Ontario College Quality Assurance Service

Service de l'assurance de la qualité des collèges de l'Ontario

COLLEGE QUALITY ASSURANCE AUDIT PROCESS (CQAAP)

AUDIT REPORT

LA CITÉ COLLÉGIALE

DATE OF SITE VISIT: October 27, 2020

PREPARATION DATE: November 1, 2020

SUBMISSION DATE: December 7, 2020

PREPARED BY: Manuel Dias

Ontario College Quality Assurance Service

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APPROVAL OF THE AUDIT REPORT

This report represents the findings of the College Quality Assurance Audit Process for *La Cité Collégiale*.

This report has been prepared, reviewed, and accepted by all parties to the Audit, including the college President, members of the audit panel, and the Chair of the OCQAS Management Board. The signatures of the representative parties demonstrate their acceptance of the content of this report.
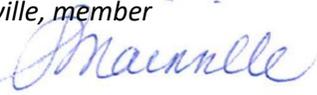
COLLEGE PRESIDENT

Signature:	Date: March 9, 2021

CHAIR – OCQAS MANAGEMENT BOARD

Signature:	Date: February 16, 2021

AUDIT PANEL MEMBERS

Manuel Dias, president Signature:	Date: December 21, 2020
Jacqueline Boulianne, member Signature:	Date: December 21, 2020
Sylvie Mainville, member Signature:	Date: December 21, 2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. **Conclusions**
   General comments and summary of the findings of the audit panel.

La Cité has established a number of quality assurance procedures and practices which are well implemented at all levels and in different sectors. The College is fully involved in the quality assurance process by allocating the necessary resources to achieve its objectives in terms of quality assurance. We can summarize them in two points:

A commitment to an annual program review process that includes the following elements:
- Support of the Quality Assurance Bureau (BAQ).
- Special attention to the Key Performance Indicators (KPI).
- Recognition of the importance of the quality assurance processes.

A close collaboration between different support and tool groups that include:
- A well established and integrated governance model that allows members from different sectors to understand their role and to fully invest in it.
- Efficient support services that ensure consistency across different campuses.
- Diversified Program Advisory Committees (PAC) that are representative of the industry and the workplace.
- A commitment to formal and informal exchanges to allow frequent and effective communication in order to ensure transparency of quality assurance processes.

The College has submitted a detailed self-evaluation report composed of numerous resources and completed with examples to support a well-established quality assurance process. This report demonstrates the reflections made by the College in its ongoing efforts to establish quality assurance processes in order to offer relevant programs adapted to the job market in constant evolution. All of this is based on an effective policy governance model that is well integrated with the various sectors and programs.

During the virtual site visit, the audit team was able to exchange with representatives from different college sectors and programs, including members of the Management Board, the Program Advisory Committees and the Quality Assurance Bureau, the Directorates of the college programs and services, members of the teaching faculty and members of various student services. During the interviews, we observed a real commitment and enthusiasm from the different groups who were ready to share with us their experience and provide us with additional information. The interviews took place over a three-and-a-half-day period, and turned out to be highly informative for the audit team.

2. Results

a. Audit Results

Standard	Result		
1	☒ Met	☐ Partially Met	☐ Not Met
2	☒ Met	☐ Partially Met	☐ Not Met
3	☒ Met	☐ Partially Met	☐ Not Met
4	☒ Met	☐ Partially Met	☐ Not Met
5	☒ Met	☐ Partially Met	☐ Not Met
6	☒ Met	☐ Partially Met	☐ Not Met

Audit Decision: *(select one)*

☒ Mature Effort
☐ Organized Effort
☐ Formal Effort

STIPULATIONS

1. **Commendations**
   Provide clear statements that articulate areas where the college has shown exemplary or leadership in the field of quality assurance and improvement. These are mechanisms that are especially good and may be worthy of emulation by other colleges in the system.

First, it is worth highlighting the mode of governance of La Cité, which is well established and integrated within the different levels and sectors. This model of governance by policy is demanding, as policies need to be reviewed regularly, communicated to all levels and be transparent. This model of governance also requires listening and getting all members to come together and fully engage in it. The members of this organizational framework have a perfect knowledge of their role, which allows the effective application of La Cité's policies.

Second, the evaluation process of the course outlines is structured and automated, with standards around the development of the course outlines that allows for comparison of the differences and the opportunity to fix these. Management is involved in the process and if large discrepancies are identified, these are communicated to the teachers concerned and changes are made. The Quality Assurance Bureau audits course outlines, and the "Monday" platform allows a precise and systematic control of these course outlines, demonstrating the desire to ensure cohesion amongst the programs.

Third, external and internal student support services have well established mechanisms to provide a quality-level student experience and guide students through their studies, even before entering La Cité. The co-op ranking and the job placement services provide strong support in the search for a job or a field placement. A variety of services are offered, from workshops on Co-op placements on eCité to sessions with employers for students looking for a job or an placement. Different departments work in synergy to guarantee uniformity across the different campuses as well as constant and continuous support. The support service staff show a genuine enthusiasm to support students in their learning while also ensuring their well-being to enable them to be successful not only in their studies, but in their professional development as well. Finally, the community services which supervises self-identified or unidentified First Nation students in all available services, demonstrates La Cité's stated desire to ensure Indegenous visibility on campus.

Fourth, the allocation of resources for students is varied and diversified. The student association, for example, subsidizes students who wish to participate in professional development activities, or sponsors study projects. Teaching specialists also provide support in terms of financial aid available to students and are able to follow closely and continuously a student's progress throughout its study at La Cité.

2. **Affirmations**

Provide clear statements that articulate areas where the college itself has found a
weakness, identified the weakness, and intends to correct it (a plan of action has
already been articulated). In effect, this is affirming the college's judgment and findings
of its own self-study.

The different improvement plans presented in La Cité's self-evaluation report are summarized
below in italics, as mentioned in the self-evaluation report (and translated for the purpose of
this English version of the audit report). We have added them here to express our approval of
each of these plans.

This long list is proof of La Cité's commitment to take the necessary measures to improve its
quality assurance processes. These measures are presented according to the requirement
number.

Standard 1:

Requirement 1.1 : *Establish and implement a quality assurance framework for all of the
College.*

1. *Develop a quality assurance framework for all of the college*
2. *Write and obtain the approval of the meta-policy of La Cité's Board of Management –
December 2019*
3. *Implement the quality assurance framework – since February 2020*
4. *Evaluate the first period of implementation– August 2020*
5. *Evaluate the first year of implementation – February 2021*

Requirement 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4: *Broaden access to procedures related to the lifecycle of the
College's programs.*

1. *Publish on the Quality Assurance Bureau's web page and on the College's web site the
Quality Assurance Bureau's operational procedures for general public access by
October 2020. These are currently available on the employee's College portal only,
under the « Secteur » tab in the Quality Assurance Bureau rubric.*

*Increase use of data and information for a program of study by giving access to people
involved in the quality and delivery of programs.*

1. *Make available on the employee portal all of the information present in the
Competency Management Tool and in the Course Outline Management Tool in link
with the program quality, to facilitate their access during the program performance
evaluation.*

Standard 2 :

Requirements 2.1 and 2.2: *Increase the level of knowledge of the significance of the VLOs amongst the full-time and part-time teachers in order to obtain a better comprehension of the logical and relevant sequence of courses and of their learning outcomes.*

1. *Make the alignment tables (mapping of courses with VLOs, EES, program competencies and language competencies) available to the college community and its different partners through reports generated by the Competency Management Tool.*
2. *Plan meetings with teachers, by program families, to familiarize them and make them aware of the importance of VLOs.*
3. *Set up informative modules to which teachers can refer to.*

Requirement 2.3: *Update evaluation mechanisms for prior learning course recognition as part of the educational transformation of the College's programs.*

1. *Formalize the course outline process to take into account the ID, the VLOs and the EES.*
2. *Plan and update challenge assessments as well as PLAR assessments based on VLOs, EES and program competencies.*
3. *Hold a thorough reflection on the entire system of evaluation measurement by competency with the creation of a new committee established for the renewal of the learning activities and assessment.*
4. *Review PLAR in accordance with the new academic model.*
5. *Review the assessment management process for the prior learning course recognition.*

Standard 3 :

Requirement 3.3: *Communicate all of the implementation of modifications made to a program's provincial standards to all of the stakeholders affected by these changes, including employers.*

1. *Develop communication that takes into account the implementation of the changes made to a program.*
2. *Choose the most appropriate means to inform interested parties, and more specifically the employers.*
3. *Establish a communication process, including the role and responsibilities of involved parties, to reach this goal.*

Standard 4 :

Requirements 4.1, and 4.3: *Ensure the consistency of teaching activities and evaluation with the course learning objectives and development indicators (4.1) and assess in a fair and equitable manner to allow timely and constructive feedback on performance (4.3).*

1. *Pay particular attention to learning and assessment activities so that they are in line with the development indicators during initial course outline development as part of the competency-based model transformation.*
2. *Make learning activities and assessment uniform for all sections of the same course.*

3. *Develop, through a working group established in January 2020 (that includes an expert in program evaluation and an academic dean), a reengineering plan for assessment in the College in order to produce, in collaboration with the different parties of the college community, a learning and assessment activity policy as part of the competency-based model transformation. The implementation should be done in four steps:*
   - *write and publish a vision of the assessment of learning;*
   - *define the foundations of the learning assessment;*
   - *create tools to disseminate and implement the learning assessment model to all parties;*
   - *assist all involved parties in the implementation of this model.*

Requirement 4.2*: Encourage teaching staff to experiment, communicate and evaluate, on a regular basis, new teaching and learning strategies, methods and tools that reflect best practices and support the constant evolution of all programs of study.*
1. *Create and publish new self-evaluation tools for the teaching staff (full-time and part-time) and provide necessary support through the CDA and other members of the teaching staff.*

Standard 5 :
Requirement 5.1: *Communicate all College's DPA so that they are known to faculty, program teams, and all College members.*
1. *Standardize the DPA communication process to the entire College community.*

Requirement 5.2: *Ensure the implementation of the cyclical review process of student directives.*
1. *Organize annual student policy committee meetings.*
2. *Implement sub-committees to facilitate discussion and review.*
3. *Consult the various key players about the proposed changes and get consensus on each change.*
4. *Establish a calendar for the activities of the student policy committee and make it available to the College community.*

Requirement 5.4: *Improve the registration management system to facilitate the follow-up for students with a modified path.*
1. *Review the current process in order to make improvement.*
2. *Explore the possibility of proceeding with an annual registration instead of a trimestral registration and use the "Prerequisite Enrolment Checking (PERC)" platform to this end.*

Increase visibility of equivalence pre-established within a program of study into the student portal so that the latter are known and used by students.
1. *Review the process and clarify the responsibilities between the BAR and the Teaching Department regarding the development and updating of this list.*

Standard 6 :

Requirement 6.1: *Hire and retain contractual teachers.*

1. *The Collège is currently working on a new formal process for the recruitment and support of contractual teaching staff.*
2. *A pilot project targeting language teachers, namely the creation of a bank of candidates, will begin this winter 2020. Afterwards, this process will be applied to all contractual teachers.*
3. *This initiative will allow the College to adopt a uniform approach for all sectors and thus promote the retention of qualified contractual teachers.*

Requirement 6.6: *Prepare staff to face changes and offer them support.*

1. *The College is currently planning to have an institutional structure as well as tools for project management and support for effective and efficient changes in order to properly prepare its employees for the rapidly changing environment.*
2. *In November 2019, the College was in the process of hiring a director for the new Project Management Office.*

Provide a diversity and inclusion tool to the College community.

1. *Raise awareness and support all personnel workers in managing diversity within the entire College community.*
2. *Develop and implement an institutional support plan towards a positive and constructive recognition of diversity.*

Improve staff recruitment and retention.

1. *With historically low unemployment rates, it is much harder for the College to attract and retain staff that has the necessary competency profile representative of its clientele.*
2. *Establishment of institutional competencies (requirement 6.1.*
3. *The establishment of a new performance management process (requirement 6.4 is a recent major initiative put into place by the College.*
4. *Follow-ups will be done during the next years.*

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3. **Recommendations**
   Provide clear statements that articulate areas as needing improvement.
   Recommendations may also be made in relation to areas of concern identified by the
   college in its self-study, and for which no plan of action has been articulated by the
   college.

RECOMMENDATION 1 (requirement 3.3)

The audit team issues the following recommendation:

That La Cité organizes frequent and regular meetings of its Program Advisory Committees.

As mentioned in the self-evaluation report, the Program Advisory Committee meetings are established biannually. But, according to the consultations done, some of these meetings were not held for more than 9 months, sometimes even a year, which constitutes a significant barrier to their consultative role with La Cité. Some members of Program Advisory Committees also expressed their desire to have meetings held outside working hours and, when possible, virtually to compensate for the absence of other members who have full-time jobs and are thus unable to get to the meeting.

Also, it's important to ensure that there is student representation within these committees, as intended. Some members have stated they appreciated being with the students. This contact already exists, as some members are invited to talk to students to convince them to enroll in a particular program during class visits by the administration. However, a consistent student presence would allow for a direct link to be established between the academic environment, the student experience and the job market.

RECOMMENDATION 2 (requirement 4.2)

The self-evaluation report as well as the interviews, particularly with members of the teaching staff, helped in identifying the many professional development opportunities available. The Certificate in higher education pedagogy allows the participants to think of other teaching strategies, and La Cité allows teachers who benefit from these training courses to share their learnings in the form of videos with the rest of the community. There's a real desire to create a community of practice around innovation in teaching.

The audit team issues the following recommendation:

That La Cité facilitate access to professional development to part-time teachers who constitutes an important college resource (420 job positions on September 1st, 2019), and strengthen the necessary support.

With the technological shift taken by La Cité, and in particular with the transition towards online teaching because of COVID-19, students have stated the challenges encountered with the learning process. Indeed, comments made by students indicated that some teachers were not prepared for the transition to online teaching and that this hampered their quality of learning.

Furthermore, in addition to developing new self-assessment tools for teaching staff, it would be interesting to adapt the student feedback surveys to their classroom experience in online education, to identify not only the areas to improve for next semester, but also to prepare more comfortably a transition towards in-class teaching that could include more approaches towards hybrid practices.

RECOMMENDATION 3 (requirement 5.8)
The audit team issues the following recommendation:
That La Cité takes more into account agreements with the various higher education institutions and puts in place a procedure or general directive to promote the pursuing of higher education.

Considering the approach of competencies adopted by La Cité, we think that the establishment of an official procedure on the development of such agreements would give it more visibility not only in Ontario, but throughout Canada.

RECOMMENDATION 4 (requirement 6.3)
The audit team issues the following recommendation:
That La Cité ensure that student requests are processed in a timely manner.

Certain financial aid demands (for example RAFEO) or PLAR demands have sometimes remained unanswered or unresolved almost a year after their submission, and some never got a follow-up with the attendant in charge of the file. It was also stated during the consultations that it was sometimes hard to get tutors at the beginning of the session, with waiting periods of over one to two weeks.

It would be interesting to get student feedback for each service rendered by an attendant, in order to ensure satisfaction of the rendered service and to note the time elapsed from the moment when the demand was received to the moment when it was processed by an attendant. It was also stated that it was particularly hard to get phone services, with waiting times of one or more hours before being able to talk with an attendant from the registrar's office, and sometime even impossible to reach an agent. A chat service is available; it would be interesting to further promote this service to the student clientele who wishes to directly contact an agent without having to show up in person, which is all the more necessary in the current period with COVID-19.