



17 October 2020

Please Stand 3 Raccoons Apart...2020 on the Pearson Campus

"Please Stand 3 Raccoons Apart."

Or, 5 Gulls or 2 River Otters or 2 metres, depending on where you happen to be on the Pearson College UWC campus these (pandemic) days. (Personally, I'd give three raccoons a bit more than the standard COVID-19 metric, but you get the drift.)

As students arrived at the Metchosin campus on the unceded territory of the Sc'ianew (Beecher Bay) First Nation after a mandatory 14-day "Quarientation" downtown, they were greeted with banners and flags of welcome from Houseparents, air hugs from friends and a series of upgrades and modifications to buildings.

The upgrades included plenty of new signage, some of which utilized imagery inspired by our non-human residents and guests. To help guide and remind are interior and exterior signage for campus entry, exit and other directions for health and safety protocols in washrooms and high traffic areas.

Physical features to help reduce contact with surfaces such as automatic door openers at 10 high-use entrances (all Student Houses, the Max Bell Centre, Library, Dining Hall, Academic and Administration buildings), touchless faucets and hand sanitizer stations across campus and plexiglass installations in gathering areas such as the dining hall and library.

"The signage and renovations are part of the multi-layered actions outlined in our COVID-19 [Restart Plan](#) to help ensure we have a safe learning and living environment for our entire community," says Ty Pile, Vice-President, Operations and Administration.

"Along with adjusting to health and safety protocols, such as the wearing of masks and establishing residence house 'families' and room 'pods,' these signs are visible reminders of how vigilant we need to be during the coronavirus pandemic." He adds that all on and off-campus staff complete a daily health check with results recorded by the campus health centre before they begin the workday.

But, emphasizes Pile, these measures are also about how College students and residents are acting to minimize transmission of the coronavirus to Metchosin and the entire Capital Region. As of this writing in mid-October, no positive case of COVID-19 has been identified in the Pearson community of new and returned Canadian and international students.

“And we’re doing everything we can to keep it that way,” adds Pile. “At this time, and for the foreseeable future, Pearson students are not leaving campus at all, except for short excursions on the trails adjoining the College.

“If students are out with colleagues from their residence ‘family,’ they are permitted to go mask-less, but they must don masks and distance if they encounter others on a trail.”

Thanks to a robust Restart Plan, Pearson is what is known as [a Designated Learning Institution](#) (DLI) for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and the B.C. Ministry of Advanced Education purposes. As a DLI, Pearson can accept international students because it has demonstrated that it has a readiness plan that has been thoroughly reviewed by both federal and provincial administrations. This is important because it means international students who were previously denied entry to Canada because their study visas were not granted prior to 18 March 2020, can return to Pearson and other independent and post-secondary schools.

“This means we’re not quite at a full complement of about 200 students, but we will be closer by the end of the calendar year,” says Pile. As more students arrive, Canadian and international students alike will be entering a mandatory off-site quarantine before joining the campus community.

Until they arrive at campus, Pearson students have been virtual members of their respective class year communities through online teaching, learning and community-building activities.