



Imprint

Your Stories, Your Voice

March 2024
Volume 2 Issue 8

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students by
students
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time between
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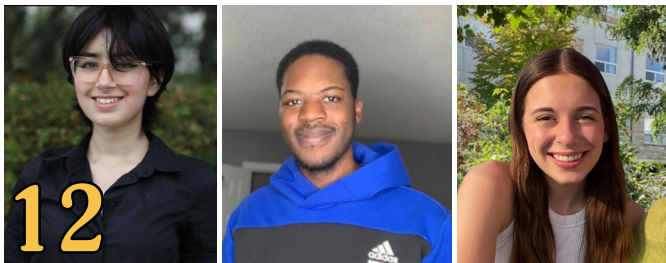
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By the students, for the students

The student groups taking mental health into their own hands

Alicia Wang, Senior Editor

Students at UW are taking the mental health of their peers into their own hands in a way that hopes to address isolation on campus and the stigmatization of mental health resources once and for all.

Kirruithikah Vadivel, a third-year honours psychology student, is the president of one such group: SOCH Mental Health club, the UW branch of a national organization that aims to combat stigma around mental health in South Asian communities. Soch (सोच) is a word in Hindi, Urdu, and Punjabi that means “to think” or “a thought.”

SOCH typically hosts two events per term, usually de-stressing activities that aim to foster creativity and provide a safe space for students to relax with friends or meet new people. Though it is open to everyone, many South Asian students in particular attend these events, Vadivel said. “You can really tell [the events] [do] help them de-stress... it’s like a way they don’t have to focus on school or anything like that.”

Alongside these, SOCH runs social media campaigns targeted towards the South Asian community, such as Mental Health Resource of the Month, which spotlights various media focusing on mental health, largely by South Asian authors. Another campaign is Breaking Barriers: South Asian Struggles, which explains the struggles that occur within the South Asian community, such as the consistent comparisons made by South Asian parents of their children with other South Asian youth, and strategies to deal with it.

Hsiao d’Ailly, associate professor in social development studies at

Renison University College, explained that the creation of such communities plays into the prevention aspect of mental health, and ensures that if the situation escalates, students can access the individual support needed to overcome it.

Debbie Wang, a part-time UW lecturer in social development studies, emphasized the importance of such support, though access to it can be hindered by stigmas around mental wellness. “The only thing is the resources... we’re hesitant to reach out. Time, energy, and money [make] it less accessible, especially to students, let alone students [who] come from certain cultural communit[ies] [where] the stigma can be immense,” Wang said.

Vadivel, whose parents come from Sri Lanka, expressed the personal impact of her work. She recalled an exchange from first year, where after explaining her exam-induced stress to her father, he suggested, to her surprise, that if she needed a break after the year, she could transfer to an easier school or take a year off.

“That was really surprising to me. Hearing that come out of his mouth... [the effort to destigmatize mental health] is really working to be honest. Like you can see a lot of people are prioritizing their mental health more, which I really enjoy,” she said.

She explained that a large reason why she joined SOCH was because of how important she feels a student-built community and support system is, which can sometimes feel more helpful than support from professors because of the sense that “everyone is in this together.”

UW certainly has no shortage of demand for both community and individual support. In



to think
a thought





“Recognizing that there’s no universal remedy for mental health, I applaud students for their ingenuity in seeking out solutions like the UW Smile Club”

Goldi Gill, Executive Director of Campus Wellness

the last fiscal year, 4,109 students, accounting for roughly 11 per cent of total students that year, sought appointments at Campus Wellness, a trend that’s held relatively steady since before COVID-19.

- 2019-2020 – 4,352, or 12 per cent of students
- 2020-2021 – 2,954, or just under eight per cent of students
- 2021-2022 – 4,129, or roughly 11 per cent of students
- 2022-2023 – 4,109, or roughly 11 per cent of students

Goldi Gill, executive director of Campus Wellness, said in a statement to *Imprint* that the data “highlights a growing demand for student support since the pandemic, a trend reflected across the sector.” A report from the Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health showed that students in Ontario post-secondary institutions reported higher levels of anxiety and feelings of stress or isolation in the aftermath of the pandemic.

“Unfortunately, sometimes it’s the big incidents that bring awareness,” Wang said, listing suicidal attempts, mental breakdowns, and feelings of isolation as incidents that can cause a “mushroom” of focus on students’ mental health.

When asked if the attacks on Hagey Hall last June could be considered one such event, d’Ailly said that with danger can also come an opportunity to reflect. Speaking of the attack,

“it’s scary... it provoke[s] fear, but... at the same time it makes you face things in a more direct way and... that’s where resilience comes in, right? Like ‘we are facing [a] difficult situation, let’s all look at it and think about [how] we can make our community stronger.’”

“Recognizing that there’s no universal remedy for mental health, I applaud students for their ingenuity in seeking out solutions like the UW Smile Club,” Gill’s statement continued, explaining that Campus Wellness has been conducting focus groups and surveys, as well as reaching out to “various student organizations across campus,” to determine students’ primary concerns and how best to address them.

According to Gill, in the past year, Campus Wellness has reduced wait times for individual, ongoing counselling services by 60 per cent by “addressing bottlenecks and finding areas of efficiencies.”

“We’re in this together,” Gill concluded her statement.

SOCH isn’t the only group of students creating student-centric spaces to improve mental health. UW Smile Club, a relatively new club on campus, hopes to spread awareness about the mental health resources available to students on campus, and has done so with the support of Campus Wellness and Gill. Its growth demonstrates the demand for such spaces: according to Rastin Rassoli, a computer science and psychology double major and Smile Club president, the club’s membership has more than doubled to 160 members, up from the 70 they had last term.

Rassoli explained that over the spring 2023 term, through conversations with peers and students from other schools, he and his friends realized that many students were unaware of or unwilling to access the different mental health resources



available to them. “So we realized that you need some sort of community that’s student-led and tries to promote these resources and connects students to these available services,” he said.

Though Rassoli and his friends hoped to start the club that same term, WUSA’s concerns about the sensitivity of the topic required the club to gain the support of Campus Wellness and participate in meetings to “convince WUSA that... students [could] run such a club,” all of which delayed the club’s official start to fall 2023.

Rassoli praised the support Campus Wellness has provided the club, stating that their belief in the club was what convinced WUSA to support it as well. He explained that Campus Wellness helped direct what the club should take on and provided some free resources and samples it might need.

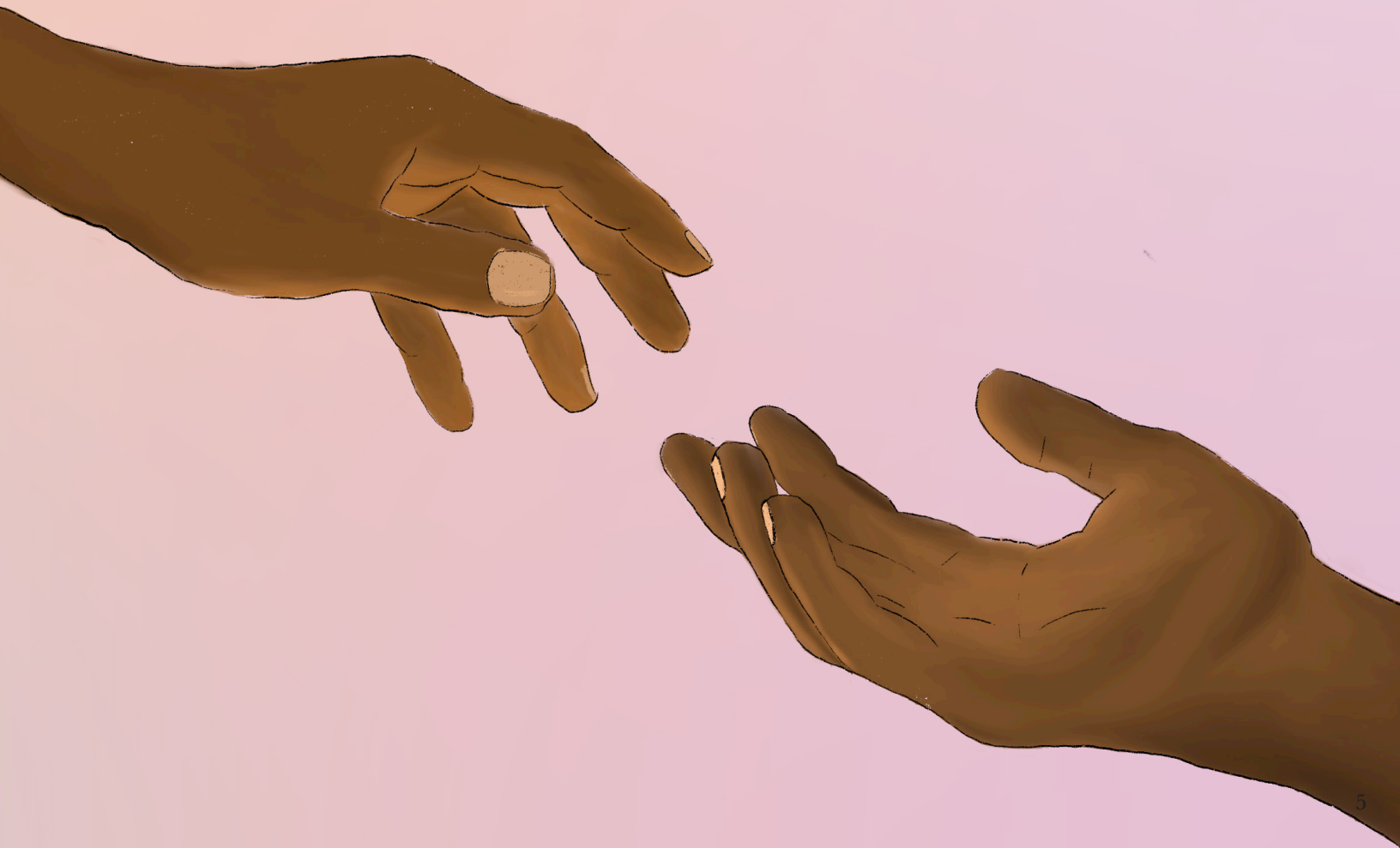
The club aims to spread awareness about mental health resources available to students, and to counter the idea that such resources should only be used by those with severe mental health conditions. Part of this work, Rassoli said, includes taking responsibility to inform students how they can help solve issues that affect the whole community, such as by informing Campus Wellness of appointment cancellations with notice, if possible, to avoid unintentionally prolonging the waitlist. They also host events to give students

space to take a breather and bond with one another. Maria Perervine, a second-year biochemistry student and Smile Club’s events director, said that the events differ depending on the needs of their members, because “everyone’s struggling with something and the way that they deal with those things, it’s different for everyone.”

The club also aims to simply foster a community for students to support other students. “We’re also students... so we can just talk with each other and it’s not necessarily related to mental health, sometimes it’s just a student is not feeling well just because of an exam, you know, and they want to talk with another student,” Rassoli said.

When asked how he balances Smile Club with school, Rassoli said that the ability to help people, the love he holds for the work, and the positive feedback he receives from Smile Club members gives him energy to keep going. “It doesn’t really drain your energy, it doesn’t feel like working, it gives you just more passion and more determination to start working on things.”

“We are not trying to have a campus [where] there’s no stress... there’s no difficulty. It’s not like that. It’s... how do we collectively support people [who] go through these difficult situation[s]?” d’Ailly said.





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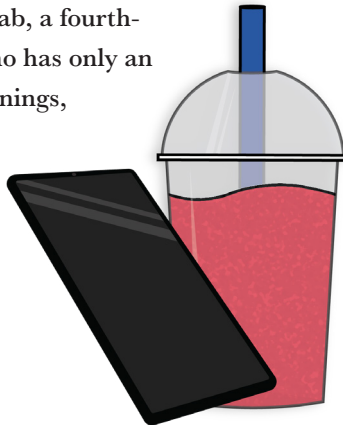
The art of killing time: How students spend time between classes

Janelle Gunaratnam, Contributor

For most students, debating what to do in between classes can be just as irritating as finding a seat in the library during exam season, especially as the term picks up and students are challenged with juggling classes, assignments, and extracurriculars. This is complicated by the fact that break times vary from an hour to the better part of a day. So, how do students use those precious moments? From grabbing a quick bite to gym sessions, here is how some UW students fill their time.

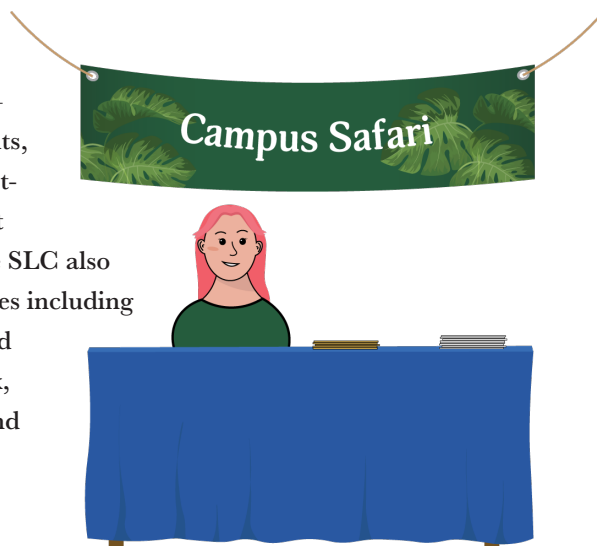
1 Snack and Scroll

For students like Stephanie Saab, a fourth-year health science student who has only an hour to spare on Monday mornings, grabbing a smoothie from the SLC and catching up with social media is the way to go. She mentions that the short break doesn't lend well to starting major assignments, but is the perfect amount of time for a quick recharge before she enters her lab.



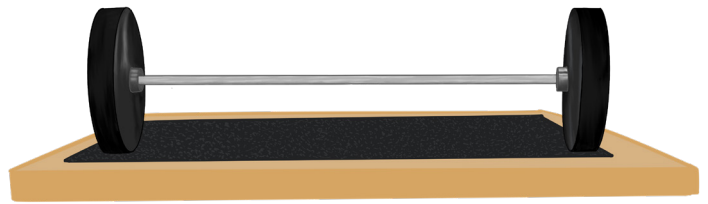
2 Campus Safari

The SLC always has something going on during the week – from career fairs to cultural events, there is always something interesting to engage with. The best part is they usually have freebies! The SLC also houses a variety of WUSA services including RAISE, the Women's Centre, and Mates. They offer spaces to relax, engage with advocacy groups, and connect with other students.



3 PAC and Dash

For Andre Arroyo-Cottier, a third-year mechanical engineering student, the best way to occupy a longer break is by heading to PAC for a quick workout. For him, it is a "great way to stay energised and happy." A Warrior favourite, PAC does not just serve as a gym – as a complete recreational facility, students can access a variety of guided fitness classes, a climbing centre, and a pool, thereby making it the perfect outlet for a recharge.



4 Office Hours and Academic Productivity

Attending office hours or booking a one-on-one with a professor or TA is a great use of time. It is an opportunity to grasp course material and build valuable relationships with faculty. Using this time to revise notes or start assignments is another great use of time — something you will be grateful for come finals season!



Nature Detox

For Niki Selvarajan, a second-year accounting and financial management student, taking a stroll through campus is a great way to recharge and de-stress. “Especially during the spring term when the sun is out and the leaves are coming in, going on a walk feels like the perfect escape. You get the opportunity to really appreciate the campus’ natural beauty.”

Errands

For students who live closer to campus, going back home for a power nap or a home-cooked meal is the obvious choice. Living nearby also allows the luxury of getting a quick load of laundry done, tidying up, or making a trip to the grocery store to stock up for the week.

Serve and Socialise

Longer breaks give students the opportunity to engage with the community. “I volunteer at the Canadian Blood Services off campus. It is really rewarding to give back to the community,” says Zoe Dahse, a third-year history student. The university is also home to hundreds of clubs ranging from athletics to acapella, guaranteeing a community for everyone. Clubs and volunteer activities also provide a great sense of service and purpose that enrich the student experience.

The Art of Doing Nothing

Sometimes, the best way to spend a break is by simply doing nothing at all.

From fitness and volunteering to academic productivity and simple relaxation, the endless options for spending time between classes reflect the dynamic and multifaceted lives of students here at UW. Whether you have mere minutes or a few hours, there are a plethora of options available. So, the next time you find yourself with a gap between classes, stop by campus – there is something for everyone.



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A look inside Flock Stop's 24/7 world

Veronica Reiner, Executive Editor

Flock Stop, the 24/7 on-campus convenience store, is seeing record-breaking sales every year, according to area retail manager Jill Nothstein. As a result, Flock Stop representatives will propose to the board this year that the organization, based in the Student Life Centre (SLC), obtain more space, either through renovations or moving to a larger location.

“We have definitely outgrown [it] because we continue to grow year over year over year,” Nothstein said. “We’re only 750 square feet, and when you have 2,000 people coming through your door every single day ... it’s very, very tiny.”

On average, Flock Stop conducts between 1,600 to 1,800 transactions daily. This number has gone up to 2,100 on some days, and the store is particularly busy in the fall. Some of the highest selling products are beverages, such as coffee, energy drinks, and soda. Other top sellers include sushi (which is made fresh daily by trained chefs) and Jamaican patties.

The store also offers Dippin’ Dots, ICEEs, cookie dough, wraps, sandwiches, salads, chocolate bars, and more.

“It’s grown in sales and popularity,” Nothstein said. “I think a lot of that is due to us being open 24 hours, seven days a week. We do quite a bit of sales at night — once all the other eateries in the SLC close, we are the only thing open.”

There is typically a rush of customers at 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., then a steady stream of students coming in throughout the night. “During the day, [there’s] the wait between classes. At night, I find there is a more consistent trickle,” Nothstein said. “It also depends on sporting or club events that are happening... we’re definitely a lot busier during exams.”

There are 25 to 30 staff that keep Flock Stop running smoothly — this is made up of UW students and three permanent staff members. Five of the students are co-op





David Yin

students, for whom it is a full-time position, working about 35 hours per week. Two co-op students also work as daytime shift coordinators, two are night shift managers, while the remaining co-op student acts as an evening shift coordinator.

One of the co-op employees is Mya Santo, a second-year UW student studying English language and literature. She recently started the position around Jan. 8, and hopes to continue working at Flock Stop past the co-op end date of May 3.

Her night shifts often run from 11 p.m. to 8 a.m. on weekends, and 10:30 p.m. to 7:30 a.m. on weekdays. “I’ve been calling it my vampire schedule,” Santo said with a laugh. Part of her role involves interacting with customers,

stocking the store, and cleaning up.

The foot traffic on nights can vary significantly — Santo noted it was particularly slow during reading week in mid February. “For the most part, it’s one or two people every hour, then occasionally big study groups come in,” she said, adding it typically clears out between 4:30 to 5 a.m.

There are often regular customers that come in throughout the night shifts. “I’ve noticed that computer science and engineering students really are night owls to a tee, all the time,” Santo said.

“It’s cool connecting with the university community in that undercurrent way, like seeing what’s going on in the nighttime. For the most part, people just want their energy drinks, and to

get out and go back to studying, which is cool. And some people like to hang around and talk for a bit, [or] want opinions on chocolate bars.”

Santo has past experience working at Tim Horton’s and Food Basics, and said working at Flock Stop feels like a blend of the two.

In addition to co-op students, there are also 10 to 15 part-time student staff members, depending on the term. Nothstein said that the growth of Flock Stop has allowed for increased staff salaries.

“We’re able to start our staff out above minimum wage — it’s typical in retail that you have minimum wage... but we’re able to do more than that,” Nothstein said.

As revenue increases for Flock Stop,

so do the costs, which include hiring more staff members, paying competitive wages and upgrading equipment, such as new coolers.

The store turns about 20,000 stock-keeping units a week. Permanent staff members handle ordering, receiving, rotating and invoicing of weekly deliveries of various products, including dairy, Pepsi, Coke, ICEE, and more.

Other responsibilities of permanent staff include staff management (such as training new co-op students), administrative work, and signage. They also need to ensure equipment is maintained and the store is clean to keep things running smoothly. “There is a lot that goes into running this little business,” Nothstein said.

While Flock Stop operates 24/7 and is open for business most days of the year, the shop closes during winter break for about one week and reopens after New Year’s Day. The only other time it closes is if maintenance is being conducted, either in the store or the SLC.

Nothstein took over managing the store in August 2021. “When I first started [at] Flock Stop, it was not easy managing a 24/7,” Nothstein said. “Many things happened overnight such as equipment failure, POS system issues, and staff call-ins. These things would happen in the evenings as well.”

She came up with better onboarding procedures, so that overnight and evening staff had the tools needed to

troubleshoot issues when they came up. In addition, part-time staff were no longer hired for overnight shifts, but instead, two co-op positions were created instead. This was done to allow student staff to adjust to the overnight schedule and focus solely on managing the store, as opposed to having to juggle classes on top of that.

“Anything we do make as sales continue to grow, we give back to our student body.”

Jill Nothstein, area retail manager

“We have very bright, hard-working students. They know how to problem-solve very well. So having these tools at their disposal, they can solve most issues on their own,” Nothstein said. “It was many of our past co-op coordinators [who] assisted me with writing these procedures. This store has truly been built by students.”

Flock Stop has seen several iterations over the years. It used to be called Aussie’s Down Under, with limited daytime hours (11 a.m. to 2 p.m.), offering snacks and a postal service to students. Later, it moved to its current location

and became Federation Express.

In 2012, it became the franchise International News, eventually extending the hours to 24/7. In 2022, the International News contract ended, and it is now known as Flock Stop, independently owned and operated by WUSA.

Since the organization is run by WUSA, it is not-for-profit. “Anything we do make as sales continue to grow, we give back to our student body,” Nothstein said.

For example, Flock Stop offers consistent pricing deals to students — for this past Valentine’s Day, they offered a 25 per cent deal on red velvet cookie dough, and in early February, there was 25 per cent off two warm entrees (the spicy jerk chicken rice and butter paneer with rice).

There have also been contests for students to win larger items, such as an Apple Watch giveaway (which ran from Feb. 19 to Mar. 1) and a Red Bull mini fridge (which ran from Jan. 17 to Jan. 31). Nothstein said Flock Stop has worked hard to grow its Instagram audience as a way to communicate with students about these deals.

Looking to the future, Nothstein plans to conduct research on what students would like to see at Flock Stop (such as groceries, health and beauty products, etc.) through surveys and interviews, then work to incorporate those items into the store.



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2024 grads reflect on their UW journey

Humreet Sandhu, Contributor

Graduation is fast approaching, and it can be an exciting and nerve-racking time for many students at UW, who are often looking to secure a job and figure out their future. Everyone has their own unique journey at university, and we can gain insight from each experience.



“My time at the university was challenging and character building.”

Rania Atif

**Honours Arts and Business,
Legal Studies Major**

Rania Atif is in the honours arts and business program, majoring in legal studies. She is graduating this April and has mixed feelings about it, adding that she feels pretty nervous because of the state of the economy. “I am grateful for co-op and having some experience from that, but to be honest, UW doesn’t really instill you with the knowledge you need to go out in the business world,” she said, expressing that her co-op term would have been

more beneficial with valuable courses like data analysis, instead of PD.

Atif started her undergraduate degree as an economics major, but didn’t enjoy it because of the professors and online classes. She later realized that studying law was her passion, and switched to legal studies. “I was so happy when I switched because I got better co-ops and the professor was very resourceful,” she said.

During her university career, Atif worked co-op jobs at CIBC, Manulife, and UW. Atif expressed that she had a difficult time in her first co-op at Manulife, as it was entirely remote. After that, she worked for the UW international student experience team. Of this co-op, she said, “This job didn’t really add anything to my resume and I felt like I wasn’t recognized for the work I did.” She then worked at a small law firm, where she reviewed refugee cases and wrote legal papers regarding the protection of refugee women that were shown to federal courts. Atif’s last co-op was with CIBC, where she updated a lot of the existing systems in the financial crime and risk management department. She appreciated working with CIBC and hopes to go into banking post-graduation. “This co-op was my favourite, because I got to present my projects to the Chief Risk Officer and other senior executives,” she said. Atif added

that students who are having a hard time finding co-op can expand their technical skills by doing Excel courses or learning a coding language.

When asked about her outlook on the university, Atif stated, “My time at the university was challenging and character building.” Atif explained how she wished she’d had more faith in herself. “I wish that I didn’t let imposter syndrome choose my major at the start and just went into legal studies. I am genuinely so passionate about legal studies and wished I had chosen it earlier,” she said. Atif is encouraged by how many roles are available in the financial crime industry, especially given that the industry is “very new, and is considered a booming industry because it’s very common.”

“I am grateful for co-op and having some experience from that, but to be honest, UW doesn’t really instill you with the knowledge you need to go out in the business world.”



“To navigate university, you need a good support system, and that includes students who are in your classes on a regular basis.”

Honours science didn’t provide that.”

AJ Mbohi

Honours Science, Geography and Environmental Sustainability Minor

AJ Mbohi is in his last year of the honours science program with a minor in geography and environmental sustainability and will be graduating in April. For the past three years, he has looked forward to graduating, however, the reality is settling in now. “Now that I am two months out, I am realizing that education is pretty much all I have known,” he said. Mbohi mentioned how he wasn’t ever in the co-op program, so he hasn’t had a straight nine-to-

five schedule for more than a month. He is scared about going into the real world, but takes solace in the fact that he won’t be attending school.

When asked about job prospects, Mbohi mentioned he had an interview last week for ONroute Ontario, a Canadian service company that operates highway rest stops. He said, “I managed to get to the third stage of the interview process, however, there was only one position available, and the chances of getting hired are really low... it might not just be that I am not necessarily a good candidate, just not the best candidate for that job.”

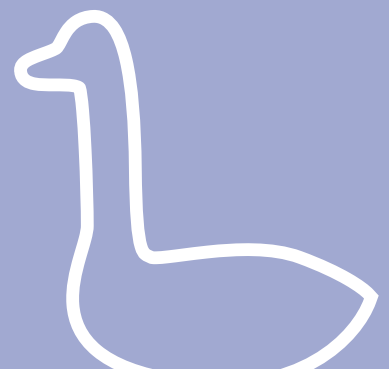
Mbohi explained how during his first year at the university, he felt a big sense of community because he lived in an on-campus residence. After the COVID-19 lockdown, he felt isolated and didn’t feel like he got all the support he needed from the university. “The six free therapy

sessions per term did help me through the lockdown, so I have to give them some credit,” he said. After lockdown, he felt students were less likely to talk to one another, especially the newer students. However, he thinks that clubs did help bring back the sense of community.

Mbohi expressed that his industry, climate science, has a sense of “boomerism.” He explained that we can do all the science in the world, but it all depends on policy makers to reduce our impact on the global climate. He said that “there is the bleakness of it, but at the same time, all climate scientists love their work because they are working where they love, which is out in nature.”

When asked about doing anything different in his undergraduate years, he responded by saying that he wished he didn’t go into the honours science program because of the lack of community and connection. “To navigate university, you need a good support system, and that includes students who are in your classes on a regular basis,” he said. “Honours science didn’t provide that.”

“The six free therapy sessions per term did help me through the lockdown, so I have to give them some credit.”





“I’m having mixed feelings about graduating, and I’m feeling scared and excited at the same time.”

Laura Steiner

**Honours Arts, Psychology Major,
Social Developmental Studies Minor**

2024

Laura Steiner is in the honours arts program, majoring in psychology and minoring in social developmental studies. She said that she is “having mixed feelings about graduating, and [is feeling] scared and excited at the same time.” She has a job lined up after graduation as a physician navigator at Southlake Regional Health Centre in Newmarket.

Steiner explained how after COVID-19, she has grown to love Waterloo, and never really ran into a bad professor. “All the professors go above and beyond to make sure that we feel comfortable and to ensure that there are resources for us,” she said.

While not in the co-op program, Steiner applied to jobs every summer.

She was recommended a job by her academic advisor as a personal support worker role, applied, and accepted their offer. “I love the job and I spend the day with a man who has a developmental disability. My goal is to make his life more productive and keep him busy,” she said. There is a demand for the job she is going into, she said, so that hospitals and emergency rooms run more efficiently. After this job, she plans to get her masters in occupational therapy.

Reflecting on what she would have done differently in her undergraduate years, she wished that she reached out more to meet people and had contacted the school to host some sort of orientation, since she started her first year amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

“All the professors go above and beyond to make sure that we feel comfortable and to ensure that there are resources for us.”

Everyone is welcome!

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A complicated series of connections between different things.

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of the 4th
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WUSA mustn't lose the forest for the trees

Why we should be humble about this year's election voter turnout

Charlie Dickson, Contributor

The results are in: 25.13 per cent of students (8,876) voted in WUSA's election, the highest percentage since 1985, and the highest number ever. This surpassed last year's results exponentially — 2023 saw a historically low 3.28 per cent voter turnout. From a statistical view, it appears WUSA significantly improved student motivation to engage with the organization — and in many ways, they did. However, I believe WUSA should view these results not as a sign of positive engagement and approval, but rather as a call to action. Instead of being concerned with the effects high voter turnout has on its brand imaging, they must accept it with a sense of humility. This voter turnout can be partly attributed to dissatisfaction and material rewards — factors that not only distorted the results, but are also unsustainable in improving year-round student engagement. These are not

the pillars upon which a strong student union relies.

For context, this burst in democratic participation is so drastic that WUSA surpassed even the University of Western Ontario (UWO), a university traditionally regarded as a leader in student engagement, after the turnout for their University Student Council election this year fell from 35 per cent in 2023 to 21.6 per cent in 2024. In the recent history of UWO's elections, there are relatively large swings in student participation, but nowhere near the fantastically steep slope created when representing WUSA's turnout history on a line graph.

2024 broke a 16-year average by more than 15 per cent. I believe there are five key factors that explain this phenomenon.

The first is simple — choice. Real choice between presiden-

Nick Pfeifle,
Candidate for President

Arya Razmjoo,
Candidate for President

Rafaeel Rehman,
Candidate for President



tial and director candidates gave stake and purpose to the election, something that has been lacking over the past four years. Candidates tend to have less motivation to campaign seriously when running unopposed. Since the pandemic, elections have been a tedious “approve or disapprove” ballot for the sole candidate running, forcing students into an unattractive binary of electing an untested candidate or nobody at all. More candidates running also increased the election’s word-of-mouth reach, as friends, classmates, and associated club members came out in support. Former WUSA President Rory Norris said that the competitiveness “ensured that multiple candidates were out throughout the election season connecting with individual voters and groups which then further spread the election message and encouraged more people to vote.”

The election was also significantly impacted by the existence of parties. When I interviewed Arya Razmjoo, Waterloo United’s presidential candidate, in November, he mentioned he was assembling a team of director candidates running on a unified platform. At that moment, I knew that this would be the most competitive election of my university experience, because parties bring legitimacy to political messages. Being a team of several members, parties make it more feasible to achieve large-scale goals that are much less practical for a single individual negotiating with other independents. The ambitions of Renew and United seemed more practical to voters given the existence of a whole team to implement them.

Thirdly, I tip my cap to the marketing staff at WUSA who made election paraphernalia much more visible than in previous years. Stickers, posters, online interviews, a giant banner in the middle of SLC Great Hall, messages from professors on LEARN and Meet the Candidate booths all made the election much more known across campus. Though I contend that WUSA should (and must, as per their Elections and Referenda procedure 11.4) bring back physical voting booths on election days, I admit that they were able to get students onto “vote.wusa.ca” effectively using sophisticated marketing techniques.

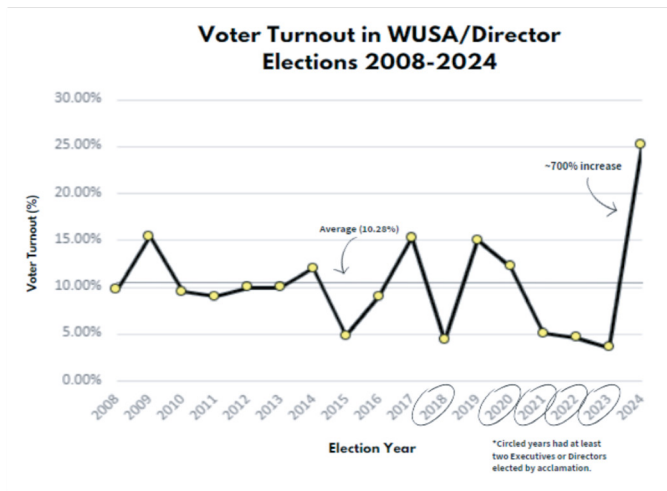
However effective the marketing team was, WUSA cannot ignore that heightened political dissatisfaction was a contributing factor. Controversies ranging

from internal discontent, to responses to external geopolitical events, forced many students to become aware of WUSA and the power of those in control of the organization. The creation of WUSA Reform last fall directly reflected such heightened awareness, and so did the bold promises of the running parties. Razmjoo, for example, campaigned on conducting an internal investigation into WUSA that would seek to identify “gaps in corporate functions,” evidenced by “delayed reimbursements, sluggish inquiry responses, and a concerning lack of transparency with the student body.” Independent presidential candidate Rafeel Rehman said during the *Imprint* officer debate, in relation to WUSA deleting an Instagram post made by RAISE in support of Palestinian liberation, that he wished to allow these services to operate with greater autonomy and condemned censorship from upper management. Nicholas Pfeifle, president-elect for Renew, said that he fought against the installment of WUSA’s new governance model, and his party openly campaigned on readjusting it.

WUSA mustn’t lose the forest for the trees. The organization cannot view this data as evidence that issues of student engagement and organizational culture have been solved. While this election might seem like a sign of a larger positive trend, it must be recognized that engagement from the candidates themselves was fueled by dissatisfaction — all three presidential candidates critiqued WUSA’s internal structure in some way. The strength of their platforms lay in their bold proclamations of reform, such as Razmjoo’s call to “change the status quo,” and team Renew’s pledge that “students deserve better.” Even if this election’s turnout is seen as a win, it must also be seen as the catalyst for further



WUSA Debate



improvement. Following the election, WUSA wrote on their website that “your involvement has transformed this election from a routine event into a powerful expression of student voice and democracy on our campus.” If this election is to truly be a “powerful expression,” then it must go beyond the ballot box. The elected candidates must prove that they are actually able to solve issues that students care about, break through the bureaucratic red tape, and truly be leaders on campus. Proving to students that WUSA serves an important function is the most effective way to increase engagement — other than giveaways, of course.

The last key factor contributing to the election’s success was consumer incentives. Leading up to Feb. 12, WUSA announced a MacBook Air giveaway to a randomly selected voter, advertising this raffle with signs across campus and mass emails. Norris said that the giveaway had “quite the effect,” and, I agree — it single-handedly contributed to hundreds of votes from students who pursued a material reward. Adding to the marketing ploy was a Dominos booth in SLC Marketplace “encouraging” students to vote in exchange for free coupons, intentionally positioned to draw students in. As a result of this strategy to increase voter turnout, I argue that a substantial percentage of ballots cast were entirely uninformed, based on random whims, phonetically pleasing names, and whichever candidate appeared first on the ballot. I bet that some of these individuals knew not of WUSA’s mere existence, much less the election and candidate platforms.

Emma Lee, elected as a director under the Renew Party, responded to a Reddit post about the MacBook giveaway, saying that although it doesn’t address the root causes of student apathy, it could be a gateway to WUSA for students. “While ‘bribery’ to vote isn’t a perfect solution, it doesn’t change the fact that we need some way to combat this,” she

wrote. Alex Chabin, a current WUSA director who also won a spot on next year’s board, agreed, writing to *Imprint* in an email, “From an overarching/long-time perspective, the MacBook promotion was a success in getting students more aware of WUSA.”

WUSA should not emphasize strategies such as a Macbook giveaway in future elections. I believe the candidates did an extremely effective job this year at convincing students that their platforms mattered, that they were addressing real issues, and that they could solve them. At the same time, WUSA marketing did a good job at showcasing them. These factors led to meaningful engagement. All the MacBook did was distort the election results, disregarding merit and platform strength to the whims of randomness and a superficial click. Chabin, acknowledging the negative aspects of the giveaway, wrote “from a candidate’s perspective in the election, the MacBook posed some concerns of voter integrity... Although it may have helped bring around more interest and awareness of the WUSA election, it probably didn’t encourage careful consideration when it came to casting ballots.”

WUSA should be humble about these election results — although they reveal a real improvement in WUSA’s ability to organize engaging elections, it does not correlate with the student body’s engagement, nor approval towards them. Going forward, I recommend that WUSA bring back in-person voting booths, encourage students to attend board of directors sessions, expand the digital media presence of candidates and current directors, and, although he will not be in power, carry out Razmjoo’s plan of launching an internal investigation. I also believe WUSA should continue showcasing candidates and current directors at the SLC marketplace, and holding roundtables open to all undergraduate students. No doubt, it will take some creativity and passion, but these actions will lead to genuine engagement and trust in WUSA, more so than any giveaway program. For now, this election should be viewed as a single, blossoming tree in a larger forest ravaged by wildfire.

With files from Alicia Wang.



UW's first ever CRO explains his new role

Megan MacGregor, Contributor

Now three months into his role as UW's first ever Chief Risk Officer (CRO), Jon Mason will play a key role in kicking off UW's 2024 approach to risk management through his ongoing work and long-term goals for institutional protection.

"I am extremely grateful and honoured," Mason said, on how he feels to be the first person to take on the position. "It is a privilege to work for such a prestigious university, and I will not take it lightly."

He was officially appointed on Dec. 11, 2023. In his first few months as CRO, Mason invested time in understanding UW's current governance framework and associated policies, while exploring the campus and meeting key leaders at the university.

Mason noted that among the first priorities of his position will be to establish the Risk & Compliance team at UW under the VP of Finance & Administration and manage the corporate insurance program, compliance framework, and business continuity at UW.

When asked how the new role was formed, Mason said that the president and leadership team recognized the need for a risk leadership position to enable a stronger risk culture and risk practices. "In addition, many colleges and universities around the world are implement[ing] risk management frameworks and positions, and UW is looking to align with best practices," Mason said.

Just before coming to UW, Mason worked at Conestoga College as the Executive Director of Governance & Risk. Before that, he worked as the Manager of Enterprise Risk & Insurance for Sheridan College from 2018 to 2021. He has more than 15 years of experience in the risk management field, and is a Certified Risk Management Professional (CRMP) and Certified Internal Auditor (CIA). Mason also holds a bachelor of business administration (BBA) from Roanoke College (based in Virginia, U.S.) and a master of business administration (MBA) from Wilfrid Laurier University.

Mason's background and education position him strongly to lead UW's ongoing efforts to mitigate emergencies and protect students and staff from complex security and financial challenges faced by leading universities. This way, UW can "continue to deliver top-quality education and provide a rewarding campus experience for students," Mason remarked.



Via UW Daily Bulletin

“My hope is that the ERM framework will enable a risk aware culture which breaks down silos to enable productive risk and strategic discussions.”

Jon Mason, Chief Risk Officer (CRO)

In 2015, UW’s Secretariat Office initiated the University Risk Management (URM) Program through the adoption of Policy 11 - University Risk Management, which set out to implement a series of best practices for risk management, adhering to the regulations, controls and reporting guidelines established at institutions of similar size and complexity. With continued turbulent times ahead, “the leadership team and board at UWaterloo believe that a dynamic risk management framework will enable key risk discussions and practices to enhance controls, manage costs, and enable the prioritization of strategic objectives,” Mason said.

Mason hopes to supplement the existing strategies of the URM program with the introduction of new risk assessment tools and a new emerging risk process for anticipating future threats to UW across areas of cyber security, financial sustainability, data governance, IT infrastructure and systems, enroll-

ment, and compliance. “The addition of the CRO role and a new Risk & Compliance Team, should enable further resources, focus and awareness of risk management across the institution and up to the board level,” Mason said.

In addition, a new Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) framework will be developed, building on principles from the URM and incorporating a mix of leading frameworks (COSO 2017 and ISO 31000). “My hope is that the ERM framework will enable a risk aware culture which breaks down silos to enable productive risk and strategic discussions. This will lead to more efficient, consistent operations and the critical planning of potential risks and unexpected events,” Mason said.

While Mason believes it is important for UW to take on certain risks to remain a competitive leader in the higher education sector, his role will ensure UW is “able to identify and manage risks to seek an adequate risk versus

reward balance for our students and community,” Mason said.

While he could not share current examples as part of his work now while he is settling into the role, he did share that this could hypothetically mean a partnership agreement with a third party international university, or leasing part of the university lands to a third party to generate revenue. “In both cases we would be taking on risk by opening ourselves up to particular third parties,” Mason said, listing contractual risk, reputational risk, and financial risk as examples. Despite the risks, he added that UW “could be rewarded by obtaining new students in a particular international region, research/academic enhancements, revenue generation, etc.”

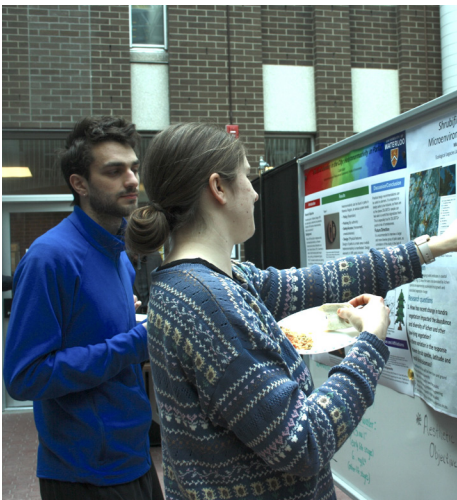
Mason would also like students to know that “risk management is a growing field with career opportunities on the rise,” and students should consider it in their future professional endeavors.

ENVigorate

celebrates 10 years of building community

Bethany Helaine Pörtl, Contributor

The ENVigorate Environment Festival, an annual festival hosted by the Faculty of Environment, is celebrating its 10-year anniversary this year. The three day event, held from March 19 to March 21, features three days of workshops, students showcasing their work, a fashion show and more.



The theme for ENVigorate 2024 is Eco-Equity: bridging gaps for a sustainable world.

The festival aims to incorporate the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into each of its events. Workshops, hosted by on- or off-campus partners, look to uplift equality and justice within sustainability.

“ENVigorate is incredibly special to me, and I first got involved two years ago when I hosted UW’s first Thrift Fashion Show during the festival.” says Ridham Chadha, a fourth year ENBUS student and this year’s festival co-chair. “I am personally deeply passionate about textile innovation and sustainable fashion, so that was a wonderful way to share my interests with likeminded people of the environment family.”

The first ENVigorate Festival took

place in 2014. A decade later, the festival has evolved and developed along with the global climate situation.

“This 10th anniversary theme is very special, because now more than ever, the conversation around equity, inclusion and climate justice is incredibly important as it will decide what the future holds for us,” Chadha said. “We believe that no work in environmental science and sustainability will be worthwhile if every group in the community is not involved in this discussion and problem solving stage.”

ENVigorate provides an opportunity to create a sense of belonging for students every year, and the festival provides first years with “hope and guidance from upper year students and faculty,” Chadha shared.

“At its core, the ENVigorate Festival is a celebration of the Faculty of En-

vironment’s community, which to me, means having the opportunity to connect with each other through sustainability,” stated Liya Murray, last years’ festival co-chair and graduate of the UW Environment faculty. “The variety of events each year helps demonstrate the wide range of research directions within the Faculty of Environment, and shows us all the different ways that sustainability fits into our lives, while encouraging us to learn from each other and explore new knowledge forms and perspectives.”

Knowledge sharing happens in many forms at ENVigorate. The academic

panel, scheduled for March 19 from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m., will bring students and faculty together for a discussion on the festival theme. The Student Showcase, taking place after that from 11:30 to 12:30 p.m., provides the opportunity for undergrad and grad students to share research projects. Each workshop also offers a unique opportunity to learn a new craft or skill such as spoon carving, tree printing, salsa dancing and wax candle making.

There are several new and returning workshops connected to the theme of eco-equity that the ENVigorate team are excited to offer, including:



1. Climate Justice Panel – how to address equity issues in all forms of work
2. Thrift Fashion Show – promoting thrifting and secondhand clothing, discouraging behaviors that support fast fashion
3. Women Centre’s Workshop – how to make your own sustainable menstrual pads
4. CEE Creative lab – how to make SDGs a part of your co-op and promote sustainability in workplace
5. Illuminate – a game simulation where students solve environmental complex problems in urban and rural settings
6. Mushroom Science – learn how mycelium and mushrooms can change the world
7. Climate Justice Mystery – a three-day hunt where students will solve clues and collect hints for a prize at the end of the festival. All clues will be equity and sustainability themed
8. The Equity Mural – a word cloud mural with all the prompts that the participants will provide us on the first day, and this will be permanently staged in one of the environment buildings



The small-business marketplace is a new addition to the festival line-up this year, where students will share what they are working on related to building business solutions that address environmental and social problems.

“We have worked very hard, and with a lot of passion, to make the 10th year the most special, educational, and fun for the students. Along with learn-

ing new skills, our goal is to inspire the environment community to keep doing the amazing work they are doing along with encouraging others to follow that path,” Chadha said.

To stay updated with all things ENVigorate follow their Instagram @envigorate.uw, watch for the link to register for workshops and join in the celebration.

Italian wedding soup with a twist

This recipe is a twist on the classic Italian wedding soup, using everything you can find in your pantry or nearest grocery store. It is understandable that we, as students, do not have time to make everything from scratch, so this is the perfect way to throw everything that can be conveniently found into a pot and let it simmer. This aromatic and flavourful soup gets better with time.



Tools

- A large soup pot

Instructions

1. Begin by chopping the onion in quarters.
2. Prepare the sausage by removing the sausage filling from the casing and rolling it into small half-inch balls. Once rolled, cook them in olive oil until the outer layer is golden brown.
3. Combine with onions and frozen vegetable mix, and cook until the onions soften.
4. Add the chicken broth and spinach until the spinach softens.
5. Finish the soup with some black pepper.

Ingredients

- 2 hot Italian sausages (must be the type with sausage casing)
- 2 cups of spinach
- 1 ½ cups of pasta (any pasta not in noodle form, e.g., farfalle, shells, etc.)
- ½ cup of frozen vegetable mix
- 2 cups of chicken broth
- 1 whole white onion (roughly chopped)
- Black pepper
- Olive oil

This recipe yields a beautiful pot of soup that can last you for the entire week. So snuggle up with a good book, blanket, a warm bowl of comforting Italian wedding soup, and enjoy!



Is UW campus prepared for climate change?

A residence infrastructure case study

Bethany Helaine Pörtl, Contributor

Throughout the entire year, the only consistency is the inconsistent daily temperature. This winter has been green and mild on some days, and a flurry of snow with snow storm warnings on others. What's causing this uncertainty? Climate change.

Climate change broadly refers to the long-term shifts in weather patterns and temperatures. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, established in 1988, states human activities have been driving climate change since the 1800s. The burning of fossil fuels, like coal, oil, and gas generates greenhouse gas emissions which trap heat and drive global rising temperatures.

According to the World Meteorological Organization, 2023 was the hottest year on record, and this continued as January 2024 was recorded as the hottest January. Rising temperatures are a serious concern as they pose health risks, disrupt natural systems, lead to loss of species, and hurt food production.

Individuals and institutions both have a role to play in addressing these crises,

“It’s very evident these buildings were built at a time when they probably didn’t have to deal with extreme heat like we do now.”

Michelle Angkasa, Village 1 campus housing don

which raises the question: is the UW campus prepared for climate change and all its potential effects?

UW declared a climate emergency in May 2021. The declaration is centered on four key pillars and outlines 10 key commitments to advancing climate action on campus.

“Aligning institutional practice and policy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including in operation of the campus and in the university’s investments” is the third pillar in the declaration.

One area of campus operation where students on campus feel climate action is needed in particular is the improvement of campus housing infrastructure and its readiness for rising global temperatures.

“I think the biggest thing will be more extreme heat and also more extreme

heat fluctuations. [Last] year, we had an especially hot summer and a dry summer with all the wildfires and smoke,” said Michelle Angkasa, a Village 1 (V1) campus housing don.

“In September, it was really hot and I would get complaints constantly from students because there was no air conditioning in V1. It’s very evident these buildings were built at a time when they probably didn’t have to deal with extreme heat like we do now.”

V1, built in 1966, was the first residence constructed at UW. Other subsequent campus housing buildings such as REV, UWP, and MH are included with V1 in the list of residences that do not have air conditioning. Collectively, these residences house over 4,000 first-year and upper-year students.

“Close to 70 per cent of our residence buildings were built around or before 1970. The buildings are 50 plus years old now, and so we have been building out a strategy on how to renew or rebuild all of our spaces and sustainability is going to be an important principle as we consider a proposal and plan for that type of work,” said Glen Wepler, director of housing at Campus Housing. “There’s a balance that we have to strike between providing things like air conditioning and the cost and how it also contributes to global warming.”

Wepler also shared that they hear comments from students on concerns of the lack of air conditioning in residence, especially in the warmer months. Campus Housing shifted core occupancy for spring term from V1 into CMH, where there is increased access to air conditioning.

“I’m glad this topic is coming up and we will be looking for opportunities for student input. I know we’ve done that over the last few months with the new residence project,” Wepler said. “If students have advice that they want to offer after reading this article, then they can certainly follow up and share that with our team.”

Addressing concerns about living in campus housing residences during predicted heat waves is part of cultivating a climate ready campus.

The 2023 Environmental Sustainability Report, prepared by the UW Sustainability Office, reports on the progress made towards the objectives outlined in the 2017 Environmental Sustainability Strategy. In the Governance and Benchmarking section of the report, the Net Neutral Building Guideline is listed as one of the internal policies used to support university sustainability efforts.

The General Principles section of the guideline acknowledges the projected temperature increase in subsection 5.7, Resiliency, stating that “Waterloo will sup-

port building resiliency, maintaining some functionality during utility disruption and minimizing impact of outdoor temperature extremes on indoor thermal comfort, which are expected to increase over time.”

This guideline is being used in the development of the new residence building scheduled to open in fall 2026. The project is being worked on in partnership with Indigenous-owned architecture firm Two Row, alongside the Office of Indigenous Relations, the Sustainability Office, Campus Housing, and Plant Operations at UW.

The new residence aligns with the Campus Housing Facilities Strategy, the long-term plan that informs the revitalization of all campus housing facilities. It is a guide for new projects as well as currently aging buildings to improve environmental sustainability and accessibility.

So, is campus ready for climate change? The answer changes based on which residence you live in and where your sustainability focus is. At V1, the necessary infrastructure changes are being worked into the strategic plan. At other residences, air conditioning is a non-factor in their question of climate readiness. Residence infrastructure is one of the focus areas of climate change readiness. Grounds maintenance, transportation access, food and water, waste management, research and education, and responsible investing are other climate change readiness factors at work on campus. These are all strategy areas with target goals reported on in the campus Environmental Sustainability Report.

To ensure a climate-ready campus for all, look around at your part of the UW community and ask yourself, “Are we prepared for climate change?” Then take action, do research, send an email, connect with others, and help encourage the university to continue pursuing bold climate actions and sustainable change.

Calls to action for climate change readiness

Take initiative in your residence

If you live in residence, either in Campus Housing or one of the university colleges, look for ways to get involved in sustainability in your residence community — residence green teams, Sustainability Office Green Residence Ambassadors, taking initiative by creating space to talk about climate change, and exercising a green thumb whenever possible.

Get involved on campus

Engage with the Sustainability Office, with student forums, and with campus groups related to sustainability and climate change. Bridge your residence sustainability actions with campus knowledge. By joining the conversation you strengthen our climate aware community.

Stay informed

Read the UW Sustainability Report, Climate Emergency Declaration and other environment related publications. Seek out news related to climate change and sustainability. Talk to your friends, your classmates, your professors about current events and how they impact our UW community, then use this knowledge to take action where you can.

“Once in a lifetime” solar eclipse coming to Ontario in April

Veronica Reiner, Executive Editor

A once-in-a-century total solar eclipse will turn day into night for several minutes in some parts of southern Ontario on Monday, April 8.

A partial view of the eclipse is expected to be in its maximum phase of totality at 3:18 p.m. in Waterloo region, lasting for two to three minutes. It will begin the first contact phase at about 2:03 p.m., and wrap up final phases at around 4:30 p.m.

“Partial eclipses happen every year and total eclipses about every year and a half. But rarely does the shadow path of a total eclipse cross so close to your locality as we are seeing this year,” explained Brian McNamara, professor and chair at the UW physics and astronomy department.

“For many this will be a once in a lifetime opportunity unless they are prepared to travel to faraway places to experience a total solar eclipse.”

The event marks the first total solar eclipse near Waterloo region since 1925, and the last one until 2144. This celestial event happens when the moon passes between the sun and the Earth, aligning perfectly and completely blocking sunlight along a relatively narrow path on the Earth’s surface.

That path is estimated to be 115 km wide and 16,000 km long. It will pass through Hamilton, Niagara, Windsor,

Leamington, Cornwall, Kingston, Prince Edward County, along with parts of Canada, the U.S., and Mexico. For those outside of the path of totality in nearby areas, a partial solar eclipse will be visible.

Local organizations will be participating in solar eclipse viewing events in areas directly in the path of totality. The UW science faculty, including McNamara, will go to Hare Wine Co. in Niagara, while the Kitchener-Waterloo Royal Astronomical Society of Canada will be travelling to the No. 6 RCAF Dunnville Museum in Dunnville.

For those looking to view the eclipse live from home, an online stream, Chasing the Shadow from Niagara to Newfoundland, will take place from 2-4 p.m., hosted by the Dunlap Institute for Astronomy & Astrophysics at the University of Toronto.

Looking at the sun directly without proper protection can cause permanent eye damage. To view the eclipse safely, one must look through safe solar viewing glasses (“eclipse glasses”) or a safe handheld solar viewer at all times. Regular sunglasses, no matter how dark, are not safe when viewing the sun.

Eclipse glasses can be purchased through the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, KW Telescope, or Amazon.



March crossword

Zoe Cushman, Contributor

ACROSS

- 1 Domain of Poseidon
 4 Relatable, in internet slang (two words)
 8 Stock ticker symbol for the iPhone corporation
 12 “Spiders Georg, who lives in cave & eats over 10,000 each day, is an outlier ___ should not have been counted”
 13 Rad
 14 Percentage on a fixed-interest investment
 17 Spanish dance and guitar style
 19 “Yer darn ___!”
 20 Plantain chips
 22 Cheery tune
 23 For one purpose, like some committees (two words)
 25 A fail on a pass/fail course at UW
 26 Trait carriers
 27 Future attorney’s study
 29 Some operatic solos
 31 New Jersey mountain range
 32 Water ___ (pool game)
 33 Engineer and roboticist Grant
 35 Like a bike or scooter
 40 Very dry, as Champagne
 42 Like this clue
 43 Pick apart, as study results
 46 Watched a neighbour’s pup
 47 C to C, for example
 48 Metric for online traffic (abbreviated)
 50 Necessities
 51 Vastaya champion in League of Legends
 52 Manitoba’s capital
 54 Number of degrees a right angle has
 56 Information about information
 59 What porcupines and sea urchins share
 60 Egyptian/Theban king of the gods
 61 “Crazy, ___, Insane” (Beast in Black song)
 62 Gray and Hutchinson, for two
 63 Millennials (two words, abbreviated)
 64 UW’s student organization for undergrads in the faculty of environment (abbreviated)

DOWN

- 1 UW’s department for business and

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- bookkeeping (abbreviated)
 2 U.S. motor permit now retired in Canada (abbreviated)
 3 Object of loathing (and a Twenty One Pilots song)
 4 Unavoidable, as a truth
 5 Camping shelter
 6 Georgia city featured in The Walking Dead
 7 English short-visor hat
 8 Plays parts in theatre
 9 Commotion
 10 Working class in ‘1984’
 11 North American with Latin Amer can cultural ties
 15 Playing pieces in Scrabble or Mahjong
 16 Tolkien’s tree creatures
 18 Slang for money - and a mountain in Mazin’ Hamsters
 21 Mistake
 23 Combination birth control pill
 24 Apothecary’s weight
 26 FASS 2024 musical comedy about evil billionaires
 28 Fret
 30 Basis of ‘The Song of Achilles’ by Madeline Miller
 34 ‘Also’ in French
 36 Quarrelled
 37 ___: The Final Boss Is My Heart (indie action game by Lily Valeen)
 38 Future attorney’s exam in the U.S.
 39 Rough figures (abbreviated)
 41 Publication for adolescents (abbreviated, two words)
 43 ___ off the old block (two words)
 44 Whimsical world of C.S. Lewis
 45 Extraterrestrials
 47 Undertale’s iconic skeleton in a blue hoodie
 49 Health records app
 52 Johann known for ‘The Swiss Family Robinson’
 53 “Pass ___” (two words)
 55 Leaf beverage - or gossip, colloquially
 57 Professor’s helpers (abbreviated)
 58 Commercials (abbreviated)



What's Happening



at **WUSA?**

Find out at the
WUSA Annual General Meeting!

Wednesday, March 27 

SLC Great Hall 

See what student issues

made the official agenda

