

## A message from Dr. Janet Morrison



### The only constant

**January 28, 2021**

Colleagues,

Today is Bell Let's Talk Day and – apparently! -- watching [Michael Buble](#) eat a bowl of potato chips will fuel a donation to mental health charities in Canada. If simply *eating* chips was a ticket to wellbeing ... I know a lot of people who'd be very happy!

But alas, we know it's not that simple. Every single person in my network – grandparents, parents, siblings, students, caregivers, educators, private-sector professionals – is struggling right now. If you're single, you're lonely. If you have children, you're exhausted from home-schooling. If you have elder-care responsibilities, you live in fear that you'll unknowingly transmit the virus. If you have to go to work, you're scared of infection. If you have to work from home, you're experiencing isolation.

A colleague I admire said yesterday that, "we're not in the same boat, but we are in the same storm." Truth is, it feels like a hurricane and – some days – the storm surge can be overwhelming.

And yet, even in this shared experience, the stigma of reaching out to talk or get help remains. Stigma is corrosive and can fuel the scourge of post-traumatic stress, intergenerational trauma, depression and anxiety -- conditions that hold people back from achieving their goals. The antidote, I think, is the cultivation of safe spaces – physical, virtual, emotional – that promote empathy, grace, and compassion.

In that context and coincident with Bell Let's Talk Day, I'm very pleased to talk about our wellness strategy and some exciting news that celebrates Sheridan's community and culture.

- Sheridan wellness
- Canada's Best Employers

#### Sheridan wellness

This week, we officially launched [Sheridan Wellness: Our Strategy for Community Well-Being](#). The Strategy is our roadmap for infusing wellness into all aspects of life at Sheridan -- from our policies and procedures, to learning environments and common spaces, activities, and support programs.

We know that attending post-secondary can be very challenging for students at the best of times. This year in particular, however, the pandemic is compounding mental health concerns and community wellness is of utmost concern. The key goals of the Strategy are as important as ever, and include:

- Embedding wellness principles throughout Sheridan's governance, policy and procedures, and creating key indicators to measure our progress
- Developing targeted wellness supports for people in our Sheridan community from equity-deserving groups
- Enhancing our physical, social, and virtual spaces to increase access, inclusion and a sense of belonging.

Our strategy also includes a commitment to the [Okanagan Charter](#), which calls upon post-secondary institutions to embed health into all aspects of campus culture.

#### Canada's Best Employers

Forbes Magazine released its annual ranking of Canada's Best Employers and I'm tremendously proud to share that Sheridan is 14th on the list of 300 -- higher than any other college, several large universities and ahead of Google and Microsoft. Of note, we catapulted 73 spots compared to our position of 87 on last year's ranking.

Forbes works with market research company Statista and the list is based on an independent, anonymous survey of 8,000 Canadian workers in businesses with more than 500 employees. Survey respondents were asked to rate how likely they would be to recommend their employer to others and also to recommend organizations other than their own.

It's been a year of upheaval and disruption; I know our employees and students continue to struggle. It's also been a year of reckonings. We've seen altruistic communities bond together to help neighbours in need, and abysmal organizational and systemic failures that can be attributed to injustice, a lack of fairness, respect, or transparency in decision making. Our leadership team and Faculties continue to change and evolve. Change is hard. Always.

In the face of all that, our people and teams keep leaning-in. Every day, you choose to invest your time, energy and expertise in unleashing human potential. This is what propelled our Forbes ranking. More importantly, our mission and shared sense of purpose will fuel Sheridan's aspirations and sustainability. Our individual and collective empathy, grace and compassion help too.

Warmly,

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