

OCULL Annual Retreat 2026

**Continuing Education at the Crossroads:
Leadership, Relevance and Renewal**



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OCULL thanks eCampusOntario for their generous support of this event.

eCampusOntario is a not-for-profit organization funded by the Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security, that supports innovation, collaboration and digital-by-design education in Ontario's publicly assisted colleges, universities, and Indigenous Institutes. We provide the sector with platforms, programs, and services to advance digital participation in postsecondary education, connecting Ontario's postsecondary institutions and learners to the future of learning and the future of work.

**March 5, 2026 | 9:15 am to 4:45 pm | Online
Agenda**

Event Access Details

Access Link: <https://utoronto.zoom.us/j/83547533592>

Meeting ID: 835 4753 3592

Passcode: 374813

Start Time	End Time	Session
9:15 am	10:00 am	<p>Welcome and Land Acknowledgement Juan Mavo-Navarro (OCULL/UofT)</p> <p>Fireside Chat - Beyond AI Hype: Building Workforce Ready Skills Through Continuing Education Armando Benitez (BMO) and Juan Mavo-Navarro (OCULL/UofT)</p> <p>Join us for a fireside chat on how continuing education can lead the response to AI driven workforce change. This session explores what AI literacy and critical skills look like across today's workforce, the learning pathways employers value most, and how ContEd units can adopt AI operationally—across marketing, enrolment, and learner support—while balancing innovation, quality, and responsible governance.</p>
10:00 am	11:00 am	<p>Cracker Barrel Roundtables Kathleen Geelen (McMaster), Karen Hamilton (McMaster), Alyson MacKay (Lakehead), and Nicky Locker (Lakehead)</p> <p>Participants will rotate across facilitated tables for focused, 10-minute conversations on priority issues impacting Continuing Education today. Each table offers an opportunity to exchange practices, challenges, and insights with peers across the sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring Quality and Credibility in CE Programming Approaches to quality assurance, standards, and continuous improvement. • Strategic Marketing Investment in Continuing Education Budgeting models, resource allocation, and demonstrating ROI. • Continuing Education as a Driver of Economic Development Aligning CE programming with workforce needs, industry demand, and regional growth. • Strengthening Community Partnerships Through CE Building meaningful relationships with community organizations and stakeholders.
11:00 am	11:05 am	Break

Start Time	End Time	Session
11:05 am	11:55 am	<p>Concurrent Sessions I</p> <p>From Industry Insight to Instructional Impact: GenAI Competencies in Continuing Education John Lewis (UofT) and Samantha Stevens-Hall (UofT)</p> <p>This session presents a pilot initiative focused on embedding industry-relevant GenAI competencies into existing non-credit programs and courses. Through a two-phase approach, instructors first collaborated with industry partners to identify authentic GenAI applications, then co-designed discipline-specific learning tasks aligned with real-world practice. Developed by internal instructional and strategy teams, the initiative offers a scalable and ethically grounded model for GenAI integration. The session positions continuing education as a leader in future-focused learning design and agile program development. Participants will leave with practical strategies for integrating GenAI through industry collaboration, flexible instructional design, and continuous program iteration.</p> <p>Access link</p> <p>Real Problems, Real Learning through a Case Study Approach Ceni Babaoglu (TMU)</p> <p>This session explores the use of case studies and real-world scenarios as a core teaching strategy in continuing education. Drawing on examples from data science and analytics, the session demonstrates how scenario-driven learning can be applied across disciplines to increase engagement, strengthen critical thinking, and support the practical application of theory. Participants will gain hands-on strategies for designing, implementing, and assessing effective real-world scenarios, including techniques for fostering interaction in virtual learning environments. The session also highlights how scenario-based activities can be aligned with professional competencies and workforce readiness, helping learners connect course content directly to real-world practice.</p> <p>Access link Meeting ID: 951 4169 1045 Passcode: 196761</p>
11:55 pm	12:30 pm	Break

Start Time	End Time	Session
12:30 pm	1:20 pm	<p>Concurrent Sessions II</p> <p>Understanding Learner Needs and Personas: Designing CE for GenAI+ Workforce Readiness Anne-Marie Brinsmead (TMU) and Melanie Hains (WatSPEED)</p> <p>This session examines how Continuing Education units can proactively design programs that respond to employer demand for occupation-specific and GenAI+ skills—often before learners recognize the need. Participants will explore real-world employer personas through a brief role-play, gaining insight into hiring challenges and in-demand capabilities across industry sectors. The session then shifts to learner personas, focusing on adults navigating career transitions, advancement, or workforce re-entry, and how to build these profiles using labour market information and social listening. Finally, participants will analyze how Gen Z and millennial learners discover CE offerings, mapping digital channels and outreach strategies to better align employer needs, learner motivations, and credential visibility.</p> <p>Access link Meeting ID: 920 3368 9582 Passcode: 887208</p> <p>Past As Prologue: The History of OCULL as Applied Knowledge in Forecasting Hopeful Learning Futures Paul Jenkins (Independent Consultant, former OCULL Executive Team)</p> <p>This session reframes history as both a discipline and a future-oriented way of thinking, highlighting its strategic value for imagining preferred learning futures. Drawing on the history of OCULL, the session examines how past decisions, values, and structures shape present assumptions and path dependencies. Participants will use this historical lens to critically reflect on current challenges and opportunities facing continuing education. Rather than predicting outcomes, the session invites a process of collective, radical imagination to envision future directions for lifelong learning. By moving from history to future-visioning, the session aims to clarify, strengthen, and unify the purpose of continuing education in Ontario and beyond.</p> <p>Access link</p>
1:20 pm	1:30 pm	Break

Start Time	End Time	Session
1:30 pm	2:20 pm	<p>Concurrent Sessions III</p> <p>From Static Courses to Living Learning Systems: How CE Is Evolving with AI Gilda Martinez (Artha Learning Inc.)</p> <p>This session examines a shift in Continuing Education program design from static, one-time courses to living learning systems that evolve through iteration, learner data, and feedback. Drawing on applied design work across professional and continuing education contexts, the session explores how CE units are adopting more adaptive approaches, including modular learning assets, embedded guidance, alternative content formats, and continuous feedback loops. AI is positioned as an enabling factor that supports scalability and personalization while preserving instructional judgment. Rather than focusing on tools, the session emphasizes practical design principles and decision frameworks. Participants will gain strategies for incrementally evolving programs within existing institutional and platform constraints.</p> <p>Access link</p> <p>Teaching with AI Tutor Pro and AI Teaching Assistant Pro Ron Owston (Contact North)</p> <p>This hands-on session introduces AI Tutor Pro and AI Teaching Assistant Pro, two free, privacy-aligned applications developed by Contact North Contact Nord to support student learning and instructional practice. The session demonstrates how these tools can be integrated into online and face-to-face courses to enhance independent study, reduce instructional workload, and strengthen teaching effectiveness. Participants will explore key features through live demonstrations and guided activities, including LMS integration and emerging capabilities such as learning shorts and agent-based support. The session emphasizes practical, immediately applicable strategies for continuing education and provides clarity on privacy, intellectual property, and institutional alignment.</p> <p>Access link</p>
2:20 pm	2:25 pm	Break

Start Time	End Time	Session
2:25 pm	3:25 pm	<p>Plenary Discussion - Strengthening Ontario's Skills Agenda Robert Luke (eCampus Ontario), Maxim Jean-Louis (Contact North), Juan Mavo-Navarro (OCULL/UofT)</p> <p>This session will engage participants in a focused, collaborative discussion on how continuing education units can strengthen Ontario's skills development agenda. Through guided reflection, attendees will identify what CE units should start, stop, and do differently to build faster pathways, deepen employer partnerships, and enhance supports for adults navigating workforce transitions.</p>
3:25 pm	3:30 pm	Break
3:30 pm	4:00 pm	<p>Innovating Under Constraint: Leveraging LMI, AI, and OER to Sustain and Scale Impact in Continuing Education Michael Chrobok (eCampusOntario) and Elisa Arnold (eCampusOntario)</p> <p>Continuing Education units across Ontario are operating at a crossroads – one marked by financial constraints, advancements in artificial intelligence, and pressure to deliver programs that remain relevant in a rapidly changing labour market. This session explores how labour market information (LMI), coupled with artificial intelligence (AI), can support data driven decision making and innovation in program design, delivery, and marketing – without requiring significant new resources. Drawing on examples from eCampusOntario and its members, this session highlights emerging practices for linking LMI to open educational resources (OER) that can be used by Continuing Education units and discusses strategies for leveraging LMI to support course and program discoverability. The session will also share early insights from eCampusOntario's research on Generative AI, highlighting practical considerations around ethics, licensing, and the adaptation of learning materials. By drawing links between LMI, AI, and OER, this session will support Continuing Education units in navigating complexity and sustaining their vital impact in Ontario's lifelong learning ecosystem.</p>
4:00 pm	4:30 pm	<p>Update from the Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security Zoë Kroeker (MCURES), Kinney Butterfield (MCURES)</p> <p>An update from the Ministry on priorities, funding, and policy directions shaping Ontario's colleges, universities, and continuing education landscape, with implications for institutions and learners.</p>
4:30 pm	4:45 pm	<p>Closing Remarks Juan Mavo-Navarro (OCULL/UofT)</p>

		The Ontario Council for University Lifelong Learning (OCULL) provides an update on its current initiatives and priorities, with a focus on advancing a multi-year action plan to strengthen continuing education, collaboration, and sector-wide impact across Ontario's universities.
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