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Subject: Update, March 28
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Hello Arts Colleagues,

I'm sorry I didn't get this message out to you yesterday – there's been an explosion of virtual meetings taking place. I'm finding myself quite grateful to the various technologies we have at hand to reduce our isolation, especially since they come with the option to turn off the video for those days when I can't be bothered to comb my hair. But it's meant that I couldn't quite get around to sending out this week's update until today.

Let me begin again by expressing my gratitude to everyone for pulling together, going the extra mile, and putting our students' interests first and foremost. We've now concluded a week of remote teaching and have one more to go – I haven't heard about any significant issues as yet, so I'm hopeful that it hasn't been **too** painful a process for you. For those of you already preparing for a Spring term of remote delivery, please keep a couple of things in mind. First, we need to realize that taking all their courses remotely will be unusual for most of our students, and many of them may find it particularly challenging, particularly in terms of time and task management. So I think we need to continue to exercise flexibility and compassion.

Second, delivering your courses remotely when you may not be used to it is probably going to create some stresses and challenges for you too: so the caution about compassion applies to you as well. Be kind to yourself, and remember what our Registrar, Cathy Newell Kelly, has said: **no** one expects the same kind of polish and sophistication out of a course that's been hastily transferred to an online platform as they would out of one that had been developed in the normal fashion. It's fine to keep the technology as simple as possible, and enhance the human interaction piece as much as you can.

Yesterday I engaged in a virtual meeting with the Deans of Arts and Social Sciences at the U15 institutions. It was an interesting conversation, and I'm sure you won't be surprised to hear that a lot of the same concerns are being expressed at institutions across the country. Although we certainly do have concerns and challenges here at UW, I did come away from the meeting feeling that we're particularly fortunate here, not only in the local expertise in remote education on which we can rely, but also in a general attitude of cooperative collaboration and mutual support that I think isn't always mirrored elsewhere. Just one example: my colleague from the Université de Montréal informed us that they've had to step in to prevent the opossums from having reproductive or recreational sex. That just strikes me as a somewhat joyless response to the emergency. After all, the geese have been having sex for weeks, and nobody here cares.

[Take care of yourselves, everyone.](#)

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[Sheila](#)

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[PS. Yes, yes, yes, I know they're **lab** opossums.](#)

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PPS. This video has gone viral, so you may already have seen it – but for those who haven't, it's pretty funny (especially the comment about cats, and don't get me wrong, I love cats):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYWrijwDeiA>

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Finish each day and be done with it. You have done what you could. Some blunders and absurdities have crept in. Forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day. You shall begin it serenely and with too high a spirit to be encumbered with your old nonsense. (Emerson, *Write it on Your Heart*).

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