

# Interim President and Vice-Chancellor's Report to the BOG

November 2025

## Message from Interim President and Vice-Chancellor Dr. Sheila Embleton

Boozhoo, Aanii, Bonjour, Hello,

October was a full and productive month across Algoma University. We marked several major milestones and community gatherings, including the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Ontario Universities' Fair, fall convocations in Brampton and Timmins, PACE graduation ceremonies, the Oshki Wenjack celebration in Thunder Bay for our Bachelor of Social Work graduates, and the annual John R. Rhodes dinner in Sault Ste. Marie, among many other events. These occasions showcased the strength, diversity, and resiliency of our university community.

Across the sector, these continue to be challenging times for postsecondary institutions. Yet there is much to look forward to at Algoma. I am pleased to share that first-year admission will resume in May and September 2026 for Visual Art, Geography, History, Sociology, and Music. The resumption of admission intake reaffirms Algoma University's belief that education should develop not only professional skills but also curiosity, compassion, and critical thinking. Algoma University will be hosting an earth-turning event in Brampton later in November for the new 450-bed student residence. This milestone signifies more than the start of construction; it represents an investment in our growth, our communities, and our future students.

## National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

Algoma University commemorated the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (NDTR) on September 30 across all campuses. Also known as Orange Shirt Day, this day holds deep meaning for our university community and serves as an important time for reflection, learning, and remembrance. Our community members wore orange shirts in recognition of the children who never returned home from Residential Schools, as well as the Survivors, their families, and the communities who continue to carry this legacy.

Across our campuses, students, faculty, staff, and community members participated in a range of meaningful events, including the Reclaiming Shingwauk Hall exhibit, a flag-raising ceremony and student art presentation in Sault Ste. Marie, Truth Walk tours (in-person and virtual), and Orange Shirt Beading Workshops. A Candlelight Vigil was also held on the Sault Ste. Marie campus, providing a moment of reflection and collective remembrance.

## John R. Rhodes Scholarship Dinner

In October, Algoma University successfully hosted the annual John R. Rhodes Scholarship Dinner. The John Rhodes Scholarship is one of Algoma University's most prestigious awards,

covering one year of full tuition to exceptional students who demonstrate academic excellence, leadership, and community engagement. This year's Scholarship recipients were Emma Walker and Kirsten Dubien. The event proudly honoured Jeff Elgie, CEO of Village Media, for his leadership and community impact. The event raised an outstanding \$186,500 in student scholarships. Each year, this dinner exemplifies the commitment, generosity, and pride that define our institution and the communities that support our students. We were especially grateful to our Title Presenting Sponsor, Village Media, and our Lead Sponsor, ApplyBoard, along with all of our sponsors who joined us in celebration.

### **BSW Graduation – Oshki-Pimache-O-Win: The Wenjack Education Institute**

In partnership with Oshki-Pimache-O-Win: The Wenjack Education Institute, we recently celebrated the graduation of the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) class at a graduation ceremony held in Thunder Bay. Algoma University is a proud partner in responding to the education and workforce needs of the North, empowering graduates to return to their communities as leaders, helpers, and changemakers.

This milestone event marked the success of a partnership designed to improve access to high-quality, flexible, community-based education in Northern Ontario. In total, 20 graduates walked the stage, each representing not only academic achievement but also a commitment to advancing the well-being of communities across the North. A second cohort started in Spring 2025 with 28 students in total.

### **Timmins & Brampton Fall Convocation Ceremonies**

Last month, I was delighted to attend and celebrate the achievements of Algoma University's Fall Class of 2025 with a convocation ceremony held at the Porcupine Dante Club in Timmins. Graduates, faculty, families, friends and community members gathered to mark this important milestone. Our Timmins graduates embody the resilience, leadership, and commitment to service that uniquely prepare them to give back to their communities in the North, helping to meet local needs and strengthen the region's future.

Algoma University also proudly celebrated the achievements of its Fall Class of 2025 at a convocation ceremony held in Brampton. This year, a single ceremony brought together 686 graduates and their families, friends, and faculty to mark one of life's most significant milestones. The celebration featured the ceremonial presentation of degrees, greetings from university leadership, and recognition of academic achievements across disciplines. We also held two graduation ceremonies to celebrate the latest cohort of Professional and Continuing Education (PACE) graduates.

### **Ontario Universities' Fair (OUF) 2025**

I would like to share the excellent outcomes from this year's Ontario Universities' Fair (OUF), which welcomed approximately 86,000 attendees. Algoma University's participation was a great success, with a lead collection up 19 per cent from 2024, 2,150 unique scans captured, 3,000 viewbooks distributed, and strong engagement through our booth activities. The results are a testament not only to the efforts of our recruitment staff and student ambassadors but also to the many faculty and staff from across the University whose contributions underpin our continued momentum. Among those, faculty who deserve thanks are:

- Biology program: Dr. Ammar Saleem
- Business Administration program: Dr. Eva Huang, Dr. Taslima Nasreen
- Computer Science program: Dr. Arghavan Asad, Dr. Randy Lin, Dr. Yazan Otoum
- Economics program: Dr. Farzana Alamgir
- Social Work program: Dr. Jessica Ticar

At the same time, this outcome reflects the contributions of many others who supported and complemented the recruitment team, including faculty members who engaged with prospective students with passion, staff who managed operations, and our student ambassadors who brought energy and authenticity to our booth. OUF remains one of the largest and most visible recruitment events in Ontario, and these results demonstrate the collective impact of team Algoma University working together.

### Inaugural Brampton Pow Wow

On October 25, the Anishinaabe Initiatives Division successfully hosted Algoma University's inaugural and annual Traditional Pow Wow in Brampton in partnership with the city. Held at the Save Max Sports Centre, the event welcomed hundreds of guests for a family-friendly celebration of Anishinaabe culture, dance, and song. The host drum was the Charging Horse group, co-hosted by Young Tribe. Other invited drum groups included Eagle Flight, Burning Plains, and Snake Island. The Grand Entry featured a dance special with prizes totalling over \$10,000.

Beyond cultural expression, the Pow Wow served as a powerful educational moment. It reflected Algoma University's commitment to promoting Chief Shingwauk's vision and Special Mission, while also raising awareness about Anishinaabe knowledge systems, enrolment pathways, and employment opportunities at the University.

### Makwa Waakaa'igan Update

Construction of Makwa Waakaa'igan is ongoing with Maple Reinders (MR) recently completing the building's foundations. Backfilling operations, installation of electrical duct banks, site infrastructure and main gas line installation from the street are all underway. Structural steel erection also commenced at the end of October, and based on the latest timelines, the scheduled substantial performance date of the project is early January 2027, with final

completion scheduled for mid-February 2027.

## Recent University Achievements

**The VR/AR Association Roadshow Event:** On October 15, Algoma University, in partnership with the VR/AR Association, presented the Future Canada: Building Economic Resilience at the Intersection of XR and AI conference in Brampton.

In a Canadian conference first, Future Canada introduced 'Jessica', an AI-powered Extended Reality (XR) digital companion developed by event technology leader ibentos, in partnership with the VR/AR Association and Algoma University's National Centre of Excellence for Immersive Technology.

This national conference and roadshow brought together government leaders, industry executives, investors, and innovators to explore how XR and AI are reshaping productivity, competitiveness, and growth across Canada's most critical sectors, including manufacturing, healthcare, logistics, and advanced industry.

**Official Launch of the Master of Psychotherapy:** Algoma University is now officially accepting applications for its new Master of Psychotherapy (MAP) program, launching in September 2026 in Sault Ste. Marie. This graduate program is designed to train psychotherapists who provide responsive, high-quality clinical care while strengthening the resilience and well-being of northern communities.

Developed in close collaboration with the community through consultations and advisory committees, the MAP program is deeply committed to maintaining ongoing, reciprocal relationships that address the unique needs of the region.

An information session will be held at the Sault Ste. Marie campus (Convergence Centre CC201) on November 10, offering members of our community an opportunity to learn more about the new program, including admissions, requirements, and structure.

This concludes the November update to Algoma University's Board of Governors.

Chi-Miigwech, merci, and thank you for all you do for Algoma University.