

## Getting Started: Principal's Welcome New Student Orientation, 2020

Earlier this summer, as I crossed UTM's Outer Circle Road toward the Davis Building, I remembered Michelle Obama's description of the nervous exhilaration in a new university experience: "a year of firsts." On 1 July, 2020, I started my first term—my year of firsts—as the Principal of the University of Toronto Mississauga; and I look forward to rediscovering from my new position the vibrant campus at which I've worked as a professor of English literature since 2004. As incoming students at UTM, you, too, will soon begin along a path of discovery. Welcome: I'm thrilled to join you on this exciting journey through your own year of university firsts!

You will listen to your first university lecture; write your first university essay; and study for your first university exam. You will meet your first university professors; ask questions to your first university teaching assistants; and share ideas with your first university classmates. You will attend your first university social event; join your first university student group; and share stories with your first university friends. In the context of the coronavirus pandemic, your new experiences may unfold in different ways than they did for other incoming classes. But my colleagues and I remain deeply committed to helping you thrive as part of UTM's supportive community. We have developed innovative strategies to ensure that your year of firsts fits the distinct pressures of your lives right now. If you cannot come to the physical campus, we will bring the campus experience to you.

This year of personal milestones will also mark a first for UTM as a whole: I am the first woman to be appointed as Principal in the campus's fifty-five-year history. My appointment signals many similar firsts to come: our campus community values courageous academic inquiry, transformative, engaged learning, and inclusive social justice—not just in words but in meaningful actions. I am excited to put those values into practice, together, as we build from our year of firsts a safer, smarter, more equitable world.

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