Sheridan

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October 5, 2021

REGION OF PEEL OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL CLERK

Thursday, September 16, 2021

To: Members, Peel Regional Council

REFERRAL TO
RECOMMENDED
DIRECTION REQUIRED
RECEIPT RECOMMENDED ✓

Re: Sheridan's Commitment to International Learners

On behalf of the Sheridan learning community, I'm writing in response to the delegation that was made on Thursday, September 9 at Regional Council regarding the challenges faced by international students across Peel.

This is a matter of great import to Sheridan. Our mission is to cultivate resourceful, highly skilled and creative people and communities through cross-pollinated, active learning and the relentless incubation of new ideas. None of that is possible when learners' basic needs go unmet: food, housing, personal safety, health and wellbeing.

My colleagues and I are painfully aware of students experiencing food and housing insecurity, illegal or harmful employment practices, and mental illness. These are realities that keep us up at night and that we work hard to address; they always compel us to do more.

Over recent years, we have responded to this imperative by developing and deploying evidence-based programming and services. To best meet the needs of our richly diverse community, much of this work has happened in partnership with community agencies whose mandates include the delivery of culturally competent mental health and addictions, employment and settlement services. This reflects Sheridan's commitments to radical engagement and collaboration; we know from experience that we can do more and achieve better outcomes when we work together.

By way of example, Sheridan convened a table of community partners three weeks ago on August 26, 2021. The meeting was designed to heighten awareness of our programming/services and ensure partners had avenues for effective referrals. Among others, representatives from Indus Community Services, Punjabi Community Health Services, Peel Police, and the Region of Peel were in attendance. The distributed slide deck (attached) included information on pre-arrival supports, immigration advising, academic advising, wellness and counselling, housing supports, and COVID protocols. Among the supports and services highlighted were virtual and on campus Counselling support with a diverse team of mental health professionals (for which there are no wait times) and 24/7 mental health support offered through "Keep Me Safe" – a program specifically designed for International students. Through our Student Union, Sheridan also offers free legal advice. The deck also included information about The Pardesi Project, a mental health promotion short film initiative aimed at addressing the unique mental health challenges for South Asian international students that was produced in collaboration with Sheridan, the Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health, and SOCH Mental Health. The deck concludes with a list of contacts for service providers.

The list of resources available to international students at Sheridan is expansive precisely because the challenges they face are complex and interconnected. I would be pleased to

Brampton | Mississauga | Oakville

The Sheridan College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning 1430 Trafalgar Road Oakville, Ontario L6H 2L1 T 905 845 9430

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provide a more expansive list of our work to lead the sector in providing international student supports, should Council find merit in hearing about our efforts. Sheridan is a learning community committed to reflection and organizational development; we can always do more, and do it more effectively. I wish to assure Councillors of the tremendous efforts and professionalism of the 3000+ faculty and staff I'm proud to lead. Each of us share a desire to provide the best possible experience for our learners, wherein they feel a strong sense of belonging and have the necessary supports to help them thrive.

As I hope that I have conveyed, a crisis this large and deep demands a holistic and collaborative response. I am confident the University of Toronto Mississauga and Algoma University – whose institutions were also named in discussions on Thursday - share our strong desire to fully support learners who we all have the privilege of serving.

Further, all invested parties must – in unison -- call on the federal government to address issues related to visa applications, immigration and federal permanent residency criteria; similarly, we must ask the Ontario government to enhance settlement services and modernize the post-secondary funding formula. Closer to home, expediting housing reform is crucial to addressing affordability, problematic vacancy rates, zoning restrictions, illegal lodging houses, and safety-related concerns about secondary dwellings.

The Sheridan learning community looks forward to working with you and other partners on this matter of great urgency. We all own this problem and each of us will contribute to solutions.

Sincerely,

Janet Morrison, PhD

Cc: Hazel McCallion, CM OOnt, Chancellor, Sheridan College Dr. Alexandra Gillespie, Principal, University of Toronto Mississauga Asima Vezima, President, Algoma University Janice Baker, CAO, Region of Peel

Supporting our Students Webinar

Thursday August 26, 2021 (12pm – 1:30pm) Presented By: Dawn Sweeney: Manager, Student Advisement Leah State: Manager, Wellness and Counselling Sunand Sharma: Associate Dean, Community Citizenship,

Student Leadership and Engagement





Welcome and Introductions



Information, Advice, and Support including COVID-19 Protocols

Supporting Our Students - Student Advisement

- One Door Approach: <u>askanadvisor@sheridancollege.ca</u>
- International Services and Supports: pre-arrival
 - Students are sent an updated checklist to prepare them for a more seamless integration after their arrival. This includes:
 - Getting Started: Quarantine and Pre-Arrival Checklist
 - Sheridan International Mobile App
 - International Students Virtual Community

Immigration Advising

- o International Student Advisors host weekly immigration workshops
- o Students may make an appointment with an International Student Advisor

Supporting Our Students - Student Advisement

COVID-19/Quarantine Plans

- Fall Semester with some on-campus and in-person services, supports and experiences while continuing to offer virtual support.
- Everyone who comes to campus must demonstrate that they are fully vaccinated, effective this fall.



How Sheridan is keeping our community safe on Campus

- Ventilation upgrades
- Mandatory screening for campus access
- COVID-19 Safety Training
- Vaccines
- Contact Tracing

- Cleaning & Disinfecting
- Capacity Limits
- Navigation signage
- Masks and PPE
- Managing positive cases

Wellness and Counselling

Supporting Our Students - Wellness and Counselling

- 20/21 Trends
- oAnxiety
- \circ Depression
- O Loneliness/isolation
- o Lower # of unique visitors; higher number of sessions
- Decreased no shows -> increased access due to virtual counselling

Supporting Our Students - Wellness and Counselling

Counselling: Supports and Services

- Virtual and on campus Counselling support with a diverse team of mental health professionals
- Groups: CBT; Worry group; Mood Routes; Thriving in Action; Face It; Global Connections
- Peer mentors; social groups; workshops
- Enhanced website resources
- 24/7 support via Empower Me and Keep Me Safe

Other Wellness Supports

- Athletics: virtual workouts (meditation, cardio, strength)
- Accessible Learning: 1: 1 appointments/accommodations; Learning Skills Workshops
- Care team

Health Centre

- Health teaching (sexual health, nutrition, stress management, etc.)
- Vaccine Clinic
- Covid FAQ site



Supporting Our Students - Mental Health Literacy

The Pardesi Project ہردیسی پروجیکٹ | परदेसी परियोजना | پردیسی پروجیکٹ

Spotlighting the Mental Health of South Asian International Students

The *Pardesi Project* is a mental health promotion short film initiative aimed at addressing the unique mental health challenges of South Asian international students.

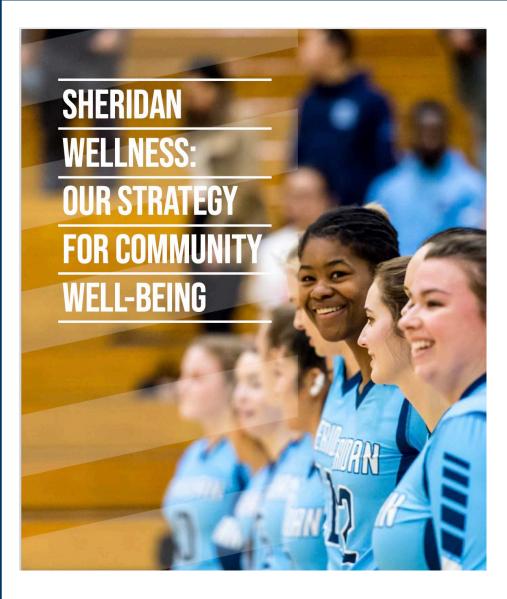
Produced in Collaboration



Sheridan



Supporting Our Students- Institutional Wellness



- Launch of Sheridan's Community Wellness Strategy
- Signing of the Okanagan Charter
- The creation of Sheridan's Wellness Committee
- Building capacity of the Sheridan Community to support student wellness proactively
- Implementing the National Standard of Canada for Mental-Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students in partnership with GTA college

Student Housing Support 14.1-13

Supporting Our Students - Student Housing Support

Increasing Access to Available Safe Housing Options:

Student Residence - 352 beds available at the Davis Campus

Place4students - Invested in an institutional partnership with one of the largest off-campus housing providers

- Sheridan Pays for landlords in Brampton to post listings for Free
- Built in screening process (By-law compliant)

Canada Homestay Network - One of the most reputable homestay companies in Canada

- International student placements with local families
- Comprehensive vetting and screening process (Criminal reference checks)

Region of Peel Pilot – Intergenerational Housing HomeShare Program Advisory Committee

• Matching students and seniors in Brampton, Mississauga and Caledon

Supporting Our Students - Student Housing Support

Housing Resources and Supports:

- Housing Ready sessions now **14 weeks** pre-arrival
- Dedicated free legal support for landlord/tenant concerns

- Resources include sublet support, roommate finders, housing checklists, housing guide, budget calculator, emergency housing resources

Community Citizenship and Safety

- Be a Good Neighbour Program by-law education and tenant rights and responsibilities
- Fire education CO2/smoke distribution
- Personal and housing safety resources

Want to get in touch?

Please refer students to <u>askanadvisor@sheridancollege.ca</u>

Connect with any of us for more questions:

Karen Lemoine, Director, Community Engagement & Stakeholder Relations <u>karen.lemoine@sheridancollege.ca</u>

Dawn Sweeney, Manager, Student Advisement dawn.sweeney@sheridancollege.ca

Leah State, Manager, Wellness and Counselling leah.state@sheridancollege.ca

Sunand Sharma, Associate Dean, Community Citizenship, Student Leadership and Engagement <u>sunand.sharma1@sheridancollege.ca</u>

Discussion and Questions? 14.1-17