

future  
past  
present

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edition



# PANDEMIC PASTIMES

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EDITOR

Lockdowns and COVID-19 restrictions have left a mark on UCC's robust extracurricular programming. As clubs have moved online and sports have been temporarily suspended, many have called the pandemic an unprecedented time. To the contrary, the College has had to adapt in a multifaceted manner multiple times during the past century. The school's goal of ensuring that students have access to after-school programming has become even more relevant as Ontario has experienced a second major lockdown.

With the fate of our extracurricular activities and sports hanging in balance, I scoured archival issues of College Times for insight on how UCC's robust extracurricular program fared during the influenza pandemic (1910s) and SARS (2000s). Suffice to say, not much has changed even with the advent of digital communication platforms. Many thanks to Ms. Spellman, our esteemed College Times archivist, for guiding me on a relentless quest through the not-so-musty UCC digital archives.

## SARS & The Iraq War

In February 2003, a viral respiratory disease arrived in Toronto. SARS, as it would later be known, first emerged in China and later spread to 25 other countries resulting in over 8,000 cases and 774 deaths (IPAC Canada).

As a result of the outbreak, thousands of Canadians were quarantined, both voluntarily and involuntarily. Evoking images of today's air travel, airports in Toronto and Vancouver screened travellers for high fever. The outbreak had a devastating economic impact on Toronto's hospitality industry and forced UCC students to postpone trips and competitions. In late April 2003, the World Health Organization (WHO) issued an advisory against all non-essential travel to Toronto.

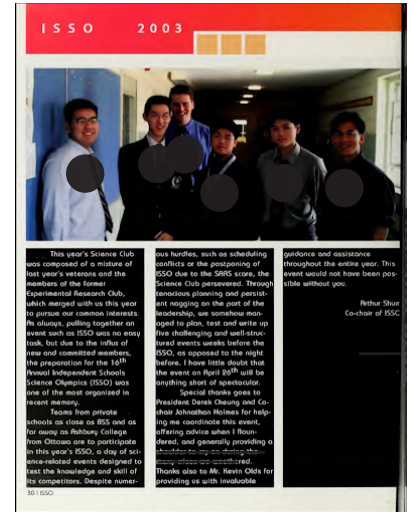
Sadly, transmission largely occurred between healthcare workers as a result of a healthcare system ill-prepared for a global pandemic. In total, there were over 400 probable cases of SARS in Canada which resulted in 44 deaths. Although the death toll was far lower than the current one of COVID-19, the high case fatality rate of approximately 17.1% sparked fear among the general populace (IPAC Canada).

In March 2003, amidst the SARS global health emergency, U.S. forces invaded Iraq to presumably destroy Iraqi weapons of mass destruction and end the dictatorial rule of Saddam Hussein. US President George W. Bush described the invasion as the "opening stages of what will be a broad and concerted campaign." However, the conflict rapidly intensified, eventually resulting in the deaths of over 4,700 American and allied troop deaths and more than one hundred thousand Iraqi civilians (Council on Foreign Relations).

Although Canada did not participate in the invasion of Iraq, the ripple effects of the conflict were felt here at the college.



*The UCC lacrosse team page from the 2003 issue of College Times: "We have already struggled through a cancelled Ohio trip (war, SARS, snowstorm)..."*



*The Science Club page from the 2003 issue of College Times: "Despite numerous hurdles, such as the postponing of the ISSO due to the SARS scare, the Science Club persevered."*

## Influenza Post World War I

In 1918, shortly after World War One (WWI: 1914-1918), a deadly strain of influenza swept the world. Colloquially known as the "Spanish flu," the disease arrived in Canada via returning troops and claimed the young and hearty among its casualties. The disease proliferated across the nation, reaching as far as some First Nations reserves and wiping out entire villages. Soon, medical facilities and personnel were so overwhelmed that schools and hotels were commandeered as field hospitals (Canadian Encyclopedia). While the medical field as a whole made great strides since the 1910s, field hospitals and a shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) are still hallmarks of the COVID-19 outbreaks occurring today in the United States.

In response to the pandemic, municipal governments closed all establishments with the exception of necessary services and provinces enacted laws regarding quarantine and the mandatory wearing of masks in public. Many businesses lost profits due to a lack of demand for their



goods or insufficient production caused by a dwindling workforce. While our current lockdown fiasco might seem draconian, they are one of the most common measures implemented during public health crises.

The deadly flu claimed between 50 and 100 million lives worldwide, approximately 2.5 to 5% of the global population. In Canada, approximately 55,000 people died from the disease (most of whom were between 20 and 40 years old) in addition to the 60,000 Canadians killed in service during WWI (Parks Canada). Consequently, the country faced temporary labour shortages and lost a significant portion of its young population.

Seen around are some excerpts and photos during those times.

On the whole, the incessant lockdowns have cast a doubt on the viability of our traditional UCC activities this year. Sports and clubs are entirely online for the foreseeable future, Batt Ball and our beloved Stewards Madness activities remain in question, and COVID-19 cases in Ontario are still at a concerning number.

However, past issues of College Times published during pandemics describe similar repercussions for prolonged periods of time. Judging from our school's vast extracurricular offerings today, I believe that our community will recover with time just as it has in the past.

I'd like to thank those who played a crucial role in the process of researching and writing this piece. I'm deeply grateful to Ms. Spellman for her dedication, spirit, and unrivaled expertise -- this article wouldn't have been possible without her gracious assistance. Additionally, thank you to Ms. Cohen for her guidance on protecting the confidentiality of the Old Boys pictured.



College Times, 1920 (Easter)

The teams, though prevented by the influenza epidemic from playing many inter-collegiate games, have worked well, and have displayed on the field, in such games as they have played, although losers, a spirit worthy of U.C.C.

Editorial Note, 1918 (Christmas)

### THE ST. ANDREW'S GAME

February 12.

On account of the "flu" epidemic in the city none of the boys of either school were allowed to attend the game. For this reason the match lacked the usual excitement. The College presented a weak team for the game on account of Kress, Brathwaite, Greey and Richardes being on the sick list. Wright started at centre, Trotter at right defence and Gill on left wing. The Saints, playing at full strength, managed to nose out a win by a 4-1 count. Kirk, Wright and Trotter played best for U.C.C., while Syer, Cameron and Findlay shone for the Scotchmen. The game by periods:

College Times, 1920 (Easter)

During the influenza epidemic drills were held daily, but, of course, these were restricted to the boarders. The spirit with which the boys drilled during this period was most admirable.

For the first time in the history of the Company a bugle band has been formed. Every year this subject has been much discussed, but until now it has never materialized. It has been decided to have twelve bugles, accompanied by eight drums. Young boys are being chosen in order that the band may not be seriously depleted next year.

H.H.H.

College Times, 1918 (Christmas)

### The "Flu"

As everyone knows, the influenza descended upon us again, although not quite so severely as last year. The School had, at one time, about 26 cases of light influenza in the sick room, not to speak of innumerable day boys. One serious consequence was that the Rifle Company Dance

had to be postponed. Another was that it seriously deranged the ranks of the hockey teams. The dance was originally to be on Feb. 14th, and has been postponed until April 23rd. The boarders indulged in a sleigh ride in its stead and had a very enjoyable time. We are now carrying on as usual, unhampered (some boys would call it unblest!) by any disease or other "millstone around our neck."

College Times, 1920 (Easter)

### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY FOURTEENTH

The usual occupations of the boarders on Saturday night are two: (1) If you can get leave, go to a show; (2) If you can't get leave, loaf around till bedtime. The "flu" outbreak suddenly put a stop to the first—and the entire house was faced with the gloomy possibility of having absolutely nothing to do.

College Times, 1920 (Easter)

### SUNDAY, OCTOBER 20TH.

On account of the influenza epidemic, the House did not go to church this morning, a service being held in the prayer hall, at which all were present. Major Grant had asked Mr. Poultney Bigelow, distinguished traveller and author, to come up and speak to us, and he delivered a very interesting talk to the assembled House.

College Times, 1918 (Christmas)

# THE RISE OF CHESS



**DEVLIN MONIZ & HENRY WANG**  
STAFF REPORTER & EDITOR

The game of chess has always been renowned around the world. However, the number of people playing chess these days, not just at UCC, has abruptly risen during the pandemic. Why all of a sudden did chess experience this sure in popularity? Is it because of the shocking success of the popular Netflix series, *The Queen's Gambit*? Has it been used as a pandemic coping mechanism? Are people now realizing it is a fun way to sharpen the brain? Or is it to train in order to compete with the greats one day, like Magnus Carlsen or Garry Kasparov? Most important, chess' popularity has grown exponentially within our UCC community and it is valuable for us to analyze the inner-details of this phenomenon.

Many chess tournaments have been put in play at UCC. However, in opposition to the traditional wooden board, most people today now play it online via two main websites: "Chess.com" and "Lichess.org". Both of these websites have been widely used throughout the world as they offer one the ability to play online against random opponents worldwide. How do these websites work? They offer many different features and modes. On one hand, you can play a game up to just one minute and on the other, up to thirty minutes. These websites offer chess puzzles and coach you on the best strategies to achieve a checkmate within a certain number of moves.

You can also play against the computer with different figures representing a different challenge. For instance, you can see Beth Harmon from *The Queen's Gambit* as a new addition on Chess.com. After games, the website can review your game to point out areas of improvement, mistakes, and successes. However, perhaps the most adored feature is the ranking system. Every time you play another person and win, you gain points and if you lose, you forfeit points. This aspect of furthering competition has really encouraged more individuals to compete.

Next, there have been several chess tournaments during this school year which have taken place on both websites. These include school-wide tournaments, interim ones, and hopefully in the future, house-chess tournaments. Best of all, these competitions are completely free of charge and are meant to give the many hard-working students of UCC a great time! Not only are the number of these great competitions amazing, but also the participation levels are off the charts. What's great about the UCC chess tournaments is that the people entering them have a wide variety of different skill sets. I have heard of really strong chess players who enter to improve their game and spread their passion.

Additionally, I have heard many other stories. Some say it is a good way to spend free time. Others say they have got into the game because of the increased free time during the pandemic. Perhaps the most common reason for entry is to

have a fantastic time. Whether you checkmate your opponents, resign early, or lose by timeout, it is a great experience for all!

## Interview with Daniel Tang, Head of The UCC Chess Club

To gain a better sense of chess from a student's perspective, Convergence interviewed Daniel Tang, Head of The UCC Chess Club.

**Convergence:** Could you tell us about your experience with chess? How did you get into it?

**Daniel Tang:** I first started playing chess when I was really young, I was bored in the house and decided to start messing around with the default chess application on my father's computer since that was the only game installed and because I didn't know about the internet at the time. I taught myself the game by randomly clicking squares and figuring out the general rules.

I then went on to develop my premier strategy at the time which was somehow capturing their queen without losing my own and magically winning from there. Seeing this, my parents decided to send me to a chess club to learn and play with others besides just the computer. Since then I've learned a lot more about the game, whether it be from lessons or games and I've gotten to know lots of people from my club, some of which I've pleasantly met outside of my chess club by coincidence.



**C:** What do you think about the recent surge in chess popularity, especially during the pandemic?

**DT:** I think the surge in chess popularity has been amazing for the sport. As a casual and avid chess player myself, the opportunity to be able to play and talk about a game I enjoy with more people is great. Chess has managed to be a topic that I've been able to talk about to people that I previously hadn't spoken much or at all to before and with chess getting more popular, it's more likely to be a topic that people can discuss together.

**C:** Do you have any comments on this year's chess tournament?

**DT:** The school chess tournament has exceeded my expectations a lot. The past few years' chess tournaments have been

fairly small from what I can remember, with there being some 16 to 24 players on average for each tournament. While I knew this year that there'd be more chess players amongst the student body, with the pandemic and the popularity of "Pogchamps" and The Queen's Gambit, I wasn't sure how many would be interested in the tournament and was expecting the average of around 20 or so players.

In reality, there was a mind-blowing 75 students and faculty who've signed up and I distinctly remember being pleasantly shocked at the number of people who decided to join. The sheer number of people actually let me try and split players into different brackets based on skill levels and while it wasn't perfect by any means, I hope that it allowed for more engaging games for all

the competitors. Being online has also given the players and I greater flexibility with when to play our games, and while there is the possibility of cheating or possible delays from players, I think it's been a worthwhile tradeoff. Overall the tournament has been fairly successful and I hope that it's been a good experience for the players as well!

If you are an experienced chess champion and dream to be world number one, or just play it as a hobby, what we have learned from this pandemic is that it is suitable for everyone! Quoting Simon Williams, chess grandmaster: "The beauty of chess is it can be whatever you want it to be. It transcends language, age, race, religion, politics, gender, and socioeconomic background. Whatever your circumstances, anyone can enjoy a good fight to the death over the chess board."

## FUTURE INVESTMENTS

**HENRY YAN**  
STAFF REPORTER

Canis Lupus from Upper Canada College was among 10 finalists in Region 4 of the 2020-2021 Wharton Global High School Investment Competition (WGHS), selected by judges from Philadelphia-based Aberdeen Standard Investments, an asset management firm. A total of 50 top teams from around the world were selected from 972 final competition reports.

Starting in September 2020, the team went through an incredibly enriching journey of crafting a personalized investment portfolio. We started by learning all about analyzing markets, sectors, industries, and companies. Then, we developed our own unique stock selection strategy and investment philosophy. After countless rounds of conducting analysis and trading on the virtual platform, we decided upon a list of stocks to allocate our client's fund to in order to generate long-term profit with a suitable risk-level. This portfolio was eventually outlined in our final investment proposal write-up which we submitted on December 11, 2020.

Our team had meetings at least once a week, sharing our progress with each other and making decisions. This

included market allocation, sector elimination, industry selection, and stock selection.

All of these decisions were based on thorough qualitative and quantitative research and analysis. After each member conducted a stock analysis, they presented their findings in a pitch to the rest of the team, who acted as the 'devil's advocate.' Through voting, we carefully selected the companies that would go into the final proposal. There were multiple factors to consider: the company's risk, value, and growth potential. Aside from that, the entire proposal had to be balanced and diversified. After assessing the client's risk adversity levels and investment objectives, we determined that the portfolio had to consist of both growth and value stocks, with large-cap stocks acting as a defensive strategy to diversify risk.

Financial literacy is a crucial skill for students to acquire in these modern times. Informed investments in the stock market can bring major benefits to one's life. Anyone is capable of making extra income just from being stuck at home during the pandemic. For those interested in business as a career path, the WGHS competition brings valuable experience like no other. It is an exceptional way to gain hands-on experience in the world of

finance and investment, and provides a practical simulation of how real fund management organizations construct investment portfolios for their clients. However, the competition can be quite intimidating and perplexing without the necessary guidance.

The Canis Lupus team has created a club to help students take part in this competition and learn about investment and finance along the way. Through this club, we seek to share this opportunity with more talented young investors who may not have the knowledge or accessibility to the competition. Members will learn everything they need about the competition and investment in general, and form teams to participate in the 2021 WGHS competition with our guidance and support.

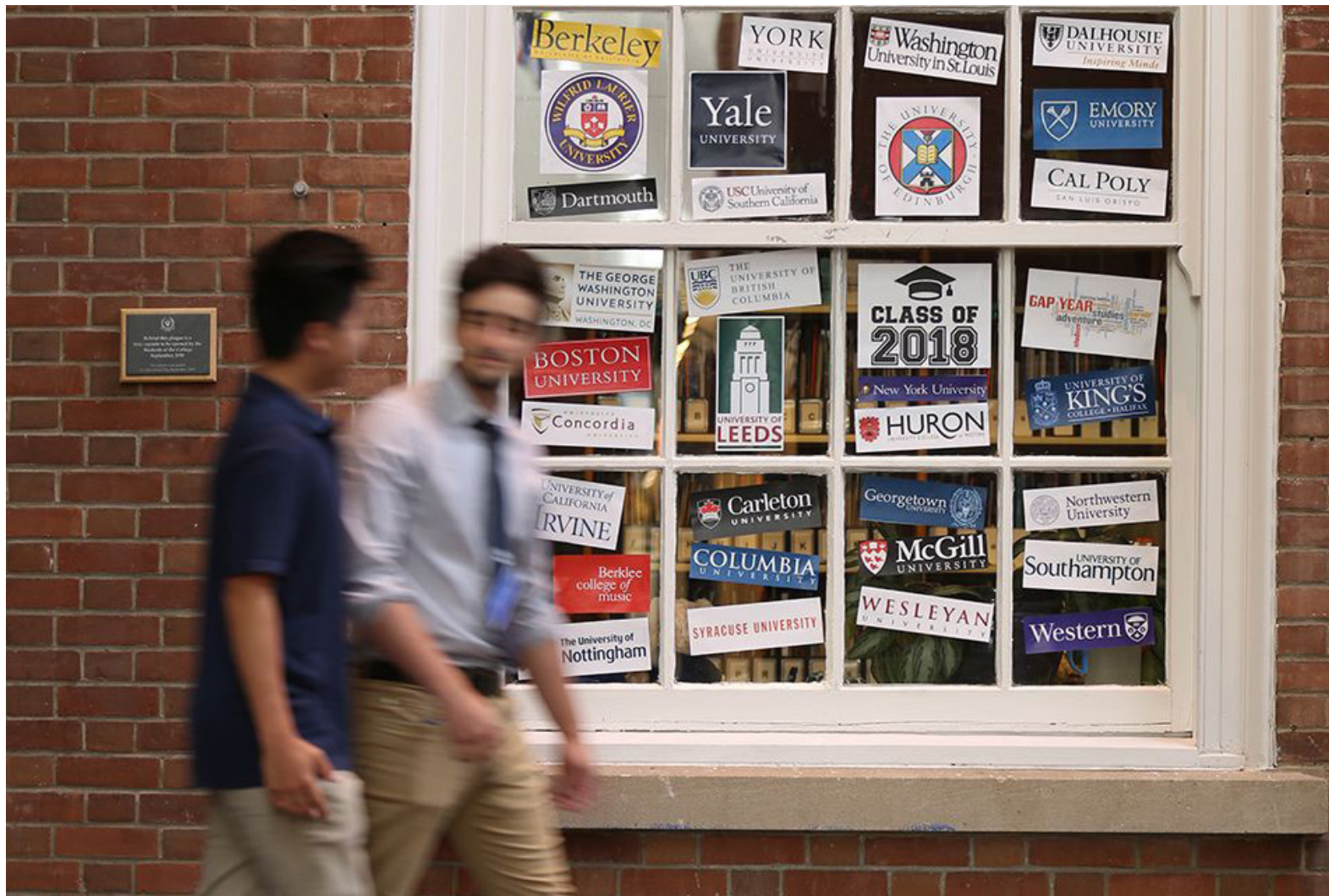
The Canis Lupus Investment Club has created a website which includes instructional videos on financial terms and concepts. (<https://henryyanhy.wixsite.com/canislupus>) The club will run meetings and seminars where the Canis Lupus team members will act as mentors for those looking to participate in the WGHS competition. If you would like to join the club, please feel free to check out @canislupus\_investment on Instagram or reach out to [henry.yan@ucc.on.ca](mailto:henry.yan@ucc.on.ca) through email.



# The Blue Page

Unfiltered voices from the UCC community

Managing University  
Applications in 2021:  
A **Year 12's** Perspective



As members of this year's graduating class, we decided to come up with a list of tips and advice from our own experiences. Of course, if you have any questions, feel free to contact us via email.

We'd like to begin with the impact of COVID-19 on university applications. While Canadian and UK application processes have hardly changed, US applicants will find one major difference: test optional policies. Many schools have already begun announcing that they will adopt test optional policies for the 2021-2022 admissions cycle. In the case of the University of California, they have entirely removed the SAT and ACT from their future applications, although there are some plans to create a new standardized test.

With that said, here's a compilation of what we think are the most important tips for different aspects of the university application process.

## Starting the Process

1. Find out which schools appeal to you the most. To do so, make sure you attend university sessions hosted either by UCC or the school itself.
2. It can be extremely beneficial to ask Old Boys or Y12s what their experience was and what advice they have. Your guidance counselor can help connect you with former students who have applied to the schools you are interested in.
3. Complete US and international supplementals during the

summer and September. Canadian supplementals usually aren't available until later in the year, and they usually don't take as much time as international applications.

4. Connect with your guidance counsellor early on so you're on the same page.
5. Write your first draft by yourself. Maintaining your own voice should be a priority throughout the process, and the best way to do this early on is to write your first draft by yourself.
6. Don't have too many people edit your essays. While it may be tempting to have as many people look at it as possible, this can actually take away your voice. College admissions officers want to learn how you, a high school student, look at the world and hear your voice.





## The Creative Process

1. It can be very difficult to recover from a messy or incoherent first draft. Making an outline/goal for each piece of writing helps you maintain an important focus.
2. Always keep in mind that you want to create the most complete picture of yourself that you can in the word count, so it can be helpful to have a list of your activities in front of you. Depending on the application, what you write will be everything the university knows about your non-academic life.
3. Brainstorming ideas that can combine activities through a shared aspect (character trait, theme, etc.) is particularly effective.
4. Get the words on the page: it can be easy to become paralyzed by constantly weighing whether your topic is good enough to write about. Write a first draft as soon as possible so you can see what you're working with. Worst case scenario, it's not very good and you write another. Best case scenario, you have a solid first draft that has ample time to be edited. It's usually the best case scenario.
5. Put yourself on a timer. It's really easy to spend way too much or way too little time on your application. Give yourself a window in which to write your essay. This also helps you work at a quicker pace without sacrificing your amount of material.

## Filling Out Forms

1. Creating a document with a list of all your application deadlines to help with organization.
2. The worst reason for your application to not work out is an inconsistency in a form. Attend the guidance OUAC workshop and any other workshops specific to what you're applying to, and keep the package to remember how to fill out the forms.
3. Get all of the admin stuff done 1-2 weeks before you plan to hand it in (which should be 2-3 days before the deadline, minimum). This helps prevent nasty surprises coming up at the last second. University websites crash all the time a few hours before the deadline.

## Content of Essays

1. Write about something that is authentic to you, not something that is really impressive. We know that this sounds cliché, but it actually is a fantastic piece of advice. If you've done something that is really impressive, your accomplishment should speak for itself in your resume. Admissions officers have seen a ton of applications, and know what's impressive and what's not. You won't be able to convince them that a particular co-curricular is groundbreaking in a 250-word essay. Instead, they'll want to know why your co-curriculars are important to you - they're not admitting resumes, they're admitting people.
2. Vigorously check grammar and readability. Getting an app like Grammarly around the time that

you're writing essays can save you from making a lot of careless grammatical mistakes. One would presume an admissions officer would appreciate such fine-writing when reading your essay. One or two mistakes won't make or break your application, but they can be easily fixed with careful proofreading.

3. It isn't a good idea to be consistently below the word limit for all of the prompts, but you don't always have to be exactly at the word limit. For instance, a lot of the "quick takes" style questions for US schools have 50 word limits. This isn't necessarily an invitation to write a paragraph - sometimes a quick phrase will grab attention and be more effective.
4. If it's academic in tone, avoid contractions.
5. When you're copying and pasting your writing into the Common App, it may appear as though there aren't any spaces between your paragraphs. There are.

## Final Thoughts

University applications, in conjunction with the first half of Y12, will probably be your greatest challenge at UCC. That's not to say that it needs to be especially stressful or difficult if you manage them properly. Yes, they take up a lot of time, but if you manage it correctly (e.g. getting them done early) you'll save yourself a lot of stress down the road. Obviously, virtually everyone hands in an application day-of or badly procrastinates at some point, but the important thing is that these don't develop into habits. Just try your best, take them seriously, and you'll be sailing through. Trust the process.