

**To:** All staff  
**Subject:** Fall Planning Updates  
**Date:** April 30, 2020

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Sheridan

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## Fall Planning Updates

### April 30, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

We're approaching the end of another week -- and another month -- of living and working through this global health pandemic and financial crisis. In the continuing absence of a playbook and no guaranteed end-date in sight, I remain committed to communicating openly and often.

To that end, this message is focused on the following:

- A Marathon, not a Sprint
- Fall Campus Scenarios
- Media Reports
- We Need Your Help

## A Marathon, not a Sprint

I know that many of you are feeling restless, annoyed, anxious, tired, or even overwhelmed. I'm empathetic because I'm experiencing those emotions too -- sometimes all within the span of a single day! I wish I could say that there was a definitive finish line in sight, but I can't. Rather, I'm increasingly aware that we're in this for the long haul, and that the path forward won't be linear, familiar or well-marked. We know that:

- 50% of Canadians report that the pandemic has had an impact on their mental health while 42 per cent report an impact on their physical health. (Angus Reid)
- Over 51,000 cases are confirmed in Canada. One week ago, we had just surpassed 40,000
- Provinces where cases are low - like New Brunswick, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and PEI -- and where cases are high, like Quebec -- are moving forward to loosen restrictions
- 69% of Canadians who are currently working from home due to COVID-19 restrictions would like to work from home more often after the crisis (Leger)
- 64% of Canadians fear contracting the virus, yet over 60% say they've witnessed people failing to practice physical distancing (Leger)
- A survey of international students interested in Canada found that only 15% are reconsidering study abroad because of COVID19 and 53% would delay starting classes if they cannot be taken in-person on campus (Academica)
- Even if students *wanted* to study online, reliable internet is unavailable to 14% of Canadians, 59% of rural Canadians, and 72% on First Nations reserves (Online Learning and Distance Education Resources)

I appreciate that this data isn't particularly reassuring. It is, however, all germane to the evolving planning scenarios I referenced last week.

## Fall Campus Scenarios

Amidst this unprecedented uncertainty and complexity, our approach continues to be grounded in the [guiding principles](#) that we shared at the Town Hall and in prior emails.

This week, the Province of Ontario unveiled its [Framework for Reopening the Province](#), which outlines three stages to recovery. I would note that we're not in the first stage yet and should expect a period of two-to-four weeks between stages to assess conditions. The framework is also tied to expectations that aren't yet fully realized, namely, that (i) we will see a decrease in the number of new cases; and, (ii) a robust process will be in place for testing, treating, tracing, and separating people who are ill.

Sheridan will continue to act in compliance with provincial directives. Our re-opening plan is aimed at creating the necessary infrastructure to: minimize the risk of disease transmission; deliver an optimal student experience; and, avoid cycles of "opening up and shutting down". To that end, we're mapping a staggered re-opening of our physical space that will provide staged access to different target populations:

essential workers;

- researchers -- like those currently making 3D printed face-shields for pandemic response;
- faculty and staff drop-ins for essential equipment and supplies or to prepare equipment for course delivery;
- identified groups of students; and
- all employees, students and visitors

The exact timeline for affording each population access to campus is still unknown. Much depends on the Province's stages of recovery and ongoing public health directives about physical distancing, which will dictate occupancy limits. Until there is an available vaccine and/or clear medical evidence that individuals cannot be infected with COVID-19 more than once, one might expect that:

- the number of people on campus will need to be kept to a minimum;
- strict physical distancing will be maintained;
- frequent handwashing, respiratory etiquette and the use of face masks will be required;
- temperature checks may be required prior to entry; and
- common gathering spaces cannot re-open for mass use.

## Media Reports

To support our enrolment goals, Sheridan published a [news release](#) earlier today in an attempt to: reassure prospective students and parents that we will be open/running programs this fall; express our hope that we can welcome learners on campus; confirm that we are working on alternate plans if face to face is not possible; and reaffirm our intention to respect public health protocols and provincial directives.

You may notice news coverage of the story, such as this piece on [Global](#) that seem to suggest an expectation of on-campus delivery.

To be clear: Sheridan has not made any decision about the delivery mechanism for our Fall programs. We are planning for various scenarios – in person, hybrid, and remote. With so many external factors beyond our control, it would be irresponsible to do anything less.

I assure you that as soon as we are in a position to make a determination in alignment with the frameworks shared above – our Sheridan community will be the first to know.

## We Need Your Help

Across all of my (now virtual) interactions with members of our community, I'm buoyed by the depth of your commitment. Faculty, staff, alumni and students write to me every day offering support and asking how they can help Sheridan weather this storm. I'm fueled by those communications and deeply grateful.

As I mentioned at our Town Hall last week, our path forward relies foremost on

enrolment recovery, which includes both the recruitment of new students and the retention of those who are continuing. To that end, I have an important ask: **please help us spread the word that there is still time to register for Fall programs at Sheridan.** Your personal contacts may include a prospective student. Word of mouth – particularly from a trusted source – is a very powerful tool. You can laud our programming with confidence; no matter the delivery mechanism, I'm fully confident that our fall programs and services will continue to be as rigorous, innovative, engaging and high quality as ever.

Please direct anyone you know who may be considering post-secondary studies this fall to visit our [available programs](#) page and select the fall term to check availability. Our [Virtual Open House](#) page also includes [Virtual Tours](#) of our three campuses and [Virtual Career Advising](#).

Thank you again for everything you continue to do for Sheridan.

Sincerely,

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