

From the Registrar

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Even in an online environment, we can see the growth in student activity and anticipation for the fall term.

Since March, the Registrar's Office has moved nearly all its services online and increased support to answer student emails and, believe it or not, phone inquiries. Yes, students are still calling. We have managed to create a virtual call centre and, over the last 6 months, our team has responded to over 11,700 calls. Transfer credit requests have also increased dramatically, specifically from our international students.

Over the first three months of the pandemic, the Registrar's Office processed over 8,000 student bursary awards as part of the provincial government's relief fund initiative. The College has since focused its fundraising efforts on building a subsequent relief fund to continue to support students in need coping with the hardships of this pandemic.

OSAP applications have remained surprisingly consistent to previous years for both the summer and fall terms, and although it is not a substantial amount, student emergency funding is in place for both domestic and international students through our Financial Aid Office.

While we were able to convert most of the RO services to an online format fairly easily, the one we could not replicate fully was producing an official transcript. Provisions were made with post-secondary institutions across the country to ensure unofficial transcripts were accepted for admission applications, transfer credits, and scholarships and, when required, RO staff did print and mail hard copies for students. Taking a step forward, a decision was made to develop an official digital transcript to provide more control to the student to share their academic record through a secure digital platform.

Over the summer, staff in the RO and ITS completed the development of a digital transcript, supported through Digitary, a world leader in digital credentials and certification. As of

September 2, 2020, Seneca students can order an official digital transcript that they can share securely with employers, other institutions, and/or government agencies anywhere in the world. For more details, see [The Digital Transcript](#) article in this issue.

Summer enrolment was better than anticipated and the overall fall enrolment is climbing slowly, but our international enrolment is tentative. With many countries still under lockdown and or experiencing travel restrictions, our new international students are hesitant to commit to starting and/or completing their studies online.

Recent changes to immigration guidelines will now allow international students to start their studies online in their home country, with a guarantee of the time spent studying outside Canada counting toward a post-graduate work permit once they are able to travel. The hope is this change will provide the security students need to continue with their enrolment, as opposed to deferring to another term.

Every term has its challenges and this coming fall will be no different, but the lessons learned over the last 6 months have taught us that by working together, we can find solutions that are effective and student-focused. Best of luck to all for a successful term, and if there is something we can do to help streamline a process that will help you or your students, please don't hesitate to ask.

View the [September 2020 issue of the Academic Newsletter](#).

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