Online Learning Experience

- UTM's Teaching & Learning Collaboration(TLC) will distribute a survey to instructors in April to figure out what has worked, and what hasn't, in the delivery of remote courses. Information gathered will be used to inform summer workshops and seminars for UTM's TLC.

- Initial student feedback re: online learning experience. Points of focus as follows:

➢ **Pedagogy of kindness:** Making connection central to course design. Students learn better when they feel a true sense of connection to professors as well as peers. Instructors have been facilitating connection through office hours, engagement activities during class, fostering a culture of feedback and dialogue, and TA check ins (just some examples).

➢ **Making teaching sustainable:** (both for students, TAs, and faculty). Remote course designs need to be sustainable from a workload perspective. Some faculty found in the fall term that, in an effort to break assignments into smaller chunks, or to include more lower stakes assignments, they assigned too many small assignments to students.

➢ **Making due dates flexible:** Some faculty found success with having "pacing dates" rather than "due dates" and having some flexibility in submission structures.

Online Learning Experience (cont.)

➢ **Universal Design for Learning:** Faculty making their courses accessible and inclusive to all learners. This can include ensuring all audio is captioned, and all images contain alt text. It can include assignment choice, which helps students to take ownership over their own learning.

➢ **Humanizing Learning:** Instructors working on humanizing digital spaces and the remote classroom experience. This can involve centering empathy, deepening connection, and emphasizing a "progress not perfect" approach to learning (growth mindset).

➢ **Active Learning Online:** Instructors working on how to foster true student engagement in the online context (so that students aren't just watching what is on the screen but are instead truly engaged in learning). Can include arrival activities, active breakout rooms, polls, think-pair-share activities, word association exercises, and misconception focused feedback.

• Associate Dean, UG and Biology professor **Fiona Rawle** leading by example. Fosters a community built on kindness, an intentional effort to strengthen human connection during these uncertain times. Link to article here: https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/main-news/showing-kindness-biology-professor-strengthens-human-connections-during-uncertain-times