

January 30, 2026

Board of Governors  
Algonquin College  
1385 Woodroffe Ave.,  
Ottawa, ON K2G 1V8

**RE: Open Letter - Future of Music Industry Arts Program, Algonquin College**

Dear Members of the Board of Governors,

As recently reported in the first economic impact of the live music sector, the industry and its related activities are significant and growing contributors to Canada's economy, culture, and workforce, generating **\$10.92 billion in GDP**, supporting over **101,000 jobs**, and driving **\$3.7 billion in tax revenue** nationwide.<sup>1</sup> These outcomes depend on a skilled, locally trained workforce that supports venues, festivals, touring, and live events in communities across the country.

On behalf of the Ottawa Music Industry Coalition (OMIC), Ottawa Festivals, the Canadian Live Music Association, and Optimal Show Experience, we are writing to formally express our serious concern regarding the proposed termination of Algonquin College's **Music Industry Arts program**, which is scheduled for consideration at the Board meeting on February 23, 2026.

We acknowledge the fiscal challenges outlined by the College — including structural constraints in postsecondary funding, federal and provincial policy shifts impacting international enrolments, and the subsequent need to align programming with labour market and financial sustainability imperatives. These are undeniably difficult circumstances, and we do not dispute the legitimacy of the College's need to respond to them.

However, the case of the Music Industry Arts program is distinct. Unlike offerings that struggle to maintain enrolment or labour market relevance, Music Industry Arts has delivered **consistent demand, strong graduate outcomes, deep industry integration**, and **has met or exceeded enrollment projections** for 16 years.

---

<sup>1</sup> [Hear and Now](#), CLMA 2025

Its graduates form a significant portion of the skilled workforce that powers Ottawa's festivals, venues, live events, tourism, and broader creative economy, sectors that, in recent years, have faced **labour shortages and amplified supply chain and production expenses**. The removal of a reliable local training pipeline will further exacerbate these pressures at a time when the municipality is actively investing in city-building and economic development initiatives that depend on a skilled local workforce to deliver events, animate public spaces, and feed Ottawa's fast-growing cultural, events, and tourism economy. This risk is particularly acute in a region that already struggles to retain talent in proximity to larger markets such as Toronto and Montréal.

From the creative industry's perspective, Algonquin College has been a **valuable partner** in workforce development and strengthening the community's ecosystem. OMIC's members are prepared to work collaboratively with the College to **advocate at the provincial and federal levels for sustainable funding frameworks** that support applied arts and industry-aligned programs, including, but not limited to, Music Industry Arts. OMIC believes that such advocacy must be grounded in **shared evidence of economic impact and workforce need**. However, that collaboration depends on the continued existence of programs like Music Industry Arts; without them, the industry loses a critical evidence base and a constructive partner for joint advocacy.

The impacts of terminating the Music Industry Arts program would be profound and generational:

- A reduced pipeline of trained workers for festivals, venues, events, and cultural infrastructure;
- Increased recruitment and operating costs for local employers who must fill roles through more expensive interim arrangements;
- A weakened ecosystem for live music and events at a time when the cultural economy is rebounding, and local investment is expanding; and
- The loss of a nationally respected program with high enrollment and proven outcomes.

Once dismantled, programs with this level of specialization and external integration are extraordinarily difficult, if not impossible, to rebuild.

As the governing body entrusted with Algonquin College's long-term strategic direction, the Board of Governors plays a key role in balancing immediate fiscal pressures with institutional mission and community impact. We respectfully urge the Board to **pause and reconsider the recommendation to terminate the Music Industry Arts program**, and to direct the College to **engage collaboratively with industry stakeholders, alumni, and economic partners** to explore alternatives that preserve the program while addressing financial realities.

Decisions made today will shape workforce development and cultural ecosystems in Ottawa and beyond for decades to come. We hope the Board will choose a course that reflects financial responsibility, partnership, and a long-term commitment to programs that deliver demonstrable value to students, employers, and the broader community. We would like to meet with the Board at your earliest convenience to discuss this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

**Mélanie Brulée**

Executive Director, Ottawa Music Industry  
Coalition | Capital Music Week



**Tara Shannon**

Executive Director, Ottawa Festival  
Network



**Erin Benjamin**

President & CEO, Canadian Live Music  
Association



**Ying (Livia) Zheng**

CFO, Optimal Show Experience

