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RETURNING TO CAMPUS WITH SOME CAVEATS

by Brian Geary, Pearson College UWC

As I write this in mid-January, we are in the midst of *gradually* welcoming Pearson students back to campus for the spring term after their well-earned respite during the annual Winter Break!

Why gradually? Well, with 200 students returning from around the world, across Canada and from local homestays (thank you, Host Family volunteers, again!) and the Omicron COVID variant chasing them – and everyone else -- we are being as cautious as we can by, among other measures, spreading student arrivals over a longer period.

This allows us to set up a limited rapid test regime* for returning students (and staff and faculty) on campus and ensure that all students comply with applicable federal regulations regarding testing and self-isolation for travellers, which vary depending upon their individual situations. For instance, while all Pearson students were fully vaccinated before they left in December to see family and friends, those returning from international destinations (except the U.S.) are required to isolate until they receive a negative test result upon their return.

While managing the ever-evolving rules and protocols of the pandemic during Omicron, one thing remains the same. Our campus is still closed to non-essential visitors – including pass-through hikers/walkers and boaters, please!

For a temporary period, we are moving to online learning and teaching, asking our students not to venture off campus and minimizing our employee numbers on campus at any one time. Across campus, we are temporarily limiting interactions between students in different residence houses and re-instituting staggered dining and, in some cases, introducing residence in-house dining. Physical activities -- essential for ongoing good mental health – are on but with House rotation schedules in effect.

On campus, our Health Centre and Operations team, have, as a precaution, and as required by the provincial authorities, designated a number of on-campus self-isolation areas to accommodate any student who tests positive during the term while continuing to support their health, wellness and academic needs. Obviously, we hope these are not needed!

All of these measures were carefully considered by the Covid-19 Response and Operations working groups, which include student representatives.

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**As you may have heard, the B.C. government is making rapid tests available to schools, like Pearson, that fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development. Publication deadlines mean that some measures noted may have been revised. Please check with us if you have any questions!*

About Pearson College UWC

Founded as Lester B. Pearson United World College of the Pacific (Canada) and located along Pedder Bay on the unceded territory of the Sc'ianew (Beecher Bay) First Nation.

Pearson's mission is "to make education a force to unite people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future" through a two-year pre-university (equivalent to grades 12 & 13) school for up to 200 students aged 16 to 19 selected from up to 160 countries and across Canada offering the International Baccalauréat Diploma Program. This year, about 80% attend on full or partial scholarships. Nearly 4,300 students have graduated from Pearson, including 14 who have gone on to become Rhodes Scholars.

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