

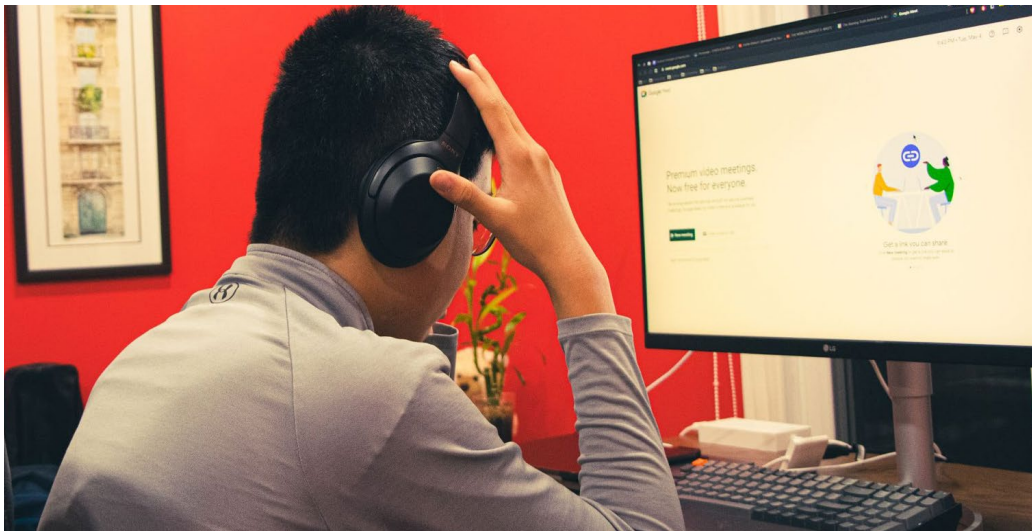
Living With Lockdown

June 2021 Issue

CONVERGENCE



STRATEGIES FOR STAYING PRODUCTIVE



RAYMOND LIU
CO-MANAGER

As the exam season is around the corner, I interviewed Ms. Barnes, the director of the CFL, regarding general studying strategies that work during the pandemic. Especially during this time, students have struggled with focusing and not procrastinating. In the interview below, Ms. Barnes gives insights and ideas cumulated from her experience. I will also be writing about what my day and strategy look like as a Year 10 student.

Interview with Ms. Barnes - Director of the Centre for Learning

What should our mindsets be going into the last month of school? How can we avoid feelings of being burnt out and keep motivated?

At this point in the year and the pandemic we're all feeling a little burnt out and it's hard to stay motivated, so I'd recommend students focus on maintaining a growth mindset. With exams moving to a "no hurt" assessment practice, this is the time for students to focus on skills development and learning (making a plan, trying a new study technique, focusing on units and con-

cepts that you've had difficulty with in the past, etc). I'd also recommend that students focus on their health and wellbeing by keeping a daily routine, getting dressed in the mornings, eating right, getting some exercise and prioritizing a good night's sleep.

It's also really important to remember that some stress around exams can be helpful as it will help you perform, but when that stress feels unmanageable or is impacting your health and wellbeing, knowing where to turn to to get help is important.

What are some strategies to keep focused while attending hours of online classes? Where and how should we learn?

- Finding a quiet place in your house (which can be difficult for some based on your family's circumstance)
- Working at a table or a desk
- Well lit environment (window, lights etc)
- Using the asynchronous periods to get up and stretch, move around, and get outside for a quick walk
- Keeping a task list or an agenda
- Planning your day

How can we maximize our evening study time and keep ourselves from procrastinating?

- Creating a daily plan
- Chunking out your work so it doesn't feel overwhelming
- Incorporating breaks every hour
- Knowing when to unplug and prioritize sleep

What are some ways in which we can balance heavy school work and relaxing? Any advice for time management?

- Again, creating a daily plan
- Chunking out your work
- Taking short and frequent breaks is needed
- Using a timer to monitor the amount of time you spend on each task and planning correctly
- Keeping your cell phone away from your work area and blocking distracting applications and sites if needed
- Prioritizing your wellbeing (when you are feeling good/healthy and well slept you're often more productive)
- Having an accountability partner - parent, sibling, or peer that helps keep you on track
- Rewarding yourself when you've accomplished your goals

My Thoughts on Being Productive

After years of watching productivity videos on YouTube, ironically while procrastinating, I have realized some key ideas which are extra-helpful for me to settle down and get to studying. Over the years, my procrastination has progressively gotten worse and to my dismay, the amount of work that I have has progressively increased.

I think that if you want to get good grades while having time to relax, which I think are the two essentials for me as a student, you have to resort to discipline. Sometimes, it is your own desires that haunt you the most. It is what you think should be the easiest to control that ends up being your biggest cause for stress.

This is what I have been doing every day after school for the past weeks since the April Break and how it helps:

- If I didn't get 7.5 hours of sleep the night before, I will take a 30 minute nap.
- Go for a run or play basketball for at least 30 minutes. Doing exercise has been shown to maximize focus. Also, if you are doing something enjoyable like playing basketball, it can be a substitute for YouTube.
- Organize my room and get some snacks. I always organize my environment and go do small tasks like washing

the dishes.

- Write down a list of tasks and think about why each task is beneficial. This can help me to be more motivated.
- Try to do first five minutes of a small task while listening to piano music. Often, working for a short period of time can put you in a state of studying that encourages you to go longer. Then when I'm starting on a larger task, I'll try to do it for five minutes with music to get the momentum going.
- Relax for 30 minutes and go to bed.

This list may seem daunting, but I am never able to follow it exactly. It is very hard to follow a strict schedule or even list of actions so I just try my best. In the times where I have gotten close to this strategy, I have been the most successful with getting work done efficiently. It is more important to try the strategies above and see which ones work the best for you. In the end, we as students have many common struggles which we can strive to overcome by sharing successes with one another.

STAYING SANE DURING THE LOCKDOWN



DEVLIN MONIZ
CO-MANAGER

This has been a very challenging lockdown for everyone. Not being able to see friends, peers, and family and having to drastically change your life for long periods of time can take its toll. UCC has been doing a lot to make our students' experiences as beneficial as we can; however, there are still many challenges that we can face.

Dr. Sorge, the school psychologist, has taken an interview from us and answered a variety of questions on how to stay sane in this lockdown. With the variety of mental health challenges students are facing, Dr. Sorge speaks about ways to stay healthy and happy in our current situation.

Convergence: This lockdown has been

tough on all of us. Public health stay-at-home guidelines have severely restricted where we can go and what we can do. These restrictions include sports and other group activities. What strategies would help students stay healthy and happy in general in these circumstances?

Dr. Sorge: Well unfortunately we have been through this a few times now, so my first recommendation would be to stick with what has worked in the past. That said, the general guidelines to help cope with these challenging times are to create a routine, stay active, and stay connected with others. Yes the order is to "stay-at-home", but we are permitted to go outside and exercise. Getting outside with a member of the same household is allowed and can be beneficial.

Convergence: We also remain physically isolated from family and friends. Pre-

viously reliable support networks are being strained by physical distancing. Are there any specific mental health strategies and coping mechanisms that we can adopt to fill in the emotional support gaps?

Dr. Sorge: The key thing to remember is that we are to physically distance ourselves and not socially distance. Staying connected to family and friends remains integral for staying healthy and mentally well. What has changed is how we can do that. I know more screen time is not what anyone is hoping for, but spending time on a video call with a friend or family members and being connected would boost emotional wellbeing. Going for a walk with a member of your household is an option. Going for a walk with a friend on a video call is also an option. We have to be creative in how we stay connected because our typical options are not there

(i.e., going out to a restaurant), but we can find new alternatives (i.e., friends order take-out together, cooking together, etc.).

Convergence: What are some common bad habits that high school students should avoid given the particularly negative impact they have during the lockdown and how can we avoid them?

Dr. Sorge: This is not only something to avoid during the lockdown, but I would always encourage students to try and avoid the Netflix and Youtube trap. Screen time is a problem given everything a student needs to do is now on a screen (e.g., learning, homework, connections, gaming, etc.). However, adding more screen time for Netflix and Youtube, though relaxing, is problematic. Now, I appreciate I sound like an old man yelling at everyone to stop watching TV, but the problem with adding more screen time for Youtube is that it makes it harder to sit down and complete homework as you have been staring at the same screen all day. I would encourage students to try to set limits on Netflix and Youtube and try to get outside a bit more often. Of course, I would also have to encourage students to avoid the use of substances to cope with whatever they are struggling with.

Convergence: What specific mindset(s) would be beneficial to students during this challenging time and what are the best ways to adopt them?

Dr. Sorge: We are now well into a whole year of uncertainty. We have hoped for things to improve and for a return to "normal." We are not there yet and it makes it difficult to keep finding motivation or to keep moving forward. First, it is important for all students to realize that everyone feels the same way. I hope there is some comfort in knowing that how you feel is how everyone feels and you are not alone in that regard. Second, in times of uncertainty it becomes all the more important to focus on what you are in control of. We are not in control of when the lockdown will end, but our role is to follow the public health guidelines. Your role as a student is to find the energy to complete the various tasks. Set small attain-

able goals. With larger tasks it can be daunting to see how we will approach it, and when we are struggling to find motivation it is challenging to even start. But break large tasks into smaller goals, write them down and cross them off as you complete them. Be sure to include goals outside of school work (e.g., going for a walk, talking to friends, etc.).

Convergence: What is the best way to organize a student's average day given the additional stresses and challenges of the lockdown? How do we find the right balance among remote learning, homework, exercise, using technology, family time and other competing interests?

Dr. Sorge: This will be dependent on the individual student and the various demands. Some students will struggle with the amount of screen time. Some will struggle with social isolation more than others. To start though, setting up a routine is key. Having a routine provides predictability which for most will be comforting to have. Your school routine is set, but there are still times that are flexible (e.g., asynchronous times). Do you go for a quick walk before the next class? Do you talk to a friend from the previous class? The balance is dependent on what you feel is missing or what

you may need more of in your day-to-day. Finding a balance between all the different demands is a challenge that adults continue to struggle with, so it is not necessarily lockdown-related. However, I agree there is additional stress as a result of the lockdown so building in

more relaxing and enjoyable activities is needed to help cope with stress. It has also been my observation that faculty at UCC are very understanding of the challenges their students are facing. If completing various tasks is an issue, ask for help.

Convergence: Every individual's needs and preferences are different. The circumstances where one student will thrive may prove challenging for another. How do we figure out what works best for ourselves in these circumstances? Where do we even begin to figure that out?

Dr. Sorge: It is challenging to figure that out, but not impossible. It starts with trying things out, but more importantly, being honest with yourself if it is working. With respect to trying things out, you will want to be consistent and give it some time to assess if it is working. For instance, if you want to be more active try taking a 15 minute walk every day for a week or two weeks. When we are testing out new routines and finding a balance, we need to make small tweaks and be consistent to see if it was a good change. After a week of walking 15 minutes, then you can assess 1) did this seem to help, 2) was it feasible (still met all other demands?), etc.

Changes needed to be gradual as it can be overwhelming to try and add too much or to really shake up a routine. Plus, if you add too much it might not be sustainable and it will be hard to see which small change was the more advantageous.

Convergence: How does a student struggling with mental health issues seek help and support?

Dr. Sorge: A student can start by reaching out to me, the Health Centre, their advisor, or an adult they trust. If the student wishes to speak to me, just send me an email (gsorge@ucc.on.ca). All students at UCC should know that there are a lot of adults here to support them.

Convergence: Is there anything else you would like to add that we should consider in helping us deal with the challenges of this pandemic?

Dr. Sorge: At this point we do not know when life will return to normal, but it will eventually. It has been a challenging year, but I would encourage everyone to celebrate that they have made it through a challenging year. There are lessons in how you were able to manage the past year, and looking back to see what helped will help with the current lockdown. There will also be lessons as to when you struggled. Knowing your personal warning signs and when you perhaps could have used some help is also very helpful information. If you feel the stress is building and you need support, please ask.

Convergence: Thank you so much for taking the time to answer our questions.

"TRY AND AVOID THE NETFLIX AND YOUTUBE TRAP"

INTERVIEW WITH OUR NEW HEAD STEWARD - ROBBIE EVANS

ALEX WANG & KEVIN HAN

SENIOR EDITOR & EDITOR

Convergence: In your opinion, what are the values needed in a successful student?

Robbie Evans: I think really what it comes down to is, oftentimes, habits. The COVID pandemic has prompted me to do a lot of reflection about myself because we have more free time and now we kind of have the choice. Often that choice is to do some work that we end up enjoying once we get into it, but seems a little bit tedious and annoying at first glance, or doing something that will be fun in the moment like playing a video game or scrolling through TikTok, and really not getting anything from it in the long term. Although that choice is very difficult, what stronger students can do is think about their future self and sacrifice some of their short-term pain and finish their work. Obviously, this comes within reason - I think all students, including strong ones, like to enjoy themselves and that's a really integral part. But having an outlet to look forward to and being able to spend time with friends is really important. Being able to think about your future self, even though it's hard to develop mentally as a teenager, is one of the most important things.

The second value would be curiosity. People who can learn to just enjoy whatever they are doing see the good in it, and enjoy their work. So yeah, those would probably be my two things: future thinking and curiosity.

Comvergence: What is your first order of business as head steward?

Robbie: Good question, so I think that the first order that has already taken place was just establishing a smoothly-run, well-oiled machine-like connection with the board. At the end of the day, being on the board is a team effort, and ensuring that we have people in a smoothed out and well working team is the most important thing. The first order was really just establishing a good environment for the team to work. Everyone has good ideas, and as Head

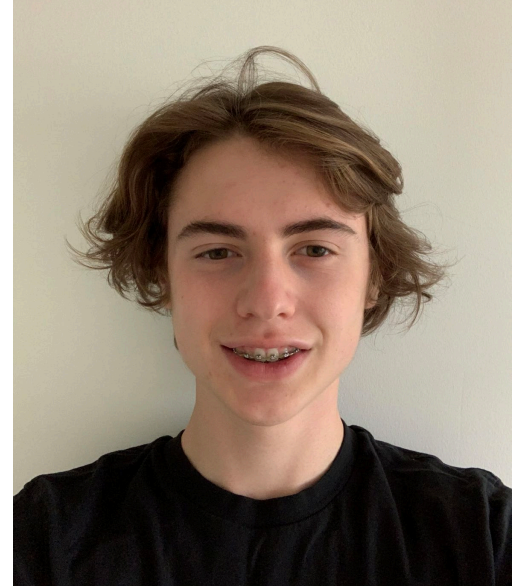
Steward my goal is to create an environment where everyone can improve the school as much as possible.

In terms of what is actually visible, the first order is something fun for school students. We've done some thinking, and it's really hard to do something like this online, during lockdown. But we've planned, with the help of a Year 9 student Liam Hilson, an activity on Instagram that promotes good spirit. Our idea is to encourage as many students as possible to send us pictures of things they enjoy during quarantine. For each post, Liam is going to donate to the Nature Conservancy of Canada. The idea is to encourage students to be outside. To incentivize students, we will make it a year level competition to see how many participants from each year can send us a post to be put on the UCC Board of Stewards' Instagram. It's important for everyone to really just be able to see each other as much as possible despite everyone being at home. So that's the first project we'll have at the end of May, something fun to lead us into June exams before we kind of get into the real business of next year.

Convergence: What is one thing you hope to accomplish by the end of next year?

Robbie: Good question. You know what, I've done a lot of reflection since the election too and I've also talked with the board about what they are interested in. I think that if there's one thing that I want to do by the end of the year, it'd be addressing a little bit around just the idea of masculinity and school culture at our school. I think that the single sex nature of schools in Toronto, especially private schools, come with a lot of value in terms of addressing gender stereotypes because oftentimes, gender stereotypes are perpetuated by the opposite gender - especially for those who are heterosexual. But it comes with its cons, one of which is that sometimes we are encouraging students to see the opposite sex in a way where the only occasion where they interact with the opposite sex is through dances and other events that are strictly social.

At UCC, we're really lucky we have events



and all sorts of projects that we work on collectively with fellow other single sex schools, but, I think there can be even more. One idea that I had is to encourage clubs to have a counterpart, let's call it a sister club, at Branksome, for example. Both clubs could operate normally every week at their own schools and then reconvene for a zoom meeting or in-person meeting next year with students from UCC and Branksome once a month. In this way, I think we'd be encouraging a more accurate representation of the workplace where all genders and all sexes can work together.

The board is pretty interesting, and we'll have help from any students who are also interested; it's not exclusive to only members of the board. We are interested in spearheading the conversation about healthy relationships and how our school culture acts with other genders and ensuring that we compete as much as possible against gender discrimination.

Convergence: Tell us a little bit about yourself - what are some of your interests?

Robbie: So the first thing that comes to mind is that I spend a lot of time these days running outside of school, so running has really been an outlook for me that I adopted especially during the pandemic. It's really been kind of a staple for my mental health, and the consistency throughout the week to get outside and see the sunshine is amazing

- just to kind of be my best doing something outside of the classroom. It's also kind of a nice time to see my teammates and just interact with them a little. I love spending time with my family, including my extended family. Oftentimes, especially in normal years, I would just visit my grandparents often and spend time with my younger cousins and ones that are my age. Aside from that, I'm pretty interested in Truth and Reconciliation, and specifically just different perspectives that operate today – the ones that aren't heard. This goes for history too – I'm interested in understanding untold history, so that's something I do a bit of work with outside of school as well.

Convergence: Do you have a personal motto?

Robbie: One motto I've been thinking about and using recently is: "be fearless". That extends for a lot of different situations. Whether it means jumping into the work I'm doing academically – not being scared of the hard work and enjoying the satisfaction afterwards – or speaking up. It happens so often in day-to-day life where you have to put yourself out there and do things that make you uncomfortable. I think it really makes you grow, especially during the pandemic. I think nobody's a stranger to comfort. It's really easy to go into an endless cycle of: sitting on your couch, doing things like watching Youtube, and being comfortable. In the long-term I've learned (partially the hard way at the start of the pandemic) that it's just not a good "strat". I think, within reason, putting

"BE FEAR- LESS"

yourself in uncomfortable positions just makes life more exciting and rewarding in the long term.

Convergence: If you could have any superpower, what would it be?

Robbie: Under the lines of myself being a runner, it'd have to be super speed: just being able to get anywhere as fast as I want, speeding around. That'd be my favourite. I think it's a close competition between super speed and flying but some form of advanced transportation would be my choice.

Convergence: Are there any obstacles you foresee with this year's Board of Stewards? How do you plan to overcome them?

Robbie: I think adaptability in general is going to be the hardest challenge that might face us, because even though we have more certainty than last year, there will probably be lots of curveballs next year. We might go back into lockdown (hopefully not) but just being able to make the most with whatever situation we have and staying true to our values and just mission statement for the whole year will be crucial in order to deal with whatever comes our way.

Convergence: Which teacher has had the most profound impact on you and why?

Robbie: There have been so many, so it's really hard to choose. I think a lot of my growth (and for most people) happened in the earlier years. The person

who comes to mind is Ms. Bowker—who is unfortunately not at the school anymore; she was one of the leaders for the Amnesty Club when I first joined in Year 8, when I was still pretty timid and knew nothing about the Upper School. She made an environment that was really comfortable for me—a safe learning space—regardless of how little I knew compared to people who were two to three years older than me. Miss Bowker was someone who fostered my interests in Truth and Reconciliation as early as Year 8. She gave me a small group of guys who introduced me to the Upper School and made me feel comfortable here.

Convergence: What song best describes you?

Robbie: Hmm... I gotta go to my Spotify Library real quick. That brings me back to a song I haven't listened to for a year or more, but it was one of my favourites in grade five or six—especially before a sports event. It's "Lose Yourself" by Eminem, which has a very clear message about soaking up whatever opportunity you got and enjoying it.

Convergence: Who are you rooting for in the Champions League Final?

Robbie: I'm glad you asked and it's a very obvious answer. Being a descendant of several generations of Man City fans outside of Manchester, the legend has it that my great-great-grandfather worked on a sailboat deck with a player who played for Man City back in the days. Also, I'm predicting Phil Foden is going to score the winning goal. So it's obvious; Manchester City is winning it this year.

MR. ELGIE'S 22-YEAR JOURNEY AT NORVAL

DANIEL LU
SENIOR EDITOR

Since joining UCC in Year 7, I've made some of my most cherished memories on our outings to Norval. The pristine forests and starry nights of the outdoor campus never ceased to amaze me. From hastily searching for bark to start a bonfire in the damp, cold wilderness to basking in the glowing embers late at night with s'mores in hand, each trip was unquestionably unique. I recall falling

sick at Norval two years ago and having my trip cut short. While I was quite disappointed at the time, I will never forget the kindness and warmth of all the staff members who looked after me; they make Norval a truly magical place.

For the past 22 years, Mr. Elgie has been the face of UCC's Norval campus. Selfless, resolute, and unwavering in his dedication to outdoor education, he is the physical embodiment of the memories we've all made at Norval. In celebration of his

retirement after decades of service to the College, I sat down with Mr. Elgie for one final interview. Although this chapter of UCC history is sadly coming to a close, Mr. Elgie and his many notable contributions will without a doubt influence generations of students to come.

Convergence: How did you join UCC? What positions have you held over the years?

Mr. Elgie: I started at UCC as a student

in Year 7 (like you) in September 1975. I started working at UCC in 1999 as the Norval Director, and have held that position ever since.

Convergence: How did you know you wanted to work at Norval?

Mr. Elgie: I taught High School science and environmental science in the Ontario public school system between 1989 and 1999. I had also worked for many years as a field instructor and course director with Outward Bound, both here in Canada and overseas. In 1999, when I read that the Director of Norval position was vacant, I immediately knew that I wanted to apply. Going to Norval was my favourite part of UCC as a student. The blend of outdoor play, field science and time in nature with friends really resonated with me. I think Norval had a significant influence on my decision to pursue my B. Sc in Environmental Science and eventually to becoming a teacher.

Convergence: What are some of your most memorable moments from your time at UCC?

Mr. Elgie: I have many memories from my first trip to Norval when I was in Grade 7. I remember camping out down near the river - something that was a very new experience for a city boy. I remember playing in the pine plantations when the trees were only a little bigger than Christmas trees. It is strange to think they were ever that small, as those pine trees are now all easily 15 metres or more in height. I remember going on a nature hike with Mr. Litteljohn, and him showing us a plant called "blood-root". I remember this clearly, because of the cool way that the tuberous root of the plant leaked a red sap when he cut it open. I have done that same demonstration hundreds of times for students over my 22 years at Norval, and it always reminds me of my first trip back in 1975. And I vividly remember Mr. Baldwin coming up to Norval and how he trapped and banded birds with us. I did not realize at the time what an amazingly unusual thing that was. I only found out later in life that Mr. Baldwin was quite famous in the field of biological science, and that his 20+ years of bird banding at Norval was considered very valuable data by other scientists.



As a teacher, I have so many favourite moments, such as:

- Hosting the Winter Wizard's birthday party for the SK students every year.
- The Year 4 Cycling trip. After 22 years, it is still SO amazing.
- Making maple syrup with Y5 students. I especially love when we have cookout pancake breakfasts, with fresh syrup poured straight out of the evaporator.
- Canoeing down the Credit River with Y9 students.
- Celebrating the 100th anniversary of Norval in 2013.
- About 10 years ago, an Old Boy asked if he could propose to his girlfriend at Norval. He set up a scavenger hunt through the woods that led to a picnic blanket and a ring. They are now married, and still visit Norval regularly.
- I remember coming to Norval in Year 7 with my Form Teacher, David Bacon. David was still teaching at UCC in the early 2000s, and I always enjoyed running programs for his classes. There was a cool synchronicity in me teaching with the teacher who first brought me to Norval.

Convergence: What are you most proud of? Do you have any regrets?

Mr. Elgie: The people responsible for looking after Norval before 1999 are a "Who's who" in UCC history: Alan Stephen, Alan Harris, Bruce Litteljohn, David Thompson and of course Don Kawasoe. Anything I accomplished in my 22 years was because I "stood on the shoulders of giants". I can only hope that I did justice to their work and vision for Norval.

I am so happy that we built the High Ropes course in 2000. It has been a great addition to Norval. I love the Sugar Shack that we built in 2010 with the support of donations from the class of 1982.

I am very proud of how the Norval program has grown during my 22 years here. Over 3 times as many students come to Norval now than when I first started. I am also proud of the many outstanding teachers who have worked at Norval over the years, and how they have expanded and improved Norval in so many ways.

My one regret is that we do not see as many Upper School trips to Norval as I would like. I worked a lot with teenagers at Outward Bound and when I taught high school, so I know that outdoor education has a lot to offer high school students. The challenge is that UCC has so much going on, it is hard to find time for students to be away. Between 2004 and 2010 we used to offer a six-day Outdoor Adventure program for Year 9 students, which included cycling, rock climbing, white-water canoeing, hiking, environmental service and much more. It counted as the Adventurous Journey component for every student's Duke of Edinburgh Award. I loved that program, and was very sad when it was cancelled.

Convergence: What are your plans for retirement?

Mr. Elgie: My wife and I will be moving to our log home near Perth. There are maple trees to tap and lakes & rivers to paddle. I am looking forward to all the new adventures and experiences that lie just over the next hill.

Convergence: As Norval's Director, what's the funniest moment you've witnessed? Are there any secrets you'd like to spill?

Mr. Elgie: In my very first year as Norval Director, I was running a game of "Instincts for Survival" with a group of Grade 4 students in the red pine plantation area. (That's the game where people pretend to be herbivores and carnivores,

and run around trying to tag/catch their prey). Anyhow, as I was walking around supervising the game near the edge of the property, I noticed someone crouched down in a squatting position. As I got closer, I realized that it was an elderly man with his pants around his ankles, and he was having a bowel movement. I was shocked, because there were 40 students all running around the forest, and any one of them could have come across him. I asked him what was going on, and in a thick German accent he said "I am very sorry, it was an emergency!" Fortunately, there were no students in that area at the time, and he politely left after doing his business.

Convergence: Do you have a final message you'd like to give to the UCC community?

Mr. Elgie: Norval is a special place. My trips to Norval in the 1970s have made a huge difference in my life! Over my 22 years, I have spoken to hundreds of Old Boys who would share memories of their visits to Norval, some from as far back

as the 1930s. When they spoke of their time at Norval, their eyes would light up as they would tell me about adventures they shared with friends, the fun they had playing night games and the lessons they learned long ago and still remember. Many Old Boys have gone on to careers in environmental professions. Many more remembered the lessons they used at Norval, and have used them to help make good environmental decisions in their lives. I hope that one day, I will meet up with you at Association Day and you can share your Norval stories with me, and maybe tell me what you have done - big or small - to help care for the earth.

Convergence: Please feel free to add anything you would like to say!

Mr. Elgie: Being Norval Director for 22 years has been the best career I could ever imagine. It allowed me to merge my passions for environmental science and outdoor education. The best part by far has been the people. The Norval staff over the years have all been exceptional

teachers, and many are still dear friends today. As Norval Director I was in the unique position to work with most of the faculty at the Prep, many from the Upper School and all the students from SK - Y10. Boys in Y12 today who started in SK could have spent upwards of 60 days at Norval since they started at UCC. It has been such a gift to be able to see so many wonderful students grow up over the years, between visits.

This is a song I used to sing at the final campfire of the summer when I was a camp counsellor in the 1970s. The words describe exactly how I feel:

*I must be on my way, must be moving along.
But as I go, I'll sing this song.
No roof for me, no roof have I.
But I own the stars, and the open sky.
One thing that I know, and I know it's true.
I'm a better man for the knowing of you.*

Until our paths cross again!

Mr. Elgie

INTERVIEW WITH A SPRINT PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

DEVLIN MONIZ
CO-MANAGER

Sprint, a new innovative program has come to UCC for its second year. It has influenced many people and broken many students' preconceived confines of what they were able to invent and create. UCC teams had wonderful experiences in the design process of a new invention. Evan Rosenberg, a Sprint participant, speaks upon his experiences with the program.

Convergence: Can you please give an overview of the sprint program? How many UCC teams were registered?

Evan Rosenberg: It was about eight weeks long and we would meet once a week for an hour and a half every Saturday. The program would bring in experts in the fields that we worked on for our project. An example of a field would be marketing and financials. We discussed how we can utilise the techniques they were mentioning when we were creating our business. I forgot to mention, we started off with coming up with an idea

for our company. In this process instructors helped us ideate this and student mentors helped us refine the idea. From there, the instructors helped us focus on certain fields like financials and marketing. On the final day of the program we did a huge presentation. It was a three minute quick pitch of what we were doing, how we project the company to work and things like that. Then we were ranked and there was an award ceremony.

Around five UCC teams participated. The program included Branksome and other public schools of which I do not remember their names. There were eleven total teams.

Convergence: What were some of the most unique, useful and innovative inventions?

Evan: There were definitely a lot of good ones and I won't rank them as all of them were good. The one that came first was a foot hammock for zoom calls. It is a foot rest you would hang underneath your desk to relieve back pain. Another

group came up with sustainable menstrual products and I thought that was really interesting. One team was providing student athletes with coaches through a platform where you could connect with coaches at a cheap cost. That was pretty cool as I play baseball and it is sometimes difficult to find the right coaches, especially when you are just starting off.

Convergence: What were some of the skills you developed from this incubator?

Evan: I went into it with minimal business knowledge. I had an idea of how we could start a company but the experts gave us a real world perspective that I wouldn't have otherwise had. You can look at the numbers and you can have a pretty good sense of what you need to do but it takes someone that's been in your field for a long time to understand and critique you and really develop your business model.

Convergence: What changes and restrictions were put in place due to the pandemic?

Evan: This was only the second year of the Sprint program. Last year was just a one day thing and this was a big expansion. However if we were in person we would have been meeting in person every week which would have made a huge difference because the mentoring would have been a bit more specific - online it's hard, sometimes members of your team can't make it. There was a boy on my team from Kenya, and it was really difficult with the different time zones and everything. If we were all at school it would have been a lot easier to collaborate and with other groups as well. Online, we did not collaborate with other groups. We were all on the same Zoom call but it was just a talk from the experts and we didn't really get a chance to talk to each other.

Convergence: What did the experts talk about?

Evan: There were week-long periods where we would speak about different things. Some weeks would be marketing or financials or social media. We would always do a Q&A session right after and we would also go into breakout rooms right after and discuss with our team what we learned.

Convergence: Have the winners been announced yet? If so, who are they?

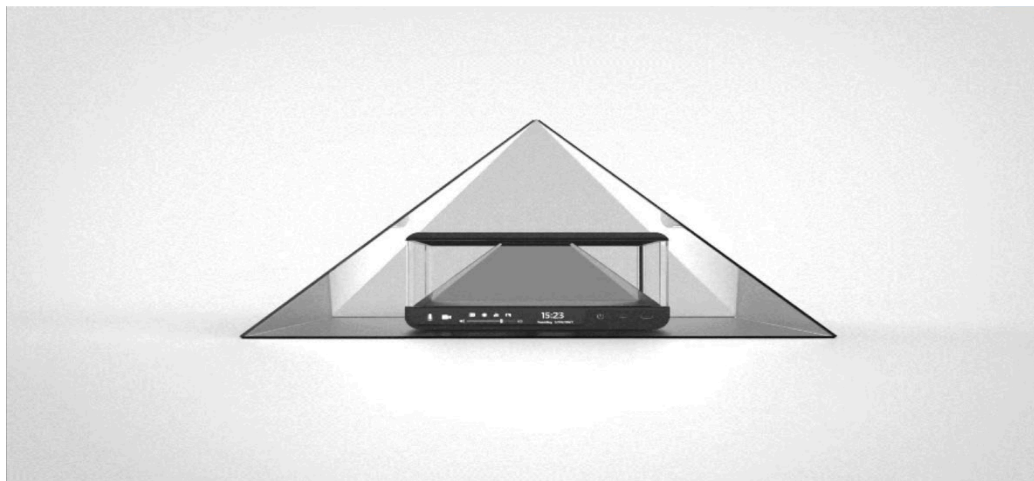
Evan: Yeah, so it was the foot hammock, sustainable menstrual products and poli-match - a student mentoring platform in that order.

Convergence: What rank did your team place?

Evan: We placed in fourth.

Convergence: Out of the four segments: ideation, marketing and prototyping, financials and the finale, which of these did you have the most success with and which one was the most challenging? In your opinion which one is the most fun?

Evan: I felt the prototyping was the most difficult because we were working with highly new and innovative technology and a lot of research hasn't been done in the field. So, at first we were contemplating actually making the 3D hologram out of these materials but with the time constraint we decided just to do some 3D renders. It was challenging to make that



decision and also creating the 3D renders was quite difficult. But it was also pretty rewarding because it provided a pretty nice final product.

The finale was definitely the most enjoyable. It was fun to see the amazing inventions everyone created.

Convergence: How was the finale set up?

Evan: We would have three minutes each to present. There would be a panel of judges composed of the different speakers from the past events and also the Sprint head, Mr. Jugoon. After everyone presented there was a twenty minute delay where the judges were deciding the winners. After this, they announced it. The whole finale took about an hour and a half.

Convergence: How did you build it?

Evan: We did not end up building it but we have all the plans to go out and build it. Hopefully with the award money we got we can go and get the materials. But we just created the 3D renders.

Convergence: What is your final product, what is its purpose and how does it work?

Evan: We were trying to make the most immersive video communication platform there is. Zoom frankly is just not cutting it. You obviously feel that you are missing a sense of reality; it is not the same as being in person. Holochat is a full scale 3D holographic cube which takes the video you are using and converts it to a holographic format. Holograms are very special because as you shift your perspective, the perspective of the speaker chang-

es as well. While you are sitting in front of your computer, if you shift your head from left to right, the view that you see of me does not change at all. With a hologram it would make it seem way more real and size is also a factor.

Convergence: How would you go about building it if you could?

Evan: The assembly would not be too complicated as we know which materials we need. We also have a very deep understanding of holograms and optics.

Convergence: What message would you give the students at UCC to encourage them to participate in the Sprint program next year?

Evan: If you have ever had an idea that you think could change the world or at least impact some people in a positive manner, go to Sprint because you can learn the foundational concepts you need to take this dream to the next level and make it a reality.

Convergence: Is there anything else you would like to add?

Evan: No, it was just really fun.