



Alumni and
Development

**Southern Alberta
Institute of Technology**
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Director's update to alumni

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As I write to you from home on my laptop, I'm struck by this fact: never before have so many of us shared the same experience at the same time world-wide — by the irony that the experience itself is isolation. But you and I can take comfort and pride in knowing we share another experience — we're all members of the SAIT family.

I'm uniquely fortunate that my job provides me with connections to so many SAIT alumni. You are everywhere in this province's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, one of the most public people on the frontlines is Tom Sampson, EMTP '85, chief of the Calgary Emergency Management Agency and SAIT's 2015 Distinguished Alumnus. He's in the news daily.

Also in the news are instructors such as Andrew Hewson from the School of Hospitality and Tourism. He spoke about how, as soon as classes were suspended, SAIT's culinary program donated its supply of 10,000 lbs. of fresh food to Calgary's Leftovers Foundation.

But today my thoughts are with the respiratory therapists, medical lab technicians, paramedics and other health care professionals working in the front-line battle to keep us healthy. I think of the plumbers, water treatment operators, and electricians who are making sure water is running and furnaces are working in our homes. And behind the scenes, there are alumni in supply chain, customer service, digital technology and countless other areas of infrastructure invisible to many of us, doing the work that keeps food delivered, lights on and computer networks up and running. Everywhere across Calgary, Alberta and Canada, I see SAIT alumni making crucial contributions to our communities.

I marvel at the strong and creative response by SAIT's executive and instructors, who have managed to pivot and get curriculum online for students. The transition from classroom to total online delivery was made quickly and efficiently, ensuring students can complete their programs wherever possible.

Last week I walked across our empty campus and I know I wasn't alone in thinking of all the SAIT students now studying from remote locations. I can't help but wonder about their experiences. We know they will emerge with the best possible SAIT education and with the technical knowledge and skills they need. But so much is uncertain — I know many students are worried about how they will pay rent or buy food for themselves and their families. Worried about their own health and the health and well-being of family members, whether nearby or far away. What will the world and the economy they graduate into look like? At this point, we simply don't know.

What I do know is that today's students will join our current alumni family as the backbone of the response to this pandemic, and will step up to help strengthen and support our city. I also know the Alumni and Development team, instructors and executives at SAIT are standing strong together — while still a safe social distance of two metres apart! — to see this current situation through.

It is yet another chapter in SAIT's 104-year history, and Alumni and Development is working to do our part. Stay tuned over the next few days and weeks as we roll out several strategies – first in support of SAIT students who are working through immediate challenges, and then in support of all alumni through enrichment and engagement programming on our digital platforms.

The world as we know it is changing rapidly before our eyes, and you – as a member of the SAIT alumni family – are essential to daily life no matter where you live and work. I want to extend my personal best wishes to you and your loved ones for well-being, good health and safety. We are in this — and we will get through this — together.

Take care of yourselves and each other,

Brian Bowman

Director, Alumni and Development