

## A message from Dr. Janet Morrison



## Thinking Differently

**May 14, 2020**

Dear Colleagues,

As the week draws to a close – and we look forward to the first, and very well-deserved, long weekend of the upcoming summer season – I’m writing to share several efforts underway to help us re-imagine what a post-secondary education is going to look like in the future. In this update, I’ll cover:

- Galvanizing Education Hub
- Coffee chats
- The student mindset
- Upcoming events

### Galvanizing Education Hub

As you know, our Galvanizing Education Hub was tasked with contemplating promising models for enrolment innovation that are rooted in creativity and entrepreneurship. The team is centering its work in human centred design – a process that begins by understanding the people you are designing for and ends with innovative solutions that are tailor-made to meet their needs. Following a literature review of tools and best practices, an examination of what worked well – or didn’t – in

our pivot to remote delivery this March, as well as targeted stakeholder consultations, the group is penning its first set of recommendations (focused on short-term strategies, which will come to me next week.

The work of the taskforce is far from over. Stay tuned over the weeks ahead for a formal announcement requesting your input and ideas into the development of medium- and long-term efforts.

## Coffee Chats

As I hope that you've heard me say – repeatedly – I'm committed to open, honest, and transparent communication. To that end, I'd like to extend an open invitation to all of you to attend a virtual one-to-one 'coffee chat' with me. The sessions will be held in 15-minute increments, starting next week. To book a session in the first block of dates, please email [president@sheridancollege.ca](mailto:president@sheridancollege.ca). We will do our best to accommodate as many people as possible who express interest.

## The Student Mindset

Much of our efforts over the next few weeks hinges on understanding the needs, interests, apprehensions and expectations of our students – both new and returning. As you can well imagine, this is a pivotal step to communicating the value proposition of obtaining a post-secondary credential and more specifically, how a Sheridan education will prepare learners for an ever-changing, and increasingly complex world.

To that end, our colleagues in Institutional Research are undertaking surveys of prospective students and their parents in our catchment areas to gather data on their attitudes, concerns and intentions around pursuing postsecondary education this Fall. The information garnered through these surveys, as well as our review of broader public surveys conducted by research firms like Leger, Academica and many others, will inform our enrolment marketing strategy. We will continue to take an evidence-based approach to fueling enrolment recovery, which remains our number one priority.

## Upcoming Events

Across my 35 years as a learner and leader in the postsecondary sector, **Convocation** has always been a highlight. Few ceremonies hold as much significance for our students and their families. I know that you share my disappointment that the current circumstances preclude us from celebrating this milestone at the Living Arts Centre.

The Convocation team, however, is hard at work developing a virtual experience for our graduating students to recognize their achievements, as well as a special presentation of their credential to mark this pivotal moment in their educational journey. I will keep you apprised as the details become firm.

As public health directives that prevent mass public gatherings will likely continue for some time, I am also announcing that our signature **Welcome Back** event will be virtual this year. In keeping with tradition, we'll be holding the event on the Wednesday before Labour Day – September 2 – with the exact time to be confirmed. Despite not being able to gather in person, it will be a highly entertaining, informative and inspirational experience. Stay tuned for more details over the summer.

Colleagues: the last nine weeks have tested our patience and endurance. In the face of such challenging circumstances, Sheridan will continue to do what it can to create a sense of comfort, support and stability for our community. Please reach out if you need help – if you're not familiar with the many resources available to you, email me at [president@sheridancollege.ca](mailto:president@sheridancollege.ca).

I hope you'll find meaningful ways to rest and recharge this long weekend. I plan to spend it toiling in my garden (likely in the rain!), reflecting on the renewal and positive energy that comes with spring.

Warmly,

Janet Morrison  
President and Vice Chancellor

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