

Loyalist College



Academic Plan
2016 - 2020





Message from the Senior Vice President Academic and Student Success

To the Loyalist College Community:

The 2016-2020 Academic Plan sets the overall academic direction of Loyalist College for the next four years. The Academic Plan builds on the Board of Governors' approved Strategic Plan '**Loyalist 2020**' and also incorporates key elements of the Strategic Mandate Agreement 2014-2017 with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and University.

The development of the 2015-2020 Academic Plan was initiated in 2014 and led by the Academic Management Team, culminating in a preliminary set of goals and objectives that could be utilized for College-wide consultation in the fall of 2015. The final version has been developed by incorporating feedback received from various internal and external stakeholders throughout the consultative process, for which I would like to take the opportunity to thank all those who participated.

The Plan also reflects a considerable investment of time and energy from many people. I would like to acknowledge the Academic Management Team who was involved in the development of the Plan as well as the Office of Teaching and Learning for the invaluable contributions related to articulating the educational philosophy at the core of the learning experience at Loyalist College.

To be responsive to our learners we need to constantly reflect on the programs we deliver and the services we provide and I look forward to working with the entire College community to engage in a process of continuous improvement to make this Academic Plan a living document and an essential component of Loyalist 2020.



John McMahon
Senior Vice-President Academic and Student Success

Educational Philosophy

The following is provided to briefly illustrate the philosophy at the core of Loyalist College's commitment to a learner-centred, outcomes-based and accessible educational experience for all its students.



Background

Educational philosophies and paradigms have long informed structures and practices in formal education settings. The concept of outcomes-based education (OBE) is not new to education. Researchers suggest that its roots may even go back as far as 500 years ago to the craft guilds of the Middle Ages where performance expectations for the craft were established. In the past century, a number of different educational approaches have been utilized in various educational sectors. These approaches include the use of educational objectives, competency-based education, the mastery movement and criterion-referenced instruction. There are common features amongst all of these approaches when compared to OBE with the distinction that OBE tends to incorporate the strengths of each of them. Outcomes-based education can be characterized by the following main features (See full document for references and more information):

- Curriculum is needs-driven
- It is outcomes-driven
- It utilizes a design-down approach
- It specifies outcomes and levels of outcomes
- There is a shift of focus from teaching to learning
- The framework is holistic in nature

Educational Philosophy

Loyalist College embraces a learning-centred approach to outcomes-based education in accessible learning environments.



Foundational Principles of the Educational Philosophy

The following principles inform Loyalist College's educational philosophy as we strive to maximize student growth and achievement through the co-creation of authentic curriculum:

Learning-Centred

Characteristics that describe Loyalist's learning-centred approach are that:

- The primary role of faculty as teachers is to facilitate a learning-centred environment.
- Power and responsibility in the learning environment is shared between the faculty and the student.
- The role of content is more than to impart knowledge. The learning facilitates the practice of using content in inquiry and in solving real-world problems.
- Through this approach, students develop skills as life-long learners and can self-assess their own learning.
- Assessments are authentic and measure the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Outcomes-Based Education (OBE)

Outcomes-based education is an educational system that communicates intended learning through outcomes and their related elements of performance. It requires the authentic assessment of the outcomes and it is the achievement of these outcomes that will determine the learner's success.

Maximizing Student Growth and Achievement

Maximizing student growth and achievement refers to a number of factors. The concept of differentiated learning stresses that approaches like assessment for learning serve to meet students where they are. By considering the student's prior knowledge and skills, learning can be more effectively facilitated for each student. This principle would also include quantitative metrics such as student success, graduation rates and employment rates. Loyalist's commitment to maximizing student engagement through a robust array of educational pathways will enhance this student growth and achievement.

This Educational Philosophy is central to the academic activities at Loyalist College.



The Loyalist Student Experience

At the heart of the Academic Plan is the *student experience* at Loyalist, from the time a potential student explores program options to graduation, and eventually their involvement as part of an extensive alumni network that reaches across Canada and around the world.

The Student Experience at Loyalist involves:

- Outcomes-based learning
- Authentic learning opportunities
- Diverse delivery modes
- Experiential learning
- An inter-disciplinary approach
- Promotion of an international/global perspective
- Strategic integration of technology



The Pillars of Academic Activity

Every member of the Loyalist Community, whether faculty, staff or administration, must be able to associate the work they do or the service they provide to one (1) or more of the following pillars:

Access

Loyalist College will strive to provide post-secondary opportunities to as many qualified students as possible. A major part of this commitment will include particular emphasis on:

- Aboriginal students
- Students with disabilities
- Students with lower economic status
- First generation students

Excellence

While maximizing access to post-secondary opportunities, Loyalist College will equally promote excellence by ensuring students meet the rigorous demands of an outcomes-based learning approach in their program in order to be successful.

Recruitment

Every member of the College community plays a role in the recruitment of students and must be able to identify their role while being supported to implement it effectively.

Retention

As with recruitment, every member of the College community plays a role in the retention of students and must be able to identify their role while being supported to implement it effectively.

Student Success as a Top Priority

This is the essential 'raison d'être' for everything we do at the College. Our learners become part of the Loyalist Community because they wish to achieve their post-secondary goals. Our first priority is to do everything we can within our capability and resources to facilitate the achievement of our learners' goals.



Strategic Academic Priorities

1. Loyalist College will develop a program mix that responds to the needs of students and the community:

- a. The **Program Health Index** (PHI) will be used to assess the sustainability of existing programs by utilizing both quantitative (financial efficiency) and qualitative (quality assurance, relevance and opportunity) factors.
- b. While maintaining its focus on 10 broad areas of strength within its current program offerings (*Health Sciences, Human and Justice Studies, Media, Arts and Design, Business Studies, Applied Sciences, Skills and Technology*) Loyalist will specifically focus on growth opportunities in the following program areas:
 - i. **Health Sciences:** This will include a full exploration of the Lifelong Health and Wellness Centre concept involving internal and external constituents.
 - ii. **Business and Entrepreneurial:** This will include an emphasis on pathways opportunities as well as high demand Graduate Certificates for both domestic and international students.
 - iii. **Applied Sciences:** A particular emphasis will be Biotechnology, especially opportunities incorporating international students, pathways and applied research.
 - iv. **Skilled Trades:** A particular emphasis will be on Welding/Fabrication and Manufacturing while building on successful partnerships such as The W. Garfield Weston Foundation Fellowship to promote access to all skilled trades. New programming opportunities such as Mechatronics will be explored/developed in collaboration with various industry partners.
- c. Loyalist College will continue to utilize a **data-driven approach** to assess new, innovative program opportunities that will complement its current certificate, diploma, advanced-diploma and graduate certificate offerings ultimately designed to provide viable career opportunities to students and/or respond to the needs of our community.



2. Loyalist College will maintain its position as one of the top five (5) colleges in Ontario hosting OntarioLearn courses while it explores other online, distance and alternative learning opportunities.

The College will:

- a. Continue to review its School of Continuing Education in order to ensure courses and programs evolve to serve the needs of its present and potential clientele.
- b. Implement a data-driven process to assess new opportunities for distance education as part of OntarioLearn and eCampus Ontario.
- c. Implement alignment processes and strategies for day and distance programs to ensure quality assurance standards are fully met.
- d. Continue to explore and develop online and alternative learning options for all programs in a manner that promotes flexible and transferable learning opportunities while maintaining quality and the needs of learners as major criteria.
- e. Invest in appropriate technology and professional development to establish the highest standards of quality distance studies delivery.
- f. Leverage capabilities and best practices in online development from the School of Continuing Education to support excellence in online/distance learning throughout the college.

3. Loyalist College will continue to provide and enhance high-quality resources to support student learning:

- a. Information Technology Services and the Learning Technologies Office will continue to develop and support the innovative application of technology to enhance the learning process for all students.
- b. Loyalist will continue to explore the innovative application of 'simulation' and 'virtual technology' that has been so successful in programs such as Nursing, Customs Border Services and Survey Engineering Techniques.
- c. Loyalist will continue to provide high-quality online and collection library resources.



4. Loyalist College will continue to support faculty, staff and administrative professional development (PD) to meet the current and future needs of our students:

- a. The Office of Teaching and Learning, in collaboration with the Learning Technologies Office, will continuously explore the most effective means to support the PD of faculty and staff in a manner that benefits the learner and best meets their learning needs.
- b. Through Human Resources, and in consultation with the Office of Teaching and Learning and Program Teams, the College will explore the implementation of a mandatory Teaching Certificate for all new faculty by 2017.
- c. The College will continue to support, within its means, the Credentials Program to facilitate PD opportunities for all faculty and staff.

5. Loyalist College will continue to develop and implement its Strategic Enrolment Plan (SEP) in order to achieve optimal enrolment for each program in the College.

The 10 major goals of the Strategic Enrolment Plan are:

1. Loyalist College will differentiate itself and gain a competitive advantage while increasing attraction through promotion and messaging with a consistent brand.
2. Loyalist College will strategically recruit and increase conversion rates.
3. Loyalist College will create enhanced cross-campus transitional opportunities.
4. Loyalist College will promote the financial literacy of post-secondary students and address the financial needs of its diverse student body.
5. Loyalist College will enact student-centred approaches to ensure seamless and transparent services.
6. Loyalist College will develop and enhance learning opportunities to attract and retain learners.
7. Loyalist College will provide a comprehensive academic support and student life model.
8. Loyalist College will increase the retention rates of its learners.
9. Loyalist College will forge positive and lifelong relationships with alumni and donors.



10. Loyalist College is committed to the principles of SEM planning and will continue its efforts in order to achieve the vision and mission of the institution.

- a. Through implementation of the SEP, the College will establish specific enrolment and retention targets for each program every year.
- b. Specific recruitment and retention targets will also be established for particular demographics including:
 - i. Aboriginal students
 - ii. First generation students
 - iii. International students
- c. Through cross-College collaboration, specific recruitment and/or marketing plans will be developed and implemented for a number of programs requiring particular attention to meet their enrolment targets.

6. Loyalist College will develop an International Strategic Plan (ISP) detailing its objectives and targets over the next five (5) years.

The ISP will focus on three (3) major areas:

- i. International student recruitment
 - ii. Curriculum sharing partnerships
 - iii. Partnerships with third parties focused on either recruitment or the establishment of branch campus opportunities
- a. Loyalist College aims to increase its overall international student population at the main campus to 200 students by 2020. Specific targets and recruitment strategies for each geographical region will form part of the ISP.
 - b. Loyalist College aims to have agreements with at least 15 international institutions in a curriculum sharing partnership by 2020.
 - c. All curriculum sharing partnerships will be governed by a rigorous approach to quality assurance to ensure the highest standards fully compliant with Program Quality Assurance Audit and/or Accreditation standards.



7. Loyalist College will provide optimal support services to students by “meeting them where they are,” thus allowing them to maximize their opportunities for success:

- a. The Student Services department will develop and coordinate a cross-College, proactive approach to identifying student needs requiring a collaborative approach to intervention.
- b. Multi-disciplinary teams, working in collaboration with academic programs, will provide essential support services addressing a wide range of identified issues throughout the academic year.
- c. On an annual basis, all data related to the implementation of this model and other services provided to students will be used to maintain, modify or implement additional strategies/services in order to maximize retention and student success for all learners.

8. Loyalist College will maintain and/or develop a wide range of partnerships with educational institutions, community, economic and business organizations as well as government agencies in order to benefit our learners while contributing to the social and economic development of the region:

- a. Each program in the College will be able to clearly identify and articulate the pathway/transfer opportunities that exist for both college-to-college and college-to-university.
- b. Pathway opportunities for each program will be highlighted at all appropriate recruitment events including Open House, high school visits, recruitment fairs and other special events.
- c. Loyalist College will continue to explore additional pathway opportunities for each program in collaboration with other Ontario colleges and universities, either independently or through system-wide organizations such as ONCAT.
- d. All pathway opportunities at the College will also be reviewed to assess their potential in terms of recruiting and/or retaining international students, particularly those involving college-to-degree opportunities.



e. Loyalist College will continue to work closely with our community, business and economic partners, primarily through organizations such as Quinte Economic Development Commission (QEDC) and Quinte Business Development Centre (QBDC) in order to respond effectively to regional economic needs while providing opportunities for our learners.

i. Primarily through our association with the Quinte Business Development Centre (QBDC), Loyalist College will continue to support the economic attraction and retention goals of our partners.

f. Loyalist College will continue to develop and promote its Applied Research capability, for the benefit of industry and our learners, by fully leveraging funding opportunities through organizations such as Ontario Centres of Excellence (OCE), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Commission (NSERC) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC).

9. Academic space and capital equipment requirements will be assessed, prioritized and developed according to the priorities of this Academic Plan (AP).

a. The Campus Master Plan will incorporate the academic space needs required to support the AP in order to address priority areas, including work and study space for students, with full consideration to the financial resources available.

b. Renovation priorities and capital equipment expenditures in the College will also be prioritized in order to respond effectively to the goals incorporated into the AP.

c. A long term (5-year) capital equipment renewal plan will be developed to facilitate the planning process for equipment expenditures that will respond to the needs of learners in every program.

d. Academic space that is developed to respond to the needs of the AP will incorporate the same high degree of excellence that was applied to the Sustainable Skills, Technology and Life Sciences Centre and the Digital Media Centre.

10. All academic programs will maintain a commitment to the integrated Sustainability Plan while promoting sustainability as a key element of the College's internal Program Quality Assurance process.