

# UTM Office of the Dean Newsletter

Volume 3: Issue 2  
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UTM's Maanjiwe nendamowinan has been recognized for excellence in design. It garnered a Citation Award from the American Institute of Architects, Canada Society.  
*Photo by Drew Lesiuczok*

## 1. From the Desk of the Dean

As we enter May, and Spring is well underway, the subject on everyone's mind is whether life will return to "normal" this summer and fall. Last month we hit a milestone that no-one would have predicted at this time last year, that is, we have lived for more than one year with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although we cannot predict the future, by providing close to 4,000 vaccines a day, UTM has vaccinated more than 100,000 people as of this date and is continuing to offer the space of the Recreation, Athletics, and Wellness Centre (RAWC) throughout the initiative. This is an impressive milestone and we remain hopeful, as the vaccine distribution continues throughout the province, that things will improve for everyone soon.

We are all looking forward, with optimism, to fall 2021 when people can once more gather on our campuses, as permitted by public health guidelines.

In the Dean's office we are very excited to have welcomed several new faces to our evolving team:

- Aisha Sharif has joined the office as Assistant Director, Strategic Initiatives, Aisha officially started in her new role on March 15, 2021. In this new role, Aisha will provide operational leadership to all aspects of academic operations, financial and human resources management. Aisha has worked at the University of Toronto for over 10 years, most recently as Assistant Director, FIPS & Special Projects with Budget, Planning and Finance. Prior to that, Aisha worked in the Division of the Vice-President Research & Innovation Office, UTM's Mathematical and Computational Sciences Department, and OISE's Office of the CAO, in progressively senior roles.
- Dann Sioson has joined our Office team as a Data and Information Analyst, as a temporary replacement of Jinli Yang who is currently on secondment to OISE. Dann graduated from UTSC's Management program, specializing in Business Technology, with a minor in Applied Statistics. While working towards his degree, Dann held several work co-op placements in the Pharmaceuticals, Construction Safety, and Aerospace Transportation industries. After graduating in 2019, Dann worked for the University of Toronto's Information Security department, specifically on the service delivery team.
- Amanda Pullan has accepted the position of Research Analyst, Academic Programs and Curriculum, in the Office of the Vice-Dean, Teaching & Learning. Amanda officially started in her new role on March 15, 2021. Amanda has worked at the University of Toronto for the past four years, most recently as Research & Innovation Liaison at the Centre for Research & Innovation Support, in the Division of the Vice-President, Research & Innovation, developing research training events and resources to support faculty researchers. Prior that, she worked as Senior Project Manager at Post MD Education, Faculty of Medicine, and coordinated the CPD office's 2018 external accreditation review. Amanda completed a PhD in History at Lancaster University, UK, where she investigated British women's seventeenth-century embroidery as a vehicle of literacy and education.
- On the May 3, 2021, Rachel Gorjup began a 6-month term position in the role of Academic Integrity Assistant. Rachel has been, and will continue to be, instrumental in providing much-needed administrative support to the Academic Integrity Unit. In October 2020, Rachel Gorjup joined AIU on a casual basis, Rachel is a recent graduate of Western University, where she obtained her M.Sc. in Health and Rehabilitation Sciences.
- On the May 14, 2021, Rima Abu-Shakra will begin her secondment in the role of Experiential Learning Officer, where she will be replacing Atiya Hamid who is currently on maternity leave. I am confident that Rima's previous experience in this role will help us to continue to achieve the goals of the EEU.

Please join me in welcoming these new members to our UTM community!

In addition, I would like to welcome Beverley Ayeni back from her maternity leave. Beverley returns to her position of Sustainability Manager, Strategic Initiatives. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Chelsea Dalton for taking on this position while Beverley was away, and for all of her hard work and progress on our sustainability initiatives.

## 2. Vice-Dean, Academic Experience

### Virtual End-of-Year Internship Presentation Events

- The end of term marks a time to celebrate the work that many of UTM's internship and research students have completed over the 2020-21 academic year. The Departments of Biology, Chemical & Physical Sciences, Economics, Visual Studies, and the Forensic Science Program held virtual internship and research presentation events. These celebrations provided students with a platform to present and discuss their internship and research experiences to an audience consisting of their peers, supervisors, interested Departmental faculty and staff, and members of the Experiential Education Unit (EEU). The event listing was as follows:
  - **Biology Internship Presentations** (March 31 and April 7, 2021) – *Instructor: Professor Sanja Hinic-Frlog*
  - **VST410H5 Internship Presentations** (March 31 and April 7, 2021) – *Instructor: Professor Harriet Sonne De Torrens*
  - **The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Forensic Science Day** (April 6, 2021) – *Instructor: Professor Tracy Rogers*
  - **Chemical & Physical Sciences Internship Presentation Evening** (April 9, 2021) – *Instructor: Dr. Elvin de Araujo*
  - **ECO400Y5 Virtual Poster Gala** (April 12, 2021) – *Instructor: Professor Nick Zammit*
  - **Chemical & Physical Sciences Student Research Symposium** (April 23, 2021) – *Coordinator: Professor Marc Laflamme*

Thank you to our faculty, students, staff, and off-site supervisors! UTM's Office of the Dean wishes all students the utmost success in their future endeavors!

### Research Opportunity Program (ROP)

- The ROP is excited to offer 215 approved projects for the 2021-22 academic year. Approximately 2,460 student applications were received. Summer 2021 ROP projects will begin on May 3, 2021.

### “Gaining Experience Remotely” Video Campaign

- The EEU is thrilled to have launched its inaugural “Gaining Experience Remotely” video campaign that ran from March - April 2021. This initiative featured student interviews that highlighted innovative curricular experiential learning activities that occurred **remotely** over the 2020-21 academic year. The EEU Student Ambassador Team engaged their peers in thoughtful dialogue, empowering students to share their experiences, insights, and advice for success in remote experiential learning opportunities. The video interviews can be found on the EEU's new [Featured Experiences](#) webpage, as well as the EEU's social media platforms: [YouTube](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

## UTM Information Sessions on Transition from Placement Portal to SharePoint

- In March 2021, the Office of the Vice-Provost, Students announced that the Student Placement Portal will be transitioning to SharePoint. SharePoint will now be used as a digital repository for all Placement Agreements pertaining to unpaid internship placements.

Bridgid McNulty (University Coordinator, Student Placements, Office of the Vice-Provost, Students), in collaboration with the EEU, hosted four virtual information sessions on the University of Toronto's transition from the Student Placement Portal to SharePoint. During this session, Bridgid provided a visual demonstration on how to navigate the interface for uploading Placement Agreements and accessing updates, templates, and announcements. The sessions occurred on March 31 and April 15, 2021 and were open to all UTM faculty and staff who facilitate experiential learning courses. Additional summer session dates will be forthcoming.

### *Lecture Me! a series*

- The 2020-21 *Lecture Me!* season was conducted virtually in collaboration with the Mississauga Library System. Our final speaker for Winter 2021 was Professor Rhonda McEwen (Institute of Communication, Culture, Information & Technology), whose lecture was entitled *Communicating During COVID-19: China and the Diaspora*. Professor McEwen's engaging talk discussed how the use of technology in China has changed during the pandemic. For a full list of the 2020-21 season of speakers, visit [uoft.me/lectureme](https://uoft.me/lectureme).

## Jackman Scholars-in-Residence Program (SiR): May 3-28, 2021

**SiR 2021 will be an online-only program with no residence component.** Participants will work for 16 hours/week in online-synchronous research teams and attend 5 hours/week of group activities including workshops and other virtual events.

This year, UTM faculty will be participating in the SiR program with four research projects:

Title: *Preserving Toronto's Foodways*

Supervisor: [Prof. Teresa Lobalsamo](#), Language Studies

Title: *Press, Celebrity and Gender in Québec (1930-1970)*

Supervisor: [Prof. Adrien Rannaud](#), Language Studies

Title: *3K-LVT: The Validation of the First Listening Vocabulary Test in Spanish*

Supervisor: [Prof. Pablo Robles-Garcia](#), Language Studies

Title: *Building Monuments, Bonding Communities: Urbanization and Social Transformation in Ancient China*

Supervisor: [Prof. Liye Xie](#), Anthropology

The SiR program is a unique opportunity for students to work intensively on a research project with U of T faculty that features:

- \$1,000 Jackman Scholar Award
- Free accommodation and meals for the duration of the program

- An opportunity to contribute to original faculty research, develop skills, and network with peers and professors.

### Academic Integrity Unit

The Academic Integrity Unit (AIU) is pleased to announce the official launch of the [Academic Integrity Student Ambassador Program](#). The AIU Ambassadors will work closely with the AIU staff to develop and implement educational initiatives to raise awareness about the importance of academic integrity at UTM. Please share this CCR approved experience with your upper-year students.

## 3. Vice-Dean, Teaching & Learning

### New Cinema Studies Major to be Offered in 2021-2022 at UTM's Department of Visual Studies

We are pleased to announce that a new [Cinema Studies Major at UTM's Department of Visual Studies](#) was recently approved by the Ontario Quality Council. The Cinema Studies Major will be devoted to the stylistic, historical, and theoretical analysis of film; it is distinct in its emphasis on film as part of the history of art and visual culture, as well as its focus on film philosophy. The program will aim to develop students' visual analysis, critical thinking abilities and writing skills, to prepare them for both further studies in this field and/or employment after graduation.

[The Department of Visual Studies \(DVS\)](#) will welcome the first students into the Cinema Studies Major this fall, September 2021. The new Major will build upon the Department's successful Minor in Cinema Studies that will continue to be offered. The Department welcomes applicants from English and Creative Writing; Art and Art History; Philosophy; Biomedical Communications; Communication, Culture, Information and Technology; and other areas of study. Congratulations to the Department of Visual Studies on this new and exciting program!



## Teaching, Learning & Collaboration Reflection Event & Survey

UTM's Teaching and Learning Collaboration (TLC) held a reflection event with faculty and staff at the end of April to discuss what worked (and what didn't) in the context of teaching and learning over the past year. We also wanted to discuss what we should be taking forward with us for our teaching practices, beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. Through this reflection event we wanted to provide a safe space for difficult conversations for faculty to openly share their perspectives and experiences.

There were many faculty that felt they have unprocessed grief and shared collective trauma from the past year. Some faculty stated that they haven't yet had time to reflect on the past year, but that they would like to do so before the start of courses in the fall term. Participants expressed a concern for wellness, for both students and faculty.

In terms of some things that worked well during the past year, online office hours, automatic (one-click) captioning, flexible grading policies, humanizing learning, and steps for purposeful connection with students all made an impact on both students and faculty. In terms of identifying things that we will take forward with us into our post-pandemic teaching and learning practices, teaching with compassion, having a more trauma-informed approach to teaching, more inclusive course designs, and keeping flexible policies were all highlighted as important

To assist UTM's Teaching and Learning Collaboration in planning programming for 2021-22, we would really appreciate hearing from all faculty and staff about how they could be better supported in their teaching. We would also like to hear about how the past year went with respect to teaching, both what worked and what didn't in the context of remote teaching during a pandemic. We have put together a needs assessment survey to help gather your feedback. The survey is anonymous and will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. You may skip any question you do not wish to answer. Please complete the UTM Teaching & Learning Needs Assessment [here](#).

The TLC will generate a reflection report looking at the past year, based on consultations, help sessions, and the survey that is currently in progress.

### 4. Vice-Dean, Graduate

#### **Black, Indigenous, and Racialized Graduate Research Fellowship**

These annual awards, co-sponsored by the Vice Dean, Graduate and UTM Principal are intended to recognize excellence in research and scholarly performance by a Black, Indigenous, or racialized graduate student of UTM. The award can be worth up to \$8,000. Recipients will receive \$6,000 as a research stipend plus up to \$2,000 that can be allocated to eligible research expenses.

*Please join me in congratulating the successful recipients of the awards:*

**Norhan Elsaadawy** is a Ph.D. student from the Dept. of Psychology who is supervised by Professor Erika Carlson. Norhan's research aims to identify when people consider others' impressions of them in daily life, what attributes they care the most about, and whether meta-

perceptions differ for individuals with marginalized social identities (e.g., race, socioeconomic status).

**Mariela Faykoo-Martinez** is a Ph.D student from Dept. of Biology who is supervised by Professor Melissa Holmes. Mariela's research will pursue the role of corticotrophin releasing hormone binding protein (CRHBP) as a modulator of pubertal suppression in the naked mole-rat by investigating how CRHBP expression levels change across the first week of puberty.

**Sloane Geddes** is a Ph.D student from the Dept. of Historical Studies and is co-supervised by Luther Obrock and Ajay Rao. Sloane's research focuses on Hindu-Buddhist interactions and courtly literary production in Sanskrit literature paying particular attention to a 9th-century text called *The Rise of Kapphiṇa*.

**Irenius Konkor** is a Ph.D. student from Dept. of Geography Geomatics and Environment who is supervised by Professor Vincent Kuire. Irenius' research examines neighborhood effects, gender disparities and the double burden of infectious and non-communicable diseases in Ghana, Africa.

**Sukshmarashi Maharaj** is a Ph.D student from the Dept. of Historical Studies and is co-supervised by Luther Obrock and Ajay Rao. Sukshmarashi's research engages with the earliest material evidence for Krishna worship and examines the key role Krishna's iconography played in the formation of identity for people in ancient India.

**Olasunkanmi (Tobi) Olaoye** is a Ph.D. student from the Dept. of Chemical & Physical Sciences who is supervised by Professor Patrick Gunning. Olasunkanmi is currently researching the proteome-wide activity of his PROTACs as a measure of true HDAC6 selectivity, and promising lead candidates will be advanced for in vivo evaluations in animal models.

**Anusha Rao** is a Ph.D student from the Dept. of Historical Studies who is supervised by Professor Ajay Rao. Anusha's research analyzes the role of literary and narrative texts in the popularization of Vedanta in late medieval and early modern South India.

**Samia Teclé** is a Ph.D. student from the Dept. of Sociology who is supervised by Professor Luisa Schwartzman. Samia's research is concerned with the relationship between mobility and global inequality and the array of migration controls that operate to influence Canada's management of refugee migration.

### **Graduate Research Colloquium**

On Wednesday, April 28<sup>th</sup>, the Graduate Research Colloquium 2021 was held. This event provided the opportunity for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to showcase their work to the greater UTM community. There were 13 amazing talks, along with two special guest speakers, Banu Subramaniam, Professor and Chair, Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies at University of Massachusetts, Amherst and Jean-Paul Paluzzi, Associate Professor, Dept. of Biology, York University.

*Special thank you to the oral presentation judges:*

Professor Firat Bozcali, Dept. of Anthropology

Professor Juris Strautmanis, Dept. Chemical and Physical Sciences

Professor Monika Havelka, Dept. of Geography, Geomatics, and Environment

*Please join me in celebrating the winners of the Graduate Research Colloquium awards:*

**Oral Presentation Winners:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> place winner for oral presentation from graduate student  
**Rebecca Allan – Chemical & Physical Sciences**
- Runner-up for oral presentation from graduate student  
**Katie Maloney – Chemical & Physical Sciences**
- 1<sup>st</sup> Place winner for oral presentation from Postdoctoral Fellow  
**Paula Di Nota – Dept. of Psychology**

**The Graduate Student Leadership Award**, is intended to recognize UTM graduate students who have taken a significant leadership role on campus, and in so doing have had a demonstrable impact on improving the quality of the graduate student experience at the UTM. This year's recipient is, **Nabanita Nawar, Dept. of Chemical & Physical Sciences.**

**The Graduate Student Research Award**, is intended to recognize excellence in research by a UTM graduate student. This year's recipient is **Ruth Rivkin, Dept. of Biology.**

**The Postdoctoral Leadership Award**, is intended to recognize UTM Postdoctoral Fellows (Postdoc) who have taken a significant leadership role on campus, and in so doing have had a demonstrable impact on improving the quality of the Postdoc experience at UTM. This year's recipient is **Dr. Egide Kalisa, from the Dept. of Geography, Geomatics and Environment.**