



Imprint

Your Stories, Your Voice

November 2025
Volume 3 Issue 4

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celebrate their
40th anniversary
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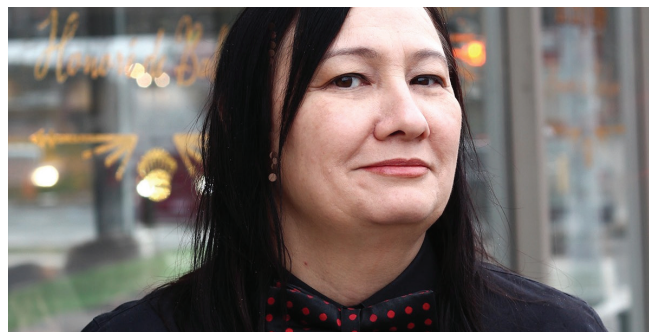
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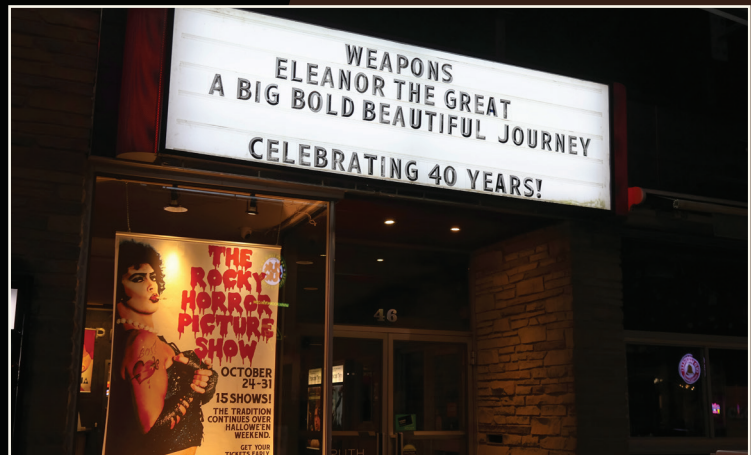
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The legacy and impact of Princess Cinemas

Thea East, Senior Editor

The year was 1985 and a young Laurier graduate had a passion and an idea, which 40 years later has grown into one of the most beloved hidden gems of the Uptown Waterloo community. John Tutt, the owner of Princess Cinemas, has created a space where students and community members can enjoy a different kind of movie experience that focuses on showing foreign films, cult classics, vintage horror, retro movies, and popular throwbacks from the 2000's. It is a stark contrast to the programming at Galaxy Cinemas which aims more towards mainstream blockbuster movies starring actors such as Glen Powell or Sydney Sweeney. Not only does Princess Cinemas have a connection with the Waterloo community as a whole, but it has had a long standing relationship with UW and its students that dates back to its early days when it was advertised in UW's very own Imprint in the 1980's.

Tutt was 25 when he first started Princess Cinemas, handing out thousands of flyers to cafes and bookstores to spread the word about what the cinema was all about. He started off by buying a couple of 16 millimetre projectors, smaller than the industry standard at the time which was 35 millimetres, and began renting films and putting on programs. When Tutt married his wife, Wendy, in 1993, it marked the beginning of the Princess Cinemas as a family business. The couple worked hard to grow the cinema together and later had a son, Jacob Tutt, who would go on to inherit his parents' love for the theatre and be a central figure in carrying on their hard work and legacy. Jacob reminisced about his earliest memories working at the cinemas at 13, serving popcorn



Karen Chen

Princess Twin Cinemas, Waterloo

“I think in a post-COVID world, as much as young people have so much access to media, so much access to streaming services, it becomes really overwhelming... so, I think post-2020, a lot of people are looking for, not only community, but a place where they don’t have to make those decisions.”

- Sophia Irwin, cinema programmer and assistant manager at Princess Cinemas

to the moviegoers. While the movies are now shown digitally, the theatre still gives a retro and nostalgic feeling as soon as you enter the doors that transports you back to another time.

The cinema started as just the one theatre located on Princess Street in Uptown Waterloo, but has now grown to include the Twin Cinemas on King Street, and The Playhouse in Hamilton, another cinema which focuses on non-mainstream films. Jacob Tutt focuses on running the Hamilton location now as John Tutt starts handing over the reins to other dedicated members of their team. One of these staff members who embodies the love and spirit of the cinema is Sophia Irwin, who has been working at Princess Cinemas for seven years and is currently in the position of cinema programmer and assistant manager. Irwin is also a Wilfrid Laurier University alumna, but has wanted to work at Princess Cinemas from even before she started university. “I was a huge movie buff already, and I had some friends in high school who had worked at Princess, and it had always been a dream of mine,” explained Irwin in an interview with Imprint. Irwin originally started off as a snack bar nighttime manager, and after four years, worked her way up to the position she currently has.

The strength and passion of this family business was on

full display back in September when the cinema celebrated its 40th anniversary. Princess celebrates annually by showing the first film it ever played, *Casablanca*. However to mark this particular milestone, Princess Cinemas also hosted a block party after the film this year, and played *Stop Making Sense*, a widely popular concert film. Over 200 people attended the event to show support and have fun along with many UW students. Andie Kaiser, a UW master’s student who attended the *Casablanca* showing, highlighted why she thinks having a place like Princess Cinemas in the UW community is so important: “I think we’re really lucky because a lot of towns that aren’t in, say Toronto, don’t have a lot of art house cinemas ... so it’s really nice to be able to have,” said Kaiser.

John Tutt explained how it is usually upper-year UW students who discover Princess Cinemas after being in the community for a few years and figure out what they are all about. However the cinema has a long standing connection with the school. GLOW has historically partnered with Princess Cinemas to host an event called *Rainbow Reels*, where the cinema played queer-related films that did not get much showtime in the 90’s when they were originally released. Additionally, the cinema, for 25 years, partnered with the film studies program, now integrated into visual culture studies, to award a student the Princess Cinemas Award where they would receive 30 movie passes for the year.

One of the biggest events connected to UW that John Tutt recalls was a month-long run of the *BlackBerry* movie back in 2023 centered around a Community Screening Day, where they hosted ex-engineers and staff from BlackBerry who attended UW. The movie tells the story of the inventor of the BlackBerry, Mike Lazaridis who is a UW alumnus and was UW chancellor from 2003-2009. “BlackBerry was very much a creation that was born out of UW [from ex-students], and we had on display about 30 or 40 of the original BlackBerry pagers and cell phones in the lobby,” said the Princess Cinemas owner.

The cinema has also shown many UW student made films over the years. Kai Reimer-Watts is a UW alumnus who graduated from his master’s in climate change in 2014 and had his



film, *Beyond Crisis*, premiere at the Twin Princess Cinemas location in 2017. The film was a multi-year endeavor which started in 2014 during global calls to address the climate change crisis. The film was a grassroots production and worked with a small budget, inspired after the filmmakers attended mass climate change protests in New York City. The film includes key voices speaking out on climate change from across the United States and Canada.

After its premiere at the Twin Princess Cinemas, the film went on a North American festival tour and has now been shown all over the world. Reimer-Watts said he had a great experience showing the film at Princess Cinemas, adding staff were accommodating and supportive. He also discussed how having a place that provides a platform for less mainstream films that are not as “palatable” to the general public or are more relevant to specific communities, like Princess Cinemas, is important. “[Waterloo is] a very diverse region... we have multiple universities of higher education here, and that should be reflected in the media content that is released, not to have this homogeneous one size fits all, but to actually support independent filmmaking,” Reimer-Watts said.

Bringing new and interesting films to Princess Cinemas is an ongoing team effort, however one of the most anticipated seasons of the year to bring in new films is the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF). While there, Irwin and Jacob Tutt, along with other team members, sought out films that they think will connect with their audiences. They often look for films from distributors that Princess has worked with before, independent Canadian distributors, festival “darlings,” and films that generate a buzz. Irwin described the experience of attending TIFF as being “a really fun time to connect with movie lovers and bring that love and connection back to Princess and to Waterloo.”

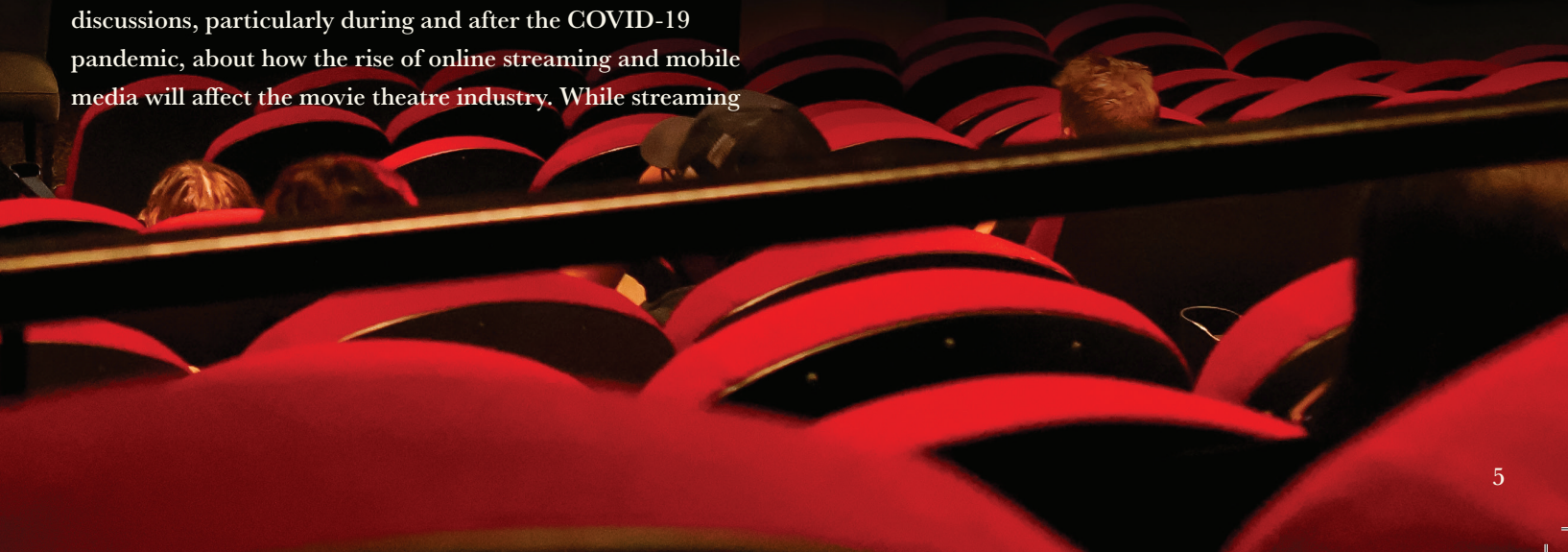
While the cinema is clearly thriving and has a dedicated community of passionate moviegoers who love the alternate experience Princess Cinemas provides, there have been discussions, particularly during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, about how the rise of online streaming and mobile media will affect the movie theatre industry. While streaming

services have been on the rise for over a decade, the pandemic saw a drastic increase in the use of services such as Disney+, Netflix, Prime Video, and Apple TV, due to restrictions on seeing movies in person according to StatsCan.

The question of whether the movie theatre industry is dying has been becoming more frequent over the last few years, but Irwin urges that this might not actually be the case. The assistant manager argued that this concern is not new and was raised before when the use of DVD’s became a popular household item. Irwin went on to state, “I think in a post-COVID world, as much as young people have so much access to media, so much access to streaming services, it becomes really overwhelming... so, I think post-2020, a lot of people are looking for, not only community, but a place where they don’t have to make those decisions.”

John Tutt explained that while he thinks the different experience they offer at Princess Cinemas draws people in, they have also had to be conscious of the rise of online streaming and become “sharper” in their programming. “You have to be able to make sure that the films and events that you have in your theater can battle... online streaming noise that people are exposed to and to make your event special and different.”

Princess Cinema also offers a membership program with a student pricing option. Regular membership pricing is \$16, while any university, college, or high school student with a valid student ID, can become a member for only \$11. With the membership you can get \$4 off of regular priced tickets and 35mm film screenings along with a discount at the snack bar and free entry into Free-for-members screenings. Memberships can be purchased either online or in-person when you buy a movie ticket.



➤ Addressing food insecurity: ➤ WUSA and local organizations take action

Radha Vyas, Contributor

For many UW students, the hardest part of the week isn't exams or 8:30 a.m. classes — it's figuring out how to afford a balanced meal.

According to the 2024 Student Experience Survey, conducted in February by UW's Statistical Consulting and Survey Research Unit in collaboration with the Institutional Analysis & Planning Department, food insecurity remains a challenge for many students. The survey invited 10,000 randomly selected undergraduate students to share feedback on their learning environment, experiences, and challenges. Results revealed that 4 per cent of respondents cannot afford balanced meals, 18 per cent can only afford them sometimes (similar to fall 2023), 60 per cent reported never using campus food support services, and 37 per cent used them at least sometimes, often, or always.



Marcus Tunkl, a fourth-year nanotechnology engineering student, said that the cost of rent intensifies the problem. From 2020 to 2024, Tunkl lived with his sister in a two-bedroom apartment for \$1,250 a month.

"When she moved, I was offered \$1,900 to stay — no upgrades, nothing. Suddenly, the apartment cost \$650 more," he said. With rent this high, buying healthy meals becomes a luxury.

We buy whatever is cheapest, on sale, or in bulk — healthy, balanced meals are just a nice-to-have."

According to Apartments.com, the average rent

in Waterloo for a one-bedroom is currently \$1,887 a month for 638 square feet.

"Until housing becomes more affordable, your meals depend on rent more than grocery prices," Tunkl said. "Buy foods that give the best bang-for-your-buck in terms of cost, calories, and nutrition — rice, chicken, broccoli, frozen

"Until housing becomes more affordable, your meals depend on rent more than grocery prices,"

- Marcus Tunkl, a fourth-year nanotechnology engineering student

veggies. Use spices — they last long and completely change meals. Even fast food has options: pizza can give four meals for \$13. A little creativity helps stretch your budget without compromising nutrition.”

In addition to housing costs, rising tuition, grocery bills, and international trade tensions also contribute to the financial burden. Recent U.S. tariffs on Canadian imports have further exacerbated food insecurity by driving up the cost of essential grocery items.

Further, according to the Canadian Campus Wellbeing Survey, a confidential study conducted by Campus Wellness that invited 12,000 UW students to participate this year between Feb. 24 and March 24, 18.4 per cent of respondents reported experiencing low or very low food security, up from 17 per cent in 2022. Tunkl also highlighted the challenge of accessing campus resources, adding he wasn’t aware of the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA) Food Support Service (FSS) or the newly introduced Pay-What-You-Can program (PWYC) before being interviewed. “Both seem helpful, but there’s always the risk of misuse — people who could pay but choose not to, or those who already have support from home,” Tunkl said. “Still, these programs are valuable for students who genuinely need them.”

Stigma is another barrier, he added. “Personally, I prefer to remain unnoticed when accessing resources, which is a shame — help is available for a reason,” Tunkl said. “My parents relied on food banks for most of my childhood. Without them, we wouldn’t have had meals.”

Tunkl is not the only student feeling the pressure or stigma of food insecurity. According to Ryon Jones, media relations manager at UW, students have reported limited awareness of resources on campus to support food security.

“They shared experiences of feeling shame and stigma in accessing supports, and that when they do access supports, they do not meet their needs,” Jones said. “We’re listening to students and paying more attention to this issue as it becomes more prevalent.”

The FSS distributes hampers with dietary options ranging from halal to vegetarian. Each hamper provides four to five meals, and demand has grown steadily over the past terms:

- Spring 2024: 158 hampers

“Students say, ‘This is amazing, but we didn’t know it existed.’ It highlights how needed the service is and also how much work remains to increase awareness.”

- Mujtaba Haider, FSS coordinator

- Fall 2024: 175 hampers
- Winter 2025: 185 hampers
- Spring 2025: 200 hampers

According to Mujtaba Haider, FSS coordinator, the feedback WUSA receives often shows both a success and a gap: “Students say, ‘This is amazing, but we didn’t know it existed.’ It highlights how needed the service is and also how much work remains to increase awareness.” To raise awareness, WUSA has increased social media outreach and is also piloting a locker system across campus, allowing students to pick up hampers at multiple locations with a digitized code, reducing travel and accessibility barriers.

Addressing both food insecurity and cultural connection, WUSA rolled out the PWYC program at the Bomber on Oct. 8. Launched to ensure that all students, regardless of financial situation, have access to hot, nutritious meals every weekday,





“If a student can’t afford the food they need, our on-campus programs are here to help.”

– Michelle Rickard, marketing and communications manager at the Food Bank of Waterloo Region

the program offers meals with a rotating menu. Meals range from sandwiches to rice bowls, offering students diverse, healthy options each day. This flexible model allows students to pay what they can, including no payment at all and still enjoy a nutritious meal. The program was created to reduce the stigma around food support and provide an accessible way for students to manage food insecurity without judgment. Additionally, the *Global Kitchen: Tastes From Home* cookbook, which supports students in preparing affordable, culturally relevant meals, complements the PWYC initiative by offering students the tools to cook at home on a budget.

The Food Bank of Waterloo Region provides another layer of support, serving 54 partner organizations, including UW’s FSS. “We work closely with post-secondary institutions to educate students on how, when, and where to access food assistance programs,” explained Michelle Rickard, marketing and communications manager at the food bank. “If a student can’t afford the

food they need, our on-campus programs are here to help.”

Looking forward, the Food Security Strategy Committee, co-led by Campus Wellness and Food Services, has developed a five-year plan aimed at achieving zero hunger by 2030. This plan introduces food prescription programs tied to wellness services, centralized student wellness fairs, a dedicated food security coordinator role, and continued support for initiatives like the Indigenous Soup & Bannock Lunch, the fruit & veggie market, and graduate student Nourish ‘n Go meals. Funding has already been secured, including \$75,000 in unrestricted gifts and \$13.75 million in bursaries available to students facing financial hardship in 2024–25.








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Inside UW's Ombuds Office

Jansher Saeed, Staff Writer

January 2025 saw the launch of UW's Ombuds Office following several years of advocacy led by the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA) and the Graduate Student Association (GSA). Led by ombudsperson Whitney Barrett and assistant ombudsperson Sam Vandekerckhove, the office provides students with confidential, impartial, and independent assistance in navigating a wide range of student concerns.

The Ombuds Office helps students with academic and non-academic issues, housing, and even interpersonal challenges at times. It also deals with both individual cases concerning student grievances and overall systemic issues at the university. "Complexity is not something that we shy away from," Barrett said.

The process for approaching individual cases looks different based on the student and their unique situation. Generally, students will first meet with Vandekerckhove as the first

point of contact and work on early resolution work.

"So it looks like talking through different policies and procedures, listening to the student, and helping to identify what the different pieces are. Sometimes, I call it peeling apart the onion. It's peeling apart the challenges that a student may come in for because they may come in for a Policy 71 related issue, but maybe there's some other things in there," Barrett said.

The office may help demystify policy, procedure, and regulations for students, explore options on how to proceed through specific issue areas, make referrals where required, provide guidance, and empower students to directly address their concerns. However, the office will maintain neutrality and therefore will not provide legal advice or counselling, or advocate for an individual case. Instead, the office can help students identify what services they need and where to find them.

Ombudsperson Whitney Barrett

Barrett joined UW as the ombudsperson in January 2025 after 17 years at Western University. There, she took on various roles including associate and acting ombudsperson and other roles related to finance, administration, and alumni relations. She has also worked with both with both undergraduate and graduate students.

"So I moved around a bit, and it gave me a really great, I think, in-depth understanding of how universities function in many different ways. I also experienced students going through the life cycle of just being a student, so coming to the university, growing, changing their lives, shifting... and really like falling in love with what they're studying is just exciting, and I love doing it," Barrett said.

Barrett noted that her diverse experiences working with students directly supports her role as an ombudsperson in recognizing the complex realities student issues take. "Peo-



ple are people. They're multifaceted. They bring lots of life experience to their space. So we openly talk about things as much as the person is comfortable doing so. So again, within that confidential space, and I like to reinforce that with that informality, we operate outside of formal structure," Barrett said.

Current initiatives and approaches

According to Barrett, student cases received by the office so far fall into a few key issue areas. In the academic domain, students have come to the office regarding grievances and petitions appeals, including those related to Policy 71. At the graduate level, some students have come in regarding issues with supervisors or interpersonal conflicts. In the non-academic domain, the office sees student cases mostly around housing contracts and fees. Depending on the complexity of the issue and its relevance to the office's role, Barrett and Vandekerckhove may develop early resolution strategies, launch a further investigation, or refer students to the appropriate services. Depending on the needs of the student, the Ombuds Office can refer students to spaces that do advocacy or provide additional support, especially through challenging policy procedures such as Policy 33 on ethical behavior and Policy 42 regarding the prevention of and response to sexual violence.

"Sometimes coming to my space and to the office is to figure out, are [students] looking for advocacy? Are they looking for a support person? Do they need someone that's going to walk with them through a process? Or are they looking just to really find out what to do next, or where to start," Barrett said.

The office approaches cases using the transparency

triangle framework, which is used widely by Ombuds offices across Canada. The framework helps identify what type of unfairness a student is experiencing in their case and looks at three forms of fairness — substantive, relational, and procedural.

The Ombuds Office is governed by the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by UW, WUSA, and GSA.

As per the agreement, the office is co-funded 50-50 by the university and student fees, reflecting the impartial nature of the office. "The agreement between students and the institution was solidified after I started in the office to make sure we had a guide post to function from. That was one of the biggest initiatives that the office assisted with," Barrett said.

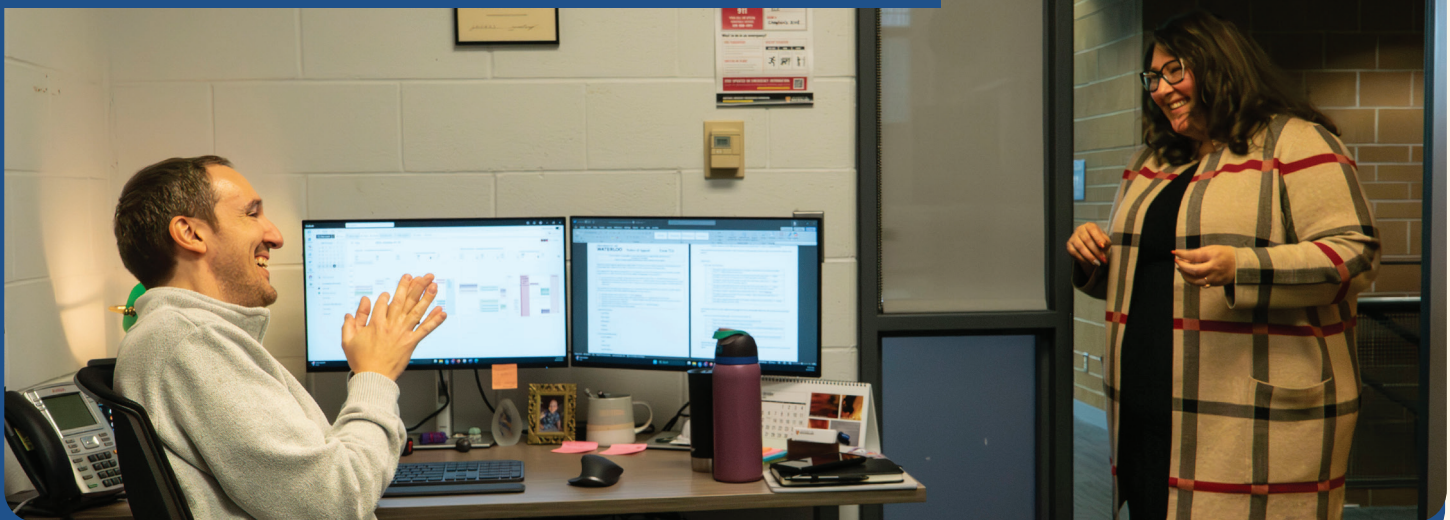
In addition to helping students on a case-by-case scale, the office supports institutional change at UW. Through annual reporting, policy reviews, and trend analysis, the office identifies systemic issues at UW and recommends changes to the UW administration to enhance fairness and transparency.

Challenges and moving forward

In 2010, UW closed its former Ombuds Office, the Student Resource Office. Over a decade later, Barrett says a big challenge faced by the new Ombuds Office is understanding where it fits within the current university structure.

"With things like the Conflict Management Office and the Student Success Office, academic advising, and the Office of Academic Integrity, where does the office sit and operate? ... [We are] working with those spaces collaboratively to understand where they support students and where we support students," she said. "We're an option for students to come to

Ombudsperson Whitney Barrett and assistant ombudsperson Sam Vandekerckhove



but we're not required at any point, whereas some of those other offices, like maybe they are required within certain steps or processes for a student to engage in one of the policies or procedures we're not. I find that's been a challenge for people to understand what an ombudsperson is."

Due to these challenges, the office has spent most of the past 10 months setting up and making students aware of its existence.

"The biggest challenge that we have is just getting our name out so that we can connect with folks across campus. Just getting the visibility of the office and an understanding of what we do and why we can why and how we can help folks navigating different things on campus is kind of the biggest challenge," Barrett said.

To navigate this challenge, aside from meetings with students in the SLC, Barrett makes visits to UW's satellite campuses in Cambridge and Stratford to meet and hear from students.

Another challenge is the lack of data amidst a growing number of cases the office has to work with due to its short history. Barrett says as more cases come through, the office

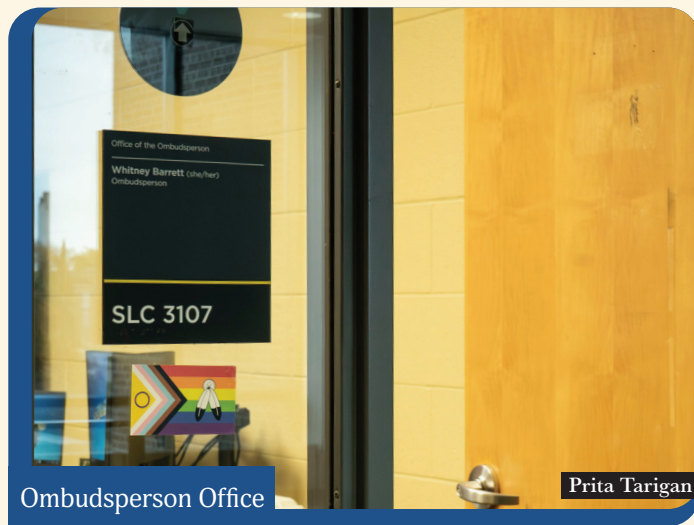
will be able to identify key structural themes and produce recommendations for the university administration to address them.

While the university faces operating budget constraints, Barrett notes that the office has not faced any notable budget-related challenges since it only consists of two people and student tuition funding can help balance out any funding threats related to the university.

As the team-of-two begin to chart a new path forward for the Ombuds Office, Barrett is hopeful for what is to come in the following year.

"I'll be able to have a better scope of what systemic concerns exist within the student population and have data behind it that I can then start to have a deeper dive into those systemic concerns and inspire change at the institution. Because that's really the purpose, right? [To] improve fairness at the institution within those bigger systemic concerns," she said.

Over time, the office hopes their work contributes to a more equitable campus culture and strengthens trust between students and the university.



The Ombuds Office is located on the third floor of the SLC.



For more information, the ombuds office can be contacted at uwombuds@uwaterloo.ca or visit <https://uwaterloo.ca/ombudsperson/>.

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To look with the eyes and the mind: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* comes to UW

Angela Li, Staff Writer

Under the influence of a spell, a young lover croons to a woman he met moments ago, all feelings for his partner Hermia forgotten. “Not Hermia but Helena I love,” “Who will not change a raven for a dove?”

Thus begins the messy but fun love dodecahedron in Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. This November, the UW theatre and performance department’s annual production will be an adaptation of the timeless play, directed by Tim Welham.

In this queer re-imagining of one of Shakespeare’s early comedies, the play kicks off with Athenian lovers Lysandra and

Hermia. Hermia’s mother Egea, who disapproves of the match, orders Hermia to marry Demetrius, a man of Egea’s choosing. The lovers flee to the forest in defiance of Egea and the oppressive rules she represents, undergoing a wild series of events, encountering fairies and becoming entangled in shenanigans before reaching their happy ending.

“It’s one of the first plays I’ve ever done and one of my favourites,” Welham said in an interview with *Imprint*. The production will be the sixth rendition of the comedy that Welham has been involved with in his career, and his first time working on a show with UW’s theatre department. Welham states that the story of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* centres around “love, imagination, forgiveness, acceptance, and [the act of] maturing. All the characters... go through transition and transformation throughout the play.”

The director is setting this adaptation in modern times, with a greater focus on the lovers’ storyline and a new vision for the characters. “Because the story is about fighting against the patriarchy, a queer story [of queer love and queer joy], lends itself to that story. And I think queer stories really need to be celebrated right now; difference needs to be celebrated.” Hermia’s lover Lysander and her father Egeus from the original *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* are re-imagined as Lysandra and Egea here, and forest fairy Puck is portrayed as a woman by a female actress, adding complexity and a refreshing update to the centuries-old work.

“It’s a play that I love because it’s lighter [and] it’s joyous,” Welham shared. “It’s a great piece to work on with... an undergraduate [theatre] company, because the life events



[from the play] are closer to their age and their experience levels.” Prior to this show, Welham taught Shakespeare Voice and Text courses at St. Jerome’s and other universities like Western University and Toronto Metropolitan University.

Aside from teaching, Welham also works as a text coach for the Stratford Festival. Just like athletic coaches help a sports team stay in shape for peak performance, text coaches at Stratford Festival help actors develop and maintain their mastery of Shakespeare’s text. For *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Welham does similar work with UW performers: “identifying intention, breaking down the meaning of the language, [and] looking at the rhythms ... because it’s as much about speaking the text as it is thinking your way through it.”

Linguistically, Welham says, the text of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* has a more regular structure and is easier to digest than Shakespeare’s later plays. Welham identifies





“It’s one of the first plays I’ve ever done and it’s one of my favourites.”

– Tim Welham, director



four different language structures, or language “worlds,” in the play: one for the Athenian nobles in unrhymed iambic pentameter, one for the play’s lovers seen in rhyming verse, a third used by the Athenian commoners who put on the play-within-a-play for Theseus and Hippolyta’s wedding, and a fourth used by the fairy characters in the forest. Characters in the last category speak in trochaic tetrameter, akin to the reverse of iambic pentameter. As the play progresses, these four language structures interact and change to reflect the evolution of the characters — for instance, the lovers’ speech shifts from an almost musical rhyming structure into blank verse by the end of the play. “We hear them grow up in the language of the text itself,” Welham added.

To attain that maturity, though, the pairs of lovers must go through a tangle of misadventures and transformations (quite literally in some cases). Third-year theatre and performance student Daniela Milicevic plays Puck, the mischievous fairy who, in the original, accidentally doses Hermia’s lover Lysander (female in the UW adaptation) with enchanted eye drops commissioned by fairy king Oberon for his wife, Titania. The switch-up results in Lysander falling in love with Helena, Demetrius’s lover.

“There’s moments where... [Puck’s] actions change the trajectory of some of the moments between the lovers,” Milicevic says, specifically citing the moment Puck transforms the head of Athenian commoner Nick Bottom into that of a donkey, which ends up further complicating and changing the dynamics among the other characters. Milicevic describes Puck as “not directly involved with [the other characters], but ... indirectly leading the play somewhere.” Milicevic also notes that while Puck was traditionally played by a male actor, his role in the show is not defined strictly by his gender: “There’s so many branches to this play, and [Puck] is just one branch of it.”

While Milicevic is an agent of chaos on-stage, she also works off-stage on the carpentry crew to make sure the show goes off without a hitch. This includes learning production techniques before planning and building props from scratch. “Most of us don’t have building experience,” Milicevic points out. “We have to be students, but also have to produce something that needs to get walked on and needs to handle another month of rehearsals and shows.”

Fourth-year theatre and performance student Quinn Hetherington faces the same challenge as a tech crew member. Hetherington works both as a dramaturg and as a wardrobe tech keeping the show’s costumes in good condition.

“It’s a big struggle to try and keep everything neat and clean so that everyone gets that same show experience ... [and] see the costumes as they were when we [first] put them



Janine Taha

out,” Hetherington said.

At the time of this interview, Hetherington was hard at work on the corset worn by fairy queen Titania. The wardrobe team did not use a pre-made pattern but created one from scratch for Titania’s outfit, before working with actress Morgaine McEvoy to ensure the corset would fit. Rather than fabric, though, Hetherington is using foam, which presents its own challenges: “To make it a real corset with the grommets and tying up at the back, we need to give it some strength ... do we add fabric in it? How do we make this foam not rip when we are tying [the corset] up? It’s a long process.” Hetherington cites that special coatings and material treatments are planned for the corset, so that Titania’s actor Morgaine McEvoy can move comfortably and look stunning doing so on stage.

“The great thing about Waterloo’s theatre and performance program is that all the students are exposed to all aspects of making theatre, so they understand how difficult it is to work on a production backstage,” Welham said of his experience working with UW students. Students who major in theatre and performance are required to complete technical production courses in addition to acting courses, creating well-rounded graduates who, as Welham says, know “how much work is put in and how each piece of the puzzle fits together,” regardless of their future theatre career goals.

After months of hard work, the cast and crew hope that audiences will not only enjoy the play but be inspired to connect with others.

Hetherington and Milicevic encourage UW students with even a middling interest in theatre to get involved. Both have heard many express intimidation towards working in the performing arts, especially with regards to Shakespearean works, given the antiquated language and complex interpretations.

Milicevic believes that “Shakespeare doesn’t have to be boring [or] black-and-white.” While many university stu-

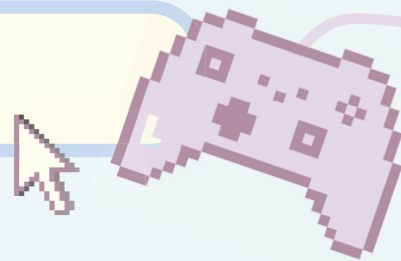
dents know Shakespeare in the stuffy context of an English classroom, she hopes that seeing the beloved playwright’s work in action on stage will change the audience’s perception of Shakespeare’s target audience and what they think Shakespeare on stage looks like: “If we find new audiences, I hope they... take away that we are young people performing Shakespeare... and having a great time doing it.”

“If you are a human being... if you are alive and desire to do theater, you can do theater,” Hetherington stressed. As a student with a chronic illness, she understands that those with physical limitations and accessibility needs may not feel up to the task, but Hetherington emphasizes that anyone can find their place in theatre, citing the incredible support she received from the faculty and fellow students. “The UW theatre program is so small, but we are so mighty... If you are debating on [taking a theatre class] and think, ‘Oh no, I’m not good at theatre’... there’s no such thing as not being good enough for theatre.”

In the end, Welham hopes that the play helps inspire non-violent change and continued connection in a time of increasing isolation and divisive rhetoric: “There are a couple moments where there’s almost violence in the play, but it doesn’t quite happen ... this play stays a comedy because violence does not prevail.” Welham also reiterates a sentiment expressed by many performers: “All theatre is political. ...The [simple] act... of standing on a stage, speaking your truth and standing up for what you believe in, of showing queer love represented on stage... allows the audience and us creators to imagine a better future.” He hopes that the audience walks away from the stage with “a feeling of inclusivity... love, [and] generosity of spirit.”

And just like queer love, art itself is a rule-breaker, game-changer, and world-maker. Even with AI threatening to replace creators and their work, Welham has faith: “The theatre will endure because it represents the best of our humanity.”

Five best indie video games to help destress after exams



Angela Li, Staff Writer

Whether you've just finished midterms or are in the grind, video games can be a great way to clear your mind for a brain break, or to dive into something completely different from your studies.

Here are some well-known and not-so-well-known indie games across a variety of genres that I recommend depending on the headspace you're in. If you're short on time or energy, most of these games don't have long narrative gaps between autosaves or complex storylines that require you to spend time trying to remember what you did in a previous gaming session, so you can easily put one down and pick it up where you left off.

For something productive but cozy

Unpacking

Developer: Witch Beam

Platforms: Steam (Windows, macOS), Switch, mobile (iOS, Android)



This relatively short game is — you guessed it — about unpacking. For all of us moving between school and co-op after exams, packing away your life into boxes to bring to a new home can be both bitter-sweet and exciting. As you take out possessions from cardboard boxes and organize them around your new living space in each level, you follow the game's protagonist through the ups and downs of their life. You watch as they move to university, settle into their first apartment with friends, and even pack up to leave after the end of a relationship — all reflected in the objects that they choose to keep over the years.



For those who like rhythm games

Melatonin

Developer: Half Asleep Games

Platforms: Steam (Windows, macOS), Switch



A rhythm game with a light story about dreams and reality, Melatonin boasts a beautiful pastel colour palette and over 20 different levels, each with different visuals and scenarios to keep things fresh. Go on an imaginary shopping spree, doze off into a dream about eating fast food, and have fun blasting zombies in a game-within-a-game. Despite its cozy name, Melatonin can be difficult at first for those not used to rhythm games, but a wide range of anti-frustration and accessibility features help ease the learning curve. These include audio assistance via a background metronome, a visual assist option that adds a timing circle cue, and for those who want to aim higher, a level auto-restart option if you fail to get a perfect rating during a sequence. For those who enjoy the game's soundtrack, it is available on Steam and major music streaming platforms such as Spotify and Apple Music.



For relaxing vibes and killing time



ABZU

Developer: Giant Squid

Platforms: Steam (Windows), Switch

Boasting a beautiful soundtrack by Austin Wintory, the composer behind the games Journey and Flower from thatgamecompany, ABZU is an underwater exploration game that is more about the vibes, with a story focusing on the powerful connection we have to ocean life and our duty to care for it. While the story can be heavy at times, the relaxed pace of this game and its mechanics allow you to wander around in each zone as long as you like. You can hitch a ride along a porpoise's dorsal fin, swim with sea turtles, and uncover an ancient civilization's ruins without the stress of needing to watch out for your health bar like in survival games. The game even allows your character to meditate, entering a special viewing mode where you can follow the sea critters' movements in an area and see the name of their species if you're curious for more information.

For something thought-provoking



Gorogoa

Developer: Buried Signal (Jason Roberts)

Platforms: Steam (PC), Switch

Flip a book open and zoom into the picture of a constellation, before dragging the frame around the screen to look for the hidden moon in the sky. Click on the flaking graffiti on a ruin to uncover the green eye of a giant beast, wandering over you ominously. Crafted painstakingly over six years by solo developer Jason Roberts (also known as Buried Signal), this 2017 indie game contains no text or dialogue, but tells a story instead through evocative images and puzzles. The player follows the story of a boy as he journeys to recover five coloured fruits and learn about the rainbow-coloured beast. The narrative itself is left open-ended to player interpretation, but its interconnected motifs and clever use of overlaid images promise an immersive experience. The game is relatively short, averaging 1 to 2.5 hours for a single playthrough.

For those looking to blow off steam

Hades

Developer: Supergiant Games

Platforms: Steam (Windows), Switch



I normally play this to burn off the excess nerves and stress after an exam, especially if it went badly! With the official release of its sequel Hades II earlier this month, it's a great time for old and new fans to play the original as a refresher. You play as Zagreus, the son of Hades, fighting your way to the surface from the underworld to find your long-lost mother, Persephone. Battle through familiar locales in Greek mythology like Asphodel, Elysium and Styx in this popular roguelike, and remember that what kills you makes you stronger — every death gives you new currency to purchase buffs, new storylines with re-imaginings of the Greek gods, and weapons to fit your preferred playstyle (or for you to try a new one). The game also offers plenty of replay value after finishing the main story and character storylines. Players who want to experiment with different builds and challenge themselves with added difficulty can do so and gain extra rewards and achievements.

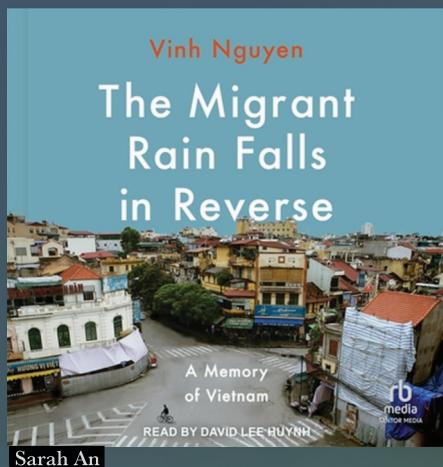
Meeting the writers at this year's Wild Writers festival

Avary Mendoza, Contributor

The Wild Writers Literary Festival, running Nov. 7-9, will be held at the Balsillie School of International Affairs in Uptown Waterloo. Festival organizers invited acclaimed Canadian writers from coast to coast to participate in this three-day literary celebration. The festival offers a variety of opportunities for writers to connect with like-minded peers and share their perspectives through a mix of panels, discussions, and writing workshops.

Eleni Zaptes, festival manager and UW alumna who graduated in 2017, shared that the goal of the festival is to help connect and cultivate a space for authors to share and for readers to meet, engage, and experience a celebration of knowledge, writing, and “meet their favourite Canadian authors, discover new authors, and have access to professional development in the literary arts space.” Unlike most major festivals, which are often held in Toronto, the Wild Writers Literary Festival has taken place in Waterloo since 2012. Zaptes explained that the location was selected due to a sense that southwestern Ontario was being underserved. All in all, the festival provides an opportunity to meet your favorite authors, as well as discover new emerging authors and their contributions in the writing world.

Author Vinh Nguyen, who works at



Renison University for the prestigious literary magazine, *The New Quarterly*, attend as a non-fiction writer. Nguyen also wrote *Lived Refuge*, published in 2023. His newest memoir *The Migrant Rain Falls In Reverse*, published this year, which will be featured at the festival. Nguyen thinks that this event is beneficial for anyone interested in writing, influencing, content creation, and wished more students attended. *The Migrant Rain Falls In Reverse* was written in around eight months, which is quite a quick turnaround considering many of his other books take closer to a year or more. He wanted the memoir to be published in April 2025, which is the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War.

He expressed his message of the book and its impactful anti-war standpoint, which frames the tone and language throughout the memoir as he explores “the effects of war, the aftermath of war, how war imprints itself to the lives of people who have to continue to live in its aftermath.” The narrative structure is split into what’s remembered, what happened, and what might have been, which is crucial as a speculative memoir. It begins with memories and stories he remembers or has been told. The speculative point of view helps readers grasp the thought process behind what might have

been hoped for as opposed to the reality of what occurred. Like many other authors writing about personal events, Nguyen feared how his book would be perceived. “I think I was more worried about how family members would read it,” Nguyen said, adding it’s important to encapsulate and represent accurately and how others want to see themselves. “I really hope the book finds the reader that it needs to find.”

The title of the book originates from a line from Chinese American poet Li-Young Lee. “I wanted a title that made people pause,” Nguyen said.

He has attended the literary festival since 2018, mentioning that his main goal of the upcoming festival is to con-

nect with others and relate and share thoughts with one another. All in all, Nguyen, who will be featured and discussing his book on Nov. 28, is encouraging others to come and interact with the writing community to gain

new insights and perspectives.

Another memoir being featured at the festival is *Wordly Girls* by Tamara Jong, who has work appearing in magazines including *The New Quarterly*. Her book is presented in an essay-style format with 14 different stories that took over 12 years to compile. Although she doesn't fully do non-fiction, she decided to venture into the genre after taking a course

on non-fiction writing at the University of Guelph. Her inspiration for this book is a desire for connection and for those who have been through similar situations or relate, with a focus on mixed ancestry and religious perspectives from the idea of her growing up as a Jehovah's Witness.

Jong also likes to use her voice to convey more emotionally resonant truths: "Sometimes you have to pretend to be someone else in order to find your own voice." Her biggest sense of self-actualization comes from seeing people borrow and buy her book, knowing that there are those who listen to her perspectives. Jong felt worried for how she was going to be perceived by society, especially those who don't know her backstory. She is sometimes questioned in ways that feel uncomfortable, specifically when she is asked about her long involvement with the religion, or when others misinterpret her portrayal of her family and religion, which are topics often characterized as taboo.

"I have to be honest, this is part of my story," Jong stated. The title *Wordly Girls* was originally called "14 stories" as a placeholder, but was later changed as *Worldly Girls*, in the

context of being a Jehovah's Witness, is seen as negative and something that is connected to the secular world. Whereas the significance of "girls" is due to her explaining the dynamic between family and mothers and daughters.

Jong previously attended the festival as a reader and is glad to now be a featured author at the event. Her main objective for the festival is to connect and relate to others. As religion can sometimes be a sensitive topic, Jong is glad to have the opportunity to meet with other writers and understand new perspectives.

Overall, the festival assists at engaging both readers and writers for the immersive experience, to connect, share, and celebrate the impact and meaningfulness of language. Through both writers' stories, one can see how the impact of memoirs and writing can leave a lasting impact on readers, and how the festival works to connect Canadian writers and show appreciation for literary sectors.



Nam Phi Dang

Author Vinh Nguyen



@elenizaptses/Instagram



Deepa Rajagopalan

Author Tamara Jong

Opinion: Why Ontario universities must rethink their education model

Jordan Bauman, Contributor

The Ontario university sector is in trouble. Most universities are running a deficit, many unsustainably. As a UW Senator, I've had a front-row seat to our budget woes. Last year, UW ran a \$43 million deficit and this year we are projected to run a \$50 million deficit. These figures get even larger without expense reductions.

Why is this happening? The simple answer is that universities are underfunded by the province of Ontario — and that's true. But let's dig deeper. In a time when we prioritize fiscal solutions for today's budget problems, let's be different by re-evaluating the educational model itself. Consider that there may be reasons why we are being underfunded: promises to a generation of students that haven't been kept, and universities that are beginning to look like factories. Higher education in Ontario needs to change to meet the demands of tomorrow.

First, let's understand how we came into the province's chokehold. Some of you will know that domestic tuition rates have been frozen at reduced levels since 2019. This

should be great for students and it has been presented that way, but it's not. Lower tuition rates need to be matched by higher provincial funding, but that hasn't happened. Universities have had to deliver the same programs with less resources.

The province has also

limited the natural growth of universities by limiting the number of domestic students that receive provincial grants. Bear with me. For every Ontarian that attends an Ontario university, the university receives a provincial grant on top of the student's tuition. To prevent unhealthy enrollment increases, the province caps the number of grants that it gives based on a target number of students. The problem is that these caps haven't been re-negotiated since 2019. Universities are growing without the necessary funds.

The final wildcard in all of this is international students. International tuition is not restricted, so universities can charge whatever they want. In effect, it's more lucrative for a university to enroll international students than domestic students. For example, a Canadian citizen pays \$9,000 for first-year tuition in the Faculty of Science, whereas an international student pays \$53,000 for the same education. With that in mind, universities began to enroll more international students to balance their budgets and fund growth. Unfortunately, some institutions took it too far. Conestoga College increased its enrollment of international students by 1,579 per cent from 2015 to 2022 culminating in a \$250 million budget surplus in 2024. This year, the federal government responded by capping international student enrollments at 473,000 study permits, down from 1 million in 2023, removing one of the last levers universities had to balance their budgets. This is how we have arrived at our present situation.

It would be easy to look at this and blame the Ontario government. While they aren't funding us enough, we should take the opportunity to look at ourselves too. Why are we being neglected? What value do we add to society, and how can we increase that value?

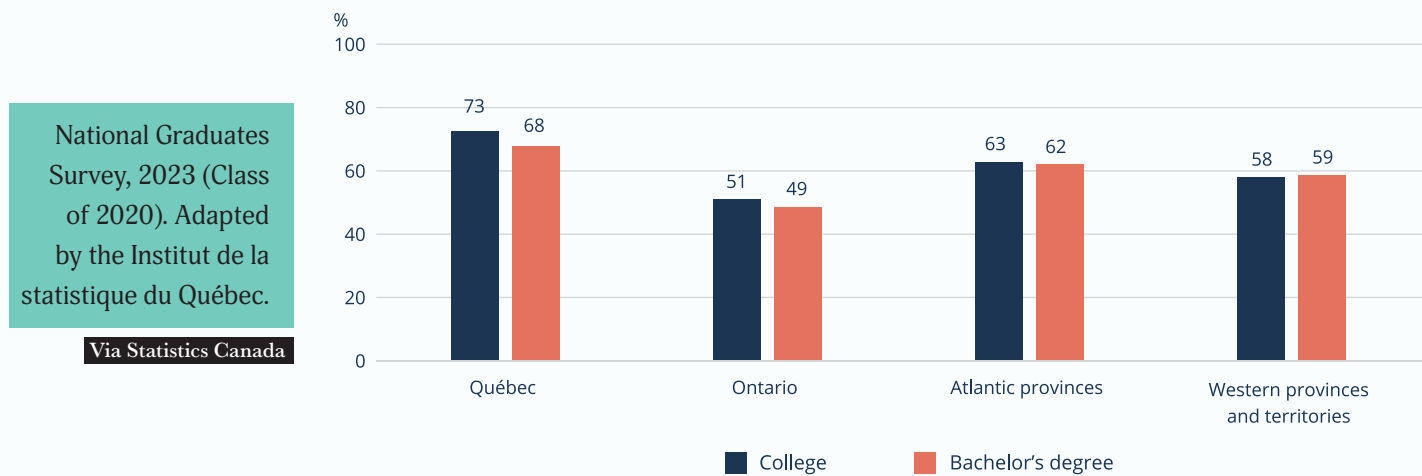
Let's be honest, an undergraduate degree is worth less



Via canva.com

than it used to be. In fact, its value is continually decreasing. A bachelor's degree used to be a direct step to employment. It is now much less the case, especially in the humanities and even the sciences. Universities, in effect,

I recently re-connected with an upper-year friend who was studying an arts degree at UW. I was interested to hear that he had recently dropped out of university to happily pursue a career in the trades. He found it rewarding to



made a social contract with prospective students and their parents that if they attend university, they will be more likely to get a job. That social contract is deteriorating. More graduates are not seeing the results of their investment in post-secondary education. Recent Statistics Canada data shows that only 49 per cent of Ontario graduates with an undergraduate degree work in a job that is closely related to their field within three years after graduating.

A bachelor's degree used to be a direct step to employment. It is now much less the case, especially in the humanities and even the sciences.

Why has the value of a degree decreased? One reason is that so many more people go to university, saturating the market. While in some ways this is a good thing, I also fear that it's partially the result of a dangerous and faulty idea: if you're smart, you go to university. We have this perception that university is the natural step after high school and that anything else is a step down in quality. We need to eradicate this idea – to reflect the truth and for the good of society. There are different ways of being intelligent and many ways to contribute meaningfully to society. To that end, here's a controversial opinion: too many people go to university. I think that a lot of students would be happier and reap greater benefits if they didn't go to university.

work with his hands, and remarked that he began to enjoy reading again since he could do it for enjoyment instead of being compelled to meet deadlines. This is not to mention his financial situation, which is vastly improved.

It's important to mention here that there is a significant market for skilled tradespeople in Ontario. These are lucrative jobs, not second-class ones. In fact, with advancements in AI and other technologies, the sectors truly at risk for job loss are white-collar jobs. Geoffrey Hinton, the Nobel Prize-winning machine learning researcher and "Godfather of AI," went on record to say that if his kids were young today, he would recommend that they work in the trades and other practical jobs. All this to say, attending university is the default, and I'm not sure that it should be.

Moreover, this idea that universities are the best place to go after high school has allowed universities to become very money focused. In some ways, they are becoming factories. Part of the response to recent budget shortfalls is a concerted effort to increase enrollment even further. My home faculty, science, decreased how selective they are with admissions where possible, so that they can enroll more students and make more money. Increasingly, if you apply with an average above minimum, you get an

offer. This is not an isolated trend. Many programs across the province are doing this. Nowadays, universities take in as many students as they can, get them through their courses, and send them on their way. Students are the customers, universities are selling degrees. This is not how it's meant to be.

Let's get down to the classroom level. I speak as a science and arts (psychology) student when I say we need to move beyond PowerPoints and multiple-choice tests. In my first two years as a student, there was only one course where I was required to read research papers. The only course that I've been required to write an essay worth more than 20 per cent of my final grade was a communications course. Last I checked, critical thought and original thinking happen when you ask questions, synthesize ideas, read widely, and are expected to come up with new perspectives, not answer multiple choice questions about memorized content. It could just be the corner of the university that I've been in or my stage of studies, I don't know, but we need to return to a higher standard of education. One where students are not customers but scholars.

Some may read my thoughts as a proposal to go back to a time when higher education was reserved for a select few but it is quite the opposite. We have the opportunity in this era to do something extraordinary: educate the world. With the advent of digital platforms like LEARN, universities have the capacity to launch online credentials allowing virtually anyone to learn at a university level. Lifelong learning can become a reality in a world that increasingly offers high-quality online courses. This also increases the potential for job-relevant credentials. More employers are supporting their employees' education with many of these schemes running in a hybrid or online format.

I have the best interest of UW and the university sector at large in mind. The future is a time when learning and knowledge sharing will be very different from what they are now. Being able to memorize facts will not cut it. We have the opportunity now to get ahead of the curve by changing our undergraduate

education to involve more creativity and critical thinking. Fortunately, UW has done well at offering opportunities for practical application through opportunities like co-op, research opportunities, externships, Velocity, and Wat-SPEED; and has the potential to continue leading in this way for years to come. As for our finances, governments will come and go. It's universities that must evolve to stay relevant. How would you like to see universities change? If you want to act, consider talking to your elected student representatives, responding to surveys, and looking for leadership opportunities.

Disclaimer: Jordan Bauman is a third year psychology student and a member of the UW Board of Governors. Here, he speaks as an independent student.



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Ingrid Au, Contributor

Nothing feels cosier than a warm bowl of soup in the midst of November. With the term getting busier with tests and assignments, I wanted to make this dish as filling as possible so that it can serve as a single meal. This way, your meals are one less thing to worry about!

Tools:

- A large soup pot
- A knife
- A ladle
- Airtight container
- Cutting board

Ingredients:

(yields 7-8 bowls)

- 1 cup of canned crushed tomatoes (about 1 can)
- 4 cups of store-bought chicken stock, unsalted
- 1 stalk of celery, diced
- 2 carrots, sliced and halved
- 1 stalk of kale (about 4 cups)
- 1 cup of canned white kidney beans (about 1 can)
- 1 whole link of Italian sausage
- 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 white onion, diced
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 sprig of thyme
- 1 tsp of brown/white sugar
- 2 tbsp of white vinegar / red wine vinegar
- 1 tbsp of cooking oil of your choice
- Salt

Instructions:

1. In a soup pot, combine the oil, onion, garlic, bay leaves, carrots, celery, sausage, and kale. Cook at medium-high heat until the kale has wilted and the onions are translucent and golden.
2. Once cooked, add the crushed tomato, thyme, beans, and chicken stock. Let it simmer at low heat for 30 minutes. After simmering, you should be able to insert a fork into the beans with ease.
3. Season with vinegar, sugar, salt, and black pepper to taste. Optionally, you may add dried chilli peppers for extra spice. Let it simmer at low heat for another 15 minutes and it's ready to be served.

I hope this soup becomes a staple dish during your study term as it is an easy one-pot recipe that will last you for a week. Enjoy, and good luck with your studies!

ONE POT
HEARTY
SOUP



November crossword

Zoe Cushman, Contributor

ACROSS

- 1 Short cuts?
 5 Amritdharis and sehajdharis, among others
 10 Cards that can be high or low
 14 Fitzgerald of jazz
 15 Put into place
 16 Young horse
 17 Modify
 18 Keyboard shortcut for copying to clipboard
 19 Prefix signalling opposition
 20 DC fixture with a new hexagon mural
 22 Jargon
 23 *Game Changer* episode that produced Brennan Lee Mulligan's "I CANNOT WIN" monologue (three words)
 24 Service station supply (two words)
 26 A ___ *Night's Dream* (UW THPERF production this term)
 28 Dork
 31 Pirate's realm
 32 Once around the sun
 36 ___ sequitur
 37 Gist
 41 Console alternatives
 42 Spot on a train
 44 Provincial organization charged with holding doctors accountable (abbreviated)
 45 Increases the humidity of a reptile's enclosure
 47 Notoriously convoluted multimedia webcomic that recently had an animated pilot based on it
 51 Spikevax producer
 54 Metal marble
 58 ___ On Danse (Stromae song)
 59 Stork with a distinctive beak
 60 Drug also known as Ecstasy (abbreviated)
 61 Smart as ___ (two words)
 63 Peek-___ (two words)
 64 Sound used for the FitnessGram Pacer Test
 65 Hero of *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*
 66 Home for a bird or wasp
 67 Raggedy doll
 68 Led Zeppelin's "Whole ___ Love"
 69 Away from the wind

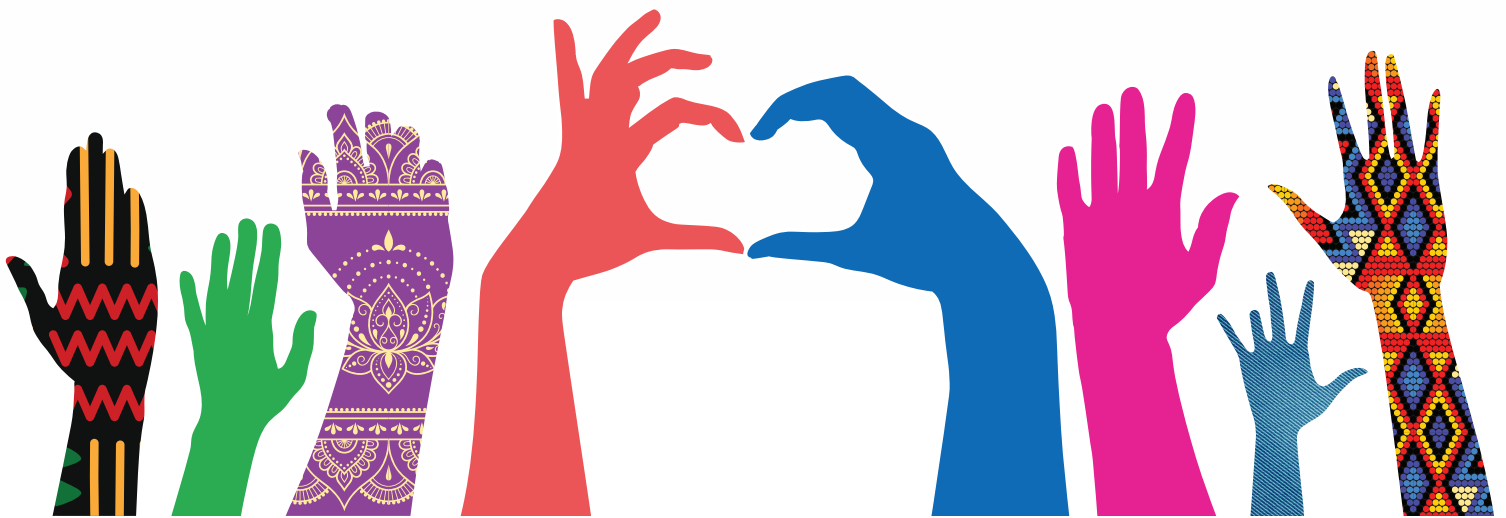
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DOWN

- 1 Muscular
 2 Nostalgic song
 3 Euphoria
 4 Stayed in (two words)
 5 Runner-up's place
 6 Paired up (two words)
 7 Socialist theorist Marx
 8 Strong acid (abbreviated)
 9 Campus building with benches featuring pieces of the tree that was cut down to build it (abbreviated)
 10 Far removed, with 'from' (three words)
 11 Party dance
 12 Shopping centre in Toronto
 13 Narrow openings
 21 Payoff
 22 Tavern brew
 24 Foreboding sign
 25 Apple computer
 27 Website visitors
 28 The 'phonebook of the internet' (abbreviated)
 29 Sorrow
 30 Two-sided animation protagonist
 33 Short albums (abbreviated)
 34 One part of a play
 35 Blog feed format
 38 Sleep-related word root
 39 ___ butter (hand cream ingredient)
 40 Show host
 43 Remedial treatment
 46 Japanese art of flower arranging
 48 Surgery sites (abbreviated)
 49 Common garment for club merch
 50 Perfect world
 51 Venomous African snake
 52 Bygone
 53 Like the Taj Mahal
 55 Defamation
 56 Admission of defeat (two words)
 57 Mexican street corn
 59 Close
 61 Visual communication system (abbreviated)
 62 Question of identity

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