

To the Brescia community,

Exam season is upon us and we are nearing the finish line of the academic year. After a challenging year of ups and downs, it is with great optimism that we are now looking forward to the 2021-2022 academic year.

We know that you have questions about the fall semester and what you can expect. At Brescia, we are known for our incredible, empowering and supportive student experience. Brescia's campus is a place of knowledge, hope, togetherness and endless possibilities. Understanding this, and in anticipation of our region and country recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic as vaccines become more accessible, Brescia is planning to return to a majority of in-person learning on campus and resume in-person support services and activities this fall.

What does "majority" mean at Brescia? Pending public health guidelines, Brescia plans to offer approximately 80% in-person learning and 20% virtual learning. This not only provides our campus with a greater degree of safety, but also ensures maximum flexibility and choice for our students. Additionally, it ensures that our students and faculty will not have to encounter dramatic shifts in course delivery, and can feel confident and prepared for the course path selected.

Our community knows that we have made decisions throughout the pandemic with a priority of keeping our students, staff and faculty safe. We will continue to follow all local and provincial guidelines to ensure our high standards and safety expectations are met. In this spirit, I will share with you the guiding principles developed, that will shape our fall 2021 plans. Making decisions grounded in these principles will allow for thoughtful, collaborative planning across all Brescia departments:

#### **Fall Planning 2021: Guiding Principles**

- 1) Prioritize the health, safety and well-being for our students, staff, faculty and campus partners
- 2) Ensure students can advance towards degree completion, as well as begin their studies – regardless of physical location
- 3) Provide a space where students, faculty and staff can learn, live and thrive as leaders

In the coming months, we will intentionally coordinate planning with every department across campus so that our collaborative approach will allow better focus and improved practices for all community members – regardless of the situation we encounter come fall. Our students are at the heart of our decisions and we will work tirelessly to ensure their needs are met.

This is why, as part of our plan, we are sharing details of what we know to be true, at this point in time, and what we are taking into consideration as plans move ahead. There is still a long road in front of us until September. At this time, we can confidently communicate the following:

**1. Fall/Winter Timetable & Registration:** The Brescia timetable will be released at the beginning of June, with the official date announced in the coming weeks following the release of Western's timetable. Registration dates for students are posted on [Brescia's Enrolment Services website](#).

**2. Course Delivery Options:** The majority of Brescia courses will be offered in-person, pending public health guidelines. Online courses will be offered in both synchronous and asynchronous formats.

Plans for in-person courses will remain in-person even if physical distancing requires adjustment. For example, this might follow a potential cohort model with some livestream technology to ensure we follow public safety guidelines. In-person courses will maintain content delivery at a specific time and place and **will not** offer online asynchronous accommodation so students should plan accordingly.

**3. International Student Supports:** We are closely monitoring travel limitations that will potentially affect our international students. Online course delivery options will ensure that our students will have the ability to pursue their studies – regardless of where they are living. We will also offer a suite of year 1 courses online, to support our international students or any other students who may face travel restrictions so they can begin their studies, on time.

**4. Technological Upgrades:** To ensure that courses listed as “in-person” will continue to run as planned, technological upgrades and modifications are being made to all Brescia classrooms and will allow for any physical distancing requirements that may extend through the fall (pending public health requirements).

**5. Clare Hall:** Brescia’s residence, Clare Hall, will remain open at full capacity for all students who choose to make this their home. The Clare Hall community has been fortunate to have a proven track record of maintaining a healthy, safe space and will continue to follow stringent policies while supporting student wellness.

**7. Library:** The Beryl Ivey Library plans to re-open for in-person services in the fall, in accordance with public health guidelines. All virtual services will continue throughout 2021-2022. As plans evolve over the coming months, the library will continue to post updates for the Brescia community on the Library’s [COVID-19: Changes to Library Services webpage](#).

**8. Writing Centre:** The Writing Centre plans to move forward with online services for the fall 2021 term to ensure services are accessible to all students. If in-person sessions become possible, plans will be shared with the community.

Rest assured, we are working diligently to resolve any unknowns at this time for the fall semester and will keep you informed as soon as we have more information.

The past year has opened up many conversations with our students and allowed us to fine tune our services based on what our students need. Based on student feedback we have received throughout the past year on both course and service delivery, we know that virtual appointments have offered our students increased flexibility in connecting with services, in real time, when they need it.

Our Student Life Centre, Academic Advising team and The Hive plan to continue virtual service delivery, along with in-person, to offer our students choice. This also gives students better access and flexibility on timing, locations and personal schedules.



We know that we cannot predict exactly what the future holds, and that there are many things to take into consideration as we plan for the fall. Vaccines continue to roll out across Ontario, at the same time as we are experiencing the “third wave.” While we remain hopeful for a strong return to campus this fall, it is important for us to continue to be realistic and modify our plans as needed. Our community has exercised a high degree of flexibility this year, responding to unique challenges in this ever-evolving journey. And, while it has not always been easy, we are proud of the resiliency and courage of our small, but mighty, community.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Counsel of St. Angela Merici states, “You will do more good by sweetness and kindness than by harsh and stern words.” Let us continue to reflect on our Ursuline values and spread kindness amongst our community, while we work together to plan for a successful 2021-2022 academic year.

We are all looking forward to the day that Brescia will be in a position to be together, in-person and enjoy the many interpersonal connections we thrive upon that support our bold community. In the interim, I will continue to update you as plans unfold. Thank you, as always, for your continued efforts and support.

Sincerely,

Cheryl, BSc, M.Ed.  
Interim Principal