

MISSA at Shawnigan 2022 Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why is MISSA moving to Shawnigan Lake School (Shawnigan)?

The Board of Directors of MISSA is responsible for implementing its strategic plan. The most recent three year strategic plan (2019 – 2022), identified a number of goals including increasing the diversity of artistic expression, broadening student demographics, diversifying funding streams (online and face-to-face programs), and implementing policies and practices that strengthen the organizations financial situation. Additionally in 2020, we engaged our community in a Challenge Dialogue (a survey to instructors, students, board members, staff, alumni and supporters) to better understand the priorities of students and faculty and what should be the future direction of MISSA. The results highlighted how they would like to see MISSA evolve over the next few years and into the future. More online courses, expanded programming beyond a once yearly summer program, and more diverse participant demographics were among the areas identified. The Shawnigan Lake School campus and facilities allows us to pursue all of those. The school is well resourced and can easily accommodate online learning and they are interested in co-marketing our programs to a broader demographic.

2. Who made the decision to move?

After several special Board meetings, in-person visits to the campus, followed by more discussions with the Shawnigan faculty and staff, the entire MISSA Board of Directors voted to move the MISSA 2022 summer program to Shawnigan.

3. Why now?

MISSA has been significantly impacted by COVID-19. We have not been able to hold our in-person summer program for two years and as such have had no revenue since 2019. At the same time, staff and administrative costs have had to be paid, all of which means we are in a precarious financial position as of late 2021. Throughout this challenging period, the Board has given a lot of thought about how to proceed in the face of financial uncertainty and what has to happen immediately if MISSA is to remain economically viable now and into the future. So, after a hiatus of two years, we feel now is the right time to make a move to a bigger, more diverse and better-resourced location and organization.

We've been interested in holding MISSA at the Shawnigan campus and a number of Board members toured the campus a number of years ago.

4. What was the decision based on?

The decision was based on evaluating an extensive list of mandatory and preferred criteria. Cost, accessibility to and around the site, transportation options and accommodation were the main ones. We did a thorough comparison in preparation for making our decision. We discussed our needs and goals with a dozen or more faculty and staff at Shawnigan and were more than satisfied with the results.

5. What are the benefits of having MISSA at Shawnigan?

There are many. Shawnigan has:

- a large and expansive site (300 acres)
- more diverse art/media facilities
- improved accommodations
- more amenities
- a well-resourced events department
- support at all levels of the organization from the head master through to the faculty and art program staff
- strong operational support
- available calendar timetable

Finally, MISSA will work with a partner who's interested in bringing their own art program (Art 360) to a larger community.

6. Did COVID-19 have anything to do with this decision?

Indirectly, COVID-19 gave MISSA the opportunity to regroup after two cancelled summer programs.

7. What other places did you consider?

Considering the wide range of criteria MISSA requires to run its summer program, we considered several other venues, however none of them could deliver everything we need.

8. What were some of the concerns with the Pearson College location?

The Pearson College location is beautiful. The facilities, however, lack a number of key attributes we need to move forward in 2022 and beyond. The accommodation facilities are less than ideal (i.e. 4 beds to a room

and a shared bathroom), there are accessibility issues on the campus and classroom technology does not meet our needs. MISSA has outgrown the amount of space and the availability of amenities necessary to move MISSA forward. While the Pearson site on the ocean is desirable, Shawnigan Lake School campus is beautiful in its own way, adjacent to a 7 km lake, easy access to forested trails, and minutes away from the ocean in Saanich Inlet. That said there may be opportunities to hold some events at Pearson in the future when students are on academic breaks.

9. When will this take effect?

MISSA at Shawnigan will be held in July/August, 2022.

10. How will this affect perennial MISSA students?

We hope that students and faculty will see and feel the benefits of MISSA at Shawnigan. We know that students and faculty enjoyed the setting at Pearson, and while they may miss that location at first, we think they will come to embrace everything the Shawnigan campus has to offer.

11. Do you think changing the location will reduce the number of students who will participate in the summer program?

On balance, probably not. Some, of course, may choose to not attend. We can't forget, however, that the location is only one part of the MISSA Magic. Shawnigan has the potential to attract a whole new age demographic as well as those located in the mid and north Island and the Gulf Islands, as well as our regular participants from Alberta, Washington State and other areas.

12. Did Pearson ask MISSA to leave?

No.

13. What about transportation to Shawnigan? Will that be an added cost?

There is ample parking on the Shawnigan campus for MISSA participants who choose to bring their own vehicle or car pool. Alternatively, Shawnigan has a fleet of 7 passenger vans and larger passenger buses that are available for a reasonable fee.

14. What about getting around on Shawnigan's campus. Will there be access for those with mobility issues?

There are easily accessible paths around campus and most buildings have elevators. In addition, Shawnigan has golf carts that can be rented on a short-term basis for those with mobility issues.

15. Will costs for courses and accommodation increase?

We could face a slight increase in course fees and accommodation for MISSA 2022 regardless of where it is held. Fixed costs such as air transportation, instructor fees, food, fuel, hotel taxes etc. have increased since 2019 and the onset of the global pandemic. We will do everything we can to keep costs down and deliver our programs at a competitive rate.

16. What will it cost to move MISSA to Shawnigan?

At this time we don't have an exact figure for moving the MISSA office and materials and equipment to Shawnigan.

17. Does Shawnigan have experience with hosting an art summer school program?

Shawnigan has experience hosting a wide range of events on their campus including corporate, sports, language, wedding and kids events. Their events staff are knowledgeable and experienced and they are backed by full departments to handle the details. In addition, they are committed to increasing their offerings of art related programming so we're very confident after meeting with them, that they will do their utmost to host a successful MISSA summer program.

18. How does the Shawnigan campus compare to Pearson College's?

The Shawnigan campus is about four times larger (300 acres) than Pearson with updated buildings, facilities and amenities including a larger dining hall and varied accommodations. The campus is located adjacent to Shawnigan Lake, with numerous access points to the 7 km long lake. There are forested trails around the campus and the school is close to a small village with retail shops.

20. What other amenities will be available on site at Shawnigan during MISSA?

A yoga studio, canoe and kayak rentals, a gym, and squash courts.

21. Will MISSA offer different courses in the new location?

The availability of new resources will allow for an expansion in workshop offerings to include the possibility of culinary arts, music (both performance and recording), theatre arts and digital arts. It is also our intention to develop a mix of online and face-to-face courses including recorded on-demand content that can be accessed any time.

24. What about camping facilities nearby?

There are a number of camping facilities in the area as well as Bed and Breakfast accommodations.