

Collège Boréal:

Growing the Francophone Community in Toronto



Photography: Patrick St. Arnaud

Collège Boréal is one of two public colleges in Ontario specifically serving the French-speaking community through training, education, employment and immigration integration services. Its new Toronto campus combines historic architecture with adaptable space design to create a comfortable environment that supports community, innovation and learning.

Developing a Community with Historical Ties

When looking for a new campus location in Toronto, Collège Boréal chose the Distillery District, a historic downtown area with the largest and best preserved collection of Victorian-era industrial architecture in North America. “Our mission here is really to provide that education and community focus within the context of a French culture,” says Terry Comeau, Executive Director of Toronto Campus Development, “This site

echoes Toronto’s very early roots as a francophone community,” adds Marc Despatie, Director, Communications, Government Relations and the Boréal Foundation.

Natural materials such as brick and timber create a feeling of warmth and intimacy. “Our challenge was to create an innovative space that was cohesive from a design perspective but still be able to flex and adapt to changing uses,” explains Comeau. “It also needed to be intuitive and easy to understand no matter what language you speak.”

The building’s interior features a diverse range of spaces that anchor the building and create contiguous space vertically. These include a ground-floor Collaboration Zone, second-floor labs, a business incubator and event spaces on the third floor, and a fourth-floor resource center and community work area. These vertical anchor spaces are supported with classrooms, staff and activity zones on each level.





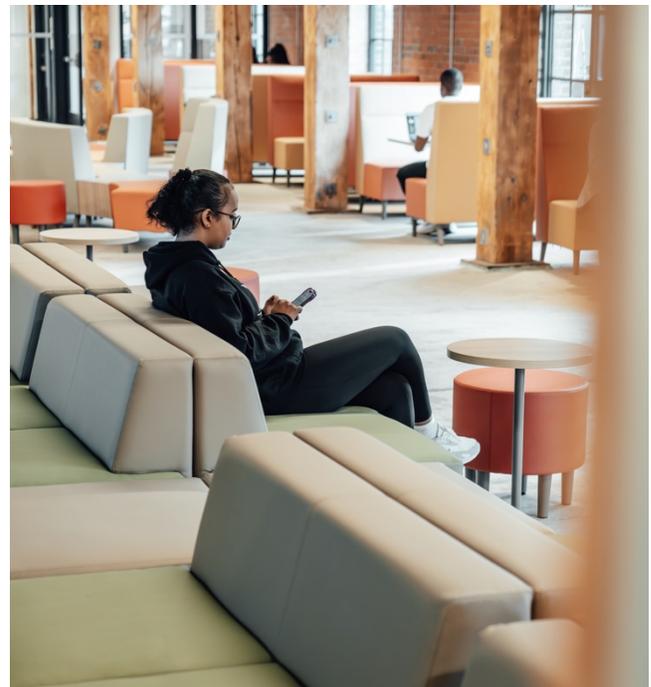
“I see students from 40 to 50 different countries, along with staff and faculty, enjoying that space together.”

Terry Comeau,
Executive Director of
Toronto Campus Development

Fostering Inclusivity for Future Success

As most students spend an entire day on campus, comfort plays a critical role to student success and wellbeing. A variety of furniture—including lounges with soft seating, meeting tables with task chairs, and individual desks—can be combined to support collaborative and focused work throughout the day. Social spaces like the Collaboration Zone form a living room where students can grab a cup of coffee and hang out. “It’s really become their space in the most wonderful way. I see students from 40 to 50 different countries, along with staff and faculty, enjoying that space together,” says Comeau.

Collège Boréal has emerged as a key hub for French-language post-secondary education, employment, immigration, and business in Toronto, by successfully nurturing a diverse community. For Comeau, the campus serves as a bridge for a smoother transition, “Showcasing the latest thinking in education design alongside an amazing architectural history, this campus reflects our students’ journey—from their past to a bright and flexible future.”



FEATURED PRODUCTS

River+ lounge seating and occasional tables, Venture booths, ML and ML Park lounge seating, Swap tables, Novello task seating, Kadin tables, ConnecTABLES tables, Zook tables, Stream seating, Bridges benching, Citi Square seating, Sonic seating, SAS stools

PROJECT TEAM

ERA Architects (Historical Architect), BDP Quadrangle (Interior Architects), Cityscape Development Corporation, Dream Unlimited Corporation, Collège Boréal

DEALER

Holland Furnishings



