

Email to employees

Date: April 7, 2020

Subject: Preserving Sheridan's financial well-being

Dear Colleagues:

Time is a funny thing in a pandemic. There are moments when it feels as though the last four weeks have lasted four years, while other days slip by in the span of a heartbeat. Time flies fastest when, like you, I'm immersed and enthusiastically engaged in delivering on our commitments to learners.

In that same context of accountability, I am a fan of using 'principles' as a strategy for staying energized, focused, positive, and consistent in our response. This is especially true at a time when everything feels unfamiliar, unsettling, or quite frankly – unnerving.

To that point, I'd like to share the **Guiding Principles for Decision Making** that Sheridan's Executive Team is using to steer our institutional response to this unprecedented emergency:

- The physical health and holistic well-being of our entire learning community is paramount.
- Across as many academic programs as possible, we will facilitate Winter semester completion for learners through an alternate/remote delivery model that facilitates physical distancing. In all instances, planning will respect the pillars of our Academic Plan: character, quality and accountability.
- Sheridan will navigate the pandemic response *together*, as a learning community, in ways that demonstrate kindness, generosity, and compassion.
- Safeguarding the long-term economic sustainability of Sheridan is an imperative.
- Our long-term lens will remain rivetted to the four priorities and five enablers crystalized in our Strategic Plan.

I hope that you recognize the adoption of these principles in the decisions that we've communicated over the past month. Preserving people's health and well-being, for example, has been the impetus behind directives about campus building closures, requests for voluntary self-disclosures of COVID-19 diagnoses, and reminders about staying physically apart. The imperative to respond together – compassionately and with kindness – has been the driving force behind our #SheridanHelps initiative to assist both learners and our broader communities. The need to safeguard Sheridan's long-term financial health and sustainability has been demonstrated in announcements that have put a temporary freeze on new hiring and discretionary spending, such as professional development.

As much as these guiding principles are helping us navigate our Winter term delivery and our immediate pandemic response, they will also be critical to delivering a sustainable path for recovery.

I have promised to be honest and transparent in my communications with you. In that spirit, I want you to know that while we don't have all of the answers or evidence yet, we are currently modelling scenarios that project a 30-55% decrease in revenue for the 2020/21 fiscal year. This could be the result of a significant drop in international enrolment, a potential decline in domestic enrolment or even the remote possibility that provincial grant funding to all post-secondary institutions could be reduced as governments look for ways to fuel the broader economic recovery effort.

Critical to our long-term financial health and well-being will be our ability to continue offering high calibre programs that underpin our reputation for excellence and an outstanding, student-centric experience. Simply put: in our 'new normal' -- which may necessitate distance learning for some time -- students will reject paying premium tuition for a sub-par learning experience.

In the days and weeks ahead, much of our efforts will focus on building a sustainable path forward, wherein all strategic investments will need to be explicitly tied to enrolment recovery (which includes recruitment, retention and learner satisfaction), expense avoidance or revenue generation. We must be prudent and disciplined.

As an immediate and uncomfortable first step, I am announcing today that we will be working with managers to schedule mandatory vacation for employees whose roles are currently underutilized due to technological limitations that limit their ability to work remotely. Our immediate focus will be on employees who are carrying large vacation balances. Managers can expect to hear more about this effort very soon from their HR business partners.

I appreciate that this will be met with some resistance. Our current vacation accruals are, however, a significant liability for Sheridan. Putting people who are currently under-engaged on vacation during this disruption will reduce the encumbrance. Further, whenever the physical distancing provisions lift, we'll need as many people back on campus as possible to fulfill our mission.

Colleagues: this pandemic continues to challenge us in unexpected ways and cause great hardship for people we care about. Please rest assured that our goal is to do what we can to maintain employment and income security for as many colleagues as possible, for as long as possible. You have always been there for us .... and Sheridan wants to be there for you.

If you or your family members are feeling stress or anxiety, please remember that there are supports available for you as a Sheridan employee. You can contact Sheridan's Employee and Family Assistance Provider, Morneau Shepell, 24/7/365 by calling 1-844-880-9142 or visiting [www.workhealthlife.com](http://www.workhealthlife.com)

As I've said in the past – this pandemic is bigger than any of us. It will take our collective resolve and capacity to navigate its challenges. As always, I am interested in hearing your feedback; please direct your questions and comments to [president@sheridancollege.ca](mailto:president@sheridancollege.ca)

Thank you for everything that you continue to do ensure that Sheridan is here for our learners, our community and each other.

Sincerely

Janet Morrison  
President and Vice Chancellor