Welcome to Fall 2020. It's a new semester, a start to a new academic year but, somehow, it feels kinda old with the online-almost-everything life our collective selves are living under the continuing COVID-19 restrictions. Nevertheless, things at the University are changing and the GI will be opening its doors on a limited capacity basis in the coming months. The GI space is being prepared for an inspection as we speak (official UW arrow/physical distancing decals on the floor, sanitation stations, plexiglass barriers where needed etc.); we have a new lab construction commencing shortly (this will be a Haptic Computing Lab/maker space courtesy of Dr. Oliver Schneider's CFI grant); a COVID-19 Safety Plan is being prepared for approval by the Safety Office; and we are still looking for a place to store chairs which need to be removed until we are allowed more than 30% occupancy rate.

We are also preparing the GI for the Senate renewal which means that, every five years, the GI community must ask the UW Senate for permission to continue existing. No joke, without the Senate approval, the GI will not be allowed to operate. Renewal documentation is due early December and the entire process should be completed by March 2021. You will be hearing more about this in the coming weeks and months as we will be asking for information and help from all our members.

But, there are also things that are not changing this term; notably, the GI admin staff. I must have done something right as we have been lucky to retain all of our staff from the S20 term. This means I don't have to attempt to train anyone over Teams ... Yay for me! ... And so:

- **Marisa Benjamin** continues as Research Communications Officer advertising your respective and collective research to the world.

- **Pam Schmidt** has graduated from her MA program and is continuing her role as Research Project Facilitator taking over more and more of the project and GI management as Neil and I prepare documentation for GI's upcoming Senate renewal.

- **Grace Van Dam** continues her role as Operations Coordinator and is responsible for any and all GI-related inquiries, coordination of access to GI space, website updates, What's Happening @ GI newsletter, a new inventory tracking system, on/off-boarding of GI members and a whole lot of other things. She's also taking a few courses this term as she is nearing completion of her BSc program.

- Our friendly neighbourhood Slack and Discord ghosts: **Cayley MacArthur** and **Jenn Rickert** are still serving our community on these platforms curating the online GI-goings-on there.

- Our friendly neighbourhood IT ghosts: **Lori Paniak** and **Jameson Schildroth** are here for any IT related support.

Wishing you a good and productive term, I encourage you to reach out to any of us if you have questions/concerns/ideas or if you just want to chat.

See you around (virtually or in our own masked persons),

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**Announcements:**

1. **COVID-19 testing centre to open on UW campus.**
   
   Located in the Health Services Building, and scheduled to open on October 1st.
   
   This assessment and testing centre will start as only available for UW students and employees, and is an addition to the [Campus Check-In](#) tool as a safety measure for the University community.
2. **Preparing the GI space for returning students!** We will be releasing a Google form shortly for those who need to return to the GI regularly. For more information about who qualifies for access during Phase 3 of campus reopening, please see the pdf attached to this email.

3. **Virtual Town Hall:** our Fall 2020 Town Hall will take place during the last week of September, and is mandatory for all GI members. Please be on the lookout for an exact time and date which will be coming shortly.

4. **GI Staff Office hours for this term:** The weekly schedule remains the same as last term. You can connect with us on either the #gi-admin-office-hours chat in Slack, or the #cubicle-chats-text on Discord! DM's and emails are always open.

![Office Hours Schedule]

Welcome to another academic year! Fall semester tends to be the busiest and we know that working from home, asynchronously, has not been easy. In the hopes of uplifting our spirits and reminding us of our amazing Games Institute ecosystem, we prepared a special issue of **Instant Replay:** a virtual highlight reel with summaries and anecdotes of what took place during Spring 2020. Read it online, here: [https://uwaterloo.ca/games-institute/about-games-institute/instant-replay-spring-2020](https://uwaterloo.ca/games-institute/about-games-institute/instant-replay-spring-2020)
As we start to form our routines for the term, check out the gi-announcements channel on Discord and let us know what events you want to see and what days work for you! Polls will close next week and events will start on the Last Week of September!