

A virtual encounter with Berta

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During 2005 I began to explore MA programs. I heard about OISE/UT, and so I explored the faculty profiles and read about Berta Vigil Laden. It seemed that both of us had some common points of interest, so I wrote to her, describing my main interests and queries. Surprisingly, Berta wrote back immediately and provided not only substantial feedback, but also confidence and warmth in her words. From there on, I started to consider the Higher Education MA at OISE/UT my program of choice.

Since I was in Chile, on the south side of the planet, contact with a faculty member of OISE/UT was tremendously valuable. It's incredible how contact with Berta was crucial to making me feel confident about my application. In fact, she even took the time to review my statement of intent before I submitted the application package.

Once I found out that I had been accepted at TPS, I wrote to Berta. She wrote back telling me that she was delighted to know that I had been accepted, that I wouldn't regret my decision of coming to Toronto, and that she was looking forward to meet me in person.

Her last words in that email were *hasta muy pronto*, which means "see you very soon". That last email was at the end of April. Afterwards, as I prepared to move to Toronto, I spent the next three months wrapping up various activities at the office, and planning my wedding. I was left with barely enough time for emails with my family and friends, and didn't get a chance to write to Berta again before I left.

Berta told me that she was ill, but she didn't specify what her condition was. I assumed, according to her last words that she was feeling better and was coming back to Toronto. Unfortunately, that didn't happen. I didn't get to meet her in person. The first thing I wished to do when I met her was to give her a big hug, and thank her for all her support. I don't know if she was aware of how much support she gave me.

Even though she isn't physically with us any longer, I hope she knows how grateful I am for her support.

That's why I would wish to thank her, once again: "Thank you so much Berta, and see you soon, *hasta muy pronto!*"