

May 15, 2020

Natasha Cortes  
President  
Development Student Association  
University of Ottawa  
120 University Private, FSS2039

Dear Ms. Cortes,

I would like to thank you and your colleagues representing undergraduate student governments for taking the time to write and inquire about tuition fees for the Spring/Summer 2020 semester.

As you are aware, the outbreak of the COVID-19 coronavirus has had an unprecedented impact on our economy and like organizations everywhere, the University of Ottawa is unfortunately not immune. We have had to mitigate increasing and unforeseen negative financial circumstances. The costs related to transforming courses from face-to-face instruction to distance learning and hybrid formats for example, included increased bandwidth for internet connections, license fees for increased usage of videoconferencing technologies, an increased number of educational and digital instruction specialists and web developers to train faculty to develop online and distance courses, as well as to provide online academic, wellness and mental health support to students.

Our collective efforts to adapt and deliver hundreds of classes remotely to thousands of students in March and April thankfully allowed students to safely complete the 2019/2020 academic year. The feedback we received about this transition is that students were generally satisfied with the remote instruction offered, as well as with the provisions for evaluation methods and changes in grading that allowed faculties to give a "satisfactory" or "non satisfactory" mark.

In the wake of this pandemic, our leadership team continues to work on implementing new ways of operating so that the University can continue to deliver quality learning based on expert content, sound pedagogies, and student attainment of course and program learning outcomes. The Board of Governors recently approved our 2020-2021 budget, and we have developed several scenarios projected to position uOttawa strategically in a post-COVID-19 environment. The University will not be lowering or waiving tuition fees for the Spring/Summer 2020 semester.

Cabinet du recteur  
Office of the President

☎ 613-562-5809

📠 613-562-5103

🖱 [www.uOttawa.ca/recteur/](http://www.uOttawa.ca/recteur/)

🖱 [www.uOttawa.ca/president/](http://www.uOttawa.ca/president/)

✉ [recteur@uOttawa.ca](mailto:recteur@uOttawa.ca)

✉ [president@uOttawa.ca](mailto:president@uOttawa.ca)

📍 Pavillon Tabaret Hall  
550 Cumberland (212)  
Ottawa ON K1N 6N5  
Canada

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To date, students have signed up in larger numbers than ever for the spring/summer semester. The spring/summer semester, as well as the fall semester, will offer flexible formats for distance and hybrid modes, including the availability of low-bandwidth versions, that will enable students to continue their studies, regardless of their location or circumstance. Support will remain available to students in distance modes. We have also waived ancillary fees for the U-Pass, the University Centre (UCU) and Sports Services for the Spring/Summer 2020 semester as these services are temporarily suspended due to the situation surrounding COVID-19.

We understand that financial and mental health stresses are exacerbated for students in this current climate. For students affected by the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the federal government of Canada is offering a significant financial relief package, which is outlined on [this website](#). These new, student-centered measures amount to \$9 billion in support. Students may also continue to contact our [University of Ottawa Financial Aid and Awards Office](#) and our [uOttawa student mental health services](#).

These are extremely challenging times. COVID-19 is a rapidly changing global health issue that has disrupted every aspect of our lives. Please rest assured that we will make every effort to minimize impact on our students. As we navigate these uncharted waters, our focus remains to ensure the health, safety and well-being of our students while delivering curriculum of the highest quality so that students may be empowered to realize their full potential and contribute to our post-pandemic economy.

Thank you once again for writing, and for your ongoing understanding and resiliency.

Sincerely,



Jacques Frémont  
President and Vice-Chancellor

c.c. Jill Scott, Provost and Vice-President Academic Affairs