

REMAINING ONLINE UNTIL MARCH 1, 2022

Dear DLSPH Community,

You have likely seen today's email from the Provost and VP, People, Strategy & Equity that the University of Toronto's return to in-person activities has been delayed to Feb. 7. I'm writing now to share the decision that DLSPH senior leaders, in consultation with students and faculty members, have made regarding our classes for the remainder of the Winter Term.

We will remain online-only until March 1, at which point we will return to a modified version of our original plan to offer some in-person class components.

The physical and mental health of our entire community is paramount in our decision-making. We also strongly considered that our School is a health science faculty with many students and faculty members working in our hospitals and other healthcare settings. At a time of great strain on our health systems, our partner hospitals and other institutions are working through staffing shortages and this means we should support them by remaining online-only until March 1. This should help cope with the increased burden of the current COVID-19 surge.

In December, when we announced our plan to return to some in-person classes and activities, each instructor came up with a plan for an in-person component. These ranged from fully in-person classes to fully online classes with options for in-person office hours or other small gatherings.

For those courses with classes that were to be online only, today's announcement means that nothing changes. Those classes will remain fully online for the duration of the Winter Term. Likewise, nothing changes for practicums currently underway.

For those classes whose instructors had planned to offer in-person instruction:

- We will continue to offer all classes with larger enrolments (over 30 students) in an online format
- We will work with the course directors for smaller classes to assess whether they can remain in person. In each case, we will encourage instructors to consider the needs of all students so that we help students participate fully in their classes.

Please note that classes held in other faculties will proceed under the rules for those faculties and we will be moving all evaluations online for the duration of the Winter Term.

It is still our goal to create opportunities for in-person gatherings and meetings for the rest of the Winter Term. Please stay tuned for announcements of more in-person academic, social and

other events at our School – especially when the weather warms up and we can use outdoor spaces.

We will continue to work to make sure our spaces are as safe as possible. To this end, we will be procuring high-quality masks for students, staff and faculty who need to be on campus, we will ask all visitors to complete the [UCheck](#) paper screening form that students, staff and faculty complete online; and we will follow the public health measures laid out in our [GAT](#). We will also be the pilot site for air quality monitoring for the University.

Finally, I know that students and faculty would like to be able to make concrete plans, and I want to assure you that this decision will stand for the rest of the Winter Term. I had looked forward to welcoming many of you back to the Health Sciences and Gage buildings, but we continue to wrestle with a challenging pandemic and we would like all of you to be able to plan for the rest of the term. Please note that it is our intention that the summer term progresses as an entirely in-person term.

Also, please know that support is available for anyone who needs it during this difficult time. U of T's [My Student Support Program](#) (My SSP) provides students with real-time and/or appointment-based confidential, 24-hour support for any school, health, or general life concern at no cost.

The [Employee & Family Assistance Program \(EFAP\)](#) is available to employees of the University of Toronto. This program is provided at no cost 24/7 and 365 days a year. Call toll free 1-800-663-1142.

And please remember, flexibility, kindness and patience – with each other and with ourselves – is essential to our collective health and wellbeing right now.

Thank you for your continued patience with this process as we make the best decisions with the best available evidence for our School.

Sincerely,

Adalsteinn (Steini) Brown
Dean and Professor