



# Imprint

Your Stories, Your Voice

September 2025  
Volume 3 Issue 2



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to find them  
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Marit Stiles on  
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# Bird courses at UW:

What they are, where to find them, and why it' can be complicated

Emma Danesh, Staff Writer

You've probably heard of the term "bird course" thrown around on Reddit, TikTok, or in the depths of a group chat. At UW, it's a rite of passage to track one down and secure your spot. But what even is a bird course? Where do you find them? And are they really all they're cracked up to be?

## What is a bird course?

In student words, a bird course is a class that's widely considered easy, light in workload, or generally painless to fly through. It's the kind of course students might take to boost their GPA, balance a heavy schedule, or just take a breather from the usual grind.

That said, "easy" is subjective. Kristen Deckert, an academic advisor in the faculty of arts, puts it best: "What is easy for one student may be hard for another." Some students thrive in essay-heavy courses, while others panic at the idea of a five-page paper. Some love the simplicity of one final exam; others would rather space things out with small assignments. It all comes down to your learning style.

So, when we talk about bird courses, we're really talking about classes that tend to be easier depending on your strengths, and maybe even your faculty.

## The faculty factor: Who wants what?

Bird courses look different depending on what program you're in.

Engineering students often prefer bird courses with a single midterm and final exam. These students already handle math- and science-heavy workloads, so a course without many of readings or assignments (especially those that can be tackled the night before) feels more manageable.

Art students, on the other hand, are generally more comfortable with essays, discussion boards, and projects are chill about deadlines, or participation bumps your mark up.

Science and math students tend to lean towards courses that are straightforward and mark-heavy on tests, with clear rubrics and minimal writing. Sometimes, they'll dip into easier arts or environment electives to break up the constant formulas.

Environment, health, and recreation students often go for courses with content that aligns with their interests, such as climate studies and public policies. A bird course might be one where the content overlaps with other core courses, making it feel easier by default.

## How do you find these courses?

There's no official bird course database, but here are a few ways UW students do their digging:

### Word of Mouth

Ask around. Upper-year students, TA's, co-workers, and even your residence don might have some suggestions. People love to talk about the one class that saved their GPA.

### Reddit (r/uwaterloo)

The UW subreddit is full of students sharing tips, horror stories, and praise for the courses they've taken. Use the search bar for keywords like "bird course" or "easy elective," or the course code you're thinking of.

### RateMyProfessor.com

While not UW-specific, it's still helpful. A professors can make or break a course's bird status, so it's worth checking out what people have to say about a professor.

## Popular bird courses at UW, according to the Internet

Here are some of the most commonly mentioned bird courses. Keep in mind, professors and course formats change so always double check the latest reviews.

### CLAS 104

#### Classical Mythology

If you're into Greek and Roman gods, monsters, and epic tales, this online course makes for entertaining lectures.



### HLTH 101

#### Intro to Health

This course is great for first-years looking for a chill elective. Topics range from mental health, illness and disability, and the history of health throughout the ages.



### SCI 206

#### The Physics of How Things Work

Designed for non-science majors, this one breaks down physics concepts using real-world objects like toasters and skateboards. It's popular among arts and recreation students.

### ENGL 108P

#### Popular Potter

Yes, a Harry Potter course. For those who love literature, or even just the Wizarding World, this one's both fun and manageable. There are essays but it's well-paced.



### PSYCH 101

#### Intro to Psychology

A classic. Lots of students say it's interesting, not too difficult, and the material is memorable.

Bird courses can offer a nice break, a GPA cushion, or a mental health buffer, but they shouldn't replace real planning. Don't fill your schedule with courses just because they sound easy. Instead, aim for balance, a few challenging courses you're passionate about, mixed with one or two lighter ones to keep your brain in place.

Remember, learning is subjective. The "easy A" for your friend might be your worst nightmare. Focus on what you enjoy, what plays to your strengths, and what fits your schedule.

### UW Flow

This site is like RateMyProf but specifically for UW. You can see reviews for both courses and professors, including the courses workload, difficulty, and usefulness. Students even rate how "birdy" a course is on a scale.

### Course Outline Repositories & Academic Advisor

You can often find past syllabi online to get a sense of the workload. Furthermore don't sleep on academic advisors: they might not say "this course is easy," but they can help you find ones that align with your strengths. Deckert encourages students to reflect on "what they desire in course offerings and styles" to find courses that suit them better.

## MIDTOWN YOGA + PILATES



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A full-page photograph of Meagan Hobson, a women's field hockey player, in a yellow and black uniform. She is captured in a dynamic pose, leaning forward with her field hockey stick, ready to strike the ball. The background is a blurred outdoor field with trees and a building.

# Beyond the field: Meagan Hobson's leadership and legacy

Thea East, Senior Editor

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After a rocky start to the women's field hockey season last fall, UW stunned the Ontario University Athletics (OUA) circuit. Entering the championship tournament as the fourth seed, the Warriors toppled powerhouse University of Toronto before edging past longtime rivals, University of Guelph Gryphons, to capture their first OUA gold in two decades, and fourth in program history. At the centre of it all was co-captain Meagan Hobson, a player whose energy, resilience, and steady leadership helped turn an underdog team into champions.

Hobson is one of the three co-captains for UW's women's field hockey team and is also a full time ARBUS student in her fourth year majoring in legal studies. While her busy schedule already speaks to her commitment and success as a student athlete, Hobson was also the recipient of the Marsden trophy at this year's athletics banquet, as well as being the U Sports National Championship Tournament MVP. The co-captain made her mark by leading her team to the OUA Championship while fostering a loving and supportive culture for the whole team to thrive in. Hobson's achievements as a student and an athlete, embody what UW's athletics aims to stand for, as she is sure to leave a lasting and impactful legacy here at UW.

Hobson's journey with the sport begins with her initial start as an ice hockey player and dabbling in field hockey during the summers along with many of her teammates. However, field hockey soon became a greater interest and she joined her first competitive field hockey team, the KW

Courtesy of UW Athletics/Tianna Dip



“You’ll have so many people in your corner cheering you on, making it a great experience... I’d say, if you come to Waterloo, you would just have another big family.”

— Meagan Hobson



Dragons, in her early years as an athlete. With her field hockey team spending many Saturday mornings playing at UW, Hobson had already begun to set her sights on playing for the school when she would eventually go to university, especially as her older sister, who also played field hockey at UW, helped to put her in contact with the team coach, Stephanie Snider, during high school. When asked if the co-captain had ever considered playing for a different school, she stated that, “It was always Waterloo. I honestly only applied to one other program just in case I never got in.”

After reaching her goal of playing field hockey for UW, Hobson looked towards her next achievement, receiving a captaincy, which she accomplished in January 2024. “It honestly has always been my goal to be able to lead the team... anyone can lead the team, you don’t need the title to do it, just being able to take that leadership role and bring it to the next level,” she explained. Hobson added that “mak[ing] our team united as one” is something that starts with the mindset of the leadership, which her and her co-captains prioritized this past season.

In the fall 2024, Hobson had her work cut out for her entering the OUA championship with her team being the underdog fourth seed that was not expected to make a deep run.

However, the co-captain shared that the win against perennial powerhouse, the University of Toronto, boosted the teams’ confidence. “It was a 1-0 game and... that’s a good team. When we beat them, we knew we could do it, but now we just had a lot more fire,” Hobson explained. Through her own leadership style, the co-captain aimed to create a community where each player was motivated to do their best on the field, and most importantly, be excited to play. It was this fire and energy, kindled by the three co-captains, that helped them to prevail against long-time rivals, the Guelph Gryphons, and bring home the OUA gold. Additionally, this was the first championship for Hobson’s coaches, which she shared made the win all the more special.

The OUA win definitely marks the UW women’s field hockey team as the ones to watch moving forward into the next season, however underneath the success, Hobson explains how if you were to walk into a room with the 19 girls off the field, you would be able to see that they are all one big family, and that is a culture that she aims to cultivate as a leader within the team. However, being the head of a big family comes with challenges which she says can be difficult sometimes to overcome. “Say you’re not having the best game yourself, it’s hard not to get too down on yourself, but



you always have to remember that the teams looking up to you, and maybe someone else is having a great day, it's how you pick yourself up and show everyone that, I might not have had a great game, but I can still try my hardest," said Hobson.

While Hobson makes her student-athlete life and successes look easy, the reality requires the juggling of responsibilities, hard work and sacrifices. The co-captain recalled a particularly difficult schedule during last season when the team had a three day turnaround from the OUA championship to competing at U Sports during midterms. "It definitely was a little more challenging to balance but... we also have a really great athletics community to lean on for wellness, and help accessing tutors which is really great," she said. Even with the additional support from athletics, Hobson explained how it all comes down to mastering her organizational and time management skills.

After her years of dedication to the sport, her steady and motivating leadership skills and hard work in her academics, it is no surprise that Hobson's achievements have been recognized as she became the most recent recipient of the Marsden trophy. The trophy is awarded to UW's female athlete of the year for athletic excellence and genuine sportsmanship while maintaining academic quality. As Hobson reflected on the moment she received the award at this year's academic banquet she described how she felt in awe of the achievement, and how special it was to have her friends and family with her during that moment. When discussing the work that went into earning the award Hobson said,



Janine Taha

"I've just been very determined throughout my four years to really make an impact on the field hockey program. I am a very competitive person." It is clear that she has left an impact not only on the program, but also her team mates, the athletics community and UW.

Now entering her last season playing field hockey at UW, Hobson is still determined to motivate her team and bring home more wins. While the co-captain says her departure is bittersweet due to the amazing experience she has had in the field hockey program, she hopes that she can in some way stay connected and continue to have an impact on future players. When asked what she would say to any new recruits coming to UW to play field hockey, Hobson said, "You'll have so many people in your corner cheering you on, making it a great experience... I'd say, if you come to Waterloo, you would just have another big family."

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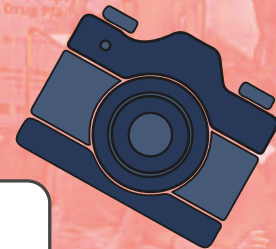
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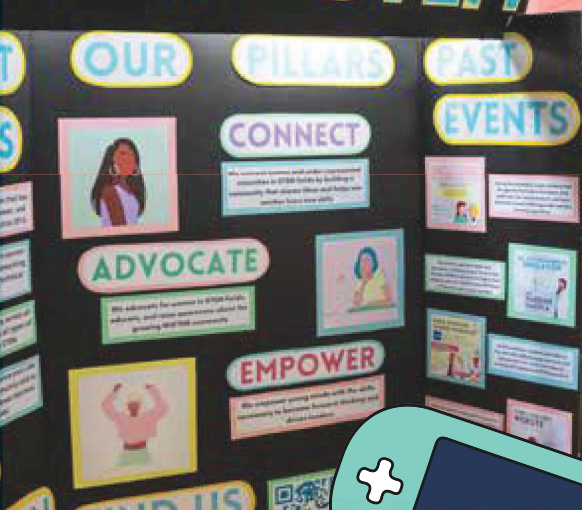


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# United for a cause with UW Clubs

Radha Vyas, Contributor

Student clubs at UW are channelling their passion into fundraising efforts that go beyond just dollars and cents. Take a look behind the scenes to see how these clubs are making a meaningful impact through their initiatives.

## UW Beauty Club

Imagine a place where mascara mishaps turn into makeup masterclasses, and skincare swaps feel like passing secrets between friends. That's the heart of the UW Beauty Club. Guided by club president Jasmine Leung, the club channels this spirit of creativity and care into action. "We've tried two different fundraisers so far. Last spring, we hosted a cookie bake sale in partnership with Sweet Lou's Cookies, and in the fall, we hosted bubble tea with Together Boba. Both events went well, but the cookie sale performed better due to the timing. We held a cookie sale during peak hours at the Student Life Centre (SLC), and that made all the difference," Leung says.

The proceeds from both fundraisers were used in a packing event where 50 boxes containing toothbrushes, toothpaste, body wash, and deodorant were assembled for those in need. These donations were distributed to organizations making a direct impact in the community. Half went to Moving Beyond Violence, an initiative of Women's Crisis Services that supports women and children escaping domestic violence in Waterloo Region. The rest went to Starling Community Services, which provides resources for youth facing homelessness and unemployment.

On the flip side, organizing these events hasn't been without obstacles for the club. "One of the biggest challenges our club has faced is booking space at the SLC during high-traffic days like Tuesdays and Wednesdays. You have to book it well in advance or you risk losing the spot," Leung notes. Despite these hurdles, Leung's advice to other organizers is clear: "Manage your time well. It's possible to host fun events with a great turnout while giving back to the community."

## UW Make-A-Wish Canada

There's a special kind of magic in making a child's wish come true. UW chapter of Make-A-Wish brings that magic to life by raising funds to grant wishes for children facing critical illnesses across Canada. "Earlier this year, we donated \$4,000, and we're on track to donate \$5,000 by the end of this year, assuming our fall events help us reach that amount," explains co-president Manshee Bansode, adding that every dollar goes directly towards Make-A-Wish Canada.

The blend of exciting events and savvy promotion has helped the club grow its following and increase participation every term. "The events were a big success thanks to our social media promotions. Doing trendy things rather than just posting simple posts is what helped our account reach 30,000 clicks this term alone," Bansode elaborates.

Like the UW Beauty Club, logistical challenges are always a part of the process. "Limited booking slots at the SLC have led us to expand into other campus spaces like DC and STC. Additionally, to maintain visibility and keep the donations flowing, we've set up weekly information booths, ensuring our presence on campus continues to grow and our momentum doesn't slow down," Bansode shares.

For Bansode, though, the real victory isn't just in the events or logistics. "I think everybody should donate, even if it's just a dollar or two. It really helps small clubs generate the funds we need, which then go directly into making a difference. It may seem small, but when it adds up, it becomes something impactful," Bansode concludes.

## UW Empower Cycle

Menstruation is often surrounded by stigma and silence, but UW Empower Cycle is changing that one menstrual kit at a time. Event directors Saghana Rajakrishna and Zara Jaswal shed light on the club's mission. "The fundraising initiatives our club most recently hosted were the Krispy Kreme fundraisers. These fundraisers were held on campus to help us raise funds for our Period Packing Parties that are held later in the winter term. The funds we raise during these fundraisers facilitate us with purchasing a variety of female hygiene products such as pads, tampons, liners, and sanitary wipes that are then packaged and delivered to women, either in local shelters in the Kitchener-Waterloo region such as the Ray of Hope, or on campus through societies such as the Association of Health Students Undergraduate Members and MathSoc.

The club's journey hasn't been without lessons. "During our first fundraiser of the fall term, our club wanted to do something special to acknowledge our general community members and decided to offer them the chance to place pre-sale orders at a discounted price. The overall reception from the community was fantastic, but the actual pick-up process for the pre-sale orders was slightly hectic and could have been better organized. After some feedback and thorough analysis, we decided that it would be best to no longer have pre-sale orders and opted to sell the donuts as the student body stopped by our booth. In spite of all of this, we do hope to find another way to show our appreciation towards our general members soon!" they share.

Beyond bake sales and booth sales, the event directors discuss how applying for the Student Life Endowment Fund (SLEF) was useful for their club. "Applying for this absolutely helped our club achieve our desired goals and helped to expand our budget for our Period Packing Parties, ultimately ensuring that women in need were able to receive the necessary support from our club."



## UW Sororities

At UW, it's not uncommon to see a table piled with cookies, cupcakes, and cheerful smiles, usually courtesy of the campus's two Panhellenic sororities: Kappa Kappa Gamma and Alpha Omicron Pi. Though their roots stretch back to the 19th century — KKG from Monmouth College in Illinois (1870) and AOII from Barnard College in New York City (1897) — their energy on campus is anything but old-fashioned. KKG and AOII are known for their strong sisterhood, but ask them what gets the campus buzzing, and the answer is easy: bake sales and giving back to the community.

AOII keeps things lively with luncheons, strike out arthritis bowling nights, and their legendary Pi Day mashup — part bake sale, part pie-in-the-face fundraiser. Mary McKay from AOII specifies, "Bake sales are super easy to organize. Students love stopping by for a sweet treat, especially when it supports a good cause." On the other side, KKG focuses its efforts on bake sales that champion mental health awareness. Maggie Varriano from KKG explains, "Fundraising isn't just about selling goodies for us. Through our bake sales, we raise funds to support local volunteering efforts and partnerships like our work with Jack.org, which focuses on youth mental health."

Hosting bake sales has been tricky at times. "There have been times when we had to set up in buildings other than the Student Life Centre. Foot traffic dropped, and sales got tougher," Varriano elaborates.

Looking over the years, KKG has raised thousands of dollars, aiming for a few hundred each term, while AOII typically nets over a hundred dollars per bake sale, depending on how many treats they bring. For both, the fuel behind the numbers is passion. "Leaders should either have experience or be eager to learn how to raise money and donate time. The passion and dedication that go into prepping and running events — before and after — are huge. When people genuinely care and want to get everyone involved, amazing things happen!" Varriano mentions. Moreover, McKay adds a tip for today's campus fundraisers, "Since many students don't carry cash, having electronic payment options like e-transfer or card readers is a must."



“One of the biggest challenges our club has faced is booking space at the SLC during high-traffic days like Tuesdays and Wednesdays. You have to book it well in advance or you risk losing the spot.”

- Jasmine Leung,  
UW Beauty Club president

## UW Women's Centre

The UW Women's Centre, part of the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA), is led by coordinators Simran Mukkar and Emma Sookoo. The centre provides a supportive environment for female and trans students on campus. Their mission is to provide essential resources like free menstrual products, peer support, workshops, and sexual health information. However, running these services requires funding, and that's where fundraising plays a pivotal role for the centre.

“We sold boxes of Krispy Kreme donuts throughout the day to raise money for reusable menstrual products, which we offer for free through our service. For a single-day event, we were really happy with the outcome. The fundraiser raised around \$450, which would go toward replenishing the stock of menstrual cups and reusable pads for the next term. The money raised might not have been huge, but it's enough to ensure that students continue to have access to these critical resources throughout the year,” Mukkar shares.

With their team made up entirely of volunteers who juggle school, work, and personal commitments, the coordinators noted that coordinating volunteers can sometimes be tricky. “It's tough to make sure everyone can commit time, especially since many of us have full course loads and part-time jobs. But timing is also key. Some days just don't have the turnout we hope for. We've learned to plan strategically, choosing high-traffic days based on the WUSA events calendar,” Sookoo clarifies.

What has helped make their fundraisers successful is a combination of strategic planning and clear communication about the purpose behind the event. Sookoo summarises, “When students understand that their support goes directly toward providing free health resources to the campus community, they're more likely to engage. We want students to walk away with a better understanding of gender justice and how our work ties into those issues.”



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## The Ring Road Roundup

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# “The government needs to pay its fair share”: A one on one with Marit Stiles

Alicia Wang, Contributor

From her own student experience to now, provincial NDP leader Marit Stiles feels that the largest difference in the post-secondary experience is the money.

During her visit to UW on her All In For Ontario tour this past summer, Stiles, leader of the official opposition of Ontario, sat down with *Imprint* to share her thoughts on the issues surrounding post-secondary institutions, including tuition freezes and Bill 33. When asked what she felt had changed for students since her time studying at Carleton, Stiles pointed out the stark difference in the financial side of things, for both students and their schools.

“I think it’s a lot tougher now. There’s no question,” she said. “When

I talk to students today and I hear about the difficulty [of] just covering the basics like food, and rent, and how many jobs people are juggling just to get through... I can’t even imagine it.”

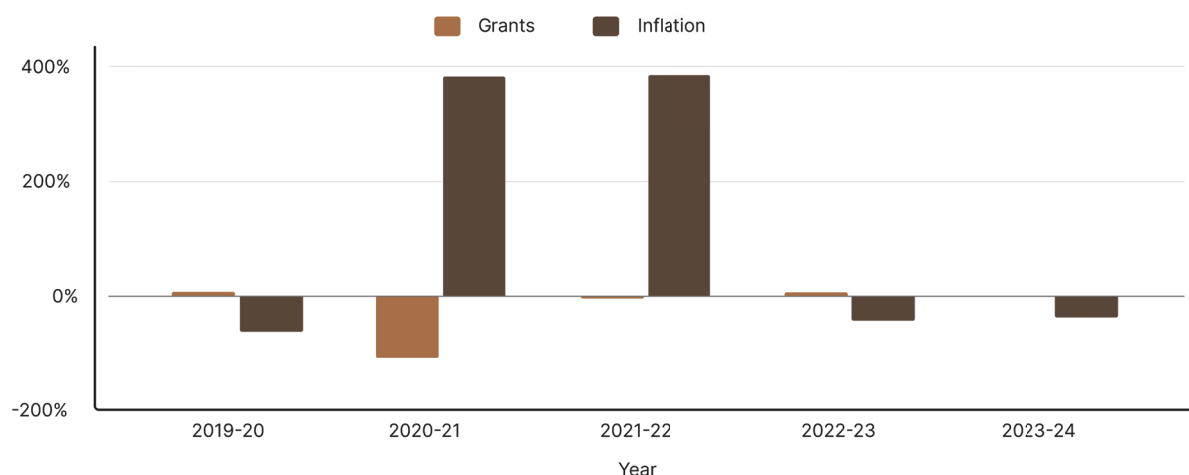
In a few weeks’ time, Stiles will be back to Queen’s Park, where post-secondary issues will be on the docket. Discussions during this period could determine whether several controversial changes to post-secondary institutions will pass. These include Bill 33’s potential to allow students to opt out of key student union fees and an end to the seven-year tuition freeze implemented by the Ford government.

The freeze, along with years of underfunding, has contributed to the increasingly large deficits that post-secondary

institutions are facing, with UW’s own shortfall sitting at \$75 million for the 2024-2025 operating budget. Though the government provided a \$1.2 billion package to post-secondary institutions in February 2024, the Council of Ontario Universities made clear that more funding would be necessary. In fact, a report written by the government’s own blue-ribbon panel recommended \$1.9 billion in base funding over the next three years as well as a five per cent tuition increase.

In July, the *Toronto Star* reported that the province may lift the tuition freeze for the 2027-28 academic year. Given the reopening of tuition discussions, a tuition hike may also be on the table. Stiles said that while

Percentage increase in grants and inflation





Contributor Alicia Wang and Marit Styles in interview

she understands the financial pressure post-secondary institutions are under, the government should “pay its fair share” rather than increase the burden on students already struggling to keep up. “If the government does end up increasing tuition at all or letting universities and colleges increase tuition, they better come forward with some serious increases in student assistance as well,” she said. “We cannot... force institutions to bear that burden either, or students.”

However, when asked for her plan on bringing financial stability to post-secondary institutions, Stiles did not provide one, instead labelling years of underfunding from the provincial government as a failure to invest in the future. She also voiced concerns that students could increasingly bear the brunt of the financial shortfalls. “What I’m afraid of, and what I’m seeing is that universities are being forced to cut those supports that students need, which is really concerning, especially given how much I think a lot of students are struggling right now,” she said.

One area where UW students have

felt the pressure is the search for housing. A 2024 Desjardins report found that even with the most student housing of any Canadian city, it still fell 5,000 units short of demand. Data recently released by the Ford government shows that it achieved less than 80 per cent of its 2024 housing targets.

On this topic, Stiles had a more concrete plan: to create Homes Ontario, an organization that would partner with non-profits and post-secondary institutions to build “millions of homes” to meet those organizations’ existing plans or needs and create more options for Ontarians. This could include student co-op housing, student residences, and rent-geared-to-income housing.

Stiles pointed out Ontario’s history of similar initiatives, stating that Homes Ontario would fill the gap of a public affordable housing organization that other provinces have. She said the housing crisis could not really be addressed until the usage of private contractors to build housing was re-evaluated, stating, “no big developer is looking to build truly affordable, deeply affordable housing.” She also

spoke of the need to bring back rent control, stating, “I think it’s really important not to forget that we also need to save the homes that people already have.”

Another key area of focus for the post-secondary sector has been Bill 33, introduced in late May to a chorus of concerns from various student and school representative organizations, including WUSA, who sent formal feedback to the Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security in June. Schedule three of the bill, which amends the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act, contains four amendments regarding applicant assessment, research security, and student fees.

One of the amendments is the authorization from the province for “regulations to be made” by the Lieutenant Governor on fees students are charged for or required to pay. To Stiles, the amendment represented a “false choice” the government was providing students. She posited that the government was using it to try and placate worries about tuition hikes by offering a way to save



# “It’s hard for students today. But imagine how hard it’s going to be for the students of tomorrow.”

— Marit Styles, Ontario NDP Leader

money on fees. “Well, that’s going to be peanuts compared to what students will pay in tuition hikes,” she said.

In a statement to *Imprint*, WUSA warned that the bill “poses serious risk to student-led services which students themselves have deemed essential,” including WUSA’s Food Support Service, RAISE, the Glow Centre, the Clubs system, and WUSA-run events. They pointed out that these services often fill in for supports that post-secondary institutions themselves would not be able to afford.

They also echoed concerns from the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA) that the bill’s amendments around student fees would affect the autonomy of student unions. In a press release regarding Bill 33, the OUSA stated that “students should be the primary decision-makers over the ancillary fees they pay, and government oversight of this undermines the democratic process that should remain in the hands of students.” Both OUSA and WUSA pointed out the similarities between Bill 33 and the Student Choice Initiative pushed by the Ford government in 2019, which allowed students to opt out of fees deemed non-essential by the government. The initiative was ultimately deemed unlawful by provincial courts.

Another of the bill’s controversial amendments is the requirement for

schools to “assess applicants based on merit and to publish the criteria and process to be used for assessment into programs of study.” WUSA echoed OUSA’s feedback to the government that institutions be allowed to set their own admissions criteria to advance specific equity goals.

“I think this is kind of an unfortunate adopting of... a lot of what we’ve seen happening in the United States right now. It’s an attack on equity and an attack on inclusion and it’s getting into an area that really, I don’t think the government should be meddling around with too much,” Stiles said, ultimately labelling it as a “distraction” from the main issue of underfunding post-secondary institutions. Referring to layoffs in the post-secondary sector projected to impact at least 8,000 people, she voiced concerns about the impact students could feel in the form of service reductions and reiterated what she felt was the government’s responsibility to “properly fund and invest in our future.”

When asked for advice she had to give to students looking to get involved in local politics and decision-making, Stiles

underscored the importance of students getting in touch with their student union and student representatives, stating that even amongst studies, co-op, and job searching, “don’t forget that you do have a voice and your voice matters.” She noted that while students and their representatives may not always see eye-to-eye, “they do have a responsibility to listen to you and... they will register the fact that you called them or that you emailed them, or that you wrote to them.”

“I think this is kind

of an unfortunate adopting of... a lot of what we’ve seen happening in the United States right now. It’s an attack on equity and an attack on inclusion and it’s getting into an area that really, I don’t think the government should be meddling around with too much,” Stiles said, ultimately labelling it as a “distraction” from the main issue of underfunding post-secondary institutions. Referring to layoffs in the post-secondary sector projected to impact at least 8,000 people, she voiced concerns about the impact students could feel in the form of service reductions and reiterated what she felt was the government’s responsibility to “properly fund and invest in our future.”

She added that students can aid in fighting “distractions” imposed by Ford by spreading information on how to come together to support each other. “Let’s think about how we come up with policies and approaches that bring us together more,” she said. “It’s hard for students today. But imagine how hard it’s going to be for the students of tomorrow. It’s going to get worse if we don’t do something.”



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# I just got to Waterloo, is exercising a thing here?

Vanshaj Garg, Contributor

**L**ong story short, it is! But what can you even do to stay active around here?

UW is known for its competitive academic and co-op programs, however most people are unaware about the various fitness programs or facilities offered to its students.

Consistent exercise not only benefits physical health, but it improves academic performance, mental health, and provides students an opportunity to engage in a healthy work-life balance. UW has plenty of facilities and services that they offer to all students to promote a healthier lifestyle. However, it is normal for students to feel lost when building a consistent fitness routine, especially when they first join the Warriors community.

Third-year student Sejal Goel, who studies planning in the faculty of environment, was once a first-year student who struggled to develop regular fitness habits. “I felt unmotivated and nervous going to the gym... I was very much a beginner who didn’t know how to navigate the gym.”

However, Goel was able to persevere through these beginner struggles with the assistance of the Warrior facilities, a friend, and some initiative.

“I realized this is something that I had to take upon myself,” she said. Her roommate taught her how to properly weightlift and helped her stay consistent. However, whenever her roommate was unavailable, Goel struggled to maintain this consistency until she began to use her surrounding opportunities such as the Warrior workouts. “They had Warrior workouts on the whiteboards at the gyms, and I really liked those... as a shy person who didn’t feel comfortable talking to people, it was a great way to learn.”

The Warrior workouts are a set of exercises that are frequently created and updated by UW Athletics, aimed to alleviate the struggle of selecting a workout routine for the day. By providing a handful of exercises and specifying the required repetitions and sets, it reduces the pressure of planning that a novice would face when starting their fitness journey.

Over time, as Goel became familiar with exercising and the Waterloo facilities, she felt fine going to the gym alone and eventually built a great relationship with exercising.

“I found myself going more because I felt comfortable... The environment was very welcoming, and my relationship with the gym has improved because I was able to learn what works for me.”

Another reason she felt increasingly comfortable was because of the Making Space – Equity Deserving Programs. These programs offer specific timeslots at various facilities for women, transgender people, and members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

“It’s important that women/2SLGBTQIA+ feel comfortable, and I believe that [Columbia Icefield] does a great job with this due to the exclusive timeslots. It creates a welcoming community and creates an open environment for people to express their feelings,” Goel said. “It made me feel that nobody judges me in the gym, which makes me believe that nobody is there to criticize or make others feel unwelcome.” The respect from the community, alongside the making space program and available resources, gave Goel the foundations for a healthy habit she has maintained since 2022.

While it may seem overwhelming to replicate Goel’s success, the Warriors Recreation & Athletics team offer a plethora of resources for students to utilize to their benefit. Liv Dake and Jacob Reed have been personal trainers at UW Athletics for about three years, and both believe that students could massively benefit from existing opportunities with a touch of initiative.

“There is something for everyone, regardless of what your interests are... whether it’s the gym, intramurals, clubs, or various other opportunities in athletics,” Dake said. “There are lots of accessible resources, but you have to look for them... once you get past that first step of looking through the Warrior website, all these opportunities are at your fingertips.”

UW Athletics offers in-person programming, wellness in-





formation, drop in recreation, multiple exercise facilities, and clubs ranging from aquatic sports to dance.

Although these resources exist, beginners may struggle to figure out how to use them sustainably. “I think a lot of people go too hard and heavy out of the gates. They’re excited, want to use new stuff, and with all the time available at the start of the term, people tend to rush into fitness too quickly and create an unsustainable process for themselves,” Reed remarked. “As university progresses, you lose that freedom of time, which leads to people cutting down on days exercising, and every day cut makes it easier to cut another day.”

He believes reversing this process is the best way to create a concrete habit that you can stick to. “Start a little slower, maybe once or twice a week, and overtime as your workload becomes more consistent, you can easily find timeslots to add in the schedule.” Like Dake, he also believes the most effective way to get the most out of resources is to take initiative. “The only way you get the most out of the experience is by doing it and taking the initiative to find these

resources... it’s our job to help and if you need it, you should come ask us for assistance.”

But what if the thought of exercising in a public facility is overwhelming to you? Student-led clubs offer opportunities to exercise in nature via rentable equipment, regional information, and the ability to connect with like-minded students.

Some characteristics that both students and trainers alike have identified about the exercise culture in Waterloo is that it is exceptionally diverse, welcoming, and has good facilities. “I think a big overarching issue is the stigma that everyone in Waterloo is only here for academics... and I feel people tend to forget we have amazing facilities compared to other universities,” Dake said. “Additionally, these are included within your tuition, so you may as well use them since you’re already paying for them.

Dake added that UW Athletics promotes inclusivity in their facilities, and that they pride themselves on a diverse community of trainers that fosters a healthy environment.

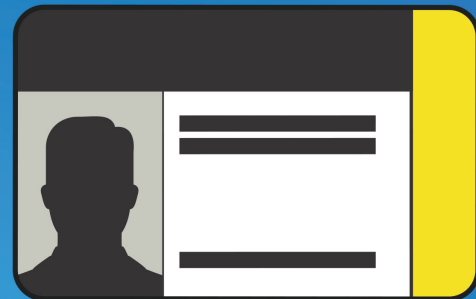
At the end of the day, your university experience is what you make it. Exercise is not only beneficial for academics, but for your ability to enjoy life now and in the future. The Warriors community is welcoming, provides a plethora of resources at hand, and you’re paying for it. If you’re on the fence, you may as well give it a shot.



Ansh Dhingra

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# The search for the ideal study spot: Where are UW's best study locations?

Carla Stocco, Staff Writer

Exploring UW's many hallways, tunnels, and buildings during your first year is both exciting and overwhelming. You'll notice some environments are noisy, others feel eerily quiet, and maybe you'll come across a few spots on campus that feel like the ideal study environment. To make the search for the best study spot feel less like a scavenger hunt, we have compiled a list to help you find the best study spot.

## Dana Porter Library

It's a classic with good reason. Located at the heart of campus, the Dana Porter Library has plenty of resources in the humanities, arts, and social sciences, but it remains popular among students across all faculties. Upon entering the library, you'll spot the circulation desk with staff ready to help you find needed study materials. Also on the first floor is Browsers Café, a cozy coffee shop stocked with study snacks and drinks for fueling up during long study sessions. Quick tip? The third floor has a water bottle filling station with some of the coldest water on-campus, making hydration quick and easy. Beside Browsers, you'll also see the IST Service Desk, with staff offering free tech support — always handy when your laptop unexpectedly crashes mid-study sessions or if you need to charge your device.

There are five floors dedicated to student study. Floors 7 and 8 are reserved for silent study, floors 6 and 9 for quiet study, and the 10th floor is meant for group study with plenty of group study spaces. For students who prefer a little background chatter while studying, the first floor has many desks facing the windows, lending a relaxed study atmosphere.

Individual and group study rooms are also available for booking through the front desk or through the study room booking portal. Forgot your laptop or need to print? No problem. Desktops are available for use on the first floor and printers are located beside the circulation desk.

## Davis Centre Library

With its high ceiling upon entering and unique architecture, the Davis Centre Library is a go-to study spot for

students. This library is home to resources for science, mathematics, and engineering. This location also has a circulation desk and an IST Service Desk ready to resolve your tech issues. Printers are located beside the IST Service Desk and desktop computers are available for use.

The library is divided into different sections for silent, quiet, and group study. The location also offers many individual and group study rooms that can be booked — perfect for focused study or when looking to work on a group project. If you're feeling in need of a study snack, the Tim Hortons just outside the library has got you covered.



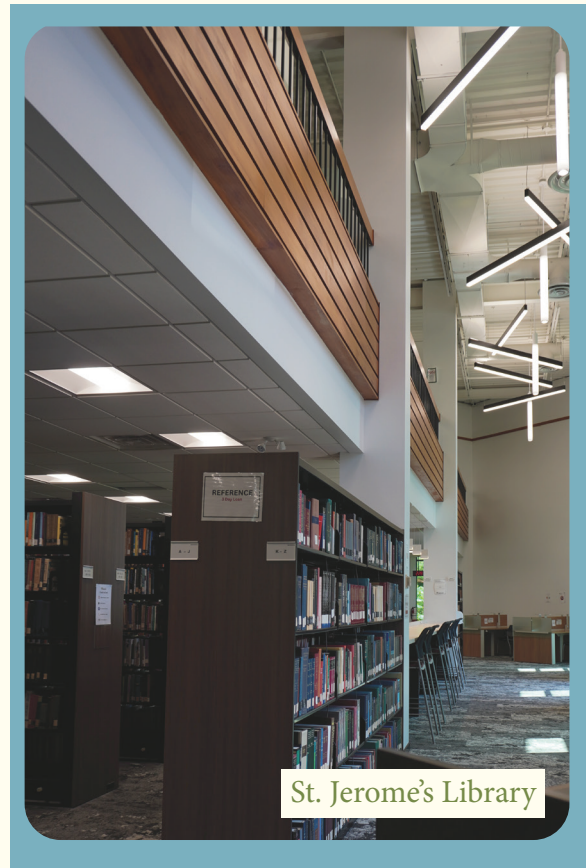
The Luis Wong Library

## Luis Wong Library

Located at the Renison University College, the Luis Wong Library is a relatively smaller library that sees little foot traffic. It's the perfect study spot if you prefer an environment with lower stimulation and plenty of natural light coming in through the large windows. Within the library itself, you'll find resources for social work, social development studies, religious studies, cultural studies, and language studies. You can also book one of two study rooms at the Luis Wong Library for study groups of at least two or more online. This location does not have a tech support desk but the Renison cafeteria is just down the hall if you're hungry.

## St. Jerome's Library

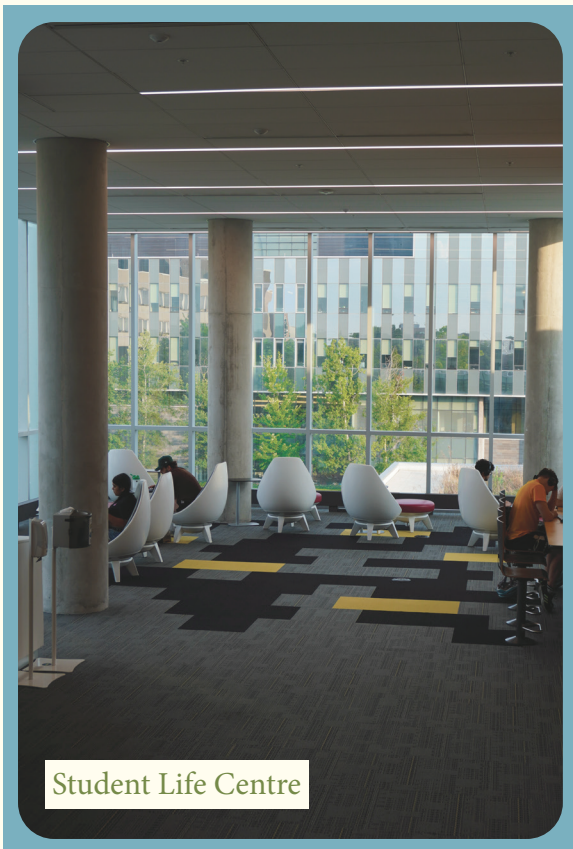
The St. Jerome's Library is located on the second floor of the Classrooms and Library Building (SJ1). With plenty of study space and cozy nooks and crannies to study in, this location tends to see high traffic during the fall term. It can be tough to find a study spot when visiting during popular hours, such as afternoons and late evenings. Three study rooms are available for booking, with bookings limited to two hours per group daily. Photocopying, printing, and scanning are available and payment is accepted via WatCard. If you're looking for food or a drink to boost your energy while studying, drop by the Funcken Café at St. Jerome's for some fair trade coffee, a variety of drinks, or sandwiches.



St. Jerome's Library

## Student Life Centre

If you prefer to study in a busier area and don't mind background action, the Student Life Centre (SLC) is the place for you. You can study while you have lunch from one of the nearby food shops, or consider heading upstairs where you'll typically see less traffic, especially during the early morning. The lower level has a study lounge open Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. and accommodates up to 36 people. If you're interested in booking one of the SLC's study rooms, drop by the Turnkey Desk. Overall, the SLC is a good option to get a study session in between classes or if you're looking for a casual meeting spot to complete a group assignment or group study session. The Physical Activities Complex (PAC) is not far off, meaning you can quickly get your workout in before or after your study session to give your mind and body a break from the academic grind.



Student Life Centre

## Quantum Nano Centre

Perhaps not the first spot that comes to mind when considering study spots is the Quantum Nano Centre (QNC). The main highlight of the QNC's study spots are the seats and tables facing the windows. During the fall months especially, it's lovely to sit in the orange glow of the changing leaves outdoors and see the sunset coming inside as you study. These seats are popular however and you'll be hard-pressed to find



a seat during peak hours, such as midday. Consider dropping by in the morning or late evening for a better chance of snagging a window seat. Otherwise, the QNC has several large lecture rooms that, like other lecture rooms across campus, can be used as a study spot when not in use.

## Modern Languages

Parlez-vous français? Even if you're not pursuing a language major, the Modern Languages (ML) building is a lovely spot to escape from the overwhelm of busier parts of campus. ML boasts one of UW's best lesser known study spots. The downstairs basement and cafeteria is relatively quiet and several chairs on the main and upper floors are typically vacant. If you're looking for an outdoor study spot, this is the place. Past the basement cafeteria, the doors lead to an outdoor space with plenty of seating and a fountain. Study outdoors to the sound of trickling water and birdsong!



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VS



OCTOBER 24  
7:00 PM  
CIF ARENA



» CAMPS AND MINOR  
LEAGUES NIGHT  
» ALUMNI NIGHT

### WARRIORS VOLLEYBALL



VS



OCTOBER 31  
(W) 6:00 PM (M) 7:30 PM  
TOTZKE COURT (PAC)



» Domino's  
BLOCK PARTY

### WARRIORS BASKETBALL



VS



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(W) 6:00 PM (M) 8:00 PM  
TOTZKE COURT (PAC)

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# What does unleashing our economy mean for Ontario's ecosystems?

Sophie Smith, Contributor

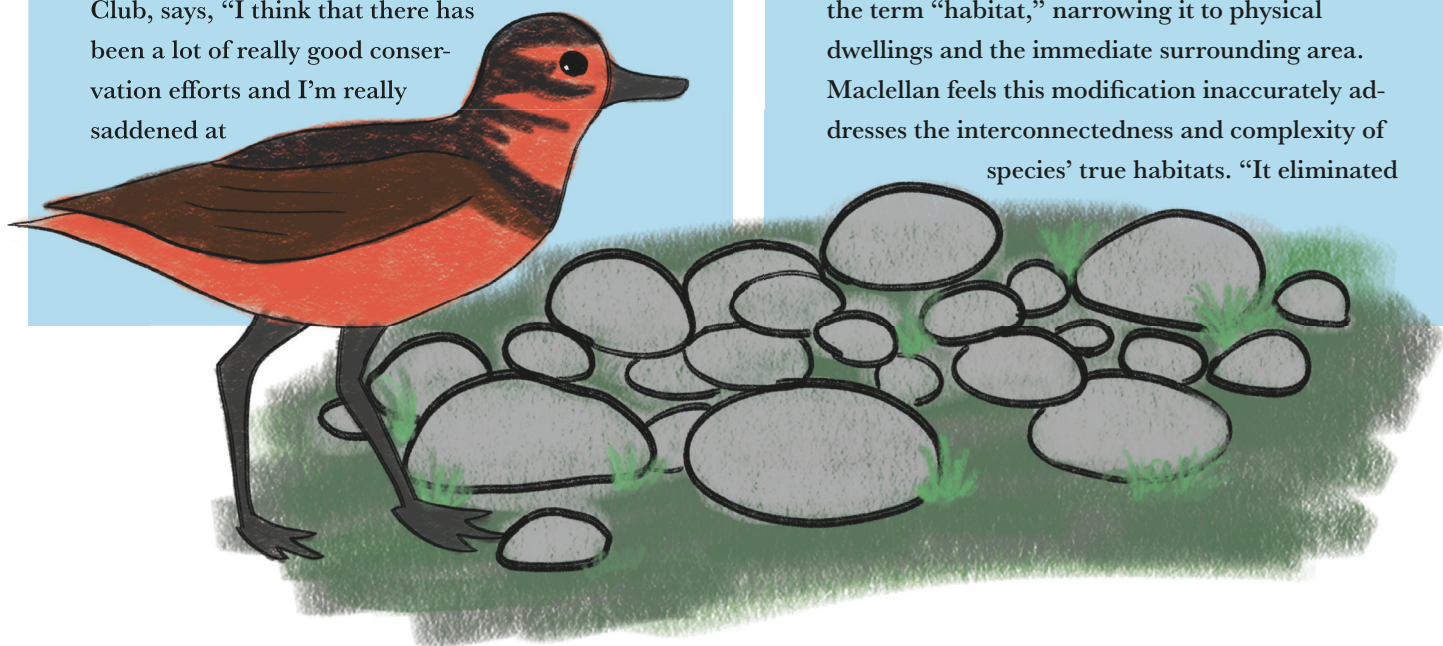
Ontario's Bill 5, the Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act, 2025, became law on June 5 despite considerable controversy. The bill amends acts such as the Environmental Assessment Act, Mining Act, Environmental Protection Act, and Endangered Species Act, 2007. Its main objective is to streamline economic development through reducing bureaucratic barriers. Doing so, however, will come with tradeoffs aimed at weakening environmental protections and consultation with scientific bodies, community members and Indigenous populations.

One of the most controversial elements of the new legislation is the replacement of the Endangered Species Act with the less comprehensive Species Conservation Act. Alexander Maclellan, a second-year environmental science and ecology student and co-president of UW's Entomology Club, says, "I think that there has been a lot of really good conservation efforts and I'm really saddened at

the idea that those can all be kind of ignored under the idea of economic growth. If conservation efforts are rolled back or ignored and that results in the loss of species here in Ontario, there's nothing we can do to get that back." Maclellan describes a similar sentiment shared by other members of the club: "A lot of members plan to go into conservation and related fields so I think it can be really frustrating to see how easily certain practices that we may have taken for granted can be removed. And now replaced with a much weaker set of policies."

"It's a terrible step," says Uday Singh Bains, UW alumni and former president of UW's Animal Rights Society. "So many species are already at risk, it's making it easier to exploit the land and animals."

The Species Conservation Act also redefines the term "habitat," narrowing it to physical dwellings and the immediate surrounding area. Maclellan feels this modification inaccurately addresses the interconnectedness and complexity of species' true habitats. "It eliminated



habitats used for feeding and migration as part of endangered species habitat or species at risk... For insects especially, that is such a bad idea. It's really hard to pinpoint where an insect species lives. I think that insects are particularly overlooked in conservation, in that way."

Geography and environmental management professor Maria Strack, whose research focuses on the importance of wetlands for storing carbon and the rates of greenhouse gas exchange between wetlands and the atmosphere, also expressed concern for lowering the protections for species at risk. "As we start allowing development with less oversight, we do run the risk of not fully considering the impacts of that development not only on the local environment and biodiversity but how that might fragment the broader home ranges of species at risk and could lead to high mortality risks," she says.

This lack of recognition for the complexity of ecosystems has generated widespread concern regarding a shift away from reliance on local conservation authorities' understanding of the landscape connectivity. "We could always use more research on sort of landscape scale effects and cumulative effects because often these decisions are being made at a project scale without considering how that adds on to additional projects in the region and how altogether those are going to affect broader functioning," Strack says.

The Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act also introduces "special economic zones," designated geographic areas in which the Ontario government could exempt from certain laws and regulations to accelerate development projects.

Harsimran Kaur, current president of the UW

Animal Rights Society, believes this undermines the longstanding interests of the province to support sustainable development. "What about the next generation? It's definitely short-term planning, not long-term planning, which is really sad. There's no thought of future generations in this case."

Regarding the proposed special economic zones, Strack addresses the difficulty of quantifying the intrinsic value of our environment against its economic value. "The majority of Ontarians will never get to go and see these areas of our own province, and yes, maybe it's easy for us to understand the potential economic benefits of developing those critical minerals, but we also have a treasure. We have a treasure in this wetland which most of us will never get to see. It can be very easy to trade what you can understand for what you don't get to see."

Highlighting the risk associated with waiving legal and regulatory processes to speed up development projects, Strack argues the importance of extensive knowledge on ecosystem functioning and the potential implications of certain developments and what's at stake. "Because of the long time frames of the development of these ecosystems, their interconnected nature and the fact that it really is a treasure, one of the largest peatland complexes in the world, and really intact, I think we should just really think about what we value."

Through accelerated development and reduced environmental protections, the Act could pose potential consequences for Ontario's climate resilience. In particular, wetlands play a key role in the province's long-term goal of achieving below 1990 levels of greenhouse gas





emissions by 2050, storing approximately 29 billion tonnes of carbon. That's the equivalent of taking every one of Canada's 24.1 million gas-powered vehicles off the road for 1,000 years. Wary of the implications of the Act for Ontario's wetlands, Strack added that across the globe, peatlands store twice as much carbon as the world's forests and disturbing them could contribute to additional climate warming.

Beyond their role as carbon sinks, Ontario's wetlands provide a vast range of ecosystem services such as reducing flooding and supporting wildlife, Maclellan added. "I think something like 20 per cent of species on the Endangered Species Act require wetlands. And that's huge. So, that's insects, that's many other species, waterfowl, reptiles, amphibians." But, like Strack, Maclellan notes the difficulty in generating advocacy for the protection of such areas. "I think people just generally don't like wetlands, they're not very economically valuable."

Bill 5 has also raised concerns for its neglect of inherent treaty rights and community obligations to First Nations peoples. Strack regrettably acknowledges the lack of priority for consultation with Indigenous communities that have the right to be consulted on these land use changes. "I don't think Indigenous communities and governments are necessarily pro or against development but they all want to have their rights maintained, particularly that duty to consult. So there are large concerns that particularly the designation of these special economic zones where development decisions could be made without some of that oversight would also have large im-

"As we start allowing development with less oversight, we do run the risk of not fully considering the impacts of that development not only on the local environment and biodiversity but how that might fragment the broader home ranges of species at risk and could lead to high mortality risks."

— Maria Strack, geography and environmental management professor

plications for the provinces reconciliation goals and just maintenance of charter rights of those Indigenous communities."

Many supporters of the Act argue it is necessary to strengthen Ontario's economic resilience despite the potential environmental harms. Supporters often point to the province's housing crisis as a reason for the Act. Maclellan counters this argument, however, stating that "in the guise of solving the housing crisis, I don't think it's good to destroy the environment, because obviously we can still build housing but if we rush through and destroy the environment, there's no way to get that back."

Strack holds a similar opinion. "I think those comments sometimes come from the thinking that environmental regulations and protections are there just as red tape to slow down development, but they are there to protect the environment which is also linked to our health and wellbeing." Such support for our wellbeing, she says, could include "water quality, access to green spaces, and prevention of flooding," among many others. "In my opinion, streamlining development at the expense of those other important services that the ecosystems are providing is not going to pay off in the end."



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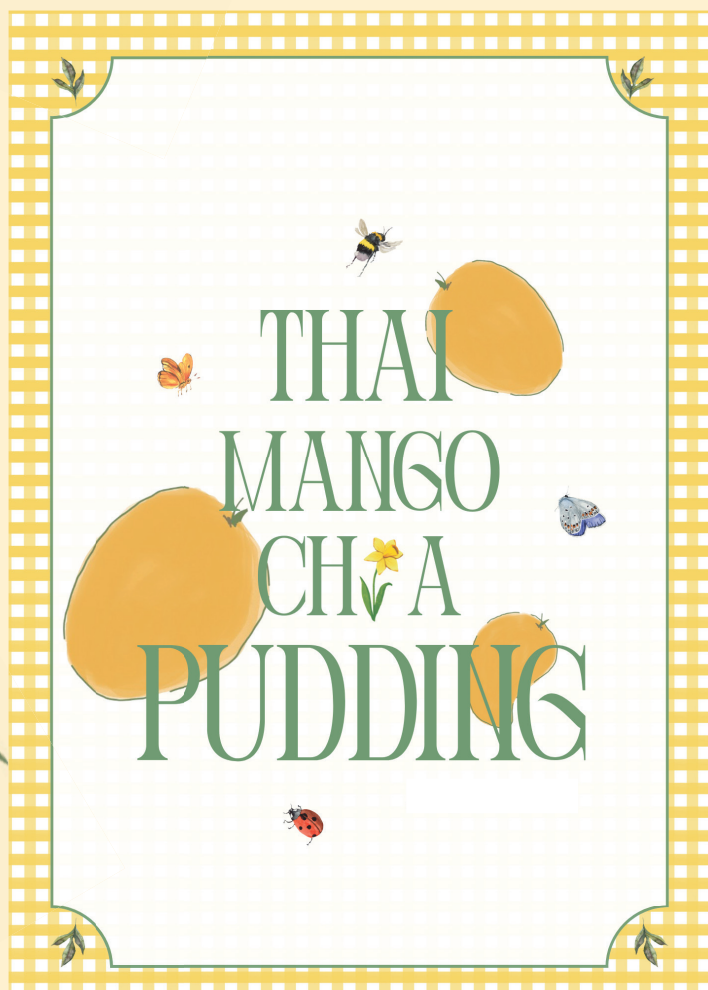
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PICK UP AND DELIVERY



Ingrid Au, Contributor

Recently, I had the most incredible Thai dessert: mango sticky rice. This dessert had me thinking about what other ways we can replicate this. Thus, this recipe was born — a chia seed pudding that is a quick grab-and-go while retaining the authentic flavours of a mango sticky rice.

### Tools:

- Small/medium storage containers
- Large mixing bowl
- Chopping board
- Knife
- Mixing utensil

### Ingredients:

- ½ cup of chia seeds
- ¾ cup of coconut milk
- ¼ cup of honey
- A pinch of salt
- 2-3 mangoes, diced
- Optional: granola, chopped nuts, cereal, etc.

### Instructions:

1. In a large mixing bowl, combine the chia seeds, coconut milk, honey and salt. Thoroughly mix the ingredients together.
2. On a chopping board, slice your mangoes into small cubes.
3. Assemble your chia seed pudding and diced mangoes in alternating layers. You may choose smaller containers for easier transport. It should last for up to five days if stored in an airtight container.
4. Optionally, you may serve with toppings such as granola, chopped nuts, cereal, etc.

Given that the fall term is now in full swing, this is the perfect snack prep for when you are spending most of your time on campus. This also makes a great dessert to wrap up your day. Enjoy the sunshine and make sure to get some fresh air in today. Have fun!



# September crossword

Tommy Ye, Contributor

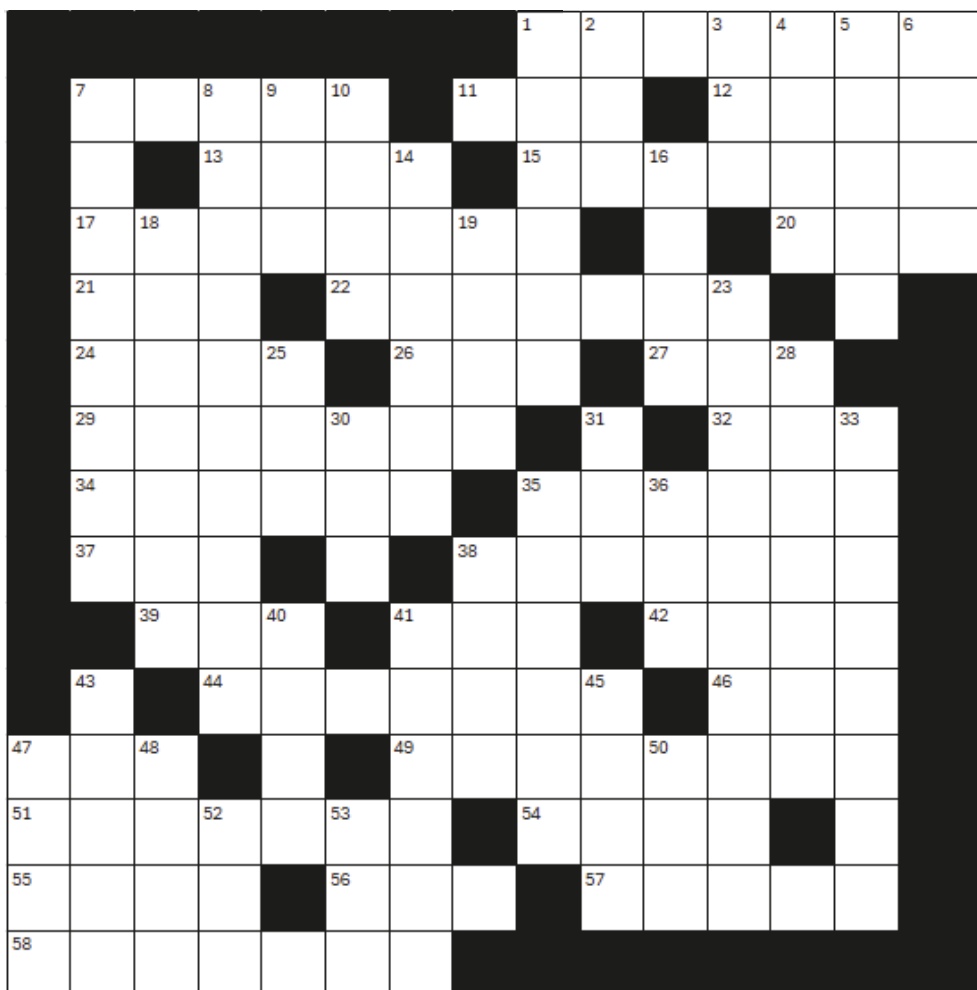
## ACROSS

- 1 Toyota Sedan
- 7 Lymphocyte of the adaptive immune system
- 11 Will Ferrell Christmas classic
- 12 Car \_\_\_\_ or pla \_\_\_\_
- 13 Salamanca of Better Call Saul
- 15 Not in office
- 17 Shakes uncontrollably
- 20 Prefix before cycle or angle
- 21 Symptom commonly associated with Tourette Syndrome
- 22 Birds, en Français
- 24 Common chelating agent used in Medicine and Molecular Biology
- 26 Acid container in cartoons, often
- 27 19th Season of Pokémon the Series
- 29 Welsh delicacy served on toast
- 32 Racetrack unit
- 34 E + I + T + D + A
- 35 Canine native to North America
- 37 Video game add-on

- 38 Angelic beings
- 39 What an otolaryngologist might look at
- 41 Brachycephalic dog breed
- 42 Close
- 44 Beans, peas, lentils, etc.
- 46 Homophone of 'or' or 'oar'
- 47 Aptly named insect
- 49 In the same plane, geometrically
- 51 Tall, tapering monolith
- 54 \_\_\_\_ advice
- 55 Mindless repetition
- 56 2013 Romance/Sci-Fi starring Joaquin Phoenix
- 57 Modelled
- 58 X's previous name

## DOWN

- 1 Glass \_\_\_\_ or walk-in \_\_\_\_
- 2 Shut \_\_\_\_ or show \_\_\_\_
- 3 En route, in text
- 4 Goods to be plundered



- 5 Truck, in a place like Hertfordshire
- 6 Open-source flashcard program
- 7 Raggedy, as clothes
- 8 One of the E's in ECE
- 9 On the \_\_\_\_
- 10 Former liquor regulation agency of Ontario
- 14 Rodrigo, Wilde or Colman, for example
- 16 Device from Back to the Future, with 'Capacitor'
- 18 Can be ridden
- 19 Engineering and Science entrance exam used in England
- 23 Tuned idiophones made of wood
- 25 Time zone in Brisbane or Canberra, abbreviated
- 28 \_\_\_\_: A Space Adventure (2005 Film)
- 30 Bond Dissociation Energy (Shoutout Dr. Lee) [This is a freebie]

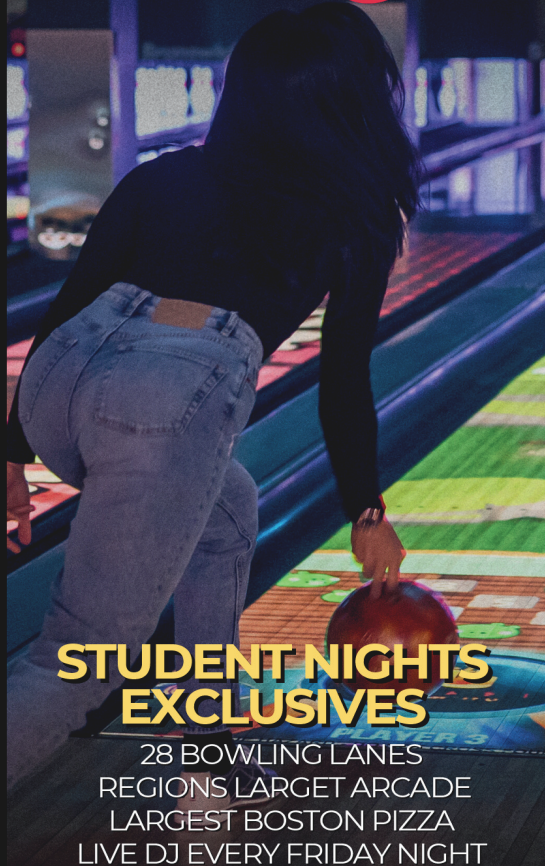
- 31 Exclusive Disjunction, logically
- 33 Bothered
- 35 Québec exclusive post-secondary institutions
- 36 Novels aimed at teenagers, for short
- 38 National sport of Japan
- 40 2nd and 3rd degree of a scale, in solfege
- 41 Scrunch up, in the face
- 43 Body part or type of macaroni
- 45 Infamous Oscars moment, with 'The'
- 47 Word before Knox or York
- 48 Abominable Snowman, colloquially
- 50 Toronto art gallery
- 52 Allow
- 53 Grammatical counterpart of 56 Across

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