

## STATEMENT OF APOLOGY

04 February 2019

Pearson College is committed to the safety and protection of our students and to the highest standards of integrity and accountability; yet there have been times in our past when we have not lived up to these commitments. Today, with humility and regret, we acknowledge there were instances of sexual misconduct at the College that took place in our past. We offer our heartfelt and sincere apology for the hurt and harm caused to those who suffered as a result of this behaviour. To those who have been affected, we are sorry.

We honour and respect all those who have spoken with us about their experiences. We have been working with and supporting survivors who have come forward, and we encourage anyone who wishes to contact us about their past experience to do so. We are determined to do everything we can to prevent any similar incidents now and in the future. With the guidance of survivors, and the support of the extended Pearson community, we will continue to implement measures to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our students.

In some instances, the College's response to concerns raised by Pearson students and community members was insufficient. We acknowledge how difficult this must have been for these students. We are grateful to all those who shared their views and experiences, and we commend their courage.

Pearson College was founded on the values of integrity, respect, compassion, action, personal example and responsibility. As we move forward together as a community, we renew our commitment to our core values.

### BACKGROUND

In August 2015, when Désirée McGraw officially assumed the role of President and Head of College, she was made aware of specific allegations of past sexual misconduct impacting some of our alumni. She immediately brought these allegations to the attention of the Board of Directors, and in the Fall of 2015 Pearson College engaged independent human rights expert, and now Justice of the Ontario Superior Court, Cynthia Petersen, to review all facets of the College's mandate, operations, policies and procedures related to student safety, health and wellness; and to invite anyone, including alumni, who had any concerns about past and current incidents or practices, to share these in complete confidence.

Some former students and other members of the Pearson community contacted Justice Petersen during this process. Others chose not to participate at the time, but later made confidential disclosures to Ms. McGraw.

Justice Petersen's findings revealed that, on specific occasions over the course of Pearson's history, some students experienced sexual abuse and harassment. Justice Petersen conducted her inquiries with complete independence and in strict confidentiality to

encourage alumni and others to come forward and to share their experiences. Those who came forward directly to the College received a similar assurance of confidentiality.

The College cannot disclose details of survivors' reports. However, we can confirm that none of those who spoke to Justice Petersen or the College requested that any action be taken on their behalf. Please be assured that no current employees or residents on campus were named in the reports we received. Above all else, we want our students – and the parents/guardians who have entrusted them to our care – to know that they are safe and have trusted people to whom they can turn.

TODAY

The College has implemented policies and procedures to provide robust protections for our current students. These are informed by what we have learned, and continue to learn, from the courageous individuals who stepped forward to tell us about their experiences.

We have taken many steps on this journey and have endeavoured to keep our community updated directly. Our Taking Our Responsibilities Seriously and Health, Wellness and Safety webpages provide comprehensive information on measures such as mandatory community safety and wellbeing training, consent education, mental health support and resource awareness as well as accreditation by the Council of International Schools to help ensure we maintain a respectful and meaningful culture of safety and wellness.

We also created the position of Special Advisor-Respectful Community, which reports directly to the President and Head of College. This position is a dedicated resource to assist any individual who wishes to inform the College, in confidence, of their experience and to seek support. The Advisor can be reached at [respect@pearsoncollege.ca](mailto:respect@pearsoncollege.ca).

The College will continue its work in support of survivors. We sincerely hope this Statement of Apology will set the path for a positive future.

Sincerely,



**THE HONOURABLE A. ANNE MCLELLAN, P.C., O.C., O.A.E.**

CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS,  
PEARSON COLLEGE UWC