

CONVERGENCE

CHAT GPT



02.23

The Blue Page

What is Chat GPT's place at UCC and how will it change learning?

RAHUL NANDA
MANAGING EDITOR

The rise of OpenAI and ChatGPT has generated intense discussion by teachers, administrators, and students surrounding its use in an educational environment such as UCC. While a piece of technology that has the ability to synthesize information in human-like fashion at first glance seems relatively dangerous, especially within the realm of academic dishonesty, does the discussion simply just end there? Is that it?

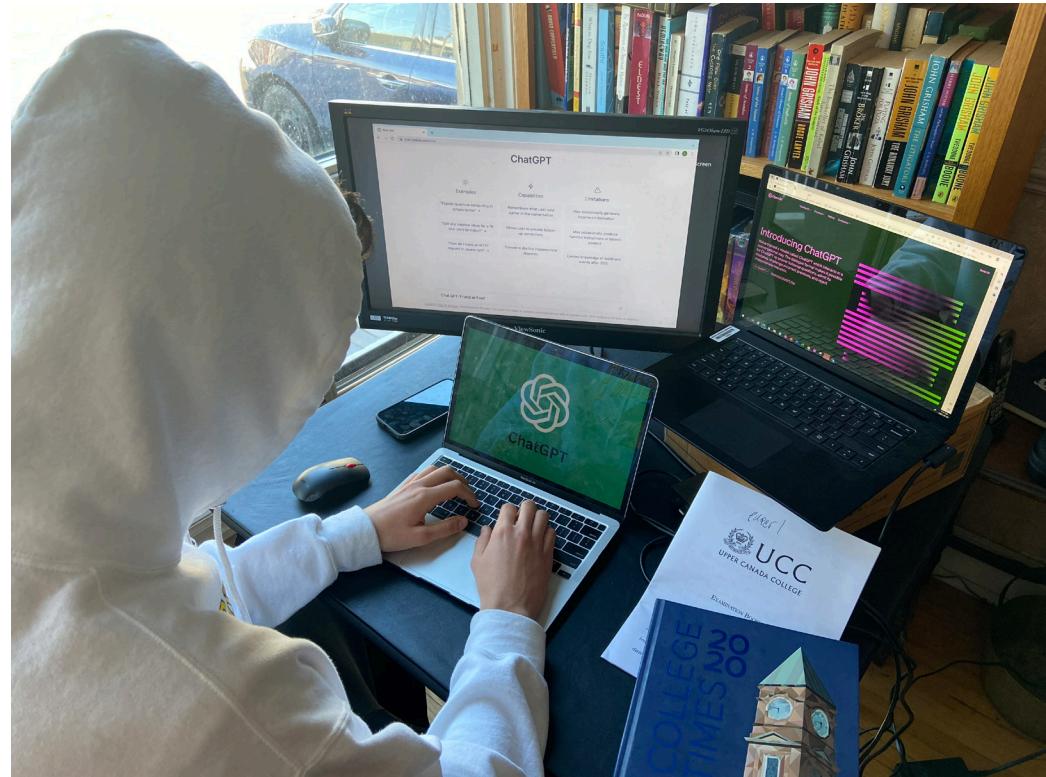
Students at UCC continuously rely on technology for assistive purposes in and outside the classroom: a spell-checker, a simple arithmetic calculator, a translator, and even a graphing calculator. We even have an entire higher-level math course in the Diploma Programme that specializes in teaching students methods of using a graphing calculator to compute equations, formulas, and more. Can the same be done with ChatGPT? Is it possible to use it for good in an educational setting? If so, when? If not, why?

To find answers to these questions, I interviewed two thought-leaders at UCC: Philosophy teacher **Mr. Terence Dick** and Theory of Knowledge teacher **Mr. Andrew McCubbin**.

In this article, I compiled a few of the responses from each teacher untouched to ensure their voice and opinion are not altered in any way in the writing of this article.

Do you think ChatGPT can be used for good at all in school?

Mr. McCubbin: Anything can be used for good and anything can be used for evil if you're an ethicist. What are its positive qualities? If we use it in a formative manner, in order to show students how to take



ideas and shape them into something that is logical, then that is good.

Then, there are some students out there that really struggle with logic equations, such as coming to the conclusion that A equals C, if A equals B, and B equals C. We can make claims and that's fine. But the problem is that ChatGPT is able to make the connections between those variables. So when you go to write an essay, it is showing you how to structure your ideas. But then when there's a chance to show off your knowledge, you should be the one structuring your ideas. So yes, it can be used as a tool in the classroom in order to help with structure, especially with students who have certain learning exceptionalities involving organization. But in terms of on a summative, when it's time to show off what you know, that's a no.

Mr. Dick: Well, I think all tools can be used for good and for bad. As someone

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who teaches writing and values it as a skill and as an art form, my initial reaction was looking towards the harm that it could do at a time when writing itself, I'd argue, is suffering. By reading, I know that there are lots of commentators and teachers I follow who said it's positive. There is also a lot of concerns that it can have a negative impact. Inarguably, however, it is going to change how we do things at school. Immeasurably.

It depends though. One comparison of ChatGPT is a calculator. Calculators are very helpful in math problems. But, they're not very helpful for a kid in grade three, who is learning their timetables. There's still value in learning the fundamentals—assuming most math teachers see that.

In contrast, for someone who's doing a law degree, it's helpful because it can synthesize a bunch of information relatively quickly and make it readable for a student

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who's in high school. My worry is that writing is not just about learning how to write in school. It's about developing critical thinking skills. ChatGPT is not great at that. It's important for students to do the labor of writing and researching that the AI is doing. In terms of whether it could be helpful, I think people seem to find it most helpful when they're researching.

Do you think it can be used as its own resource, such as Google? Can it be used as a way to find quick answers to questions you would normally scavenge the internet for? It seems like it can be just another resource or article you read when you are researching for a project or a class.

Mr. McCubbin: One of the things that we discuss in French class is the idea of human ingenuity; looking at whether technology makes your life better and/or easier. Also, what is the difference between making something easier and better? ChatGPT could easily do the research for you. But does that actually teach you how to do the research yourself? No. At some point in our lives, we're going to have to go find information. Whatever it is, wherever we are in the world, at some point, we're going to have to go find information. And if we want to synthesize something original, then we're going to have to have the skills and the competencies to be original.

I had a teacher in high school who used to talk about the difference between searching and researching. Researching is finding

something that somebody has already discovered. Searching is finding new knowledge, something that's original, something that's yours. By relying too much on artificial intelligence in order to help us organize our research, we're just doing research, and we're not searching. If we start programming artificial intelligence to come up with original ideas, we could all just sit on the couch and get fat. We can't rely on that. We have to progress and move forward and make our lives better as human beings. So yes, ChatGPT will make your life easier, but does that make your life better? No. For me, I would trust more in searching for knowledge as opposed to researching other people's knowledge.

Mr. Dick: It depends on what you do with it. Your generation already has Google. Based on the evidence that I see, most students don't use that very effectively or critically. As you said, everyone is at the stage of synthesizing information. The skill that is important to develop at school is being able to navigate a resource such as Google and assess the sources it gives you. Also, to make judgments about it. What happens with the Google algorithm is that you allow it to highlight certain links and put them at the top of the page. We don't often go beyond that. That kind of shopping out the labor of research to an algorithm (ChatGPT) means that you're limited by the algorithms' limits.

One of the other analogies I make with it is that it's like having the option to have pre-chewed food. Yes, the labor of chewing

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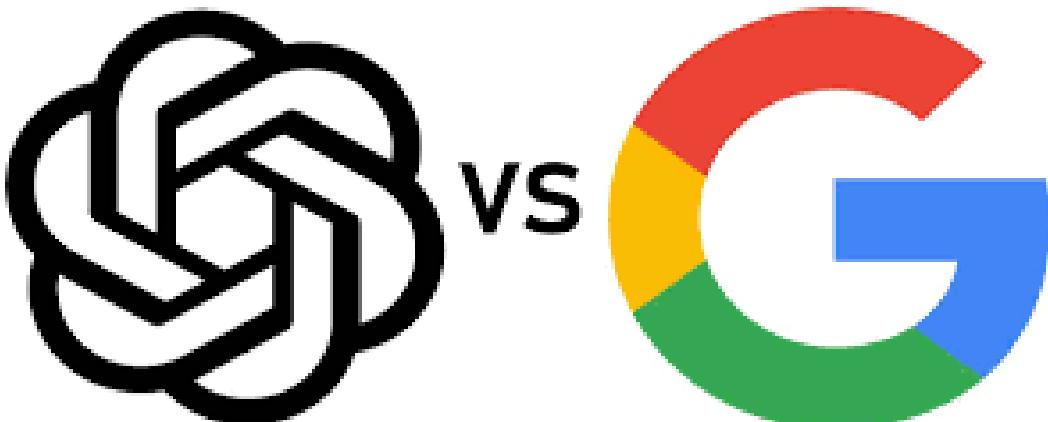
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is done for you, but you'll miss out on the labor of the activity itself. You'll miss out on the labor of doing research. I'm speaking as someone who loves being in libraries and spent a good part of my education lost in libraries. There are ways in which that experience of researching yourself is very important, if not essential, to learning. When we subcontract that to a machine - a statistical generator - we really do lose that. I'm going to be pessimistic. I'm sure you're expecting that. I'm sure there are positives but I see it as a shortcut.

The one positive I heard was from a journalist saying that if I wanted a quick summary on a topic that I'm researching, I could do this rather than wade through articles that Google provides for me. That's a short journalistic shortcut. Of course, a journalist would still do firsthand research to write a serious article. So there are things that shortcuts are good for and things that they're not. And I don't know if you want to use a shortcut for your education.

Is ChatGPT going to change how you teach?

Mr. McCubbin: In the short term, I'm going to be doing things that require writing check-ins. In TOK, for example, we have the essay planning document, then you have your draft, and then you have your final essay, and then there's a check in. If there's a difference between your final essay, your planning document, and what you submitted in your draft, I'm going to





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investigate why.

In the long-term, once we are proactive, then we might start teaching how to use this technology or how to develop skills so we don't have to rely on that technology. In the short term, I'll be reacting and probably changing the way I assess. But in the long term, I think that there is an opportunity to be proactive. What I would love to do in response to a tool like ChatGPT is instead of actually testing you on an essay, for instance, have you do a thesis defense of your essay and an oral conversation. Instead of marking your essay and the way you organize your ideas and paper, we are going to quiz you about some of your points, and have that be the summative. This is already used in many PhD programs because you want to make sure that the person who did that research can actually explain that research and has developed original thought.

In terms of the extended essays (EE), one of the big things that we have to coach students to do is to not rely on your research as much. Instead, try to contribute something that is original to the area of knowledge or to the discipline. There's a sense of the scholarly community there. I think that would be a really interesting way to approach it.

Mr. Dick: The initial response amongst the teachers I talked to was discussing how exams are important as the immediate recourse to avoid students cheating in this manner. That may be true, but there's always ways around this kind of technology, if you are willing to go so far to cheat.

The obvious tactic is to have oral exams more often, or chunk up the work so you have to hand in notes and drafts to make

the working process visible, which teachers do already. Though my feeling is that the student loses out on the experience of having an extended amount of time, rather than an hour in an exam period, to reflect on research, develop, revise, and craft a complex piece of writing. Again, sounding pessimistic, it will only limit what we can do to assess students.

Do you have any other thoughts or comments?

Mr. McCubbin: In terms of the intersection between ethics and AI, sometimes we get caught up asking what is the morality of a Chatbot or wondering what is it going to tell us? I think that's less important right now. That's where the conversation gets hung up. What is more important now is that we think about our core values as a school and as individuals - in other words virtue ethics. What are our core principles that we value over anything else? So if we want to be resilient, we have to practice resilience. If we want to be disciplined, we have to practice discipline. If we want to be truthful, we have to practice truthfulness. Students have to really consider why they're here at UCC and really consider what their intrinsic motivation and education is. Is their motivation purely extrinsic? Is it purely grade based? If it is purely outcome based, I feel sorry for you because you're never going to be fulfilled that way. Whereas if it is intrinsic, we strive to teach ourselves resilience and how to learn, we can only accomplish those by practicing them.

The other thing I want to mention is the concept of a calculator. I had a really smart student the other day who loves to argue, talk to me on how this particular piece of equipment is like a calculator. I just want

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to underline that that argument is completely flawed. Calculators provide us with information. They don't synthesize knowledge. I could look something up in a dictionary, Google Translate, or an encyclopedia, and that's providing me information. We're using it as a tool. What this particular artificial intelligence is doing is it's taking information and drawing links between them. That is the process by which we are judged in school. I strongly believe that intelligence is our ability to make links between ideas and information, and ChatGPT is already doing that for us. The reason we're here at school is to learn how to make connections between A and B. Calculators don't make a connection between A and B. The calculator just gives us the A or it gives us the B. It's up to us to draw the line between A and B. However, this Chatbot is drawing the lines for us. That's the danger—the danger that we don't descend into idiocy and rely on extrinsic things to make links for us.



I think that's the danger of AI. Also, they might conquer the world one day and realize that humans are actually useless!

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Chat GPT: Friend or Foe?

Unfiltered Voices from the UCC Community:

A Year 11's Perspective



NOAH PILNITZ
OPINION EDITOR

ChatGPT has taken the world by storm. In a mere 2 weeks, the chatbot has amused students and appalled teachers. So much was the furor that the administration has even issued a stern warning against even considering using ChatGPT for assignments. But is all this furor justified?

Make no mistake: ChatGPT is an impressive achievement in AI technology. It produces astonishingly - or perhaps, alarmingly - humanlike sentences and phrases. However, a closer look at the chatbot's answers reveal that although fluent, the text is monotone and unimaginative, and the ideas are plain, evident, and self-repeating.

The chatbot might be able to summarize a story, but would never be able to discuss how dialogue represents the conscience of Macbeth, or how the hero's journey limits the perspectives of other characters. I encourage you to try entering these prompts into the chatbot. The result is a nice-sounding, but substanceless essay, a regurgitation of the most popular study guides offering little in the way of innovative thought or depth. The essays ChatGPT spit out more closely resemble a Wikipedia article with every other line removed than a demonstration of a high-school academic discourse.

Given ChatGPT's inability to generate high quality and thoughtful content, why has the school shown so much concern over its use? Well, the UCC Academic Honesty policy states that the unauthorized use of aids is considered cheating. What counts as an authorized aid depends, of course, on the assignment at hand. For example, calculators might not be appropriate on a math test, but are allowed and encouraged on a Real-world Criterion D or an IA.

In these cases, a calculator is a tool that allows students to focus on the more profound aspects of math beyond low-level calculations. Entire fields of modelling and statistics are accessible to students due to the power of calculators. In fact, much of the IB Applications and Interpretations Math course revolves around harnessing the power of the calculator.

Likewise, ChatGPT should be seen as a tool to help students structure a simple essay or to give inspiration, for the times when students are staring at a blank page. At a high school level, learning should not come from the mechanical reproduction of an essay format, but rather from critical thinking and thoughtful ideas. If a student tried to cheat an assessment with ChatGPT, their mark should reward them accordingly, because having the proper 5-paragraph format down to the sentence wasn't the goal of the assignment.

In the coming weeks, as we get more familiar with ChatGPT, I hope that the attitude towards this chatbot is more open-minded. Students and teachers should explore and discuss the powers and limitations of the technology. No doubt, as Artificial Intelligence progresses, new chatbots will produce ever higher-quality work. It's impossible to ban students from ever using chatbots. But what is possible, is a receptive discussion around the pitfalls but also the benefits of using technology in the pursuit of learning.



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ChatGPT by Chat GPT

Unfiltered Voices from the UCC
Community:

A Robot's Perspective



CHAT GPT

ROBOT REPORTER

In recent years, the development of advanced language processing technology has given rise to a new generation of tools for language generation, including ChatGPT. This AI-powered chatbot has the ability to generate human-like text in real-time, making it a valuable asset for a variety of applications.

One area where ChatGPT has garnered attention is in the field of academic honesty. With its ability to quickly generate written text, some have raised concerns that ChatGPT could be used by students to cheat on their assignments or exams.

While it is certainly possible for ChatGPT

to be misused in this way, it is important to note that the responsibility for academic honesty lies with the students themselves. Using ChatGPT or any other language generation tool to cheat on assignments is a form of academic dishonesty, and students who engage in such behavior risk facing severe consequences from their schools.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that ChatGPT is not a perfect tool for cheating. While it can generate text that sounds human-like, it is not capable of understanding the context or meaning of the text it generates. This means that students who attempt to use ChatGPT to cheat on assignments may end up with text that is nonsensical or otherwise unhelpful.

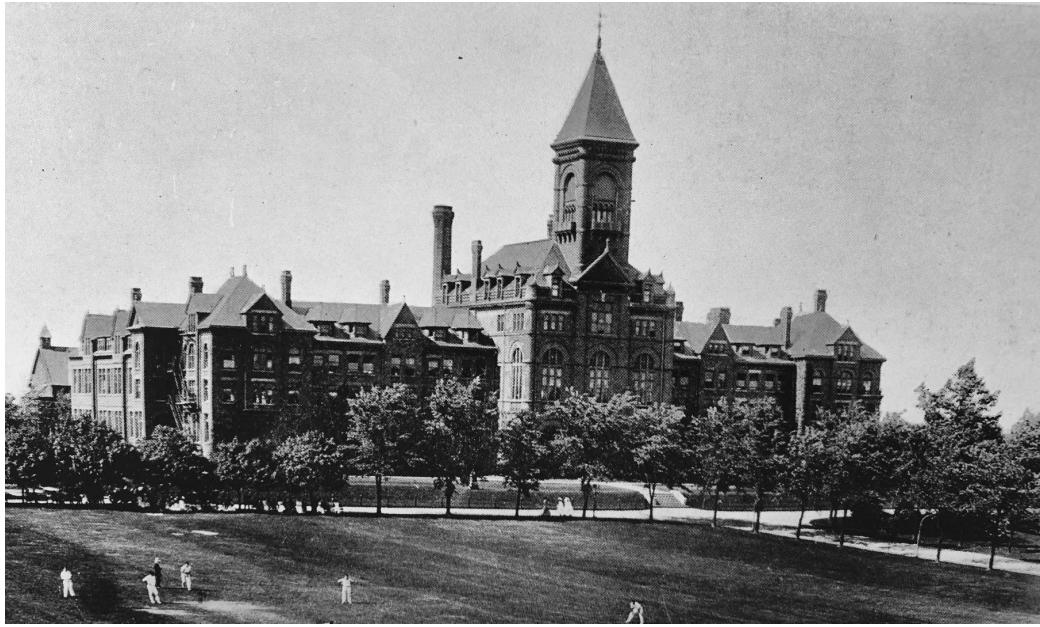
In addition to its potential misuse by stu-

dents, ChatGPT also has the potential to benefit the field of academic honesty. For example, ChatGPT could be used by instructors to automatically generate writing prompts for assignments or exams. This could help prevent students from copying assignments or exam answers from previous years or from other sources.

Overall, while ChatGPT and other language generation tools have the potential to be misused by students, the responsibility for academic honesty ultimately lies with the students themselves. It is up to schools and instructors to educate students about the importance of academic honesty and to take steps to prevent cheating, such as using tools like ChatGPT to generate unique writing prompts.

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The End of The Founder?



MATTY BERMAN
STAFF REPORTER

The Founder's Day assembly began with a phrase UCC students know all too well, "We acknowledge the land we gather on here today at Upper Canada College." It then went on to honour the founder of the college himself, Sir John Colborne.

Every year the students of UCC get the chance to gather in Laidlaw Hall and learn about our history. The "brave" Sir John Colborne united opposing governments, became the Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, and founded Upper Canada College. What a hero!

Of course, students get to experience the facade of John Colborne's heroism every day. Whether it be his statue towering over the quad or his painting in Laidlaw, John Colborne's impact is known throughout the college. Let me rephrase that, John Colborne's "positive" impact is known throughout the college.

What is lesser known is who John Colborne actually was. After the Founder's Day assembly, I overheard dozens of students discussing how they had no idea what the

school meant when talking about the controversy surrounding our school's founder.

The truth is, John Colborne was not the hero that our school paints him as. John Colborne was a colonizer who used his power and influence to impose Eurocentric cultural values, language, religion, laws, and policies on Indigenous Peoples. John Colborne may have funded and founded Upper Canada College, but he also funded and founded many "civilization programs" for Indigenous Peoples. If it isn't clear what those are, "civilization programs" were the roots of the residential school system.

In 1829, after visiting a settlement on the Credit River (with a Church of England missionary), John Colborne became a supporter of these programs. He then made a policy to implement this system all across Upper Canada. In his plan, he referenced existing programs by the American Government whose programs included "missionaries, schoolmasters, farmers and mechanics".

At this time, John Colborne had also strongly advocated to the Governor General of Canada that the most successful parts of the programs were those which dealt with "promoting their [Indigenous

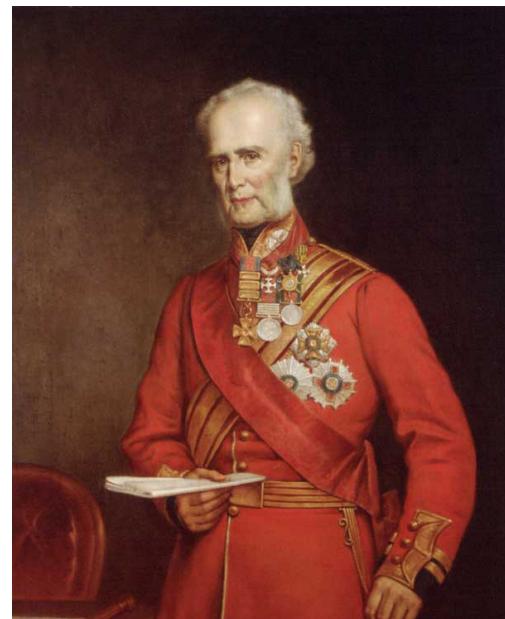
John Colborne does not deserve a day of celebration

A Student's Perspective

Peoples'] religious improvement and education". Furthermore, in 1836, John Colborne learned of further extensions to a program which included "religious conversion". John supported this too and encouraged others to implement this (including his eventual successor, Sir Francis Bond Head, who would eventually create an Indigenous "removal program").

The Nishnawbe Aski Nation, an organization that represents around 50 Indigenous communities states that one of the first policies put in place that jumpstarted residential schools was a policy made by John Colborne. The policy aimed to turn the nomadic way of life of Indigenous Peoples into a lifestyle congregated in one place. By doing so, Indigenous Peoples would start to be assimilated into the European ways of life.

Colborne would implement these policies and programs under the philosophy of it being a "civil service" when in reality, he



was building the foundation for a system that would abuse, traumatize, and create rippling effects still present today. Not to mention, these programs were only one part of John Colborne's injustice against Indigenous Peoples. He's also been

¹ https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2017/aanc-inac/R5-273-1985-eng.pdf

² <https://web2.uvcs.uvic.ca/courses/lawdemo/WEBREAD/MILLER99.htm>

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The End of The Founder?



documented to have taken land (through either treaties or surrenders) from Indigenous Peoples, and Upper Canada College itself was once used to try and model residential schools. According to the Australian Indigenous Law Review, “Analogy were even drawn with elite residential schools like Eton in the United Kingdom

or Upper Canada College in Toronto to support this model of education.”

From a student’s perspective, it can feel like Colborne is only painted as a hero who deserves a day of honour. It can feel like we pretend to “acknowledge the land we gather on here today”, yet refuse to acknowledge who our founder really was. It can feel like our school’s pro-truth-and-reconciliation stance is performative, and we fail to act when we can make a change.

The idea of society somehow reaching “the end of the founder” feels like another ploy to sweep an issue under the rug when in reality we’re just pretending that if we ignore a problem long enough, it will go away. After discussing with school administrators, I’ve learned that this problem is not being ignored, and some change may come. The school is making the effort to research our founder and decide how to best handle this situation.

However, when our school spends so much time teaching us about the horrors of Canada’s past but seems to go silent when this institution comes into question, it feels wrong. When talking about John Colborne in an assembly, we should not skip over

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the negative side of John Colborne. If students are only ever taught about John’s “positive” impact, they’ll never realize that an issue is present.

Acknowledging the truth about John Colborne will not repair the harm he caused or correct the cruelties he committed, but it is vital for our school’s integrity.

UCC MODEL UN'S BIG WIN - AN INTERVIEW WITH GIGI CIARLANDINI

TOMMY WU
STAFF REPORTER

Over the course of the November long weekend, a group of UCC students travelled to McGill University in Montreal as delegates to attend Canada’s largest and most notable annual Model UN conference, the Secondary Schools United Nations Symposium, better known as the SSUNS conference. The UCC team performed exceptionally well, achieving first place in the Best Large Delegation category.

ry for the tenth year in a row, with many notable individual performances. In this interview, Gigi Ciarlandini, a leader of the UCC MUN team, recounts his and the team’s trip to SSUNS.

Convergence: Congratulations on the big win! Tell us a bit more about the team’s experience and highlights throughout the event.

Gigi: Something that happened this year that we’re really grateful for is just overall performance and the bonding between the

team members. Being with these guys and growing up with people older and younger than you on the team is always a highlight. This year, we were treated to an incredible performance by our year ten contingents, with every year ten achieving an award and five of them gavelling, a term for being the best delegate in your event, and it’s not something that you can ever expect. There’s a degree of randomness to it, but there’s no denying the work they put in and the talent they showcased, so that was one of the highlights that we were really happy with coming out of our big win.



C: Tell us a bit more about your own event.

G: In this event, I represented Sam Rainy, the 1993 finance minister of Cambodia. In MUN, everyone is given a committee and position, and I'm part of the crisis committee. In these committees, you're not necessarily representing a country or world organization as you would in other committees, but it is more specific and historical. I was tasked with finding a way out of the Khmer Rouge period of Cambodia, a dark period of Cambodian history, through different methods and achieving peace. I was voted democratically as prime minister at the end even after doing some very questionable things to the country, but that's the way these committees work. It's the time where you're allowed to become as chaotic as possible. You're making speeches, creating resolutions, working with other delegates to work out papers to make things happen. So that's what I've been doing for a while, it's my third straight gavel in SSUNS at crisis, and let's go for four next year!

C: What challenges did you or any one of your team members encounter? How did you/they overcome it?

G: As I alluded to before, MUN is a large family of students, so everyone knows what's going on in each other's committees. We had some extremely talented delegates where things didn't go their way, but that's just a fact of life, especially in crisis com-

mittees where your plan can be shot down very easily and your objectives might not come out as well as you had planned them. As a team, the way we deal with it is to constantly support one another and be there, and in the end, we know that for as many people that it goes wrong for, there's as many people that it goes right for, so nobody really walks out empty handed.

C: What were your main takeaways from this event?

G: Always, always have faith. The amount of skill that is concentrated on this team teaches us that every single time. We went in, not sure if we could bring home number ten, but we came through, and it's taught us to always have faith in ourselves. This is one of the places that I belong most at the College, and it teaches me that I have a big community there that's always ready to support me.

C: Knowing that the talented group of year twelves are leaving this year, what are your thoughts and plans for the future of this team?

G: Knowing that the tens did so well, the future looks bright. Even though we'll be losing an exceptional crop of guys this year, with our club heads, Lawrence and Alex, and other instrumental members, Randy, Moyyad, and many others that I can't name leaving this year, seeing the year tens significantly improving really instills me with a lot of confidence. Orig-

inally, only having two elevens was worrying us, but the tens' strength has proved us wrong. It will definitely be sad seeing the twelves go, though, with myself being the last one around under the correction of Mr. Grimm. I'll make sure to carry his legacy onto the younger guys, but our new faculty additions have really made a massive impact. With Ms. McRoy-Mendell, Mr. Hill, and Ms. Pashali joining Mr. Higgins and Mr. Zlotnik, it's looking bright and it's looking like a good collaborative effort coming next year. We'll be at HMUN and our third conference this year, and we'll be back at SSUNS to bring home number eleven next year.

C: Any last thoughts you'd like to share with Convergence?

G: A ten year run we've had will never be replicated. So many things went right, so many talented guys, and the legacies that past students made will always pass on. Back in the day, when Mr. Hill was a delegate, when Rothman and Niddam Dent were heads, and when I first joined MUN and Gaurav Dogra was head, these legacies will always be remembered and carried through. This 10th win is essentially every-



one's win for anybody who is and was part of the team, and is a significant milestone for the UCC MUN team and the College. We'll continue to perform, continue to put in the effort, and we hope to end up on the top of the podium for the rest of our conferences this year.

C: Thank you for the interview! Once again, congratulations, and good luck to you and the rest of the team for the rest of this year!