



Algoma
UNIVERSITY

SEPTEMBER 2020

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The President's Report provides the Board and community with regular updates of the progress we continue to make on the strategic priorities of the University while highlighting some of the current initiatives and exceptional talent within the organization.

Over the past five months, we have chosen the Inukshuk as a symbol of hope and wayfinding as Algoma University continues to navigate this unprecedented period in world history. We are grateful to have been gifted, by the Anishinaabe people of this area, the Grandfather teachings to guide our interactions with each other and to keep us strong as a community: love and kindness, respect, bravery, wisdom, honesty, truth, humility.

As the fall term commences, we will continue to move forward with the 2020-21 priorities established in collaboration with the two governing bodies, the Board of Governors and the Academic Senate:

- institutional sustainability through an **enrolment growth strategy** focused on recruitment, retention, and vibrant programming;
- target activities and investments that enhance the **student experience**, academic and operational excellence;
- through partnerships, advance the University's leadership and commitments to truth, and reconciliation, and our **special mission** to cultivate cross-cultural learning;
- cultivate a culture of **research and innovation** that enhances the University's economic and community engagement and its impact; and
- **institutional excellence**: facilitate the ongoing improvement of the University by focusing on problem solving, teamwork, and leadership.

Highlights in this edition of the President's Report include:

- the unveiling of the *Sault Ste. Marie Campus Master Plan*;
- a glimpse of the program development underway and the next phase of construction (\$3M renovation) thanks to the generous support from the City of Brampton who are helping to support growth to 1000 FTE (full-time equivalent);
- new partnerships between Northern College and Algoma U in Computer Science – expanding University degree access to this underserved region of the province;
- strengthening the national leadership presence Algoma U is establishing within the university sector in relation to truth, reconciliation and healing;
- enhancing capacity in research and innovation at Algoma U, for faculty and students.



While this will be a challenging year for universities across the country, including Algoma, we have positioned the organization to weather this storm, with the intent to move toward recovery as soon as possible. We remain committed to the target of 3000 FTE by 2024.

Over the past six months, the COVID-19 task force has led us through a safe and successful transition to remote learning, teaching and working. Through ongoing consultation with government and public health, the task force is now helping to guide us through a safe, gradual and phased approach to Return to Campus (RTC). In the fall, we will see many employees returning to campus and a number of student services being made available on each campus (computer labs, library services, fitness areas). We are now positioning our plans to support the next steps in RTC; our intention to deliver face-to-face or hybrid programming **where possible** starting in January 2021.

Algoma University has assumed a long-standing leadership role in addressing issues of equity, diversity and inclusion within the communities we serve and we will continue to increase our efforts in this area. The year 2020 will not only be remembered as the year COVID hit, it will also be a period marked by a demonstrated societal desire to address systemic bias and racism. At Algoma, we understand, *“racism will not be eliminated by one specific action but through an ongoing series of deliberate actions and peaceful dialogue intended to shift bias, remove stereotypes and change behaviours exhibited within our society.”*

Our actions will ensure EDI remains a priority on this campus and that Algoma and its communities are safe, inclusive and welcoming. This effort will be enhanced in 2020 through the leadership of three new positions: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Officer, Academic Lead of Diversity and Equity and Nyaagaaniid of Student Success and Anishinaabe Initiatives. In combination with others in the organization doing this important work and the EDI committee we will continue to move our EDI strategy and action forward.

Thank you – Chi-Miigwech to everyone who has played and continues to play a part in this unprecedented and exciting chapter of our history. Thank you for being adaptable, creative and committed to ensuring our students have an exceptional learning environment.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Asima Vezina'.

Asima Vezina, *President and Vice-Chancellor*

“Thunderbirds protecting Thunderbirds - Thunderbirds protecting Community”



CONTINUE FOCUS ON INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH ENROLMENT GROWTH STRATEGY: **RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, VIBRANT PROGRAMMING**

Key Metrics/Areas of Focus

Recruitment

- Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) plan with clear strategies for achieving enrolment targets: 1740 FTE (2020/21); 2050 (2021/22); 3000 stretch target
- Diversify international enrolment across five key international markets
- Expand academic programming in Brampton – growth to 1000 FTE by 2023

Retention

- Confirm Student Success Strategy: Retention metrics identified for various student groups: international, domestic, eLearning, college pathways, Anishinaabe

Vibrant Programming

- Consultation is underway for AU's next five-year Academic Plan (2021-2026)
- Finalize changes to the Algoma University Act to offer select Master's degrees

What We've Accomplished...

SPRING ENROLMENT **exceeds target**
BY 38%

94%
SPRING STUDENTS
report positive
WELLBEING 

PARTNERED WITH **PowerED™** |  Athabasca University

TO DEVELOP OVER
180 | UNDERGRADUATE COURSES INTO
HIGH-QUALITY, INSTRUCTIONALLY
DESIGNED AND ENGAGING
ONLINE DELIVERY



Recruitment

- Spring enrolment exceeded target by 38% which is close to 70% of the pre-COVID target
- Spring/Fall Domestic and International Degree enrolment has surpassed 2019-20 levels
- International travel restrictions have impacted graduate certificate enrolment. The University has experienced a 51% decline as compared to the pre-COVID projection. New government legislation is expected to ease the burden moving forward
- “Study Local” campaigns launched in Brampton, SSM, Timmins



Retention

- 94% of Spring students reported positive well-being
- Student Success staff provided virtual check-ins with 891 students enrolled this past Spring, a nine percent increase from Spring 2019 levels



Vibrant Programming

- Successfully launched a strategic partnership with PowerEd by Athabasca University to develop over 180 undergraduate courses into high-quality, instructionally designed and engaging online delivery. This will result in at least three full degrees being available online beginning with Computer Science in Fall 2021.
- 46 of the 80 targeted courses for this year have been developed – we are on track to exceed our 2020-21 goal
- New certificate in Project Management–Resilience and Innovation, with first intake Sept 2020
- New strategic partnership with MITACS to support experiential learning and research opportunities for students
- Strengthened partnership with Northern College to expand academic programming, starting with Computer Science, in Timmins

What's Next?

- Finalization of RFP for new pan university multi-year marketing strategy (Nov 2020)
- Procurement of data system to monitor retention rates (Jan 2021)
- Continue expansion and implementation of eLearning options and platforms, to offer full degree programs
- Finalize hiring of Nyaagaaniid - position at Sr. Executive level to lead Indigenization strategy/coordination with SKG as it impacts Algoma U/processes
- Finalize content and structure of new Master's degree programs in Biology and Computer Science



TARGET ACTIVITIES AND INVESTMENTS THAT ENHANCE STUDENT EXPERIENCE, ACADEMIC AND OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Key Metrics/Areas of Focus

Student Experience

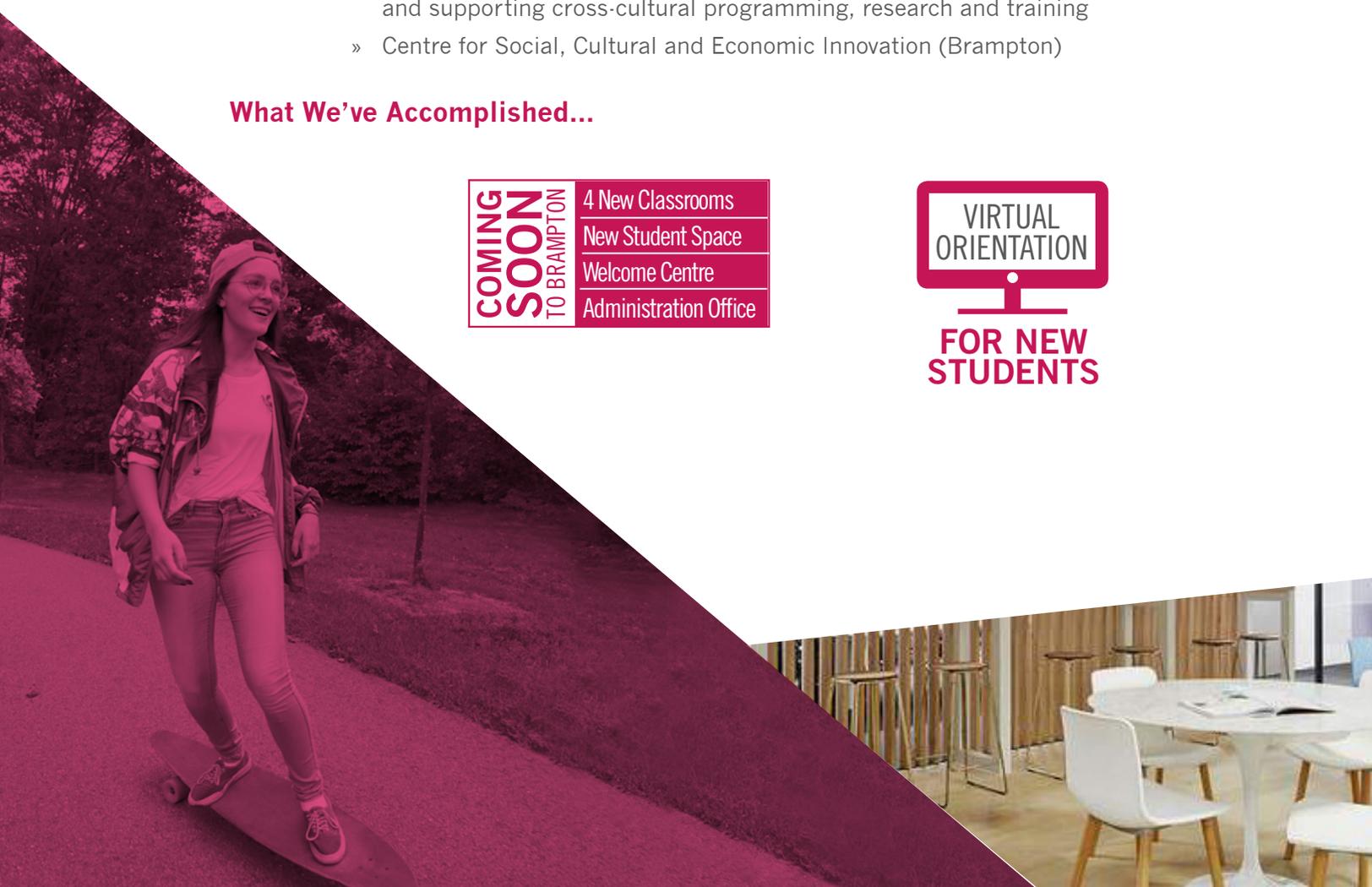
- Expand Brampton campus footprint
- Finalize and implement SSM Campus Master Plan (CMP) initiatives to support growth to 2000 FTE
- Finalize renovation of the Speakeasy in partnership with AUSU
- Student Health & Wellness Supports in place to ensure student needs are addressed

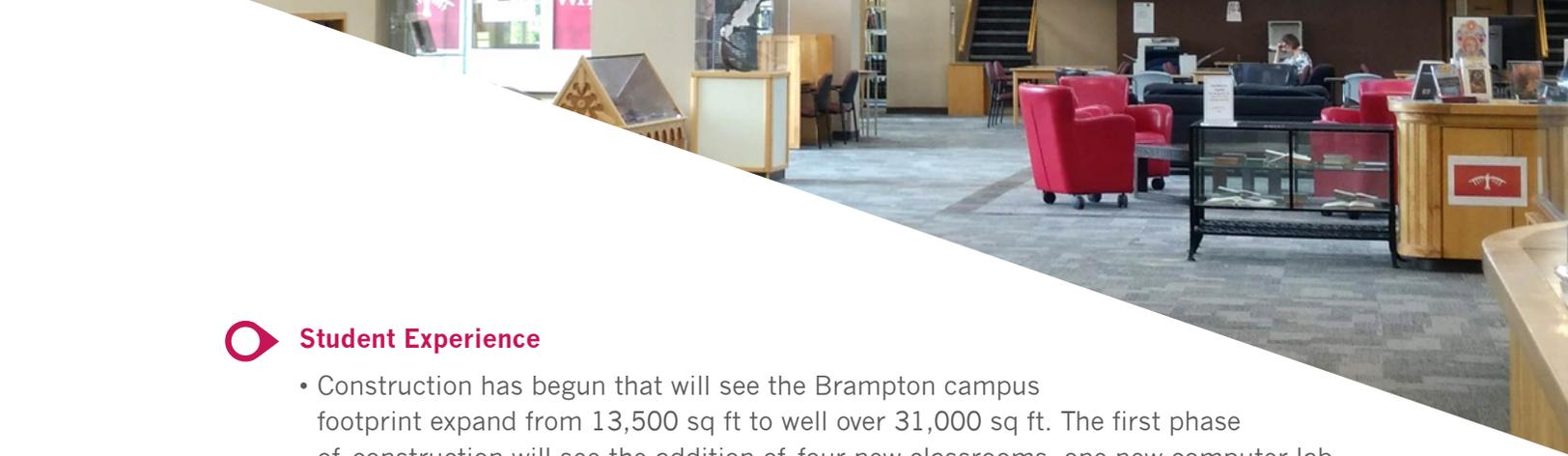
Academic & Research Excellence

- Establish academic/programming elements in alignment with the Academic Plan for the following initiatives:
 - » Ontario Mental Health and Addictions Research and Training Institute
 - » Mukqua Waakaa'igan – a national centre focused on truth, reconciliation and supporting cross-cultural programming, research and training
 - » Centre for Social, Cultural and Economic Innovation (Brampton)

What We've Accomplished...

COMING SOON TO BRAMPTON	4 New Classrooms
	New Student Space
	Welcome Centre
	Administration Office





Student Experience

- Construction has begun that will see the Brampton campus footprint expand from 13,500 sq ft to well over 31,000 sq ft. The first phase of construction will see the addition of four new classrooms, one new computer lab and a Welcome Centre. Current phase on target for Dec 2020 completion
- Speakeasy renovation currently in tendering process
- SSM CMP presented to BOG for review and approval (Sept 2020)
- Virtual Health and Wellness supports in place for students to start the Fall term
- Creation and execution of “Virtual Orientation” for new students and training for returning students

Academic & Research Excellence

- Identify new academic programming for Brampton campus
- Expand exciting new interdisciplinary programming
- Continuous quality improvement in Office of Research and Innovation

What's Next?

- Finalization of Student Success Strategy
- Implementation of CMP initiatives approved for Sault Ste. Marie
- Move forward with new academic programs to be offered at the Brampton and Timmins campuses in 2021 and beyond
- Establish academic program elements for the Centre for Social, Cultural and Economic Innovation (Nov 2020)
- Finalization of Library Strategic Plan
- Advance academic program development for five-year e-Learning Strategy
- Establish academic program elements for the Ontario Mental Health and Addictions Research and Training Institute & the Mukqua Waakaa'igan (March 2021)
- The development of “Off Campus Housing Supports” to help offset reduced residence capacity and need for resources on all three campuses



PRIORITY
#3

THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS, ADVANCE THE UNIVERSITY'S LEADERSHIP AND COMMITMENTS TO **TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION**, AND OUR **SPECIAL MISSION** TO CULTIVATE CROSS-CULTURAL LEARNING

Key Metrics/Areas of Focus

Truth & Reconciliation

- Work with partners to develop the concept and secure funding support for Mukqua Waakaa'igan – a national centre focused on truth, reconciliation and supporting cross-cultural programming, research and training
- Work with partners to develop the concept and secure support for the Ontario Mental Health and Addictions Research and Training Institute
- Recommit to the Calls to Action and the University's Commitments to Truth and Reconciliation

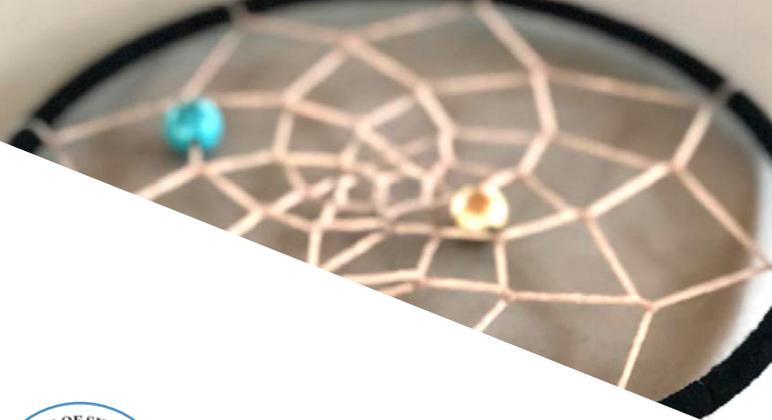
Advance the University's special mission to cultivate cross-cultural learning

- Strengthen relationships and build understanding of the roles key groups play in achieving the special mission (SASA/AUSU, AU, SET, SKG, CSAA, SRSC, JWG, APC, AID)
- Deepen collaboration among Anishinaabe research, academic departments, student success and those responsible for site significance

Strengthen the University's relationship with SET, SKG and CSAA

- Re-kindling relations, building strong ties for all students among these stakeholders on the Sault Ste. Marie campus location ultimately affects all three campuses in a good way; students, staff and faculty are becoming more familiar with the special mission. This important work is a part of the Addendum to the Covenant acknowledged and signed in Nov 2018





What We've Accomplished...

**EXECUTIVE
SEARCH**

NYAAGAANIID:
STUDENT SUCCESS AND
ANISHINAABE INITIATIVES



**AGREEMENT
FINALIZED**

Truth & Reconciliation

- Co-hosted national summer 2020 institute “Perspectives on Reconciliation” for Universities and Colleges in Canada
- Mukqua Waakaa’igan – funding proposals submitted, concept completed
- Ontario Mental Health and Addiction Research and Training Institute –funding proposal submitted

Advance the University’s special mission to cultivate cross-cultural learning

- Executive search underway for Senior Executive position called Nyaagaaniid, to provide senior leadership and oversight to the work and goals of Student Success Central, the Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre and the Anishinaabe Initiatives Division
- Anishinaabemowin and Anishinaabe Studies tenure track hires completed

Strengthen the University’s relationship with SET, SKG and CSAA

- Agreement with CSAA finalized
- New Board members SET and CSAA – in process

What’s Next?

- Finalize shared services agreement between AU and SKG
- Define new commitment to Algoma U’ s response to the “Calls to Action”





CULTIVATE A CULTURE OF **RESEARCH AND INNOVATION** THAT ENHANCES THE UNIVERSITY'S ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND IMPACT

Key Metrics/Areas of Focus

- Capitalize on scholarship and research to enhance student learning, support faculty growth, and contribute to local economic development
 - » Identify, initiate and leverage support for three new research projects that respond to local community needs
- Algoma U cultivates a culture of research and innovation among students and faculty to promote career readiness
 - » Target 10% increase in students directly involved with faculty research projects
 - » Target increase in both number and value of faculty research and dissemination
 - » Increase Experiential Learning (EL) opportunities for students

What We've Accomplished...



DR. PEDRO ANTUNES
CANADA RESEARCH CHAIR
RENEWED

DR. SHEILA GRUNER
SSHRC CONNECTION GRANT
AWARD



Mitacs
partnership established





- Leveraged membership in the University of the Arctic consortium through participation in UArctic collaborative research networks
- MITACS partnership established to provide research training and experiential learning opportunities for students
- Dr. Pedro Antunes' Canada Research Chair, Invasive Species Biology has been renewed for five years
- Dr. Sheila Gruner, CESD, has been awarded an SSHRC Connection grant (\$52,500) for *Indigenous and Afro-descendant People in Colombia: Peace, Territory and Transformation*
- This past July, Krista McCracken (SRSC) won the Canadian Historical Association Best Article In Indigenous History Prize

What's Next?

- Build and expand research supports – expertise and funding
- Identify and develop research elements of key initiatives including the:
 - » Ontario Mental Health and Addictions Research and Training Institute (Jan 2021)
 - » Mukqua Waakaa'igan (March 2021)
 - » Centre for Social, Cultural and Economic Innovation (Brampton) and the Northern Ontario Research and Technology Hub (Nov 2020)
- Implement the Experiential Learning Strategic Plan





INSTITUTIONAL EXCELLENCE: FACILITATE THE ONGOING IMPROVEMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY BY FOCUSING ON PROBLEM SOLVING, TEAMWORK, AND LEADERSHIP

Key Metrics/Areas of Focus

-  **Organizational Alignment**
-  **Talent Management**
-  **Modernization of Systems and Processes**

What We've Accomplished...

NEW FACULTY HIRES

Dr. Saneeha Ahmed



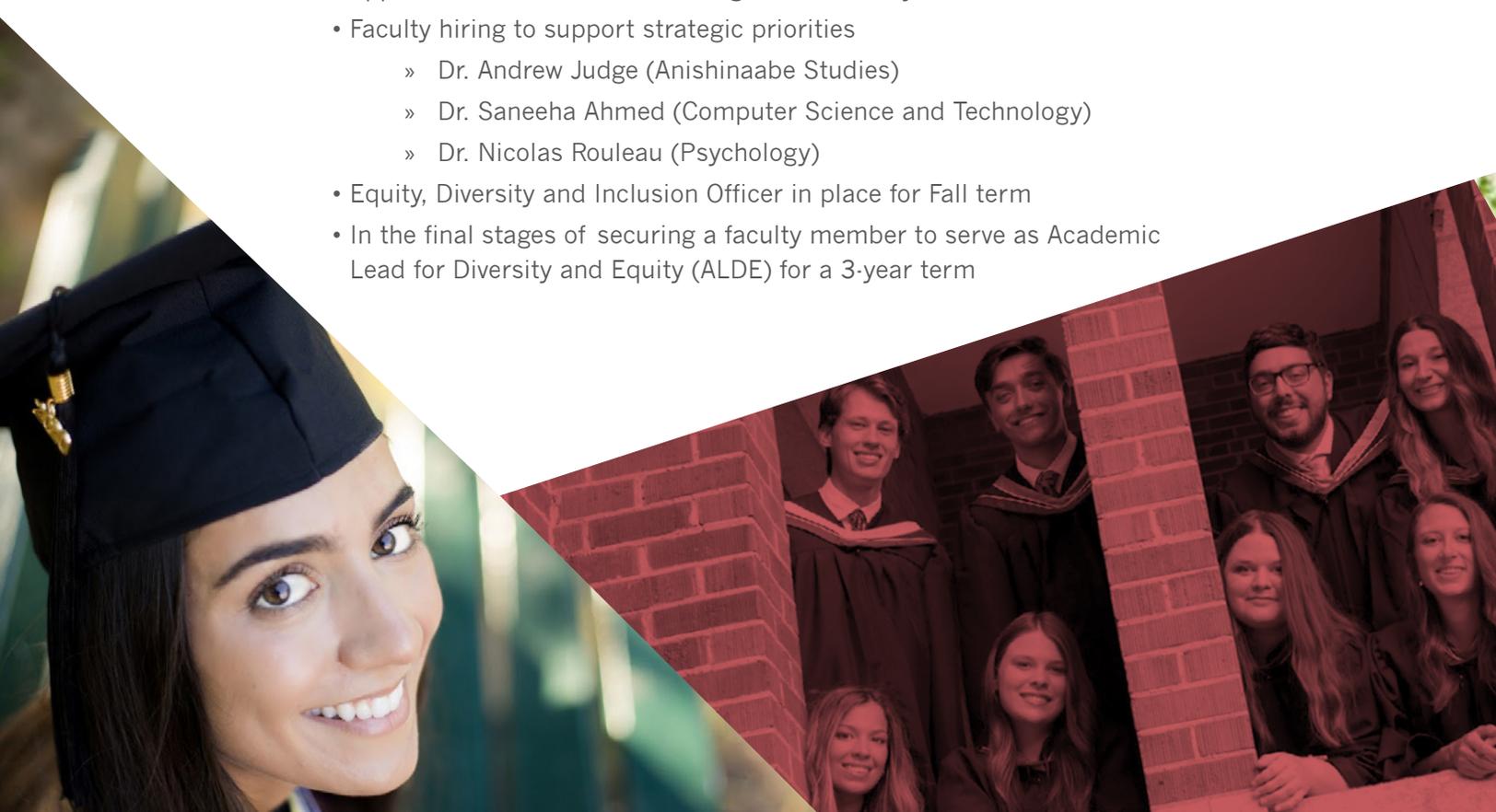
Dr. Nicolas Rouleau



Dr. Andrew Judge



-  • Senior executive restructure to improve efficiency and accountability
- Updated organizational structure finalized
- Appointed Mario Turco as new Algoma University Chancellor
- Faculty hiring to support strategic priorities
 - » Dr. Andrew Judge (Anishinaabe Studies)
 - » Dr. Saneeha Ahmed (Computer Science and Technology)
 - » Dr. Nicolas Rouleau (Psychology)
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Officer in place for Fall term
- In the final stages of securing a faculty member to serve as Academic Lead for Diversity and Equity (ALDE) for a 3-year term





What's Next?

- Completion of an operational efficiency report to support the continued development of enhanced processes and standard operating procedures (Nov 2020)
- Alignment of annual planning to achieve strategic priorities (budget, human resources, capital, risk management, academic and research plans) across the University (Jan 2021)
- Development of a five-year technology/infrastructure plan. The modernization of the Human Resources Information System (HRIS) and the IT Service Management Tool (Jan 2021)
- Development of a capital five-year maintenance plan (March 2021)
- Comprehensive review of corporate policies (March 2021)





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