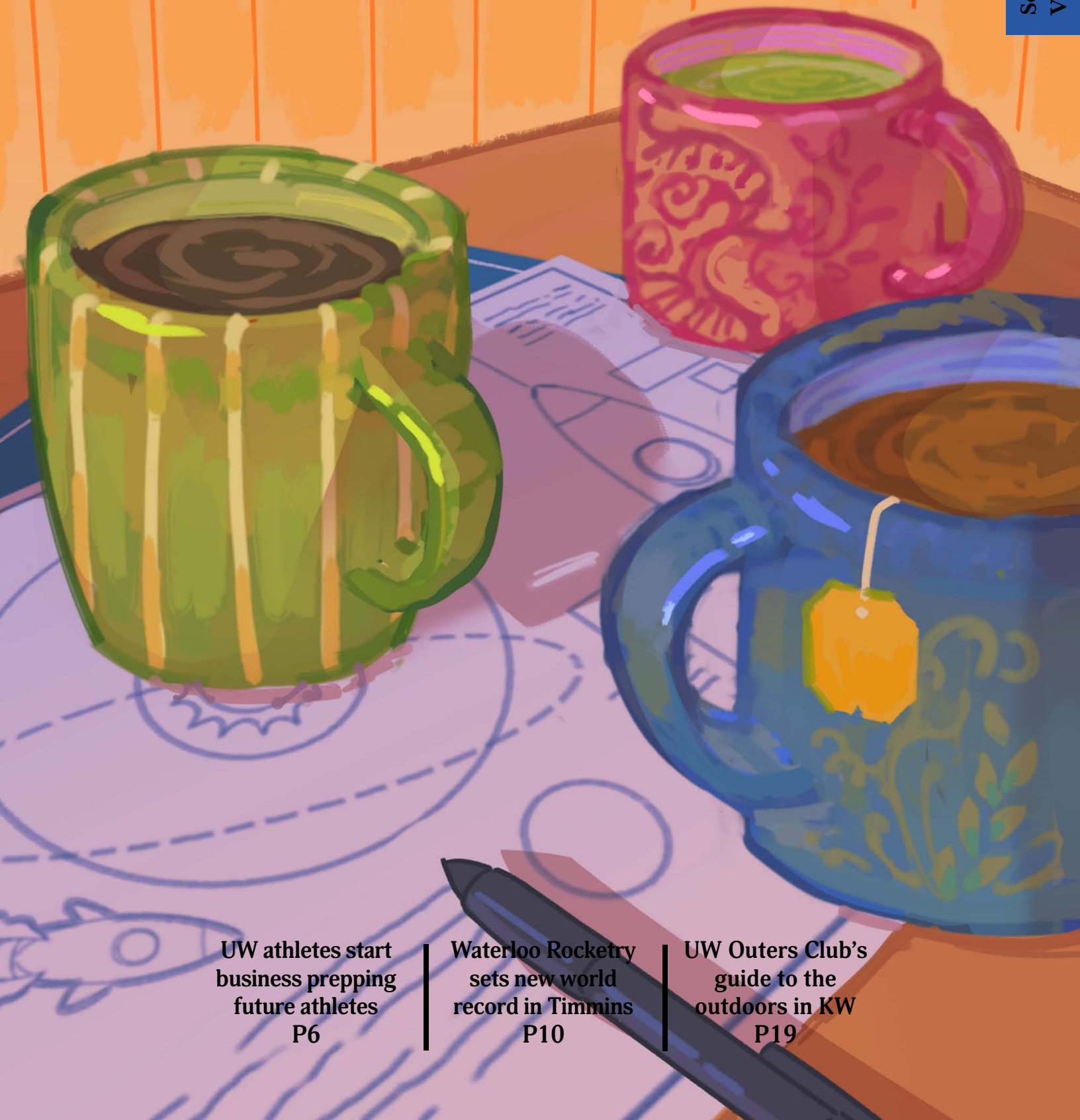




Imprint

Your Stories, Your Voice

September 2026
Volume 4 Issue 2



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business prepping
future athletes
P6

Waterloo Rocketry
sets new world
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Celebration and recognition: UW alum chosen to create Indigenous Peoples Day Mural

Zoey Pearce, Staff Writer

Marking National Indigenous Peoples Day, the City of Waterloo partnered with UW sexuality, marriage, and family and Indigenous studies alum Maddie Bernard-Resmer to create a public mural in Waterloo Public Square, which was unveiled on June 21. “The goal of my art is for people to see themselves, to see their stories represented, and to feel that they have a place [in the community],” they said.

Bernard-Resmer, who is from Pikwakanagàn First Nation and Kitigan-Zibi First Nation, is a mixed-Anishinàbe, Bear Clan, and Two-Spirit creator. They have been an artist since childhood, implementing Indigenous teachings into their past, present, and future creations. The mural they created for this year’s Indigenous Peoples Day, “wànakìwin: harmony between relations,” features animals who are native to the Haldimand Tract Treaty Territory, which is where KW is located. In their mural, Bernard-Resmer wanted to show the harmony between different parts of nature that don’t typically interact by illustrating it in a single shared space. This is why Cattails, mushrooms, a cloud, and a rainbow are included in the mural alongside a variety of wildlife. The bear represents the protective nature of the Bear Clan and its interest in being providers and teachers of medicine. The fox illustrates the joy that comes from playful people who bring upbeat energy to their inner circles, as well as their cunning sides. The heron portrays the independent qualities of people who watch over others in their communities.

“The message that I hope the piece conveys is that harmony is possible, but it takes work. It takes showing up in community. It means engaging with conflict or having to work with people you are out of alignment with sometimes,” Bernard-Resmer explained. They call on people to not paint each other with the same brush in recognition of society’s desire to categorize individuals into the same boxes that strip

them
of their
personhood.

To combat this division, Bernard-Resmer urges others to show up as their fullest selves in all aspects of their lives. The decision behind the mural’s colour palette consisting of vibrant blues, pinks, purples, and oranges stems from Bernard-Resmer feeling naturally gravitated to bright colours and rainbow colour schemes. They call this gravitation a self-fulfilling prophecy because their Algonquin name is Kekekons Nimid-Tagwanibisan, which means Hawk Child Dances with Rainbows. The contrast between the mural’s vibrancy and the grey concrete it is painted on is what Bernard-Resmer hopes catches people’s eyes.

An Indigenous teaching Bernard-Resmer shared related to animals and rainbows surrounds the raven. In this teaching, the raven helps put out a fire, which consequently makes its wings and body become covered in ash. The dark soot and ash that the raven carries afterwards are intended by the creator to remind people of the sacrifices that the bird had made for them. “Teachings like that bring me back to a



Maddie Barnard, artist of the
Indigenous Peoples Day mural

time where we saw the earth and the other parts of creation with so much life and animism. People talk about how... everything has lost a lot of character, fun, and nuance. I'm really passionate about those things. I really love stuff that stands out to the eye [and] doesn't blend in with the rest of the world around it," they said.

"I think that connecting with my culture, my traditions, my people remind me that we all have a place and that we don't have to prove that, earn that, or consistently show up in a certain type of way in order to keep our position there. We just get to exist. I think that that helps me to unmask, do what feels right, and create the stuff that I want to create."

An aspect of "wànakìwin: harmony between relations" that Bernard-Resmer wants people to closely examine is reading its artist statement. The statement further explains the mural's elements, and parts of it are written in Bernard-Resmer's Indigenous language. "I feel that language revitalization work is really important for me. I've been hearing a lot from community members, with this piece in particular, that they really liked learning about the stories of some of the different parts of the mural," they noted.

Prior to working on this project with the City of Waterloo, Indigenous artists Luke Swinson and Alanah Jewell held the position and were responsible for creating original installations. Once they felt ready to let another artist take control of the project, they handed it off to Bernard-Resmer, who says they had a welcoming experience working with the city. "I feel like so many talented First Nations, Metis, and Inuit youth in this region who are just needing an opportunity or someone to take a chance on them, and that was what I was really lucky to have," they said.

In addition to painting and drawing, Bernard-Resmer creates jewelry, large-scale beadwork, digital art, collage work, clay pieces, and runs a small business called Western Sky Designs where they sell their art. "I would say my primary and consistent inspiration comes from becoming more and more entrenched and soaked in my culture. I think as I become more fluent in the language, as I become more con-

nected with our traditions, ways of being, and thinking prior to settler contact, the more in touch I feel with the creative parts of myself," they explained.

Living out their desire to help create a stronger community, Bernard-Resmer also works at SHORE Centre (Sexual Health Options Resources Education) as a clinical coordinator. The sexual and reproductive healthcare work they do at this non-profit organization is deeply integrated with Indigenous wellness. In the next season of Bernard-Resmer's life, they plan on starting a project focused on "communicating with different Algonquin communities across Quebec and Ontario to be able to document and record some of our traditional artistic practices, language, and all of these different pieces."



"I'm really looking forward to... dedicating more time and work and resources and energy into giving back to my people and my communities, but also being able to preserve these aspects of who we are that are disappearing more and more by the day," they shared.

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Shawn Kouadio, Contributor

What is a sport without competition? Many elementary and high school athletes work tirelessly to reach the next level, weaving a web to catch the attention of coaches, scouts, and trainers. But when they run out of silk, who are they outside of that web?

At Verse Athletics, colloquially known as Verse, the only person you compete against is “who you were yesterday,” according to founders Emilio Arruda and Yinka Ogunnote.

“We want to teach [our athletes] skills that are transferable anywhere, [like] leadership skills. How do you stay accountable? What does that mean in your day-to-day? Helping them with their mental health, dealing with high pressure, low pressure, dealing with stresses of life. [A player] can get injured and lose it all, so we want them to be prepared for all facets of life,” Ogunnote says.

Est. in 2024

Founded in December of 2024, Verse now has over 20 alumni who have committed to sports programs at participating schools in Ontario University Athletics (OUA), including the University of Windsor, the University of Ottawa, Wilfrid Laurier University, and many more. If you followed UW football last year, you’ve already seen Verse alumnus and receiver Ben Yong take the field. Verse hosts several training camps and tournaments.

An economics student from Guelph by way of Lagos entering his fourth year, Ogunnote founded Verse Athletics with Arruda, a psychology student from Brantford.

“We had initially partnered with another company that focused on hockey, Advantage Prep Athletics, and we were going to be a subsidiary for them that would have focused on football,” Ogunnote says. “But [Arruda and I] decided to part ways with them, and then start our own thing with our own vision, and Verse was born.”

Both life-long football fans and current athletes for UW, Arruda and Ogunnote met during their first year and quickly became close friends. Through years of practices, training camps and attempts to pursue their passion at the university level, they realized how muddled the recruitment process had become for young athletes.



“It was difficult to find training camps, get exposure, et cetera, growing up. You’d have to drive hours, send emails to every coach you could find, [and] hope to get a reply,” Arruda says. “We wanted to bring something different for the next generation [of athletes], something more streamlined.”

But before Verse became a rapidly growing, respected name in the KW region, it consisted of Arruda and Ogunnote hosting free training sessions during the harsh winter for local youth, with no more than 10 or 20 children in attendance at a time.

Once they’d begun to establish a foothold, they contacted their respective high school coaches to spread the word. Verse rapidly picked up steam soon after, drawing the attention of Warriors rugby flanker Spencer Makela in October 2025. With Makela’s expertise

in technology and coding, the duo-turned-trio now had the resources to execute their vision.

Less than 2 years later, the company now hosts training camps with hundreds of athletes, and has close to 3000 followers on social media.

Twenty months gone by

Now with a brand and a core group of founders, Verse has accomplished a lot before its second birthday. Originally for high school football players looking to make the push to post-secondary athletics, the company added a rugby program in July 2026 and programs for elementary school athletes as well. They now hold camps with over 100 people from around Ontario in attendance, where aspiring players can receive high level training and exposure.

“Entering 2027, we plan on hosting our own seven-versus-seven tournaments and sending teams to tournaments across Canada,” Arruda says. “Our long term goal isn’t to be the biggest name or most profitable company, but to change the culture surrounding Canadian sports. We want it to be talked about more seriously, give everyone a chance to play and bypass barriers that might hold them back. We want sports to be more than entertainment, but an avenue for long-term connections and life lessons.”

Student-athlete-entrepreneurs

Managing a startup business while attending practices and going to classes is a lot for anybody. Time constraints and personal relationships can interfere with the needs of a business. With plans for expansion on the horizon, such as the first Verse rugby camp held in July 2026, how does Verse tackle these problems?

“Compartmentalization,” Arruda says. “We all know our roles and trust the others to do theirs,” Ogunnote adds. Arruda handles the company’s media relations and marketing, Ogunnote focuses on operations and event planning, and Makela handles IT.

“Because I joined so late, it was challenging to understand what my role would be,” Makela says. “When a business is first starting, there’s a lot of chaos and it took me a few months to settle in. But knowing I can give 100 per cent to my part while [Arruda and Ogunnote] give 100 per cent to theirs has made it easy.”

“There’s sacrifices as well,” adds Spencer Cockerill, an inaugural coach for Verse and high school teammate of Arruda’s.

“Sometimes you have to decide between two commitments, or go to work then head straight to a training session. But we love what we do, and that makes it easy.”

You vs You

A company is built for money, but a brand is built for an idea. Playing a sport competitively takes enormous amounts of time and puts strain on the body. An exceptionally long athletic career might last 20 years. Regardless of skill, background, work ethic, or luck, one day, everyone has to hang their cleats up for good. At the end of their career, an athlete won't be able to rely on athleticism or highlight tapes, but rather the skills and lessons they learned during that time.

“That's what we care about,” Ogunnote says. “The one thing we all agree on is that anybody that gives us a chance should get something out of it, beyond sports. We want to share more than football techniques.”

Through every business dealing, personal relationship, and training session, Verse strives to be as ethical as possible. “Nothing is easy, but everything should be fair,” Makela said.

Our long term goal isn't to be the biggest name or most profitable company, but to change the culture surrounding Canadian sports. We want it to be talked about more seriously, give everyone a chance to play and bypass barriers that might hold them back. We want sports to be more than entertainment, but an avenue for long-term connections and life lessons.

— Emilio Arruda, co-founder of Verse Athletics

Whether that's following up with athletes who ask for extra help, making accommodations to lighten the load on parents or guardians attempting to enroll their children, or going out of their way to cheer up a player having an off day, every aspect of the business matters to Verse.

“I'm not always a super talkative guy, but thinking of the coaches I had that volunteered and went out of their way to train us, I knew I had to give that same energy to the kids I



Via Instagram/@sksportsphotos, @verseathleticsfootball

coach,” Cockerill says. “I always try to talk to every player, learn their names immediately, open up group conversations to the shyer kids. That's what sticks with me the most, knowing I made a difference no matter how small.”

That same supportive spirit comes into play when training athletes at Verse. “Sometimes players don't understand a drill or mess up,” says coach Yassier Adams, a fourth-year kinesiology student at UW and defensive back for the Warriors. “When I grew up, coaches would scream, embarrass you, but I think the difference in us being younger is we understand what these players are going through. We take our time with everyone.”

Verse's slogan and brand, “You vs You,” was built from this idea. There's competition in everything, but it's important to recognize that not everyone starts from the same place. “Comparison is the thief of joy,” Adams says. Makela adds that “if a pilot is learning to fly, they'll make mistakes. But even if they're facing turbulence, they don't look at another plane and let theirs crash. They see what adjustments they have to make to theirs and fix it.”

And in that same vein, the team at Verse emphasizes that being better than who you were yesterday is all that matters. “If I become one percent better than I was yesterday, just one percent, that means everything to me,” says Cockerill. Arruda agrees: “It's about looking in the mirror and asking yourself, ‘how can I be the best version of myself today?’”

“I try to teach myself and our athletes that you can learn from others' mistakes, and if you learn from your own, it's a lesson,” Ogunnote said. “It'll always be ‘You vs You.’”

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How Waterloo Rocketry got their record breaking rocket to new heights

Andrew Yang, Contributor

On Aug. 20, in Timmins, Ontario, the Waterloo Rocketry student design team launched Polaris to a height, or apogee, of 63,497 feet, roughly equivalent to the height of 473 Dana Porter Libraries. Polaris broke the world record for the highest launch of an amateur liquid rocket, an apogee previously set by Georgia Tech's Vespula at 56,590 feet in May.

Founded in 2012 as a continuation of a fourth-year engineering capstone project, Waterloo Rocketry now consists of over 100 students working out of a bay in the Sedra Student Design Centre on the first floor of Engineering 5. The team, made up of undergraduate and graduate students in and outside of engineering, develops rockets to launch at the annual Launch Canada event.

"I think the chances that we beat the current record right now is like 110 per cent," team co-lead Jeremy Schnellhardt told Imprint in December 2025. At the time, the record was 47,732 feet, held by Embry Riddle University's Deneb-1 rocket. Waterloo Rocketry had been developing its liquid engine since 2023 for the rocket Borealis. Design improvements, including to the rocket's size and fuel capacity, over the three years since Borealis gave the team reason to believe they could break the record.

Although the launch outside of Timmins received the media attention, breaking the world record was not the biggest goal for the members of Waterloo Rocketry. "That's just a minor goal," said Matthew Gordon, a senior member of the team and recent mechanical engineering graduate. "Our big goal with Polaris is to get it back in one piece."

The launch might get the glory, but recovery is a key part of a successful rocket. The second part of the flight brings the rocket safely to the ground. When done successfully, this phase completes a nominal flight. "We've never had a successful recovery at competition," said Mia Louie, a third-year math and business student and the team's recovery co-lead. The recovery parachute of the team's 2025 rocket Aurora failed in competition and resulted in the rocket's loss, despite successful tests

earlier that year. Both Deneb-1 and Vespula were also not successfully recovered.

Louie described how the team improved the recovery system in Polaris to handle seven times the force they expect the rocket to experience. "It's probably a bit overkill, but it's good to be safe," Louie said.

After testing the rocket's components multiple times throughout the year, Waterloo Rocketry completed the design and manufacturing of Polaris, its largest rocket to date, which stands at 213 inches tall and eight inches wide. On Aug. 13, with equipment in tow, 40 team members made the eight-hour drive from Waterloo to Timmins.

The Launch Canada competition takes place every year in Timmins and brings together teams from all over Canada. There are several categories of rockets that are launched during the week, including solid fuel, liquid fuel, and multistage rockets. The weeklong event begins with a weekend conference, followed by a five day window for teams to launch their rockets. The week culminates with an awards banquet.

Waterloo's week was plagued with many unforeseen issues that meant the launch did not take place until Thursday. To make the best use of the daylight available, the team starts its day before dawn. A one-and-a-half-hour drive to the launch site means days usually start at approximately 4:30 a.m. The team went into Day 1 of the launch week confident that they would be able to get the rocket in the air that day. Unfortunately, that optimism was short-lived, as issues arose with the brand new antennas used for remote launching and monitoring. The team was forced to abandon the launch on the first day to avoid both communication disconnects and losing their limited supplies of ethanol fuel and nitrous oxide.

The next day was hampered not by technical problems, but by nature. Heavy cloud cover and rain forced all teams to cancel launches scheduled for that day. Waterloo Rocketry took this opportunity to continue fine-tuning the rocket and its launch procedures.





On Day 3, the team once again reached the launch pad at the crack of dawn to prepare for another attempt. The problematic antennas had been swapped for their older but reliable backups and all was ready for the 11 a.m. launch window. Pre-launch processes all went according to plan, telemetry looked normal, and with high anticipation all around, everything felt ready for launch. Three, two, one, ignition... a cloud of nitrous gas surrounded the rocket and everyone awaited the moment the rocket left the launch pad. But after a few beats, the rocket remained grounded. Despite all data reading normal, the rocket had failed to launch. The lack of an obvious failure, other than the rocket still sitting on the launch pad, confused and frustrated the team.

Other teams continued to launch their rockets as Waterloo Rocketry speculated about what might have gone wrong. Finally, with the all-clear given by launch control, the team was able to go to the launch pad. The team found the culprit to be another novel issue: a tube used for fueling failed after being melted by hot smoke. "It's not for lack of trying, bad design or anything; it's just like, a thing that happened because we're trying to launch the rocket," explained Keegan Tripp, a senior member of the team. The confusion among the team turned to reserved optimism as it became clear that this failure was out of the team's control — all team members had executed operations correctly, and with the tube requiring only a quick fix, the team still had the resources to launch in the remaining two days.

Waterloo Rocketry arrived at the launch pad on Thursday, ready to finally see the rocket in the air. Just before noon the countdown started again for Polaris: three, two, one, ignition... and this time, it launched straight as an arrow. Though later than they had planned and hoped, the team was ecstatic to see the rocket leave the ground. At apogee, Polaris deployed its initial drogue parachute to slow down the rocket as it fell. Seven minutes after liftoff, the parachute deployment was confirmed.

"Everything was going our way, everything was nominal, it was unreal." Schnellhardt said of the launch. "Finally hearing that we were under main parachute... It felt like a weight lifted off my shoulders," Louie said in a statement to *Imprint*. The launch marked Waterloo Rocketry's first successful recovery in competition, and an experience of "pure vindication for all the sacrifices everybody had made for the rocket and for this team."

Waterloo Rocketry made the headlines by breaking the world record for the highest launch of an amateur liquid rocket. But perhaps more importantly to them and the future of their program, they also completed their first ever nominal flight in competition and the first ever nominal flight of a liquid rocket in Canada. Reflecting back, Schnellhardt stated that there was "nothing more we could have asked for out of the flight of that rocket; it was incredible."

As for what's next, Schnellhardt told *Imprint* that the team has ideas but needs to discuss them further as a group to decide what new challenges to tackle with their next rocket.



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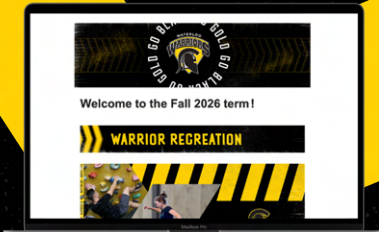


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Rest: What it means amid the grind

Carla Stocco, Staff Writer

When opportunity, ambition, and curiosity come together, most of us may initially envision nothing but future possibility or potential. However, we may fail to recognize the high cost of high achievement and the exhaustion that can follow sustained effort.

If you've gotten so used to running, why stop for a break? When you've grown accustomed to UW's co-op program, from applying and interviewing to the grind of the work-study sequence, the idea of not studying or working can feel almost foreign. Although many of us can maintain a sense of work-life balance, continuing to invest in other relationships and interests, it can still be easy to lose sight of that balance as a UW student.

In this continual process of optimization and the chase for both academic and professional success, are we giving ourselves the time and space to stop along the way? To admire the garden we've been tending and notice the roses that have already bloomed along the way to receiving our degree?

Heather Westmorland, associate director of the Student Success Office at UW, offers her thoughts on how students can seek to integrate balance into their routines, whether they're heading back for classes or co-op this fall.

Transitions: Navigating between terms

Whether you're transitioning from a co-op term to a study term, beginning your first term at university, or preparing to graduate, the constant switch between environments or pursuits can feel overwhelming. Asked whether she has noticed students struggling academically more during certain points in the co-op cycle or during the transition back into a study term or start of a work term, Westmorland shares, "We know that times of transition can be particularly challenging. Moving from a structured workday back into classes, assignments, and exams require[s] students to shift their routines and expectations quite quickly." While she concedes that students

are adaptable and their ability to cope with transitions is unique, "[transition] points take energy and can leave them feeling stretched."

As for what students can do to support themselves between these transitions, she recommends that students plan ahead by "resetting sleep and daily routines before classes begin, look[ing] at course expectations and anticipate workloads early, and be[ing] thoughtful about what they take on in the first few weeks." If you're feeling pressured to hit the ground running on your first day back to classes, remember to give yourself time to adjust. She emphasizes that it takes time to rebuild academic habits and that students "do not need to be operating at full capacity on day one."

Ayo Onaifo, a 2025 UW graduate who pursued a co-operative program while majoring in psychology and legal studies, can relate to feeling overwhelmed by the transition between co-op and study terms. She shares, "Study terms gave me more flexibility with my schedule, but the workload could fluctuate a lot, whereas co-ops gave me a more predictable routine but less energy left for a social life."

Constantly optimizing: The cost of success or the road to burnout?

In a time when we have instant access to each other through digital means and constant exposure to one another's accomplishments via social media, it can become easy to normalize the idea of constantly working. While working hard and persevering are admirable traits, being able to care for yourself and make time for other aspects of life that are fulfilling, is equally important.

Asked if she ever felt pressured as a student to maximize her opportunities or be constantly studying or working during every free moment, Onaifo says, "100 per cent. UW is incredibly competitive and there's definitely a culture of feeling like

“I think students sometimes delay rest until everything else is done but [rest] is part of what allows them to manage competing responsibilities and sustain their effort over time.”

— Heather Westmorland, associate director of the Student Success Office at UW

you should always be doing more.” She went on to describe how the environment at UW and social media posts can increase the sense of pressure: “Seeing people studying late or constantly posting about a new opportunity can be encouraging... But it can also lead to comparison.” To avoid such comparisons and retain confidence in herself, she often reminded herself that “someone else’s productivity doesn’t determine whether I’m being productive enough in my own life.”

When asked what she might say to a student who feels the need to constantly self-improve to remain competitive in today’s job market, Westmorland says, “I would remind them that they do not need to optimize every hour of every day to be successful. Employers value more than a long list of accomplishments.” She adds that soft skills, such as adaptability, self-awareness, communication, and collaboration, are equally valuable. She highlighted the need for achievement that remains balanced, adding, “Growth is important, but it needs to be sustainable.” If you’re concerned that making a little time to socialize or maintain close connections will cut into your study or workload, consider reducing your commitments. Westmorland emphasizes, “Taking care of yourself and maintaining relationships are not signs that you are falling behind.”

Can rest mean progress?

So, amid work and study, could learning to rest and take time for yourself actually be one of the most effective ways to reach your professional and academic goals?

A 2021 study on the effects of skill development and rest, led by researchers from the National Institutes of Health, found that the brain may more effectively solidify the memo-

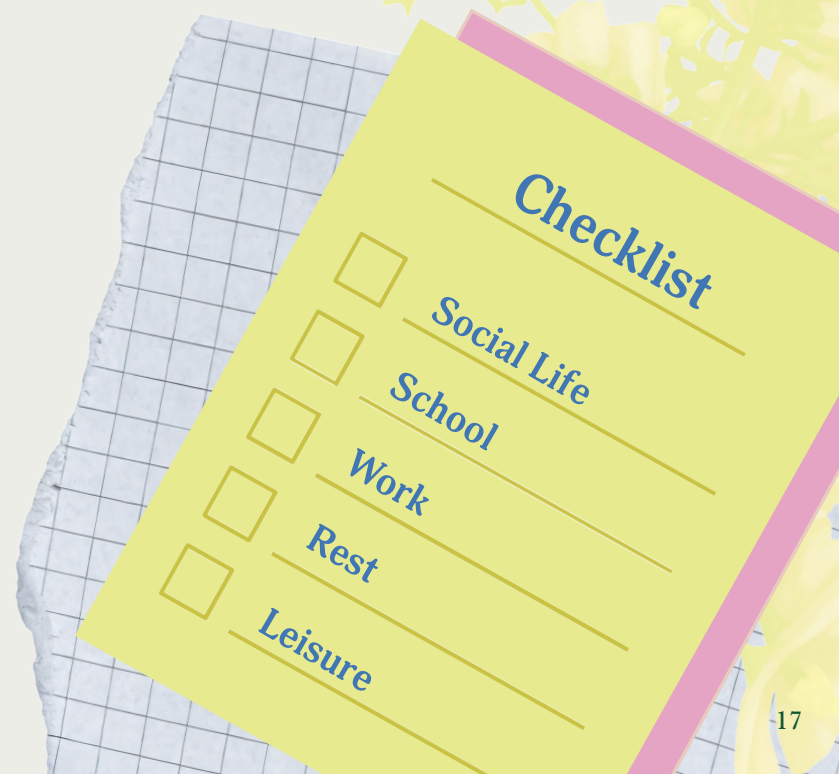
ries of recently acquired skills when participants take a short rest. Researchers emphasized that rather than believing that constant, continual practice is the key to developing a new skill, integrating several short breaks can actually supercharge our ability to develop new skills.

In the context of life as a student, such research findings are a reminder not only to integrate rest when studying, but perhaps, more importantly, to remind us that taking time to rest can help our brains and bodies work more effectively when we get back to working or studying.

Westmorland echoes this sentiment when describing the importance of rest, “Rest supports concentration, learning, emotional regulation, and good decision-making. I think students sometimes delay rest until everything else is done but [rest] is part of what allows them to manage competing responsibilities and sustain their effort over time.” She adds that knowing when to rest and finding good sources of rest is a life skill that we all need to continually practice: “I wish more students understood that rest and academic success are connected, not in competition.”

When students cut out time for sleep, relaxation, and social connection amid a busy schedule, “they will find it harder to focus, stay motivated, and manage stress.” Westmorland highlights the importance of social connection in particular, emphasizing its role in “provid[ing] support, perspective, and a sense of belonging.”

Onaifo admits to experiencing burnout during both study and co-op terms. She describes how the stress of navigating life as a young adult while finding your place can be challeng-



ing. For her, having friends who understood the importance of rest reminded her that rest wasn't something she should feel guilty about needing. She encourages current students to schedule time for rest and leisure as they would schedule time for classes or appointments: "If you treat rest as optional, school and work will always give you a reason to skip it." She also emphasizes the importance of perspective when university life becomes challenging: "Some tomorrows will be worse than the 'yesterdays' and that's okay too. It's part of the journey." Rather than comparing your accomplishments to another peer's, she encourages students to focus on becoming the better version of themselves.

Seeking support: Knowing where to look

Are you struggling to manage your academic workload? Unsure about a co-op requirement? Having a hard time coping with anxiety or stress in class? Westmorland emphasizes the importance of knowing where to look for support at UW, adding, "Behind every service is someone who can help guide students to the next resource or support they may need."

She suggests students check out UW's "Current Students" website, which provides "an excellent starting point where students can see what's available and determine what resources make sense for them."

Whether you're looking for mental health support or need to discuss your academic path, there's a resource for you at UW. Westmorland encourages students to "seek help early and often and before you reach burnout."

"Study terms gave me more flexibility with my schedule, but the workload could fluctuate a lot, whereas co-ops gave me a more predictable routine but less energy left for a social life."

— Ayo Onaifo, UW graduate who pursued a co-operative program

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UW's Outers Club's guide to exploring the great outdoors in KW



Zoey Pearce, Staff Writer

Emilie Schatzmann

Hiking, geocaching, and camping in Kitchener-Waterloo (KW) make up just some of UW's Outers Club's (UWOC) termly events, encouraging students to disconnect from their busy university lifestyles and reconnect with the refreshing activities nature has to offer. UWOC executives Emilie Schatzmann, Alana Mainolfi, and Lauren Maxwell shared the club's most popular adventure destinations, as well as how their time in the club has shaped their university experiences.

"Whether you're outdoorsy or not, coming out to our hikes or our social events is a great opportunity to take a breath and step away from school," Schatzmann said. Schatzmann is in her fourth year of environmental engineering and joined the UWOC in fall 2024. Since becoming a member, she has served as an executive member leading the club's meetings, coordinating events, and overseeing equipment room activity in PAC. In total, the club has 19 executives and nearly 100 active members.

In 2025, Schatzmann started hosting bi-weekly hikes and bi-weekly social events, alternating every other week. To fit the seasons, club events involve activities such as kayaking, canoeing, wood chopping, snowshoeing, movie nights, tent

pitching races, and rock painting. Recent kinesiology graduate Mainolfi has been a club executive since May 2025. Mainolfi says she is certain that incoming first-year students and upper-year students can find something to enjoy within the club's wide variety of activities that range in difficulty levels.

Mainolfi is very fond of the club's dynamic and how everyone in its tight-knit team possesses a shared passion for the outdoors. "I think the reason for that is that everybody is very open-minded, willing to learn, and curious. Those are the three qualities that I think you need when you're outdoors because stuff pops up that you have to deal with, so you have to be very go-with-the-flow and laid-back. Nature doesn't follow an itinerary, so you need to be flexible," she explained.

Being an executive has allowed Mainolfi to witness the club grow along with its members, who come from all UW faculties. "The most valuable thing for me is just the diversity and the range of people that we get, and then they contribute to us as well. They bring so much value to the club just in their storytelling, perspectives, and life experiences," Mainolfi shared.

Like Mainolfi, second-year environment student Maxwell

also found her place in the club because of its members' passion for nature, and joined the UWOC in her first year. She was promoted to an executive position this January. "I was looking for a little bit of a leadership opportunity, and I felt that coming on [the team] as an executive would be a good way to fulfil that," she said.

The club gives Maxwell various opportunities to immerse herself in forests and bodies of water rather than textbooks, which is what helps her reset her mind and energy. "Getting outside is huge, especially when [life] gets kind of stressful. With school, being able to get outdoors for a little bit, even if it's just for a couple hours on the weekend, I feel like it really helps put things in perspective," she noted. The diversity in club events is what appeals to many of its other executives and members, such as Maxwell, who says the club has so much to offer to anyone looking to do something active outdoors. Maxwell also appreciates the club's interest in continuing activities all year round, as this gives her and all other members opportunities to learn seasonal outdoor skills.

Trails

The hiking trails the club frequents are all located within KW, are accessible by the Grand River Transit, and are led by different executives to demonstrate their specific skills and interests. Here are a few of them and what they offer.



UWOC members pass through a horse pasture on the Health Valley Trail.

Columbia Hills' Geotime Trail

594 Sundew Dr., Waterloo, ON N2V 0B9

UWOC's classic hiking spot is the Columbia Hills' Geotime Trail. This trail is favoured by many members for the solar clock along its route. This path has popular photo op locations, is accessible during all four seasons, and is where members snowshoe together during winter.

Health Valley Trail

3075 University Ave., Waterloo, ON N2J 3S5

The Health Valley Trail combines members' love of nature with their love of coffee. After passing through a horse pasture, this trail ends at several local cafes, such as EcoCafe, where executives lead the group to enjoy drinks, treats, and conversation.

Laurel Creek Conservation Area

625 Westmount Rd. N., Waterloo, ON N2J 2Z4

After paying a fee to enter this conservation area, members typically enjoy its beach, hiking trails, water activities, and campsites.

Grand River Trail

Walter Bean Grand River Trail, Waterloo, ON

Here, members can participate in night hikes that are well suited for stargazing.

The Hydrocut

1522 Glasgow St., Waterloo, ON N2N 0A7

This trail is only accessible to bikers during the spring, summer, and fall, but becomes a winter hiking trail where the UWOC mainly hosts their winter activities like snowshoeing. "It's really nice to see people get out in the winter, which is awesome," Schatzmann stated.

Huron Natural Area

801 Trillium Dr., Kitchener, ON N2R 1K4

This large park is filled with many trails and meadows. Executive Konrad Cheung leads members on bird-watching hikes around this area to encourage further connection with the local wildlife.

Sarah An

UWOC members snowshoe on the Hydrocut Trail.

Emilie Schatzmann



Special club events

Women in Wilderness

The club's newest initiative, Women in Wilderness was started by Schatzmann to help women feel safer while engaging in outdoor activities. Many of the team's executives are women, who often feel unsafe going outside due to an increase in violence against women and femicide. With this initiative, Schatzmann hopes to break down misogynist stereotypes about who can engage in outdoor activities, such as the belief that women can't chop wood or shouldn't start fires. "I want there to be a safe space where people feel they can come out and ask questions in a good, fostering environment," she shared.

Geocaching

One of Maxwell's favourite club activities is geocaching. This activity consists of using a third-party GPS app to track down treasure items along hiking paths that were placed there by app users. The treasure pieces, called "caches," usually contain pieces of paper and pens for those who find them to sign their names and sometimes trade small trinkets with other geocachers. Maxwell recalled moments during which she had to climb a tree to retrieve a cache, find and use keys to open locked caches, and scavenge through rocks along the Geotime Trail to find hidden ones.

Camping trips

The club runs overnight camping trips in KW and some locations outside the region like Elora. During these events, members get to test their outdoorsy and survival skills while bonding with each other in the depths of nature.



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THE MUSEUM



Spinach Artichoke Quesadillas

Annora Jo, Contributor

September is one of the busiest times of the year on campus, and it is when the leaves begin to change colour. For this withering month, I will introduce a quick comfort food that is great as a light meal or a late-night snack shared with your friends. It is a savoury quesadilla with a spinach artichoke filling inside, and this menu brings an unfailing combination that has been a longtime favourite for decades. The spinach artichoke mashup creates a creamy texture and a rich, savoury flavour, while the crispy tortilla holds everything together, making it portable and shareable. If you are looking for a melty, filling snack that is not greasy, you will enjoy this spinach artichoke quesadilla recipe!

Yields 4 quesadillas
Cooking time: 25 minutes

Ingredients:

- 1 cup of cream cheese (1 block)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of shredded mozzarella
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of sour cream or plain Greek yogurt
- 2 tbsp of olive oil
- 2 cloves of minced garlic
- Pinches of salt and pepper
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups of spinach
- 1 can of artichoke hearts
- 4 large tortillas

Tools:

- Pot
- Frying pan
- Spatula
- Mixing spoon

Instructions:

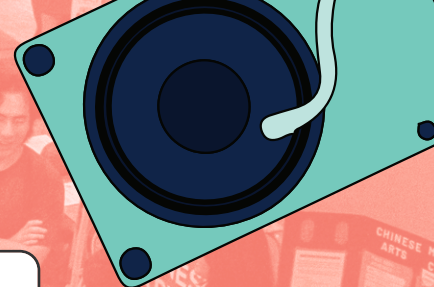
1. Chop your spinach, drained artichoke hearts, and cream cheese into smaller pieces.
2. In a pot, add olive oil and minced garlic until it sizzles on medium heat. Then add the chopped spinach one handful at a time and mix with a mixing spoon until it wilts down.
3. Season the spinach with a few pinches of salt and pepper as you go, add in the artichoke hearts to the pot, and mix well for 2 minutes.
4. Turn the heat off, add in chopped cream cheese and sour cream or plain Greek yogurt, then mix until everything is melted and well combined.
5. In a frying pan on medium heat, place down a large tortilla, spread shredded mozzarella, and add the spinach artichoke on half of the tortilla so that you can fold it.
6. With a spatula, flip the tortilla to cook both sides until the inside is melted and the outside is golden and crispy. Then turn off the heat, cut the tortilla into a desirable size, and enjoy!

Side note:

You can also make variations of the recipe and make a classic spinach artichoke dip by skipping the tortilla-making step. Instead of steps 5 and 6, you can add in the cheese along with other cream ingredients, top off with more mozzarella on top of the dip, and broil the dip inside the oven for a few minutes. There, you have a nice spinach artichoke dip that is perfect with tortilla chips or crusty breads!



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