

Message from the Dean

Detlev Zwick, PhD



Dear Students:

All of us are continuing to adjust and adapt to the new reality brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to support our students, we've taken a number of actions to help ease the challenges associated with remote learning as well as to cushion the financial impact caused by the pandemic.

The following are some of the steps we've taken during the past several months in response to student needs:

We've responded with increased financial support for students. Since March of this year, we've provided approximately \$210,000 in bursary support to 94 Schulich MBA and Master's students facing financial hardship as a result of COVID-19. These funds have been used to help cover costs associated with lost income and internships as a result of the pandemic.

As a result of continued student concerns regarding financial support, we will create more needs-based bursaries for students enrolled in the Fall semester through our Schulich **COVID-19 Bursary Fund**, and will provide an additional \$150,000 in funding support for students in financial need. The average level of bursary support per student is \$2,500.

We've responded by looking at ways to get our students back into the classroom as safely and as soon as possible. As most of you already know, York University last month announced that the entire 2020-2021 academic year will take place online, with the possibility for some coursework to take place in-person on campus. We understand the desire of students and faculty to return to the classroom. While the physical challenges posed by social distancing measures and other public health guidelines are significant, we are nevertheless working hard to get our building and classrooms ready for as much in-person teaching as possible. We are currently preparing an in-person teaching plan for the Winter semester that includes having an optional in-person teaching component for various courses in our MBA, IMBA and specialized Master's programs.

We've responded by investing more into teaching technologies that will enhance the remote learning experience. When the pandemic shutdown took place in mid-March, we acted quickly to switch from in-class study to remote learning using Schulich's technology platforms. Since then, we've made great strides in refining and adding to our teaching technologies and investing in our remote delivery capabilities. We've expanded the functionality of CANVAS, our Learning Management System, to better integrate Zoom for synchronous remote teaching, as well as Echo360, a video platform for recording and sharing lessons that support asynchronous teaching. And we've also added new staff to train faculty in the use and deployment of these remote teaching technologies.

We've responded by introducing greater flexibility in our programs and curriculum. In light of the pandemic and the move to a remote program delivery, we will offer an extended, tuition-free part-time semester option to all full-time

students who have started a Master's-level program in May or September 2020. For more information on how this may impact your study plan, please contact your academic advisor.

And we've responded by enhancing the services we provide to students through our Career Development Centre, Alumni Relations office and Student Services office:

1. Students looking for a job can engage with the Schulich Career Development Centre (CDC) in a number of ways, including booking a Zoom appointment with a CDC career advisor or participating in one of the CDC's weekly drop-in sessions with an advisor. In addition, the CDC will offer its services not only to current students but also recent graduates while they continue their job search. For more information, please visit: <https://schulich.yorku.ca/student-life-services/career-centre/>.
2. Our Alumni Relations and Development team has been providing presentations to incoming students about a wide range of alumni services for students with a special focus on our mentorship program. Also, last month students had an opportunity to meet with alumni mentors to enhance their communication and presentation skills while also expanding their professional network. Student clubs are also encouraged to contact the Alumni Relations Team to see if the club could benefit from engaging Schulich alumni as guest speakers or advisors.
For more details about services offered by our Alumni Relations office, please visit: <https://schulich.yorku.ca/alumni/alumni-services-for-students/>.
3. Our Student Services and International Relations team continues to offer daily advising appointments, information sessions and virtual Q&A drop-ins to help address student support need such as enrolment, advising, financial aid and international student assistance. Learn more about the services available to you by visiting: <http://gradblog.schulich.yorku.ca/updates-to-ssir-service-offerings/>.

While Schulich's administration, staff and faculty have been working around the clock these past six months to adjust to this new reality, our students have also been tremendously supportive in helping us make the best of what is a historically challenging situation.

Thank you for your continued understanding and support during these challenging times. We are all in this situation together. As a community we have already accomplished a great deal, but we cannot move ahead without your continued support and engagement.

Sincerely,
Detlev Zwick

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