MEMORANDUM, DCD #5, 2021-22

To: Chairs, University of Toronto Scarborough
CC: Chairs' Assistants, Undergraduate Coordinators & Departmental Assistants
From: Professor Katherine R. Larson, Vice-Dean Teaching, Learning & Undergraduate Programs
Date: 24 August 2021
Re: Fall Teaching
Note: For broad distribution

Dear colleagues,

With the start of the Fall term rapidly approaching, I am writing to remind you of the teaching resources available to support faculty and departments as we continue to navigate the pandemic. Please share this information with your faculty members; course instructors, sessional lecturers, and TAs; as well as with staff members in your units.

Centre for Teaching & Learning Academic Continuity Resources
Since March 2020, the Centre for Teaching & Learning (CTL) has developed and continued to expand an excellent set of online teaching supports on Academic Resources. The site includes dedicated sections on course building and syllabus design; setting up and facilitating an online course; designing assessments and running online tests and exams; engaging and supporting students; remote experiential learning; academic integrity; and accessibility. Please encourage instructors to bookmark and refer to this site, as it continues to be updated regularly.

I would like to draw your attention in particular to two recent communications that are linked to the "Crucial Memos" section of the Academic Resources site: First, a reminder about the importance of the **pedagogy of care, compassion, and kindness**: The Office of the Vice-Principal Academic & Dean asks instructors to plan their courses with this in mind and to be as flexible as possible with course and assessment policies. For advice on how to provide this flexibility within the context of regulations related to student petitions and grade submission, please contact the Registrar & Assistant Dean Enrolment Management, Curtis Cole at curtis.cole@utoronto.ca or Associate Registrar Student Services, Fiorella Sabadin at fiorella.sabadin@utoronto.ca The Academic Resources site also includes a document on **responding to microaggressions in the classroom**, which we hope will be helpful for instructors and TAs, as well as for Chairs.

A significant amount of local expertise on effective instruction under the current restrictions has been generated over the past eighteen months. In the summer of 2020, CTL launched a "This Worked for Me" webinar series that enabled U of T Scarborough faculty to share their experiences of teaching remotely. The tips and best practices shared in these recorded webinars are a valuable reference point as instructors are preparing their courses for the Fall. A vibrant webinar series has continued throughout the past year; recorded sessions can be accessed online: CTL Webinars CTL is also available for individual, personalized faculty support, and educational technology (Quercus) course building support.

Centre for Teaching Support and Innovation (CTSI)
In addition to the resources provided by CTL, the tri-campus Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation website has consolidated guidelines for syllabus design, including information on accessibility and site anchors that enable faculty to jump to Sample syllabus statements on the following topics:

·   Academic Integrity,
·   Plagiarism Detection Tools,

- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion,
- Notification to Students when Recording Online Lectures and Course Meetings, and
- Accommodations.

Please note that **the University of Toronto's current contract with Turnitin ends in 2021**, and the required syllabus language for the university's plagiarism detection tool has been updated and made more generic in anticipation of any possible changes in technology that might occur. The Quercus interface for the submission of student work remains the same. For more information, including the updated syllabus text, please visit the [CTSI](#) website.

Please take note as well of the [Provostial Guidelines on the Use of Digital Learning Materials](#) that are in place during the pandemic.

Along with CTL, CTSI has an ongoing schedule of webinars and events related to teaching in the online context that are open to faculty across the university.

Recommended Tools for Synchronous Lecture Delivery
Zoom and MS Teams Video are available for teaching in real-time. Please refer to this guide for more information: [Comparing Synchronous Teaching Tools](#)

With students this Fall residing in multiple time zones, and balancing complex challenges related to the pandemic, it is crucial to plan classes with accessibility in mind. We recommend recording your sessions as described in the synchronous teaching guide to ensure students can watch even if they are unable to attend the live session. Lecture capture is the single best way that faculty can anticipate accommodation needs related to the online context. Having access to recorded lectures also benefits all students. Please also consider asynchronous options for students to engage in graded participation activities (e.g. through written participation options).

Recommended Tool for Asynchronous Lecture Delivery
SnagIt is available for pre-recording lectures and mini-lecturettes. Please refer to this guide for more information: [Recording Lectures Using TechSmith Snagit](#)

Best Practices in Course Video Hosting
Every Quercus course has a "Media Gallery" powered by Kaltura. We recommend that all course videos be downloaded, and re-uploaded here to ensure reliable and easy access for all students. Especially in the case of deferred exams, this practice makes all the difference for student success. Please see the "[Adding course video with Quercus using Kaltura](#)" tip-sheet, and "[Embedding Video with Kaltura](#)" tip sheet for details.

Learning Tool Integration
U of T also supports a range of educational technologies and related tools through its systems. For a full list of university-supported platforms, visit the Ed Tech Catalogue in the Quercus Support Resources section of your Quercus dashboard (accessible via the "Help" link on the main menu). Learn more about our [academic tool-kit](#) governance.

Exams and Assessments
As you plan exams and related assessments for the Fall term, please continue to be aware both of the additional challenges that the online environment presents for academic integrity, as well as the additional stress that timed online assessments represent for students. Whenever possible, we encourage you to explore alternative modes of assessment, including final projects and take-home options. Students should not be required to have cameras on during timed assessments, though instructors may ask for a T-Card check. Should a student not have a T-Card, please accept alternative photo ID.

You can visit https://uoft.me/MockExam to take an actual mock exam in Quercus. CTL has many varieties of assessments on display. We encourage you to recommend this resource to your students as they prepare for

exams in your course (e.g. take-home file upload, vs. timed multiple-choice exam, etc.) It is also very instructive to see the exam as a student does (not quite the same as what one sees in constructing it!). Many students have told us, for example, that having no way in which to review their responses is stressful; we ask that you keep this in mind when designing exams as well.

Guidance for Potential Risks in Remote Teaching
The University of Toronto has prepared a set of resources to assist instructors in Planning around potential risks in remote teaching. Instructors should be mindful of students' geographical locations and potential access and technological limitations when planning their courses. Pedagogical frameworks like universal design and flexible assessment design may help in supporting individual circumstances. Questions can be directed to the Information Security Risk Working Group at remoteinstructionrisks@utoronto.ca.

Campus Access
In the Fall term, approximately 20% of our course offerings at U of T Scarborough are scheduled to run in person. Departments and academic support units should be planning for some on-campus presence as we begin to transition back to in-person operations. It is crucial that faculty, staff, and students do not come to campus if they are unwell. Faculty should be planning courses and assessments to ensure that students have ways of completing course requirements if they are ill or need to self-isolate. Anyone coming to campus must complete a UCheck health screening before arrival. We will be providing further information about campus access and COVID-related protocols as the university receives guidance from the provincial government. Continue to check the UTogether site for updates about campus resources and hours. The Library and the Bladen Wing will be open for students who need to access computers.

Well-Being and Mental Health
As we continue to grapple with the COVID context, and in particular the local and global impact of the fourth wave, the health and well-being of our entire community — faculty, staff, and students — are our main priority. We encourage faculty to prioritize connection and community for students during your classes. Please be sure that students are aware of Campus supports for well-being and mental health. Students who need to miss academic activities due to illness or other reason should submit a self-declaration form through ACORN. To ensure that students are not coming to campus while ill and to ease pressures on the Health & Wellness Centre, please note that instructors should not be asking students to provide additional documentation or verification of illness forms.

Faculty and staff who need additional support, including for needs related to health accommodations, childcare, and/or eldercare, should not hesitate to reach out directly to their Chair.

Movement Breaks
The Athletics Department has developed a series of short videos for faculty to incorporate movement breaks into their online classes. Examples can be found online: https://ocw.utoronto.ca/movement-breaks/videos/. The Athletics team is also available to run short live sessions. If you would like to incorporate one of these pre-recorded segments or host an Athletics team member in your class, please contact Sheila John, Assistant Dean, Wellness, Recreation, and Sport at sheilaj.john@utoronto.ca.

Inclusion, Accessibility, Indigeneity, and Anti-Racism
We are continuing to face significant challenges related to the pandemic, but the past eighteen months have also brought important pedagogical insights and galvanized institutional change. New perspectives on teaching and learning, accessibility, and student engagement have emerged as a result of the experience of teaching and learning online. The campus is also in the process of rethinking how our courses and teaching reflect U of T Scarborough's commitment to inclusion, Indigeneity, and anti-racism, as well as our diverse population through the ongoing curriculum review, which will be continuing this Fall. Please let us know how we might support and assist you as you consider your Fall courses and departmental initiatives through these lenses. We also encourage you to take advantage of the resources offered by U of T Scarborough's Access*Ability* Services and Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Office, as well as the University's Anti-Racism & Cultural Diversity Office (ARCDO).

We hope that the summer has brought you and your loved ones some much-needed rejuvenation time, and we wish you well for the coming term.

Kind regards

Katherine R. Larson
Vice-Dean Teaching, Learning & Undergraduate Programs
Office of the Vice-Principal Academic & Dean