

[Home](#) » [About CITY](#) » Interim Director's Message 2020

[Edit This](#)

Interim Director's Message 2020

Dear CITY members,

Having served as a member of the CITY executive for the 2019-2020 year, I'd like to begin by thanking Prof. Linda Peake for another successful year directing CITY (despite the curtailment of activities in March by COVID-19) and wish her well on our behalf for a productive and enjoyable sabbatical. I'd also like to express our collective thanks to our outgoing coordinator Dr. Francesca D'Amico, who defended her PhD in History last Fall and is now settling in to postdoctoral life at the University of Toronto's Jackman Humanities Institute.

It is an honour to step in as Interim Director for the year. And I do hope that I will get to step inside the Kaneff Tower at some point before the end of this year! I am also glad to be working with our interim coordinator Dr. Tiffany Pollock for the coming months; both of us have been getting to grips (remotely) with what button does what since starting on July 1.

We will continue to administer the various SSHRC and other grants currently housed at CITY over the coming months. As you are aware, the grant application cycle has not changed as a result of COVID-19, and we will continue our practice of encouraging and constructively critiquing applications from any of you that you are interested in running through CITY for the upcoming season. We will be updating the CITY website to take account of your various items of news and achievements and the arrival of new postdoctoral researchers and visiting scholars, as well as the fruits of our creative graduate and undergraduate affiliates. And despite the current realities of off-campus interaction, we will continue our process of outreach to locate urban and suburban-focused researchers and projects at York, especially but by no means exclusively in the arts and humanities arena.

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Finally, we have all become aware of the impacts of COVID-19 on our daily lives and circulations since March. From an urban perspective in general, the list of impacts is long: the uneven geographies of infection and spread within cities and their disproportionate effects on low-income and racialized populations; the uneven impact across occupational sectors and the experiences of essential and frontline workers; improvisations and adjustments among segments of the urban population to facilitate their demands for leisure and entertainment; pressures on domestic lives; and projected constraints on municipal finances, budgets, services, and programs. Neither can we ignore the urban-centred struggles we have witnessed against racial and other forms of discrimination as political and economic polarizations become ever more transparent in different parts of the world as well as on our own doorstep. As all this is ongoing, we speculate on what post-COVID cities may look like in both the social and physical sense.

With the above predicaments in mind, we are planning our schedule of seminars for the upcoming year. It is critical that we address these current issues in the schedule and to do so in a way that ideally showcases a variety of disciplinary approaches and a diversity of urban environments. In this respect, I will be glad of any assistance and suggestions from any of you over the coming weeks and months. Our Fall seminars will at least be online and some will take the form of panels.

I thank you for your attention to the above matters. I look forward to hearing from you, and wish you and those around you good health and safety as we prepare ourselves in our own particular ways for the Fall semester.

William Jenkins

[Prof. Linda Peake's 2018-2019 Director's message](#)

[Prof. Linda Peake's 2017 Director's message](#)

