



May 4, 2020

Dear Students

We realize we are writing to you at what is likely a very trying time, filled with uncertainty and a sense of dislocation. In our field of study, environmental studies, a new term, “solastalgia,” describes what many of us are feeling, i.e. the lack of solace when environmental change takes place. This describes the full range of emotions from wistfulness arising from winters that are no longer as snowy to a complete sense of loss when homes are destroyed by an earthquake or landslide. Right now, much of what is familiar to us and taken for granted has changed and this leaves us with feelings similar to solastalgia. Perhaps we can call it covistalgia.

It is understandable if you feel anxious about your lives in this ongoing period of uncertainty and yearn for your previous life free of covistalgia. It makes sense that the current circumstances leave you unsettled or, even, despondent at times. We, the entire community at UTM and UTSC, are committed to working together, supporting each other, as we progress through the successive stages of this pandemic.

As you are well aware, we changed our mode of course delivery dramatically in the last few weeks of the Winter 2020 term and, now, even our summer offerings. We recognize all of our efforts to successfully fulfill the University’s academic mandate while also handling, in many cases, major personal challenges. We have followed and will continue to follow the guidance and direction of municipal, provincial and federal governments in safe guarding our health and, especially, the health of those most vulnerable in our society.

We all desire a physical return to campus in the fall but it is unclear, at present, exactly what form in-person instruction will take. We are developing new modes of delivery that maintain the exceptional standard of education at all campuses of the University of Toronto. We are confident that the creativity and innovation that characterize our university will result in excellent academic programming for all our students, no matter where you are located. Our plans prioritize the safety and well-being of our students, faculty, staff and our communities. We look forward to welcoming students to campus in a variety of forms and numbers in the fall; we are committed to a robust, intellectually rich set of course offerings in whatever mode is possible for any undergraduate student registered at the University of Toronto.

We greatly look forward to welcoming you, in person, virtually or in both modes, this September to an ever-evolving and always inspiring UofT.

Sincerely,

Amrita Daniere  
Vice Principal, Academic & Dean  
UTM

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