

A message from Dr. Janet Morrison



Fear and Optimism for 2021

January 7, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

I can't help but start by acknowledging that we witnessed a shocking scene in the United States yesterday. It's a frightening reminder that we cannot take the peaceful transition of power for granted and that many people continue to be disenfranchised in our communities.

The fact that these events are taking place against the backdrop of other crises – the pandemic, its economic impact, and ongoing racial discrimination – may bring on increased anxiety. If you or your family need support, help is available 24/7 by calling 1-844-880-9142 or visiting workhealthlife.com. Sheridan employees can register for the mindfulness app Headspace for free by [visiting here.](#)

Today I'd like to focus on three updates:

- Student Orientation
- Spring/Summer Semester
- The Open Innovation Challenge

Student Orientation

[New student orientation](#) kicks off next Tuesday with program-specific orientation sessions running Wednesday and Thursday. Our faculty and staff have gone to great lengths to make these sessions engaging, fun, informative and useful. The sessions cover everything from schedules to financial aid and available support services.

Spring/Summer Semester

Planning is well underway for program delivery during the Spring/Summer 2021 semester. As we continue to monitor provincial and regional public health guidelines to stop the spread of COVID-19, we anticipate that **the majority of programs will continue to be offered remotely during the Spring/Summer 2021 semester.** Consistent with current practice, in-person instruction will be reserved for programs where experiential, hands-on learning is required to meet the learning outcomes of a particular course or program. Select accrediting bodies also require a specific number of in-person teaching and learning hours. In those limited instances, we will – of course -- follow strict guidelines for physical distancing and hygiene.

Sheridan's academic teams will make a **final decision about the delivery mode for Spring/Summer 2021 no later than the first week of February.** We appreciate that students are keen to have this finalized too; our timeline for decision making will be communicated to them in an email later this week.

The Open Innovation Challenge

I again want to encourage you to share the [Open Innovation Challenge](#) with your networks and consider participating yourself. The Inspiration Phase closes on January 29 and there are \$10,000 in prizes available during this stage.

The Reimagine Learning and Education in our Communities Challenge is an opportunity for anyone across Canada to share their experiences and ideas to address the question: **How might we collaborate within our communities to reimagine learning and education so that no one is left behind and all youth and adults can realize their full potential?**

I want to close by wishing you a very happy new year. For many, this is a time for reflection. Without question, we remain at an inflection point – one that requires all of us to step up and help find ways to address societal inequalities, amplify voices from underrepresented communities and drive change that builds resilient individuals and communities. Our shared level of fatigue is very real; I'm not so naïve to think it's anything close to what can be resolved by a short (though much appreciated!) closure. I genuinely hope, however, that you will continue to marshal the energy to think radically, lean in, and embrace new opportunities.

2020 was challenging, but I've been so proud of how our community rallied together to support our students, colleagues, and broader communities. My personal commitment is to embrace what we've learned and make 2021 one to celebrate.

Warmly,

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President and Vice Chancellor

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