

From: [Artsstaff](#) on behalf of [Sheila Ager](#)
To: artsfac@watarts.uwaterloo.ca; artsstaff@watarts.uwaterloo.ca; [Cristina Vanin](#); [Kofi Campbell](#); [Peter Frick](#); [Troy Osborne](#)
Subject: Update, April 11
Date: April 11, 2020 5:26:25 PM

[Dear Arts Folks,](#)

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[I don't know about you, but I am beginning to have some difficulty in distinguishing what day of the week it is – I continually think that we are farther along in the week than we are. Fortunately \(I guess\) I still have a sufficient number of meetings that I can at least tell whether it's a weekday or the weekend. I am developing proficiency with MS Teams, Webex, and Zoom; in fact, I am actually my family's ZoomMeister. I really like that feature where you can choose your own background, though the technology can't quite decide what to do with my hair. It seems undecided as to whether my hair is actually attached to my head or not.](#)

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[Enough about me. I hope you're all enjoying a bit of a break with the long weekend, though I know it will be disappointing for many of you that you won't be able to gather for traditional celebrations. We had another big virtual meeting this past week, this time with the Board of Governors. I thought that summarizing the report that the President made to the Board might be a way of letting you know where we're at right now. That's really more of an exercise in explicitly identifying what we **don't** know. It's no surprise that we don't know what the Fall term is going to look like; prognostications vary widely, and nobody I know has a working crystal ball. The university sector as a whole is preparing for the probability that our student numbers will be down \(and we are trying to mitigate that by going out aggressively now with our admission offers\). We will almost certainly be offering a significant portion of our curriculum online, perhaps even all of it. This is something we \(as in, the University\) will have to decide on within the next few weeks. The hiring freeze remains in effect, though resources are being deployed to boost CEL's ability to support instructors making the transition to remote teaching for the Spring, and ultimately for the Fall.](#)

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[I know that the idea that things will not necessarily be back to normal by September is disheartening, though I'm sure you've all been contemplating that possibility already. I do want you to know that no one underestimates the stress and strain that the situation is causing, nor are we taking at all lightly the demands that we're placing on everyone. Please do take care of yourselves, and that includes reaching out if things become overwhelming. I thought this might be a good opportunity to remind you about UW's \[Employee and Family Assistance Program\]\(#\). And you can talk to me anytime.](#)

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[For the next while, then, we're going to have to continue the self-isolation, and all the challenges and questions that go with it. Who gets to walk the dog next? Should I bother with a shower ~~today tomorrow~~ next week? Do these pyjamas make me look fat? Are all the people in this Zoom meeting actually wearing pants? Do these sweats make me look fat? Is that all the wine that's left?](#)

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[So, as a small anodyne to the isolation, here's \[one of my favourite videos\]\(#\) – it's over a decade old,](#)

but I return to it regularly. Something for us to do when we're all together again?

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Affectionately.

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Sheila

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PS. I trust you realize that you're free to make fun of these messages from me if you want.

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Civility is 'the activity which protects people from each other and yet allows them to enjoy each other's company.' Robert Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*, 1976: 264.

Dr. Sheila Ager
Dean, Faculty of Arts
Professor, Department of Classical Studies
University of Waterloo
200 University Ave. W.
Waterloo ON Canada N2L 3G1
519-888-4567, x32217

The Faculty of Arts acknowledges that we are living and working on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (also known as Neutral), Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.