

Strategic Planning Kick-Off Address January 14, 2019

Fleming College: Stepping Up and Standing Out

Good morning and welcome. Thank you so much for being here today.

I would like to start by first respectfully acknowledging that we are holding this event on the traditional lands of the Anishnabee and Mississauga peoples. We offer our gratitude to our First Nations for their care and teachings about our earth and our relations.

Thank you for taking time from your day to join us this morning. I am pleased to have our staff and students join us along with members of our Board of Governors. We are broadcasting this event to our campuses in Cobourg, Haliburton and Lindsay.

I am particularly thrilled to have our external guests from various sectors in our economy and different service organizations. Thank you for taking valuable time away from your businesses and services to join us here this morning.

For those organizational folks that cannot be here, you will have every opportunity to participate in this important conversation. We need your voice.

I am also excited to be accompanied by my co-chair, Jason Jackson, and my entire team who have worked tirelessly to pull this together.

Today we are launching our new strategic planning process and on-screen you will see our agenda.

We will cover off how the process unfolds, how you can participate and introduce you to our team. I will share some of my thoughts as we begin this process.

I am also excited to make some important announcements about our upcoming Fleming College Thought Leaders Speaker Series that we will launch as part of our planning process.

To start, I would like to introduce you to Dan Marinigh, the Chair of the Fleming College Board of Governors. Dan is a very busy and accomplished man, and I have learned is a very creative thinker.

At the same time that he offers his leadership to Fleming, he is also the Chief Administrative Officer and Secretary Treasurer of the Otonabee Region Conservation Authority.

I, along with my team, want to thank Dan for his support and leadership, and we look forward to working together on this process.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dan Marinigh.

Thank you Dan, we look forward to working with the Board to guide us through the process.

Since my start at Fleming in August, I have had the opportunity to visit all the campuses and really talk to a great number of stakeholders. There is more to share on that.

Reflecting on what I have heard since joining Fleming, I have chosen the theme ***Stepping Up and Standing Out*** for our planning process.

Stepping Up reflects my belief that we have a lot of untapped capability and opportunity at Fleming, and a strong willingness to change. We, together through this process, need to define how we are going to Step Up and leverage our capabilities to unlock new opportunities and leverage change.

Standing Out to me means that we need a new strategy that purposefully and definitively sets Fleming in a new light. One that puts Fleming on the map as an exemplary community college producing premium quality graduates.

I would like to share some of my early observations and how they can relate to *Stepping Up*.

I see opportunities to step up and more effectively serve our communities as a true economic development partner.

I see the need to step up and better serve our labour market needs, both regionally and nationally, ensuring our graduates have both technical and soft skills needed for jobs today and in the future.

Perhaps more importantly, providing industry with the talent that they are looking for in a dynamic and real-time fashion.

And that is not something we can do by ourselves. We need to work in true partnership with businesses and other educational institutions across the range of primary, secondary, postsecondary and private sectors.

Fleming can be the “first mover” in programming and student support. We can stand out. For example, we have a world-class applied research department and have already developed some considerable capacity. I believe and know that we can stand out.

When our government, our funders, are looking to pilot new initiatives, I want them to think of Fleming first. In a future state, our reputation will be such that we will be sought out as a preferred partner.

I know we will hear a lot though this process about how to serve students better. I look forward to hearing ideas about how we can not only be better, but be great.

In my experience, while there has been progress, true diversity and inclusion remains an elusive goal in many organizations. This is not just a challenge for smaller communities. Many organizations, like the one that Dan and I both worked in, the Ontario Public Service of 65,000 employees, are still challenged by this. It is evident that there is still much work to be done.

You have heard me say many times that we must figure out how to address the systemic issues that hold us back on this important matter. We must truly carve the path integrating Indigenous knowledge and experience into our curriculum authentically.

I want to hear from you. We need to hear from you. How can we make substantial progress, not incremental progress. How do we get there? We need your ideas.

When thinking about our own employees, I think we need to step up and invest more in professional development and new learning opportunities. Especially if we are going to be role models in lifelong learning for our students. When budgeting gets tough, we need to be tough and invest in people. I would like to hear what our employees think on this front and how we can tackle this issue.

Lastly, in terms of stepping up, I think Fleming can be a leader in partnership solutions on issues like housing. It is a critical issue in our communities, particularly in Peterborough and Haliburton. How can we work with communities to improve issues as big and important as housing? The only way to accomplish these goals is to work with community, industry partners and all levels of government.

In terms of the second component of our theme *Standing Out*, I would also like to share a few thoughts.

We have some real gems in our portfolio of programs, so how do we accelerate their growth and prosperity? How do we leverage our successful program clusters and how do we develop new ones?

Regardless of location or academic focus, I want all Fleming graduates to be known as something special, the preferred graduate, highly sought after prospective employees.

At the same time, we cannot be all things to all people. We will need to pick our space in the market and take informed risks to be great in our chosen segments.

As we experience future success, I want us to do a better job of showcasing our success, not just to Peterborough, not just to Ontario, not just to Canada, but to the world.

I have spoken before about my strong belief that we can do a better job of supporting our Indigenous communities. We have made progress, but to truly Stand Out, we can do more and in my opinion, we are obliged to do more, much more. I look forward to hearing your input on that.

Those are some of my very preliminary thoughts based on my observations so far. I expect that this list will grow tenfold in the coming weeks, and I hope to hear some fresh perspectives on what we need to do to take Fleming to the next level.

To do this, we need your help, we need your input.

I would like to take a minute to introduce you to many of the team members who will be driving this process for us.

First, I would like to ask our Steering Committee members to stand. We are fortunate to have participation and representation from all campuses, from students and from all employee groups and from our unions.

I am especially thankful to our external committee members.

Rhonda Keenan, President and CEO of the Peterborough & Kawartha Economic Development Corporation and Rhonda Barnet, President & COO at Steelworks Design Inc.

We are also fortunate to have as our key external advisor, Bonnie Patterson, who many of you will know as the past President of Trent University and Council of Ontario Universities.

And as our session facilitator, Erik Lockhart, Associate Director of the Queen's Executive Decision Centre.

Thank you to everyone who has Stepped Up, we all look forward to working together and producing a fantastic plan on behalf of the college and our communities.

The last thing I am going to do today is make a special announcement.

I am excited to announce that, in conjunction with our strategic planning process, we are launching our new Fleming College Thought Leaders Speaker Series.

We are going to announce further details soon, but Ken Steele will be our first speaker on January 25. More than 25,000 higher education professionals across Canada and the U.S. have come to rely on Ken Steele as a definitive source of breaking news, bright ideas and insight into student trends, technological innovation, strategic planning, branding and recruitment marketing. He has consulted with hundreds of colleges and universities, helping them interpret market research, understand their competitive context, and develop distinctive institutional strategies and brand positions.

In February, we will welcome one of the most highly regarded leaders in postsecondary education in Canada, Sheldon Levy.

Sheldon is currently the CEO of NEXT Canada, a non-profit that aims to develop Canada's next generation of entrepreneurs.

He has held prior roles as the President of Ryerson University and Sheridan College. He was also the Deputy Minister of Colleges, Training and Universities from 2016 to 2017.

Sheldon was the driving force behind the creation of the Digital Media Zone at Ryerson, known as a transformative organization in entrepreneurship and business success support. For hockey fans, also as the Ryerson president, Sheldon purchased Maple Leaf

Gardens, creating a truly unique campus feature for the university and downtown Toronto.

We are certain that this series of thought leaders will spark ideas and create discussions that help identify opportunities that we can apply to our plans to shape the future of Fleming.

Stay tuned for more details and for announcements on the next speakers in our exciting new series.

Please tell your friends, your family and your community, we want as many people as possible to benefit from these inspiring leaders. We want creative juices flowing, so what better way to get fired up.

Now I would like to introduce my Co-Chair for the strategic planning process, Jason Jackson. Jason is the Chair of our School of Trades of Technology. He brings a spark, an undying enthusiasm and great thoughtfulness to his role here at Fleming and has helped lead the transformation of our trades and technology school. We look forward to his insight and his ideas as we move ahead.

Please help me welcome Jason.

Closing remarks

Thank you to everyone who has come today. We really appreciate your support.

If I leave you with one request, it is this: think about what success would look like for Fleming in 2025.

Then tell us about it. Go to our website, attend a session or simply write to us. Tell us what you think. Tell us what we need to do to help Fleming and our communities thrive and prosper.

Thank you.

*Maureen Adamson
President, Fleming College*