

TITLE: WEBSITE GOVERNANCE POLICY

Date of Approval: December 8, 2016,
April 9, 2020

Effective Date: April 9, 2020

**Mandatory Review
Date:**

3 Years

Approved By:

- ☐ Board of Governors
☒ President and Vice
Presidents
☐ Senate

1. Purpose

Website Governance is a framework that sets the standards and structures for the creation, maintenance and ownership of the Sheridan College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning (Sheridan) official and affiliated website properties. Through associated procedures, it outlines the processes and people that enable this work to occur in an organized and consistent manner. The goal of Website Governance is to provide the best possible user experience for visitors by ensuring quality, consistency, accessibility and effective discoverability of information on Sheridan's Website Properties.

This policy authorizes the existence of a Website Governance Council that provides collaborative, centralized governance and champions a holistic Sheridan Website Presence that is aligned to the institution's overall vision and Strategic Plan. It establishes policies and procedures to govern current and future Website Properties. It also authorizes the existence of affiliated Website Governance Advisory Committees that provide input and recommend actions.

The policy supports the roles of Website Managers, who in cooperation with their Departments are responsible for a wide range of tasks and services related to the central administration and ongoing stewardship of the Website Properties.

The policy aligns with Sheridan's decentralized model for content creation, which relies on distributed content owners who are responsible for developing content for their pages and ensuring the accuracy of information that is presented. This decentralized model also provides Content Editors and Owners with flexibility to adapt their pages for their unit's needs, provided that they meet Sheridan's overall standards.

The policy enshrines Sheridan-wide compliance with relevant legislation including but not limited to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Trademarks Act, Copyright Act, Consumer Protection Act and the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Sheridan employees and any hired vendors or partners who work on Sheridan Official and Affiliated Web Properties, or any Website Property where an established affiliation to Sheridan exists, or where Sheridan's interests are represented or where Sheridan business is conducted.

Sites that are excluded from this policy include Sheridan's enterprise-wide applications or information management systems such as Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems, Finance or HR enterprise solutions, Academic Systems (defined below), Employer Relationship system (ORBIS), AlumniConnect and Sheridan's social media platforms. For governance matters related to social media, please see Sheridan's social media policy.

3. Definitions

"Academic Systems" are digital/electronic properties, including SharePoint sites that are used for the purposes of academic programming and course management. They include SLATE and other websites built and used for the purposes of course delivery by faculty or as part of course learning by students

"Affiliated Website Property" means a website property that has a clear connection to any of Sheridan's programs, departments, or units but is not managed through Sheridan's official content management system (CMS). Examples of an affiliated website include but are not limited to myotr.sheridancollege.ca; it.sheridancollege.ca; curiosities.sheridancollege.ca; ovation.sheridancollege.ca

"Content Editors" (sometimes called Digital Content Specialists) are individuals responsible for posting and maintaining content on a Sheridan Official or Affiliated Website Property.

"Content Management System" refers to a software application that allows users to create, publish, manage, and modify content on a website without the need for highly specialized technical knowledge such as coding skills. It allows for the collaborative authoring of websites.

"Content Owners" are content subject matter experts within Faculties and administrative business units, who are responsible for the development and accuracy of content specific to their area of expertise, that is shown on Website pages their areas are responsible for maintaining.

"Official Website Property" refers to Sheridan's website: www.sheridancollege.ca; its soon-to-be-launched refreshed Intranet and any other properties managed through Sheridan's official content management system (Sitecore) such as caps.sheridancollege.ca

"Website" refers to a set of related website pages, typically served from a single website domain (e.g. www.sheridancollege.ca) , hosted on at least one website server, accessible via a network such as the Internet or a private local area network through an Internet address known as a uniform resource locator (URL) or website address.

“Website Governance” is a framework that defines the people, policy, standards, processes and guidelines to govern the creation and maintenance of Sheridan’s website presence.

“Website Governance Council” establishes policies and procedures to govern current and future official and affiliated website properties at Sheridan. It also establishes the membership of the Advisory Committees.

“Website Governance Advisory Committee” is a steering group that acts as a resource to the Website Managers and are the liaisons for their units with respect to communicating updates regarding Website strategy and initiatives. The group has pan-institutional members who meet once per semester. They may suggest global changes to taxonomy, structure, navigation as operational needs change, recommend additional templates or suggestions to existing ones; and recommend subject areas for training and support for Content Owners.

“Website Managers” are the administrators who provide primary technical, design and branding support for Sheridan’s official and affiliated website properties. They administer and maintain website-related infrastructure, databases, servers, software and applications.

“Website Property” refers to a point of presence (e.g. a website or web application viewed via a browser on desktop computers or mobile devices or through a native mobile app). They are assets of Sheridan used for the purpose of representing Sheridan and its interests.

4. Policy Statement

Sheridan’s Website Presence is the public face of the institution. Its Website Properties are aligned to the institution’s vision and mission and serve to advance its strategic plan and help Sheridan realize business-related goals.

Sheridan’s Website Presence carries enormous influence as a platform that allows Sheridan to project a positive image by serving as major institutional channels of communication; showcasing the institution’s best qualities; portraying a high-quality image to all visitors; providing access to many aspects of Sheridan’s operations; providing accurate and consistent information; and engaging audiences through a positive user experience.

Sheridan places a high value on excellence, inclusion and engagement. It is paramount that our Website Properties (including their design, navigation, functionality and content) are:

- aligned with Sheridan’s brand and its standards
- high quality, accurate, clear, consistent and compelling
- audience-centric and consider the needs of the visitor rather than solely follow the structure of Sheridan’s departments and divisions
- compliant with regulatory standards, such as accessibility
- meet requirements related to security and protection of privacy
- are intuitive, responsive, efficient and device agnostic

Where possible, Sheridan also strives to ensure that its Website Properties:

- avoid duplication (following the philosophy of “store once, reference often”)

- display content that evolves over time (as Content Owners across the institution are empowered to manage their own website pages reflecting our decentralized approach to content management)

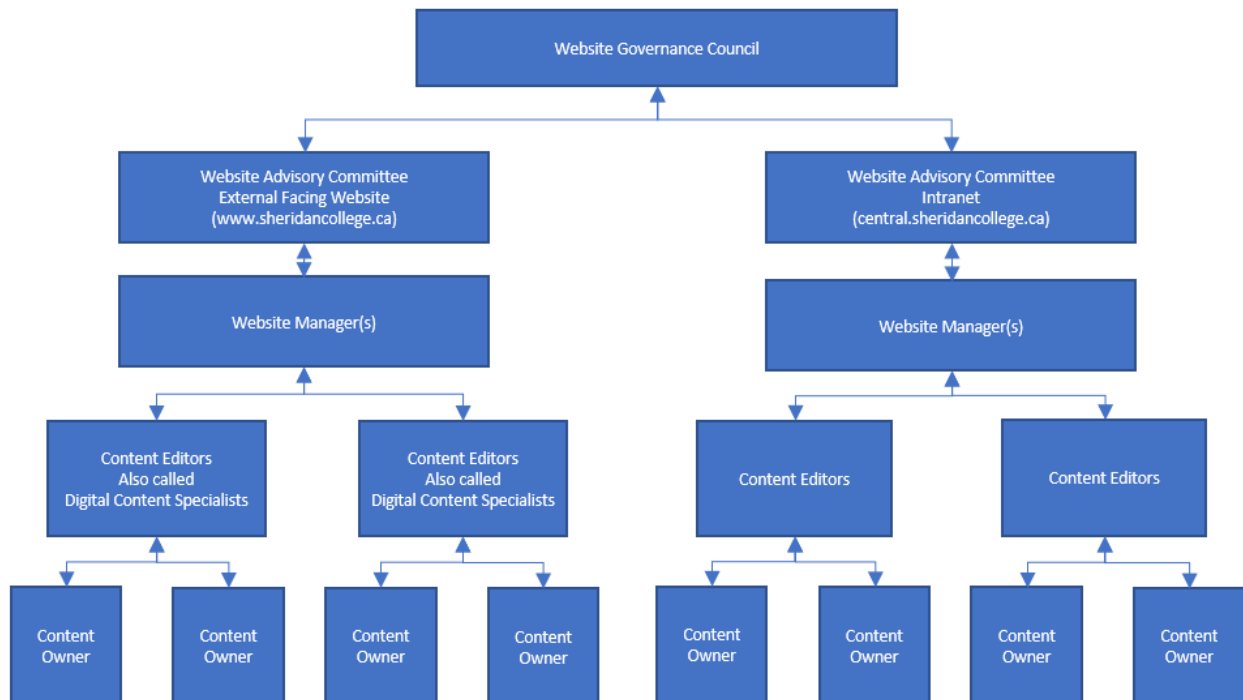
4.1 Ownership and Compliance

Sheridan's Website Properties are the sole property of Sheridan. Sheridan reserves the right to uphold quality control. Its Website Managers may edit content for clarity, accessibility, grammar, spelling, usage, style and compliance with Sheridan's naming conventions and branding. Sheridan's Website Managers further reserve the right to revise or delete content that is inaccurate or outdated, or that does not meet acceptable use guidelines or quality standards.

Sheridan further holds the right to: approve or deny requests related to making changes to official and affiliated Website Properties; enforce enterprise-level standards; facilitate and resolve non-compliance issues; and immediately suspend or terminate services when website properties are non-compliant with regulations including but not limited to security and privacy.

Continued non-compliance with the policy may result in the removal of authorized access and/or the removal of content from the core web properties. Violation of this policy by Sheridan employees may result in serious sanctions up to and including dismissal.

4.2 Membership and Duties of Council and Committees



The Website Governance Council meets once per year to review policies and procedures to govern current and future website properties. It also reviews and approves the membership of the Website Governance Advisory Committees.

With the delegated authority of the President and Vice Presidents Committee (PVP), Sheridan's Chief Communications Officer and its AVP of Information Technology serve as the Executive co-sponsors of Sheridan's Website Governance Council.

The Website Governance Council may call on the Office of the Provost and Vice President Academic and/or other Vice Presidents for recommendations and support as required.

Its membership shall include:

- Chief Communications Officer
- AVP, Information Technology
- Vice Provost, Research
- Academic Dean
- Legal Counsel
- AVP, Integrated Learning Services
- AVP, Enrolment Innovation
- Dean of Students
- Registrar
- Director, Marketing and Brand Strategy
- Director, Information and Communication Technology
- Director, Enterprise Systems Services
- Director, HR Services
- Manager, Web Technologies and Development Operations
- Manager, Learning Management Systems & Learning Technologies
- Manager, Accessibility and Inclusion

In addition to the Website Governance Council, two advisory committees exist – one for each of Sheridan's institutional website presences that serve as channels of communication. These local advisory committees provide input and recommend actions to the Website Managers responsible and accountable for designing, implementing and maintaining the sites.

The Website Advisory Committee for the external Sheridan website (www.sheridancollege.ca) help ensure that future directions affecting this Official Website are strategically considered. They take into account Sheridan's 2024 Strategic Plan and Sheridan's Enrolment Management Plan when advocating for the needs of the site's audience (prospective students and influencers, alumni, media, industry and external partners). They provide input into the overall taxonomy, structure, navigation and functionality of the website and may suggest changes as operational needs arise. The Committee helps to identify standards and best practices regarding legislative requirements and high-quality user experience. They may assist to investigate, facilitate and resolve non-compliance issues. They also may recommend additional templates or suggestions to existing ones for the creation of webpages. The Committee assists to monitor the overall quantity and quality (relevance and currency) of content for this Official Website Property. They also may suggest subject areas for training and support for Content Editors and Owners to be arranged and/or delivered by Website Managers.

Its members include:

- Director of Marketing and Brand Strategy (co-Chair)
- Student Experience Owner (co-Chair)
- Manager – Website Operations
- Representative – Academic Portfolios/Provost's Office
- Representative – Recruitment/Registrar
- Representative – Student Affairs
- Representative – Research
- Representative – Alumni
- Representative – Advancement
- Representative – Community/Government Relations
- Representative – WIL/Coop
- Representative – PR/Communications/Media Relations
- Representative – Information Technology
- Representative – Human Resources (Talent Recruitment)
- Representative – EDI/Accessibility

The Website Advisory Committee - Sheridan Central Intranet assists its Website Managers to understand the communications needs of Sheridan's Divisions and Departments and provides input that helps to prioritize the backlog requirements that will inform the ongoing development of this Official Website Property. Its members include:

- Manager, Sheridan Central Portal – IT representative - Chair
- Portal Communications Officer
- Representative – Office of the Registrar
- Representative – Student Affairs
- Representative – Sheridan Student Union Administration
- Current Student
- Academic Dean or Associate Dean
- Program coordinator
- Representative – Finance and Administration
- Representative – Human Resources
- Representative – CPOD
- Representative – Institutional Research and Planning
- Representative – Library/Learning Services
- Representative – Career and Integrated Learning
- Representative – International Services
- Representative – Research
- Representative – EDI/Accessibility
- Representative – IT Security
- Representative – IT Communications
- Representative – CTL

4.3 Jurisdiction of Website Managers, Content Editors and Content Owners

The core teams who are responsible and accountable for the day-to-day operations related to Sheridan's Official and Affiliated Website Properties include Website Managers, Content Editors and Content Owners.

Website Managers oversee the functional areas of Website Services, Digital Marketing, Communications, Information Communication and Technology, and Information Security. Their staff, contractors, agencies and vendors are responsible for a wide range of services and supports related to the administration and ongoing stewardship of Sheridan's official website properties.

These teams provide and support the infrastructure, technology and user administration related to the core web properties. They establish resourcing requirements, set goals in line with Sheridan's strategic plan, and monitor overall site performance.

They ensure compliance with legal and regulatory standards and ensure quality and content integrity. They are responsible for navigation (menus/links and taxonomy); design and branding; front-end functionality (tools, controls, actions and outputs); back-end functionality (how it operates to achieve functions, support tools, organize controls, and create actions and outputs); content structure, hierarchy and placement; and analytics design and installation.

These teams are responsible for website server operations and security, providing set up, maintenance and troubleshooting services. They are responsible for the selection, installation and management of the core CMS software and databases.

These teams provide regular communication, training and support to editors of affiliated website properties. They also provide ongoing reporting and recommendations to the executive sponsors in relation to continuous improvement and quality assurance.

Content Editors (sometimes called Digital Content Specialists):

Each page on a website property (official or affiliated) must have a defined content editor who is appointed by the functional area of the college whose content is represented on the page. They are responsible for posting and maintaining content on their website pages, working to proactively assess, edit and remove the content as necessary so that their pages adhere to established policies and procedures. They ensure that their content complies with accessibility standards, does not include broken links, and adheres to Sheridan's style guide and brand standards. Adherence to such standards encourages clarity, consistency, accuracy, and quality to promote a positive end user experience, foster effective service delivery and maintain a positive image for Sheridan.

Content Owners:

Content Owners are content subject matter experts within Faculties and administrative business units who are responsible for the development and accuracy of content specific to their areas of

expertise. It is their responsibility to advise on the currency and factual accuracy of the content on their area's pages.

4.4 Responsible Office

The responsible executive for this policy shall be the Chief Communications Officer. The Communications, Public Affairs and Marketing division will interpret and apply the policy, steward all standards, and have responsibility to draft and/or approve any associated procedures.

5. Related Documentation (Procedures/Additional Policies/Forms)

- Website Governance Council Terms of Reference
- Website Governance Advisory Committee Terms of Reference
- [Website Responsibility Guidelines for Stakeholder Roles within Sheridan](#)
- [Operational Procedure to Establish and/or Maintain Websites at Sheridan](#)
- Website Content Quality & Accessibility Guidelines
- Brand Policy (forthcoming)
- User Experience Policy (forthcoming)
- [Brand Standards](#)
- Trademark Policy (forthcoming)
- [Social Media Policy](#)
- [Acceptable Use Policy](#)
- [Code of Professionalism and Civility](#)
- [Free Speech Policy](#)
- [Accessibility Policy](#) (Section 4.13 Accessible websites and web content)
- [Conflict of Interest Policy](#)