

Annual Report 2012



Mission Statement:

Ontario*Learn* is a consortium of colleges devoted to the development and delivery of high-quality, accessible, online learning opportunities.

Vision Statement:

Ontario*Learn* is a national leader in post-secondary online education. This leadership will be ensured by maintaining the highest standards of curriculum design and delivery, leveraging our award-winning cooperative model, and pursuing ever-expanding markets.



Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to share with you the 2012 Annual Report for OntarioLearn. Our aim in assembling this document each year is two-fold. The primary objective is to provide you with a detailed review of our enrolment, financial processes, course development, quality assurance and systems enhancements and infrastructure support. Our second but equally important intention is to give you a snapshot of our three-year strategic plan and share how we are moving towards our goals through key initiatives.

This past year, a focus for us was enhancing our e-portal and grades system to streamline the user experience, making the system more efficient. We are proud to report that in 2012 registrations approached 66,000. While down slightly from the 67,000 registrants we had in 2011, OntarioLearn has experienced growth rates in excess of 15 percent in the last few years and ranks as one of the largest providers of online course development and delivery in North America. We have come a long way since 1995 when OntarioLearn welcomed its first 750 registrants with the initiation of its online presence to distance education.

In fact, our consortium recently expanded to 24 from 22 colleges with the addition of French institutions Collège Boréal and La Cité collégiale. We were delighted to welcome them to OntarioLearn and to further strengthen the development and

delivery of our high quality, accessible, online learning opportunities. In the coming months, we will continue to assist their integration into our system.

Another emphasis for us this past year was refining our quality assurance to ensure that we provide students with a positive learning experience which facilitates their academic success. We successfully developed faculty self-directed training modules made available through the website. Based on student evaluations, it is evident that we continue to make significant progress in enriching the quality of our courses.

The shifting demographics of our student body reflect the Ontario population at large. We have more immigrants and international students, as well as workers who need retraining to regain employment. In general, post-secondary enrolment is climbing along with high school graduation rates. OntarioLearn continues to keep pace with learners' needs, offering flexibility and choice without boundaries. Students are able to choose from approximately 1,200 online courses, registering at one college and receiving it through another. The possibilities are endless. By pooling registrations, we have expanded our inventory of courses, developed and delivered cost-effectively.

As we wrap up the year, we would like to thank Kim Walker, Dean, Continuing Education, Niagara

College, who has completed her two-year term as Chair of OntarioLearn. Her commitment and leadership have helped to advance OntarioLearn. Kim will continue to serve on the Executive Committee providing direction to the group.

We are delighted to announce that Dan Holland, Dean, Schools of Business & Management Studies, Biosciences and Centre for Justice Studies, was elected incoming Chair for a two-year term. As a founding member of OntarioLearn, Dan was instrumental in building the organization throughout its early years. As you will see in the report, OntarioLearn is charting a new strategic course under Dan's strong leadership, which builds on the great work that is being done.

Thank you for your interest in and support of our efforts.

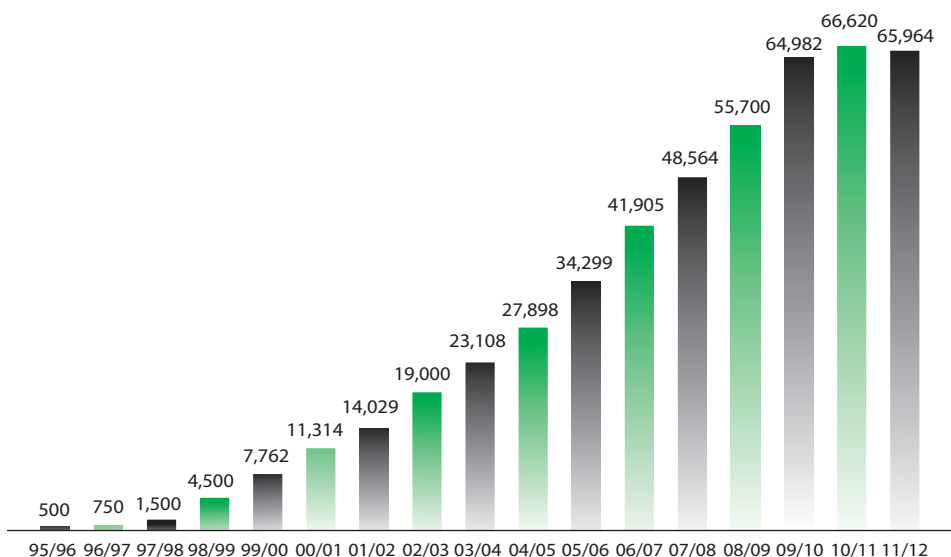
Alan Brady



Executive Director

OntarioLearn Enrolment Trends

OntarioLearn's enrolment for 2011/12 was 65,964. Although down slightly from the previous year, we fully expect to return to a positive enrolment trend in the coming year.



Enrolments by College

College	2007/08 Enrol.	2008/09 Enrol.	2009/10 Enrol.	2010/11 Enrol.	2011/12 Enrol.	Variance	% Change from Previous Year
Algonquin	5,292	6,461	7,114	5,866	5,770	-96	-1.6
Cambrian	831	850	865	925	941	16	1.7
Canadore	265	516	875	909	757	-152	-16.7
Centennial	3,282	3,185	3,000	3,166	3,348	182	5.7
Conestoga	2,245	2,843	3,436	3,903	4,056	153	3.9
Confederation	1,159	1,426	1,672	1,921	1,298	-623	-32.4
Durham	5,346	5,953	6,902	7,367	7,500	133	1.8
Fanshawe	1,624	1,636	2,085	1,803	1,623	-180	-10.0
Fleming	963	1,031	1,499	1,809	2,073	264	14.6
Georgian	445	616	1,108	1,518	1,912	394	26.0
George Brown	898	1,028	1,505	1,611	1,463	-148	-9.2
Humber	1,299	1,643	1,746	2,255	1,828	-427	-18.9
Lambton	1,202	1,578	2,088	2,085	1,752	-333	-16.0
Loyalist	3,333	3,952	4,518	3,945	4,311	366	9.3
Mohawk	6,256	6,997	7,953	8,092	7,643	-449	-5.5
Niagara	2,886	3,190	3,859	4,378	5,276	898	20.5
Northern	220	184	294	335	204	-131	-39.1
Sault	582	760	744	786	674	-112	-14.2
Seneca	5,819	6,711	7,768	7,700	8,187	487	6.3
Sheridan	3,257	3,678	4,075	4,092	3,424	-668	-16.3
St. Clair	338	223	273	291	257	-34	-11.7
St. Lawrence	1,022	1,239	1,603	1,863	1,667	-196	-10.5
Total	48,564	55,700	64,982	66,620	65,964	-656	-1.0

Host College Activity

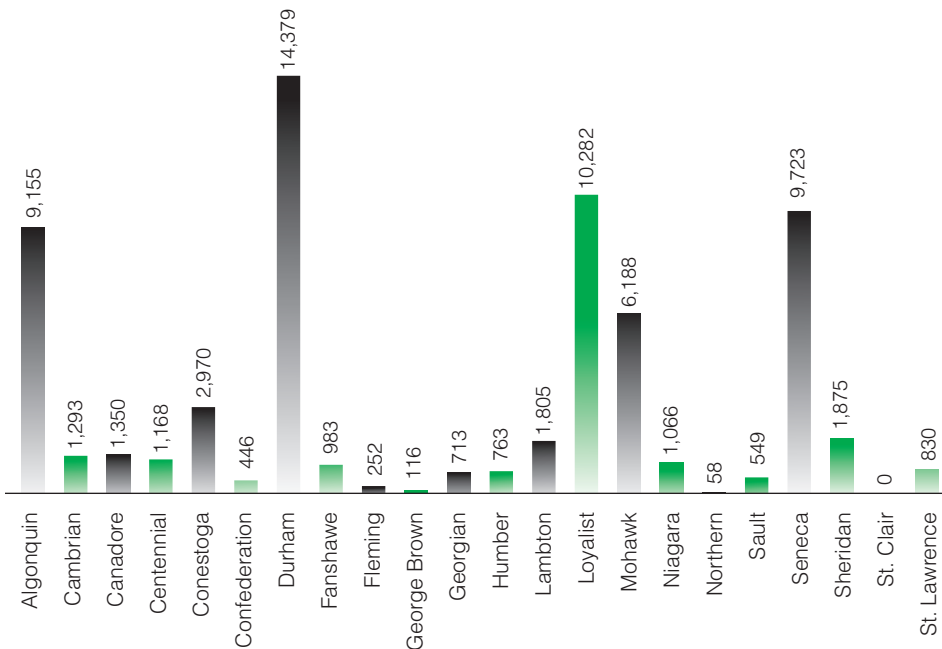
The Host College is the college that designs, develops and delivers the course, and also officially records the students' final grades. Hosting activity differs from one college to another due to many combined factors which may include available financial and human resources, and timing.

However, because of OntarioLearn's collaborative model, our students have greater options and access, both of which allow them to take the course of their choice, typically, at the college of their choice.



The chart below lists the number of students enrolled in courses hosted by each college in 2011/12.

OntarioLearn Hosting Activity (2011/2012)



My experience with OntarioLearn has been great. My online professor makes it incredibly easy to do the course having everything readily available. She also takes the time to write lots of great feedback on each weekly assignment, furthering your knowledge. I will definitely take another OntarioLearn course if the opportunity presents itself in the future.

– Student,
Georgian College

Hosting Activity by College

College	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	Variance	% Change from Previous Year	2011/12 % distribution
Algonquin	12,777	14,157	15,171	10,978	9,155	-1823	-16.6	13.9
Cambrian	625	741	874	1,041	1,293	252	24.2	2.0
Canadore	438	430	477	1,120	1,350	230	20.5	2.0
Centennial	253	457	653	811	1,168	357	44.0	1.8
Conestoga	1,090	1,990	2,321	2,725	2,970	245	9.0	4.5
Confederation	592	651	644	464	446	-18	-3.9	0.7
Durham	8,381	10,548	12,721	14,311	14,379	68	0.5	21.8
Fanshawe	1,177	949	925	945	983	38	4.0	1.5
Fleming	362	327	296	311	252	-59	-19.0	0.4
George Brown	104	115	164	210	116	-94	-44.8	0.2
Georgian	198	160	312	320	713	393	122.8	1.1
Humber	797	1,123	1,055	1,189	763	-426	-35.8	1.2
Lambton	998	1,159	1,549	1,673	1,805	132	7.9	2.7
Loyalist	6,108	7,330	8,697	9,360	10,282	922	9.9	15.6
Mohawk	4,908	5,668	6,640	6,752	6,188	-564	-8.4	9.4
Niagara	1,462	511	647	786	1,066	280	35.6	1.6
Northern	49	34	63	55	58	3	5.5	0.1
Sault	703	642	804	719	549	-170	-23.6	0.8
Seneca	7,267	8,380	10,123	10,220	9,723	-497	-4.9	14.7
Sheridan	199	207	646	2,002	1,875	-127	-6.3	2.8
St. Clair	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0
St. Lawrence	69	107	200	628	830	202	32.2	1.3

Monthly Intake Activity

Over the last few years, OntarioLearn's online students have demanded more flexibility to start courses when they want to without the restrictions of more traditional terms, e.g., registering only at the start of a new semester. This demand has been driven in part by the economic downturn which

forced many out of the workforce and pressured them to quickly investigate their retraining options.

OntarioLearn has responded to this demand. There were 14,779 monthly-intake enrolments reported for 2011/12. This translates to a 4% increase in monthly-intake activity

over the previous year and accounts for 22.4% of the overall 2011/12 OntarioLearn enrolment activity. The table below compares the enrolment activity in semester intake courses and monthly intake courses during 2011/12.

OntarioLearn Enrolment Activity

Semester	Total 2011/12		Semester Intake		Monthly Intake		
	# Sections	Enrol.	# Sections	Enrol.	# Sections	Enrol.	% Enrol. Activity
Spring 2011	1,349	22,541	901	16,615	448	5,926	26.3
Fall 2011	1,296	21,023	925	16,116	371	4,907	23.3
Winter 2012	1,162	22,400	909	18,456	253	3,946	17.6
Total	3,807	65,964	2,735	51,187	1,072	14,779	22.4

Financial Process and Success Rates

Success Rates

OntarioLearn's success rate for online education has exceeded 70% for the last nine years. The overall success rate throughout 2011 was 74.8%.

When adjustments for attrition are factored in, the success rate increases to 85.3%. For 2011, the retention rate was 87.7%.

OntarioLearn Success Rate for 2011/12

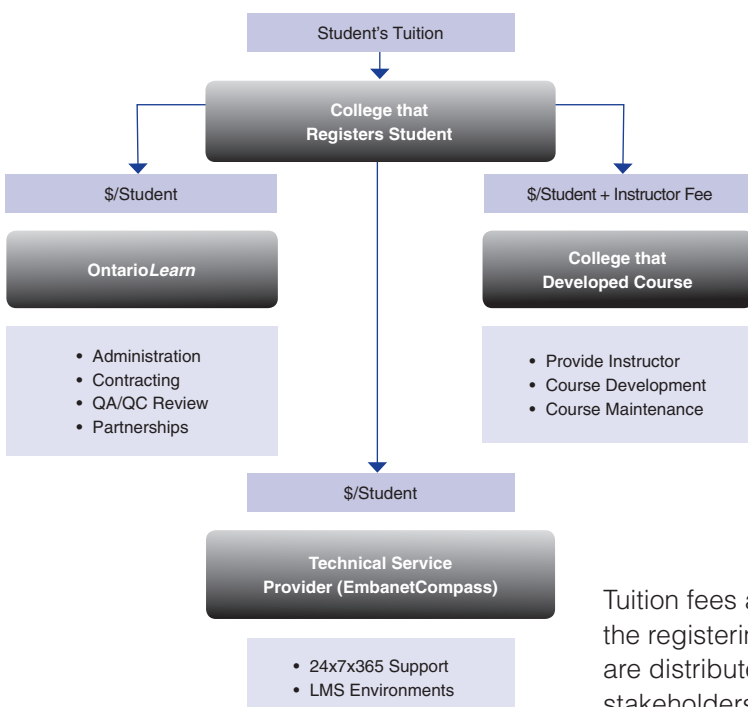
	Winter 2011 (%)	Spring 2011 (%)	Fall 2011 (%)
Success Rate	75.2	73.8	75.5
Success Rate (Minus Attrition)	85.3	84.2	86.4
Attrition Rate	11.8	12.4	12.7
Retention Rate	88.2	87.6	87.3

- **Success rate** – % of students who achieved a final grade of 50% or higher (or a pass)
- **Attrition rate** – % of students who officially withdrew from their course OR did not complete their course and were assigned a grade of zero

OntarioLearn Success Rates for 2007 to 2011

	2007 (%)	2008 (%)	2009 (%)	2010 (%)	2011 (%)
Success Rate	74.1	73.8	73.7	75.3	74.8
Success Rate (Minus Attrition)	85.2	84.6	84.2	85.3	85.3
Attrition Rate	13	12.7	12.4	11.7	12.3
Retention Rate	87	87.3	87.6	88.3	87.7

Financial Process



Tuition fees are collected by the registering college and are distributed to the various stakeholders.

Course Development & Offerings

The course development process is one of the foundations of OntarioLearn's operation. We maximize efficiencies by allowing only one course covering one set of learning outcomes. This is a no-duplicate policy that is maintained through a course claim process. Any college may enter a claim proposing a new course by providing the appropriate detail in a course outline. All other colleges have an opportunity to challenge this claim should they feel one of their existing courses already addresses the identical learning outcomes.

The Executive Committee and an independent arbitrator handle disputes and evaluate competing courses. A college that is successful in submitting a claim will have one year to develop the course. If that college cannot deliver the course in that time frame, other colleges are free to pursue it following a similar process.

As of February 2012, there were 1,127 courses available to be offered each semester and another 233 in development. Some courses in the course inventory are only offered at specific times of the year.



OntarioLearn Course Inventory	February 2006	February 2007	February 2008	February 2009	February 2010	February 2011	February 2012
# of Available Courses	846	920	989	1,096	1,103	1,118	1,127
# of Courses Claimed for Development	466	355	356	233	244	178	233

This is the ninth course I have taken through Loyalist. I have enjoyed them all. The courses are well prepared and even though I may have some background in the subject areas, I always learn many new things. I have taken distance education courses many times over the last 41 years, starting with correspondence courses in accounting in 1971. The OntarioLearn courses are the best I have taken, superior even to courses I have taken through Athabasca at the graduate level.

— Student,
Loyalist College

Available Program Areas

OntarioLearn partner colleges have designed certificate and diploma programs consisting of courses offered through the consortium. Each college determines the requirements for its programs. Some of the certificates/diplomas programs are comprised entirely of courses available online through OntarioLearn while others may also require courses offered outside the consortium. As of March 2012, more than 460 partner college programs are listed on the OntarioLearn website.

The following program areas demonstrate the variety of offerings available through OntarioLearn.

- Academic and Career Entrance Program
- Accounting
- Apprenticeship
- Business
- Business Writing
- College Preparation
- Communications & Languages
- Computer Programming
- Computer Software Applications
- Corrections
- Creative Writing/Literature
- Early Childhood Education
- Educational Assistant
- General Education
- General Interest
- Health Sciences
- Home Inspection
- Hospitality/Travel & Tourism
- Human Resources
- Justice
- Legal/Office Administration
- Library & Information Studies
- Management
- Marketing
- Mathematics
- Military Arts and Science
- Pharmacy Technician Bridge Program
- Police Foundations
- Sciences
- Security
- Social Sciences
- Sports/Leisure & Recreation
- Teacher Training
- Teacher Training for Online Technology
- Trades

My instructor for this course is very knowledgeable, helpful, kind and quickly puts all the first-time online course users at ease. I have been very impressed with this course and the online program. I will definitely continue with the online courses to receive my certificate!

– Student,
St. Lawrence College

Course Quality Review

OntarioLearn's quality standards are built on our members' collective commitment to providing our students with a positive learning environment that ensures their academic success and satisfaction. Course quality is measured using two assessment tools: a student feedback questionnaire and a Course Standards Checklist. The comprehensive student feedback questionnaire measures the overall effectiveness of course content, instruction and students' general perceptions of quality. The Course Standards Checklist is designed to measure overall course design and student usability. The Checklist is used to evaluate all new courses and reassesses those courses that fall below the expected student satisfaction levels. In addition to these two vehicles, OntarioLearn also participated in the Continuing Education Provincial Survey in winter 2012 which also provided valuable feedback. Member colleges are accountable for the overall quality of the course content, copyright and instructor recruitment, training and evaluation.

OntarioLearn's Quality Assurance/Quality Control Specialist conducts course reviews and provides the college under review with a summary of the Checklist results and a findings report that summarizes what was observed and the recommended course of action. Colleges are expected to act on the changes and/or provide a rationale for the existing design decision by the end of the semester after which the review was conducted. The college risks

Teaching Excellence Supported in the Online Classroom



having the course removed from the OntarioLearn inventory if the changes are not made in a timely fashion. For OntarioLearn, a good online classroom offers a well-structured virtual environment that presents well-developed course content, learning activities and assignments, along with ample opportunity for students to interact and learn with each other as well as their course facilitator.

We realized this vision by launching a quality assurance initiative in 2007 that focused on overall course design and usability criteria. These design standards are now well entrenched and ensure course information requirements are consistent. Lesson and assignment templates provide instructors and course designers with considerable flexibility while assuring students that the same design approach is applied across the broad range of courses available.

Our most recent quality initiative is the development of the Online Teachers' Resource Site. Launched in December 2011, the site provides

short-duration learning modules that support skills development within each of the competency categories recognized by the Ontario colleges. The learning materials reflect a variety of content delivery approaches that demonstrate effective online delivery strategies.

The website is the go-to place for faculty to:

- interact with the module content, if and when needed;
- reinforce their understanding of the course design criteria expected in all OntarioLearn courses;
- communicate with fellow faculty members through the blog and wiki features available in the topic modules and in the resource section; and
- obtain one-on-one coaching support from an instructional designer who monitors the site and responds to questions as needed.

Partner Colleges

Time and again, OntarioLearn's member colleges demonstrate that great things happen when they work together towards a common goal. They have embraced the mandate of this unique consortium to share the development, expenses and delivery of online courses. In partnership, they have devised and implemented strategies to improve access to education that meet the growing and varied needs for higher learning of Ontarians living in urban centres and rural communities. OntarioLearn also continues to work closely with Contact North in support of their efforts to broaden the reach of online education across Ontario.

Of particular interest in the past year has been the addition to the consortium of two French colleges, Collège Boréal and La Cité collégiale. In June 2012 we will be launching a bilingual version of our website and a major effort is underway to translate our Faculty Resource portal. In addition, we are continuing to work with EmbanetCompass, our infrastructure support partner, to assess the viability of offering bilingual support to the students and faculty in our French colleges.



Enjoyed this course. Clear, concise and pertinent to my job. Well laid out. Instructor was easy to reach by email.

– Student, Northern College



Collège Boréal

CAMBRIAN COLLEGE



CONESTOGA

Connect Life and Learning



Confederation COLLEGE



DURHAM COLLEGE

SUCCESS MATTERS



FANSHAWE COLLEGE



Fleming College

GEORGIAN COLLEGE



HUMBER



Le Collège des meilleures pratiques

Lambton College



MOHAWK COLLEGE

Niagara College Canada APPLIED DREAMS.

Northern COLLEGE



SAULT COLLEGE

Seneca



ST. CLAIR COLLEGE

Sheridan



St. Lawrence College

Systems Enhancements

The Desire2Learn learning management system (LMS) was officially launched during the fall 2011 term after a summer pilot. Member colleges may choose from five approved LMS including Angel, Blackboard 9.1, Desire2Learn, FirstClass and Moodle to deliver the courses hosted through OntarioLearn. The Blackboard CE8 site was decommissioned in September 2011 as scheduled.

The “OntarioLearn Grades System Release 2” was successfully launched in the spring 2011 term. The secure system is an administrative tool used to record and track student results. The system is designed for faculty and administrator use only. Instructors are required to use the OntarioLearn Grades System to record the breakdown of their students’ results and their final mark. Designated administrators from member colleges are able to retrieve the results for their students as well as monitor the data for the courses they host through OntarioLearn. The system enhancements improve usability for faculty, as well as the tracking and reporting functionality for administrators.

Enhancements to the OntarioLearn ePortal system were implemented during the past year to improve the online experience for our students. All students are required to read and accept the terms of our Student Code of Conduct when they make their initial connection to the OntarioLearn ePortal system. Our login tutorial, which walks students through the login process, was updated to include audio. A course availability notification feature was also implemented. This new functionality allows us to activate student ePortal accounts earlier, giving students the opportunity to login and familiarize themselves with the site prior to the start of their course. Prior to the course start date, the LMS logins are disabled and the student sees a notification for when their course will be available. As of the course start date, the LMS logins are automatically enabled and students can connect from their ePortal desktop to the LMS where their course is delivered.

Website

As we welcome two French colleges, the consortium has initiated a project to revamp our website. We are aiming for a bilingual site and we have also made improvements to the site’s look and feel, search engine and database “back end.” By making use of the latest software, tools and techniques, we will be able to gather analytics to show how the site is used by those who visit it. The site launch is planned for mid June 2012.

I thoroughly enjoyed this course! I learned so much and was given great tools to work with in future library job positions. The course material was very interesting. Thank you Mohawk and OntarioLearn.

– Student,
Mohawk College

EmbanetCompass Support

The collaboration between OntarioLearn and EmbanetCompass (formerly Embanet) dates back to 1999. EmbanetCompass is the technical service provider for OntarioLearn. They operate a world-class data centre with a state-of-the-art network infrastructure to support our needs. EmbanetCompass provides the data hosting and help desk support to the consortium from their Toronto (Markham) location.

Four of the five LMS used by OntarioLearn are hosted on-site at EmbanetCompass. This includes Angel, Blackboard 9.1, FirstClass and Moodle. These high-performing, reliable systems enhance and support online instruction to the point that EmbanetCompass can guarantee high uptimes and ensure customer satisfaction. The Desire2Learn system is housed at Desire2Learn Inc.



EmbanetCompass provides the 24 x 7 x 365 help desk support for all of our students and faculty on all five LMS. During busy months, the help desk staff can handle upwards of 5,000 inquiries.

EmbanetCompass has supported the explosive growth of OntarioLearn over the last 14 years, consistently adjusting its infrastructure to match our demand. Our contract includes service level agreements with significant penalties to ensure our high standards are maintained.

In addition to supporting our operational needs, the staff at EmbanetCompass have significant experience with online course design and delivery. They have proven to be excellent partners with special projects that require rapid design and development of new initiatives.

Taking courses online was a completely new experience for me. I was nervous at first but found it easy to learn how to use the Blackboard system. I really enjoy taking courses online and will continue. I am almost finished the work for the Conventions and Meeting Management Certificate and I am considering starting the Fundraising Certificate. I love online learning.

– Student,
Algonquin College



The three-year strategic plan is currently under review by OntarioLearn's Board of Directors and facilitation sessions have been organized to help us look ahead based on our changing environment and future challenges. Some key initiatives that the organization will continue to focus on in the next year include:

- Continuing with the creation of online versions of several courses that form part of the Leadership Development Series.
- Completing the integration of the French colleges into the consortium and helping them establish the most viable form of support for their faculty and students.

- Monitoring the use of our recently launched Faculty Resource site and investing in improvements as necessary.
- Improving operational efficiencies to ensure they meet the needs of continued enrolment growth and student satisfaction.

Maintaining our position as a relevant and responsive resource for all Ontarians is a priority for OntarioLearn. To that end, we will vigorously pursue these future plans.

Executive Committee

Al Brady – Executive Director
Heather Ryan – Administrator
Cheryl Jensen – VPA Liaison
Kim Walker, Past Chair – Niagara
Dan Holland, Chair – Loyalist
Linda Rees, Treasurer – Algonquin
Pat MacDonald – Mohawk
Susan Savoie, Co-Chair – Seneca
Dan Piedra – Sheridan
Laurie Poirier – Sault

Board Members

Cheryl Jensen – VPA Liaison
Linda Rees – Algonquin
Danielle Talbot-Larivière – Boréal
Tracie Marsh-Fior – Canadore
Michelle DeCoste – Centennial
Louise Turcotte – Cambrian
Vince Stilla – Confederation
Sandra Schelling – Conestoga
Mary Blanchard – Durham
Susan Cluett – Fanshawe
Brenda Pander-Scott – Fleming
Brenda Yip – George Brown
Janice Priest – Georgian
Mark Ihnat – Humber
Suzanne Gibault – La Cité
Donna Church – Lambton
Dan Holland – Loyalist
Pat MacDonald – Mohawk
Kim Walker – Niagara
Andrew Fitch – Northern
Laurie Poirier – Sault
Susan Savoie – Seneca
Dan Piedra – Sheridan
Dr. Peter Tumdajski – St. Clair
Lynn Walker – St. Lawrence

*It's a great way to learn
and still be able to
work at the same time.*

– Student,
Seneca College



