

IN-HAS NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 18

SUMMER 2021



IN-HAS

Housing & Ancillary Services
Employee Newsletter

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Inside

- 3 Let's Chat: Housing Admissions Effectively Reaching and Communicating with our Students
- 4 Chef's Kitchen, Culinary Teaching and Development Centre
- 6 Converting Lambton Hall into a First-Year Residence
- 8 Excess Food Feeds Over 135 London Residents in Need
- 9 Your One-Stop Shop: Say Hello to Tech-Hub and Give a House Warming to Graphic Services
- 10 Boom to Bust to Virtual
- 12 Reinforcing Technology, People and Processes
- 14 "The Only Constant in Life is Change": Organizational Shifts in Residence Life

Calendar

August 15–18	International Early Arrival to Residence
September 3–6	Domestic Move-In
September 6–12	OWeek
October 20–22	Fall Convocation
November 1–7	Fall Study Break

IN-HAS Newsletter Committee

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Dear colleagues,

With the summer well underway, we have surpassed the one-year mark since the coronavirus eched our shared reality. The pandemic has firmly altered our daily lives and has left an imprint on our campus' culture that we will notice for many years to come. While our community, province and country have experienced devastating losses, there is light at the end of the tunnel.

As I write this, nearly **10.5M** people from Ontario have received at least one dose of an approved COVID-19 vaccine. **8.9M** people from Ontario are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, having received both required doses. These are extraordinary numbers and a remarkable demonstration of our collective impulse to come together to fight the virus.

As the University **announced on August 11**, part of Western's new COVID-19 vaccination policy will require all members of our community – including students, staff and faculty – who plan to be on campus this fall to demonstrate proof of vaccination. On campus, Western is operating a **Vaccination and Testing Centre** located in the Graphic Services Building. Our community members are strongly encouraged to **[book an appointment online](#)** for your first and second dose of vaccines.

Life may still not look and feel the way it did before the pandemic, but I sense better days are ahead of us. Certainly this is the outlook we enthusiastically await this coming fall when students, staff and faculty return to campus.

I continue to be inspired by the relentless optimism of our team members and I recognize there are many silver linings even to the events that caused the most disruption in our daily lives. Working from home for some of us has allowed us to spend more time with loved ones, and to find new ways to connect with those outside of our households. Others had the opportunity to try new roles and develop new skills, as our front-line staff supported the health and safety of our campus community. As a Division, we have been forced to innovate in search of new ways to help our community thrive. I for one have learned a great deal from this experience and am ever more confident in our abilities to offer world-class food and dining experiences, creative digital events, wrap-around care in residence, and adaptive retail services. Our flexibility and agility has been our strength, and our recovery depends on a commitment to taking care of each other.

In this issue, you will read about many recent accomplishments, as well as some exciting new ventures on the horizon.

Everything we have learned will allow us to be more nimble as a Division and as individuals. Thank you for your ongoing efforts and for never giving up. Here's to our next chapter on a path to bigger and better things.

Chris Alleyne
Associate Vice-President

Email, Phone Call, and now: Let's Chat

How Housing Admissions is Reaching Our Students

Kylie Wood

Occupancy and Data Management Coordinator, Housing Admissions



As a central information hub, Housing Admissions may be the first point of contact a student has with Western, introducing and welcoming them to our Mustang family. Even though the majority of calls and emails come in during the summer, we continue to be a constant connection, providing communication and support to our students and their families throughout the year.

We know that students are looking for quick response times and often interact with Housing over multiple channels. Moving over to a central inbox a few years ago made a significant difference in how we have been able to respond to inquiries promptly. Using a central inbox has provided all team members simultaneous access to emails sent and received, what has been read or unread, and what is currently being drafted. We can pick up where another team member has left off, and pull a student's email if needed, which provides additional context to a call and reduces the need to respond to the email. We have further improved our processes by categorizing our inbox, allowing team members to respond to inquiries consecutively by topic, reinforcing consistent messaging. We continue to find ways to respond efficiently and to communicate to our students over preferred channels.

This brings us to our newest endeavour! If we consider communication in alignment with a student's journey to Western, one route a new student may take to connect is visiting the "Welcome to Western" site. Housing Admissions has joined Undergraduate Recruitment and Admissions' Unibuddy Platform, alongside Western International and the Indigenous Student Centre. Unlike a central inbox, Unibuddy presents the opportunity for students to establish a meaningful connection prior to arriving on campus by connecting incoming students to student or staff ambassadors for a one-on-one chat. It's less like a live chat system, and more like receiving a text from a friend. Joining this platform meets the interest of establishing meaningful connections and quick response times, while also providing a Housing presence to our incoming students at an alternative point of entry.

Thus far, the communications we've received are similar to those that come through our central inbox. Since students are connected to an individual, often conversations can span a few days, as additional questions pop up. At this time, communications are beginning to taper off, but we can expect a resurgence when academic offers are sent out in early 2022. ●

Food for Thought

A photograph of two female chefs in a kitchen. They are wearing blue surgical masks, white aprons, and dark blue polo shirts. They are focused on preparing donuts on a metal tray. One chef is using a small container of red toppings to decorate a donut. The background shows a typical kitchen environment with stainless steel surfaces and equipment.

CHEF'S KITCHEN:
OUR CULINARY
TEACHING AND
DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

Jeffrey Bruyea
Acting Associate Director, Residence Dining



Food, in its primitive form, serves a utilitarian need—we consume carbohydrates, protein, fats and other nutrients to sustain life. Food consumption is a response to the body’s need for energy. But, are the food choices we make purely utilitarian? In my opinion, and experience—no. Many of us choose foods that comfort us, particularly within the context of time and place. We choose what we feel like eating.

Is there anything better than scoffing back a grease pie after a late night out, or the gastronomic delight of a voluptuous bowl of pasta Bolognese on a cold winter’s night? The food we eat evokes emotion, emotions that are heightened when we gather with friends to dine, laugh, talk, confide and indulge. Food also helps us through challenging times. Although I leave myself vulnerable to contrarians, food can soothe what ails. We find solitary comfort with indulging—a donut bursting with creaminess and exploding into a coma-inducing sweetness is, sometimes, what the doctor should order.

Food can also comfort our students who find themselves away from home for the first time, in a new city, or country and far from their familiar. Walking through a servery and hearing the sizzle of a smash burger, seeing the creamy cheese pull on a fresh tray of mac and cheese or the delicate aroma of miso broth cascading around ramen noodles while

eagerly awaiting slices of decadent pork belly and a sprinkle of crisp scallions should transcend the far from home to a familiar place. Enter the Chef’s Kitchen.

The Chef’s Kitchen, located at Ontario Hall, was conceived to provide a space for Hospitality Services staff to develop their culinary skills and a teaching space to share knowledge. Students come to us each year with a culinary history—their cuisine of choice—their comforts—all determined long before they cross the threshold of their residence. Historical food trends—the familiar comforts—and emerging trends, as injected into our collective tastes by social media, each demand culinary talent to produce.

The Chef’s Kitchen programming will allow Chef’s and culinary team members to learn, teach, and develop their culinary skills. The mission of the Culinary Training and Development Centre is to tap into the diverse knowledge and talent of the Hospitality Services teams, students, and the campus and greater community, to continuously develop an authentic and diverse culinary program—one that provides both comfort and adventure for our students. Very soon Residence Dining will carry on as the place that stimulates social connections—where students can gather to dine, laugh, talk, confide, indulge... and find comfort in the sweet hug of a decadent donut. It will be about time. ●

Lambton Hall has a New Roar!

CONVERTING LAMBTON HALL INTO A FIRST-YEAR RESIDENCE

Christopher Lengyell
Director of Housing

Work is well underway in the conversion of Lambton Hall from a university apartment into a first-year undergraduate residence. With our largest ever incoming class, this will bring Western's total number of residences to 10 to help fulfill our first-year residence guarantee. In Lambton, each suite will be fully furnished and accommodate two students, with a kitchen, living space, two single-occupancy bedrooms (with double beds) and one washroom. Recognizing there is no in-building dining hall, meal plans will be optional for Lambton residents which supports our effort to create more financially accessible housing options for students. For those who choose to opt into the



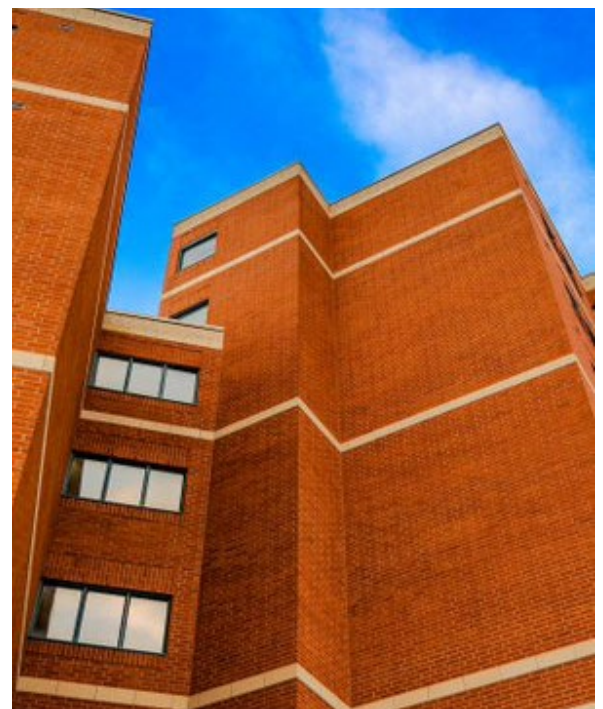


meal plan, they can dine in any one of our seven dining halls, including Saugeen-Maitland Hall, which is only a five minute walk away.

Renovations are taking place to ensure that amenities offered in other residences will also be available at Lambton Hall, including front desk services, floor lounges and rooms for laundry, exercise, studying and music practice. A comprehensive residence life program will ensure that Lambton students have the chance to be a part of the excellent residence experience that we're known for. A team of 10 Residence Staff will help build community and support transitional student needs while a Residents' Council and Residence Soph team have been successfully recruited as student leaders that look to put their mark on the exciting start of something new. The Lambton Lion mascot has also been introduced to help build the foundations of a strong building identity.

Built in 1992, Lambton Hall has a capacity of 280 beds. The building also houses our Hospitality Services whose offices are undergoing construction to provide renewed spaces for members of our team. While the building will be fully operational for the fall, some construction projects are phased over two years as we look to expand some facilities to best meet the needs of our students.

If you haven't had a chance to peek inside yourself, feel free to [explore our virtual tour](#) and join us as we welcome students to our newest residence in September. ●



Excess Food Feeds Over 135 London Residents in Need

Brittany Salter

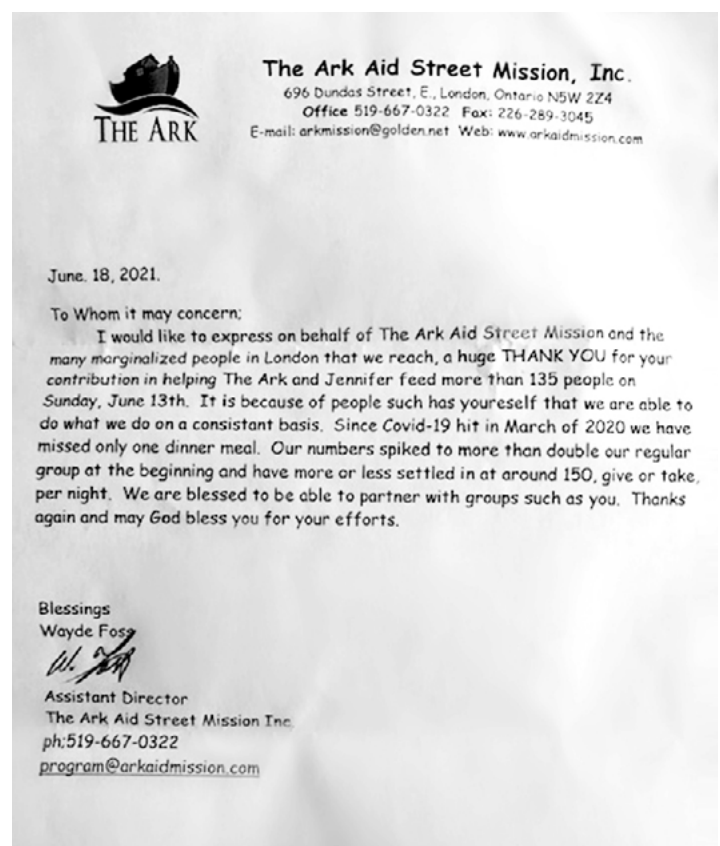
Digital Content Coordinator, Housing and Ancillary Services



Last year when the pandemic hit, due to limited operations and unexpected shutdowns, the freezers at Ivey Eatery had extra food in stock that needed to be used. The expiry dates loomed, and if the remaining food supplies were not cooked within a short time, they would go to waste. Lesley Cook and Marta Valovcik from Hospitality Services made the quick decision to call Ark Aid Street Mission. Ark Aid took those extra food supplies and turned them into meals for over 135 London locals in need.

Hospitality Services has worked with Ark Aid Street Mission in the past, supporting their goals to aid London residents with services to help people get back on their feet. This includes preparing a daily evening meal, which requires volunteer support and donations.

During the pandemic, the number of people going to Ark Aid for a meal more than doubled. So when they received the call from Western, the donation was highly appreciated. ●



Letter sent by Wayde Foss, Assistant Director of The Ark Aid Street Mission, expressing thanks to Hospitality Services.

Your One-Stop Shop

Say Hello to Tech Hub and Give a House Warming to Graphic Services

Stephen Cribar

Associate Director, Sales and Procurement, Retail Services

At the beginning of the summer, Western Retail Services executed two changes to assist with the desire for a smaller environmental footprint and to bring services closer together.

The first move was to incorporate the Campus Computer Store into the main Book Store. The Computer Store has been rebranded as the Tech Hub and is now located in the Book Store on the lower level. The same services and products are offered including computers, tech accessories, software, and hardware. Staff at the Tech Hub will also be able to process orders under the Employee Purchase Plan (EPP).

“We saw an opportunity to decrease our footprint, create synergies between the Book Store and the Computer Store while still maintaining all services and product offerings,” says Shawn Finkbeiner, Acting Director of Western Retail Services. “This move brings our retail operations under one roof and provides a

one-stop shopping experience for students, staff, faculty and the community.”

The second change involved moving Graphic Services production from the standalone building into the space recently vacated by the USC’s Creative Services on the second floor of the University Community Centre. Graphic Services will continue to offer a full menu of services such as colour and black and white printing, book binding, brochures, posters, graphic design and much more. Staff dedicated to graphic design and billing/quotes are now located in the Book Store.

“With Graphic Services now located in the centre of campus, we hope the campus community will be able to better utilize our services.” Finkbeiner says. “Ultimately, both moves bring our teams closer together, and utilize space in an economical way while making our service and product options more accessible.” ●

The logo for Tech Hub is displayed on a dark blue background. The words "tech hub" are written in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font. A purple circular graphic element is positioned behind the text, partially overlapping the letters "h" and "u".

tech hub



Boom to Bust to Virtual Events

Cliff Fielder

Conference Manager, Conference Services

The 2020 conference season was expected to be a boom year. Plans were well under way to welcome back many returning groups and introduce Western to many first-time visitors. As the scope of the pandemic became evident, our market was going to be severely affected for the foreseeable future.

The team (Patty, Mike, Brady and Cliff) realized that we needed to quickly adjust to offer a viable virtual events option, just like institutions across the country had adjusted to provide an alternate academic experience.

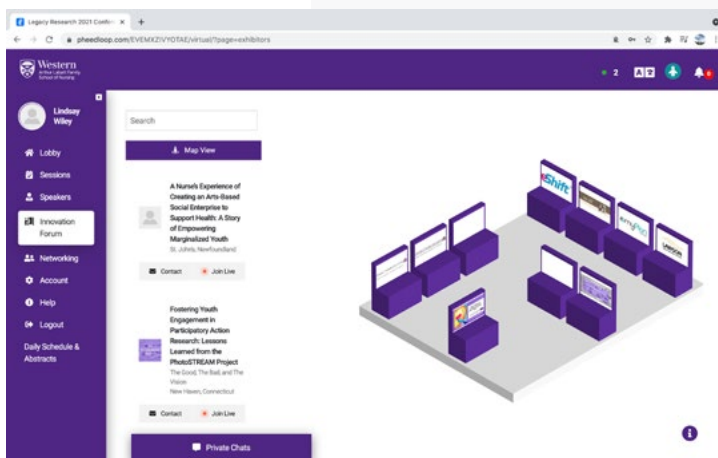
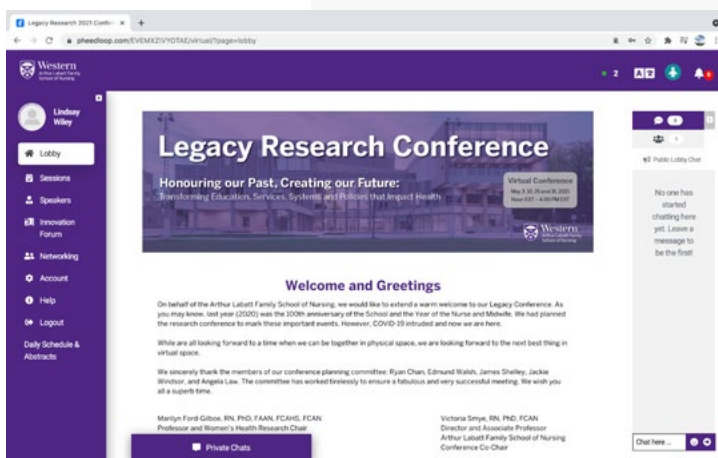
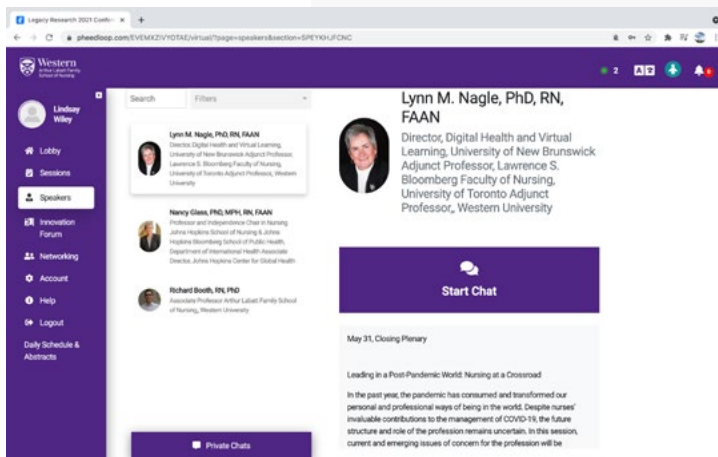
Where to begin? As we dove into the virtual world in search of a virtual event platform, we needed to learn an entirely new market, understand what options were available to us and what would work best at Western. We needed a platform that we could customize, integrate with our registration services and then be able to promote and sell.

We had more questions than answers, but we were all committed to exploring and determining solutions for

things like hosting multiple events at one time, recording and storing sessions, protecting the personal information of users, and finding a workable option for sponsors and exhibitors.

In talking with our counterparts at other Canadian universities, there were a select few embracing the opportunity the pandemic presented—we learned from their challenges and shared our own findings. After an extensive platform search and numerous platform demos and sales pitches, we collectively decided on Pheedloop as the best option for us. We were able to integrate our Western Zoom account and still support conference registration services through our own property management system.

In less than a year, we have learned a completely new platform, and can now offer clients virtual and hybrid conference experiences. In May, we hosted four multi-day events; The Department of Otolaryngology (Head & Neck Surgery), Legacy Research Conference (Health Sciences), International Student Symposium on Animal Behaviour and



Testimonials from event holders

“The platform looked great and was easy to navigate. We worried about tech issues, but your team was standing by and provided great support to everyone. Truly, we so appreciate how responsive your team has been to questions, requests, etc. It has been a real pleasure working with such wonderful professional group of people.”

**Marilyn Ford-Gilboe,
Legacy Virtual Conference**

“We really appreciated having your team work with us – it made for a great conference – and we will look forward to more interactions with WCS in the future.”

**Jamie Otolaryngology
Virtual Conference**

Cognition and a Mycology Conference (the study of fungi). SHAD Canada joined us again in July for a month-long virtual conference and the Ontario Horticultural Association partnered with us to host their 115th annual convention.

The ability to transition into the virtual world will not be short lived. A group is planning to host a hybrid conference in July 2023 at

Western and we will be there supporting our Western community. Check out our virtual events page on our Conference Services website (<https://conferences.uwo.ca/host-a-virtual-event>). Our HAS Marketing and HAS IT support has been invaluable and we wouldn't be where we are today without all of their support. Thank you all! ●



REINFORCING TECHNOLOGY, PEOPLE AND PROCESSES

Hosham Alimorad
Director, Information Technology, Housing &
Ancillary Services

To live up to our mission of being the technology solution provider to our division, HAS IT is strengthening our teams, focusing our technology selections, and streamlining our processes and communications.

Our reliance on technology has grown exponentially, as demonstrated throughout the pandemic. While utilizing technology as a communication tool, education platform or e-commerce and delivery system, consumers are leveraging technology for convenience and accessibility. The one-click shopping experience has become the norm, therefore, the HAS IT team must be prepared to support the ever-evolving needs of our division and customers (students, faculty, staff).

Strengthening the team

We've welcomed five new team members to the HAS IT group in the past year. These roles have been filled to account for attrition and amalgamation within both the Retail Services IT and HAS IT teams. We are in the process of recruiting two additional web developers to support the growth of our online (web and mobile) presence. HAS IT will continue to grow to adapt to meet the needs of our clients. As the demand for technology increases within our division, so does the need to make decisions on technologies that align with our long-term vision and create efficiencies.

Focusing our technology selection

We are looking to intentionally select technologies that will meet the needs of several stakeholders across multiple units. This is the difference between supporting, maintaining, and managing multiple systems/software that do the same thing, versus selecting systems and applications that achieve most of the division's needs (e.g. Live chat, or a staff scheduling application). Streamlining in these key areas will allow us to maximize our talents to focus on growth and innovation, rather than maintenance and support.

We aim to give our users more control using a content management system (CMS). By empowering and enabling our clients, our IT personnel will have more time for strategic priority projects. Unifying our web development processes will enable us to provide more dynamic applications/sites. We expect to be more nimble and adaptable to changes within the sector.

Streamlining processes and communications

Being a large project centre, improving the project intake process and communication with our stakeholders is paramount. We are in the process of implementing a ticketing system that will allow HAS IT to centrally manage all web/client support and network requests. This new medium will also be used to initiate divisional projects. Additionally, we plan to update the HAS IT website to make it more accessible. We will also build a knowledge repository to house training documentation, videos, and how-to guides for most technologies that the HAS IT team supports. The information will be updated regularly to empower our division to reference for quick resolutions to common issues.

Other areas of attention include the infrastructure support that exists for servers, data management/backups and residence internet and wireless support. These infrastructures must be front and centre in our planning and budgeting cycles, as the stakes are high and we need to ensure these systems are performing at their best as their performance directly impacts our students and division. The technology portfolio is large in both scale and scope. Working collaboratively with business units is critical to ensuring that we manage the projects and priorities of the division effectively. We are committed to collaborating with all units within the division to ensure that their needs are being met, and to identify areas for opportunities and growth. ●

connect IT

Connect-IT will be supporting 13 buildings and over 6,000 subscribers this fall. Previously named RezNet, this dedicated team has provided quality internet service since 1996.



“The only constant in life is change”

Organizational Shifts in Residence Life

Christopher Lengyell

Director of Housing



As we've seen throughout the last academic year, our division has the capacity to provide the decisive leadership needed to succeed in the face of significant change. Despite the priorities and variables that continue to shift around us, it's evident that we have the strengths and tools necessary to manage risk and maximize our success as an organization. In Residence Life, our success is largely driven by our ability to adapt and respond to the ever-evolving needs of students. Although our ability to navigate these changes has been largely successful, over the past few years we've continued to navigate cyclical and pervasive challenges.

With the aim of enhancing support for our students and student leaders and in an effort to adapt to the growing 24/7 nature of our work, we're making intentional and targeted adjustments to the organizational design of the Residence Life and Residence Conduct Teams.

Goals

Informed by internal assessment and aligned with institutional best practice, these structural shifts will

enhance role clarity, retention and results while ultimately driving positive change and necessary cultural shifts within our portfolio. Defined goals behind this include:

- Improving alignment with the Campus Housing Master Plan through the development of neighbourhood-specific functional area teams.
- Augmenting Residence Staff support through the provision of enhanced management, supervision and community development.
- Increasing capacity to provide restorative and developmental opportunities for students through our behaviour management process.
- Better retention and leadership development through expanded full-time continuing roles intended to minimize brain drain, preserve institutional knowledge, and promote career growth.

Process

For the last few years, our team has participated in regular strategic exercises with the intent of taking consultative approaches to our organizational design. Throughout this process, our approach has been driven by a series of sequential actions grounded in the ADKAR model of change management:

Change isn't always easy—and it's rarely perfect. So, as much as our change management strategy here has been driven by outcomes, it was important for us to take a process-oriented approach. To support this, we've engaged in regular strategic retreats, reflections, conversations, and debriefs. Much of this has informed the creation and evaluation of annual thematic goals and objectives and it's become evident that increased role clarity, collaboration and team engagement/development are integral to our success as a team.



Results

With the support of our colleagues in Human Resources, we've undertaken a significant review of the job descriptions and structures that define our work within the Residence Life Management Team (RLMT). This review has resulted in a number of structural changes, including:

- The conversion of the 'Residence Manager (RM)' role to 'Residence Life Coordinator (RLC)' with the intent of providing RLCs with more opportunities to focus on student leader support and community development. The objective here is to provide more role clarity and depth within the Residence Life portfolio.
- The conversion of the 'Residence Manager Specialist (RMS)' role to 'Residence Area Managers (RAM)' with the RAMs now providing direct supervision and support to the RLCs in each neighbourhood.
- The expansion of the 'Residence Conduct Coordinator (RCC)' team from 1 to 3. Reporting to Lisa Highgate, Associate Director, Residence Conduct & Conflict Resolution, these neighbourhood-specific roles will focus on behaviour management and increasingly restorative and developmental conduct outcomes for students.

Ahead for us is the ongoing recruitment for the vacancies within these changes on our team. Although we've been successful in driving some of these shifts within our

team—it is important for us to remain equally focused on the ways that we will gather feedback and course correct along the way. This focus will ensure that we can measure our impact, celebrate our successes and sustain these changes. To support this, we've established a committee with representation from across the RLMT to engage in the ongoing process of review and meaningful evaluation of these changes. Additionally, we're working with our colleagues in the Talent, Learning & Engagement Team to facilitate a We Act Team Strategy Session and pulse survey facilitated by Metrics@Work to ensure our actions are informed and driven by the ongoing needs of our team.

Over the course of the coming weeks, we'll be sure to share regular updates about the recruitment and placements for members of our team as they come together. We'll also share updated workflows regarding which members of our team are best situated to reach out to and collaborate with based on our evolved roles.

As we approached the 2021-22 planning cycle, it was challenging but important to shift our focus from the urgent aspects of our work that have dominated our attention over the last year towards important long-term and strategic objectives. We're thankful for the voices, insights, feedback and support from within the RLMT and senior leadership as we've worked to move these changes along. We're looking forward to what we're going to be able to achieve with these structures in place and are hopeful that these shifts will further our ability to create a supportive, inclusive community for students to live, learn, and thrive. ●

