

A message from Ryan Piper

Vice President, Human Resources



Remote working update

February 25, 2021

Dear colleagues,

With news of COVID-19 vaccines in the media almost daily, I know that many in our community are wondering when we might return to campus. While we've previously informed employees that a return wouldn't happen prior to April, I'm announcing today that we do not anticipate a return to campus prior to September.

Therefore, those of us who have been working remotely can expect to do so until at least the end of the summer term.

The prospect of a campus return may still seem distant, but please be assured that preparations have begun and will intensify to ensure we are ready to return in the fall if it is safe to do so. The Emergency Operations Committee continues to meet regularly to plan and respond to pandemic developments and changes in public health guidelines.

Working from home has presented real challenges for everyone – including those who have had prior experience, such as some of our teaching faculty, and for those at Sheridan who have worked remotely for the first time as a result of the pandemic. Sheridan transitioned exceptionally well under difficult circumstances and the next several months give us an opportunity to further refine and learn from the experience.

I have heard from many around Sheridan that they miss in-person engagement with their colleagues but the flexibility to contribute from home has been positive and worth further exploration. That's why a Remote Working Taskforce has formed to develop supports and recommendations to bring the best elements with us into the future.

In the coming weeks, you'll be asked to comment on remote working including what has and hasn't worked, and what you would like to continue when campus access is unrestricted. Keep your eyes open for surveys, focus groups and other opportunities to provide your input. There are exciting opportunities in this new way of working and collaborating that could enhance the flexibility, innovation, interdisciplinary collaboration and wellness that we committed to in our strategic plan

The taskforce is focusing on positions whose duties are typically performed outside the classroom, or otherwise not directly engaged with bringing the curriculum to our students. Teaching and learning is also evolving through the pandemic experience, and Sheridan is also assessing the impact on teachers, technologists and others directly engaged in the classroom.

It may not seem like it some days, but we are soon going to emerge from this unwelcome and trying time in our lives. When we do, I think we'll find that we gained valuable wisdom to make lasting improvements to the employment experience, academic quality and student achievement. That collective goal has been a powerful rallying cry throughout the pandemic, and it continues to be a beacon as we move forward.

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