

Heather Ryall, Dean of Media and Design
Julie Beauchamp, VP Academic
Rodney Wilson, Chair, Board of Governors
Algonquin College
1385 Woodroffe Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario, K2G 1V8

January 27, 2026

Dear Ms. Ryall, Ms. Beauchamp, and Mr. Wilson,

I am writing on behalf of the Ontario Museum Association to ask you to reconsider your recommendation to the Board to suspend the College's Applied Museum Studies Program.

It is the only museum studies program in the province east of Peterborough and has been an important economic and cultural resource for Eastern Ontario since 1972. Museums play a vital economic role, especially in smaller communities, driving tourism and defining community identity for new and established residents, as I can see at my own museum in Almonte.

Algonquin College's students have also provided practical help in preserving artifacts at the McDougall Mill Museum, Perth Museum, Lisgar Collegiate, and the City of Ottawa Shared Museum Resources, mounting artworks in sling-mounts for the Renfrew Legion and the Inuit Circumpolar Council, and doing special conservation projects for the Ottawa Art Gallery, the Cameron Highlander Cadets, Osgoode Museum and the Mississippi Valley Textile Museum. When the mural in the C building of the College itself suffered water damage, staff and students of the Program repaired it.

In doing this work, Algonquin College's program supports Canadian identity in a practical way, at a time when our sovereignty and identity are under real threat. If we do not support the heritage organizations, museums and related education programs that help collect, preserve, and share our stories, we cannot understand or come to terms with what actually makes us Canadian.

Additionally, I am a graduate of the program. My career success would not have been possible without this program, as this was (and remains) the only Ontario program that accepts students without a degree. The museum world is addressing its colonial legacy, and that is important to study and understand; but it is also important to address in a practical way, by reducing barriers to socially and economically disadvantaged students who are interested in the museum sector. Algonquin's program does that.

Algonquin's Applied Museum Studies Program does all these things so well that it is consistently oversubscribed. The loss of all these strengths – benefits to Eastern Ontario, support for Canadian identity, accessibility to diverse Ontario students -- would be a loss to the future of Ontario museums.



Michael Rikley-Lancaster (he/him)
President, Ontario Museum Association