

MEMORANDUM

To: UTSC Faculty, Staff & Students
From: Professor William A. Gough, Vice-Principal Academic & Dean
Date: 20 May 2020
Re: UTSC Fall Term Strategy

Dear UTSC Community:

I am following up on President Gertler's message to the University of Toronto community yesterday on our plans for the Fall 2020 semester. As noted in his letter to the University, the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis is grounded in three principles: health and safety, academic excellence, and our community. These same three principles were the basis for UTSC considerations as we finished the winter term in remarkable fashion and in our movement to remote-only offerings for the summer term. Below I outline successively how these principles will guide our steps forward for the fall.

We will continue to be guided by health and safety in our decision making, particularly by the advice and requirements of public health authorities. At UTSC, we have begun with the assumption that physical distancing, and restrictions on gathering sizes, will likely still be in place at the beginning of September. This reduces our classroom capacity substantially - likely down to 20% of its designed capacity. *We are committed to providing remote access for all Fall term courses, so that all students can access courses should their circumstances not allow them to attend campus.* That said, for students who can and are willing to access the campus, we will provide, as best we can or are permitted, in-person instruction where pedagogically appropriate.

Educational elements of smaller size, such as: seminars, tutorials, and Facilitated Study Groups (FSG) - all of which will be delivered remotely - may also be offered in-person. In addition, we are exploring the safe use of our teaching laboratories to provide some in-person elements. There are a number of other pragmatic considerations related to health and safety that we are actively engaged in planning for, including the cleaning of classrooms between classes, the possibility of COVID-19 screening of faculty, students, and staff, and hallway and elevator protocols, to name a few. As well in the shorter term, we expect the gradual re-activation of research labs on campus. This is a key aspect of the University and provides an invaluable intellectual contribution to the campus, the university, and society more generally. A safe restart plan will enable our globally recognized research to continue to inform our excellent teaching.

Whatever form our delivery of education takes, remote or a combination of remote and in-person, we are committed to course offerings consistent with the University's superlative reputation for academic excellence. This high-quality education will have the support of UTSC's Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) and Informational and Instructional Technology Services (IITS), the UTSC Library, and additional resources to facilitate the transition to remote delivery. We anticipate the need for more Facilitated Study Groups (FSG) for our courses, both to foster an academic community and to provide support in courses that are considered particularly challenging, especially when offered remotely. We are addressing academic integrity issues with remote offerings in order to ensure that consistent standards for all of our courses and assessments are maintained.

We are certain that we will be able fulfill our academic mission with the support of a dedicated and caring community. We do recognize however, that uncertainty has been weighing heavily on many in our community. We are committed to providing the supports needed for faculty, librarians, staff and students. For students, this is a particular focus of Student Life, the Academic Advising & Career Centre (AA&CC), and Health & Wellbeing. Consistent with our commitment to inclusive excellence, UTSC's *AccessAbility* office is providing the guidance to meet the needs of those living with disabilities, especially with remote course offerings and related evaluation practices. As part of our planning, we are considering how best to create a sense of UTSC identity for the incoming cohort of students. This is a coordinated effort that will include current students, faculty, the Registrar's Office, Student Affairs, and Marketing & Communication. This will take form in additional curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

UTSC has responded remarkably to the COVID-19 crisis, illustrating the degree to which we are a close and supportive community. Faculty, librarians, and staff quickly rallied to support the academic mission, allow students to finish their term and to provide them with a fulsome set of summer offerings. I want to finish by thanking every member of the UTSC community for coming together in these difficult times to support each other and to support our academic mission. If there are significant changes in our circumstances, we will provide periodic updates.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'WAG', written in a cursive style.

William A. Gough

Vice-Principal Academic & Dean
University of Toronto Scarborough