AICO Symposium Fall 2019

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In November of last year, a dozen Seneca faculty members were fortunate to be able to attend a one-day event at Mohawk College. The Academic Integrity Council of Ontario (AICO) Fall 2019 Symposium focused on key strategies in order to foster best practices but, more importantly, examined the rationale behind the issue and the positive reinforcements that grow from empathy and understanding.

The keynote address by Mohawk's Vice-President Academic Paul Armstrong centered on the idea that in fostering academic integrity we, as educators, are providing students with the ethics and professional practices that will serve them long after they leave our College. Integrity and honesty are issues that permeate life on a global scale, not just in academe, and that our responsibility is to shepherd our students to deeper knowledge of the issue. But with the recognition of the intrinsic humanness of the problem, how can we provide a framework for better behaviour – that is, an educational approach rather than a punitive approach?

The Symposium focused on three core objectives: education and prevention, restorative justice practices, and supporting policies. And these objectives were unpacked in three distinct streams: Faculty, Curriculum Assessment, and Student Services Support.

In the Faculty stream, the key take-aways were to view through a behaviour analytics lens with an understanding of examining the actions rather than the individual. There were animated discussions around the behaviour topography, the importance of clarifying expectations, the vital recognition of the cultural component involved, and the need for ever-creative forms of assessment to challenge not only our students but the notions around different forms of deliverables.

In the Curriculum stream, the Indigenous Experiential Learning Cycle of experiencing → reflecting → making meaning → acting → return to experiencing was the centre of discussion prompting important group conversations that focused on expected behaviour and helping students at risk in methods of self-reflection.

The Student Support stream examined issues of good faith, rational requirements, and accommodation scaffolding, recognizing the need to aid students in overcoming obstacles in their own personal growth.

It was an informative and dynamic day that provided a framework not only for students to achieve but also promoted the essential need for empathy and understanding behind the root causes of the behaviour. Indeed, the most compelling take away was the requirement of us all to be less reflexive and more reflective.



Save the date: the next AICO event is their bi-annual meeting on **Wednesday, November 4, 2020**. The featured speakers are Bonnie Maracle, talking about "*Developing Indigenous Academic Resources*," and Amy Gatto, talking about "*Creating a Culture of Caring: Practical Approaches for College and University Faculty and Staff to Support Student Wellbeing and Mental Health*." The event runs from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. For more information, and the connection URL, see the AICO Nov. 4, 2020 flyer (PDF).



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