

# IN THE LOOP

## NOTES FROM THE DEAN'S OFFICE

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences



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## DEAN'S WELCOME

Jennifer S. Simpson, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

I've been working in higher education for over 20 years. This will be the first fall in which I will not have the privilege of joining my colleagues on campus to begin the term. I am glad to extend September greetings to faculty, staff and students in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. I am also keenly aware that all of us have had an unexpected spring and summer, and that we will not be starting the fall term as usual. I am glad to be able to provide updates on successes and initiatives in HSS.



# THE COVID CONTEXT

By Dr. Jennifer S. Simpson, Dean

One of the pleasures of working and taking classes at a university is arriving in September and seeing returning colleagues and students and new faces. For me, there has always been a distinctive excitement and energy about the start of the fall term, including a mild-to-moderate level of nervousness for each new class I have taught (including those nearly two decades into my career!). The lack of an on campus, face-to-face beginning is a loss, for all of us, and especially for first-year students.

The loss of starting the term face-to-face and on campus is only one of the many emotional realities we have been navigating for the past several months. Fear, uncertainty, isolation and the difficulties associated with making long-term plans when so much is shifting under our feet can have effects on us and on our personal and professional lives. I very much appreciate the work that faculty members have put into building remote versions of your course offerings. I hope that even with the uncertainties and differences that come with this term, your connections with students are ones that feed you and sustain the pleasures that come with teaching.

The breadth and depth of programming and courses in HSS looks very much like fall terms in the past, and Fall 2020 registrations in HSS are strong. HSS contributed four courses to a [Kickstart Your Degree Program](#) this summer, which in total attracted over 100 students into HSS courses. These courses gave new students the opportunity to take credit courses toward their degrees, and become familiar with Brightspace and remote learning at the university.

Myself and others in the Dean's Office continue to do what we can to ensure a supportive environment for teaching, research and creative work. This has included listening carefully to Heads and their concerns and questions, and planning as best we can for the fall term and remote instruction. We realize that even with the best planning, there may be unanticipated needs. We also understand that remote teaching can bring challenges, particularly as people juggle the demands of childcare and eldercare, with home and work life overlaid upon one another.

Throughout the term, we will do our best to continue providing support. If questions or concerns do come up, please pass these onto your Heads, who can then be in touch with myself and others in the Dean's Office.



**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES  
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

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# NOTES OF APPRECIATION AND CONGRATULATIONS

First, two long-term HSS administrative staff have retired in the last few months. Karen O'Leary began her career at Memorial University in 1983 in Corner Brook, moved to the St. John's campus in 1985, and most recently worked in the Dean's Office as the Enrolment Manager. Derek Norman, who started at Memorial University in 2002, was the inaugural Coordinator of the Digital Research Centre for Qualitative Fieldwork and the HSS Film Unit. I very much appreciate the contributions both Karen and Derek made to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

There have also been additions to the Dean's Office in the past several months. Many of you have met Ken Hopkins, who started in December as the Senior Administrative Officer. Also, Tana Allen began as Associate Dean (Research) on July 1.

It is great to be able to talk about research success in the Faculty, and our faculty continue to do very well. Congratulations to the many grant and award recipients who have been notified over the summer, notably those who have received SSHRC Insight Development Grants, the Terra Nova Young Innovator Award, and recognition by the Royal Society of Canada. We will take time to celebrate these and other successes at a familiar event, A Fine Crowd, which will be held on September 24 in a re-envisioned way.



Working together to get it done—remotely



# CURRENT INITIATIVES IN THE DEAN'S OFFICE

The last several months have been unique not only due to a global pandemic. There has also been heightened attention internationally to anti-Black racism. Faculty Council meetings were held in June and July to address possible anti-racist initiatives for HSS. At a meeting scheduled for October 14, my office will bring forward a proposal for discussion, drawing on conversations at the first two meetings.

There was strong attendance at the June and July meetings, and I am pleased to be addressing this topic at Faculty Council meetings with colleagues and considering possible next steps. (For minutes and other related documents, please visit this [link](#) and scroll down to the header "Special Faculty Council Meetings".)

Each of the Faculty Council Committees are working on initiatives coming out of the [Strategic Framework](#).

The Curriculum and Programs committee has been working toward creating a quiz app to support communication about what HSS has to offer. Ideally, such a tool will also allow students to explore HSS programs in relation to their interests, and assist students in declaring their programs.

I will briefly note my involvement with other on-campus initiatives. At the request of the Provost, I chair a Deans EDI Subcommittee, and it is an excellent place for Deans to address EDI, academic vision and leadership at Memorial University. [The Gazette](#) will soon feature an op-ed written by Dr. Sulaimon Giwa (faculty member in the School of Social Work, cross-appointed with the Department of Sociology) and myself on EDI at Memorial University.

As we begin the fall term, I wish everyone the best.

## AILSA CRAIG

Associate Dean (Curriculum and Programs)

Firstly, thank you for all the work you have put into preparing your courses for remote instruction as we work together to help support our students' timely completion of their programs, and to welcome the 2020/2021 HSS cohort to Memorial University. I hope that the resources provided through CITL have proven to be helpful, and I encourage you to [reach out to them](#) if you need assistance throughout the term. Our office has also set up a shell in D2L for you to share ideas and experiences with your colleagues on discussion boards.

As always, feel free to be in touch with your Head if you have any questions related to curriculum and programs. While this isn't the term we envisioned it would be last year at this time, I nonetheless look forward to our continued work together, and to helping support what we create with and for our students for Fall 2020. Lastly, I appreciate the phone calls and 'Hollywood Squares' moments of Webex meetings as we connect from our living rooms, kitchens, basement studies, etc. It's been a pleasure to meet your cats/dogs/children as they pop in from the sidelines. Have a great Fall term, and reach out as necessary.



# TANA ALLEN

Associate Dean (Research)

This has been an unusual moment to step into a new position! But it is a genuine pleasure to have joined the Dean's Office this summer, as it has given me the opportunity to become much more familiar with the exciting activities that are going on throughout our faculty. I have been impressed with the remarkable contributions, thoughtful questions and commitment to engaging with knowledge and ideas from all that I have seen.

Your research plans and activities may have had many disruption and changes. For those of you looking for information to navigate the many changes that have been rolled out over the last few months, including Tri-Agency guidelines among others, please let myself or Heather O'Brien and Matt Milner ([Grants Facilitation Officers](#)) know how we might be able to help.

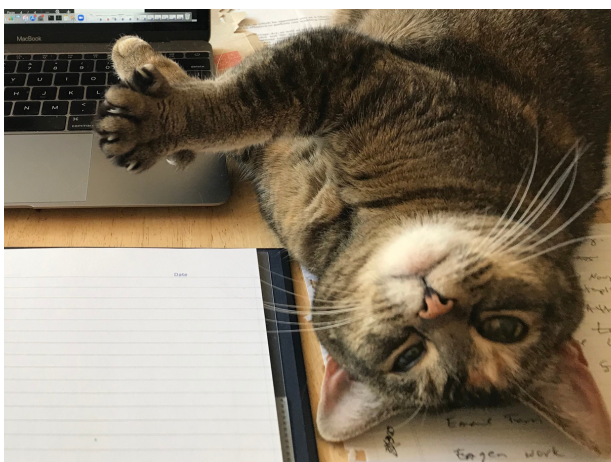
This term is going to be like no other, but there are already talks, seminars and online extravaganzas of all varieties going on. I look forward to seeing the ingenuity and resourcefulness of all of us working together to figure out how best to keep moving forward!

## A FINE CROWD

A reception for achievement in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

September 24, 2020 at 1 p.m.  
Online via Facebook Live

[DETAILS](#)



Nibbler, remote office assistant to Dr. Craig

## WELCOME FROM KEN HOPKINS

HSS Senior Administrative Officer

Hi everyone and welcome to a new fall semester.

First and foremost, I would like to thank all our administrative staff, who have been working hard all summer in preparation for this semester. This is my first fall at Memorial University and I am thoroughly impressed with the professionalism, dedication, and commitment of staff, especially while addressing the unique challenges we have faced over the past few months.

I'm looking forward to working with everyone as the new term progresses and wish everyone a very successful semester. As always, please feel free to reach out anytime.