

A message from Carol Altia

Vice President, Student Experience and Enrolment Management and Interim Provost



Your Feedback; Our Future

October 9, 2020

Dear Sheridan Students,

It's not a stretch to say that the pandemic is having a profound effect on people's health, social well-being and economic stability. To help us better understand its impact on our learners, we've conducted several 'waves' of online surveys with different segments of students, so that we can take your 'pulse' and better tailor our actions.

Confidential surveys were released on June 26, July 17, August 12, September 25, October 2 and October 7. Here's a snapshot of your current thinking as a learning community, and some information about how we're responding.

The Results

Students report having the hardware and software they need for their studies.

- 97% have access to a computer/laptop
- 91% have the software they need
- 85% have access to reliable internet
- 47% need more information

Learning in a pandemic remains the top concern.

- 62% of domestic students want more information on what will happen if a second wave occurs and 56% are concerned about a second wave
- 58% of international students are worried about their ability to succeed in a remote learning environment
- ~42% of all students are worried about not being able to interact effectively with their classmates and ~38% are worried about the same with their professors

3 out of 5 learners are satisfied with how the term is going. The top drivers of dissatisfaction are technology, difficulty in interacting and teaching methods.

- 13% are having issues with connectivity, hardware, software
- 12% report feeling that it's harder now to interact with teachers/peers
- 9% report missing hands-on activities
- 9% feel the workload is too high
- 8% feel that online learning is hard
- 5% want a clearer grading scheme

Payment plans and the extended refund date had a positive influence.

- 73% were aware of the new payment plan option (tuition installments) and 40% said it had an influence on their decision to attend
- 72% were aware of the reduced enrolment deposit and 40% said it had an influence on their decision to attend
- 71% were aware of the extended refund deadline and 41% said it had an influence on their decision to attend.

Our Actions

In line with your feedback, we've undertaken a number of measures:

- Creating a loaner laptop program to provide access to hardware
- Investments in new technology to support online exams, lecturing through recording, video assignments, and a video capture platform for recording interactive lectures and demonstration videos
- Mobilizing 25 educators who specialize in adult learning to support professors in the conversion of their traditional courses for remote delivery
- Pioneering a Sheridan Start virtual workshop series this summer for new students to engage with professors and peers, gain confidence in the online learning environment, and strengthen foundational academic skills
- Embed the Learn Well program of virtual supports into 120 courses this fall, connecting students to tutoring, counselling and advising, and to virtual communities that provide regular interactions with upper-year Peer Assisted Learners, Mentors and access to online study halls
- Deployed new technology that allows us to send text notifications and reminders, and to respond to your questions
- Developing the 20-4-20/Athletics Double Blue initiative to foster student fitness and wellness through online classes, e-sports activity, virtual community building and preparing for the impending, gradual re-opening of our on-campus athletic facilities
- Offering remote counselling and nursing through video conferencing and phone, now further supplemented by the re-opening of our campus health centres
- Providing online tutoring, virtual academic skills workshops like exam crams, and creating library guides to support learning differently through the use of technology

The safety, health and well-being of our community is a top priority. Our planning continues to be informed by evidence and by directives from public health authorities. We are vigilant about monitoring conditions and planning contingencies. We are also committed to keeping up our practice of timely, multi-channel communication.

We fully recognize that post-secondary education is a significant investment. As always, we are working to find new and unique ways to be student-centric, enable your sense of connection, and provide you with the high-quality learning experience and tangible learning outcomes that our students have come to expect from Sheridan.

Sincerely,

Carol Altia, VP Student Experience and Enrolment Management and Interim Provost

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Sheridan

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