Competing slates led by Ben Coleman, Cameron Wathey as presidential candidates

Two slates are vying for executive positions in the 2015 University of Toronto Students’ Union (UTSU) elections. The campaign period for UTSU executive and Board of Directors positions began at 9:00 am on Monday, March 16, 2015.

Team Change U of T is led by presidential candidate Cameron Wathey, incumbent vice-president, internal and services for the past two years. Wathey hopes to harness the knowledge and skills he has gained from his two years working as vice president, internal and services to continue the work of the UTSU. “I’ve been involved and done a lot of great things with the previous teams from small things… like expanding upon our printer, so students can continue using our cheapest photocopying and printing on campus, to bigger picture things such as working on flat fees,” he says.

Wathey adds that, though he has had the privilege to do good work with two UTSU presidents in the past, he hopes to approach a new role with the students’ union with his own set of priorities. “This year I really want to focus on making sure there’s more of a community at U of T, as well as making sure that students from all over are being represented,” Wathey says.

According to Wathey, the main focus of the Change U of T slate is improving student life. “We want to make sure that students are prioritized first,” Wathey says. To Wathey, this includes providing support to student-run clubs and campaigns, as well as increasing mental health support. If elected president, Wathey says he will also focus on advocating for representation on Governing Council for international students and including international students on the Ontario Health Insurance Plan.

For his part, Coleman wants his team to be “strategic and realistic.” “When we put more detail in the next week about our platform, it’s not going to be bullet points. It’s going to be, ‘this is how we think we’re going to achieve this, this is what we’re going to do’… and then at the end this is the change that is realistic that we think we might see,” he explained. On academic matters, Coleman says he wants the university to guarantee all first-years a place in a seminar course and to strengthen the UTSU’s Professional Faculties Committee. He also wants to see more information and access to financial assistance for students from lower income families or students who face barriers to education.

Overall, Coleman hopes to have a positive campaign. “I’m hoping to have fun… I mean, it’s a big deal, it’s important, there’s a lot the UTSU can do for students. We’re trying to stay really positive, we don’t want to be like the kind of opposition campaign that’s really negative,” he says.

Ryan Gomes, candidate for vice-president, internal, emphasized his time on the UTSU’s Board of Directors as engineering director, on the executive of the Engineering Society (EngSoc), and as club representative of lgbtq+. “I know how an executive is supposed to work, and how people work together,” he says.

CONTINUED ON PG 9
WHAT’S GOING ON THIS WEEK ON CAMPUS

MONDAY

SHOULD WE ABDOLISH THE SENATE?
Music Room, 7 Hart House Circle, 7:30 pm—8:30 pm
The Canadian Senate is a controversial institution and it is the subject of the Churchill Debate, which will feature the current master of Massey College and former Senator Hugh Segal.

TUESDAY

INFO + ACTION SESSION ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN THE U OF T COMMUNITY, PRESENTED BY HERE
Alumni Lounge, 5:30 pm—8:30 pm
The feminist letter-writing collective HERE is hosting a meeting dedicated to the issue of sexual violence within the U of T community. The meeting will feature presentations by the founders of U of T Thrive and U of T Students Against Sexual Violence.

WEDNESDAY

SGDO STUDY SPACE
21 Sussex Avenue Room 415, 2:30 pm—5:30 pm
The Sexual & Gender Diversity Office is hosting a weekly positive and supportive study space. A learning strategist will be present and is holding drop-in appointments.

THURSDAY

UTSU EXECUTIVE CANDIDATE ELECTIONS FORUM
Medical Sciences Building, Room 2170, 6:00 pm
The executive candidates in this year’s UTSU elections will present their platforms and take questions from the floor.

FRIDAY

THE TCDS PRESENTS: THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE
George Ignatieff Theatre, 8:00 pm
The Trinity College Dramatic Society presents a musical about six young children competing in a spelling bee. The performance features audience participation and improvisation.

THE EXPLAINER

The University of Toronto Students’ Union elections are underway and the campaign period is now open!

Here are some campaign rules for which you should watch out:

1. High-gloss posters, laminated posters, and any posters that are not recyclable are not permitted. In fact, all campaign materials should include the phrase “please pass this on to a friend and recycle after the election” wherever possible.
2. If it looks like a candidate has their own wallpaper, in that they have covered an entire wall with their posters, this is not allowed. Candidates’ posters may not overlap one another, and all must be at least one foot away from another one of their own posters.
3. Campaign materials may not be affixed to surfaces in classrooms or seminar rooms, but candidates may campaign in classrooms if they have obtained permission from the lecturer before the start of class.
4. If you are a major procrastinator and you count more than 1,000 executive candidate posters, more than 500 at-large director candidate posters, or 200 other director candidate posters, these are the limits for poster quantities. You’ll glad we told you that.
5. Using animals for campaign purposes is forbidden. Yes, we know; we’d vote for a candidate who gave us kittens too.
6. Even if candidates had kittens, they would not be allowed to give them to us, as distribution of goods for campaigning is a campaign violation.
7. Campaigning where alcohol is served is also not allowed, for what we hope are obvious reasons.
Students, professors respond to labour shortage

Some TAs continue to work despite strike; professors, undergraduates pick up labour

Iris Robin
ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITOR

While new picket lines form on campus every day, some teaching assistants (TAs) are choosing to stay in their classrooms. The labour shortage has led to some professors, and even some undergraduates, taking on the responsibilities of the striking TAs.

Members of CUPE Local 3902 Unit 1, which represents teaching assistants and graduate course instructors, have been on strike for over two weeks now, following a rejection of an eleventh-hour deal proposed by the university in the early hours of February 27.

Instances of others fulfilling the duties of work TAs are known as “strikebreaking” and are sometimes referred to derisively as “scabbing.”

NOT ALL TAS ON STRIKE

Marko*, a TA from the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering and CUPE 3902 member, has chosen to continue to work throughout the strike. According to Marko, most of his research group and department are not on strike either.

“I am not striking... mostly because I think the current strike is misdirected, and it is ending up hurting primarily undergraduate students,” he said. “[Undergraduates] are used as bargaining chips.”

Claiming that he has received threats from CUPE 3902, Marko maintains that he has the right to work or not work.

The union, Marko says, sent out an email, which stated that classes taught by strikebreakers may be picketed. “Those who work for the Employer are NOT in neutral in this dispute. They are siding against friends and colleagues and working at crosspurposes to them,” a portion of the email reads.

“Myself, as well as a number of other students in my research group that I have spoken to, feel the threatened and intimidated by this e-mail,” Marko says. “If I am rightly so, asked not to submit to threats from the University, I will certainly not submit to threats from an organization who claims to be representing me.”

“The Union is not issuing threats to members who work during the strike,” says Ryan Culpepper, chief negotiator and vice chair of CUPE 3902 Unit 1.

The email states that the email, sent to union members, was intended to clarify that continuing to work often creates bad feelings among colleagues and friends. According to Culpepper, picket lines exist to allow strikebreaking to continue unabated. Picketing efforts, of course, should never entail bullying or intimidating behaviour, and our Union does not encourage such behaviour,” Culpepper says, addressing what Marko perceived as a threat to picket classes taught by strikebreakers.

“Of course striking workers are not content to allow strikebreaking to continue undeviated. Picketing efforts, of course, should never entail bullying or intimidating behaviour, and our Union does not encourage such behaviour,” Culpepper says, addressing what Marko perceived as a threat to picket classes taught by strikebreakers.

PROFESSORS

Professors have also picked up the slack, with a professor teaching HIS 311 allegedly reviewing students’ presentations that were initially to be presented before a TA in tutorial.

Rebecca*, an upper-year international relations student, says that there was no class vote when the professor announced the changes. Although she has already completet her presentation, Rebecca believes that the plan is unfair. “I can’t think of how this is fair to the students who have to present to a professor rather than a TA like everyone else did,” she says. “Also, this is undermining the strike’s efficacy, since all 3 TAs are not holding tutorials.”

Nina*, a second-year English, ethics, society and law, and philosophy student, claims she was not given the right to vote in her ENGL 205 class when the professor wrote the midterm for the class instead of the TA. Nina reports that the midterm was changed to all multiple-choice questions to facilitate grading.

“It’s not great [that the professor] seems to have either taken over or has gotten rid of the roles played by TAs, but as a student, I’m not sure I’m comfortable with 30 percent of my grade being put on the line either, even if this is a credit/no credit course for me,” Nina says.

“[M]uch worse for non-members to take on Union members’ work while they are on strike,” says Culpepper. He adds that, to him, faculty who are well paid and have near-total job security who take up the work of TAs is especially egregious.

“The strike is only prolonged by strikebreaking. The stronger our collective efforts, the faster we can resolve this,” Culpepper says.

*Names changed at students’ requests.
Trinity to remove gender-segregated language from constitution

Vote draws substantial support five months after original motion failed

York strike enters third week

Academic activity resumes after Unit 2 approves agreement

Units 1 and 3, representing teaching assistants (TAs) and graduate lecturers, respectively, rejected the university’s deal and remain on strike. The strike began on Tuesday, March 1, when CUPE 3903, the union representing York’s 3,700 teaching staff, did not approve an agreement regarding work contracts. Among CUPE 3903’s priorities is to obtain better job security. The union is pushing for multi-year contracts as opposed to seasonal contacts that expire after one semester.

“We believe that our comprehensive settlement offers are highly competitive with if not better than settlements reached with similar employees at other universities, including those at other universities represented by CUPE,” said York University in a statement.

“York highly values the significant contributions its teaching assistants and graduate assistants make to the university. We are committed to reaching a fair and competitive settlement,” says Rhonda Lenton, provost and vice-president Academic at York. The strike at York University coincides with that of the University of Toronto, whose Unit 1 has been on strike since February 27. Unlike at York, most academic activities continue at U of T despite the strike.

York University currently holds the record for the longest faculty strike at a Canadian university. The institution was on strike for 85 days in the academic year 2008/09 before legislation ordered staff to return to work. Undergraduates at both schools are anxious to complete their courses on time, but a baccalaureate term has never yet been lost to a strike at a Canadian university.
$41 million to combat sexual violence and harassment

Provincial government plan includes legislation, awareness campaign

While there is an appreciation for the inclusion of student voices, concerns remain that the plan may not go far enough to fully address the safety concerns of college and university students.

“We believe there are a few things still missing, and we will continue to call for a sexual assault support division to hold institutions accountable to their new policies, and give students recourse if they do not receive adequate support from their institution,” says Goldfinch. Sexual assault rates are five times higher for women under the age of 35.

On campuses, four out of five female undergraduate students have reported a sexual violation while in a dating relationship. Young women have also reported the highest rates of being stalked.

“Campuses are a reflection of our society, which means that they are not immune to issues we face in our daily lives like sexism and rape culture,” says Goldfinch. “Post-secondary students experience a disproportionate number of sexual assaults compared to the general population.”

According to the Rape Crisis Centre, the term “rape culture” was coined to show the ways in which society normalizes male sexual violence and engages in victim blaming. One of the goals of the action plan is to eliminate rape culture on campus by ensuring that all students have information on sexual assault and harassment prevention. Another goal is to introduce a policy that requires post-secondary institutions to publicly report incidents of sexual violence.

All colleges and universities will also participate in a province-wide awareness campaign in September 2015.

“We want to eliminate rape culture on campus. We want school environments to be safe and respectful. We want every student, in every university and college in Ontario, to be able to learn and study and experience campus life at its finest, free from sexual violence and harassment,” reads a statement in the Action Plan.

Sexual violence is directly connected to gender inequality. One of the biggest challenges victims of sexual assault face are damaging perceptions of sex and gender, which work to perpetuate sexual violence, and which can have far reaching consequences for victims. Victims of sexual abuse are more likely to experience depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, and self-harm.

The hashtags #WhoWillYouHelp and #ItsNeverOkay invite Twitter users to speak out against misogyny and sexual violence, and are beginning to gain traction on the social media site.

According to Belinda Bien, communications and policy advisor to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, the Ontario government is hoping to introduce the legislation in autumn 2015.

“The Ministry believes the action plan is a bold plan for combating sexual violence. The Ministry is working closely with both Colleges Ontario and the Council of Ontario Universities and has engaged with student associations to ensure meaningful steps are being taken to address this issue,” says Bien.

Women in House program aims to bring women into politics

Just one quarter of Canadian MPs are female

Emily Colero

Last week, a group of female University of Toronto students spent time at Canada’s Parliament shadowing female Members of Parliament (MPs) as part of the Women in House program, which accepts students from a range of programs and includes excursions to Ottawa landmarks. The program runs during the first week of March in honour of International Women’s Week.

Just one quarter of Canadian MPs are female. To date, 85 female students and 50 different female parliamentarians have participated in the program.

The students included Elizabeth May, leader of the Green party; MP Peggy Nash; MP Carolyn Bennett; and Senator Yonah Martin.

Tina Park, a U of T PhD candidate, founded the Women in House program in fall 2012 along with Carolyn Bennett, MP for St. Paul’s. Natalie Petra, who has been active in politics for about a decade and ran for City Council in the last municipal election, participated in this year’s program. She sat in on a caucus prep meeting, a hearing of the industry committee, and question period.

Petra shadowed Peggy Nash, MP for Parkdale-High Park. “It’s so valuable for future female leaders to be able to network and experience what it’s like to be a female in government. I recently read a statistic that said if you add up all the women who have ever been MPs, across all the governments in Canadian history and sat them in the House of Commons together, there would still be over 50 empty seats,” Petra says.

“To be able to learn from strong experienced women who have found success in the institutions that govern our nation is invaluable,” she adds.

This year, Rachel J. Gunn, a past participant, was selected to assist in logistics and planning. In 2014, Gunn shadowed MP Laurin Liu in the Committee on International Trade. Liu was the youngest MP to be elected to parliament and was the only female MP in the Committee on International Trade.

“This brought to mind a common issue among high achieving women — the ‘imposter syndrome,’ where relative to our male peers, we tend to underestimate our competence and potential. Her example powerfully demonstrated that age and gender should not limit our aspirations,” Gunn says of her experience.

I hope the program continues to grow, and do not see that this program could help us take one more step towards promoting gender equity in our Canadian society,” says Park.
Province, university respond to student financial concerns

UTSU president criticizes lack of financial support

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and the University of Toronto have responded to concerns regarding increasing student contributions to university revenues and to rapidly rising international tuition fees.

In its Budget Report for 2013-2016, the university expects provincial grants to constitute 30 per cent of operating revenues. It has projected that this proportion will decrease to 25 per cent by 2019-2020.

"To compensate for the province's decreasing share of the burden, student contributions from tuition and other fees are expected to increase relative to the total," the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities has allocated over $3.5 billion in operating grants to universities — an increase of $1.63 billion, or 86 per cent, since 2002-2003.

May Nazar, a spokesperson for the ministry, says that the province’s contribution in operating grants has more than kept pace with the increase in enrolment.

"In 2013-14, the ministry’s operating grant to the University of Toronto was about $662 million. This includes an increase of $274 million or 71 per cent since 2002-03. By comparison, enrollment at the university increased by 42% over the same time period," she explains.

When provincial inflation is taken into account, the $274 million increase represented a 21.9 per cent increase in operating grants.

Nazar adds that operating grants are not given for international student enrollment, noting that “tuition collected from international students is an additional source of revenue growth for universities.”

However, Yolen Bollo-Kamara, president of the University of Toronto Students’ Union (UTSU), criticized the province for providing inadequate financial support.

“I think it’s a tragedy that we’re losing that public institution at the University of Toronto, and students should be concerned about that, the society at large should be concerned about that,” she says.

“Yet, what and why should we be paying more for tuition in the provincial government,” asks Mika Howard, a 2nd-year political science student.

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Howard notes that the group also plans to conduct a levy referendum upon request.

Despite not currently receiving funding from graduate students, Howard says that the "SEC provides approximately 36 per cent of all bulk orders of (safer sex supplies) to graduate students at U of T." "SEC would like to be able to better represent student graduate students. By receiving funding from GSSU, this relationship can be strengthened," he says.

As it stands, SEC is not subject to Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA). "This means that even though safer sex products have become more expensive, due to inflation, we are still receiving the same amount of money we were 19 years ago. With more funding, SEC would like to be able to meet our increasing demand and expand our services," Howard adds.

On whether it is appropriate for the University to impose a levy on its graduate students, the university does acknowledge the contributions that international students provide to the university in choosing to study here.

"These students contribute to the international student population in Canada, and their presence provides opportunities in our academic and co-curricular programs for the enhanced learning environment," Nazar says.

"Graduate students live here and they work here. International students contributed about $3 billion to the Ontario economy," she says, citing a report by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade released in 2012.

The report also says that international students in Ontario contributed $202.9 million in government revenue and nearly 30,000 jobs in 2010, the same year the Open Ontario Plan was announced.

The University of Toronto has increased international student enrollment by 37 per cent since 2007, and international tuition fees are competitive globally. Althea Blackburn-Evans, U of T’s director of media relations, says that the university is “the only one that is consistently ranked #1 in Canada and in the top 20 internationally.”

“International tuition fees are very competitive in this global context (and are actually closer to the middle range than the high end),” she says.

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New space for software innovations

Computer science incubator to be “open to all disciplines”

Tanim Mansour
ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITOR

The Department of Computer Science (DCS) has opened a new incubator for innovative software solutions. The DCS Innovation Lab, located in Gerstein Library, is the eighth and latest incubator at the University of Toronto under the province’s Campus-Linked Accelerator (CLA) program. The CLA program is intended “to build world-class innovation and entrepreneurial programs at GTA colleges and universities,” according to a Ministry of Research and Innovation news release. Helen Kontozopoulos and Mario Grech, directors of the Innovation Lab, want to create an environment for student innovations in software. “Our end goal here is to create an environment where we’re building innovation, which can be in entrepreneurship like startups. They can also be innovations within organizations like intra-preneurship,” says Kontozopoulos. “We want to build an environment where students are working and learning from and developing with industry, with research that we have on campus.”

“The idea here is to teach them how to go about solving significant problems and actually commercializing, whether it’s through a startup or industry itself,” adds Grech.

The idea was pitched to the department by the pair just last year, stemming from a fourth-year course in Business of Software that they run. According to Grech, the program is “[conducted] as a venture capitalist would or as a leader in industry that would be investing in a project in a large company.”

Kontozopoulos recognized that though the students in the department were some of the top students in Canada, they were limited in pursuing their ideas. “A lot of them have this thriving want to create and build something,” says Kontozopoulos.

In developing the concept for the Innovation Lab, the directors consulted with students on the requirements for the space, including Jonathan Webb, president of the Computer Science Student Union. “I remember having a very clear discussion with [Webb] during the summer months about how students were frustrated because they didn’t have an avenue or clear path to drive innovation beyond the department,” says Grech.

Kontozopoulos echoes this frustration. “Our computer science students didn’t have this. They would go to other incubators or accelerators on campus, off campus, or worldwide.”

“The space is currently being used by the students in the Business of Software course and students pursuing an independent studies project. In the coming weeks, the space is slated to open to students through the new summer entrepreneurship program.”

Kontozopoulos and Grech also gave credit to Sven Dickinson, chair of the Department of Computer Science, and Paul Gries, associate chair for undergraduate studies in computer science, for supporting the project. “These two men were forward-leaning and had this idea of giving students more than they had now. Helen and I both came from industry, so in our discussions with these two gentlemen, they felt that given the plans and the vision, we managed to help them find a number of things,” says Grech.

Funding for the incubator will come from a myriad of sources, including the provincial government under the CLA program, the equity the university holds in projects that are successful, and industry endowments.

The directors hope that the Innovation Lab will become self-sustaining and that the success of projects from the lab will contribute to more projects. “It has to be a sustainable model that drives money in and doesn’t take money out,” says Kontozopoulos.

When asked what makes the DCS Innovation Lab different from other campus incubators, Grech noted that technological innovation is now dependent on software.

“Take artificial intelligence for example; you bring disciplines from all over campus. Anything that wants to be innovated on, whether it’s a subject matter on music, anthropology, sciences, at the end of the day has to come to the software funnel,” says Grech.

Kontozopoulos and Grech hope that the Innovation Lab will be open to all disciplines, with a focus on software. “We very much want to tie in as many faculty and departments as possible. It’s the way that innovation is created now. The days of silos are obsolete,” adds Grech.

Islam Awareness Week combats Islamophobia on campus

Emma Compeau
VARSITY STAFF

Last week, the Muslim Students’ Association (MSA) at the University of Toronto hosted Islam Awareness Week, featuring events that included lectures, coffee houses, and a night of Islamic arts. While Islam Awareness Week has been held annually at U of T for at least the past decade, it is not unique to the University of Toronto and is held at many campuses across North America.

The theme for this year’s week was “With Muslims and #AgainstHate.” The theme, designed to reflect the week’s goal of promoting awareness of Islamic knowledge and principles, and inspired by a vigil hosted by the MSA and the Muslim Chaplaincy for the victims of Islamicophobic attacks in North America, used hashtags in an effort to facilitate online conversations to call out different forms of hate seen on campus, including Islamophobia, xenophobia, racism, and anti-Semitism.

According to Dalia Hashim, MSA vice-president, external, Islam Awareness Week endeavors to challenge the idea of Islam being an “anti-women culture.” This small comment speaks about the unfortunate rise of Islamophobia that we are witnessing in Canada, and it is crucial that we have weeks like Islam Awareness Week to show non-Muslims what Islam is all about,” says Hashim.

“We need to show people that the religion is in fact a peaceful religion, and we should not define our perceptions on Islam based on what groups like ISIS do — who most certainly do not represent Islam,” she adds.

New to Islam Awareness Week this year was Soul Food, a weekly event hosted by the Muslim Chaplaincy at U of T that offered attendees the chance to visit Muslim prayer spaces on campus, as well as opportunities to meet Amjad Tarsin, the Muslim Chaplain.

Many other events were held during the week, such as speakers and poetry events. When asked about what is unique to this year’s Islam Awareness Week, Hashim said that the present climate on campus indicates a need for larger discussions on Islam.

Pointing to recent Islamophobic incidents on university campuses, including the defacing of posters of a Muslim candidate running in the recent Byrson Students’ Union elections, Hashim says that Islam Awareness Week may be especially needed this year.
Toronto350 to present at ad hoc divestment committee meeting

Climate change updates included in brief since first presentation

The Presidential Advisory Committee on Divestment from Fossil Fuels has agreed to have a meeting with Toronto350 on April 17. At the meeting, Toronto350 will present a revised version of their brief on fossil fuel divestment, last updated in September 2013, to the ad hoc committee.

Toronto350’s Divest U of T campaign is asking the university to sell their direct stock holdings in the 200 fossil fuel companies with the largest reserves. In April, they will present the committee with new evidence in their brief.

Ryan Ilnyckyj, the main author of the brief and a PhD candidate in political science, acknowledged concerns the university has regarding endowment funds from those companies. “We do not expect [selling the stocks] will lead to a significant decrease in donations or research partnerships. If these companies feel a research partnership is beneficial for them, they are still going to feel that way if the direct stock holdings have been sold,” Ilnyckyj says.

The fossil fuel divestment committee has until the fall to make a recommendation to president Meric Gertler, who will make the final decision. At the presentation, committee members will have the opportunity to ask Toronto350 questions about their brief and the plausibility of divestment.

According to Toronto350 treasurer Graham Henry, the committee has only met once since its creation last November—in December 2014. “The thought was that they would be meeting monthly, maybe bi-monthly, reasonably regularly, and they just haven’t met since,” Henry says. “We’ve got a date that they will be meeting us. It’s just four months later than we thought it would be.”

However, according to Althea Blackburn-Evans, U of T director of media relations, the committee has met several times. “The Advisory Committee on the Divestment of Fossil Fuels is continuing an intensive and methodical consultation process,” she says. The next committee meeting is on March 27 and will only be open to the appointed members. Ben Donato-Woodger, operations director for Toronto350, worries about the committee making a timely recommendation because other universities have tried to slow divestment by postponing their rulings. “The evidence of climate change was clear 25 years ago and nothing is being done,” he says. “If it’s a crisis you treat it like a crisis. We want to convey a sense of urgency to the committee members and the Governing Council,” Donato-Woodger says.

Toronto350 members hope to shift investment towards energy options that are safe for the climate. “We have all the technology that we need to deal with climate change,” Ilnyckyj says. “What we need is policy will and the investment determination to drive the transition at the rate that is necessary.”

With the number of divestment supporters in elections for student seats on Governing Council this year, Donato-Woodger says that he feels students want divestment.

“Whatever the outcome of this important debate, these students have demonstrated the highest ideals of student activism and represented the University of Toronto with integrity,” Blackburn-Evans says.

Environmentalism in the mainstream

Author Ryan O’Connor visits U of T as part of Ecofest

Ryan O’Connor’s book launch for The First Green Wave. COURTESY OF MILAN ILNYCKYJ/Flickr by CC
George Connell, a renowned biochemist who served as the twelfth president of the University of Toronto, died on Friday, March 13 at the age of 84. Connell, who earned a PhD in biochemistry at U of T in 1955, was also an Officer of the Order of Canada.

“Professor Connell was an outstanding champion of U of T, whose presidency cemented our position as one of the world’s great universities,” said U of T president Meric Gertler in a statement. Connell worked as a professor at U of T, acting as chair of the biochemistry department, around the board restructure of the Centre, and president, research and planning before becoming president of Western University in 1977. Connell returned to U of T to serve as president in 1984.

In addition to his distinguished academic career, Connell was more than once called upon to advise Canadian government officials on important biomedical issues. He assisted the Krever Inquiry in 1990, which dealt with tainted blood stocks, and also the important biomedical issues. He assisted the Krever Inquiry in 1990, which dealt with tainted blood stocks, and also the important biomedical issues.

CONTINUED FROM COVER

With files from The Globe and Mail

Team Brighter of U of T faces off with Team Change U of T

George Connell, former U of T President, dies

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CONTINUED FROM COVER

With files from The Globe and Mail

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Ontario’s recently revamped sexual education curriculum has polarized the public. Among the variety of signs raised and slogans chanted during the protests at Queen’s Park last month, two factions took form: a vehement disapproval of the state’s incursion into the family’s domain of influence and a gleeful hope for a more sexually aware youth. Disgruntled protesters held signs with slogans like “math, not masturbation; science, not sex!” whereas others applauded the move with slogans like “ignorance en-dangers children!” CBC reports that the new curriculum — which hasn’t been revised since 1998 — is the most up-to-date one. My assessment of the value of the recent changes also derives from local and global considerations. Youth are often among the first adopters of new consumer technologies as they become available. Almost all high school students in the province have a smartphone in their pocket and a Facebook or Twitter account, each of which afford them abundant opportunities to communicate with their networks, check in with friends, post photos, and more.

Participation in these global and local networks has never been easier, and the accompanying risks have never been more conspicuous — one need not look further than the sexualization of photo-messaging mobile applications. Does this not highlight the importance of educating young students about sexting and privacy-related dangers associated with sharing explicit content online? Today’s youth, caught in the midst of the eb and flow of the twenty-first century, are in need of a modern and versatile sexual education curriculum that succinctly addresses the challenges of a rapidly evolving society. Overall, it seems to me that the new curriculum is reasonable.

Omar Bitar is a fourth-year student at University College studying neuroscience, sociology, and biology.
The oil industry divestment campaign isn’t working

In order to effect real change, we need to focus on consumption, not production

Li Pan
VARSTY STAFF

Lately, the fossil fuel divestment campaign has seemed to be gaining ground. At least once a week, the activist group Fossil Free U of T held a meeting at Simcoe Hall in front of President David L.À. T’s held a meeting at Simcoe Hall in front of President Gordon’s office to draw his attention. And this is disconcerting, because divestment simply doesn’t work. As such, activists’ energy would be better spent elsewhere.

Divestment cannot hurt oil companies financially. Indeed, divestment, or the sale of shares, will only transfer these shares between investors without any discernible effect on profits or share prices. One might argue that the negative publicity that accompanies divestment is reason enough to continue the campaign. In the case of the oil industry, however, more bad press won’t matter — the sector already ranks last or second-last in US public perception polls, largely due to the British Petroleum oil spill in 2010. In any case, oil is a quintessentially extractive industry, such that the oil’s oil production come from state-owned companies, which are immune to divestment.

Disputable claims on financial impact aside, Toronto350’s stated objective is actually to fight global warming by evoking big oil’s social license to operate. That is, big oil’s “extraction of dirty energy” should become “socially and politically unacceptable.” This goal doesn’t make sense.

Global warming is actually a consumption problem: fossil fuel is over-consumed because people only care about the price they pay at the pump. The pollution that this consumption causes is not reflected in the price of gas, and is therefore ignored at the consumer level. As such, the way to effectively fight global warming is to reduce the demand for gasoline. Campaigns to that effect could call for more global warming awareness, much heavier taxes on gasoline, or more subsidies and investment in alternative energy sources to drive down the price of fossil fuels.

What’s more, demonizing big oil won’t reduce gasoline that needs to lose its social license. One need not look any further than the tobacco industry — the poster child of divestment campaigns — to see an example of how targeting consumption, rather than production, can be a more effective tool for activists.

Smoking prevalence in Canada has dropped from 50 per cent of the population in 1965 to 15 per cent in 2012, this pattern continued with- out any deviation during the early 1990s when divestment was occurring. This is not surpris- ing. People don’t stop smoking because tobacco companies are evil. Rather, they stop smoking because smoking is evil. Cigarette consumption is now frowned upon because it imposes heavy costs on the public healthcare system, harms others through secondhand smoke, and, most importantly, kills the consumer. This change in attitude towards consumption is achieved through research on the effects of smoking, package warnings, and bans on smoking in public spaces. The quickly forgotten divestment campaign played little, if any, role.

One might wonder why divestment cannot just take place alongside other campaigns to fight global warming. If nothing else, it might serve as a good symbolic victory. Well, this is because divestment sends the wrong message. For change to happen, average consumers will need to make significant sacrifices.

Of course, governments and companies should play a role too. In many cases, they already are. Purchases of electric cars in Ontario, for example, are already accompanied by a rebate of up to $8,500 from the provincial government.

The problem we face is one of collective inac- tion. The public is all too ready to shrug off the necessary sacrifices when they think that there are environmentalists out there to take care of the problem for them. The divestment movement actually contributes to this problem to some ex- tent. By shifting the blame for global warming onto big oil, the campaign is covering up for the real culprit: average consumers who refuse to cut back on consumption to save the environment. In the fight against climate change, nothing will make a difference in the way that changing the public’s attitudes towards consumption will, and to that extent, the divestment campaign is futile. Whether or not oil companies do well is irrelevant to the end goal. The thing that keeps big oil up at night is the thought that people might stop consuming gasoline.

Li Pan is a third-year student at Trinity College studying financial economics and math. His col- umn appears every three weeks.
Students in solidarity
A new format for undergraduates to share their thoughts with the administration

Victoria McKenzie
CREATOR OF STUDENTS IN SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

I am not a pawn in this war and that is a pow- erful thought — powerful to the point that it moves me to speak. My voice is my weapon, and with it I began the Students in Solidarity letter writing campaign because I wanted all of my fellow undergraduates to know that they too have voices. We are suffering, we are being starved of an education that we paid for. My concerns are in the arena of justice and I urge the university to take the undergraduates out of purgatory. Their actions, or lack thereof, have implications. Students who planned on graduating this year are now having to reconsider their plans. Students who took out loans to pay for the qual- ity education that U of T claims to offer are now wasting money they never had to begin with. International students are suffering higher fees and cross oceans to get here in anticipation that an established, organized, and renowned in- stitution would deliver on its promise. What is happening? We are being cheated, and that is not something I passively accept. The Students in Solidarity letter writing cam- paign began as a small Facebook event that I shared among friends at U of T. With the ap- proval and support of the CFUE 3902 outreach coordinators, I asked that everyone use their voice to write a letter to the university admin- istration and ask for a refund. Because if you didn’t get the service you paid for, you should ask for your money back. My vision was to make Friday, March 13 the day for students to send their emails, so that on the day the U of T administration would be bombarded with student grievances and be forced to respond. This is a busy time of year and not everyone will have the time to construct a letter so I’ve also created a petition on change.org that stu- dents could sign in solidarity. On it is a draft letter as well as a list of administrative emails so that whenever a student signs, the adminis- tration receives a letter. The petition will be up, and the letters will be sent, until this conflict is resolved. This is a call for action, in all aspects. It is a call for my fellow undergrads to rise up and exercise the power they hold. It is also a call for the university administration to get back to the negotiation table, and recognize CFUE 3902 Unit 1. It is a call for compromise; and most importantly, it is a call for undergraduate students to be heard. Victoria McKenzie is a third-year student at St. Michael’s College studying comparative litera- ture, religion, and philosophy. She is responsible for launching the Students in Solidarity letter writing campaign.

Emma Kikulis
ASSOCIATE COMMENT EDITOR

Long gone are the days when young girls idolized cutesy pop stars, giggling roman- tic-comedy heroines, and the dreaded Disney princesses. In an increasingly competitive technol- ogy-driven society — especially in North America — many girls are forsaking plastering their bedroom walls with posters of Mi- ley Cyrus, Belle, or Cinderella. Instead, they are learning and reading about Sheryl Sand- berg and Marissa Mayer — some of the most successful women working in Silicon Valley. For anyone with even a bit of knowledge about the rise of digital engineering, the valley is synonymous with the pioneering of innova- tive technologies. Names like Mark Zucker- berg and Steve Jobs are often associated with the valley, which is home to 22 Fortune 500 companies. It boasts a high concentration of startup companies, as well as $5.57 billion in venture capital investment in 2014 alone. With impressive numbers like these, it is no wonder that, now more than ever, young girls are expressing interest in tech-driven fields and businesses. Unfortunately, hard work and determination aren’t always enough for bud- ding female tech entrepreneurs to make it in Silicon Valley. It’s not for lack of trying. It’s no secret that women trying to enter traditionally male- dominated fields are often subject to sexism, exclusion, and misogyny — especially when trying to establish themselves in positions of authority. Women are subject to a series of challenges when initiating start-ups. Is it because their proposals are sub-par? No. Nor is it because women lack the proper qualifications. Women are underrepresented in C-level ex- ecutive positions and there are fewer female top-earners in many tech ventures. A survey by Babson College in 2014 found that a mere 15 per cent of US firms had any female representation on their executive teams, and less than a quarter — 2.7 per cent — were spearheaded by a woman.

LAURA WANG/THE VARSITY

Victoria McKenzie initiated the Students in Solidarity letter writing campaign. EVAN LUKE/THE VARSITY

The progress is impressive, but women still have a long way to go in the valley

A recent story in Newsweek titled “What Silicon Valley Thinks of Women” caused controversy with its illustration, which fea- tured a cartoon of a woman with a mouse cursor lifting up her dress — simultaneously demeaning and satirizing the struggle of the women explored in the piece. Although problematic, the article was able to shed some light on the struggle that highly quali- fied, completely competent women face in Silicon Valley. Young executives cracking “gang-bang” jokes, wealthy entrepreneurs beating their wives, and a catalogue of misogynistic tweets make up only a few of the offenses committed by wealthy, successful males in the valley. These men suffer minimal con- sequences, as do their companies. It’s an unfortunate truth that there is a double-standard among the sexes in these professions. Women have been fired for demanding the same level of respect and financial compensation as their male coun- terparts. This is an established problem — just ask “pushy” Jill Abramson. The problem, I argue, is not getting women into the tech and top-management fields — U of T boasts the highest percentage of female first-year engineering students in all of Ontario at a record-breaking 30.6 per cent. The issue is breaking the glass ceiling that prevents women from riding the escalators to the top positions of these firms. As companies evolve to see women in the top decision-making and top earning positions, there’s no more room for Jordan Bellforts or Don Drapers. The culture of the tech industry is in need of a major overhaul.

Emma Kikulis is an associate comment editor at The Varsity. She is studying sociology and Eng- lish. Her column appears bi-weekly.
With UTSU campaigning underway, candidates should consider these as priorities

This week marks the opening of the campaigning period for the University of Toronto Students’ Union (UTSU) team for the next academic year.

On Thursday, March 19, contenders for each of the UTSU’s executive portfolios will participate in an open forum discussion to expand on their respective priorities and goals should they be successful. Equally important, however, is the opportunity to interact with the (continued) UTSU’s constituent members — the opportunity to interact with their would-be representatives, ask them questions, and judge their suitability.

In advance of this Thursday’s forum, The Varsity offers the following ideas for consideration. Selected from across the spectrum of the UTSU’s responsibilities, these are some of the issues that we believe are of the greatest consequence to students and the university for the foreseeable future.

FEES

The issue of ever-rising tuition costs has been at the forefront of recent executive platforms heading into the UTSU elections. Next year, incoming and continuing domestic students will find that their fees are set to increase by three per cent in line with the province’s capped tuition framework. Most professional programs will undergo a five per cent increase.

International students have and will continue to bear the most significant financial burden — their fees are set to increase by five per cent for continuing students, nine per cent for incoming Arts & Science students, and an astounding 10 per cent for Applied Science and Engineering students. The UTSU’s immediate role is to continue to focus on student organization and mobilization in protest. Currently, lobbying efforts are in desperate need of new tactics and ideas. If our elected representatives are to attempt to effect change to our fee structure, they will need to focus on creative and bold strategies.

ACTIVISM

Addressing advocacy issues on campus must remain a top priority, particularly with respect to mental health and sexual violence. Large groups of students have been calling for the President and Provost to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Violence, the Provincial Advisory Committee on Student Mental Health, and proposed Mental Health and Physical Activity Research Centre need to be supplemented with efforts that better provide for the immediate needs of students.

Whoever finds themselves in office following the last day of voting on March 26 should focus on making the current work that current president Yiden Bello-Kamara began with mandated the Mental Health Action Team a priority from day one. Additionally, enhanced support for initiatives like U of T Students Against Sexual Violence and U of T Thrive could go a long way towards addressing community concerns and raising awareness.

This work needs to result in practical and immediate options for students that can fill the void and combat resource decentralization until we await future systemic change. If elected, candidates must be willing to advocate for students by pressuring the university to make progress on long-term promises.

STUDENT COMMONS

All full-time undergraduate students at U of T contribute $16.40 a year to the commons through their tuition fees. In light of recent developments that will enable the commons project to finally be built, the incoming executives need to be committed to seeing the project’s completion through to the finish. This work needs to result in practical and immediate options for students that can fill the void and combat resource decentralization until we await future systemic change.

In developing the Student Commons, the UTSU is taking on unprecedented responsibility and control over student space on campus. It is imperative that any political disagreements that could, and inevitably will, arise between the student representatives, ask them questions, and judge their suitability.

DEFERRED MAINTENANCE

Although full-time students in (continued) the Varsity

The Varsity’s editorial board is elected by the membership at the beginning of each semester. For more information about The Varsity’s editorial policy, email comments@thearth varsity.ca.

Letters to the editor should be directed to comment@thevarsity.ca. Please keep letters to 250 words. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.
OLD TO NEW

This phrase rings true as I walk up and down the aisles of Courage My Love, which sells everything from handwritten cards to antique lamp globes with square bases. The store is on one of a pair of tall, old buildings and maintains a casual, no-nonsense atmosphere. The store is run by a family that has been working through revitalization, aiming to build a sense of community among residents of the area.

The store’s mix of old and new pieces is emblematic of growing trends in the fashion industry. The shift towards sustainability and a trend towards vintage clothing reflects a desire to revitalize and sell at the store. They bought the building efforts.

Webster explains, saying, “We work together with people, rather than simply directing them.”

Over time, Toronto has evolved as a vibrant hub for culture and ideas. Thrift and vintage shopping is just another piece of the puzzle.

The University of Toronto is not new to the thrift and vintage scene, in fact, many thrift stores and vintage shops have been in business for decades.

For example, clothing swaps hosted by organizations like Colleagues and FASHions afford students to bring in their gently used items to trade with others.

Enthusiastic thrift-hunting habits into younger generations could have a significant positive impact on larger social movements. Vintage shopping has been connected to environmental efforts, in an attempt to promote recycling and reduce waste.

“Many people say this generation, [that] only think about themselves, and I don’t believe that at all,” Webster emphasizes. “I see many young people with a high social conscience.”

Characteristically of many thrift stores is the notion of giving value to something that otherwise can’t be used. Depending on the store’s aims, these organizations can be maintained in their communities for the benefit of their customers.

“I think there should be more thrift shops and more emphasis on this activity, and less emphasis on buying the newest, greatest thing,” Webster says. “There’s nothing wrong with buying new things, but perhaps less consumerism could be achieved through things like thrift stores.”

With parts as diverse as the objects they display, Toronto thrift stores and the growing culture surrounding them bring something unique to the retail world. They bring new life to old possessions and an awareness that at all, you can probably find it here.
I found BADBADNOTGOOD (bbng) tucked away backstage in the UTM Student Center, casually playing a round of Super Mario Smash Bros. before taking the stage. For a band with such an unusual sound, their ordinary disposition is deceiving. Since the their inception, they’ve been given labels such as “Jazz-Hop,” “Post-Bop,” “Jazz-Trap with a hint of Hip-hop,” and pretty much any other combination of musical terminology that could potentially shed light on their unparalleled sound. “We all call it different things,” says drummer Alexander Sowinski, referring to the band’s genre, “but usually the word ‘weird’ comes up.”

Last Thursday night, the musical trio brought their ambiguously categorized music to the UTM Student Center as an extension of their current North American tour. Their most recent album, Sour Soul, marks their fourth album to be released, and adds another chapter in the group’s ever-progressing success story.

Having grown up in Toronto, the band’s three members, Alex Sowinski (drums), Matt Tavares (keyboard), and Chester Hansen (bass) all met at Humber College before forming as a band. After a series of YouTube videos that showed them performing Jazz renditions of Odd Future songs, bbng found themselves garnering attention from popular musicians such as Tyler The Creator, MF Doom, and Danny Brown. Before long they had developed a prominent fan base and were playing sold out shows across North America.

Now, the band finds themselves back on a university campus, but this time for different reasons. Backstage, Hansen quietly directs his attention towards the video game at hand, while Tavares leans back against the red sofa, gearing up information on early French cinema. The best thing about playing in Toronto, he points out, is that he can crash at his parents’ place after the show.

The band collaborated on Sour Soul with Wu-Tang Clan member Ghostface Killah to develop 12 tracks of jazz-oriented instrumental compositions combined with a series of vigorously executed verses. The rapper has been active for over two decades, almost tripling bbng’s career. “The experience was definitely intimidating,” says Tavares, recounting their collaboration with Ghostface Killah. “I mean, the guy is such a legend. When we play these songs with him, we want to make sure they feel good, sound good, and have an energy fit for a live setting. Each performance, we’re kind of nervous but excited.”

The band is calm and collected on stage, and can easily transition their audience from casual head bobbing to sporadic bursts of jumping and flailing about. Sowinski, a master of rhythmic coordination, shouts out instructions to the audience while simultaneously keeping track of the beat. Tavares whips his fingers up and down the keyboard, occasionally rising out of his seat, while Hansen leaps into the air at the mark of every bass drop. Together, they create a whirlwind of energy and awe-inspiring noise — made especially noticeable at their recent Opera House show, when Ghostface Killah, dumbstruck by what he was hearing, turned around and declared to the audience, “This shit is amazing!”

This time, Ghostface Killah wouldn’t be joining them, but that wouldn’t stop them from entertaining their crowd. Putting their jazz knowledge to the test, bbng uses their instruments to create a slightly different sound every time, so that no two bbng concerts will sound the same. “We want to bring whatever we can to get the right feeling to our sound,” notes Hansen. “When we play a song, we’ll try to let it breathe, and not play it the same way each time. That’s the jazz side to our music.”

The number one thing is not to stop,” he says. “We’ve busted our ass to go play with other musicians trying to gain recognition from labels and record producers. “The number one thing is not to stop,” he says. “We’ve busted our ass to go play with other musicians trying to gain recognition from labels and record producers. “The number one thing is not to stop,” he says. “We’ve busted our ass to go play with other musicians trying to gain recognition from labels and record producers. “The number one thing is not to stop,” he says. “We’ve busted our ass to go play with other musicians trying to gain recognition from labels and record producers. “The number one thing is not to stop,” he says. “We’ve busted our ass to go play with other musicians trying to gain recognition from labels and record producers. “The number one thing is not to stop,” he says. “We’ve busted our ass to go play with other musicians trying to gain recognition from labels and record producers. “The number one thing is not to stop,” he says. “We’ve busted our ass to go play with other musicians trying to gain recognition from labels and record producers. “The number one thing is not to stop,” he says. “We’ve busted our ass to go play with other musicians trying to gain recognition from labels and record producers. “The number one thing is not to stop,” he says. “We’ve busted our ass to go play with other musicians trying to gain recognition from labels and record producers. “The number one thing is not to stop,” he says. “We’ve busted our ass to go play with other musicians trying to gain recognition from labels and record producers. “The number one thing is not to stop,” he says. “We’ve busted our ass to go play with other musicians trying to gain recognition from labels and record producers. “The number one thing is not to stop,” he says. “We’ve busted our ass to go play with other musicians trying to gain recognition from labels and record producers. “The number one thing is not to stop,” he says. “We’ve busted our ass to go play with other musicians trying to gain recognition from labels and record producers. “The number one thing is not to stop,” he says. “We’ve busted our ass to go play with other musicians trying to gain recognition from labels and record producers. “The number one thing is not to stop,” he says. “We’ve buste...
Do you hear the TAs sing
A playlist for all involved in the ongoing TA strike

Alex Fernandes
VARSITY CONTRIBUTOR

With summer quickly approaching, all of us unemployed students need to get out there and start looking for a job. Thankfully, I’ve gone and to the far away regions of the Internet to compile a list of off-beat jobs for the ultimate unique summer experience. But even a back-burner office job or for soul-sucking minimum-wage food sector hell, I’ve prioritized several key factors for ultimate summer job satisfaction: mostly outdoors and good for a story. Come September, with these jobs, you’ll have the best “interesting fact” to share around the tutorial table.

PROFESSIONAL SLEEPER
This job is perfect for those of you who hate to get out of bed in the morning. Both scientific studies held at the university and living arts productions are often looking for volunteers willing to act as stand-in sleepers. The pay varies depending on the legitimacy of your employer, but plenty of researchers at our very own U of T are always looking for both parties to take part in their studies, and box the beer for shipping. The job involves a bit of heavy lifting and some drinking, so hopefully you aren’t too much of a lightweight. It’s located in Mississauga so not much travel necessary — just be sure not to drive to this job.

HERITAGE INTERPRETER
History buffs will love this listing: Parks Canada is looking for students to re-enact historically significant events as well as military parades and demonstrations in uniform. Some examples provided are parading for gold, cannon fire, or high tea celebrations. No experience required, just days full of dress-up and impersonations that are sure to make your summer a little more fun.

POND DIVER
Apparently you can get paid quite a bit of money if you are able to score this job. Golf courses are always looking for brave individuals to go diving into their course ponds to retrieve all the golf balls that many not-so-talented golfers lost when trying to reach the fairway. This job isn’t the easiest to get but contact your local golf course because somebody has to do it.

UNDERCOVER ANIMAL INVESTIGATOR
Green Work Canada, a website that lists environmentally friendly jobs, has some work for animal lovers who are willing to go undercover. This job requires you to travel to farms to look for potential animal cruelty. It isn’t the most light-hearted employment, but its for a good cause and requires no formal education.

STAND-IN BRIDESMAID
The final job is for all you ladies out there with an entrepreneurial spirit. There is a high demand for stand-in bridesmaids for all those brides out there that either don’t have enough friends or have uneven numbers in their bridal party. The best way to go about this one is to create your own website and advertisements, so it takes a little bit of extra work. The upside to all this is that you get to enjoy free dancing, free drinks, free food, and still get paid! The only requirements are to be charismatic, sociable, and a good actress, because some brides may ask you to play the part of a friend or family member to shield the fact that she hired you.

CONTRIBUTOR: JACOB LORINC
ASSOCIATE ARTS & CULTURE EDITOR

For the past week or so, disgruntled TAs have provided the St. George campus with loud, ambi- ent noise in the form of chanting, singing, and the general clamor of a group that is demand- ing something. While studying undergradu- ate students, like myself, have gone to great lengths to stay focused (or, in some cases, hit the picket lines and joined in), we nevertheless find ourselves unable to escape the ever-present TA strike that leaves us without tutorials or graded papers.

In this classic, JoJo tells us the story of a woman who catches her boyfriend flirting with another girl at a frat party. Is he cheating on her? The idea makes her upset. Will the TA’s salary be able to support them through the year? This idea makes them upset as well. Obvious connection.

“Wasted Hours” – Arcade Fire
The university caps the TA’s hours at 205 per year, however many TAs end up working much more than these allotted hours — Arcade Fire tells it like it is.

“You Never Give Me Your Money” – The Beatles
When summing up the TA’s unfortunate situation, this song is actually right on the money (pardon the pun). “Out of college, money spent/see no future, pay no rent/all the money’s gone, nowhere to go,” sings Paul McCartney. Bleak, but not far-fetched.

“So Appalled” – Kanye West
This is applicable mainly because Kanye spends the better part of his time trash-talking large corporations on radio shows. Yeezus is with you, TAs. Yeezus is with you.

“Everyday Struggle” – Notorious B.I.G.
Thankfully, the TAs have not found them- selves in a situation where they have to sell crack on the side to make up for their low income, wage, so the song’s relevance is really just in the title.

SONGS FOR THE ADMINISTRATION

Baby Come Back – Player
“Baby come back, you can blame it all on me/I was wrong, and I just can’t live without you.” They haven’t admitted it yet, but we know that this is exactly what the administration has been feeling all along.

“Where Is The Love?” – Black Eyed Peas
In this somber ballad, the administration takes a step back, and tries to consult their president, Meric Gertler, asking desperately, “Father, father, father help us, send some guidance from above, ‘cause people got me, got me questioning, where is the love?” And, alternatively, when the administration negotiates with the TAs, aren’t they just trying to say what ABRA had been saying all along with “Take A Chance On Me?”

“All You Had To Do Was Stay” – Taylor Swift
The administration tries to make life easier for both parties with this T-Swift number. I Why leave when all you have to do is stay? Alas, if only it were that easy.

“Money Grabber” – Fitz & The Tantrums
The administration and the TAs reached a ten- tative deal last Friday, however, upon the TAs’ near-unanimous rejection of this deal, the admin- istration became bitter. Now, they preach the good word of Fitz & The Tantrums, singing “Don’t come back anymore/I’ve already had your kind/This is your pay back/Money Grabber.”

“Tainted Love” – Soft Cell
Have we lost all hope? Have we been pushed to the point where we need an excessively campy song? This is applicable mainly because Kanye spends the better part of his time trash-talking large corporations on radio shows. Yeezus is with you, TAs. Yeezus is with you.

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“Baby come back, you can blame it all on me/I was wrong, and I just can’t live without you.” They haven’t admitted it yet, but we know that this is exactly what the admin- istration has been feeling all along.

“Where Is The Love?” – Black Eyed Peas
In this somber ballad, the administration takes a step back, and tries to consult their president, Meric Gertler, asking desperately, “Father, father, father help us, send some guidance from above, ‘cause people got me, got me questioning, where is the love?” And, alternatively, when the administration negotiates with the TAs, aren’t they just trying to say what ABRA had been saying all along with “Take A Chance On Me?”

“All You Had To Do Was Stay” – Taylor Swift
The administration tries to make life easier for both parties with this T-Swift number. I Why leave when all you have to do is stay? Alas, if only it were that easy.

“Money Grabber” – Fitz & The Tantrums
The administration and the TAs reached a ten-
When I was in high school, my afternoons and evenings were made up of two things. The first was the near-daily band practice I’d committed myself to as a member of the school’s junior and senior concert bands, and the other was the hours spent on gaming sessions with the likes of Uncharted, Assassin’s Creed, and The Legend of Zelda. While my high school self had a fairly romanticized view of the two art forms, I always saw them as entirely unrelated. Never would I have imagined that the mediums could come together quite the way they do in Video Games Live.

Video Games Live is a passion project by composer and gaming personality Tommy Tallarico that sees symphonies and choirs extracting music out of the 8-bit world and loading them into large scale concert halls across the globe. The show’s ambition is twofold: to earn games recognition in mainstream culture as artistically significant rather than as a purely recreational pastime, and to get young people out to see and experience the symphony.

Alongside conductor Emmanuel Fratianni and roughly 40 symphony and choir members made up entirely of Toronto musicians, Tallarico returned to Massey Hall on March 7th, hosting a two and a half hour journey into the sonic depths of video game classics. The sold-out show contained several interactive segments—a essential part of any game—and as attendees were invited on stage as part of a costume contest, for a round of Space Invaders fully scored by the symphony, and many other surprises. An all but essential round of Guitar Hero took place, where a fan played through “The Pretender” by the Foo Fighters on the plastic peripheral while Tallarico backed him up on his own electric guitar.

As for the music itself, the symphony powerfully swept through score after score, hitting every beat and packing nostalgic punches thanks to Fratianni’s renowned conducting. I caught myself tearing up during a rendition of the theme from Kingdom Hearts, a Disney/ Final Fantasy crossover game that meant the world to me as a youth. The show benefited from a large screen behind the band that projected iconic scenes from the game being performed at that moment. This, to me, also seemed to be an excellent way to fill in the gaps for songs originating from games with which I was unfamiliar, enticing me to try them out.

As if the concept wasn’t unique enough, Video Games Live occasionally mixed things up by diverging from the symphony in favour of other methods of performance. A bearded YouTube guitarist, for example, referring to himself only as “Viking Jesus,” came on stage to perform a heavy metal tribute to Pokémon (“Because heavy metal and Pokémon go hand in hand”). Later, talented vocalist and cover artist Jillian Aversa provided vocal accompaniment to the band during “Zelda’s Lullaby/Skyward Sword Medley” while dressed in full Princess Zelda cosplay.

A brief look at the fans in attendance proved that Video Games Live achieved its two aforementioned goals. The number of occupied seats exemplified the emotional significance of video game music for many Torontonians, and the excited, glimmering faces of young and old fans alike revealed that the exposure to live music had an all-around positive reception. It’s an entirely unique show in which fans waving lighters and cell phones are both outnumbered by those waving their Nintendo 64. The show returns to Massey Hall every year, each time with a new set list crafted largely by requests Tallarico receives in the weeks leading up to the performance.

Last year, after Luminato Festival’s Music Mob event, I told a friend that it’s great to be a music nerd in Toronto. While I meant it at the time, that’s never felt more true than when I walked out of Massey Hall after Video Games Live.
Green is the new black

Victoria College’s annual Enviro Fashion Show champions eco-friendly fashion

The Vic Enviro Fashion Show is an annual event at Victoria College featuring original and second-hand pieces from student designers. The show promotes environmental awareness and sustainability in the world of fashion.

This year’s theme was Blade Runner, the iconic 1980s sci-fi flick. Set in a dystopian Los Angeles, Blade Runner was chosen as a theme for its portrayal of a “lived-in future,” a scenery staunchly opposed to the attractive and clean futuristic images of films like Star Wars. The Blade Runner vibe was very apparent in the feel of the show — the lighting, music, and, of course, the clothing itself.

As soon as the lights dimmed and the atmospheric music came over the speakers, the venue was transformed from a regular hall to a futuristic runway. The models, most of them first-time runway walkers, each gave off an air of confidence and experience that convinced the audience otherwise. The clothing ranged from casual everyday-wear to formal dress, and, in true Blade Runner tradition, featured an abundance of trench coats. While the clothing was predominantly wearable, some combinations appeared dramatic on the models, giving off a serious impression of haute couture.

Aside from showcasing student talent, the show had a deeper purpose: to promote eco-friendliness and sustainability in the fashion industry. “The fashion industry can be really unsustainable, with rayon made from slow-growing trees, and garments you can only wear five times before they wear out or go out of style,” says one of the event’s fashion designers, Arlie Millyard, adding, “I think there needs to be a shift in both the industry and the way we think about clothes.”

There was a very strong DIY message in the show, which was encouraging for a student who can’t mend her own socks, let alone design an entire dress. Each piece featured in the show was made from entirely repurposed materials — a mix of altered vintage pieces, thrifted ensembles, and entirely original creations. In a society where high fashion is usually reserved for those with full pockets, it was promising to be shown stylish, original alternatives that were accessible within a student budget.

Along with sustainability, a large focus of the show was affordability. “By designing my own clothing and reworking material I already had, I established my sense of self and style through clothing with little to no money. This event embodies that feeling, and that chic and fashionable does not always mean big bucks,” says Ivy Pan, one of the show’s designers.

After the show, there was a buying period in which nearly all the pieces were brought out for the public to purchase. Audience members flocked to the racks to pick out their favourites, and, of course, each piece was priced economically. “There’s a lot that goes on behind the scenes, administrative stuff,” shares head designer Elana Moore, who’s been involved with the show for four years. “It’s hectic and crazy, there are 20 models and around 10 designers. It’s a lot of work, but it’s so rewarding.”
Farewell, Long Winter

Last Friday was the final installment of this year’s Long Winter Festival

Aneta Perehinets
VARSITY STAFF

The final installment of the ongoing Long Winter Festival came on a fittingly spring-like night. The festival markets itself as a multi-sensory experience of music, art, gaming, and talk. While this may sound overwhelming, the Great Hall was perfectly structured so as to allow festival-goers to take in a variety of pieces and performances.

I was lucky enough to have a chance to speak to one of the main organizers of Long Winter, Josh Zucker. Zucker is a member of Toronto band Fucked Up, and actively involved in Toronto’s artistic community.

“In the mid-2000’s Fucked Up would organize these three-day, multi-venue punk & hardcore festivals around Halloween,” Zucker says, continuing, “Three years ago, [they] decided to promote something again in Toronto that [they] saw [themselves] playing at and [they] had this idea to promote inter-arts shows. [They] then met with a few different friends in Toronto and launched Long Winter. That first year Fucked Up played most of the shows, this year [they’re] not playing at all. That was part of Long Winter becoming it’s own thing.”

When I ask about how the festival has grown into their vision, Zucker says that it’s become this “kind of artist-run festival and the end-goal — at least the goals for the next while — is to push that further, get more artists involved to take some control over curating and programming, with Toronto artists to own this thing and feel like they have a stake in it.”

This was clear in the variety and blend of performance and art — even the Main Stage, which was the central room of the Great Hall, contained multiple instalment pieces as bands took the stage. A piece by the Analog Preservation Network was posed as a massive cubic disco ball (which I thought was decorative at first), but acted like a Jumbotron screen on acid during performances.

I started out at the Main Stage, but quickly began exploring around the building. I was surprised at the difference in mood and crowd in each particular room. At the beginning of the night, the Conversation Room contained two instalment pieces at opposite ends: Lucy Satchewick’s Shit Talk pop-up wall and Bottom’s Dream Collective interactive forest set-up. I then decided to go to the basement where I realized that talk show Long Night with Vish Khanna was beginning. The panel of speakers was fantastic, particularly kids in the Hall’s Scott Thomas. It was an interesting sensory experiment to go from listening to noise rock band Not Of and appreciating installation art to laughing at Vish Khanna’s opening sequence. Because I came early, there was no line and I was able to openly explore. Along with another 250 people, I also received a free vinyl featuring Long Winter acts Elsa and Dreamsloitation, although it was a really welcoming gesture. There truly was no judgement in the space as the mesh of art brought a vast diverse crowd of people. As the night wore on, however, the event gained a heavier youth presence and progressed into a crowded party with a line-up extending around the block.

There is a room, a time (the crowd gets more interesting toward 2 am), a medium, and a performance or piece for anyone in the vicinity to stop by. Long Winter is an exciting festival that will hopefully grow into a notorious Toronto event.

Zucker feels that, “As far as popularity, I just think it’s a winning combination — there is a lot of good music and good art, the door price is Pay What You Can, it’s all ages and it’s a fun party. We’re trying to be a portal for young people into the arts scene and a way to discover stuff in person, meet people, have fun.”

Maylee Todd, a multi-faceted Toronto-based artist, agrees, adding, “It’s a really liberating event, where I feel like anything goes. It’s amazing because in my experience, the people who are already coming to view stuff seem to have an open mind and an intention to communicate.”

Jonathan Rogers, the vocals & guitarist of Toronto indie dream-pop band Elsa, added his two cents to the mix: “I think the whole point of the Long Winter festival was to have varied art forms. Like there’s a talk show downstairs, new up-and-coming bands in the Conversation Room, and then there’s some bands that have been around for a long time and come from different walks of life and genres. They want it to be all over the place.”

Hall of art

Seeley Hall was home to many students' artistic endeavours

Sara Rebelo
VARSITY CONTRIBUTOR

The Trinity Art Show took a chance this week to promote a more creative side of the U of T student community. Seeley Hall in Trinity College was transformed to present a free, inclusive space that allowed for artistic expression and the collaboration between students, patrons, and artists.

The show was able to lend a creative outlet to a variety of different mediums, and a wide array of artistic talent — from painting to sculptures to digital photography. “Lumanita contro il male” by Valerine Chandrakumar was one of three paintings in a series that represented the male” by Valerine Chandrakumar was one of three paintings in a series that represented the male (the onlooker a feeling of movement and motion. The use of colour and blurred lines gave multiple performances that one body can contain. Her ability to portray the vulnerability of life and the uncertainty of life, influenced by decay. She used consumable products to create structures that led the onlooker to question how the eyes perceive their surroundings.

The bright colours of her pieces stood out in a room full of muted creations. Kayla Tremblett’s piece entitled “Harmful Algae Bloom (HABS)” used a mix of digital photography on canvas and was meant to draw on the uncertainty of life, influenced by decay. Her ability to portray the vulnerability of life through the delicate, permeable fabric created an innovative illusion that combined two very different mediums.

In contrast, several postmodern pieces hung throughout the exhibit. Charlene Lo’s two pieces, “Reality” and “Unreal,” used consumer products to question the illusionary truth of reality. She used consumable products to create structures that led the onlooker to question how the eyes perceive their surroundings. The bright colours of her pieces stood out in a room full of muted creations.

Overall, the Trinity Art Show provided an opportunity for emerging artists to contribute to a growing creative culture at U of T. A silent auction offered an incentive for students to commission the work exhibited at the show. Fifteen per cent of the proceeds from the silent auction went towards the Trinity Art Fund Initiative that will allow for the promotion of the artistic community at the college.
Anastasiya Muntyanu

In recognition for her novel research, University of Toronto professor Dr. Molly Shoichet has been named the L’Oréal-UNESCO For Women In Science North American laureate for 2015. Shoichet was one of five award recipients worldwide, representing North America, and received a prize of just under $140,000. This award has been given out annually since 2008 to support top women scientists and recognize their significant scientific accomplishments. One of the goals of this program is to encourage young women to pursue careers in science and engineering.

Incredible biomedical research conducted at The Shoichet Lab has the potential to change the way diseases are treated. Professor Molly Shoichet guides a group of 25 researchers to make breakthrough advancements in medicine at the intersection of engineering, chemistry, and biology.

Shoichet’s work involves targeted delivery of stem cells to the spinal cord and the brain, using novel biodegradable hydrogel polymers. Polymers are long, chain-like structures made up of smaller, repeated molecules. The hydrogel polymers can be injected through a needle and then set almost immediately in the target area. This delivery system, invented in the lab, can be compared to a space suit that holds fragile stem cells inside a hydrogel. To enhance integration and promote survival of these stem cells, support cells are added into the hydrogel network. The next step is to refine the technique and then translate the science from the bench to the bedside by beginning clinical trials.

The Varsity spoke with Professor Molly Shoichet about the award, which she will be presented with during a ceremony in Paris on March 18.

The Varsity: What does it feel like to be part of the high recognition events for women in the science? Molly Shoichet: This award recognizes excellence in science. It is a tremendous honour to have our science recognized. I feel privileged to work in Canada, at the University of Toronto, with great collaborators and exceptional students, post-doctoral fellows, technicians, and post-graduates.

TV: What is the inspiration/motivation behind your work? MS: We’re inspired to advance knowledge towards clinical applications — to ultimately make a difference in people’s lives. We are tackling big questions in science and engineering and are motivated to make a difference.

TV: How will your research findings benefit patients and what is the next challenge that stands before implementation of these new methods in clinic? MS: There are many steps that need to align in order for us to advance our research to the benefit of patients. We start with models, which advance our understanding and refine our science. We patent our inventions, providing opportunities for licensing or company formation. Ultimately, we need to partner with industry in order to advance beyond academic research toward product development and clinical trials.

TV: Where do you hope to take your research in the future? MS: Our goal is to ultimately advance research to the clinic. We are pursuing several strategies — cell delivery to the back of the eye (the retina) to overcome blindness, cell and biomolecule delivery to the brain to overcome stroke, cell and biomolecule delivery to the spinal cord to overcome spinal cord injury, [and] drug delivery and drug screening applied to cancer. Through active collaboration, we are confident that we can make a difference.

TV: What piece of advice do you have for women thinking of pursuing a career in science? MS: It’s a fantastic career. It allows you to be imaginative, creative and innovative. You have the opportunity to invent the future. Moreover, you can have a career and a family — they are not mutually exclusive. I have both and so can you. Make sure to choose a partner who values your career as much as you do.

TV: How do you manage to achieve a good balance between your personal and professional lives? MS: I have a lot of help — I don’t do anything alone. Professionally, I work with leading international scientists and clinicians and have an amazing research group of creative and independent thinkers. I work with a great admin[istrative] staff as well, which enables me to tackle new projects. Personally, I have a great husband and additional support from my mom. I spend many hours working, but I also find time to spend with my sons and husband. There’s never a dull moment and very little down time, but I thrive on being busy. I also eat a lot of chocolate — [that’s the] secret to my success.

This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity and length.
Use your phone to focus

Flipd is a new Android app with features to lock mobile devices and more

In the current age of technological advances, it’s hard to avoid getting distracted by the countless notifications and messages that we receive on our mobile devices. As part of a Toronto-based startup, third-year U of T computer science student Andres Moreno has come up with a solution to help control the excessive use of our mobile devices. Moreno is the lead developer of a new mobile application called “Flipd,” which creates “freedom from mobile distractions.” Moreno, like us all, has noticed the very visible phenomenon of people being glued to their phones. “I think that everyone would be much more productive if they could put it down and focus on their work or go out and have some fun,” he says.

In essence, Flipd allows users to lock their devices so that they are unable to access them in order to avoid distractions. Many apps for this purpose are currently available on the market. Flipd, however, comes equipped with many additional convenient features, taking the prevention of excessive device use to a new level. Users can choose to completely lock their mobile devices or tablets for up to 12 hours.

With a feature called “smart lock screen,” users can still make emergency phone calls, receive notifications, and enable auto response text messages so that they won’t be completely disconnected from the social world. Further, Flipd can be used in groups — a person can limit another person’s mobile device usage in a non-invasive way.

Moreno is more interested in seeing a behavioural change in users than in just providing a lock screen. “For example, the app provides 60-second breaks while you’re locked in case you need to use [your phone],” he says, adding, “There’s also an auto response feature that provides a personalized response so that you don’t get the feeling that you are responding right away.”

After taking courses on mobile application development and network communication, Moreno came across a solution to help people think twice before they put their phones down and focus on their work or go out and have some fun, he says.

The Android version of the app has been in beta since December and was launched in late February. Moreno is currently working on an iOS version of the app with his team, which they are planning to launch in the summer. “Following that, we have ideas to expand our market and release a version geared towards businesses or schools,” says Moreno.

The app is already gaining momentum, with over 1,000 downloads. “It feels great knowing you’re creating an app that people from several different countries are using right now,” Moreno says.

Teamwork is key for Moreno, and he would recommend that to all new developers as well. “I would advise them to be part of a team when creating the app,” he says, adding, “You get a lot more ideas and different viewpoints that will make your app much better.”

Study: researchers brew magma in U of T basement to uncover new mechanism for volcanic sulphur transport

In 1991, the world witnessed the eruption of Mount Pinatubo, a volcano in the Philippines that spewed out so much sulphur into the atmosphere that the global temperature dropped by one degree for an entire year. For two decades, scientists wondered how Mount Pinatubo and other volcanoes like it could produce such a tremendous amount of sulphur, as it was believed to be physically impossible that one single magma source could send that much of the substance to the surface. Now, U of T professors James Man-gall and James Brenan, along with their French and Australian colleagues, have finally found the solution to the puzzle.

In essence, the researchers have created a new mechanism for transporting sulphur and other elements, including copper, nickel, and precious metals, such as gold in the form of vapour bubbles. “When a magma contains a lot of sulphur — one thing that can happen is that it can actually produce a sulphur-bearing separate phase,” explains Brenan, who is part of the Department of Geophysics, “and it’s much like if you have oil and vinegar in a salad dressing, the two don’t actually homogenize. They can remain in separate phases, and you have to shake it up a lot for it to be homogeneous.”

“The same thing happens in magmas,” he continues, “if they have too much sulphur they actually produce blobs of iron sulphide magma.” By conventional wisdom, these blobs of iron sulphide, which as the name suggests are highly rich in iron, would be far too heavy to reach the surface. It was thought that this dense and heavy magma would sink deeper into the Earth and settle too far from the surface to become available to erupt into the atmosphere. However, as the new research shows, the iron sulphide “blobs” will instead actually attach themselves to vapour bubbles and then hitch a ride to the surface.

Despite being chock-full of iron, this bubbly-buddy system still works for two reasons. First, the force that keeps the iron sulphide attached to the vapour bubbles which physicists call “surface tension,” is, in this case, stronger than the gravity trying to pull them back down. Second, the system is in essence a big furnace, and they get hot enough to melt rock.

What the observations showed was that so long as there was a gas present in Brenan’s home-brewed magma, the iron sulphide blobs, against all intuition, would want to attach themselves to the vapour bubbles every time. As well as contributing to our knowledge of how eruptions and volcanic activity are affected by climate, the vapour-carrier mechanism is thought to be responsible for depositing copper, nickel, and precious metals, such as gold, near the surface in areas where there is lots of volcanic activity.

Bubbling up

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Scientists may have found a promising lead to follow for treating multiple sclerosis (MS) — the most widespread neurological disorder disabling young adults between the ages of 20 and 40. Individuals with MS can suffer from high blood pressure, which were previously seen only among adults. In the current study, they showed that the same complex was present at significantly higher levels in dead tissue from people and mice that mimicked MS symptoms.

The team then wondered whether breaking up this protein-pair would reduce nerve cell death in the sick mice. To this end, Zhai designed a peptide — a small chemical chain — for subsequent treatment. The sick mice treated with the peptide showed regrowth of nerve cells, increased survival of nerve cells from which the insulating coat around the nerve cells grow, and the rescue of thinking of the very same cell. Commenting on the putative drug-like features of the peptide, Zhai adds, “Based on our current experiment, the treatment of this peptide had very minimum side effects and that is very encouraging.” The team did not detect any direct effect of the peptide on the immune system of the mice model.

“Hopefully we can develop a drug based on this peptide. Some challenges, however, exist — one of which is we now need to determine the best route of administration since that can greatly affect the efficacy of the drug,” Zhai remarks.

Jasper Lim

A recent study conducted by researchers at the Department of Nutritional Sciences at the University of Toronto found that, of 3,178 meals sourced from 10 fast-food and seven sit-down restaurants, 50 per cent are found to exceed the WHO’s proposed daily recommendation for sugar intake. The WHO recommends that added sugar not make up more than five per cent of daily dietary consumption — a 50 per cent drop from the older guideline published in the early 2000s, which recommended that it make up less than 10 per cent.

Mary Scourboutakos, the lead author of the study and a doctoral student at the Department of Nutritional Sciences, says that consuming high amounts of sugar can lead to long-term potential harm, such as causing obesity and tooth decay. Scourboutakos’s research focuses on added sugar, otherwise known as free sugar, which is “table sugar added to foods and drinks by the cook or consumer and sugars naturally present in honey, syrup, fruit juices and fruit juice concentrates.” The research is important as there is an ongoing obesity epidemic in Canada: one in four children and youth in Canada is found to be overweight or obese. Obese children are much more likely to experience health conditions, such as Type 2 Diabetes and high blood pressure, which were previously seen only among adults.
Green solutions and the 600-ton threshold

What happens when green solutions aren’t really that eco-friendly?

Alexandra Rusu
VARSITY CONTRIBUTOR

In recent years, government policies and individuals have been pushing for more eco-friendly transportation and energy production. “In total, the US transportation sector — which includes planes, trains, ships, and freight — produces around thirty percent of all US global warming emissions,” states an article, titled, “Science for a healthy planet and a safer world,” written by the Union for Concerned Scientists.

We have seen this change implemented in many places. Coal furnaces have been replaced by natural gas generators and gasoline-consuming vehicles by hybrids. However, what happens when “eco-friendly” solutions result in more carbon emissions than their fossil fuel counterparts?

Professor Christopher Kennedy of the Department of Civil Engineering at U of T recently published an article in Nature Climate Change entitled “Key threshold for electrification emissions,” which deals with the issues facing so-called eco-friendly solutions and how to resolve them. “The threshold refers to the level of carbon intensity of electricity supply (tonnes of carbon dioxide produced per GWh of energy) which is well below Kennedy’s 600-ton threshold. With the proximity of Niagara Falls and numerous nuclear facilities, “Ontario is a great place to be driving electric vehicles,” says Kennedy.

For international policies, as well as US-Canada negotiations on climate change, the 600-ton threshold could give governments a starting point when negotiating emission levels. “Governments will begin to include carbon intensity of electricity generation as a key metric in their climate change negotiations. The 600-ton threshold will be used as a short-term target for the high emitters,” states Kennedy, suggesting that countries such as the US and China could have something to work towards on a short-term basis. “The 600-ton threshold is based on a review of international studies. It’s an approximate universal global number... the 600-ton threshold is robust enough that governments can use it to guide energy policy,” Kennedy says.
The physicality of acting

U of T students explain the physical exertion required while acting

It will be difficult to try to represent all of the heart and passion that I have experienced as a part of this team with words on a piece of paper, but I will do my best.

Every journey has a starting point, and it’s difficult to pinpoint exactly where ours began. At the very least, this Canadian Interuniversity Sports (CIS) championship title was three years in the making, so I suppose our journey began in 2013 when we lost the overall title by a mere two points.

In 2014, we experienced a similar heartbreak when, despite the amazing breakout performances and beating our ranking, the banner was two points out of reach again. I remember as a rookie last year agonizing over points out of reach again. I remember.

There was no agonizing over points this year, and there was no leaving it to chance. There was a lot of heart, a lot of guts, and relentless self-belief — and we finally walked away with our CIS championship banner. At the end of the three days, our individual performances culminated into a whopping total of 131.50 points, ahead of Trinity Western University in second with 79 points.

The moment when we finally got to hold this coveted banner — when this banner became our banner — at the awards presentation, my breath was taken away. Winning the team title meant so much to us. No team was more deserving than this group of ladies.

We were there on a mission and we were confident that we would achieve it, but not one of us takes this victory for granted. After the past two years, we know more than anyone that just because something can happen doesn’t mean that it will happen. But these ladies never stopped believing in themselves, and our coaches never stopped believing in us either.

My favourite race memory from the weekend was the 4x800-metre relay. We had a dominant team lined up and we had just broken the Canadian record at the Ontario University Athletics championship, but we knew that we would have a great battle with the University of Victoria.

Rachel Jewett did an amazing job leading us off, Honor Walsley continued to stretch our lead, and Sasha Gollish — the CIS Athlete of the Year — dropped the hammer to give me a very comfortable lead.

As the anchor, I had to run away from one of the best 800-metre runners in Canada, Rachel François, and I knew the race wasn’t won until I crossed the line. When I grabbed that baton, I ran for my life. I would not settle, and I refused to be caught. Running scared clearly worked, because we ran a new national and CIS record of 8:52.56, shattering the previous record by 10 seconds. Nothing can compare to anchoring with the fastest 800-metre of my life, and then running into the arms of my fellow record-breakers who held me when my legs gave out.

Behind every great team is an even greater support group, and we are blessed with the best in the country.

We were all so proud when our head coach Carl Georgevski was awarded with the CIS Coach of the Year.

Georgevski, along with the rest of our coaches, has taught us never to dismiss heady goals out of hand.

Instead, we’ve learned to ask, “How? Where? When?” — they have taught us that we are limitless.

Looking ahead, I am confident that we will continue to be a force to be reckoned with. We have many athletes graduating from our program this year, and they leave us with big shoes to fill, but I believe that we are up for the challenge. One thing is certain: as long as we have a team with this much heart, we will never be defeated.

It is important for aspiring actors to begin movement training as early in their career as possible.

"An actor has three tools at his or her disposal: the mind, the voice, and the body. Should any one of those elements be neglected or undermined, the actor’s success at any project will be diminished proportionally. Therefore, it is imperative that all actors begin movement training as soon as they enter any acting program, and that they continue to incorporate the skills and knowledge learned in those courses long after graduation," says DeWolf.

In a director’s show, it is important to recognize that each actor, and indeed each person in general, has a different vocabulary about movement and their bodies.
Blues football team finds challenges in recruiting athletes

U of T struggles to compete with other Canadian and American universities while recruiting players

Anthony Piruzza
VARSITY STAFF

A university football team’s success can usually be traced back to the quality of the players that previous recruitment drives attracted. This makes recruitment a high stakes pursuit, with numerous schools competing for the same top prospects.

YouTube is cluttered with highlight videos made by high school football players, but head coach & management of football operations, Greg Gary says that the team still relies on traditional means of evaluating talent. He says that “[the] OVF [Ontario Varsity Football League] is a really good place to identify… up and coming good football players in Southern Ontario.”

The Varsity Blues also rely on grassroots relationshiop with high school coaches across the country to connect with incoming prospects.

Top recruits are often contacted by interested coaches in their second year of high school, and interested coaches follow their athletic development closely, according to first-year student Mac VanDuzer, who was recruited to the Blues football team.

Scholarships are usually offered between December and January, after an athlete completes their final high school football season. These scholarships are dependent on the player maintaining a minimum academic average and making good football players in Southern Ontario.”

Gary notes that first-year athletes occasionally withdraw from varsity football after realizing the academic pressures of being a full-time university student. This results in a loss of their athletic scholarship.

Along with other teams in the Ontario University Athletics (OUA) Conference, the University of Toronto faces an uphill battle in attracting athletes with scholarship money. The conference's rules stipulate that Athletic Financial Awards (AFA) awarded to a player cannot aggregate to more than $4,000 per year. This maximum value is unique to the OUA, as all other CIS conferences are free to award the full cost of tuition to incoming athletes. Additionally, OUA players must maintain a 70 per cent average in order to renew their AFA's while athletes in the other three Canadian conferences need only a 65 per cent average.

Despite the financial restrictions, Gary believes that the University of Toronto's academic reputation is a unique factor that draws top student athletes. “If you're a serious student athlete, this is where you want to be,” says Gary. VanDuzer explains, “What drew me to the University of Toronto was the way their football program works alongside the academic programs in order to ensure that students are taking their schooling at least as seriously as their athletic careers.”

Convincing prospective athletes to look past the Varsity Blues football team's recent losing record was an early challenge for Gary when he was promoted to the head coach position in 2011. Gary admits that this legacy presented an obstacle in attracting top level recruits. “The initial aim was just trying to stabilize the program and just bring in recruits,” he says. He went on to say that the team's 4-4 record in 2013 has improved relations with possible recruits. “I think our program, with the 4-4, I think that made it easier to recruit,” says Gary. OUA teams also have to compete with American universities to keep football recruits in Canada despite the heightened popularity and financial resources of NCAA teams.

In an attempt to expand its national visibility, the CIS signed a 2013 deal with Rogers Sportsnet to broadcast an expanded array of Canadian university sports, including the Vanier Cup. Gary explains, “I think the CIS has done a great job of promoting their product.”

Although the Varsity Blues football season is over, their success in future years will be founded in their current efforts to attract the 2017 class of recruits.

New

Post-Baccalaureate Diploma program in Economics

Do you have an undergrad degree and want to explore economics? Or do you want additional prep for grad studies in economics?

Carleton's new Post-Baccalaureate Diploma Program is for you!

Information on the PBD is available on the website of Carleton University's Department of Economics.

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTIONS

Varsity Publications Board of Directors Elections will take place on March 16, 17, 18 at voting.utoronto.ca

The candidates

Zaigham Ali
Hussein Fawzy
Alexander Marshall
Joshua Oliver
Alexandra Rusu

Details of the election can be found at var.st/boardelections2015

If you have any questions or concerns about the election, please email the returning officer, Kelly Rahardja, at elections@thevarsity.ca.
Glancing back at Goldring

U of T’s newest athletic facility may not be reaching much of the student population

Adit Daga
VARSTY CONTRIBUTOR

Not many buildings can be held in high regard for their beauty at the University of Toronto, when compared to the Goldring Centre. As this article is being written, U of T’s newest athletic facility may not be reaching much of the student population.

Not only the students who are new to yoga practice, but in cyberspace, yoga seems to have taken on a very different character. Many of its spiritual aspects are replaced by cosmetic posturing. Timed selfies of the eagle pose are supplemented with a “#yoga” hashtag, and what one would have been considered a humbling experience is tainted with the intention of ego—try to inspire others’ envy. It is truly a mixed bag.

“#Yoga” does more harm than good

Using Instagram while in class devalues traditional practice

Malone Mullin
VARSTY STAFF

Last fall, I took a Hatha yoga class through Hart House. In between difficult seminars, I learned how to breathe in time with my movements. I figured out how to steady myself on one or both feet, how to do a forward bend without hurting my back, and how to challenge my body and quiet my mind. All this I did with the help of an excellent instructor, who insisted that we all leave our personal belongings — cell phones included — at the door.

But in cyberspace, yoga seems to have taken on a very different character. Many of its spiritual aspects are replaced by cosmetic posturing. Timed selfies of the eagle pose are supplemented with a “#yoga” hashtag, and what one would have been considered a humbling experience is tainted with the intention of ego and imagery.

Yoga is a way to stay healthy, in all possible aspects. It has the power to unify the mind and body and strengthen, given the right application. Actively involving Instagram feeds in one’s practice can’t cultivate the kind of well-being that yoga has the potential to endow.

In an email interview, yoga guru Fatha Singh KHALSA, who teaches free yoga class at U of T’s Koffler House, extolled the practice of yoga as a private dialogue between mind and body.

"If you look beyond the surface, you will see that postures are just a part, and not the whole of yoga practice," he says. "Sound posture allows us to sit and experience peace of mind through meditation, which is the actual objective of yoga," he writes. "With peace of mind also comes humility. A true yogi does not want to show off their latest posture or their most difficult meditation," says KHALSA. However, posting "#yoga" photographs is still a means of sharing one’s progress and encouraging others to follow suit. "That being said, of course there are millions of people who are new to yoga practice. Some are excited and want to share their latest accomplishments. Others are just vain and try to inspire others’ envy. It is truly a mixed bag," he says.

But it remains that advertising poses on Instagram cannot instill one with the requisite humility and peace of mind to practice yoga genuinely. Framing yoga as part of a lifestyle that may simultaneously promote a high level of concern with competitive body imagery and self-concept ultimately debases the traditional aspects of the exercise. Ultimately, if you perform a headstand in order to brag about it online, then you aren’t really doing yoga.

Rather than turning to a superficial promotion of yoga culture, it may benefit one’s practice to forget about hashtags while on the mat.
Sudoku

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Answers online at var.st/crossword

Varsity Publications'
Spring Meeting of Members

Date & time:
Thursday, March 19, 2015, 5:15 pm

Location:
21 Sussex Ave., room 200

Proxies:
Forms are available online and due to the meeting location at 5:15 pm on March 18, 2015.

All members of Varsity Publications Inc. are eligible to attend and vote at the meeting.

Details of the meeting, including proxy forms, can be found at var.st/smm2015

If you have any questions or concerns about the meeting, please email editor@thevarsity.ca.