Dear Friends,

Well, it has been another pretty lively week chez Waterloo, so this note’s a bit longer than usual (sorry about that). A lot of things have been happening, some of them pretty challenging. But there’s some good news, too. I’ll save the good news for last. I believe that’s part of my character in general: I think I’m one of those people who believes in delayed gratification. Like eating the cake out from under the icing, to save the icing for last (I don’t actually do that anymore). One thing I do still like to do, though, is save gift opening until after we’ve finished Christmas dinner. It makes my family crazy. Good thing they don’t know that what I’d really like to do is save gift opening until Boxing Day.

So, to begin: probably the most challenging news that we’ve had to deal with this week is the 15% holdback in the 2020/21 budget (everyone will have received the e-mail from the President, sent out this past Thursday). This is a contingency measure, intended to prepare us to cope with the possibility (probability) that we will not be meeting our enrolment targets come the Fall term. As you know, our revenues are dependent on student enrolments – both tuition and government grant – and a reduction in numbers of students obviously means a reduction in numbers of dollars. One of the most challenging things we’ve been having to deal with in the past several weeks is the absolute unpredictability of our admissions process this year. Much praise is owing to program directors, Associate Chairs, Associate Deans, and admissions staff in the Registrar’s Office for doing their utmost to help the University come at least close to its targets – they’ve all had to do an enormous amount of crystal-ball gazing. Confirmation date for our students is June 1st, so we may be able to get some idea of what our numbers will be like then; but there is still a great deal of uncertainty about how things will play out over the rest of the summer.

I’ll be able to provide more detail on the budget situation as we move forward. In the meantime, I just wanted to say that we’ll be doing our best to meet this challenge in as equitable a way as we can. I also wanted to express my profound appreciation to all of you for pulling together as a Faculty and helping us do so. I am not going to reference the mantra of the mid-1990s – “do more with less” – because that got pretty tired pretty quickly. Not to mention it filled people with an undeserved sense of inadequacy and led to burnout. Obviously, we have to do less with less – but we can work together to do that as productively as we can. (And I sure hope that didn’t sound like trying to say the same dumb thing, only in different words.)

(* I was all prepared to show off by saying that I was employing the rhetorical device of **praeteritio** here – calling attention to something by saying you aren’t going to call attention to it – but then I read an article that said this was **Trump’s favourite rhetorical device**, so I decided not to.**)

(** In case you didn’t notice, I just used **praeteritio** again.)
Also in the President’s (Feridun, not Donald) e-mail was an announcement of the formation of the new Integrated Co-ordination and Planning Committee (ICPC), whose role is “to assess and guide the disruption [there’s that word again] caused by the pandemic and the implications for the University”. The core of the ICPC is the Central Planning Group, which is composed of the “PVP” (Presidents and Vice-Presidents) and the Deans. There are also several working groups focusing on academics, research, and operations. Some of you have already been invited to participate in some of these groups. It’s a little unclear still (to me, at any rate) how these bodies will function, since we’ve only just had our first meeting, though the President has firmly stated that they are not intended to usurp the authority of the regular governance structures of the institution. This too is something I may be able to tell you more about as we move ahead.

So I said we had some good news to celebrate, and indeed we do! I hope that my delayed gratification preferences haven’t undermined the significance or the happy nature of this news. I’m really pleased to announce the winners of the 2020 Arts Awards for Excellence in Teaching, Research, and Service:

**Excellence in Teaching:**

- Christopher Bennett, Political Science (lecturer)
- George Lamont, English Language & Literature (lecturer)
- Seda Oz, SAF (faculty)

**Excellence in Research:**

- Tim Bauer, SAF (faculty)
- Suzan Ilcan, Sociology & Legal Studies (faculty)
- Elise LePage, French Studies (faculty)
- Heather Whiteside, Political Science (faculty)

**Excellence in Service:**

- Gerry Boychuk, Political Science (faculty)
- Andrea Charette, Dean of Arts Office (staff)
- Keira McMaster, Stratford School (undergraduate student)
Normally, as you all know, we announce these awards at our Celebration of Arts event, which we usually hold in April. I’m still hopeful that we can hold it early in the Fall term, but if we can’t, we’ll be holding it as soon as we can – it will be an opportunity to celebrate being together again. Many thanks to all of you who sent in nominations, and a special shout-out to Angela Roorda and the rest of the Arts Honours and Awards Committee, who adjudicate these awards. Angela in particular deserves a big thank you for all the work she’s put into the committee and this award process over the years!

So like I said, this message is longer than usual, and I should sign off while you’re still reading it … Hello? … Hello?? But I still wanted to tell you what I did this weekend for entertainment. I got an e-mail from the National Ballet with this teaser for their upcoming production of Swan Lake. It’s an old favourite of mine (the one time I saw the full production live, Prince Siegfried fell down, which let me tell you is my own particular nightmare). I was inspired to pull out my full-length recording of the entire ballet. Now, I know I would be a lot more cool if I played air guitar or air tuba or air theremin (which I think is actually the only way you can play the theremin), but, having had to abandon my career as a prima ballerina (not to mention my second career as a concert pianist), I believe I still make a pretty fair air conductor. So, the National doesn’t need to worry if they aren’t able to put on Swan Lake live this season, since I’ve already staged the entire production in my living room. And it’s pretty good exercise too.

OK, I really am signing off now, with the happy news that it’s going to warm up a little by the end of the week, and with a shout-out to Mother’s Day. Because, as Pluto says, there are moms of all kinds.

Sheila
xoxo

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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.