From Laurel's Desk

Published 6/23/2021 by Ashley Ribbel

in the June 2021 issue

Lasts and Lasting

In thinking about this introduction and in particular the context of this year, I decided that I would write about "lasts." And the dichotomy of feelings we experience in anticipating "lasts."

And while Seneca will never be the same, there are, no doubt, many "lasts" to which we will be happy to bid adieu: the last convocation to be cancelled, the last "only in virtual" showcase of student work, the last time you will need to have approval for and go through screening to teach or work on campus. These are in addition to more personal "lasts" – the last Zoom meeting with your family who live within a 30-minute drive but you can't see because of lockdowns, the last time you will have to stand in line to purchase groceries or arrange for curbside pick-up, and so many more.

Since our regular rhythm is that of the academic year, many of the "lasts" come at the end of the spring semester or perhaps the end of June. The last class you will teach until September, the last class for students who are graduating. These "lasts" remain regardless of the environment in which we have been operating. These are the "happy-sad lasts."

For me, May and June have been the months of "lasts" as I close out my work at Seneca at the end of the month. With each "last" meeting or event, whether with groups or individuals, I am reminded of the good work being done and the impact of that work, as well as the exciting potential to be realized in the future. These are my personal "happy-sad lasts" in that it has been such a joy to work with talented, committed, and creative educators and others who support the academic work we do. At the same time, I am sad to say goodbye to the Seneca family, all of the people who make Seneca special, and sad that I will not be there to champion and support what is to come.

I will close out with my final note on "lasting," or perhaps enduring. The effects of what we have, and are, experiencing will be lasting effects – on how we live and work, and what we value and how we demonstrate those values. As difficult as it has been, and I would be remiss not to acknowledge that it has been so much more so for those less fortunate, we

have learned and internalized many of those learnings.

It is well known that teachers and caring staff leave a lasting impression on students and colleagues. All of us can recall, in a millisecond, the name of that one person who influenced the direction of our lives when we were at an inflection point or changed our viewpoint. Over the years at Seneca, I have witnessed this happening, over and over and over again.

While we often celebrate or mark the “lasts,” it is the “lastings” that have the power to transform.

My sincere thanks to all of you for all of the “lastings” you have so generously given to me. It’s been an honour and privilege to work with you.

I wish you all good health and happiness. And may you continue to create the most amazing “lastings” for our students and each other.

Laurel

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tags : june-2021, vice-president-academic