



ALGOMA U

TODAY

ALGOMA UNIVERSITY ALUMNI MAGAZINE



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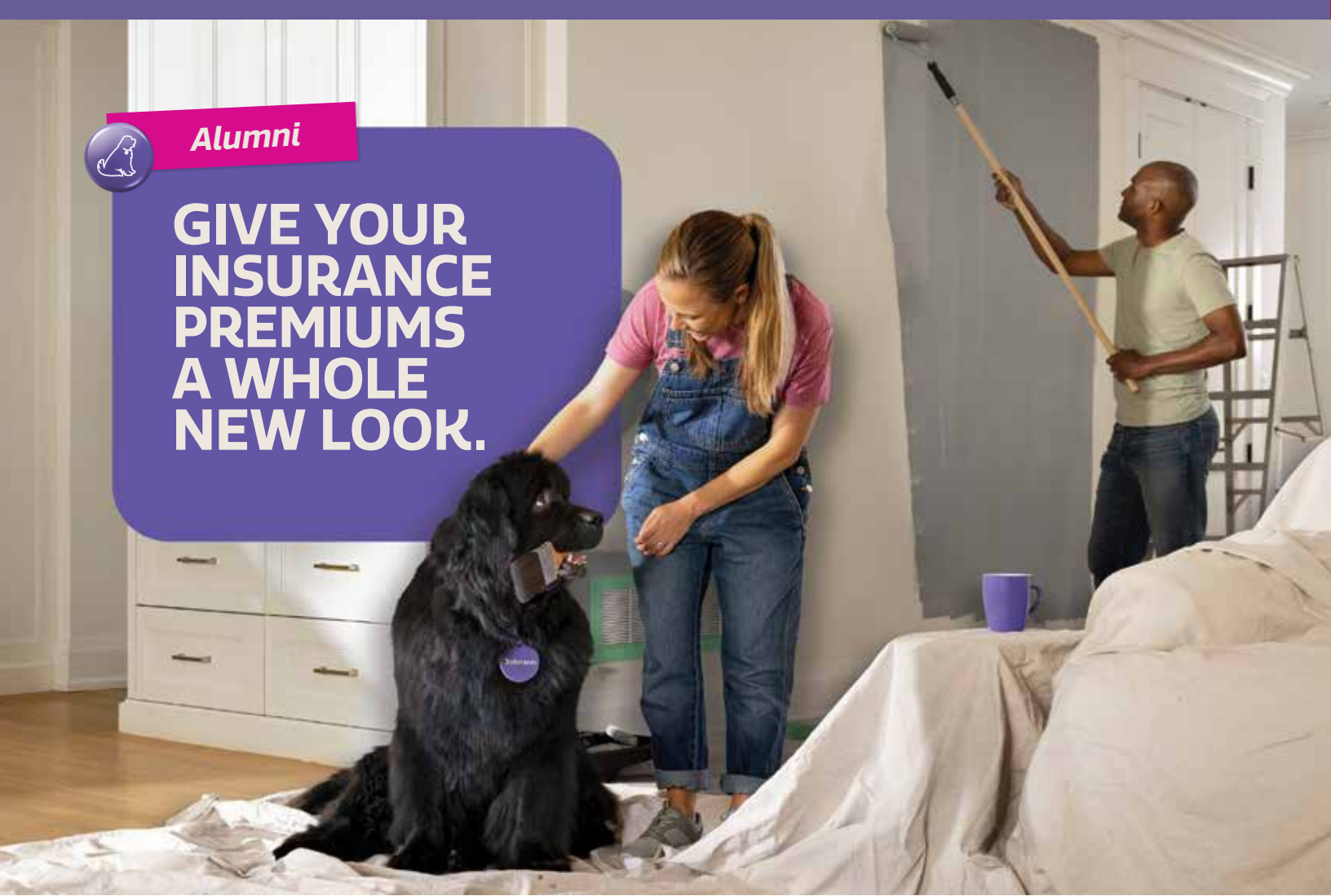
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ALGOMA UNIVERSITY EXPANDS ITS IMPACT

New enhanced programming for students, exciting new spaces, and positive change within the communities it serves.



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EXPANDING ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

Message from the Chair



This is an exciting time for Algoma University and our growing alumni family. As we emerge from the pandemic related restrictions that have impacted us all, we have truly enjoyed reconnecting with our alumni through several in-person events. Expanding our engagement helps to solidify the bonds between all members of our growing alumni family.

During late winter we cheered “the Hounds” on to victory against the visiting Kitchener Rangers at our Soo Greyhounds Alumni Night, and reconnected with former classmates at Northern Superior Brewing for our Sault Ste. Marie Alumni Social.

This spring, we “hit the links” after a two year hiatus with the return of the Algoma U Golf Classic. We also celebrated our newest graduating class in Timmins alongside a number of alumni, faculty, staff and students at a pre-convocation social.

This was the first of three opportunities to welcome the Class of 2022 to the Algoma University alumni family. Our Brampton convocation included two ceremonies to best accommodate the incredible growth on this campus. As these new graduates start their careers, we look forward to supporting them on their journey.

The Fall 2022 issue of *Algoma U Today* provides a range of highlights on the initiatives and people that make our institution an incredible place to study, work, and play. From record breaking enrolment to new partnerships from around the globe, the tremendous progress being made by Algoma is garnering considerable attention across the university sector. This issue also shines light on some of a growing number of faculty who are increasingly being recognized for their groundbreaking research.

The Algoma University Alumni Council is currently developing a new strategic plan. We are eager to share the finalized document with our community this Fall, as we use it to guide our future plans and initiatives. We will once again host in-person homecoming activities to provide further opportunities for us to reconnect with one another. No matter what, I encourage you to continue to stay connected to Algoma University wherever you may be in the world, especially during this exciting time of growth.

Adam Carpenter,
Chair, Alumni Council
Algoma University



EXPANDING OUR IMPACT

President's Message

faceted center of cross-cultural excellence on our Sault Ste. Marie campus, providing a safe and inclusive space where people of all cultures will be welcomed from around the world to share and learn from and with each other.

There is no doubt our growing success is having a positive social and economic impact on our students, the communities we serve and increasingly, the world. As I have shared with others, the words of Margaret Mead seem very fitting in our current context, *"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed. It is the only thing that ever has."*

This issue of Algoma U Today expands on a few strategic updates from across our growing family of alumni, students, faculty, staff and community partners. As we move forward, and I prepare for my second term as President and Vice-Chancellor, I am eager to see what the future holds for Algoma University. There are lots of exciting projects moving forward, including the development of our next Strategic Plan and the introduction of graduate studies. Thanks in advance to everyone who will help shape this next chapter of our journey.

In the interim, I hope you enjoy this issue and best wishes to all for peace, good health, and happiness.

Chi-Miigwetch,

Asima Vezina,
President and Vice-Chancellor
Algoma University

Over the past few months, we have had the good fortune of re-engaging in many of the traditions that make Algoma University such a special place. With four memorable in-person convocation ceremonies, the return of our annual Classic Golf Tournament, the Gathering at the Rapids Pow Wow, the Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association Reunion, and a host of other special events, it was truly an amazing spring and summer.

While these events bring a new energy back to our campuses, as we shift to the fall term, the prospect of what's in store for the future is also generating quite a

buzz. As one of Canada's fastest growing universities, with overall enrolment tripling since 2018, it is clear that our strategic outreach efforts are being noticed. Our research presence and ever-increasing recognition as a national leader within the university sector's response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions Calls to Action have also garnered considerable attention to an increasingly diverse audience.

As we move forward, the Mukwa Waakaa'igan project introduced in our last issue will be a key focal point of our strategic development efforts. This initiative will see the creation of a multi-

SETTING THE PACE FOR LIFELONG LEARNERS

Written by Rafael Nuncio-Lappe

AU's new Professional and Continuing Education Division

Algoma University continues to expand its program offerings. Our new Professional and Continuing Education Division, a.k.a. PACE, supports lifelong learners within communities throughout Sault Ste. Marie, Brampton, and Timmins.

PACE's primary objective is to help people get jobs and grow careers in today's increasingly competitive employment market. "PACE offers career-focused education from a university right in our community," says Dr. Daniel Weeks, Algoma's Senior Project Manager. "If education is the door to opportunities, then universities are the keys that open those doors. PACE will help Algoma continue to create possibilities in learners' lives."

Algoma stands apart from large metropolitan universities because of how deeply embedded it is in the northern communities in which it operates. PACE plays to that distinction. Its success lies in understanding what residents need and addressing those gaps through educational offerings.

Preparing for new realities

In a crowded labour market, continuing education plays a key role. Learners are

invited to upgrade existing skills or acquire new ones through PACE. They might also be brought to recognize untapped applications for the professional talents they already possess.

"People have many proficiencies," says Dr. Weeks. "Often, the foundation is already there. What PACE offers is a platform from which learners can refresh their skills and find ways to apply them in new contexts and areas. That's the very definition of innovation."

As an example, Dr. Weeks points to the appetite among diverse industries for learners steeped in the humanities. "You don't necessarily come out of university with a degree that directly translates into a job. But people with English degrees are now working in high-tech companies because that industry's needs have changed. PACE allows us to adapt to such changes and to better prepare our learners and graduates for new realities."

Enriching lives

PACE is not only out to support the labour force in Northern Ontario and the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). It's equally devoted to building a stronger, more skilled, and passion-driven population through the provision of academic and career direction. "People of all ages sometimes come to universities without knowing what pathway to take," explains Sumbul Syed,

the newly appointed Director of Professional and Continuing Education at Algoma.

"This new professional and continuing education division makes it easier for learners to think about what they want to do in their lives and careers."

It's a demographic that covers a wide spectrum, from high school students to hobbyists. Through PACE, the former can obtain post-secondary experience without committing to a full program; it's an exciting opportunity to see what Algoma has to offer. For the latter, it's a chance to turn a personal pastime into a diploma or certificate, or even a profession.

Indigenous learning and teaching

PACE is firmly committed to Algoma's Special Mission. Part of the division's focus is the widespread dissemination of Indigenous learning and teachings. "Algoma has a special role to play in bringing education to our northern and Indigenous communities," says Syed.

One example is Mukwa Waakaa'igan, a centre of cultural excellence currently under development.

At Mukwa Waakaa'igan, people of all cultures and national origins will come together to share experiences and learn from

each other. The centre will showcase the life work of the Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association—a group of residential school survivors and their descendants. The new facility will also serve as the home of the Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre archives and Aboriginal Healing Foundation Collection.

"With PACE," says Dr. Weeks, "we boost our commitment to making education accessible, meaningful, and life-changing for everyone."

The power of partnerships

Partnerships play a crucial role in PACE.

"Partnerships are essential for Algoma to serve its communities," says Dr. Weeks. "We want to prove our desire and readiness to partner with local and international businesses and organizations and provide value for everyone in our network—from our local citizens all the way to our global partners. Through strong partnerships, we can

ensure a hands-on and needs-based approach to learning that creates and strengthens a skilled workforce and community in Northern Ontario."

"In 2018, Algoma and the Sault Ste. Marie Police Services entered into a partnership to create SHIFT, now known as

"With PACE, we boost our commitment to making education accessible, meaningful, and life-changing for everyone."

Dr. Daniel Weeks

Gabegendaadowin,” cites Syed. *“The program bridges the understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities through evidence-based, experiential learning. It is a perfect example of the type of training and partnerships that we would like to offer at PACE in the future,”* she explains.

A path to self-fulfillment

Regardless of who you are or where you’re from, PACE is designed to serve you. Learners of any age, background, or skill level can benefit. The division is open to newcomers, current learners, graduates, Indigenous learners, international students, and the community at large. As further proof of its receptiveness, PACE will even create new programs based on popular demand.

“Some people are just interested in learning something,” explains Syed. *“The pursuit of knowledge is a goal in and of itself and doesn’t need to have a professional or financial gain in mind. If pursuing lifelong learning enhances your passions, then you’re on your way to self-fulfillment.”*

“Having a professional and continuing education arm is important for Algoma to maintain its critical mission as a university,” beams Dr. Weeks. *“With this new division, we can foster knowledge, scholarship, research, and collaboration in ways that we hadn’t thought of before.”*

Adds Syed, *“We look for inventive ways to contribute to the lives of every person in our communities. That’s exactly why PACE came to be.”*

Whether someone comes to PACE for upskilling, reskilling, or simply to pursue an interest, the division is there to connect them with their goals and a community hungry for their talents. *“We invite you to come to PACE,”* says Syed. *“Acquire new skills, explore your passions, and become a lifelong learner.”*

RIGHT: SUMBUL SYED, DIRECTOR OF PROFESSIONAL AND CONTINUING EDUCATION, ALGOMA UNIVERSITY





SCHOOL OF BUSINESS & ECONOMICS

CREATOR OF COMMUNITY: Professor Jim Bird, SchoolBE

Written by Dan Lalonde

Throughout his long, varied career, Jim Bird has been a police officer, a bank clerk, a real estate developer, a business owner, an accountant, a human resources director, and a teacher—and those are just the jobs he remembers. He draws liberally from his experiences in each field as Academic Lead at Algoma University's School of Business and Economics in Brampton.

"I have a lot to give to the students in terms of experience," he understates.

Jim's first teaching experience was in a one-room schoolhouse in his hometown of Woodstock, Ontario. *"The older kids were expected to teach the younger ones,"* he recalls. *"So, at age twelve, I became a teacher."*

As his long list of professional occupations suggests, twelve-year-old Jim did not feel the call of destiny. He didn't come back to teaching until his equally eclectic education brought him to Georgian College. Literally minutes after being told they couldn't use a former CPA as an instructor, Jim bumped into the Dean, who was desperate to fill a gap. *"I don't suppose you can teach accounting?"*

the Dean asked. Jim has been teaching ever since.

For years, Jim juggled the classroom with the boardroom. His longest stint was in the not-for-profit sector, primarily with March of Dimes Canada and the Canadian Red Cross. It was at the former where he got involved in labour relations. *"Up to that point, I had never had to deal with unions,"* Jim explains.

"I got there and I asked, 'As HR director, how many unions will I have to deal with?' 'Oh, about nineteen,'" they said.

Jim went on to play a pivotal part in more than fifty labour negotiations. Today, he not only imparts his adventures to his students, but he's also a seminal voice in Algoma's union movement.

"I love teaching," Jim, one of the first professors at the Brampton campus, enthuses. *"I love it for the same reasons I loved being a cop. You never know what's going to happen on any given day."* Jim's first love, though, is creating community. Brampton named him Citizen of the Year in 2009. Jim helped the city establish a new hospital, saved the music program

at his son's high school, and served as a volunteer for many other civic causes. Jim views his work at Algoma as an extension of that commitment, spearheading experiential courses on everything from Organizational Behaviour to Business Ethics. *"When I saw that a university was opening, I jumped at the chance. What a wonderful opportunity to help the young people here."*

"Jim's a staple at the Brampton campus," adds director of the School of BE Cathy Denomme. *"He volunteers for all of the open houses and sits on all of the committees, just like he does as a private citizen. He's caring, he's calming, he's inspirational."*

Does Jim fear that the small-town character of the city he so loves, and the intimate quality of Algoma, will dissipate as both continue to enjoy unprecedented growth? *"Our current growth is great for Algoma,"* he endorses. *"It broadens their marketplace. It's also a great opportunity for the students from this area. Both Brampton and Algoma will always have that community feel."*

Especially with Jim Bird looking out for them.

"When I saw that a university was opening, I jumped at the chance. What a wonderful opportunity to help the young people here."

Prof. Jim Bird

CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT AT ALGOMA'S BRAMPTON CAMPUS

Written by John Phillips

COVID-19 forced many organizations in Ontario to slam the brakes on plans for growth. Such a halt was not the case at Algoma University's Brampton campus, where both student enrolment and expansion of facilities has been transformational. With enrolment growing exponentially since 2018-19, Algoma has been busy completing a multi-phased expansion to support the continuation of this trajectory.

Phase III of expansion is nearing completion. (See the Fall 2021 edition of Algoma U Today for information on earlier phases.) This latest phase in campus evolution includes new programs, enhanced services, and added spaces in which students, faculty members, and alumni can gather and learn.

The most recent addition to the campus sees the creation of new student support and classroom facilities at 28 Main Street. This acquisition bookends Algoma's campus in the bustling four corners of Brampton's Garden Square. The new space sits directly across from 8 Queen Street, a historic landmark in downtown Brampton. The fully restored building, home to a new student centre and the school's Centre for Social and Economic Innovation, sits on the same block as Algoma's two other campus facilities – 24 and 52 Queen Street.

"We're using this latest expansion not just to keep the momentum going, but to push growth even harder," says Jamal Muckett-Sobers, manager of Algoma's Brampton operations.

Evidence of this push is clear. The campus will offer Brampton students new programs in a range of disciplines. The most anticipated is the four-year Community Economic & Social Development degree option. The only undergraduate degree of its kind in

Canada, it integrates fields of study that are critical to healthy community development, including sociology, geography, economics, and political science. Algoma's School of Business and Economics has also introduced innovative programming in aviation management and the business of esports.

Expansion allows for enhanced delivery of frontline services. Professional personnel will supply students with expert advice on academics, financial aid, job placement, and career progress. It will also provide gathering places for people to socialize and learn.

"We listened to our students," says Muckett-Sobers. "They expressed to us the real demand that exists in Brampton for Algoma to have a stronger presence. Brampton is one of the fastest-growing and most diverse municipalities in Canada

so the location is perfect given our emphasis on cross-cultural learning."

Brampton is equally enthusiastic about Algoma's expansion. The city supplied financial support to help fuel growth. Brampton also sees the campus as central to the municipality's vision of a connected, inclusive, and innovative city.

"Brampton is in the midst of an exciting transformation," says Patrick Brown, the city's mayor. "Together with our partners, we are putting the building blocks in place to develop our Innovation District – located in downtown Brampton – into a major education hub. We are thrilled that Algoma has chosen Brampton as its latest site for expansion."

Alumni and other stakeholders are encouraged to book a tour of campus or attend an alumni event. There is no doubt you will be impressed.



CONCEPTUAL RENDERING FOR 28 MAIN STREET CLASSROOM



ALGOMA U LEADS REGIONAL MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS PROJECT

Written by John Phillips

A grassroots, cross-cultural, multi-disciplinary response

Algoma District is facing a mental health and addictions crisis. In 2020, Algoma Public Health reported 53 opioid-related deaths, up from 17 in 2019. The region's mortality rate due to this crisis is now more than double the provincial average. Incidents of hospitalization for addictions and mental illness are also troubling. They are three times the Ontario average. First Nations and Métis peoples are especially vulnerable.

"No one is working on solving this problem from a grassroots, cross-cultural, multi-disciplinary perspective,"

says Asima Vezina, President and Vice-Chancellor of Algoma University. *"As a leading organization in our community, we determined that Northern Ontario needed to make a transformational change to its approach to addiction and mental health. This approach must include healthcare, housing, and other social supports. It must also increase professional capacity through a strong pool of graduates coming out of the region's higher education sector."*

Five central partners

Algoma University is helping bring this solution to life by leading the effort to build the Ontario Mental Health and

Addictions Research and Training Institute. As its name suggests, the institute will be a provincial focal point for the research and training necessary to understand and treat mental illnesses and addictions.

Five local organizations are central partners in its planning and eventual operation:

1. Sault Area Hospital will train emerging physicians and advance research of mental health and addictions.
2. Shingwauk Kinooomaage Gamig—an Indigenous-led institute of higher learning—will use its expertise in land-based teaching to establish healing and wellness education programs.



THE CONVERGENCE CENTRE ON THE ALGOMA UNIVERSITY CAMPUS IS THE PROPOSED SITE LOCATION OF THE ONTARIO MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS RESEARCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTE.

3. Sault College will provide training courses, credentialing programs and continuing education opportunities to ensure clinicians have expertise in the treatment of mental illnesses and addictions.
4. The Northern Ontario School of Medicine University (NOSM) will supply learning opportunities to undergraduate and post-graduate students. These opportunities will enable the Institute in particular and the region in general to have more qualified physicians.
5. Algoma University will create new courses and multi-disciplinary programs to advance the understanding of mental health and addictions. The University will also make sure the Institute has the necessary teaching and research capacity.

“We all share in this problem, so the only way to solve it is for all of us to have a share in the solution—to work in true partnership within the community itself,” says Dr. Daniel Weeks, Senior Project

Manager at Algoma University. *“This is a coming together of partners, with each one bringing an impressive amount of capacity in their individual field. By working together, I think we can find a new way forward that any one of these groups couldn’t find acting alone. This partnership will be the difference.”*

Asima Vezina elaborates on the value and uniqueness of the partnership: *“The institute is something that I don’t think has happened yet in Canada, where you have a hospital, medical school, college, university, and Indigenous organization working together to contribute their strengths and skills. Research is going to create solutions, while training will produce a workforce of frontline medical staff, as well as psychologists and social workers, to support a diverse community that is really struggling.”*

“This is a coming together of partners, with each one bringing an impressive amount of capacity in their individual field...”

Dr. Daniel Weeks

Three waves of planning

Development of the Ontario Mental Health and Addictions Research and Training Institute involves what Dr. Weeks calls three waves of planning. The first wave is building a structure that can address the Algoma District’s mental health and addictions crisis. A key outcome of this wave is a feasibility study, which is nearing completion.

“We’re trying to line up all existing research and training in Algoma District,” says Weeks. *“For instance, we’re looking to integrate new training seats for physicians at NOSM University with practical exposure at Sault Area Hospital, so that these professionals can be brought closer to the problem. We’re also looking at how to incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing into the whole Institute. Once we realize what each of the partners brings to the table, we can align the contributions to make sure they meet the challenges of mental health and addictions in Northern Ontario.”*

The second wave is developing new learning, research, and training programs. These programs will produce the added healthcare and treatment professionals needed to tackle this complex problem. Weeks expects this second wave to roll out over the next six to eight months.

The third wave involves bringing on additional partners from the region, province, and country. These partners will supply financial and other supports, so the Institute can expand and intensify its research and training capacity.

“Nothing is free,” says Weeks. *“New programs and capacity building may well require investments from the province. Yet money alone is not the answer. The scale of the challenge is such that we need investments of human resources and infrastructure as well. We will make a strong case to prospective partners for all of that investment.”*

Indigenous peoples and alumni have roles to play

First Nations and Métis communities and organizations in the region will be integral partners in the Institute. Shingwauk Kinooomaage Gamig is one of the five founding partners. Chiefs of three local First Nations communities have also signed letters of support. Their backing is vital, as is the overall support from Indigenous peoples throughout the region.

“The involvement of First Nations and Métis in the Institute ties into reconciliation and the Special Mission of Algoma University,” says Vezina. *“The Institute is going to look at mental health and addictions from a cross-cultural perspective, not relying on one worldview or on Western science alone. We would like to incorporate many worldviews into the research and training programming.”*

Algoma University alumni also have a role to play. *“I would like our alumni to support the Institute,”* says Vezina. *“They can do so by talking across their networks in government and business about the importance of having this Institute in Northern Ontario. They can also sponsor students to research and train here. They can even come back to the school and engage directly. Their participation will be vital in moving the institute forward.”*

WHAT AN AMAZING SPRING & SUMMER

Our campuses are buzzing with activity once again! Over the past few months we have had many opportunities to reconnect in Brampton, Sault Ste. Marie, and Timmins.



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- 1. JUNE - SCHOOL OF COMPUTER SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY RIBBON CUTTING (SSM)
- 2. JUNE - SSM CONVOCATION (HONORARY DEGREE RECIPIENT, CHIEF LYLE SAYERS)
- 3. & 4. JUNE - BRAMPTON CONVOCATION
- 5. & 6. JUNE - TIMMINS CONVOCATION
- 7. JULY - CELEBRATION FOR SHIRLEY HORN, ALGOMA'S FIRST CHANCELLOR (IN PHOTO: PRESIDENT & VICE-CHANCELLOR ASIMA VEZINA, FIRST CHANCELLOR SHIRLEY HORN, CURRENT CHANCELLOR MARIO TURCO)
- 8. AUGUST - CHILDREN OF SHINGWAUK ALUMNI ASSOCIATION (CSAA) REUNION



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SHINGWAWK RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS CENTRE RECEIVES MEDAL OF MERIT

Written by Dan Lalande

On May 2, 2022, the Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre (SRSC) officially received the City of Sault Ste. Marie's highest honor, the Medal of Merit. The ceremony hosted at city hall had been postponed for almost two years due to covid. The SRSC earned this distinction for achieving a standard of excellence in a cultural or academic field, and for its extraordinary contribution to the community.

"Sault Ste. Marie's efforts on the truth and reconciliation journey continue to be led by the local Indigenous community, with the Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre providing a foremost example of the importance of acknowledging the difficult truths of our past and committing to move forward in the spirit of collaboration and mutual respect," said Mayor Christian Provenzano.

The formal presentation was conducted as part of a city council meeting. Krista McCracken, researcher/curator of the SRSC, attended the event. *"It was a lovely ceremony,"* comments McCracken. *"It was great to see support from the community and the mayor. Recognition as a leader in cross-cultural education is truly wonderful."*

It's an agenda in which McCracken continues to play a seminal role. In 2010, looking to establish a formalized community archive as part of the SRSC, Algoma University turned to McCracken, a public historian with a background in archival research. Today, the SRSC, featuring the Reclaiming Shingwauk Hall exhibit, is the longest-running community archives dedicated to Residential Schools. Plans to expand the SRSC's scope to cover a more complete history of colonization and decolonization in Canada are currently in the design stage.

The SRSC continues to attract attention at the local, provincial, national, and international levels. The City of Sault Ste. Marie's Medal of Merit is the latest acknowledgment of the passion and diligence of staff, volunteers, and leadership at the SRSC and Algoma University.

"The recognition from the city is testament to the long-standing commitment and hard work of the dedicated members of the Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association along with the expert staff who oversee the SRSC," notes Mary Wabano-McKay, Vice-President, Nyaagaaniid - Anishinaabe Initiatives, Equity and Student Success. *"Their efforts to preserve and share the*

truth of Canada's residential school period are of critical importance so the ongoing work of healing and reconciliation can move forward."

The Medal of Merit builds on the many accolades bestowed upon the SRSC for their efforts. More information is found on the SRSC website (<https://algomau.ca/research/shingwauk-residential-schools-centre/>).



FROM LEFT: MARY WABANO-MCKAY, VICE-PRESIDENT, NYAAGAANIID - ANISHINAABE INITIATIVES, EQUITY & STUDENT SUCCESS AND SHIRLEY HORN, FORMER CHANCELLOR, ALGOMA UNIVERSITY AND SHINGWAWK RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SURVIVOR



FROM LEFT: MADDIE BIFANO, SITE SEARCH ARCHIVES TECHNICIAN; JENNA LEMAY, DIGITAL ARCHIVES TECHNICIAN, SRSC; KRISTA MCCracken, RESEARCHER/CURATOR, SRSC; MAYOR CHRISTIAN PROVENZANO, CITY OF SAULT STE. MARIE; SHIRLEY HORN, FORMER CHANCELLOR, ALGOMA UNIVERSITY AND SHINGWAWK RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SURVIVOR; AND MARY WABANO-MCKAY, VICE-PRESIDENT, NYAAGAANIID - ANISHINAABE INITIATIVES, EQUITY AND STUDENT SUCCESS



DR. NIROSHA MURUGAN: A rising star in the realm of research

Written by Rafael Nuncio-Lappe

An Algoma University professor is making big ripples in the research community. Meet Dr. Nirosha Murugan, a self-described interdisciplinary scientist who combines traditional research principles and ground-breaking techniques to achieve unconventional results. Her fields of expertise are neuroscience, regenerative medicine, and cancer biology.

Dr. Murugan began her studies at Laurentian University. There, she obtained a bachelor's degree in behavioural neuroscience, a master's degree in neuroscience, and a PhD in biomolecular science. She attended Tufts University in Boston for her post-doctoral research within the Tufts Center for Regenerative and Developmental Biology. Upon her return to Canada, the Toronto native chose to come back to the North and joined Algoma University as an assistant professor in 2020.

Dr. Murugan is an early career researcher with a bright and promising future. At only 31 years of age, she has already been the recipient of two prestigious grants.

The New Frontier Research Fund awarded her \$187,000 for her research to develop an early

diagnostic tool for cognitive impairments associated with cancer treatments. The Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada awarded her \$162,000 to further her research in cancer biology—specifically, how cells communicate with each other to prevent or stop cancer cells from developing.

In January 2022, Dr. Murugan's exemplary research and teaching earned her the Rising Star Award of Excellence from Ontario's Ministry of Colleges and Universities. The award recognizes her work as a leader in post-secondary education in the province.

"I'm incredibly thankful and proud to be honoured with this award," she says. "The award means that I'm privileged to be part of a close community that is dedicated to excellence in innovation and research. To be recognized by my students and peers is a humbling experience."

Algoma's acting Academic Dean and former chair of the biology department, Dr. István Imre, comments, *"The Rising Star Award is a recognition of the calibre of the work that our Algoma faculty members do. The University's ability to attract and retain a colleague like Dr. Murugan speaks volumes about the environment that our institution offers for such outstanding researchers. It also contributes to the reputation of the program, Algoma, and the north."*

Some of Dr. Murugan's most intriguing work is in regenerative medicine. She was the lead author of a study that earned her worldwide recognition. The study garnered attention from the journal *Science Advances*, *The New York Times*, and even *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*. It is focused on frogs but is loaded with promising applications for humans.

"Frogs are unique animals because they can fully regenerate when they're tadpoles," explains Dr. Murugan. "Tadpoles can lose limbs and organs and easily regenerate them. When tadpoles become adult frogs, however, they completely lose that ability."

She equates that formidable ability to human embryos. At the embryonic stage, humans have a lot of stem cells and regenerative capabilities—superpowers that are lost as a person develops. Dr. Murugan's research uses frogs as a bridge to bring us closer to emulating the regenerative abilities we had in our early developmental stage.

To achieve this, Dr. Murugan and her team created a silicone cap called a BioDome. The cap contains a silk-based gel comprised of a five-drug mixture aimed at kickstarting regeneration in an adult frog that can no longer grow limbs. The gel delivers these chemicals directly to the tissues. It also provides support by holding the new limb in place and keeping the appendage hydrated.

The research team amputated one of the hindlimbs of 115 African clawed frogs. They divided the amphibians into three groups: a group that did not receive treatment, a second group that wore BioDomes without medication for 24 hours, and a third

that wore the devices with medication for the same period.

Surprisingly, the wounds in the treated animals started to heal but remained open. Within eighteen months, the legs had regrown with nerves, muscles, bones, and even some finger-like structures. The regrown limbs also responded to pressure and allowed the frogs to return to normal swimming.

"It's not perfect," says Dr. Murugan. "But it's very close. We're excited to see how far we can go. We hope to one day reverse human limb loss completely. These new approaches to regenerative medicine are unlocking a path to achieve this breakthrough."

True to Dr. Murugan's approach to research, a significant aspect of the frog experiment was its interdisciplinary scope. The project brought together multiple experts from different departments and institutions. Dr. Murugan's aim is to move away from a traditional single-focus research method. Instead, she advocates for researchers to be trained to think in different directions and collaborate with various people to solve problems. This kind of thinking is more strategic in the long run, she adds.

"The Rising Star Award and my research demonstrate that you don't have to be 'purebred' in your scientific community," she explains. "To me, 'purebred' means that you've been trained by experts and have only focused on one thing your entire career. I don't want that. In my field, it's very important to show that we're open to change and to bring in people who think differently, and work with them. I'm very proud of myself for bringing together

all these experts—and for leading them as a woman of colour."

Adds Imre, *"Dr. Murugan is a wonderful role model for other women in STEM studies and careers."*

Among the many collaborators Dr. Murugan has brought together are those who live in remote communities. *"Through Indigenous knowledge and lived experiences, we can sharpen older technologies and thought patterns. We can then integrate these different approaches and deliver a more efficient method to the world," she says.*

"Dr. Murugan's work serves the needs of students in Northern Ontario. She works in the north for the north," adds Imre.

"She embodies the cross-cultural education and knowledge transmission between our Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities that we strive for at Algoma. She is also a perfect example of the University's commitment to our equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives and expectations."

Taking stock of her accelerated success, Dr. Murugan offers some personal advice: *"I want people to know that it's okay to have an unconventional journey," she advises, "as long as you keep your sights on where you want to go and what the endgame is. Never lose your creative drive and your openness to different ways of thinking and doing—no matter your academic training, your passion, or your journey."*

"Dr. Murugan's work serves the needs of students in Northern Ontario. She works in the north for the north..."

Dr. István Imre



DR. DONNA ROGERS: Into the unknown

Written by Dan Lalonde

“Do more of what you’re afraid of.”

That’s the parting advice to Algoma University students from outgoing Vice-President Academic and Research, **Dr. Donna Rogers**. It’s the personal motto behind a long, colourful, and distinguished career, almost all of it propelled by a genealogical instinct to venture boldly into uncharted territory.

“I come from Scottish and Irish ancestry,” explains the genial and well-spoken Dr. Rogers. *“My ancestors came to a new country looking for a better life. They were literally stepping into the*

unknown. I’ve inherited much of that spirit.”

Dr. Rogers’ professional journey began in high school when she fell in love with European languages (a precedent set by a childhood bent for French-language CBC TV programming). In her culminating year, however, the school she was attending dropped her favourite subjects. Only a single student had enrolled—guess who? Dr. Rogers promptly opted out of school entirely and stepped into, you got it, uncharted territory.

After acquiring some work experience (she had considered careers in policing

and the pharmaceutical industry), she was accepted at the University of Waterloo. The caveat was, being a dropout, she had to maintain a C average. She exceeded expectations, earning a degree in Latin and Spanish. After that, it was off to Western University to complete her master’s.

Her first professional engagement was, improbably, as an English-Spanish translator for a Canadian-based poultry breeding company. *“They had clients in South America and the Caribbean,”* she remembers. *“The company would often book a charter and bring me with them. So, on weekends, there I’d be, on a plane to*

DR. DONNA ROGERS, RETIRED VICE-PRESIDENT
ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH AT ALGOMA UNIVERSITY

Columbia with 75,000 chickens.”

She also translated the company’s feeding and disease control guides. *“I learned a lot about poultry in two languages,”* she laughs. During this period, she made time to serve as an ESL teacher for refugees, an experience that set her to consider grander designs as an instructor.

After she procured her Ph.D. in Linguistics from the University of Toronto (including achieving near-native fluency in Catalan), Dr. Rogers got her first full-time teaching job—in the U.S. Like her ancestors, she was stepping into a new land to find work. *“I can still hear that poor, perplexed border guard,”* she recalls, going into a creditable imitation. *“You mean, we have to import people to teach Spanish?”*

What followed was a dozen years at one of the 19 campuses comprising Penn State University. No stranger to extremes, she next found herself at Middlebury College, a private institution nestled in low-key Vermont, with a student population of under 3,000. While she classifies both experiences as rewarding, each tested her comfort level, though the intimacy of the latter never lost its appeal.

“I like the smaller institutions,” she explains, *“places where I can get to know the students and they can get to know me, places where you can still make connections.”* A telling preference, which would lead her to her last and most cherished professional home: Algoma.

The return to native soil—first at Dalhousie University, then at Brescia University College—brought with it thoughts of serving students in capacities outside the classroom. *“I began to consider programs and program quality,”* she reflects. *“At first, I was an accidental administrator. Looking back, though, I can see that ran a lot deeper than I thought.”*

An understatement. Throughout her

administrative career, she rose from Associate Dean Academic, Arts and Social Sciences to Vice-Principal and Academic Dean and Interim Principal. Eventually, she became Academic Dean, then Vice-President Academic and Research at Algoma.

Everywhere she ventured, her guiding principles never wavered: *“I wanted attractive programs, exciting faculty, and policies that would help students navigate this world that was new to them.”* It’s an empathy and understanding born of her own experience: *“I was the first one from my family to get a higher education. I always kept that in mind, how opaque post-secondary education was to me as a young student.”* International and Indigenous students have particularly benefited from this mindset.

In 2018, Dr. Rogers was nearing her final professional stop. *“A colleague said to me just before I went to AU, ‘You’re at the legacy stage of your career. Have you thought about what you’re going to do?’”* So, I asked myself, *“Where can I make a difference? Where can I bring all of this experience?”*

The answer, of course, was Algoma, which checked all of the right boxes: it was modestly sized, community-minded, and had just undergone a change of leadership, *“so it was an excellent opportunity to contribute.”*

And contribute over her four years she did, leading the development of Algoma’s new five year academic plan. The plan’s goal to increase enrolment from 1,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) students to 3,000 was accomplished well ahead of schedule, quelling concerns about the institution’s sustainability. The increase in tuition revenue was invested in new

programs and faculty. The University reached another milestone when the original act for its establishment was amended, allowing for the introduction of master’s degrees. This institutional priority, currently in development, could

see three academic disciplines offering MAs, more proof of AU’s academic maturation.

Dr. Rogers attributes the growth of the school to a series of strategic partnerships with larger institutions. *“Algoma is an attractive partner for them because of the Special Mission and our commitment to addressing reconciliation.*

We have a ton left to do in that

regard, of course” she adds. *“Yet, these other institutions say to us, ‘Wow! You’ve done so much!’”*

Not to say that Dr. Rogers’s tenure at Algoma didn’t have its challenges. In March 2020, the pandemic struck. Algoma University suffered a complete shutdown. *“From there, we acted on orders that got updated every couple of weeks. But we took it one day at a time”—*on her military historian husband’s sage advice—*“and never laid off a single employee. I’m extremely proud of our academic continuity throughout it all.”*

This past May, Dr. Michele Piercey-Normore joined Algoma University as its new VPAR, bringing with her 20 years of research, teaching, and progressive administrative experience. The retired Dr. Rogers, meanwhile, will continue to contribute to community. *“Faculty careers are made up of three components,”* she explains, *“teaching, administration, and service. None of us takes the ‘service’ part lightly.”* She’s entertaining volunteer work and part-time teaching. She’s also thinking of travel—excursions, no doubt, into the unknown.

“I wanted attractive programs, exciting faculty, and policies that would help students navigate this world that was new to them.”

Dr. Donna Rogers

ALGOMA UNIVERSITY SENATE DESIGNATES DISTINGUISHED FACULTY

Written by Dan Lalande

You hear a lot about lifelong learners—but what about lifelong teachers or researchers? Upon retirement, a handful of seasoned and devoted faculty were recognized by the Algoma University Senate and Board of Governors with the honorary status of Professor Emeritus/Emerita. This designation acknowledges the continued devotion of these instructors to their life's calling and their ongoing commitment to enriching the lives of students and the broader AU community in a myriad of capacities.

AU congratulates these Professors Emeriti and thanks them for their continued contributions to the school. Their invaluable experience and inextinguishable spirit will continue to enrich the quality and character of Algoma and the communities our campuses serve.

PHOTO BELOW: DAVID MARASCO, REGISTRAR, ALGOMA UNIVERSITY (FAR LEFT) AND ASIMA VEZINA, PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR, ALGOMA UNIVERSITY PRESENT DR. WILLIAM OSEI AND DR. CELIA ROSS WITH THE HONORARY STATUS OF PROFESSOR EMERITI



DR. WILLIAM OSEI

Dr. William Osei

It is the intelligence, leadership, and personality of Dr. William Osei that people think about when it comes to geography, geology, and land stewardship at Algoma.

Dr. Osei holds a B.A. from the University of Ghana, an M.A. from Carleton University, and a Ph.D. from Western University. He joined the faculty of Algoma University in 1992, having taught at Brandon University and the University of Victoria.

Dr. Osei was the long-serving chair of the Department of Geography and Geology (now Geography, Geology and Land Stewardship). In addition, he is a member of the Canadian Association of Geographers, the Canadian Association for the Study of International Development, and the Association of American Geographers, among other national and international organizations.

His teaching and research interests include forestry and energy, environment and rural sustainability, and food security. He developed and taught many different courses in geography and geology, including Introduction to Physical Geography and advanced special topics courses on energy and sustainable development.

Dr. Osei served on a wide range of committees at Algoma, including the Peer Review Committee, the Research Ethics Board, and the Board-Senate Liaison Committee. He has also played key roles in the faculty union.



DR. CELIA ROSS

Dr. Celia Ross

After completing graduate and doctoral studies in French Literature in 1982, Dr. Celia Ross became a member of the Algoma University (College) Department of Modern Languages. In time, she became a figure of strength and reliability the University leaned on in times of crisis and transition.

Dr. Ross was named academic dean in 1997, guiding Algoma, at that time an affiliate of Laurentian University, through a difficult transformational period.

After one short year, she was promoted to the role of President, a position she held until 2010. She returned to the President's role in 2016 on an interim basis.

Dr. Ross was instrumental in the creation of Algoma's Independent Charter in 2008, marking the school's separation from Laurentian University. The Charter helped set the course for Algoma's current success as the University came into its own as a thriving academic institution.

Dr. Ross was also a key champion of AU's varsity athletics program. When the women's basketball team reached the provincial championships for the first time, she wrapped up an important faculty meeting, then promptly hopped an overnight Greyhound to Ottawa to cheer on the Thunderbirds. Now that's commitment!



PROFESSOR DAVE GALOTTA

Professor Dave Galotta

Algoma's reputation as a leading provider of business education owes a debt to the knowledge, leadership, and devotion of Professor Galotta.

He joined the faculty of what was then Algoma University College in 1990, after success in the corporate banking world. He's been a member of the Institute of Canadian Bankers, the Chartered Professional Accountants of Ontario, and the Society of Management Accountants of Canada.

At the University, Prof. Galotta led and supported the development of specializations within the BBA, such as Accounting and Marketing. He served as Academic Lead for the Brampton campus (Business and Economics) and helped to establish the Algoma University Business Society (AUBS) in 1995. In addition, he has served on over 150 committees, including Senate, faculty union, Board of Governors, search committees, university-wide committees, and external community committees.

Prof. Galotta was an early adopter of experiential learning methods in corporate finance, investments, and business strategy courses. According to his students, he even found ways to make the much-feared finance courses engaging!



DR. CHERYL REED-ELDER

Dr. Cheryl Reed-Elder

Dr. Reed-Elder's devotion to Algoma is more than just a matter of her years of service. She took on whatever was necessary to support students at a crucial stage in their personal and academic growth.

Dr. Reed-Elder came to teach in the psychology department at Algoma University in 1988. Originally hired on a one-year appointment, she served at Algoma U for 32 years.

She holds undergraduate degrees in psychology from Mount Saint Vincent and Saint Mary's universities. She also holds an M.A. and a Ph.D. in psychology from Dalhousie University, with a specialization in experimental psychology.

Dr. Reed-Elder assumed a variety of academic leadership roles at the University. She served a record 13 years as Science Divisional/Faculty Chair before stepping down in 2019. That same year, she received the Distinguished Faculty Award.

In addition, Dr. Reed-Elder supervised no fewer than 50 undergraduate thesis students. Small wonder AU's student population prized her ability to impart the skills required for post-graduate and professional programs, particularly in the realm of academic writing.



IN PHOTO FROM LEFT:
LOGAN MACRITCHIE,
SKYLA CARON AND
JANE PETRONI

JANE PETRONI: A champion for social work in Northern Ontario

Written by Dan Lalonde

Benefiting students and citizens

In the late 1990s, Jane Petroni was a single parent with a full-time job. Looking to better her lot in life, she would drive from her home in Timmins to Sudbury's Laurentian University to earn her bachelor's degree in social work — this on notorious King's Highway 144, in the winter, in the dark of night. It's just one example of the indefatigable energy, die-hard determination, and unwavering devotion to education and community that characterizes her to colleagues, students, friends, and neighbours.

After earning her master's from the University of Calgary while teaching in the Social Service Worker program at Northern College (NC), Jane became part of a small team of dedicated individuals who helped bring Algoma University's newly approved Honours Bachelor of Social Work program to Timmins. As with most new initiatives, program start-up was an incredibly busy period for all involved. True to her nature, Jane helped to make it a rousing success;

today, social work graduates have an easier time finding employment than graduates in most other fields. Further, she helped secure the program's ties to Northern Ontario, creating a college-university-community ecosystem that continues to benefit students and citizens.

"Jane is the face of the social work program in Timmins," says former colleague Linda-Savory Gordon, a retired professor at Algoma University. Sadly, due to her recent retirement, Jane will no longer play such a prominent role—though another colleague, Student Services Coordinator Emilene Dumoulin, notes, *"Given Jane's passion, she continues to teach on a part-time basis, for which we are thankful."*

A vision for the program

AU's social work program was originally developed while the University was an affiliate college of Laurentian. Students spent the first half of their four years at AU, and the remaining two in Sudbury.

When a collective cry of frustration rang out, AU set out to establish an alternative joint admissions agreement.

For that, AU would need a new partner. Enter Northern College, enter Jane. She was an adjunct professor at NC's Timmins campus at the time, with a full-time job in the field. *"Jane was on board right away,"* remembers Savory-Gordon. *"She was very interested in our vision for the program."*

The social work program subscribes to a unique and important focus, offering Indigenous, structural, critical feminist, anti-oppressive, and anti-racism perspectives on northern, rural, remote, Indigenous, and Franco-Ontarian communities. Graduates are prepared to practice entry-level, anti-oppressive social work with diverse populations. Jane helped to create regional placements, which often led to full-time jobs in disadvantaged regional sectors. She was also deeply involved with the First Nations students in the program, ensuring that it remained imminently accessible to them. *"Jane was always there,"* says Savory-Gordon. *"Those students really related to her."*



Your Donations Make an Impact.

Algoma University was built on a community's dream for a post-secondary institution close to home. Today, that dream continues to thrive. Our deepest thanks to the generosity of donors, alumni, the business community, and champions who continue to support the success of tomorrow's leaders, our students.

Donating to the Algoma University Annual Fund makes an immediate impact in the following areas:

- 1. **Scholarships**, which recognize academic excellence
- 2. **Bursaries**, ensuring that university education is accessible
- 3. Support for athletes participating in **varsity sports**
- 4. Enhancing the overall **student experience**
- 5. Algoma University's **Special Mission**
- 6. Special and/or Research projects
- 7. Capital projects

Reasons for making a gift vary. Some give to provide the university with more academic resources; others to provide students with academic awards or financial aid. Many give as an act of gratitude, for the contribution Algoma U has made to their lives. No matter the reason, we hope that you will help Algoma University by making a donation that will have a lasting impact on our students.

To make your donation, please contact

Giselle Chiarello, Senior Development Officer, Alumni & Advancement Office
at 705-949-2301, ext. 4125 or giselle.chiarello@algomau.ca. You can also visit our website at: algomau.ca/giving

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Algoma University Athletics ADOPT-A-THUNDERBIRD



Athletics are an integral part of Algoma University's history. Our student-athletes have excelled at the regional, provincial, and national levels in their respective sports. As part of Ontario University Athletics (OUA), our varsity teams compete in the most prestigious university sports conference in Canada, offering team members the opportunity to excel and grow.

Our student-athletes (Thunderbirds) compete in the following sports:

- Basketball
- Cross-country running
- Curling
- Nordic skiing
- Soccer
- Wrestling

Adopting an Algoma U Thunderbird allows families, friends, alumni, and the community the opportunity to support our student-athletes.

Algoma University's hard-working student-athletes need your philanthropy in order to support their academic standing while training and competing. There are also travel costs, as they venture thousands of kilometers across Ontario, the rest of Canada, and the United States to participate in various events.

You can help bolster the Algoma University Varsity Athletics program by making a donation to the Adopt-A-Thunderbird program today!

Your donation will help to:

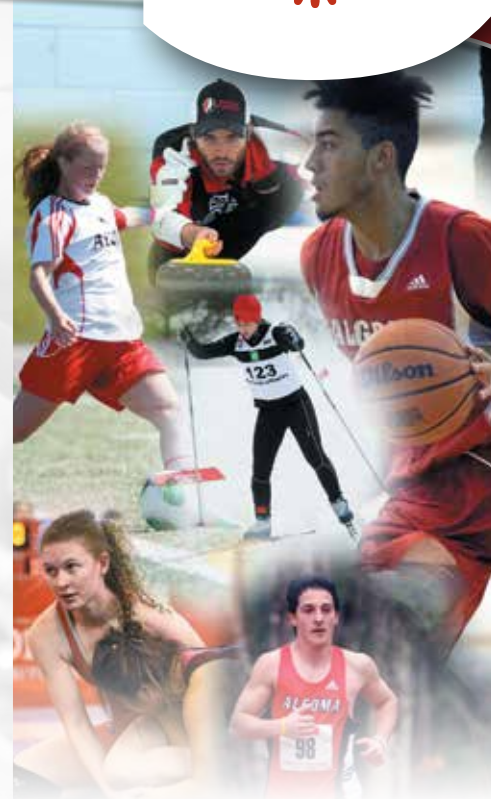
- purchase specialized equipment
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- support student-athlete achievement awards.

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If you wish to speak with a member of our team about a donation, please contact

Giselle Chiarello, Senior Development Officer, Alumni & Advancement Office
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You can also visit our website at: algomau.ca/giving



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(Please complete credit card information.)
Please indicate the amount that you wish to donate monthly:
 - \$100 per month
 - \$75 per month
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 - \$25 per month
 - \$_____ per month

I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A ONE-TIME DONATION

- Cheque enclosed for \$_____ (Please make cheque payable to Algoma University. The fund being donated to can be listed in the memo line.)
 - Credit card payment in the amount of \$_____
 - VISA MasterCard American Express
- Name on Card: _____
 Card Number: _____
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DR. OLABANJI AKINOLA: In memoriam

Written by Dan Lalande

The story has become the stuff of legend. The long drive through a raging snowstorm, from Sault Ste. Marie to Algoma's campus in Timmins, so that he might personally introduce himself to a group of students he was teaching online.

Such was the professional ethic, undaunted enthusiasm, and deep humanity of the late Dr. Olabanji Akinola, the Professor of International Relations and Comparative Politics known to colleagues and students as 'Banji.' Dr. Akinola passed away from cancer in January at the tragically young age of 37. His influence will last well beyond his short tenure as colleague, advocate, mentor, and role model. *"The students loved him,"* explains Dr. Trevor Tchir, Associate Professor of Political Science in the Department of Law and Politics. *"More than a few said to me over the years that he was the most engaging prof they'd ever had."*

Dr. Akinola arrived at Algoma in 2018 in a limited-term position. His mix of masterful knowledge and irrepressible energy catapulted him to the tenure track. Together, he and Dr. Tchir grew Algoma University's Political Science program, a Herculean task for a two-person team. *"It was a great fit,"* says Dr. Tchir. *"I'm from Canada, so I teach the domestic side. He lived in all sorts of countries, so he taught the international content. Together, we were able to cover the whole University program."*

Dr. Akinola's devotion to his students extended beyond his courses in comparative politics, global governance, and international relations. He served as faculty advisor for the student delegation



DR. OLABANJI AKINOLA

to the North American Model United Nations, a mock version of the U.N. He also moderated talks during a Wet'suwet'en solidarity march and an online event for Indigenous Awareness Month on behalf of the Shingwauk Anishinaabe Students' Association (SASA) and University partners.

Dr. Akinola led the University's Anti-Black Racism Sub-Committee and mentored Algoma's growing Black community, as well as its contingent of international students. *"That will be part of his legacy,"* adds Dr. Tchir. *"He was a positive force in the*

"He was a positive force in the internationalization of the school."

Dr. Trevor Tchir

internationalization of the school."

The Department of Law and Politics has established a scholarship in his memory: the *Dr. Olabanji Akinola Citizenship Award for Excellence in International Relations*. For the next three years, this annual endowment will be given to the international student graduating in political science with the highest academic achievement in International Relations and Comparative Politics. Donors can contribute to the extension of the award, exhibiting the same spirit of academic encouragement and deep-set generosity that characterized the much-missed Dr. Akinola: algomau.ca/giving

THE MARIA FRANCELLA SCHOLARSHIP:

An uncommon legacy

Written by Dan Lalande

“Maria knew that she could provide the kinds of opportunities that she herself had to struggle to obtain. And that, in turn, those students could change the lives of others. Her life was cut short—but she made it a life well lived.” Dr. Arthur Perlini



“It’s not common for elementary school teachers to make large donations to universities,” admits Dr. Arthur Perlini, Professor of psychology and former Academic Dean at Algoma. To hear him tell it, nothing about the late Maria Francella, the big-hearted shaper of young lives responsible for the endowment, was common.

Born in 1977, Maria grew up in the west end of Sault Ste. Marie. She was orphaned at a young age, yet rose above circumstance to earn her undergraduate degree from what was then Algoma University College before going on to secure a Bachelor of Education. She joined the Huron Superior District Catholic School Board in 2003 and began a 15-year career as an educator, teaching at a number of schools during her career. She was adored by students and colleagues alike everywhere she taught.

Then came her voice mail—an unusual form of communication in today’s digital age. Even stranger was Maria’s message, a cryptic invite for her and Dr. Perlini to reunite years after she had been a student in his classroom. “That began the process of our liaising

with one another,” explains a still emotional Dr. Perlini. “All of 43, she had been diagnosed with cancer. Maria told me that, having been a teacher, she wanted to create a scholarship.”

In the end, Maria Francella made two scholarships possible: one for a student in their second, third, or fourth year of studies in the psychology program, and one for a full-time student in their third or fourth year in the social work program. Though Maria didn’t live to designate how the funds would be allotted, Dr. Perlini ensured that their respective dedications would reflect the character and intentions of their donor.

Maria knew that she could provide the kinds of opportunities that she herself had to struggle to obtain.

Dr. Arthur Perlini

explains, “because Maria had been one. Then I got to thinking about her circumstances. She had lost her mother and had probably depended on social supports. We have a Social Work program at Algoma. So the University foundation and I thought,

we should help students who are invested in helping others. This would be consistent with Maria’s values.”

This year’s Maria Francella Award recipients are Amber Goslow and Carrie-Lynne Smale. Both were honoured during a *student awards video recognition released earlier this year, where Dr. Perlini spoke of Maria’s kind soul, infectious spirit, and determination to assist others and make a difference in the world.

“Nothing was given to Maria. But as a teacher,” qualifies Dr. Perlini, “Maria knew that she could provide the kinds of opportunities that she herself had to struggle to obtain. And that, in turn, those students could change the lives of others. Her life was cut short—but she made it a life well lived.”

***Interested in viewing the 28th Annual Student Awards Celebration video? You can find it on YouTube by searching ‘Algoma University 2022 Student Award Donors’**

Pictured above: Maria Francella
Inset Photo: Dr. Arthur Perlini



THE JANE RODGERS SCHOLARSHIP FUND:

A personal act of reconciliation

Written by Dan Lalande

"I realized that each of us non-Indigenous Canadians should make a personal act of reconciliation. Ignoring isn't enough, thinking isn't enough, learning isn't enough. Acknowledgment and action are needed – and right now. I consider the endowment my first major act of reconciliation." Jane Rodgers

"We drove by that Shingwauk home many times when I was a child and never thought twice about it."

So admits Jane Rodgers, the Sault Ste. Marie native and retired high school teacher based in Kingston. Jane's reframing of her childhood excursions from the Soo to Sudbury is the culmination of a long political awakening. It began when, for the first time, Canadians were forced to face the truth about the horrors being carried out across the country in their name.

Jane's extensive self-education on the matter made her aware of the Shingwauk home's current identity and AU's Special Mission to move healing and reconciliation forward. She lauds the school's honest perspective on Canadian history and its unwavering commitment to cross-cultural learning and teaching. Says Jane, *"I was so impressed by the comprehensiveness of what they're doing."*

Jane retired in 1997 after a 35-year career in teaching. Finding that she missed working with the younger generation, she began tutoring international students. *"I had students from everywhere,"* she recounts. *"But*

each of them had this romantic vision of Canada. I thought I'd better read more about my country if I'm going to be the authority for them."

Three years later, the Prison for Women in Kingston, three blocks from Jane's home, closed. That brought Jane in contact with another Jane: Jane Chartrand, a 25-year veteran of Correctional Services Canada and a residential school survivor. Aspiring author Chartrand was working on a series of children's books and was looking for editorial guidance. *"She was the first Native person I had ever even talked to,"* remembers Jane Rodgers. *"Her stories about her life really resonated with me."*

Then the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls was launched. *"After all of that, although I had reached my late sixties and seventies,"* says Jane, *"I began to look at the issue more broadly and historically."*

Jane's social awareness inspired her to create a scholarship at Algoma.

The Jane Rodgers Scholarship Fund provides \$1,000 each to a mature female First Nations, Inuit, or Métis student in their second, third, or fourth year of study in AU's Humanities program.

"In reading the Truth and Reconciliation report," explains Jane, *"I realized that each of us non-Indigenous Canadians should make a personal act of reconciliation. Ignoring isn't enough, thinking isn't enough, learning isn't enough. Acknowledgment and action are needed – and right now. I consider the endowment my first major act of reconciliation."*

Jane encourages other donors to establish scholarships, citing the ease and impact of working with AU. *"There's very little bureaucracy, and even a small contribution goes a long way compared to other institutions."* As for her own contribution, Jane says, *"It's something I can leave behind that I'm extremely proud of."*

"I thought I'd better read more about my country if I'm going to be the authority for them."

Jane Rodgers

Pictured above: Jane Rodgers



ALGOMA U ALUMNI LEAD SAULT STE. MARIE INTO THE FUTURE

Written by John Phillips

Algoma University nurtures leaders. Vivid proof exists on Sault Ste. Marie city council. Five of the 11 council members are Algoma graduates: Luke Dufour, Corey Gardi, Matthew Scott, Matthew Shoemaker, and Lisa Vezeau-Allen. These leaders of today share their experiences and advice with leaders of tomorrow.

“Two qualities that have helped me in my political career are remaining open-minded and deeply curious,” says **Luke Dufour**. The Ward Two councillor comes by this knowledge honestly. He was Algoma University’s first overseas exchange student, spending a portion of

his undergraduate years at the University of the Sunshine Coast in Queensland, Australia.

“I realized for the first time just how special my life was back in Northern Ontario,” says Dufour, who graduated from Algoma University with a Bachelor of Arts with honours, majoring in English and history. Equipped with this understanding, Dufour returned home invigorated—to find a fulfilling job, start a family, and begin a life of service to his community. Today, he brings an open mind and deep curiosity to the council chamber and in his role as chair of the social services administration board.

Dufour’s commitment to social services is well established. At Algoma University, he was part of a group of student union members who started the first campus food bank. A project foreman for a local homebuilder, Dufour also works on developing policies that supply safe and affordable housing. *“Most successful policies stem from having the open-mindedness and curiosity to ask the right questions,”* he says. *“Then using the answers you get to truly solve problems and not just get a headline.”*

Corey Gardi’s affection for Algoma University is unequivocal. According to the graduate, two of his professors were

PHOTO LEFT: SAULT STE. MARIE CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS AND ALGOMA U ALUMS, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: LUKE DUFOUR, LISA VEZEAU-ALLEN, MATTHEW SHOEMAKER, AND MATTHEW SCOTT. ABSENT: COREY GARDI.

teachers in the truest sense of the word. *“Political science professor Don Jackson and geography professor William Osei taught me the importance of being an insightful citizen and of pursuing my passion,”* he says.

Gardi’s passion is giving back to his community, a desire first kindled by watching his grandfather, who served for many years on the Sault Ste. Marie city council. Today, the Ward Five councillor follows his forbearer’s example. *“A conception exists of politics being cutthroat, but my experience with the people I meet and talk with has been nothing but positive,”* he says.

In addition to serving the people of his west end district, Gardi is working to bring the proposed Canada Water Agency to his hometown. The agency would carry out a variety of tasks to improve Canada’s stewardship of its freshwater.

“Sault Ste. Marie is the ideal place for this institution for many reasons, including the strong institutional partners in the city, such as Algoma University,” he says. *“Algoma is an excellent place to gain an undergraduate education. We need young people to stay in Sault Ste. Marie and thrive. Going to Algoma helps them do that.”*

Politics and public service have been lifelong enthusiasms for **Matthew Scott**. Like his Ward Five colleague, Corey Gardi, Scott’s grandfather also served on the Sault Ste. Marie city council. Scott also followed provincial and federal politics closely growing up, and was a keen student of civics and law in high school. Yet it wasn’t until Scott reached Algoma University that his eager interest turned into focused action.

“Professor Tom McDowell taught me political science, and I also served as a board member on the student union,” says the Algoma graduate, who earned a Bachelor in Business Administration degree. *“Those experiences showed me*

how individuals and groups actually went about solving problems.”

Galvanized by this understanding, Scott was elected to city council in 2018. He credits his win, in part, to adhering to a practice that is counterintuitive to most politicians: *“Listen first and speak second,”* he says. *“Let your constituents guide your priorities and then follow your moral compass to realize them.”*

Over the past four years, Scott has put this practice into action in a straightforward yet keenly felt way: *“I had a great upbringing in Sault Ste. Marie, so I want to create a city where today’s kids are encouraged to stay here, start careers, and raise families.”*

Matthew Shoemaker lists his formative political influences as one person and one experience. The person is the aforementioned Tom McDowell, a political science professor at the university from 2007 to 2011. *“He helped me understand my political beliefs in terms of time-honoured principles,”* says Shoemaker, who graduated with a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in history and political science. *“This grounding set my political compass and gave me direction.”*

The formative experience is his service as a student union executive when this elected body helped then-Algoma University College win its independence from Laurentian University. *“It showed me that my generation should make its voice heard on every decision made by the whole of the community,”* he says. *“This realization, in part, spurred me as a young person to run for city council.”*

When asked by other young people thinking about their own run, Shoemaker supplies two words: *“Do it. If you have an idea you want to implement, there is*

no better way of realizing it than putting yourself forward in an election and seeing it through.” He is taking his own advice. Re-elected to council in 2018, Shoemaker is running for mayor this fall.

Lisa Vezeau-Allen has devoted her career to representing those without a strong public voice. For 30 years, the Algoma University graduate has led or supported community organizations related to youth, arts, and culture. She

is also volunteer executive director of Grocer 4 Good, a grocery store that provides employment opportunities for people with autism and other intellectual disabilities.

“Being a student representative on the Algoma University Senate first showed me the value of serving as a voice for an under-represented group,” says Vezeau-Allen, who earned a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in English. *“The experience also made the whole idea of being on a board of any kind seem*

real and normal. I realized I could do this kind of work.”

In 2018, Vezeau-Allen took her voice to city council. As a Ward Two councillor, she raises the needs and concerns of the socio-economically disadvantaged and, as she puts it, *“anyone who is uncomfortable sitting around the boardroom table or who doesn’t feel represented in their community.”*

In keeping with her inclusive approach to her public role, Lisa’s advice to Algoma graduates and students who are contemplating a run for elected office is equally positive and cooperative: *“Don’t be afraid,”* she says. *“But also realize that you don’t have to do it alone. Find a good mentor or mentors who can help you understand and carry out campaign logistics.”*

“Algoma is an excellent place to gain an undergraduate education. We need young people to stay in Sault Ste. Marie and thrive. Going to Algoma helps them do that.”

Corey Gardi

ALUMNI UPDATES



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JAMIE CARROL

Jamie Carrol (BA History '11, Sault Ste. Marie Campus) attended law school in Florida and spent time working in Manhattan. She currently serves as a professor at the Ave Maria School of Law. Jamie and her husband recently welcomed their third son to the family.



MELODIE GENERAL

Melodie General (BA Sociology '12, Sault Ste. Marie Campus) is a teacher with the Algoma District School Board. Melodie has embraced her culture, becoming a member of the First Nation and Métis Education Committee and working with Weecheetowin Support Services. She also welcomed another son to her family.



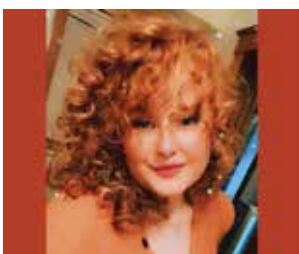
JAMES WHITE

James White (BBA Accounting '21, Sault Ste. Marie Campus) currently works for Maximus Rose Living Benefits Inc. in Sault Ste. Marie.



CHRISTINE CARON

Christine Caron (BSc Biology '17, Sault Ste. Marie Campus) completed her Master's of Science in Pathology at Western University. She currently works as a Researcher at the University of California, San Diego in a cancer immunology lab.



HANNAH WATSON

Hannah Watson (BSW '21, Timmins Campus) has started a position as Internal Medicine and Family Medicine Social Worker with Horizon Health Network at Saint John Regional Hospital in New Brunswick.

Brad Van Boerdonk (BBA '17, Sault Ste. Marie Campus) started his career in Human Resources three years ago. He recently joined Amazon as an HR Business Partner in Ottawa, Ontario.



BRAD VAN BOERDONK

Jonathan D'Sa (BSc Computer Science '02, Sault Ste. Marie Campus) worked for 20 years in leadership positions at IBM, ADP, and Financial Force. He is currently working as the Director of Outbound Product Management at Oracle.



JONATHAN D'SA

Erika Provenzano (BA English '12, Sault Ste. Marie Campus) obtained a Master of Library and Information Science degree from Western University in 2013. Erika is now working for the Natural Resources Library Services as a Digital Engagement Librarian. She focuses on digital projects and initiatives, and promoting electronic research.



ERIKA PROVENZANO

Iman Sohail (BBA Accounting '19, Brampton Campus) is the Student Accounts, Awards and Scholarships Officer at Algoma University. She is also working towards a CPA designation.



IMAN SOHAIL

Pauline Danquah (BA Law & Justice and Political Science '20, Sault Ste. Marie Campus) recently started as an Evaluation Officer at Indigenous Services Canada - Evaluation Directorate. She works with the Strategic Policy and Partnerships Branch, focusing on Child and Family Welfare.



PAULINE DANQUAH

Melissa Ouimette (BBA Human Resources '09, Sault Ste. Marie Campus) is a female entrepreneur and owner of the Copper Bean Cafe in Bruce Mines, Ontario. (pictured third from left)



MELISSA OUIMETTE

New Alumni Council Members



Tee Komsa (BA English '16, Sault Ste. Marie Campus) is the Manager of Client Experience & Product Delivery at Vivo Team Development, a leadership development company in Vancouver, BC. She is also the founder and CEO of The Letter Tee, a virtual operations company she started in 2020. The company focuses on helping entrepreneurs and small businesses with processes, operations, marketing, and branding.

"I'm excited to bring all of my experience and energy to the Council and give back to the school that gave so much to me. I'm looking forward to connecting with other alumni, students, and faculty, and being able to make a difference for Algoma U's past and future graduates!"



Skylia Caron (BSW '20, Timmins Campus) welcomed her daughter, Aubrey, into the world in July, 2021. She has recently started a new role as a social worker in the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Unit at the Timmins and District Hospital.

"I am a new recruit to the Council. I'm very excited and looking forward to what I can bring to the table and how to bring events and services to the alumni in the Timmins area. I am looking forward to this amazing opportunity."



Ash Lamba (CERT Business '20, Brampton Campus) is currently working as a Business Strategy Specialist for Save Tax Solutions. He is also the Founder of Student Connect which helps support students with financial, emotional, accommodation, immigration, health, and social needs.

"I love connecting with students and being involved in decision making and planning for future students to make their experience better. I also run a non-profit organization called 'Student Connect' which works towards the betterment of the student community in Canada. I feel being in the Council aligns with my goal of empowering students."



ALUMNI CHEER ON THE GREYHOUNDS AT A GAME IN THE SOO IN MARCH



ENJOYING THE MUSIC AT THE SAULT STE. MARIE ALUMNI SOCIAL AT THE TAP ROOM AT NORTHERN SUPERIOR BREWERY

Thank you for sharing your career updates and personal milestones with us at alumni@algomau.ca. Please keep your news coming and be sure to update your contact information so we can let you know about special benefits and events exclusive to alumni. Visit algomau.ca/alumni

CITYSTUDIO PROJECT HELPS REVITALIZE DOWNTOWN SAULT STE. MARIE

Written by Rafael Nuncio-Lappe

CityStudio arrived in Sault Ste. Marie last fall. The new partnership between Algoma University and the city of Sault Ste. Marie promises to enrich our community and the university's learning experience.

CityStudio started in Vancouver in 2011 as a collaboration between the city and Simon Fraser University. Other post-secondary institutions in the city have joined since. A non-profit start-up, CityStudio's mission is to increase sustainability in higher education and give students opportunities to work with cities to address urban challenges. The initiative has grown into a network of CityStudios in 12 cities across Canada. Each CityStudio is run independently and adapts to each city's needs, while CityStudio Global serves as the network hub.

CityStudio Sault Ste. Marie is the latest addition to the network. CityStudio enables students to use their creativity, skills, perspectives, and lived experiences to solve real-world problems within city confines. It also applies innovative solutions to major urban challenges through student engagement.

"Students can connect with the local community and work on things from climate change mitigation to downtown safety and revitalization, and anything in between," says CityStudio Innovation Hub Coordinator Taylor Jaehrling. *"We have business, environmental science, community development, and visual arts students working on CityStudio projects. It's also a cross-cultural learning initiative between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities."*

In just two semesters, CityStudio has engaged more than 150 students, eight faculty members, and ten city staff. *"We planned for four projects each semester,"* explains Jaehrling. *"This winter, we took on 11! With each semester, more and more people become interested."*

One of CityStudio's large-scale goals is the revitalization of downtown Sault Ste. Marie. In the Fall 2021 semester,



“

"I get to be a part of the revitalization of our downtown, this brings a sense of pride, brings a sense of community, and really goes to show how much our community and local university cares about the revitalization of this downtown area because we all feel it needs it, and having the ability to put our two cents in makes it all that much more meaningful for us."

- Lilliana Speck
(Bachelor of Business Administration)
Downtown Revitalization Project

CITYSTUDIO
SAULT STE. MARIE

upper-year visual arts students created the Lightbox Project within CityStudio. The project answers the need for brighter, safer spaces in the downtown core. It also provides a place for the students to display their work as public art, a showcase that was launched in winter 2022. It's a win-win for both students and the community.

"The city provided \$12,000 in funding to purchase the lightboxes and connect learners to business owners," says Jaehrling. *"Stakes aren't just abstract. This is a real-world project with real relationships."*

CityStudio's projects are low-cost and multi-semester, so students can create a foundation that they can build on over their academic tenure. These foundations have the flexibility to evolve into different

projects with expanded purposes. Algoma's goal is to have an experiential learning component in all its degree offerings. CityStudio will give students a valuable way to test their creativity and apply it to real-world, hands-on projects.

"We want as many people to benefit from as many projects as possible," says Jaehrling. *"We also want to collaborate with other institutions and organizations. We invite the public to learn about the exciting municipal projects that CityStudio is supporting."*

To learn more about CityStudio Sault Ste. Marie, share ideas, or collaborate, contact Taylor Jaehrling at taylor.jaehrling@algomau.ca or at 705-256-9304.



Leaving a Legacy Can Help Future Generations of Students

Legacy planning, commonly referred to as estate planning, can be a meaningful way to contribute to the future of Algoma University. Your support and commitment help fund scholarships and bursary awards, athletics programs, Algoma's Special Mission, research projects, library resources, and future capital projects. The legacy gift you leave to Algoma University will nurture and inspire tomorrow's leaders.

There are many ways to make a legacy gift to Algoma University, with tax benefits.

Gifts in Will:

A gift through your Last Will and Testament is simply a distribution from your estate to the University. We recommend using specific language to describe the direction of your assets and to properly carry out your final wishes.

Gift of Securities:

A gift of appreciated publicly traded securities - stocks, bonds, mutual funds and shares - is one of the most tax-effective ways to make a donation.

Gift of Life Insurance:

There are a variety of life insurance policies that are equally beneficial to you and the University. Here are various ways to gift a life insurance policy:

- Transfer ownership of a paid-up policy
- Transfer ownership of an existing policy with premiums still owing
- Purchase a new policy, initially naming the University as the owner
- Name Algoma University as primary beneficiary of a policy or as a co-beneficiary

Gift of RRSP/RRIF:

A gift of an RRSP/RRIF can be made by designating Algoma University as the

beneficiary. The tax credits generated by the charitable tax receipt will offset taxes payable on the distribution of the registered retirement fund.

The Alumni and Advancement Office at Algoma University is available to help individuals who are considering a legacy gift. For more information, please contact:



Giselle Chiarello

Senior Development Officer
at 705-949-2301, ext. 4125
or by email at
giselle.chiarello@algomau.ca

If you are interested in more information, please return this form to:

Algoma University, Alumni & Advancement Office
1520 Queen Street East, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario P6A 2G4

Yes, I would like more information on how to:

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Algoma University encourages you to explore the options that best suit your personal philanthropic goals. The information provided will outline the benefits of making a planned gift to Algoma University. We strongly recommend that you consult with your financial and/or legal advisor prior to making your gift to determine specific tax advantages and requirements.

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