



# Imprint

Your Stories, Your Voice

March 2025  
Volume 2 Issue 8

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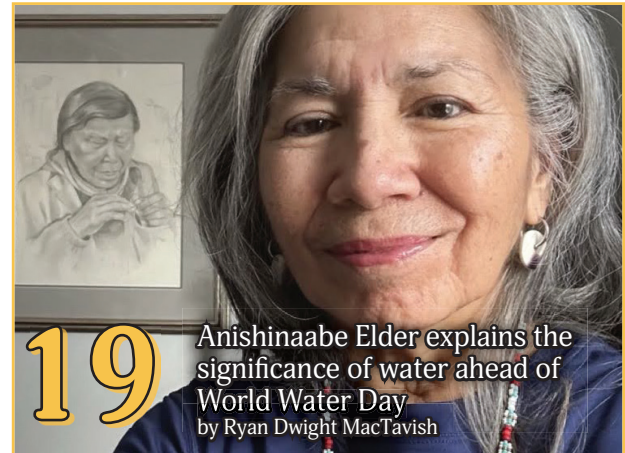
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# WUSA election results: A glimpse into the Horizon presidency

Carla Stocco, Staff Writer

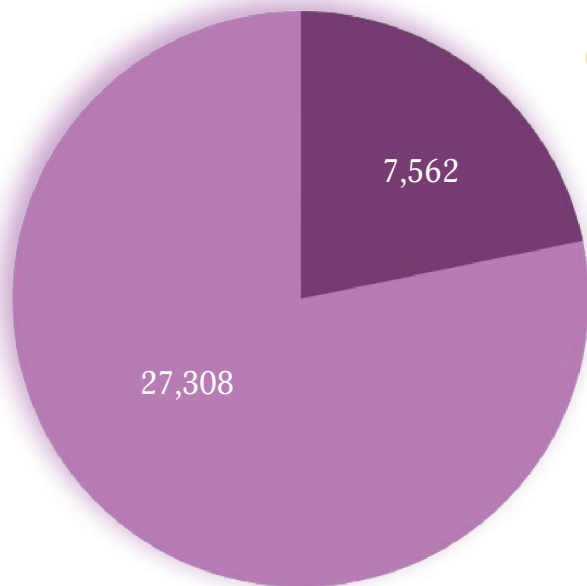
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With the new year came new WUSA elections, and the results are finally in. The new WUSA president and vice-president for 2025-2026 are fourth-year statistics student Damian Mikhail and third-year mathematics student Remington Zhi respectively, both part of the Horizon party. Determined to address pressing issues affecting UW's undergraduate population and prepared to advocate for much-needed reforms, Mikhail and Zhi display clear passion for their new roles.

## 2025 Voter Turnout Results

Undergraduate student engagement with WUSA has remained a topic of concern among past and present electoral candidates. For reference, 2023 turnout saw a record low with just 3.2 per cent of eligible students voting. In 2024, voter turnout was six times higher, at 25.17 per cent. Voter turnout fell once more (although not as drastically) in 2025, with a 21.69 per cent turnout. To put this into perspective, 7,562 students voted out of an eligible 34,870. On the subject, Mikhail shared he feels WUSA staff worked hard to get the vote out, however, he concedes it remains disappointing to not see voter turnout continue to rise. Adding on to this, he emphasized the importance of “show[ing] students what WUSA can do for [them].” When asked for his thoughts on why student participation remains low, he shared, “One of the things I hear when [speaking] with students is that they don’t know what WUSA does, or two, do not feel [WUSA is] advocating for them.”



2025 voter turnout, according to WUSA

“ One of the things I hear when [speaking] with students is that they don’t know what WUSA does, or two, do not feel [WUSA is] advocating for them. ”

— Damian Mikhail, 2025-2026 WUSA president and fourth-year statistics student

Zhi also weighed in on the use of incentives when it comes to student voting, stating, “It’s about getting students to care about the election and not just voting for a MacBook or pizza.” Zhi does believe such incentives can be effective in opening the door to student interest in WUSA, however. They cited that several students at the free taco and pizza events were there for such incentives, but ultimately “learned about what WUSA does and started to care about WUSA.” Mikhail emphasized that it is WUSA’s job “to create the conditions where students care about WUSA.” This, he said, can be achieved by actively showing students what “[WUSA] can do to improve student lives and tangibly change them for the better.”

## Hope on the Horizon: Changes students can anticipate

### Transforming WUSA Governance

Both Mikhail and Zhi have voiced their interest in making changes to the current WUSA governance model. Mikhail expressed the need to outline strict responsibilities for WUSA directors in regards to student clubs and affairs, perhaps by finding incentives and to ensure a greater understanding of issues important to students to all members of WUSA. He also emphasizes that the communication between WUSA, student clubs and societies, and students at large is key to promoting change within the current governance system. Although Mikhail believes directors are well-meaning, he feels that students are subject to a lack of change as directors are “held back by a system which restrains them.” Nick Pfeifle, the 2024-2025 WUSA president, voiced governance concerns that are echoed by Mikhail, with the need for greater student oversight being a key reform.

### Reviving Campus Culture & Clubs

There’s no doubt that clubs and student-run events play an essential role in the undergraduate student experience. Both Mikhail and Zhi agree on the need for greater financial support for student clubs. Currently, UW provides \$75 per term for each student-run club, which Mikhail attests is “less than almost any other university in Ontario.” For example, the University of Alberta offers \$750 to eligible clubs, a noticeable jump in funding. He goes on to state that loneliness and feelings of disconnection among students on campus can be partly attributed to the lack of resources and financing put into running events and clubs. Mikhail is interested in exploring financing models that display effective functioning at other universities and implementing such models at UW. One of the issues behind student club funding lies in the current cheque request system, which he describes as “slow and bloated” and that there’s a need to “streamline [the system to] speed up that process and look at new ways [of] figuring out the hold up.”

### Addressing Hate Crimes

Hate crimes are on the rise in Waterloo region, and they have no place in our community or universities. In 2023, Waterloo Regional Police Service reported a 94 per cent increase from 2022 in hate crimes in the region. Zhi mentioned that Waterloo

WUSA vice-president Remington Zhi



region now has the highest rate of police-reported hate crime, per city, across the country and noted that it is “being called the hate crime capital of Canada.” The Region of Waterloo “reported 34 hate crimes per 100,000 people [in 2023].” Last fall term, UW’s international student population was 7,627 students. With such a large international student population, Zhi believes in the need “to work with local governments to address that [and improve] representation for international students within student government.”

### Upholding Academic Excellence

UW’s current financial deficit remains a pressing concern and the Horizon presidency is seeking to mitigate any potential negative impact for students. Zhi believes “the biggest threat to universities and to education right now is funding issues.” UW’s current financial deficit stands at \$75 million for the 2024-2025 operating budget. Knowing that many departments and faculties are currently under close scrutiny as UW evaluates its spending and resources for the 2025-2026 fiscal year commencing in May, concerns regarding the quality of academics and the possibility of program cuts have arisen. Although Zhi reiterates that there are currently no concrete plans to cut programs, students and professors have voiced concerns over such a possibility. Mikhail and Zhi both agree that WUSA will work to avoid any cuts to academics that could have negative repercussions and that Horizon will work to advocate for students. Mikhail assures, “We want to make sure students get the education that they were promised. [Students] accepted [UW] for a reason with a certain promise [of academic quality].”

Without a doubt, the Horizon party is determined to bring student needs and voices to the forefront of their presidency. By addressing pressing concerns and recognizing the need to build a stronger sense of belonging, community, and student trust within WUSA, Mikhail and Zhi are ready to spark change. As Zhi concludes, “There are people at the university who care about students and it’s about working with them to help them understand student needs better.”

# Inside the challenges of student movements at UW

Jansher Saeed, Staff Writer

Student movements at UW has surged in recent years, with groups like OccupyUW, UW NDP, OrganizeUW, Climate Justice Ecosystem (CJE), and UW Voices for Palestine (UWVFP) driving social change and shaping campus history. Yet, the job has not been easy — student organizers report facing increasing roadblocks and barriers to organizing on campus.

“Students have always been at the forefront of change, whether it be students protesting the Vietnam War or South African Apartheid, there are so many examples in history that we can look at where students were at the forefront of these really important and influential social justice movements [...] yet we are constantly faced with challenges,” said an executive member with UWVFP, who asked not be named.

## Challenges working with UW administration and WUSA

Student organizers noted that they are no strangers to facing roadblocks and barriers from UW’s administration. One of these challenges is feeling safe as students and organizers on campus. Michelle Angkasa, a UW graduate and co-founder of CJE, shared how UW’s response to the 2023 campus stabbing impacted her sense of safety as a student and organizer.

“That horrible tragedy and the aftermath made it very clear to me that the university did not meaningfully care about the safety of students, especially its most vulnerable students. Aside from hollow statements, the administration did not step up to address the root causes of the issue: homophobia, transphobia, and hate,” Angkasa said.

UWVFP shares similar concerns in regards to safety. Over the spring 2024 term, OccupyUW led a student encampment on the Grad House green

in response to the genocide in Gaza. Several weeks later, UW launched a 1.5-million dollar lawsuit against the encampment. While UW dropped the lawsuit on June 25 in response to student organizers agreeing to dismantle the encampment, UWVFP discussed how the lawsuit negatively impacted their sense of safety.

“After seeing the university’s response to student organizing on that scale, I don’t think it’s possible for organizers to feel safe or heard in the university anymore, or for there to be any kind of trust. Setting up cameras to watch the students and then suing them for \$1.5 million, I guess it’s just definitive proof that the university does not have its students’ interests in mind,” the UWVFP executive said.

UWVFP noted several examples of surveillance and police presence at their events but one specific instance stood out. In 2024, UWVFP hosted an Iftar and embroidery event, where they claimed special constables made continuous visits. When organizers asked the special constables to leave, the constables refused.

“I questioned, why do police need to be in all of these spaces where we’re just trying to come together as a community during an extremely difficult time, where our families and people of Palestine are ongoing in genocide, and we are being surveilled as we are just, you know, doing embroidery and having Iftar together,” the UWVFP executive said.

According to UWVFP, the student group formed to advocate for peace, justice, and freedom for Palestine. Following the onslaught of the genocide in Gaza, the student group saw a substantial increase in student engagement. Later that year, UWVFP hosted the largest student rally in UW’s history with over 1,000 participants.

For CJE, working with WUSA posed similar challenges. While some staff and elected students sympathized with CJE’s demands, Angkasa said the governance and jurisdiction capabilities of WUSA were limited in enacting the change CJE wanted. Maintaining constant communication with WUSA posed additional challenges.

“We wanted to see dedicated space in SLC for climate and sustainability work and a sustainability commitment included in the long range plan. Unfortunately, our efforts led nowhere. Our emails were consistently ignored by elected representatives and staff, we were unable to get clear answers to our questions, and generally felt we were hitting dead ends,” Angkasa said.



### **Maintaining the momentum of movements**

Since the pandemic, movements at UW has seen a massive uptake. OrganizeUW organized graduate TAs and RAs, eventually voting to join the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE). UW NDP successfully advocated for the night bus loop at Waterloo Regional Council. Change Course UW’s campaign Banks Off Campus looks to target banks at UW, pushing them to divest from fossil fuels. CJE and UWVFP organized major rallies during this period as well.

“I think that students were hungry for change and in person community. After years of online/hybrid learning and pandemic protocols, I felt that people were eager to gather again. I also think the unprecedented reporting and visibility of the genocide in Gaza spurred students to action on campus,” Angkasa said.

After witnessing the decline of student movements during the pandemic, Angkasa and a fellow UW graduate Celine Isimbi formed CJE in 2023 — a grassroots coalition of students organizing on climate-based issues.

“We spent winter 2023 doing a thorough environmental scan and building relationships to assess the need and viability of a climate justice student coalition. We took the summer to do collective visioning and develop our theory of change, demands, and group structure. We finally launched in September 2023 with a rally,” Angkasa said.

CJE’s 2023 climate rally involved several student groups including OrganizeUW, UW NDP, and the UWSolidarity Network. The rally reflected the zeal of the monumental 2019 Waterloo climate rally in support of the Global Climate Strike, which saw over 4,500 protestors in attendance.

CJE and UWVFP noticed a dip in that momentum over the past few months. Major actions targeting student movements on campus, such as the university’s lawsuit against the student encampment, were significant contributing factors, but UWVFP noticed another trend.

“There’s been a lot of surges of momentum, when huge things begin to happen, and then unfortunately, as people become disengaged or experience forms of burnout, you might see a decline in that level of involvement and engagement. I think this is probably not something that just pertains to the Palestinian liberation struggle. I think that this is something that all social movements have to contend with and deal with,” the UWVFP executive said.

Student organizing at UW faces a unique challenge in the form of alternating co-op and study cycles that co-op students experience. Organizers shared turnover resulting from alternating cycles poses significant challenges for pursuing long-term projects of any scope at the university.

“One of the main questions that I’m always asking our team is, are you on campus next term? Are you on campus? Did you get a co-op yet? Where’s your co-op? But I do think that this is a common struggle that all UW clubs have to contend with, just because of the nature of how terms are organized,” the UWVFP executive said.

Aside from being organizers, these students have another responsibility — just being a student. Coursework and other academic duties already take up space on student organizers’ plates.

“Capacity was the number one issue we faced at CJE. Waterloo students have so much on their plate with classes, work, co-op, and many other commitments and responsibilities. Organizing, unfortunately, is very often unpaid labour, and not everyone has the privilege of having the time and energy to engage in it,” Angkasa said.



### **A hopeful outlook**

This term, several student groups and movements are active on campus at once. UWVFP sees an opportunity here — channelling the organizing momentum through better communication and coordination and working on finding solutions to common challenges together.

“You would not believe how many clubs I have talked to and asked, so what are the main challenges that you’re going through right now, trying to organize events on campus? And it’s always the same version of events. So, knowing that we all face the same challenges, I’m really excited to see how we’re able to overcome this,” the UWVFP executive said.

While students are faced with a higher cost of living, the climate crisis, and general political and economic uncertainty across the globe, Angkasa sees hope in the power of student organizing in this specific period: “I am hopeful that this generation of student organizers — radicalized by the 2019 climate strikes and 2024 Palestine encampments — will continue to build up their bases and power for the long term. We can’t afford to give up.”





# Hope and climate change, imagining a sustainable future

Bethany Helaine Pörtl, Contributor

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“Where do you see yourself in five years? How about in ten years?” Usually these future planning questions are directed at people, particularly youth, who are expected to be thinking about a personal life plan. “Where do you see the country in five years?” This question may be politically focused, with constituents wanting to know what direction political figures are leading them. The intention of these questions is to learn the motivations of a person, and what they view the future to be. But imagine these questions were posed to the Earth directly — how would the Earth respond? As the Earth cannot express itself verbally, it’s up to the people to consider what the Earth’s interests and motivations may be. What does a sustainable future imagined by Earth look like, how do we listen to what the Earth is telling us and, while balancing human needs, get there?

To answer this question, citizens, scientists, policy makers, and others have been mobilizing to imagine these answers and work on their solutions. The environmental movement which supports this work began in the early 1900s, and gained more attention in the 1970s. The first Earth Day was celebrated in the U.S. in April 1970, as a national demonstration used to raise awareness on environmental issues. For 55 years since the first Earth Day (and longer since the beginnings of the broader environmental movement), those involved have been envisioning transformational change and empowering others to act accordingly.

Looking at the history of environmental action and the increasing concern about climate change, another question is raised — how do we continue acting on behalf of the Earth when achievements and setbacks are alternating, and how do we engage everyone in sustainable action for the planet?

“As a researcher who’s concerned about the future of decent work, I examine how work has become more insecure for many.” said Nancy Worth, associate professor in the Department of Geography & Environmental Management. “For a more environmentally and economically sustainable future, we can consider what we buy: buying less, buying local, choosing businesses that treat their workers well, [we can] engage politically: learning about candidates at all levels of government, and voting for policies that align with our values, and [we can] find local ways of taking action: finding people who are already doing the work and joining in.” She recommends reading *Take Back the Economy: An Ethical Guide for Transforming Our Communities*, a copy of which can be found in the Dana Porter library.

Community is central to imagining sustainable living, examining how the economy can be improved for humanity and the planet, and maintaining hope within climate action movements. As the effects of climate change are seen globally through the increase of various natural disasters and unexpected environmental events, participating in the climate movement can become overwhelming. Through connecting with community, each person can be supported and climate anxieties can be worked through together. It is through community that shared visions for sustainable futures are built.



Sarah An

“ Sustainability is a cultural shift and a social thing rather than something that happens immediately through policy. Policy and law is important but humans have to want that it has to be a public thing for it to really shine through and be wanted. ”

— Chloe Greer, fourth-year ERS student and sustainability projects assistant co-op at the Sustainability Office

The imagined sustainable future is one that is multidimensional, as sustainability will look different in different locations. On UW’s campus, sustainability action and climate resilience are seen through the Environmental Sustainability Report from the Sustainability Office, and through student organizations for sustainable futures.

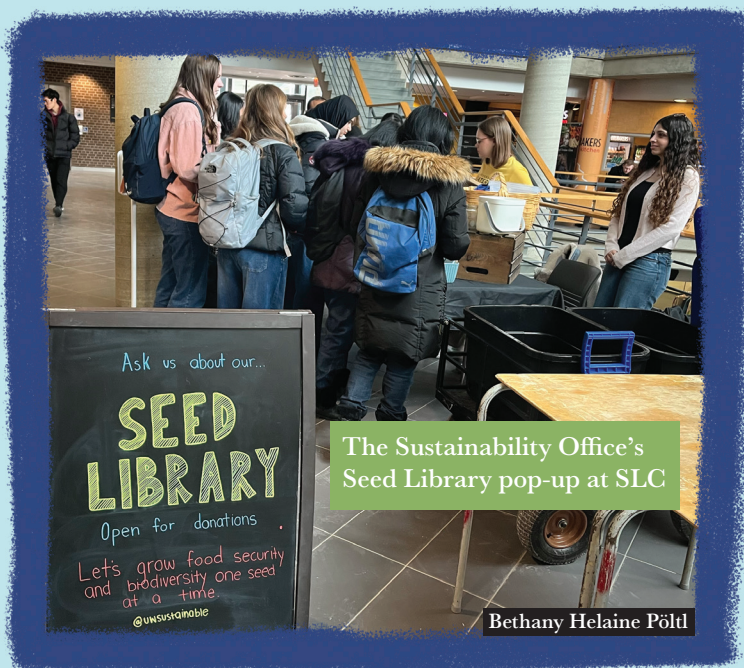
“I feel that throughout the next generations will continue to be more and more sustainable and social culture will phase out what we use the most now, like nonrenewable energy. Sustainability is a cultural shift and a social thing rather than something that happens immediately through policy. Policy and law is important but humans have to want that it has to be a public thing for it to really shine through and be wanted,” shared Chloe Greer, a 4A environment, resource and sustainability (ERS) student and sustainability projects assistant co-op student at the Sustainability Office.

“At the Sustainability Office we just started the seed library which is supposed to be an initiative to really help on campus food security. Giving people free and reliable resources towards seeds where they can plant whatever they want,” Greer said. “There is a barrier to who has the funds and ability to plant things, that’s why we do also have the food plots on campus. Those are free for people to sign up, trying to give people the ability to have produce that doesn’t come with a cost.”

This project from the Sustainability Office represents the intersection of food security and climate change, and is an example of community action towards building a sustainable future. Globally and locally production, consumption, and disposal of food has a large environmental impact. Through the seed library the Sustainability Office is hoping to foster an increasingly self-sufficient and resilient community. Campus food plots are located over by the V1 residence and can be signed up for on a first come first serve basis, on the food garden pilot page of the Sustainability Office website.

To access the seed library follow the free store pop-ups that happen on campus. Seed donations of native wildflowers and grasses are accepted to support local biodiversity, as well as noninvasive fruit and vegetable seeds to support sustainable food cultivation.

This project is one way UW campus is imagining its sustainable future. By creating accessible resources and promoting community participation through connection to each other and nature we begin to see what a sustainable future for Earth could look like.



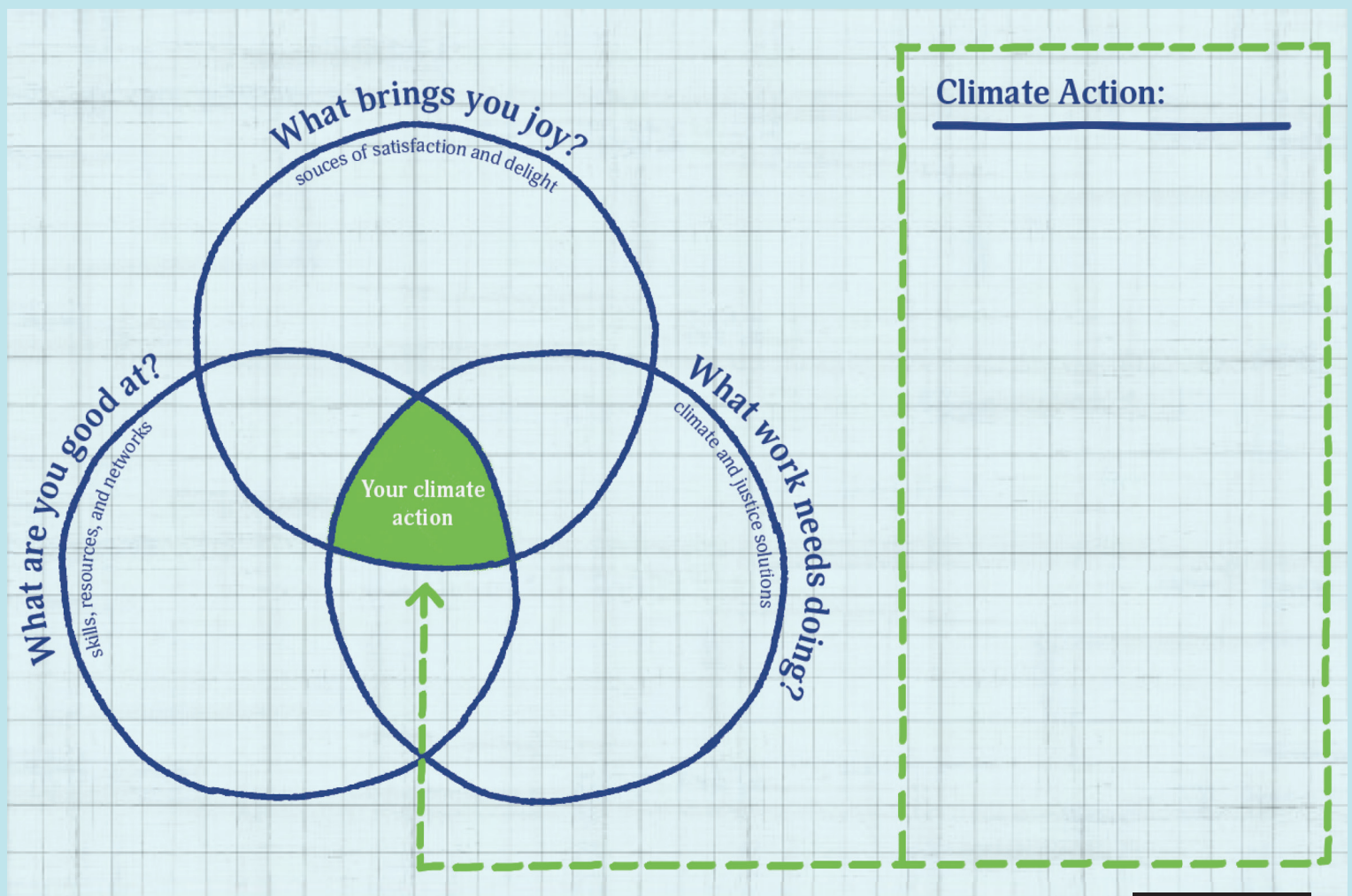
Now it's your turn. Close your eyes, take a deep breath and ask yourself, "What sustainable future would I like to live in in the long term?" and equally important, "What actions will I take today to help reach that sustainable future for all of us?"

Wondering about specific, meaningful climate actions that you can engage in? Try Ayana Elizabeth Johnson's climate venn diagram exercise to connect climate action with your talents, interests, and what climate work you want to focus on!

"To find your meaningful and bespoke way to help address the climate crisis, draw your own Climate Action Venn Diagram.

1. What are you good at? What are your areas of expertise? What can you bring to the table? Think about your skills, resources, and networks — you have a lot to offer.
2. What work needs doing? Are there particular climate and justice solutions you want to focus on? Think about systemic changes and efforts that can be replicated or scaled. There are heaps of options.
3. What brings you joy? Or perhaps a better word is "satisfaction." What gets you out of bed in the morning? Choose climate actions that energize and enliven you."

— Ayana Elizabeth Johnson



Via [climatevenn.info](http://climatevenn.info)

# *The Ring Road Roundup*



Sign up for our newsletter

# Six sustainable swaps for your everyday life

Bethany Helaine Pörtl, Contributor

Are you looking for ways to add more sustainable practices to your life? Consider these eight sustainable swaps to lower your consumption of new or disposable products, save money, and create a positive impact on our environment!

## Thinking of this?

## Try that!

Looking to buy new clothes?

Try thrifting at WUSA Thrift pop-ups, or community thrift stores

Going to buy a new book, dishes, houseware, craft supplies or even a printer?

Check out the UW Free Store or Buy Nothing groups online to get gently used items for free

Throwing out a broken appliance, ripped garment or other well worn items?

Try mending your items first, attend repair nights on campus hosted by KWRepair, check on Instagram @UWRepairHub for drop-in workshop hours

Need help with your bike?

Before trading it in, visit the WUSA Bike Centre, @uwbikecentre, for bike repair assistance

In search of a cup of coffee or tea on campus?

Bring your own reusable mug to reduce the amount of disposable cups used and save 10-20 cents on your drink purchase!

Time to purchase more laundry products?

Consider switching out liquid detergent for environmentally friendly detergent sheets, and swap single use dryer sheets for a reusable wool dryer ball!

# Meet Sarah Connors, the first naturopathic doctor at UW

Shania T. W. Scotland, Contributor

The University of Waterloo has enhanced student health services with the introduction of Sarah Connors, a naturopathic doctor, to its campus. Bringing her unique Two-Eyed Seeing approach, Connors blends Western medicine with Indigenous healing practices, offering students new avenues for holistic wellness. As the first naturopathic doctor on campus, she is leading an initiative that integrates diverse healing methods to support students.

## How did she get here?

Connors' path into naturopathic medicine was formed through a mix of both personal experience and academic exploration. She graduated from UW's health sciences program in 2009 with a minor in psychology. Connors always knew that she wanted to work in healthcare, but wasn't sure which direction to take.

"UW was the best school for studying health sciences," she reflects. "The program offered a lot of flexibility, and I was able to go in different directions even during undergrad." After earning her degree from UW, Connors went on to graduate from the Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine in 2013. She received specialized training in pediatric care during her clinical internship and worked with a local Indigenous community at Anishnawbe Health Toronto.

Growing up, she was first introduced to naturopathic medicine when she was seven years old. Her family regularly consulted a naturopath alongside their family doctor. Remedies like herbal teas, vitamins, and minerals were integral to her upbringing, reinforcing a preventative approach to wellness.

"Herbs came first, then we built medicine off of those plants," she explains, highlighting the long-standing connection between natural remedies and pharmaceutical medicine. This perspective guided her to pursue a career where she could integrate both components.



Sarah Connors, an Indigenous naturopathic doctor

## Two-Eyed Seeing: a holistic approach to medicine

With her blended ancestry of Mohawk and European descent, Connors' practice is guided by Two-Eyed Seeing. The concept was introduced by Mi'kmaq Elder Albert Marshall, which encourages viewing the world through both an Indigenous and a Western lens.

"Naturopathic medicine serves as a bridge," she says. "It's about bringing the best of both approaches together to provide the most comprehensive care."

Her presence at UW Health Services offers students alternative pathways to health, whether through preventative strategies, changes in nutrition or natural medicine. Students are more familiar with conventional healthcare models, but Connors believes that her role will help broaden the understanding of integrative medicine.

"People are used to seeing a general practitioner or a nurse," she acknowledges. "This is the first time naturopathic medicine is being offered on campus, so it will take time for students to understand what it is and how it can benefit them."

Her services include acupuncture, botanical medicine, clinic nutrition counselling, healthy lifestyle counselling, homeopathic and natural remedies, reiki, smudging and other ceremonial practices.

## Navigating challenges and building awareness

Introducing naturopathic medicine into a university setting comes with its challenges. The popular healthcare model has been rooted in conventional Western practices for centuries, making it a shift for many to consider alternative treatments. However, Connors emphasizes that this is not about replacing existing methods but rather expanding the available resources.

"The tools available to us in healthcare are like a toolbox — one tool isn't necessarily better than another. It's about using the right tool at the right

time for the job," she explains.

To address these hindrances, Connors is engaging with the student community through outreach efforts, including collaboration with the Menstrual Equity Steering Committee on awareness initiatives for conditions like polycystic ovarian syndrome and endometriosis. She facilitated a session under a Lunch and Learn event on Feb. 28 to further educate students on reproductive health.

**"This is the first time naturopathic medicine is being offered on campus, so it will take time for students to understand what it is and how it can benefit them."**

— Sarah Connors on expanding awareness of integrative medicine.

## Impact and future aspirations

Despite being on campus for just a few weeks, the reception from students and faculty has been overwhelmingly positive.

"The experience has been very welcoming," she shares. "There's a strong understanding that we're working towards expanding wellness support on campus." Currently, Connors is on campus once a week, with plans to grow her engagement based on student needs. "My goal is simple: to be a helping hand in improving the health of those around me," she says. "Whatever role I play; it's about working towards achieving optimal wellness for students."

The future for Health Services at UW is exciting as there is proof of how diverse health treatments can coexist, creating an environment where students can access a more comprehensive approach to healthcare.

# The spring slump:

## Finding renewed hope

Carla Stocco, Staff Writer

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Last winter, my co-op placement was coming to a close and the spring study term was fast approaching. Initially, I couldn't have been happier. Exhausted by the grind of the workday, the spring term would mean a respite from the 9-to-5 workweek and a chance to enjoy sunny weather. But May arrived, and I was faced with an abrupt change to the work schedule I'd grown so accustomed to. I struggled to find the motivation to tackle my quickly growing pile of assignments. Although blooming daffodils, twittering birds, and a return to brighter afternoons are welcome changes, it was tough to shake off so many months of dark evenings and frigid weather. Amid such a seemingly hopeful time of nature's rebirth, why can spring term feel so challenging? Is it the pressure to find employment after the term is over, or is the lingering exhaustion just one of many symptoms of seasonal affective disorder (SAD) brought on by all those days in the dark? Is it possible that the return to sunny days doesn't always equate to an immediate boost of our well-being? In search of answers, I reached out to UW students for their insights into finding wellness this spring.

### Understanding the spring slump and SAD

Broadly speaking, the spring semester slump can be described as a general sense of burnout, exhaustion, and waning motivation. The seasonal impact on mental health is becoming more well-researched, and according to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), the spring blues are more prevalent among women, young people, and those living far north or south of the equator. In fact, up to 1 in 20 Canadians are affected by severe SAD, according to CAMH. The severity of such diagnoses can be worsened by changes to one's circadian rhythm, cold weather, dark afternoons, and a loss of interest in socializing with others or spending time outdoors. For students, with the ongoing pressures of university life in addition to the need to cope with the

challenges brought on by Canadian winters, the term spring slump, or springtime blues, comes to mind, and acknowledges the potential for feelings of sadness come April and May.

### Contributors to springtime blues

An article from *The Tiger* cites the lack of adequate time-off as a major factor in spring mental health struggles. Fifth-year computational mathematics student Jeanie Zhang echoes this point, acknowledging that "spring term is tougher because it's a shorter term without breaks and [has] fewer holidays within the term." She describes how in the fall term, breaks such as reading week, Thanksgiving, and holiday closures offer moments of respite "which help adjust [her] mood and get rid of the stress of studying." Another contributor to springtime blues might be the reduced number of students on campus. One student could be away on a spring co-op term, while their friend is stuck on campus studying. Being stuck on campus studying is another contributor to feelings of loneliness, Zhang notes.

### From FOMO to JOMO: embracing where you are today

Picture it: it's a gorgeous sunny day outside, but you're busy completing a 3,000-word paper for your 400-level course. It's hard not to feel like you're missing out on the fun. Dania Murtaza, a fifth-year political science and communication studies student, describes how she often feels the need to "make more plans, because the weather is so lovely." Many students can probably relate. Yet for those of you longingly scrolling through Instagram posts of tropical vacation getaways and hikes in faraway forests and wishing your spring plans were more exciting, it's worth considering how you can find moments of joy and relaxation wherever you may be spending the spring term.



An article from *BU Today* touches on the idea of JOMO (joy of missing out), explaining that the need to be incessantly socializing can make us forget the simple delights in life. Whether it's rollerblading, badminton, painting, or swimming, there are endless options to spend this spring learning a new skill or refining current talents. Fun isn't only found in booking flights and three-hour road trips. Likewise, it's worth acknowledging the downsides of those luxury trips posted online, such as the costs, travel, and schedule planning. Sometimes, a bike ride in the park, an ice cream with a friend, or even purchasing a new book or T-shirt can be catalysts that remind us of the joy we can find in the present moment, in our current location. While fall term parties or homecoming events might have felt exciting, consider how a springtime coffee chat with a close friend can feel refreshing and energizing in its own way. In a modern world that's constantly asking us to do more, choosing to integrate activities that are soothing and fulfilling can counteract feelings of longing and sadness.

## Beating burnout and renewing yourself

When it comes to coping with the spring slump, lingering feelings of burnout or FOMO, it's essential to recognize strategies that can set you back on the path towards greater wellness. Asked what kind of advice she'd give to students struggling with the transition from winter to spring term, Murtaza suggests: "Spend some time reflecting on what you're concerned about, and try to find ways [you can] make it easier to thrive during your term." She also emphasized the importance of acknowledging your concerns this spring, be it loneliness or the stress of future planning. Recognizing your worries and then seeking support to lessen or cope with challenges will set you up to find the resources that best support you this spring. Check out the following tips for more strategies to beat the spring slump:

### 1. Avoid comparison

Believing that your extroverted colleague never feels down or that your best friend's new relationship is flawless isn't a realistic perspective. Comparing yourself to anyone and believing that your brief glimpses into their best moments represents the full picture robs you of the ability to recognize that while you may be feeling down, you're not alone. Perhaps it's also worth remembering the truth that feelings and adversities shift, meaning joy and success are equally possible.

### 2. Engage in self-care

Who doesn't feel better after taking a shower or sipping a warm cup of tea? Murtaza finds the end-of-day to be an excellent time for re-centering herself. For activities that reduce feelings of burnout, she suggests "reading, baking, writing in [a] diary, [or] talking to [a parent/loved one]." For Zhang, reconnecting with nature by going for a walk in a local park offers the chance at both sunshine and relaxation. If you're on campus, consider heading to the PAC or CIF gyms for an endorphin-boosting workout, strolling through Waterloo park for a moment of peace, or diving into a new book by borrowing from the university or local libraries.

### 3. Develop resilience

Brian Orend, professor of philosophy and UW alum, offers insights to staying resilient and managing ongoing challenges. In his book *Seizure the Day*, Orend details the stress of coping with seizures, misdiagnoses, and the eventual diagnosis of a brain tumor. His background in philosophy lies at the forefront of his approach to such tribulations. Although philosophy often places emphasis on individual experiences, Orend encourages us to notice how deeply happiness is interconnected to others in our lives: "The empathy and support of those around us are critical to our well-being." He underscores the significance of developing a philosophy of joy that is untethered to the pursuit of constant happiness or the need to eliminate hardships. He suggests working to develop a mindset that enables the discovery of delight and purpose no matter the current circumstances, and spending less time on draining activities and more on those that lift your heart.

To learn more about Orend's journey towards resilience, check out his podcast *Uncharted: Living a happier life on the UWaterloo Alumni Podcasts* site.

## Uncovering a season of potential hope

Spring has long been seen as a season reminiscent of hope, possibility, and renewal. American psychiatrist Karl Menninger believed hope to be the “indispensable flame of mental health.” We cannot deny the darkness and difficulties of the recent winter, nor can we ignore looming worries of a possibly lonelier spring term or new fears of life post-graduation. Yet acknowledging the challenges we face is the first step towards uncovering our capacity to handle adversity with courage. Choosing to see the possibility that exists this season takes strength.

If your undergraduate career is wrapping up this spring, celebrate the closing of this chapter. Reflect on who you were in your first year and who stands before you now. If this spring study term looks to be a little quieter, reconnect with your inner voice and neglected hobbies. In a world that is constantly modernizing, changing, and trying to tell us who to be or what to do, in the renewal of spring, in the rebirth of flowers and morning birdsong, perhaps we find again what matters.



Iqra Majeed

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# Anishinaabe Elder explains significance of water ahead of World Water Day

Ryan Dwight MacTavish, Contributor

## A path of healing and reflection

As a Mohawk of the Six Nations of the Grand River and a proud Turtle Clan member, my journey has been deeply shaped by both personal growth and an evolving connection to my heritage. The past few years, including my placement at the Waterloo Indigenous Student Centre (WISC) and my work with the Office of Indigenous Relations, have granted me the privilege of engaging with knowledge keepers and Elders who have guided me on both a professional and personal path.

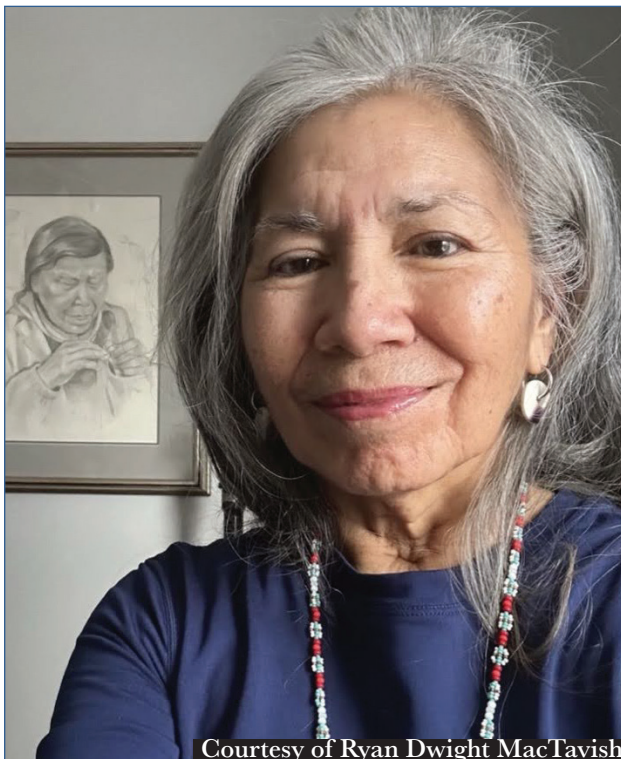
One of the most pivotal moments in my journey came when I connected with Mary Anne Caibaiosai, a respected Anishinaabe Elder and water advocate, among many other things. Our paths crossed at an Indigenous grief circle hosted by Crow Shield Lodge, and from that moment, I felt a sense of connection and purpose. Her name had come up many times when I sought guidance, and it felt as though

our meeting was destined. Caibaiosai's wisdom and deep commitment to the protection of water have left a lasting impression on me, and I continue to carry her teachings forward in my life and work.

Water is not just a resource — it is sacred. It is our first medicine, as we are all born of water. It connects us to the land, to the ancestors, and to future generations. In Indigenous worldviews, water is a living relative that must be treated with reverence. The more I have come to understand the vital role water plays in the health of our people and our planet, the more I recognize that protecting it is not just an environmental issue, but a spiritual and cultural responsibility.

For much of my life, I remained silent about my heritage. It wasn't until I began my healing journey, connecting with Elders and immersing myself in Indigenous ways of knowing, that I realized my role within my community. I understood that my service would come from both my strengths and vulnerabilities and that service means actively contributing to the betterment of my people. This realization has guided my actions as I work to help build strong, supportive communities — communities that recognize the sacredness of water and the need to protect it.

The importance of land-based healing, connection, and storytelling has become more clear to me through this journey. These practices have shaped my understanding of the world and I have learned to appreciate how they interweave with my personal and professional development. The sacred relationship we have with the land and the water is not one to be taken lightly, and in my own work, I strive to honour and uphold those relationships. Storytelling has become a powerful tool in my work, helping build connections, facilitate healing, and create space for those who wish to share their truths. I've seen firsthand how stories can shift perspectives, build bridges, and foster unity. I felt a calling to write this piece as World Water Day approaches on Mand I hear the calling of accountability and responsibility. I hope by reading this, you may feel something and reflect deeply on your relationship with water and the land.



Courtesy of Ryan Dwight MacTavish

Mary Anne Caibaiosai, an Anishinaabe Elder and water advocate.

## Honouring Mary Anne Caibaiosai: A reflection on Indigenous leadership and water advocacy

Mary Anne Caibaiosai is a Bear Clan Anishnaabe kwe from Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory on Manitoulin Island, currently residing in Peterborough, Ont. She follows the traditional teachings passed down to her from Elders in her territory and the Midewewin lodge. Caibaiosai is a passionate advocate for the protection of water and has been called to continue the sacred work of water walking, following in the footsteps of Josephine-Baa Mandamin, the original water walker who honoured the water by walking around the Great Lakes. Caibaiosai's upcoming water walk along the Grand River, beginning in mid-September, is a ceremonial walk to honour the river and its waters. Guided by the belief that water is life and has spirit, she and her team carry the river in a ceremonial pail, offering prayers, songs, and good words to cleanse and honour the water. Through this journey, Caibaiosai invites people of all ages, backgrounds, and walks of life to participate in the ceremony, whether through physical participation or supporting the walkers in other ways. Her work is rooted in Indigenous teachings, emphasizing the importance of connection to the land and the water, and serves as a call to action to protect and honour the Earth during a time of ecological crisis.

### Honouring Mary Anne Caibaiosai: A reflection on Indigenous leadership and water advocacy

Caibaiosai's work in water advocacy and leadership is a testament to the interconnectedness of Indigenous knowledge, storytelling, and community-based activism. As an Anishnaabe woman, her commitment to the protection of Nibi (water) exemplifies the teachings of respect, responsibility, and relationality. Through her advocacy and her own personal storytelling, she amplifies Indigenous voices and nurtures important dialogue on environmental stewardship and cultural resilience. Caibaiosai shared, "It's always been about the water and the land. That's where our teachings come from, that's where we learn. The land and the water, they're our first teachers."

**"It's always been about the water and the land. That's where our teachings come from, that's where we learn. The land and the water, they're our first teachers."**

— Mary Anne Caibaiosai,  
Anishinaabe Elder and water advocate

One of the most profound aspects of Caibaiosai's work is her dedication to the practice of water walks, ceremonial, physical, and spiritual journeys that emphasize the protection of water. These walks are not mere symbolic gestures — they are rooted in the teachings passed down from her sister, Josephine-Baa, who taught her to carry water with intention, prayer, and gratitude.

In these walks, Caibaiosai reminds us that water is not just a resource to be exploited, but a living relative that sustains us.

Her work calls us to reevaluate our relationship with water and the earth, urging a return to the reciprocal relationship that Indigenous worldviews have always honored. Water is not separate from us, it is intertwined with who we are. In many Indigenous cultures, it is said that we come from the water, and we will return to it. Our very survival is bound to the health of the waters that flow through our lands. The teachings that Caibaiosai upholds reflect a broader truth: that water is life, and its protection is not only an environmental issue but a cultural and spiritual one.

Her work underscores the need to see water as more than just a commodity, reminding us that it is sacred, to be respected and protected. Through her leadership, Caibaiosai has demonstrated that protecting the water is a collective respon-

sibility, one that extends beyond ourselves to future generations. She continues to teach us that when we honour and protect the water, we honour and protect all life.

Caibaiosai's approach to leadership centres around Indigenous knowledge systems, using storytelling, ceremony, and relational accountability to guide future generations in the responsibility of protecting the land and water. In her work, Caibaiosai challenges the colonial frameworks that view water through an extractive, commodified lens. Instead, she advocates for sustainability, kinship, and reciprocity, offering a vision of environmental justice that is rooted in Indigenous teachings.

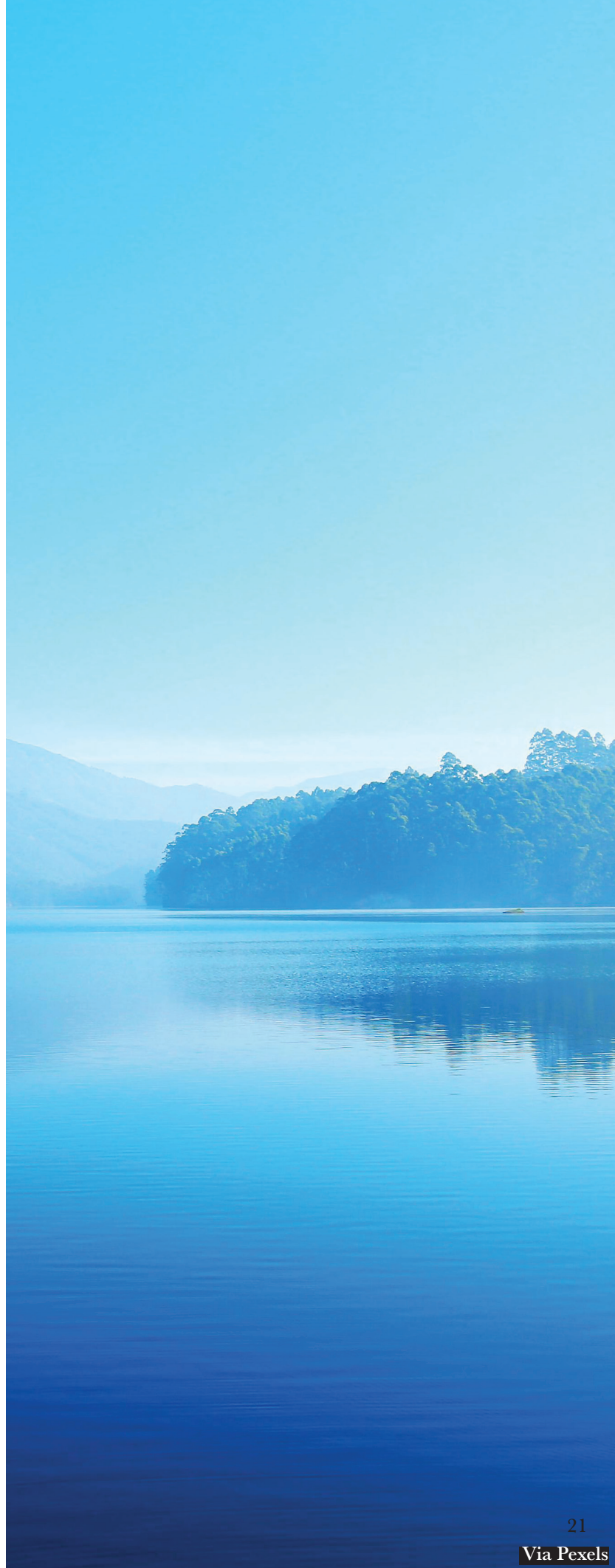
Her impact extends far beyond her own advocacy. Through her leadership, Caibaiosai has inspired countless individuals, students, community members, and fellow activists to engage with water protection in ways that honour Indigenous teachings. Her work offers a path for collective action, building solidarity within and between communities and creating a space where both Indigenous and non-Indigenous voices can join together in the fight for environmental justice.

The legacy Caibaiosai is building is one of resilience and resistance, intricately woven into a broader tapestry of Indigenous activism that spans generations. Her work stresses the importance of Indigenous leadership in addressing the ecological crises we face today. She shared, "The world is changing fast, and we see the damage everywhere. But our teachings tell us we still have a role, that we can still make a difference if we listen and act.

Caibaiosai's example teaches us that advocacy is not just about policy or protest, it is about living a life that reflects our inherent responsibilities to each other and to the natural world. Through her, we are reminded that the work of protecting our waters is an act of love and a call to protect the future for all generations to come.



A piece of art created by the author, which speaks to the healing nature of tears.



This week, I took a deep dive into my collection of recipes on *Imprint*, and I realized that I have never written a recipe for chocolate chip cookies. Consider this my formal apology for leaving out the most delicious baked good to exist. This recipe incorporates the magic of brown butter and takes less than an hour to create. It pairs perfectly with a cup of hot chocolate or milk during these treacherous winters.

# Chocolate chip cookie



Ingrid Au, Contributor

## Tools

Measuring cup  
2 mixing bowls  
Baking spatula  
Cooking pan  
Whisk or spatula  
Sheet pan  
Parchment paper

## Ingredients

2 cups of all-purpose flour  
1 cup of milk chocolate chips  
1 cup of unsalted butter at room temperature  
1 ¼ cup of brown sugar  
½ cup of white sugar  
1 whole egg and 2 egg yolks at room temperature  
1 tbsp of vanilla extract  
1 tsp of salt  
¾ tsp of baking soda

## Instructions

Preheat the oven to 350 F.

In a pan over medium heat, cook the butter for 5-6 minutes or until golden brown. Set aside in a bowl and let cool. Combine the dry ingredients in a mixing bowl: flour, baking soda and salt. In a separate mixing bowl, combine the cooled brown butter, brown and white sugar, vanilla extract, egg and egg yolks. Using your whisk or spatula, fold the dry ingredients into the wet, then mix in the chocolate chips.

Line your sheet pan with parchment paper and roll the dough into the size of a golf ball. Space the cookies out so they do not merge when baking. They should be about 2-3 inches apart. Bake the cookies for about 10 minutes, or until the edges are golden and the centre remains soft. You can also check if they're done by inserting a toothpick into the cookies — if it comes out clean, the cookies are ready. Once baked, set them aside to cool for 10 minutes, and then transfer them to a cooling rack.

There's just something special about a simple treat. During this cold harsh winter, nothing is better than a warm baked cookie and a cup of hot chocolate. Enjoy and stay warm!





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