

Canadian Government Adds Financial Support to New Pembroke Campus Project

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PEMBROKE, ON, September 12, 2011 – The federal government of Canada, through its Enabling Accessibility Fund (EAF), is contributing \$3 million to the cost of building the new Algonquin College in the Ottawa Valley Campus along Pembroke's waterfront. The announcement of the funding, the largest grant awarded under the EAF, was made today by Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke M.P., Cheryl Gallant, at the site of the new campus, which has been under construction for a few months, and is scheduled to be completed by the fall of 2012.

Algonquin College Vice-President of Student Services, Deborah Rowan-Legg, says the funding is welcome news as the College had always intended to build a campus that would be fully accessible for students, staff and the general public. "This funding provides us with the financial resources to guarantee that our new Pembroke Campus will feature the latest innovations in architectural planning to support individuals with mobility issues. We applaud the federal government for making this funding available to our college and thereby helping ensure Algonquin provides a welcoming environment for all of our constituents – an environment accessible to all," adds Rowan-Legg.

The new Pembroke Campus will provide increased access to post-secondary education in the Ottawa Valley by creating more student spaces and will replace an aging building that poses significant challenges for individuals who have physical disabilities. The new building will be designed to meet the most current accessibility standards, including standards for ramps and elevators. It will also provide sufficient space in offices, classrooms, meeting rooms and common areas to support people who require wheelchairs or other motorized equipment to move comfortably within the facility.

Algonquin College in the Ottawa Valley Dean, Karen Davies, says we want our new campus to be a showcase for accessibility within our community. "As a community college we have a unique opportunity to play an advocacy role for people with disabilities, and this funding will permit us to demonstrate the importance of building public facilities that not only meet, but exceed the expectations of ensuring they are accessible for everyone who uses them," says Davies.

The Enabling Accessibility Fund was launched in 2008 and has supported community-based projects across Canada that knock down barriers to accessibility in order to enable Canadians with disabilities to participate in and fully contribute to their communities. The fund has helped dozens of communities build or upgrade facilities to make them more accessible.

Algonquin College has been a leader within the Ontario college network in supporting students with disabilities. The College has a Centre for Students with Disabilities at all of its campuses that offers many daily services to students. The Centre was established at Algonquin College in 1988 and Algonquin was the first Ontario College to have a formal policy on supporting students with disabilities. Additionally, the College has established an "Accessible Built Environment Standard" to guide it throughout all of its construction projects to ensure its new buildings are fully accessible to people with disabilities.

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