



September 21, 2020

Subject: A Message on Behalf of the UTSC Executive Team

Dear UTSC faculty and staff:

As we start the third week of the fall term, we write to you to thank you, once again, for your extraordinary work, especially since the middle of March. While we have always taken pride in the core values and the quality of people who drive the mission of our campus, your commitment to that mission over the last six months demonstrates in no uncertain terms why that pride is well earned. It is abundantly clear that our collective success stems from the fact that we are a community that brings together the very best scholars, teachers, and staff whose dedication and compassion enabled us to finish the winter term successfully, deliver an entirely remote summer session with record-breaking student registration, and prepare in creative ways for the fall term. Recently, at a UTSC governance committee meeting, we affirmed that we could not be prouder of the UTSC faculty and staff.

Looking ahead, our winter term, as we made clear to you some months ago, will look very similar to the fall, with a few additional in-person elements, such as Science labs, as directives and guidelines from municipal and provincial governments permit. All of our plans are nimble and will respond with alacrity to whatever changes may occur. At the heart of all decisions have been the health and wellbeing of our students, and you - our faculty and staff. We are very mindful of the academic and other needs of all our students, including providing a full year remote guarantee for incoming students and a pathway to completion for our graduating class. We are confident all of our students would be supported appropriately because of what you do.

We recognize that the response to the pandemic has varied among you and that some of you have encountered and continue to encounter substantial challenges in your personal and professional lives. Where appropriate, we have been able to accommodate a range of faculty and staff needs. We will continue to be responsive and encourage you to access the supports you need, including those offered by the university, your family, and the various communities of which you are a part.

We have also heard that some of you are concerned about your careers. While there is some fiscal uncertainty that arises from potential enrolment volatility, we want to provide some reassurance. Our enrolments this past summer were over 20% higher than in previous summers. Final numbers for the fall will not be known until the provincially mandated November count takes place. We are, however, cautiously optimistic. At present, like all Toronto universities and campuses, domestic enrolment is lower than last year. This is offset by increased international enrolment.

We are committed to sustaining exceptional teaching and learning in this new environment. Hence, the teaching budget has been augmented this fall to facilitate efficacious transition to the remote/on-line context and to enhance this experience for students. These investments are necessary to deliver the quality of experience that students expect from us. We are also proceeding with approved plans for faculty and staff searches this year, as we grow the requisite capacity needed to meet the goals of our strategic plan. If we all continue to do our part to maintain the quality of the student experience and to support transformative education under the current circumstances, our cautious optimism about enrolment and fiscal health are likely to bear out.

There is no question the pandemic has brought many challenges, but we are also confident our community has what it takes to overcome them and to seize emerging opportunities. There are a number of initiatives in our strategic plan that are timely and responsive to the challenges. This is a demonstration of your collective leadership in generating forward-thinking ideas for our campus. We are pursuing those initiatives together to the best of our abilities, under the current circumstances.

With one voice, as members of the UTSC executive team, we want to conclude this message by reiterating our gratitude to you for your manifold contributions towards sustaining our values and our goal of Inspiring Inclusive Excellence.

Yours sincerely,

Wisdom Tettey
Vice-President and Principal

William A. Gough
Vice-Principal Academic and
Dean

Bernie Kraatz
Vice-Principal Research and
Innovation

Andrew Arifuzzaman
Chief Administrative Officer

Desma Charlemagne-Michel
Director, Human Resource Services

Winnie Falkenstein
Director, Equity, Diversity and
Inclusion

David Jang
Executive Director, Marketing and
Communications

Lisa Fenton Lemon
Executive Director,
Dev't and Alumni Relations

Desmond Pouyat
Dean, Student Experience and
Wellbeing