

***PLAR:
Reducing Barriers
to Education***

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Algonquin College

- **Mission**

- To transform hopes and dreams into skills and knowledge, leading to lifelong career success.

- **Vision**

- To be a global leader in digitally-connected applied education and training.

- **Core values**

- Caring. Learning. Integrity. Respect.



Algonquin

- **Full-time:** Over 19,000 students
- **Part-time:** Over 37,000 Registrations
- **International:** Over 1,000 international students from more than 100 countries
- **Campuses** in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait
- **Age 25 or older:** 23%
Age 20 – 24: 41%
Under 20: 36%
- 72% of 1st year students non-direct (trending)
- **Programs:** Around 180
- Strong **On-line** presence



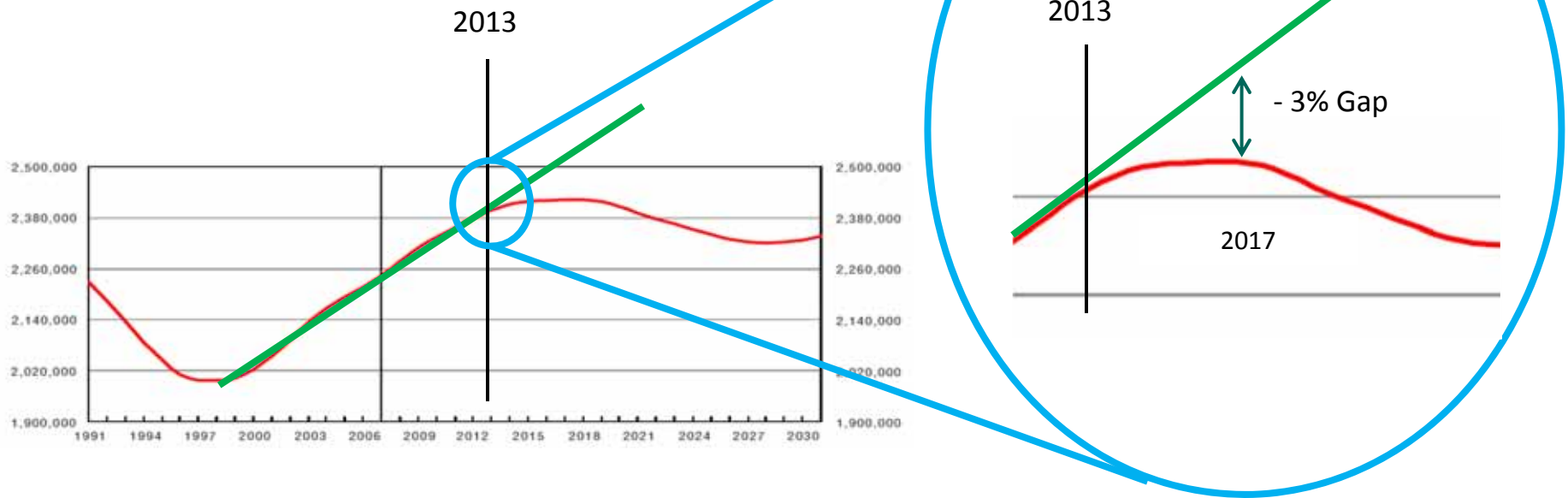
Algonquin

1. Digital
 1. E-text program
 2. Mobile Program
2. Work-Integrated Learning
 1. 90% of programs offer
 2. 700+ students in Applied Research
3. Industry/Community Focused
 1. 120 research partners annually
 2. Corporate Training serves 350 businesses and 3500 learners



Demographic Challenges for PSE in Ontario

Population growth 1999
to 2013 Average
+ 1.3% per year



Source: Stats Canada



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Algonquin Strategic Plan Metrics



Strategic Plan Metric	2011-12 baseline	2014 target	2017 target
Enrolment	18,200	20,345	21,100
Retention	84.0%	87.0%	89.0%
Graduation	62.4%	64.2%	70.0%



What is PLAR?

Prior Learning Assessment & Recognition (PLAR) is a process of

- identifying
- documenting
- assessing, and
- recognizing (validating)

what a person *knows* and *can do* related to a specific purpose.



Algonquin's opportunities with PLAR

1. Enrolment (Recruitment + Admission)
2. Retention
3. Graduation (completion)

- ✓ Reputation/marketing
- ✓ Efficiencies



Goal of PLAR

To provide an effective, efficient, supportive system

- that allows individuals to move forward independently,
- using available resources and accessing personal support as required

in order to recognize applicable prior learning of individuals at Algonquin.

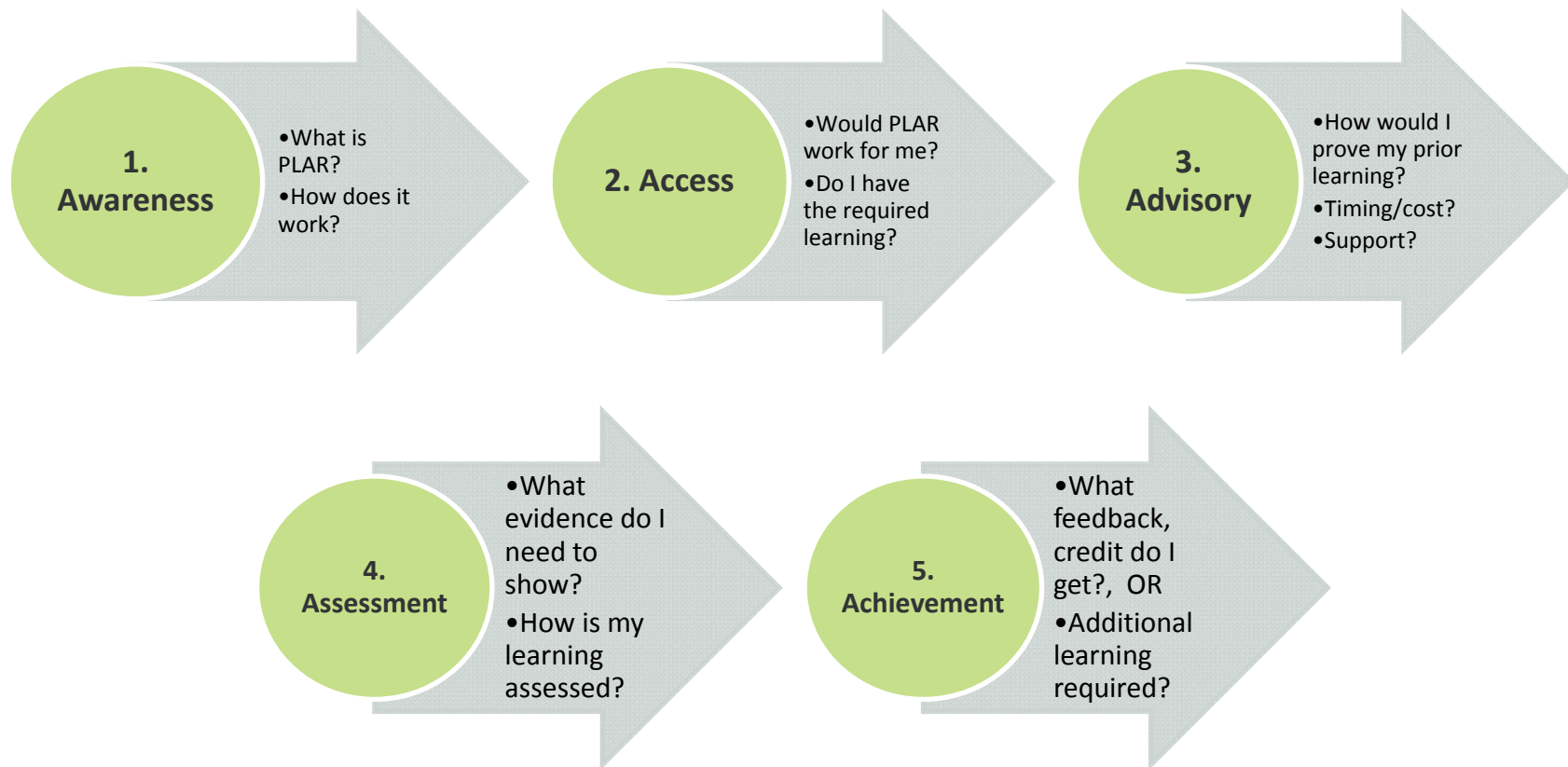


Algonquin PLAR Strategy

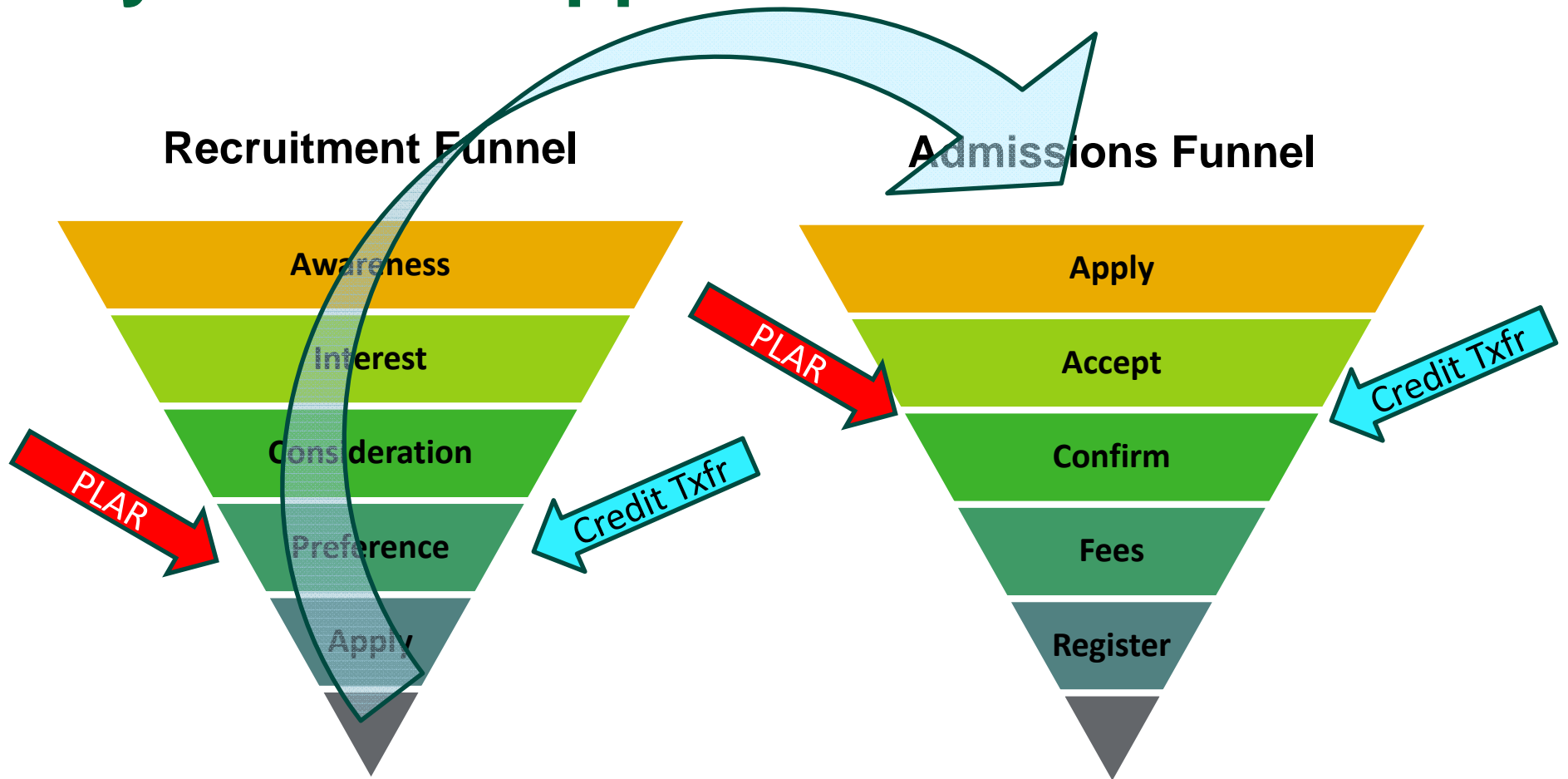
- PLAR Strategic Plan overarching goals:
 1. Awareness, Access & Communication
 2. PLAR Quality & Capacity
 3. Staff & Faculty Development
 4. Administration & Reporting
 5. Partnerships & Growth



The PLAR Process at Algonquin



Systematic Approach



Extend to Retention, Graduation funnels



PLAR for Enrolment Results

- Focus on non-direct entrants (applicants, students, graduates, immigrants)
- Engage at recruitment and admission stages
- Integrate PT, OL, and flex pathways
- Develop and engage cross-college teams
- Balance supply/demand in programs



PLAR for Retention Results

- Target high failure, high risk, and high withdrawal courses
- Outreach to communicate, and engage with student options
- Offer suite of solutions
- Develop and engage cross-college teams



PLAR for Graduation Results



- Retention efforts help graduation
- Target departed students with graduation gap
- Offer suite of solutions for graduation
- Integrate PT, OL, and flex pathways
- Develop and engage cross-college teams



Algonquin's Experienced Workers Centre

- Connects laid-off or underemployed workers to courses/programs that can help them on their journey back to work
- Averages 1,200 new clients annually
- Immigrants face unique barriers
- Need support to navigate system & identify the best way to build their experience



To PLAR Or Not To PLAR ?

- Limited awareness of PLAR
- Need time/attention to ensure proper fit
 - Language, appropriate referrals
 - Curricula design – 60% to PLAR
 - Determine most appropriate method
- Strategic investment has moved PLAR from reactive to proactive



AWARENESS

Educated internal stakeholders

- 50+ presentations & workshops
- Internal partnerships = clear, consistent messaging delivered by student services, recruitment, and individual departments
- New web site & related self-assessment tools:
<http://www.algonquincollege.com/plar/>

Result: College-wide collaboration designed to enhance students' educational experience



ACCESS: SELF ASSESSMENT RESOURCE GUIDES

Has your social and cultural experience affected you in ways that:

Duration	lasted for months or years rather than a few days or weeks?
Impact	helped you reflect on new ideas about yourself, your community, and the world?
Learning	exposed you to new concepts, especially related to theory, history, and ethics?
Experience	provided you with a depth of life experience beyond mere facts and skills?

Have you ever:	Duration	Impact	Learning	Experience	Total ✓
A. lived in a non-English-speaking country? If so, can you:					
1. explain how the experience influenced your outlook on life?					
2. explain which of its cultural forces shaped your current values?					
3. identify historical and present cultural figures and events there?					
4. defend the importance of exposing oneself to a different culture?					
Total ✓					<input type="text"/>



PLAR: BENEFITS FOR IMMIGRANTS

- Reduces time commitment: more time to focus on most challenging course material, work, family
- Reduces cost: \$95 - 119/PLAR vs. \$450/course
- Empowered, increased confidence
- Higher grades; higher levels of completion



