

A message from Dr. Janet Morrison



Fall Term

May 21, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Our pandemic response remains subject to significant volatility and external factors beyond our control. Today, I want to share some of the things we're doing to adjust and adapt, using the levers available to us. As always, our efforts and decisions are informed by evidence, including this recently released data:

- 57% of Canadians feel that their provincial government should maintain the pace of relaxing restrictions and returning to normal activities (Leger, May 11)
- 54% of Canadians are personally afraid of contracting the virus (Leger, May 11)
- 13% of Canadians indicate their mental health has been bad since the start of the pandemic (Leger, May 20)
- 50% of those surveyed are unwilling to be exposed to large crowds for the remainder of 2020 and 75% are unlikely to attend in-person conferences or trade shows (IBM Institute for Business Value, April 2020)

In this update, I'll cover:

- Start of Term
- Fall Events
- Protecting Your Safety
- Engagement and Belonging
- Resources for You

Start of Term

As previously announced, we are running a full suite of academic programming this fall. All programs that can be delivered remotely will continue in that format. In-person instruction will be reserved for courses with academic outcomes that cannot be measured or achieved virtually. Any on-campus activity will be delivered in ways that safeguard people's health and safety.

Sheridan's commitment to the scholarship of teaching and learning means that remote learning goes far beyond playing a recorded power point or the exclusive use of videoconferencing. While each program and course will approach alternate delivery differently, I've been privy to examples of professors using visualization, gamification, and virtual whiteboards. Others are discussing ideas for championing interactivity, dialogue, and guided projects to help students form meaningful connections.

Regardless of how our programs are delivered, the value proposition of attending Sheridan remains crystal clear; specifically, our commitment to academic quality and student success is unwavering, even in the face of a global pandemic.

To deliver on that promise and afford our academic colleagues, technicians, and facilities staff with additional time to prepare for the fall term – while balancing vacations – its start will be delayed by one week, **beginning on Monday, September 14**. We will preserve our fall reading week, and run a 13-week term, ending on December 18, 2020.

Fall Events

We all agree that a post-secondary experience extends far beyond the classroom. Students seek opportunities to foster connections outside their fields of study, which often happens through events. Following a recent announcement that our Welcome Back event will be held virtually on September 2, many have asked about other events.

Our ability to permit or sanction large gatherings of people – on or off campus – will be informed by public health directives and the Province of Ontario's roadmap for re-opening. While it's too early to predict where we will be in the fall, a decision has now been made to defer all large gatherings until the very final stage of that plan is actioned. Sheridan's own framework for re-opening also notes that visitors will be among the final target populations allowed back on campus.

Specifically, all planned events for the fall will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to understand the nature of the event, where they might be held, the intended size of the audience, and whether the space conditions could allow for proper safety measures to be upheld to reduce the risk of possible transmission. I am asking

might offer your event – no matter how small or large – remotely.

Protecting Your Safety

Like many of you, my mind is turning to what Sheridan will look and feel like when we are allowed to return to campus. Rest assured that our Emergency Operations Centre – which includes key leaders from Security, Occupational Health and Safety, Facilities, Ancillary Services and more – are actively planning for your return.

Included in their deliberations are efforts to:

- Determine the flow of people through buildings to avoid congestion.
- Order reusable masks for students and employees.
- Implement a schedule for enhanced cleaning and disinfection.
- Limit the use of shared objects and enforce a plan for cleaning between uses.
- Install signage that promotes measures to protect oneself and others.
- Be stringent on occupancy limits.
- Create well-defined plans for safety within and beyond classrooms, studios, labs and open spaces.

Engagement and Belonging

Our colleagues in Institutional Research and Planning will be launching an anonymous survey to all employees next week to better understand your opinions and perspectives -- about health and safety, mental health and well-being, remote work and employee engagement – in the wake of COVID-19. Please look out for your invitation to participate, which will be sent via email. The results will be reviewed in aggregate. We'll use the data to inform the design and redesign of services and supports that will effectively address your needs.

If you have not done so already, another way to stay informed, connected and engaged is by visiting our new intranet: [Sheridan Central](#). From the main Sheridan homepage, click on the Login icon in the top navigation bar, where the drop-down menu will provide a link to enter.

The portal facilitates access to college-wide news and announcements, engaging homepage polls, a virtual event listings, a digital marketplace, a rich people database, quick links, personalized content depending on audience type, and panels that prompt a user about actions to take depending on the stage of their journey at Sheridan. It's mobile friendly, searchable, and accessible.

Resources for You

You can also look to [Sheridan Central](#) for a list of the resources that have been

financial disruption. Our new Inclusive Communities webinars, links to workout videos from Sheridan Athletics, start of term essentials guides for faculty, and more are all archived here.

As always, thank you for your unwavering commitment to Sheridan and our learners.

Warmly,

Janet Morrison
President and Vice Chancellor

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