion for a profile you'd like to see in an upcoming issue of *College Administrator* magazine, please reach out and let us know: monique@kelman.ca.

La Cité's Competency-Based Learning Model

Collège La Cité is the only college in Ontario with a competency-based learning model, and Casimiro praises its success. "It took us seven years, but we transformed all of our programs so that they are competency-based. What it means is that we reverse engineer our program. So rather than saying 'We want the learner to be able to do this by the end of their program' or 'We want them to be able to learn this so they need to know this theory,' what we do is we basically say 'Okay, forget that.' But we go one step further and we say 'What are the employees looking for? What do [these students] need to be able to do? Never mind what we think they need to learn. What are they actually doing when they get into the workplace?' So we look at professional association sites. We look at job postings in the fields. We have members of the industry that make up this consultation committee that meet twice a year and make sure that our program is still well aligned with industry, and these committees are also consulted. And then we provide a report to the faculty members saying 'This is what learners need to be able to do in the workplace. So now restructure your program so that they're achieving that.'"

Casimiro explains that this model allows students to be put into authentic learning immediately within their program. As just a few examples of where the model has worked exceptionally well, Casimiro points to journalism and tech support training.

The transformation has also improved student retention and increased enrollment. "Our retention has gone from 70 some percent to 90%. It's amazing because the students see the relevance, and so they stay, and they continue their programs. That has had a huge impact on their retention and perseverance within the programs. And faculty members find the students are more engaged," says Casimiro.

"We're actually working with another college on using our approach to help with Indigenous learning. They want to

do authentic learning, but they found that the learning-outcomes approach wasn't fitting," she adds.

What's On the Horizon

Casimiro says that going forward it will be crucial for colleges to remain responsive to the marketplace as careers are evolving more rapidly than ever.

"AI is coming and we need to prepare now because it's going to take us four years to train these people. So that nimbleness is an issue. Another issue is the fact that learners are turning to go in and out of education as needed. We're still teaching in a very traditional way, in the sense that you're registering for a certificate, or diploma, or an advanced diploma, or a degree. And this is what you need to do. What we're seeing is so many [learners] want to say, 'Well, can we just do the first year for now? I need to go work for a bit and I'll come back and do a bit more.' But the way that we're structured as a college does not support that kind of delivery, I would say. And not because we don't want to, and not because we can't, but the financing is not supportive of that. Because the financing that we receive from the ministry is different for part-time learners than for full-time learners. And we do need to be able to help these learners because so many of them are indirect, they're coming back to colleges. It used to be the majority of our learners used to come directly from high school, now our majority of learners – and this is for the whole system – are coming as indirect [students]," she says.

"And of course, AI is an issue. The way we're delivering education has to evolve with that. Like I said, we're already on the right track. You can't be scared of AI; we need to be able to incorporate it. So how do you incorporate it as a tool? And we're working on that, on being able to use it as a tool for teaching, but also for the work that we do from an administrative perspective, and for faculty as well. Again, it becomes a tool in the toolbox for them to be able to do their work, but for that we need to provide them with what they need. So that AI is definitely here to stay and we need to make sure that we're

tapping into it properly. Otherwise the system is going to figure it out for us. And we don't want to do that," she says.

Casimiro is careful to identify two other issues of importance. "One part that colleges need to play right now, and need to continue to play more and more, is our role in Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. And it's a difficult one because when you look at the top things that worry Canadians it often isn't there, but it's a fundamental obligation that we have. I think we have to make sure that we don't lose sight of that, and our colleges play an important role with other post-secondary institutions. We need to make sure that we're playing our role seriously and not just paying lip service to it, but taking concrete actions together. There's a lot of beautiful work that's happening throughout the system. We just need to do more."

The other issue of importance, says Casimiro, is applied research. "Applied research has grown exponentially in colleges. And applied research has a direct economic impact on the communities that the colleges serve. It has had direct impact for our community." She adds: "I think the economic impact of what we're doing needs to be recognized more, and I think we have a role in making sure that it is and making sure that it's quantified. We're actually helping companies be better. We're helping companies with their processes, with products, and they are growing. And our students are contributing to that. You know, it's developing their entrepreneurial spirit, it's developing their creativity, it's developing their innovation. And so that, again, is feeding into the marketplace after. There's a lot of work that needs to be done there as well. And I think it's under-appreciated." ■

In the next issue of *College Administrator* magazine, we will be connecting with Mitch Dumas, President and CEO at Northern College. Keep an eye out for that – and more – in our Spring 2025 magazine!



JOINT PhD EDUCATIONAL STUDIES



Accepting Applications for
July 2025 Admission

jointphdined.com | jointphd@uwindsor.ca

FLEXIBLE STUDY

Joint PhD in Educational Studies Program

Brock University, Lakehead University, and University of Windsor

jointphdined.com

Ruxandra Nahaiciuc – Current Student, Joint PhD

“My continuing experience within the Joint PhD in Educational Studies Program rests on the pillars of inspiring academic human capital, valuable experiential learning opportunities, and truly transferable research skills. It has been my pleasure to learn from faculty members, guest speakers, and advisors. It has been my joy to expand my learning by visiting another university campus and contributing to the advanced learning. It has been my benefit to find diverse ways in which to direct my studies. The program provides both the structure and the liberty to begin integrating educational theory into the personal interests of the individual student.”

The Joint PhD in Educational Studies Program brings together qualified faculty with a broad spectrum of expertise and research interests. As well, it provides opportunities in generating new knowledge and directions in research. With a focus on nurturing students as developing scholars and leaders, we promote professional development through collaboration and promote partnerships locally, nationally, and internationally.

The unique program was launched in July 2000 and 2025 will mark its 25th anniversary. It is designed to accommodate mid-career professional educators who cannot relocate or leave their employment to pursue advanced training in a traditional full-time degree program. Since launching, there have been 224 successful program graduates. It is available for qualified applicants across Canada and globally.

The jointness of the program means that students benefit from having access to the strengths and uniqueness of each university – expanding the range and scope of the possibilities for research and scholarship.

3 FIELDS OF STUDY | JULY 2025 START

Flexible study options

- Two in-person classes and each class is only one month (July, annually) in duration.
- The remaining required courses are online/independent study.

Access to highly qualified expert faculty

- Courses are taught and doctoral committees are formed from the highly qualified faculty from the partner universities of Brock, Lakehead, and Windsor.

Become an expert in one of the following fields of study

- Cognition and Learning
- Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
- Social/Cultural/Political Contexts of Education

BENEFITS AFTER GRADUATION

Once you complete the program, you will receive your Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Studies and have the opportunity to inform as well as be a leader in educational decisions, knowledge, and policy.

- Contribute to the development of knowledge and expertise in teaching/learning
- Contribute to the solutions of problem/s issues in Canadian education
- Promote scholarly inquiry and the development of methodological advances in the study of education
- Integrate theory and practice in education
- Assume positions of leadership in Faculty of Education, school systems, and other public sector and private sector institutions concerned with education

The Office of the Secretariat is currently at the University of Windsor and Dr. Andrew Allen is the current Director. “I have taught courses in the Joint PhD program for years now and I have also supervised PhD students in the program. I just finished the first year of a five-year term as program’s Director,” says Allen.

“The program is designed to suit the schedule of working professionals and educators. One of the most exciting things about the Joint PhD program is that students get to work with faculty members from all the three universities. They also attend classes and progress through the program as a cohort group. The experience for both students and faculty members is collaborative and collegial,” Allen explains.

We are accepting applications for July 2025 admissions to the program. To learn more, please visit jointphdined.com or email jointphd@uwindsor.ca.



L'édition axée sur **les gens :**

Rencontrez de nouveaux dirigeants de collèges

Par Monique Doyle



Elaine Popp
Durham College



Paul Armstrong
Mohawk College



Lynn Casimiro
Collège La Cité

Quatre nouveaux présidents de collèges de l'Ontario ont pris les rênes en 2024 : Elaine Popp au Durham College, Paul Armstrong au Mohawk College, Lynn Casimiro au Collège La Cité et Mitch Dumas au Northern College. Les quatre dirigeants, tous des recrues internes, étaient déjà bien connus sur leurs campus respectifs. L'APACO a le plaisir de féliciter chacun d'entre eux pour son nouveau rôle.

Le magazine *College Administrator* a récemment communiqué avec trois de ces nouveaux présidents pour en savoir plus sur leur parcours professionnel, leurs priorités et ce qui les attend.



Elaine Popp

Durham College

Photographie avec l'aimable autorisation du Durham College

Elaine Popp a entamé son mandat de présidente du Durham College le 1er mars 2024. Elle était auparavant vice-présidente exécutive de l'université pendant huit ans. Mme Popp est titulaire d'un doctorat en philosophie et d'un baccalauréat ès sciences avec mention en biologie et en kinésiologie de York University. Elle est passionnée par l'enseignement post-secondaire, le mentorat, l'exemplarité et l'aide à la réussite des étudiants. Elle explique que son intérêt pour ces domaines a commencé lorsqu'elle était elle-même étudiante.

« Le pouvoir de transformation que l'éducation peut avoir pour les individus et la société, dont j'ai personnellement témoigné et que j'ai vu chez les autres, a toujours été pour moi une étoile polaire, ou un facteur de motivation qui m'a poussée à entamer une carrière dans l'enseignement post-secondaire il y a maintenant longtemps. Au début de ma carrière, des leaders croyaient en moi, investissaient en moi, voyaient quelque chose en moi, peut-être ce que je ne voyais même pas en moi-même. Ils m'ont encouragée, ils m'ont soutenue pour que je saisisse diverses opportunités de formation au leadership et que je me présente à des postes que je n'aurais jamais envisagés, très franchement. C'est donc grâce à ces mentors et à

ces champions que j'ai pu commencer ma carrière et que j'occupe ce poste aujourd'hui », explique-t-elle.

Depuis neuf ans qu'elle travaille au Durham College, Mme Popp dit qu'elle a apprécié de travailler avec les employés du côté universitaire de l'établissement, et qu'elle travaille maintenant plus étroitement avec le personnel de l'ensemble de l'organisation, établissant de nouvelles relations. « Avoir la chance, dans ce nouveau fauteuil, d'approfondir mon engagement avec les étudiants, avec tous les employés, avec nos partenaires communautaires, de différentes manières et à différents niveaux... J'ai toujours admiré les personnes dévouées et créatives que nous avons ici, tant sur le campus que dans notre communauté. C'est un véritable privilège pour moi d'occuper le poste de présidente, de guider et de soutenir l'objectif collectif du Durham College. Je suis impatiente de construire sur les bases solides que nous avons déjà ici et de travailler ensemble pour obtenir des succès encore plus grands », explique-t-elle.

Dans le cadre de ses nouvelles fonctions, Mme Popp s'est fixé deux objectifs immédiats.

« Bien que je travaille ici depuis plusieurs années, je suis encore en train de faire la transition vers ce

nouveau rôle et, par conséquent, dans une certaine mesure, d'autres sont également en train de faire la transition. Pour moi, le défi de la transition consiste donc à m'assurer que je suis à l'écoute des nombreuses voix et des messages que j'entends dans ce nouveau rôle. Enfin, j'ai veillé à ce que la transition se fasse le plus harmonieusement possible en restant en contact avec la communauté et en gardant les oreilles grandes ouvertes. »

Qui plus est, le plan stratégique quinquennal du collège arrive à échéance au printemps 2025. « Nous devons entamer le processus de consultation pour déterminer à quoi notre nouveau plan stratégique peut ressembler, afin de construire un établissement d'enseignement supérieur encore plus durable, centré sur les personnes, axé sur l'équité, à l'épreuve du temps et connecté à la communauté », affirme-t-elle.

Mme Popp reconnaît que le Durham College, comme tous les autres établissements d'enseignement supérieur, est confronté à la complexe question de s'adapter aux changements découlant des limites sur le nombre d'étudiants étrangers. Elle considère aussi la gestion financière comme un autre grand défi à relever.

L'édition axée sur *les gens* :

« La réduction du financement par le gouvernement [...], c'est-à-dire à la fois la subvention et la réduction, en plus du gel des frais de scolarité... À cela s'ajoute le plafonnement du nombre d'étudiants étrangers. Ce mélange contribue certainement à des situations financières très difficiles pour les universités. En bref, nous travaillons dans un environnement beaucoup plus compétitif. Il faut donc consacrer plus d'argent au marketing et au recrutement, à un moment où l'on essaie déjà de composer avec l'augmentation des coûts opérationnels. » La hausse des coûts comprend l'inflation, les accords de mandat stratégique et les augmentations salariales collectives, précise-t-elle.

L'évolution des besoins des étudiants

L'évolution des besoins des étudiants est un autre défi cerné par Mme Popp. « Leurs attentes changent et évoluent, exigeant davantage de la part des établissements d'enseignement supérieur. La pandémie a certainement mis en lumière très rapidement différents modes d'enseignement, y compris en ligne, hybrides et flexibles. Nous cherchons maintenant à utiliser notre technologie numérique d'enseignement et d'apprentissage très intentionnellement, en réfléchissant à la meilleure façon d'enseigner en personne, en ligne, de manière hybride ou flexible, et de combiner cela avec ce qui est le plus logique pour rendre l'éducation encore plus accessible. »

Faire preuve d'agilité pour répondre à l'évolution de la démographie étudiante est un autre défi et une opportunité, selon Mme Popp. Le nombre croissant d'étudiants indirects dans les établissements d'enseignement supérieur signifie que les étudiants ont souvent plus de responsabilités et d'engagements dans la vie. « Ce sont des étudiants plus âgés. Beaucoup d'entre eux ont des enfants, des obligations familiales, des hypothèques et même des emplois, des emplois à temps plein, tout en essayant d'être des étudiants à temps plein », explique-t-elle.

Elle ajoute, d'ailleurs : « Nous sommes dans une région, ici à Durham, où les étudiants en âge d'aller à l'université, cette population, commencent à augmenter. Il s'agit donc de déterminer, compte tenu de la pénurie de salles de classe et d'espace sur le campus, quel est le bon nombre d'étudiants sur le campus et quel est le bon pourcentage d'étudiants internationaux par rapport aux étudiants nationaux. Je crois qu'en Ontario, nous sommes l'établissement qui a le deuxième ou le plus petit nombre d'étudiants étrangers par rapport au nombre total d'étudiants. Nous en sommes à environ 30 %. Nous devons donc nous assurer que nous disposons de suffisamment d'espace pour les étudiants internationaux et nationaux qui souhaitent venir étudier chez nous. Il y a tant d'autres défis à relever : l'inclusivité et le développement durable, ainsi qu'une plus grande attention portée à l'EDIA [équité, diversité, inclusion et appartenance] et à l'autochtonisation. Garantir l'égalité des chances pour tous les étudiants est un autre point sur lequel nous continuons à nous concentrer et sur lequel nous voulons nous concentrer encore plus. »

Selon Mme Popp, les programmes qui soutiennent la santé mentale du personnel et des élèves sont également essentiels. « La pandémie a notamment attiré notre attention sur l'évolution de nos services de santé mentale. Même si notre mission principale ou notre mandat principal n'est peut-être pas de fournir des services de santé mentale, les étudiants ne peuvent pas se concentrer sur leurs études s'ils ne bénéficient pas d'un soutien en matière de santé mentale. Et c'est ça, notre mission principale : leur fournir l'éducation dont ils ont besoin pour réussir. Il s'agit de trouver le bon équilibre et de s'assurer qu'ils ont accès à ces aides », insiste-t-elle.

Suivre les tendances émergentes

Le Durham College a récemment lancé de nouveaux programmes de diplômes appliqués. Ces nouveaux diplômes portent notamment sur

l'intelligence artificielle, les sciences du comportement et la santé mentale communautaire. Face à la pénurie de main-d'œuvre qualifiée, le Durham College a aussi lancé un diplôme de gestion de la construction.

« Je mentionnerais peut-être notre diplôme de parajuriste, qui forme les futurs praticiens et leur fournit les connaissances dont ils ont besoin pour s'inscrire au Barreau de l'Ontario afin de devenir des parajuristes agréés, ajoute Mme Popp. L'une des tendances qui a le plus d'impact sur l'enseignement supérieur et, en fait, sur presque tous les autres domaines et disciplines de la planète est l'IA générative, bien sûr. Pour rester adaptables et réactifs à l'impact de l'IA sur nous, nous devons nous assurer que notre programme d'études évolue de manière à ce que nos étudiants apprennent à utiliser l'IA dans les emplois qu'ils occuperont à l'avenir. L'intégrer dans notre programme d'études afin qu'il fasse partie des résultats d'apprentissage de leurs programmes. Il faut aussi s'assurer que les enseignants savent comment utiliser l'IA générative, les former [...] et déterminer ce que nous pouvons faire plus efficacement pour nous libérer et nous consacrer à d'autres aspects de notre travail, plus proches des étudiants, plus proches des gens, plus créatifs », explique-t-elle.

Le Barrett Centre

« L'un des autres projets ou initiatives uniques que nous menons ici au Durham College est notre Centre Barrett pour l'agriculture urbaine. Grâce à une généreuse donation de la Barrett Family Foundation, nous avons créé le Barrett Centre for Urban Agriculture, dont la vision est de devenir un pôle d'excellence internationalement reconnu en matière de pratiques d'agriculture urbaine, de recherche, d'éducation et de formation, afin de relever le défi de l'insécurité alimentaire dans la société, de garantir l'accès à des approvisionnements sûrs et durables en aliments frais et d'utiliser nos terres de manière

à contribuer à leur régénération et à la production locale de denrées alimentaires », explique Mme Popp.

La ferme du centre présente un certain nombre de méthodes agricoles

innovantes, notamment les fermes de conteneurs, la culture verticale, les serres, l'hydroponie et l'aquaponie. Il s'agit de la deuxième année d'une subvention de cinq ans accordée par la

Barrett Family Foundation au Durham College. Le collège a récemment organisé une journée portes ouvertes au Centre Barrett, et des visites sont organisées chaque semaine.



Paul Armstrong Mohawk College

Paul Armstrong a pris ses fonctions de président du Collège Mohawk le 1er juillet 2024. Mais Paul a une très longue histoire et des liens avec le Mohawk College. Il y a étudié à la fin des années 1980, puis est devenu membre de la faculté en 1992 au sein du département d'imagerie médicale, avant de devenir directeur des opérations du collège en 2020. M. Armstrong est titulaire d'une maîtrise en administration des affaires de Queens University. Il a suivi le programme de gestion avancée de la Harvard Business School.

« J'ai choisi Mohawk pour suivre une formation dans le domaine de l'imagerie médicale, de la radiologie et de l'échographie. Je suis venu ici pour cette raison, et pour travailler en clinique. Je travaillais en fait dans un grand hôpital d'enseignement clinique et j'ai découvert que j'aimais beaucoup la possibilité de participer au processus d'éducation et d'aider les gens à développer leur propre apprentissage, puis, peu de temps après, j'ai eu l'occasion de donner quelques

cours formels dans le programme dont j'étais diplômé. Et encore une fois, cela m'a conforté dans l'idée que, même si j'aimais mon travail clinique et qu'il avait un impact, c'était un bon choix. Je pense que j'étais un bon éducateur. Je pense que j'avais un impact sur les gens. J'ai donc décidé de faire ce qu'il fallait pour devenir professeur à plein temps, et l'occasion s'est présentée. Je ne pense pas que j'ai jamais pensé, dans mes rêves les plus fous, que le point culminant de ma carrière serait d'être président du Mohawk College », explique-t-il.

« Jusqu'à présent, ce que j'ai le plus apprécié, c'est le soutien que j'ai reçu de la part des employés du collège. Le changement, c'est difficile, après tout. Peu importe le moment, il est toujours source d'incertitude. Mais j'ai l'impression que les gens avec qui je travaille depuis si longtemps sont soulagés de voir que je comprends ce que nous faisons. Je pense qu'il y a un véritable sentiment d'énergie

en ce moment et les gens sont très ouverts avec moi à ce sujet. L'accueil et la confiance que les gens ont en moi et qu'ils m'ont témoignés ont été formidables », ajoute-t-il.

M. Armstrong reconnaît que, même s'il a été recruté à l'interne, un nouveau dirigeant passe toujours par une période de transition. « Une chose à laquelle il faut faire attention en tant que candidat interne, c'est supposer qu'il n'y a pas de travail à faire en ce qui concerne les relations que l'on a au sein de l'organisation. Ma priorité, c'est d'aller de l'avant et de créer autant d'occasions que possible d'entendre directement tous les employés sur ce qui est important pour eux, alors que nous essayons de faire avancer notre plan stratégique, sur les points sur lesquels nous devrions nous concentrer, sur les obstacles qu'ils rencontrent en route vers l'impact qu'ils veulent avoir. Il s'agit en quelque sorte d'une remise à zéro [...] au cours des deux prochains mois », explique-t-il.

L'édition axée sur *les gens* :

Changements, défis et opportunités

En 30 ans de carrière au Mohawk College, M. Armstrong a été témoin de nombreux changements.

« Je dirais que l'un des changements les plus importants que j'ai constatés au cours des dix dernières années est le rôle que joue le Mohawk College dans la communauté au sens large, en tant que partenaire communautaire, en dehors de son rôle éducatif. Ce qui n'a pas changé, c'est l'engagement que nous prenons à l'égard des apprenants. Ce qui n'a pas changé, c'est comment nous répondons et soutenons nos employeurs et notre communauté pour répondre à leurs besoins en main-d'œuvre. Mais je constate depuis peu que Mohawk, en se fixant des objectifs ambitieux, a un impact plus large. Nous nous sommes engagés à faire tout ce qui était en notre pouvoir pour promouvoir l'action climatique et le développement durable. Nous le faisons évidemment dans nos propres bâtiments, dans notre programmation, dans notre recherche. Mais nous en avons tiré parti pour créer une coalition nationale, qui commence à aider d'autres établissements d'enseignement supérieur et d'autres communautés dans tout le Canada à faire le même genre de travail », explique-t-il.

« Lorsque nous pensons au travail que nous avons entrepris dans le cadre de Vérité et Réconciliation, c'est la même chose, explique-t-il. Nous avons développé une culture interne très forte d'engagement authentique, d'écoute, d'orientation et de développement stratégique fondés sur les façons de savoir et d'être des Autochtones. Et cela se traduit aujourd'hui par des opportunités plus larges au sein de la communauté », ajoute-t-il.

Le collège travaille sur des plans visant à grandement développer son programme de soins de santé, ainsi que d'autres domaines stratégiques. « Mohawk est fortement axé sur les programmes de soins de santé. Et nous savons qu'il sera très important de répondre aux besoins de la main-d'œuvre à mesure que nous

avançons. Nous allons nous assurer que nous faisons réellement ce que nous avons dit que nous allions faire en lançant une toute nouvelle école d'action climatique. Nous avons cinq nouveaux programmes, allant du certificat d'études supérieures à la licence, qui sont tous axés sur le développement durable politique et technologique. Et puis, il y a d'autres domaines que nous examinons en permanence, y compris comment créer des capacités dans notre campus des métiers spécialisés et de l'apprentissage, parce que l'évolution de nos forces dans le domaine des véhicules à émissions nettes zéro continue d'être un point focal. Nous formons aussi beaucoup de personnes dans de nombreux métiers de la construction et nous connaissons les pressions qui s'exercent actuellement pour créer davantage d'opportunités dans ce secteur. C'est donc un autre domaine sur lequel nous nous concentrons », explique M. Armstrong.

« Nous avons des objectifs assez immédiats pour renouveler toute une série de programmes, afin d'examiner comment répondre aux besoins actuels de la société en matière d'intelligence artificielle, d'apprentissage automatique et de cybersécurité. Nous avons en fait une série de 10 nouveaux programmes de licence uniquement dans ces domaines. Nous sommes en train de faire avancer le processus d'approbation », ajoute-t-il.

Un autre défi que M. Armstrong considère comme une opportunité à saisir est l'évolution des besoins des employeurs, du type de formation disponible et de l'accès à la formation. « Au cours des 55 dernières années, nous avons toujours eu des programmes dans le cadre desquels les gens sont accueillis à un moment précis, ils suivent une formation, c'est très bien, ils ont des opportunités, puis ils entrent sur le marché du travail. Et il y aura toujours une place pour ce type d'enseignement formel, diplômant, semestriel et basé sur des cohortes. Mais, précise-t-il, comme les choses évoluent plus rapidement que jamais, c'est ce besoin réactif que

nous devons combler : comment les gens peuvent-ils se perfectionner, comment peuvent-ils se recycler? Parce que si le système collégial ne peut pas le faire, la formation sera assurée par quelqu'un d'autre. Et je pense que c'est le plus grand défi auquel nous devons prêter attention. »

Restructuration récente au Mohawk College

Outre l'élaboration du nouveau plan stratégique du Mohawk College, la Mohawk College Foundation a récemment achevé sa restructuration.

« Le Mohawk College dispose d'une composante de base mature et bien développée. Et la fondation, même si elle s'est alignée sur le Mohawk College proprement dit, a toujours été une sorte d'entité à part entière. Nous avons en fait regroupé toutes les activités de la fondation au sein de l'établissement. Le précédent président [Ron McKerlie] avait en quelque sorte un double rôle, c'est-à-dire président du collège et président de la fondation, alors qu'aujourd'hui, avec l'intégration, mon portefeuille comprend les deux. Mais pour moi, ce qui est agréable, c'est que toutes les opérations de la fondation, tout le personnel, font maintenant partie du Mohawk College à proprement parler. Nous commençons donc à avoir plus d'opportunités autour de cette collaboration, notamment pour l'intégration de la stratégie », explique M. Armstrong.

« Elle est entrée en vigueur le 1er juillet, date à laquelle j'ai pris mes fonctions, et nous aurons évidemment un peu de travail à faire au cours de l'année, mais le processus a été très, très positif jusqu'à présent », explique-t-il.

Faire connaître la valeur

M. Armstrong souligne l'importance de continuer à partager et à faire connaître la valeur de l'enseignement supérieur.

« Nous devons continuer à renforcer ce point. Pour moi, qui ai choisi l'enseignement supérieur, parce que c'était ce que je voulais faire, parce que cela allait me donner une opportunité de carrière – pouvoir, en temps réel et

dans la vie réelle, raconter l'histoire de la force que j'ai obtenue pour accéder à une grande carrière dans les deux ans qui ont suivi la fin de mes études secondaires... Me doter des autres connaissances dont j'avais besoin pour me développer en tant que leader... Je peux maintenant valider tout cela en tant que leader d'une institution

qui continue à fabriquer ces produits et à raconter cette histoire avec une véritable authenticité », déclare-t-il.

« Personnellement, c'est un honneur et un privilège d'assumer ce rôle, car je pense que j'ai une grande responsabilité et le devoir non seulement de faire en sorte que Mohawk soit à son meilleur, mais

j'espère aussi continuer à aider à raconter l'histoire, à construire la valeur et à créer un message, en quelque sorte, qui conduira plus de gens à nos collègues, qui créera plus d'opportunités de participation, et qui continuera à construire une sorte de connaissance générale de l'excellence des collègues de l'Ontario », ajoute-t-il.



Lynn Casimiro

Collège La Cité

Lynn Casimiro est devenue présidente-directrice générale du Collège La Cité le 1er juillet 2024. Au cours de sa carrière, Mme Casimiro a notamment été directrice exécutive du Conseil universitaire de la santé à l'Université d'Ottawa et directrice de l'enseignement à l'Institut de recherche de l'hôpital Montfort. En 2016, Casimiro est devenue vice-présidente académique du Collège La Cité. Elle est titulaire d'un doctorat en éducation de l'Université d'Ottawa et d'un certificat en gestion des services publics.

Le parcours de Mme Casimiro pour accéder à ce poste de direction n'a pas été direct. « Je suis physiothérapeute de formation. J'ai travaillé dans le domaine de la santé, en tant que physiothérapeute, puis en tant que professeure adjointe à l'Université d'Ottawa. J'ai toujours travaillé en français. Pour moi, c'est d'abord et avant

tout le fait d'être franco-ontarienne. J'ai toujours travaillé à la défense des services en français et j'ai fait beaucoup de recherches dans ce domaine. J'ai fini par travailler à l'hôpital Montfort, une autre organisation qui se consacre aux services en français. »

« J'avais travaillé avec les collègues, dans le cadre de certains travaux que je menais à l'époque, avec une autre organisation qui s'appelait le Consortium national de formation en santé. Il s'agit d'une organisation nationale qui favorise l'accès à l'enseignement du français pour les professionnels de la santé. De fait, j'ai été en contact avec de nombreux partenaires éducatifs à travers le pays, y compris La Cité. Alors, lorsque je travaillais à l'hôpital Montfort, je travaillais à nouveau très, très étroitement avec La Cité. J'aidais Montfort à assumer sa nouvelle mission

universitaire, ce qui signifiait plus de formation pour les étudiants, les résidents, les médecins et les autres professionnels. Nous avons travaillé en étroite collaboration avec La Cité pour tous leurs programmes de santé », explique Mme Casimiro.

Lorsqu'elle a rejoint le Collège La Cité en 2016, Mme Casimiro s'est dite « abasourdie » par la rapidité, l'agilité et la réactivité de l'établissement. « J'ai toujours été impressionnée par la façon dont les collèges semblaient, à mon avis, avoir raison en matière d'éducation. L'accent était mis sur les étudiants, et il s'agissait de s'assurer qu'ils possédaient des compétences en matière d'employabilité. C'est quelque chose qui me manquait, je dirais, lorsque j'étais à l'université. J'ai parfois constaté qu'en éduquant nos étudiants, nous perdions de vue la

L'édition axée sur *les gens* :

raison pourquoi nous les éduquions, à savoir devenir des membres productifs de la société et du monde du travail. J'ai beaucoup apprécié que les collègues se concentrent sur cet aspect et sur les étudiants d'abord, tandis que les universités se concentrent sur la recherche et l'avancement des connaissances d'abord. C'est vraiment la mission première des universités. Mais dans les collèges, il s'agit d'offrir ce dont l'apprenant a besoin. Comment pouvons-nous l'aider à réaliser ses aspirations? Tout cela est axé sur les besoins de la société et du lieu de travail. Je me suis rendu compte qu'il y avait une énergie vraiment intéressante. Lorsque j'ai fini par travailler au collège, c'était ce que j'avais constaté, multiplié par dix. »

Dans son nouveau rôle de présidente-directrice générale, Mme Casimiro continue d'apprécier les équipes avec lesquelles elle collabore. « J'ai travaillé pendant huit ans et demi en tant que vice-présidente académique, et nous nous sommes rendu compte que nous avons accompli beaucoup de choses ensemble. Les équipes étaient tout simplement fantastiques et nous avons procédé à une sorte de transformation pédagogique. Nous avons pu faire avancer ensemble de nombreux aspects de l'enseignement et de la recherche. Cela témoigne de la qualité de notre personnel, de son engagement au sein de l'organisation et même de sa créativité. Je me suis donc dit que je voulais continuer à travailler avec cette organisation et j'ai eu le plaisir d'être choisie comme nouvelle directrice générale. Et pour moi, il s'agit simplement de tirer parti de cette merveilleuse équipe que nous avons et d'aller plus loin en tant qu'organisation. »

Équilibrer les priorités

Mme Casimiro a cerné un certain nombre de priorités pour le collège, et

pour les collègues en général. L'un de ses principaux objectifs est d'examiner l'orientation stratégique de la Cité et de la revoir avant qu'elle n'expire en 2026.

« Néanmoins, à court terme, certaines choses doivent être examinées immédiatement. Par cela, j'entends le financement des collègues. Avec ce qui s'est passé avec les étudiants étrangers, le manque de fonds publics pour financer les collègues, le fait que nous ne pouvons pas augmenter les frais de scolarité et que nous sommes plafonnés dans la source de financement du Ministère... Les collègues doivent faire preuve de créativité, d'esprit d'entreprise et trouver d'autres sources de financement. Il s'agit donc d'un risque immédiat », explique-t-elle.

La viabilité à long terme restera un défi. « Nous nous dirigeons vers une crise financière pour tous les établissements d'enseignement supérieur du système. Ma prédécesseure [Lise Bourgeois] s'était déjà penchée sur la question, mais je dois continuer à faire en sorte que les équipes se concentrent sur ce point et que notre orientation stratégique en tienne compte. C'est la viabilité à long terme du collège – la nôtre, mais aussi celle du système collégial dans son ensemble – qui doit être prise en compte immédiatement », affirme Mme Casimiro.

Mme Casimiro explique que les collègues devront rester viables en raison du rôle qu'ils jouent dans l'économie et de leur rôle pour résoudre les problèmes qui touchent les Ontariens. Ces questions concernent notamment le logement, la recherche appliquée à des méthodes de construction innovantes et plus rentables, la formation aux soins de santé des travailleurs nécessaires pour les soins de longue durée, etc.

« Nous travaillons très, très étroitement, mais cela nous oblige à pivoter très rapidement, car nous n'avons qu'une capacité d'espace

limitée. Nous créons donc des salles de classe vivantes; nous faisons de l'apprentissage à distance pour utiliser des installations ailleurs, pour former les gens. Ce sont en quelque sorte les priorités sur lesquelles nous devons continuer à travailler parce qu'elles sont importantes pour la main-d'œuvre et pour les Canadiens. Ce sont des priorités qui nous obligent à recentrer les ressources à l'interne, dit-elle, pour nous assurer que nous donnons la priorité aux choses qui sont importantes pour les Canadiens et les Ontariens. »

Modèle pédagogique par compétences de la Cité

Le Collège La Cité est le seul établissement d'enseignement supérieur de l'Ontario à disposer d'un modèle pédagogique basé sur les compétences, et Mme Casimiro se félicite de son succès. « Il nous a fallu sept ans, mais nous avons transformé tous nos programmes pour qu'ils soient axés sur les compétences. Cela signifie que nous procédons à une rétro-ingénierie de notre programme. Ainsi, plutôt que de dire "Nous voulons que l'apprenant soit capable de faire ceci à la fin de son programme" ou "Nous voulons qu'il soit capable d'apprendre ceci et qu'il connaisse donc cette théorie", nous disons "Bon, oubliez ça." Nous allons plus loin et nous nous demandons "Que recherchent les employés? Qu'est-ce que les étudiants doivent savoir faire?" Peu importe ce que nous pensons qu'ils doivent apprendre. Que font-ils réellement lorsqu'ils arrivent sur leur lieu de travail? Nous consultons donc les sites des associations professionnelles. Nous consultons les offres d'emploi dans les domaines concernés. Des membres de l'industrie font partie du comité de consultation qui se réunit deux fois par an pour s'assurer que notre programme est toujours bien aligné sur l'industrie,

Si vous avez une suggestion pour un profil que vous aimeriez voir dans un prochain numéro du magazine *College Administrator*, n'hésitez pas à communiquer avec nous et à nous en faire part : monique@kelman.ca.

et ces comités sont également consultés. Ensuite, nous remettons un rapport aux membres du corps enseignant en leur indiquant ce que les apprenants doivent être en mesure de faire sur le lieu de travail. Alors restructurez votre programme pour qu'ils y parviennent. »

Mme Casimiro explique que ce modèle permet aux étudiants de participer à un apprentissage authentique immédiatement dans le cadre de leur programme. Parmi les exemples où le modèle a exceptionnellement bien fonctionné, Mme Casimiro cite la formation au journalisme et à l'assistance technique.

La transformation a également permis d'améliorer la rétention des étudiants et d'augmenter le nombre d'inscriptions. « Notre taux de rétention est passé de 70 % à 90 %. C'est incroyable parce que les étudiants en voient la pertinence, alors ils restent et ils continuent leurs programmes. Cela a eu un impact considérable sur leur rétention et leur persévérance dans les programmes. Et les professeurs trouvent que les étudiants sont plus engagés, affirme-t-elle. Nous travaillons actuellement avec un autre établissement d'enseignement supérieur pour utiliser notre approche dans le cadre de l'apprentissage des Autochtones. Ils veulent un apprentissage authentique, mais ils ont constaté que l'approche fondée sur les résultats d'apprentissage n'était pas adaptée. »

Au-delà de l'horizon

Mme Casimiro estime qu'à l'avenir, il sera essentiel que les établissements d'enseignement supérieur restent attentifs au marché, car les carrières évoluent plus rapidement que jamais.

« L'IA arrive et nous devons nous y préparer dès maintenant, car il nous faudra quatre ans pour former ces personnes. L'agilité est donc une question importante. Un autre problème est le fait que les apprenants se tournent vers l'éducation, avec l'espoir d'y entrer et d'en sortir selon leurs besoins. Nous continuons à enseigner très traditionnellement, en ce sens que les étudiants s'inscrivent pour obtenir

un certificat, un diplôme, un diplôme supérieur ou un grade. Et c'est ce qu'il faut faire. Ce que nous constatons, c'est que beaucoup [d'apprenants] veulent dire : "Pouvons-nous faire la première année seulement, pour l'instant? Je dois aller travailler un peu et je reviendrai pour en faire un peu plus." Mais notre structure, en tant que collège, ne favorise pas ce type de prestation, je dirais. Et ce n'est pas parce que nous ne voulons pas, ni parce que nous ne pouvons pas, mais parce que le financement n'y est pas favorable. Le financement que nous recevons du Ministère est différent pour les apprenants à temps partiel et pour les apprenants à temps plein. Nous devons être en mesure d'aider ces apprenants, car un grand nombre d'entre eux sont indirects; ils font un retour aux études dans les collèges. Auparavant, la majorité de nos apprenants venaient directement du secondaire, alors qu'aujourd'hui, la majorité d'entre eux (et cela vaut pour l'ensemble du système) viennent en tant qu'étudiants indirects », explique-t-elle.

« Et bien sûr, l'IA est un problème. Notre prestation de l'enseignement doit évoluer en conséquence. Comme je l'ai dit, nous sommes déjà sur la bonne voie. Il ne faut pas avoir peur de l'IA; nous devons être capables de l'intégrer. Comment l'intégrer en tant qu'outil? Nous y travaillons afin de l'utiliser comme outil d'enseignement, mais aussi pour le travail que nous effectuons d'un point de vue administratif, ainsi que pour le corps enseignant. Là encore, il s'agit d'un outil qui permet de faire le travail, mais pour cela, nous devons leur fournir ce dont ils ont besoin. L'IA est donc bel et bien là pour durer et nous devons nous assurer que nous l'exploitons correctement. Sinon, le système le fera à notre place. Ce qui n'est pas l'objectif désiré », précise-t-elle.

Mme Casimiro prend soin d'identifier deux autres questions importantes. « L'un des rôles que les collèges doivent jouer aujourd'hui, et qu'ils doivent continuer à jouer de plus en plus, est notre rôle dans la réconciliation avec les peuples autochtones. Il s'agit

d'une question difficile, car lorsqu'on examine les principales préoccupations des Canadiens, elle n'est souvent pas mentionnée, bien qu'il s'agisse d'une de nos obligations fondamentales. Je pense que nous devons veiller à ne pas perdre cela de vue, et nos collèges jouent un rôle important avec les autres établissements d'enseignement postsecondaire. Nous devons nous assurer que nous jouons notre rôle sérieusement et que nous ne nous contentons pas de belles paroles, mais que nous prenons des mesures concrètes ensemble. Il y a beaucoup de beau travail qui se fait dans tout le système. Nous devons simplement en faire plus. »

L'autre point important, selon Mme Casimiro, est la recherche appliquée. « La recherche appliquée s'est développée exponentiellement dans les collèges. La recherche appliquée a un impact économique direct sur les communautés desservies par les établissements d'enseignement supérieur. Elle a eu un impact direct sur notre communauté. Je pense, ajoute-t-elle, que l'impact économique de ce que nous faisons doit être davantage reconnu, et je pense que nous avons un rôle à jouer pour faire en sorte qu'il le soit et qu'il soit quantifié. En fait, nous aidons les entreprises à être meilleures. Nous aidons les entreprises à améliorer leurs processus et leurs produits, et elles se développent. Et nos étudiants y contribuent. Il s'agit de développer leur esprit d'entreprise, de développer leur créativité, de développer leur innovation. Ce qui, une fois de plus, alimente le marché par la suite. Il y a beaucoup de travail à faire dans ce domaine également. Et je pense qu'il est sous-estimé. » ■

Dans le prochain numéro du magazine *College Administrator*, nous nous entretiendrons avec Mitch Dumas, président et directeur général du Northern College. Ne manquez pas ces renseignements, et bien d'autres, dans notre magazine du printemps 2025!



college administrator

We want to hear from you!

College Administrator is seeking articles of interest to administrators in Ontario colleges for our **Spring/Summer 2025** issue.

College Administrator is the bi-annual digital publication of OCASA (Ontario College Administrators Network). The magazine aims to engage and connect with thousands of administrators at Ontario's 24 colleges, along with college presidents and all members of boards of governors.

We're looking for timely and topical articles and columns to inspire lively and meaningful discussion on topics important to the Ontario college community. Feature stories run about 1,500 to 2,500 words, with columns at approximately 750 words.

Our editorial deadline for the **Spring/Summer 2025 issue is March 14, 2025**

College Administrator wants to hear YOUR stories about:

- current issues facing administrators.
- emerging challenges for the future.
- reports on academic papers.
- interesting people and colleagues in the college community.
- noteworthy projects happening at your colleges.
- new and innovative approaches to situations.
- insights on how developments in areas like information technology, student services, and more impact the role of administrators in other departments.
- societal shifts that are affecting how colleges function.
- how we can learn from other colleges outside of Ontario.
- **AND MORE!**

Please reach out any time to *College Administrator* Managing Editor Monique Doyle at monique@kelman.ca with questions, story ideas, and submissions.



Spotlight on New Beginnings for International Students

By Monique Doyle

Last September, OCASA's annual conference in Niagara Falls included a panel discussion titled "Strengthening Programs and Supports for International Students." This moderated panel featured Thom MacDonald from Durham College, David Corcoran from

Colleges Ontario, and Trish Weigel Green from Conestoga College.

"Our colleges have been always been committed to student success and with the growth in international students that commitment has remained consistent. This panel enabled us to discuss the standards in a way that connected them to the great work that is happening

and also highlight key initiatives that are taking place. I also hope it encouraged attendees to be proud of the work happening in colleges to support international students," Trish Weigel Green explained.

The fall conference panel focused on the work of International Transition Coordinators and International

Spotlight on New Beginnings for International Students

Student Advisors. Versions of these roles exist at most colleges and ensure that international students have specific supports in place to meet their unique needs – both around transitioning to Canada and with regards to all of their requirements for work, study, and, for many, the path to permanent residency.

“From a Conestoga perspective we focused time on sharing the outcomes we’ve seen through our Student Success Portal. Launched a few years ago, we’ve developed a one-stop portal for students to access all support services, book their appointments, sign up for events, and see all of their notes.

Although this resource was developed for all students, it has huge benefits for international students who can access specific international supports there and also other services. We are able to gather and report metrics that are helpful for planning and most of all, have reduced the navigational barriers students find in accessing services,” Weigel Green explained.

This year, the federal government announced a two-year plan to reduce the number of new international post-secondary students in Canada. In late February, the Ontario government announced it would provide almost \$1.3 billion in funding over three years to

Ontario's post-secondary sector, while also freezing tuition fees for another three years. From those funds, about \$700 million will be in broad-based supports, while \$203 million will be for institutions with greater need. Factors such as geography, total enrollment, and reliance on international enrolment will be taken into account. This is a huge development affecting post-secondary institutions and it will continue to be an evolving and important focus for many across the province.

While navigating these changes and the challenges they will create, supports for international students continue to matter at colleges in Ontario.

Discover how three international students chose a college in Ontario to pursue their education, the supports and programs they found helpful, and what their futures hold.



Meet Gaia Ninzatti

Community Engagement Coordinator at the Ontario Shores Foundation for Mental Health
Advanced Diploma, Public Relations and Strategic Communications, Durham College, 2021–2024

I am originally from Italy. I moved to Canada in 2021 with my partner Adam and graduated last October in Public Relations and Strategic Communications from Durham College. I am a huge animal, travel, and book lover.

Why did you choose to study in Ontario, and why was Durham the right fit for you?

I first learned about Durham College through a friend from back home in Italy who was attending there. While exploring all major colleges in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), Durham College caught my attention. I ultimately chose Durham College because

its Public Relations and Strategic Communications program offered an advanced diploma and included two internship opportunities. I believed this combination would better prepare me for the job market.

What were your first few months like after moving there?

My first few months in Canada were extremely busy! As soon as I landed, I started taking care of essential parts in order to get my life here started: obtaining a SIN, setting up a bank account, finding an apartment, securing a job, and getting my driver's licence sorted. All of this was during

the post-pandemic period, so waiting times were crazy due to the scarcity of available appointments. In 2021, there was a backlog of 700,000 people for driver's licences; those were interesting times! About a month after I arrived, I started settling into my new life as a remote student with a house and a job.

Why are support programs for international students so important at the college?

These services are very important because, although I didn't use them, there are other students who need and greatly benefit from them.

Spotlight on New Beginnings for International Students

Were you affected by the COVID-19 pandemic during your studies? How did that colour your experience?

Absolutely. COVID-19 disrupted an entire year of my life. I was registered to start at Durham College in September 2020 and had submitted my study permit request in December 2019. However, the IRCC was unable to process study permits during the early part of the pandemic. When they resumed processing, they started from the top of the pile rather than the bottom. I know this because I was part of numerous Facebook groups of students awaiting permits, and people frequently updated their situations. Those who applied in May–June 2020 were getting responses, while people like me, who applied earlier in the year, were still waiting.

September came, and I began my program at Durham College remotely from Italy. After three weeks without any news, Durham College informed me that I had to withdraw as I couldn't continue attending classes without my study permit. Heartbroken, I withdrew. My study permit arrived exactly a month later.

Durham College did their best to accommodate my situation, but unfortunately my program only started in September. Since I was determined to take that program, I decided to postpone everything for a year. I'm not going to lie – I felt really defeated because I had done everything I could to allow myself enough time, but in the end, I lost an entire year.

What would you suggest as improvements/changes to the system and supports for international students?

Students should be treated as learners, not revenue sources. Secondly, I would like to see more equity. On average, schooling is three to four times more expensive for international students than for domestic ones. Additionally, most international students don't have family in Canada, so they have to find housing, pay rent, bills, and buy groceries. While domestic students may

also face these challenges, many live at home with their families or receive some sort of family support.

Most international students come to Canada prepared to hustle and understand the financial commitment. However, in terms of equity, most on-campus jobs are reserved for domestic students, with only a few available to international ones. The job market for international students outside of campus is even more challenging, as Canadian employers often disregard experience gained outside of Canada.

Moreover, there are many bursaries available to domestic students, but hardly any for international students. I'm not asking for things to be easier for international students, but for merit to be prioritized over nationality. In my class, the top-ranking graduate was an international student who received a \$500 prize bursary in our final semester. Another classmate with lower grades, but who was a domestic student, received \$2,500 from the same bursary.

My point is that things don't need to be easier, but they do need to be fair. If the top student in the class is an international student, they should receive the top prize, not less just because they are foreign. The same applies to jobs, whether on campus or off. If a candidate is the best for the job, their nationality shouldn't matter. Additionally, I wish international job experience would be recognized by Canadian employers.

What advice would you give to other international students preparing to study at a college like Durham?

To come extremely prepared, both financially and mentally. It's hard starting a new life in a new country with little to no support, so please, please come prepared financially. Life is extremely expensive, especially right now because of inflation, plus finding a job is not easy either, so make sure you have enough money to support yourself at least for the first six months while settling in.



I think Durham College did a great job preparing me for the workforce, thanks to our professors who are professionals in their respective fields alongside teaching.

How did your time at the college prepare you for the employment you now have?

I think Durham College did a great job preparing me for the workforce, thanks to our professors who are professionals in their respective fields alongside teaching. The curriculum also included two internships – one in the not-for-profit sector and one in the corporate sector – which provided me with valuable insights into both worlds and made me feel market-ready upon graduation.

And what's next for you and your future?

I have recently been promoted at work after a short tenure, and I hope to continue this trajectory, aspiring to a management position someday. I also aim to keep improving my skills and learning as much as possible. However, I'm uncertain where my career will ultimately settle, as my partner and I are considering moving back to Europe due to the high housing and living costs in Canada, particularly in Ontario. If the situation doesn't improve, that might be our only option.



Meet Ismail Aravai

Communications Consultant at Redbrick Communications
Post Graduate, Business Management, Fanshawe College, 2020–2022
Bachelor of Commerce, University of Mumbai, 2016–2019

Why did you choose to study in Ontario, and why was Fanshawe the right fit for you?

I heard great things about Fanshawe and how they make international students feel welcomed and part of the community. I spoke with students already at Fanshawe, and they mentioned that London has a diverse international population,

which made me feel like it would be an inclusive and supportive place to study. My program, the Post Graduate Certificate in Business Management, stood out because it offers hands-on learning through case study analysis, graded class debates, and a community consultancy project. This practical approach to learning was exactly what I was looking for.

What were your first few months like after moving there?

The first few months were a mix of excitement and nervousness. I arrived in Canada in November 2020, right in the middle of the second wave of COVID-19. It was a big challenge to pack my whole life into two suitcases and move to a new country with new people. Finding a house took about a month and a half


Mathematical Peace of Mind

Breathe in Calm, Breathe out Anxiety

Enjoy a stress-free semester & help reduce students' math anxiety with VLI's resources.

Reach out to learn more.
info@vrettalyryx.com
vrettalyryx.com

 **Vretta** |  **lyryx**



Spotlight on New Beginnings for International Students

because landlords were hesitant to rent to international students due to COVID-19 fears. Luckily, some friends let me stay with them while I was searching for a place. Despite the challenges, their support made a huge difference and helped me settle in.

What supports did you find for international students that were useful for you?

The support I found most useful included Career Services, where I regularly met with a Career Consultant who helped me market myself for jobs, network, and attend job fairs. They also had a mentorship program that connected students with industry experts. Fanshawe Student Union arranged regular events, including cultural events, which were great for making new friends, relaxing, and feeling a sense of belonging, especially when I felt homesick. The International Centre at Fanshawe was incredibly helpful too, providing guidance on immigration and visa issues and offering workshops.

Why are those types of programs and supports so important at the college?

These programs and supports are essential because they help international students adjust to their new environment, making the transition smoother and less stressful. They create a sense of community and belonging, which is crucial for both academic success and personal well-being. By providing resources and guidance, these supports empower students to make the most of their college experience and feel confident in navigating life in a new country.

How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect your studies?

I had to complete my entire program online, which was challenging, but Fanshawe provided the necessary resources and support for remote learning. I found the virtual events, workshops, mentorship opportunities, volunteering, career services, and mental health services especially

beneficial. These activities helped keep me connected and supported.

What would you suggest as improvements/changes to the system and supports for international students?

I have a few suggestions for improving support for international students. First, international students often have time-sensitive questions about study permits or work permits after graduation, so waiting a month to get an appointment with an international student advisor isn't practical. It would be helpful to have quicker access to advisors. Second, more support for off-campus housing would be beneficial, including educating students about their rights and providing proactive assistance to prevent scams or issues with landlords.

What advice would you give to other international students preparing to study at a college like Fanshawe?

The first step I took was booking an appointment with Career Service Consultant Christina Larke. She helped me with my resume and gave me tips and tricks to find my first job, as well as to prepare for a job after college. I advise new students to take advantage of all the support services and resources available. Don't hesitate to ask for help, whether it's academic, personal, or social. Get involved in campus activities and consider applying for or running for student leader positions.

How did your time at the college prepare you for the employment you now have?

From the very start, I took every opportunity to attend workshops and events. I began by volunteering as a Class Rep and then advanced to become a Student Life Coordinator at the Fanshawe Student Union (FSU), where I led events and managed volunteers. My interest led me to run in the election and become the President of the FSU. Throughout this journey, I got to work with industry



Throughout this journey, I got to work with industry professionals, learn best practices, and make valuable connections. Fanshawe offers a lot of resources, and all we had to do was take advantage of them.

professionals, learn best practices, and make valuable connections. Fanshawe offers a lot of resources, and all we had to do was take advantage of them. This proactive approach paid off, and after my tenure, I was headhunted for my current role as a Communications Consultant at Redbrick Communications.

Tell us about your experience as president of the Fanshawe Student Union, and why that was important to you.

Serving as the President of the Fanshawe Student Union was an incredibly rewarding experience. Acting as the CEO of the organization, I had the unique opportunity to drive student engagement and inspire others to take on leadership roles. One of the highlights of my tenure was making history by encouraging a record number of students – eight in total – to run for the one presidential position.

Spotlight on New Beginnings for International Students

This unprecedented level of participation reflected our success in fostering a vibrant and involved student community.

Additionally, I collaborated with Presidents of Student Associations across Ontario to establish a provincial advocacy organization called Ontario Student Voices. This amplified our collective voice and strengthened our ability to advocate for student interests at a provincial level. My time as President was marked by these significant achievements and underscored the importance of

leadership, collaboration, and advocacy in making a positive impact.

And what's next for you and your future?

I plan to continue working in communications. Currently, I am thoroughly enjoying my work at Redbrick Communications, where we help local governments tell their stories, provide media training, issues management, and crisis communication. The work is fulfilling, and I feel fortunate to contribute to meaningful

projects that make a difference in the community, leveraging the leadership, communication and people skills that I gained from my time at Fanshawe.

Fanshawe's community has been incredibly welcoming, and I am deeply grateful for the experiences and opportunities I've had there. I've gained so much from my time at Fanshawe, and I hope to give back by continuing to contribute to the community. My goal is to use the skills and knowledge I've acquired to make a positive impact and inspire others to do the same.



Meet Rupam (Rupe) Kumari

Cloud Data Management Grad Certificate Program, Conestoga College, started in Spring 2023

Why did you choose to study in Ontario, and why was Conestoga the right fit for you?

I have been working as an Enterprise Technical Trainer for eight years and I choose to study in Ontario because of opportunities available in the province in the field of Cloud, Data and Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning. It aligns perfectly with my career goals. Conestoga College stood out for me due to its focus on theory plus practical, hands-on practical learning, specially under the guidance of highly knowledgeable professors who bring their years of technical expertise to the tables in the classrooms. They do not just bring their experience but also guide students with the career's choices helping them decide which path to follow while they evaluate their options during their studies.

What were your first few months like after moving there?

Like many of my peers, my first months after moving to Canada were tough, especially with the transition from a far east country like India with completely distinct cultural backgrounds, leaving family and friends behind. I moved to Canada with my husband in June 2023 and it took me a couple of months to get used to the transport system (like tapping our cards for the ticket fare) or the grocery store timings especially on the holidays as stores and malls will be open for longer hours in India, mostly 11 pm – but here it was different. However, with the help and support from college, community, and new friends we managed everything, and the move became smoother month by month.

What supports did you find for international students that were useful for you?

Firstly, I received immense support from the college like the Student Success workshops, events conducted by Conestoga Students Inc., Conversations cafes, student advisors for career coaching and guidance, Conestoga entrepreneurship collective for raising awareness about freelancing helping me identify my niche skills to train people in the community, medical clinic and wellness center to keep a tab on my nutrition and health, counselling support guidance in case I got too stressed or overwhelmed, games and multi-cultural programs celebrating all ethnicities and regions.

Secondly, I also networked more in the community beyond the classroom

with the help of Conestoga and learned more about the resources available for international students from Kitchener Public Library, tech workshops organized by Catalyst Commons, Communitech and Accelerator Centre. It really helped me to analyze my professional goals here in Canada and create a structured plan to achieve them.

Why are those types of programs and supports so important at the college?

I believe that as a new international student in a completely new country, we can feel alone, stressed, and overwhelmed at times, even with a lot of friends. Having access to these programs and supports is like a close friend who is always there to support and help us in our journey while we are trying to make it through every day.

They provide essential guidance and resources to help us get accustomed to an unfamiliar environment, understand and transition to the new cultural and academic differences, and build a sense of community. These supports help us overcome the initial challenges, reduce our stress, and guide us to focus on our academic and professional goals. They also help us to feel inclusive, ensuring that every student feels valued and empowered, irrespective of our culture, race, and gender.

What would you suggest as improvements/changes to the system and supports for international students?

The current resources are incredibly good to support students; there are a few improvements that could further enhance the overall experience for international students.

1. Awareness about the community resources: There are numerous programs and helpful workshops available in the community for international students but many times, students aren't aware of these, and so they aren't able to

utilize them fully. It could be helpful to promote these resources more so that students can explore these resources more for our personal and professional growth.

2. Increased access to professional internships and co-ops: While there are some internship and co-op opportunities available right now, we could focus more on the program-oriented internships and co-op placements that are specifically targeted towards international students to gain good local work experience.



My advice to other international students would be to have a positive attitude and begin the journey with an open mind and heart.

What advice would you give to other international students preparing to study at a college like Conestoga?

My advice to other international students would be to have a positive attitude and begin the journey with an open mind and heart. Be proactive and

try to engage actively with the resources and support systems available at the college. Don't hesitate to ask for help, whether it's from student advisors, professors, or peers. Take advantage of networking opportunities both within and outside the college to build connections and explore professional avenues. Also, remember to take care of your well-being, as adjusting to a new country can be challenging. Most importantly, stay focused on your goals and remain flexible to new experiences. These will really help with the studies and personal life and reduce the stress.

And what's next for you and your future?

I am soon going to graduate from Conestoga College with a post-graduate diploma degree in Cloud Data Management. So, looking ahead, I plan to use the experience, skills, and knowledge acquired from my studies to land a full-time job as a corporate professional in the field of Cloud Data Training and Development, preferably Data Engineer, Data Analyst, or Data Scientist.

I'm working as a Freelance Enterprise Trainer focusing on data extraction, transformation and load with process, framework, and automation. Prior to this, I worked as a corporate trainer for eight years specializing in Microsoft 365 collaboration suite, providing significant value to corporate clients to optimize their cloud infrastructures, enhance data security, or drive their digital transformation initiatives. These are particularly important for today's rapidly moving and highly competitive business environment. Hence, I intend to use these strong skills to grow into relevant roles, working on projects that leverage cloud technologies like Azure, AWS or GCP including AI-driven analytics, and data governance strategies.

I also plan to mentor and train the next generation of data professionals, helping them meet the evolving demands of the corporate world. ■



STUDENT DORMS

ADVANTAGES OF USING MODULAR CONSTRUCTION

Speed of Construction: Modular buildings are constructed off-site in a controlled environment, which significantly reduces the construction time.

Cost-Effectiveness: The ability to predict costs more accurately and minimize on-site labour and material waste contributes to overall budget efficiencies.

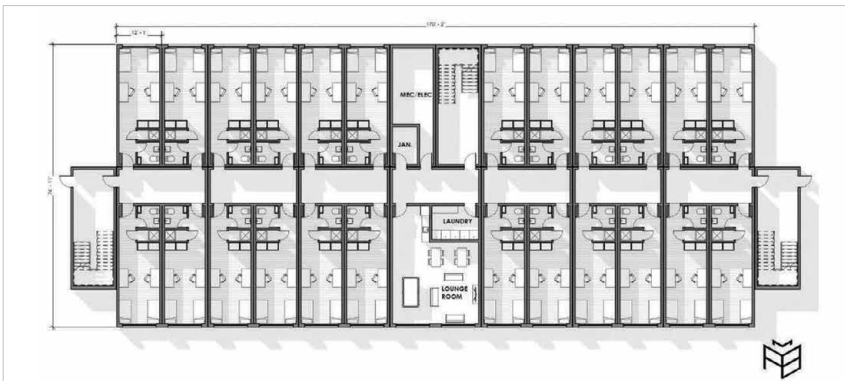
Quality Control: The manufacturing environment enables more stringent oversight and adherence to building codes.

Sustainability: Reduced waste, and the ability to recycle and reuse modules for different purposes or locations promotes sustainability.

Flexibility and Scalability: Modular dormitories can be easily expanded, reduced, or reconfigured.

Reduced Disruption: Since the majority of construction is done off-site, there's minimal disruption to campus life.

Design Versatility: Modern modular buildings offer a range of architectural styles and can be customized to meet specific needs and blend with existing campus infrastructure.



EMAIL:

PHILIPPELATREILLE@
AMBMODULAIRE.COM

CELLPHONE:

514-625-4645

www.ambmodular.ca





AMB MODULAR: REDEFINING EDUCATIONAL SPACES FOR ONTARIO'S COLLEGE ADMINISTRATORS

As the educational landscape evolves, so does the need for flexible, innovative campus solutions. AMB Modular (AMB), a family-owned leader in the institutional modular construction market, is proud to offer transformative spaces for colleges across Ontario. With a track record of on-time and on-budget deliveries, our commitment is evident in every project – whether it's for educational spaces, student dormitories, or administrative offices.

PRODUCTS & SERVICES

Our Expertise in Educational Spaces

AMB Modular specializes in crafting modular educational spaces tailored to the dynamic needs of academic institutions. Our offerings include state-of-the-art classrooms, cafeterias, and specialized facilities such as science labs. These spaces are designed not only to enhance the learning experience but also to adapt to the changing educational requirements over time. Thanks to our standardized approach to modular projects, we ensure consistent quality and reduced lead times, making our solutions both reliable and swift to deploy.

Innovative Student Dormitories

Understanding the importance of quality student life, AMB provides modular student dorms that blend comfort with convenience. Our dormitories are designed to offer a safe and inviting environment for students, supporting both their academic pursuits and personal growth. Modular construction allows for scalable solutions that can grow with the student population, offering the ability to easily expand or modify living spaces as needs evolve.

Efficient Administrative Spaces

For administrative needs, AMB delivers modular offices and meeting rooms that encapsulate modern, professional work environments. These spaces are crafted to promote efficiency and are equipped to be seamlessly integrated with existing structures on campus. Whether expanding an administration building or adding new functional areas, our modular solutions provide the flexibility to adapt quickly to institutional growth or changing administrative requirements.

OUR APPROACH

Seamless Integration and Flexibility

One of the unique features of AMB's modular buildings is their ability to be effortlessly attached to existing structures. This adaptability ensures that institutions can expand their facilities

without the disruptions typically associated with traditional construction methods. Whether you need to temporarily increase space during renovation projects or permanently expand your campus infrastructure, AMB's modular units provide a practical, aesthetically pleasing solution.

Proven Track Record

Expanding our presence from Quebec and the Maritimes into Ontario, AMB has recently been selected by OEMC for the modular building master agreement, reinforcing our commitment to the region. Our reputation for delivering all projects on time and within budget is unmatched in the industry. Our extensive experience and adaptability allow us to handle the complexities of multiple institutional projects simultaneously, ensuring that each one meets our high standards of quality and efficiency.

Commitment to Excellence

At AMB, we understand that each project carries its unique challenges and opportunities. Our highly qualified team, coupled with a network of reliable partners, allows us to remain flexible and responsive, adapting our strategies to meet specific project needs without compromising on quality or consistency. This ability to manage and execute swiftly is crucial in the fast-paced world of educational institutions where time and quality cannot be sacrificed.

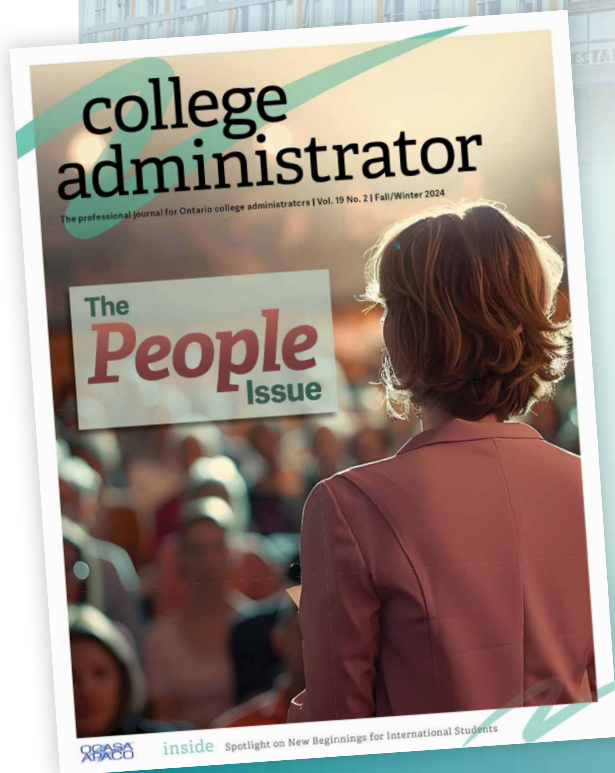
LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

As we continue to grow and adapt, our commitment remains strong: to provide modular solutions that not only meet the immediate needs of educational institutions but also anticipate future demands. Our standardized processes, combined with our capability to customize and scale solutions, make us a preferred partner in the modular construction sector.

For Ontario's college administrators looking to enhance their campus facilities, AMB Modular offers a partnership that promises not just to meet expectations but to exceed them. With AMB, you can trust that your projects will be handled with the utmost professionalism and care, ensuring that every modular solution enhances the educational experience and supports institutional growth.

With AMB Modular, you're not just building for today – you're investing in the future of education. Let's create vibrant, adaptable spaces together that will inspire learning and growth for generations to come.

college administrator



To reach administrative professionals in Ontario colleges through *College Administrator* magazine and its targeted readership, contact **Jeff Kutny** to discuss your company's promotional plans.



OCASA
APACO

Jeff Kutny, Marketing Manager
jeff@kelman.ca | 866-985-9789