



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Vocantas Helps Algonquin College Call Out for Student Engagement and Success

OTTAWA, ON, CANADA - February 4, 2009 - Algonquin College is getting connected with its students, in more ways than one. With a new solution developed by local firm Vocantas, the school is reaching out in a proactive, meaningful way through a medium very familiar to students, the phone. During the third week of each semester, first-years are contacted and asked a series of questions. From the responses, school administrators can quickly identify and address issues that students are having in time to positively impact their academic future.

On average, 10 to 15 percent of students in colleges and universities are lost to student attrition each year. Research has found that those numbers can be reduced significantly in cases where outreach and intervention are initiated in the first three weeks of the semester.

Algonquin has instituted a variety of programs over the years to promote the success of its students. To reinforce those efforts, school administrators can now track and report real time data from students' responses to a number of customized questions. Easy access to a Web-based reporting tool helps school administrators identify issues quickly so students stay on track towards succeeding in their program.

"We recognized the importance of a retention plan several years ago and have been building upon it each semester. This proactive approach provides confirmation that our retention programs are working," said the school's Special Advisor on Academic Initiatives. "The Vocantas system lets us reach out to more students faster than we ever could before. It is a great compliment to the variety of other programs we already have in place."

Hundreds of calls were made over a five-day period in late September. Students at both the Woodroffe and Pembroke campuses were asked a series of questions to identify challenges they were facing in the third week of classes, and to measure their awareness of the many programs and services available to help them. Of the students who were contacted, 95% completed the entire survey. An unanticipated benefit of the initiative was that Algonquin was able to confirm student contact information and update their records. This helps to ensure that the college is able to effectively contact students in the event of any emergencies.

The college completed another series of calls the week of January 26, to engage students who commenced programs at the beginning of this semester.

- More -



(Page 2 - Vocantas Helps Algonquin College Call Out for Student Engagement)

"The student retention system is a strategic part of a school's efforts to identify students that could be in jeopardy of completing their degree for any reason," says Gary Hannah, president and CEO of Vocantas. "It empowers administrators so they can address students' issues immediately, before they become irreversible."

Vocantas outreach solutions can effectively notify entire student and faculty populations about upcoming events or provide instructions during times of emergency. Automated surveys collect meaningful, documented insights into how programs can be improved, so administrators can respond quickly and allocate resources appropriately. Students enjoy this direct link to their educational institution, the feeling of extra care and control over their educational futures. A timely phone call can address their uncertainties and change their commitment by offering support when they need it most.

About Vocantas

Vocantas is a developer of interactive voice response systems (IVRS) that use advanced computer telephony and speech technology to provide its customers with cost-effective customer outreach solutions. The company's easy-to-use, turn-key solutions offer customizable core features and optional enhancements that integrate seamlessly with existing systems. Its products have particular application in the healthcare, education, utilities and customer service environments where they have been proven to increase efficiencies while minimizing operational costs. For more information, please visit www.vocantas.com.

About Algonquin College

Algonquin College of Applied Arts and Technology is located in the Nation's Capital and the Ottawa Valley and is the fourth largest college in Ontario. Algonquin is a leader in the integration of technology into learning. Algonquin College has a diverse population of nearly 16,000 fulltime students and more than 39,000 part-time registrations in more than 140 programs and is committed to student success. For more information please visit www.algonquincollege.com.

For more information contact:

Vocantas Marketing Communications
info@vocantas.com
877-271-8853 X 545