



Algonquin College

Dean, Mrs Heather Ryall

Re: Program Update

Ottawa, January 23rd, 2026

Dear Heather,

Thank you for sharing this information and for the transparency surrounding the forthcoming recommendation to the Board of Governors. I appreciate the care being taken to support learners through this process.

I am writing to express my serious concern regarding the proposed suspension of the Media and Film Foundations program.

Ottawa's screen-based production sector is a growing and significant contributor to the city's economy. In recent years, live-action production in Ottawa has generated tens of millions of dollars annually in local economic activity — for example, over \$62 million in local production spending in 2025 in live-action and record figures above \$100 million when including animation and in-house projects — with direct spending benefiting local labour, talent, hotels, equipment services, restaurants, and other small businesses throughout the community.

This growth has come alongside a steady rise in production volume: Ottawa has hosted dozens of feature films and television series, including holiday and streaming projects such as *24 Karat Christmas*, *Hot Frosty*, *Geek Girl*, *Eaux Turbulentes* and *Michael Cera's Love is Not the Answer*, with multiple locally filmed projects earning Canadian Screen Award nominations. (playbackonline.ca)

As production continues to expand — with the Ottawa Film Office reporting over 40 productions completed in recent years and a projected record year ahead — demand for skilled, entry-level and technical talent grows right alongside it.

Yet the industry faces significant workforce challenges. While post-secondary institutions such as Algonquin College, Collège La Cité, and other partners are training the next generation of crew, animators, and production professionals, current enrolment and training capacity are insufficient to keep pace with the number of productions and the expanding economic footprint of the sector. Many graduates find exciting opportunities in larger centres such as Montréal, Toronto, and Vancouver, creating a gap in the local workforce that foundational programs like Music, Media and Film Foundations help to fill.

Foundational training/course programs are therefore not optional extras — they are essential to sustaining Ottawa’s competitiveness as a production destination and to ensuring that local residents have the chance to build careers in the creative industries that are investing and thriving here. Suspending this program at a time of growth would reduce pathways into the industry and limit the development of locally trained talent precisely when the sector most needs it.

Algonquin College has long been a cornerstone of creative and media education in our region, and its leadership in workforce development directly supports both the cultural vitality and economic resilience of Ottawa’s creative economy. For these reasons, I strongly urge the College to reconsider this recommendation and to explore solutions that allow the program to continue — whether through restructuring, industry partnerships, or alternative delivery models.

The Ottawa Film Office would welcome the opportunity to engage in discussions about potential solutions and to help identify ways the industry can support the long-term sustainability and relevance of this program.

Thank you for your continued commitment to learners and to Ottawa’s creative community. I look forward to further dialogue.

Sincerely,

Sandrine

Sandrine Pechels de Saint Sardos

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CEO & Film Commissioner | PDG & Commissaire au Cinéma

Ottawa Film Office | Bureau du cinéma d'Ottawa

t: [613.695.1955](tel:613.695.1955) | m: [613.240.5260](tel:613.240.5260)

a: [150 Elgin Street, 8th floor, Ottawa K2P1L4](https://www.ottawa.film)

e: spdesaintsardos@ottawa.film | w: www.ottawa.film