



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
MA COMMUNICATIONS
AND TECHNOLOGY

MACT NEWS

FALL 2020



MESSAGE FROM DR. GORDON GOW,

ACADEMIC DIRECTOR

Well, it's been quite a year, so where do I begin? Perhaps I'll start with the 2020 Rundle Summit in Banff, which was the last time I recall being together with a group of students and faculty in a physical space! Our annual graduate student conference was another success, and we were pleased to have Mark Wolfe as an invited keynote at the event. Many thanks to Kyle Napier for leading the organizing committee on behalf of the MACT team.

The pandemic lockdown happened in mid-March, and while we were initially hopeful that the Spring Institute might be able to go ahead as planned, that illusion was soon shattered when the university declared that all spring term courses would be online. So, for the first time in the 20+ years of the MACT program, the Spring Institute went online. I would like to thank all of our new and returning cohort members for their contributions during our consultation period

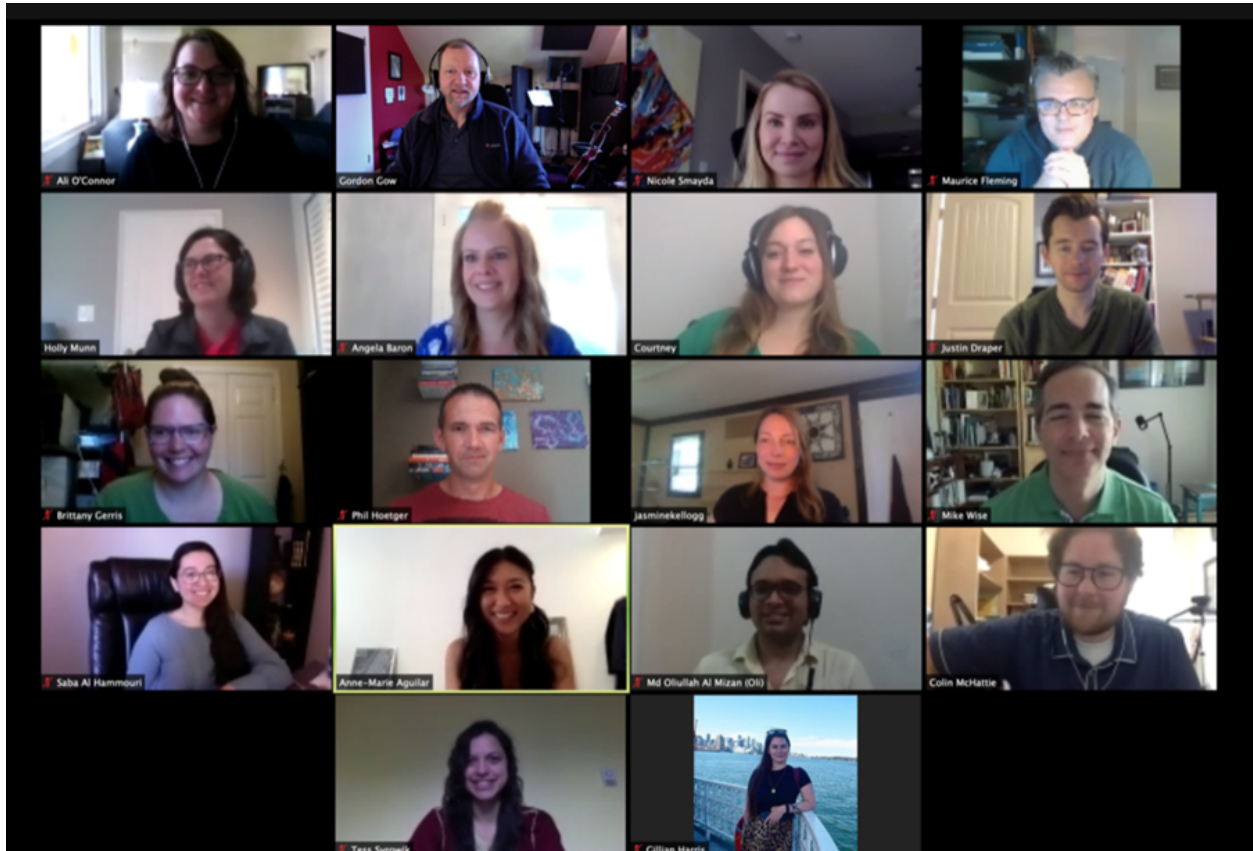
leading up to the decision to shift to a 6-week version of the Spring Institute. We are of course all hopeful that we will be able to get back to normal for our Spring Institute in 2021.

The other big news in the past months has been MACT's move from the Faculty of Extension to the Faculty of Arts. MACT is now part of a newly formed Media and Technology Studies unit, that includes three undergraduate programs and one other graduate program (Digital Humanities). This is a very positive development for the MACT program, as it opens up opportunities for expanding our elective offerings and growing the program in some new directions.

The pandemic has been a challenging time for all of us, but it has also revealed the value of the blended format of the MACT program. Our courses for summer, fall, and winter term have always been offered online, so for our students and faculty it is largely "business as usual" when it comes to delivering our programming the coming months. And while the challenges of managing our time at home may be more complex than in typical years, I'm confident that MACT students will continue to demonstrate their exceptional commitment to their education as members of our remarkably diverse and talented learning community.

SPRING INSTITUTE 2020

For the first time, ever, the MACT Spring Institute went online! Like all of you, COVID-19 changed our plans this spring. In early April, the University of Alberta made the call that all courses would be delivered remotely in spring term 2020. After some deliberation and seeking the feedback of our new and returning cohorts, the decision was made to deliver Spring Institute over six week rather than the usual three weeks. The format was a blend of weekly zoom sessions, short recorded video lectures and online forums. As always our MACT students and faculty rose to the occasion. Using their skills in and curiosity about communications and technology, Spring Institute 2020 was as exciting as ever and, of course, memorable!



Cohort 2020 class photo via Zoom

STUDENT & ALUMNI NEWS

- **Mandeep Jawanda** (Cohort 2012) celebrated [virtual convocation](#), due to COVID-19, on June 12 as he received his MA in Communications and Technology. Congratulations Mandeep and welcome to the MACT alumni community!
- **Jennifer Pascoe** (Cohort 2016) has accepted an one-year secondment (1 August 2020 - 31 July 2021) as the Executive Director, Strategic Communications for the University of Alberta. Congratulations on this exciting and important new role!
- **Oliver Rossier's** (Cohort 2012) capstone research is being published in the [Kule Institute for Advanced Study's collection on sustainable research and conferencing](#), published by Open Book Publishers.
- **Maria Alvarez Malvido** (Cohort 2018) has published an article entitled [A Participatory Action Research Project: Weaving Technology and Autonomy with Indigenous Communities in Mexico](#) on the Global Media Technologies and Cultures Lab blog.

- **Bev Fowler** (Cohort 2006) received her Certified Emergency Manager (CEM) designation through [International Association of Emergency Management](#) (IAEM) in 2019. At the time, there were only ~1,880 Canadians who had achieved this designation. Additionally Bev receiving the Alberta Emergency Services Medal in 2018 for her service in the Fire and EM industry. Congratulations and thank you for this important work, Bev!
- **Katrina Ingram** (Cohort 2018) shares: "Season Four of the Back to School Again podcast is in development. As usual, episode one will be all about MACT. I'll be talking with fellow 2018 cohort classmates Jane Duffy and Cedric Cordero about "Research in a time of COVID-19" and how the pandemic impacted our capstone projects. I'm aiming for an early September launch and all episodes will be at www.backtoschoolagain.ca I'm also working on launching a company that is an extension of my capstone research. I've been blogging since last fall at www.ethicallyalignedai.com and I plan to turn the Ethically Aligned AI brand into a company."
- Award-winning, Edmonton-based filmmakers, **Marliss Weber** (Cohort 2007) and Randy Brososky from Group of Rogues, have created a seven part web series called Day Nine. The project is a cross-border collaboration with filmmakers in six different countries, with all of the production taking place during the coronavirus lockdown. <http://daynineseries.com/>
- **Kris Hodgson-Bright** (Cohort 2015) has recently completed a project with a colleague to build an electric cello. [Check out the news story about the fascinating project!](#)
- **Diana Varma** (Cohort 2013) shares: "In November 2019, I started a podcast called 'Talk Paper Scissors', focused in the area of graphic communications. Since I launched nine months ago, I've had more than 500 downloads and had listeners download the podcast in six continents. Find it on [Instagram](#) or [Apple Podcasts](#)"

Stay in touch with MACT throughout the year.

Follow us on social media or contact us directly at mact@ualberta.ca.