

the **STRAND**

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY'S STUDENT NEWSPAPER
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the orientation issue



Introducing Vic's student government

VUSAC's agenda for the 2018-19 year

ROBIN DINESH
NEWS EDITOR

The Victoria University Students' Administrative Council (VUSAC) is Vic's student government, and liaises between students and college administration.

This summer, VUSAC's executive board has been working to fulfill its mandates, which range from the allotment of funds to clubs and levies to planning social events and implementing equity initiatives. This year, Victorians have much to look forward to from their student government.

Devon Wilton, Vice-President External of VUSAC, elaborates on some of the council's activities leading up to the academic year: "VUSAC's been working on a lot of different projects so far this summer, and we'll keep up the work once the school year starts," says Wilton. "Personally, I've been working on VUSAC's proposal to rename Ryerson House and the Ryerson Vic One stream, collecting student feedback on Goldring [Student Centre], and looking at how we can increase ease of ac-

cess to gender-neutral washrooms on our campus."

In addition to pursuing new initiatives on campus, VUSAC also works to maintain ongoing services for students and to encourage student engagement with the council. Nick Shyshkin, Vice-President Internal of VUSAC, describes some of the different ways in which VUSAC aims to continue serving the student body. "One of [the] biggest goals under my portfolio is to make the VUSAC office a more open and accessible space for students," he says. "We offer a wide range of services, including five-cent-per-side printing, free tea and coffee, a charging station, safe sex supplies, free menstrual products, and more! We want students to come into the office and use the space, be it for studying or using our services."

In addition to the executive leadership of the council, VUSAC also includes several commissions dedicated to student life, including the Arts and Culture, Equity, Scarlet and Gold, Sustainability, and Academic commissions. These commissions play an important

role in the initiatives and events that VUSAC organizes.

According to Georgia Lin, VUSAC's Equity Commissioner, her commission's activities will include "running a self-defence workshop series in late September for women and trans students at Vic, hosting month-long thematic programming for Women's History Month in October, and organizing more fun events to engage Vic students with equity work on campus."

The Arts and Culture Commission, headed by Carleigh Campbell, also works to promote student engagement and expression on campus. "The most important role in my portfolio is providing students with spaces and resources in which they can safely express and create [...] through activities and initiatives that target issues of sustainability and equity, and how these things intertwine with arts and culture. The most popular events put on by my commission are *The Bob Comedy Revue* and the Gardiner Gala," says Campbell.

VUSAC's scope is broad and covers many aspects of student life. There are

many ways in which students can get involved with VUSAC, according to Shyshkin. "We have our Fall Elections, where students can run for a Councillor position. We have eight spots available, with three specifically reserved for incoming students," he says. "As a Councillor, you have a vote during Council meetings, you represent the interests of students, and you are assigned two to three portfolios underneath Commissioners, Vice-Presidents, and Staff. If you do not want to sit directly on Council, you can apply to be a part of our other Commissions [...] where they collectively take on advocacy work and plan events for the school year. We also have the Highball Committee and Winterfest Committee which fall under the Scarlet and Gold Commissioner, where it's all about helping plan large-scale events at Vic!"

VUSAC's office is located in the Goldring Center, room 127. Find them online at www.vusac.ca, or on their Facebook page, Victoria University Students' Administrative Council.

Exploring Victoria

Four places to check out on campus

NICHOLAS FREER
ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITOR

As the school year starts, it's important to find a place where you feel comfortable hanging out with friends, spending time alone, or studying—a place that feels like your own. If you're new to UofT, or a student who hasn't had the chance to explore, your college is a great place to start. Here are four spots at Vic worth exploring:

E.J. Pratt Library

Opened in 1961, E.J. Pratt is one of the best libraries on campus. It contains an extensive permanent collection and hosts to many specialized collections available by request. Apart from its value as an academic resource, the building itself is perfect for getting some uninterrupted study time. Pratt features unique interior design with natural lighting and a warm, friendly atmosphere, making it one of the more tranquil libraries for studying.

Caffiends

Caffiends is a student-run café that offers good coffee for just \$1 as well as tasty snacks. For 12 years the café has sought to be both ethical and environmentally friendly, serving fair-trade coffee and using reusable mugs rather than disposable cups. Caffiends provides a platform to educate others about ethical consumption. Located inside Old Vic, it's worth the visit as a niche spot for anyone looking for a warm drink and a communal space.

The Cat's Eye

Located in the lower level of the Goldring Student Centre, the Cat's Eye is the core of community life at Vic—

toria College. The student bar and lounge offers shows, pub nights, and other entertainment throughout the year. During the day, it functions as a great place to play pool or video games, relax, and meet other students. The Cat's Eye is a popular place with a laidback atmosphere, fun times, and friendly people.

Lester B. Pearson Garden for Peace and Understanding

Located beside E.J. Pratt Library, the Lester B. Pearson Garden is a natural setting tucked away from the bustle of university life and work. It is a perfect spot to sit

outside and enjoy either time with friends or a moment of solitude. Considering that the downtown core is a place dominated by office buildings, condos, and traffic, escaping to a green space is a refreshing change of pace in anyone's day.

There are plenty of other unique places to find both at Vic and throughout the broader university campus. To make this university your home, finding places you enjoy is essential. With the school year only beginning, there's plenty of time to find what you appreciate in Toronto and to explore the places that will support you throughout your studies.



PHOTO | HANA NIKCEVIC

The commuter's guide to campus

ROBIN DINESH
NEWS EDITOR

Balancing academics, extracurriculars, and social activities as a university student can be difficult. Add a long commute to and from school, and the experience can be draining and sometimes isolating. Luckily, Victoria College has many great resources for commuter students to make their day-to-day commutes more convenient and to help them find their place on the campus social scene.

Important resources for commuters are provided by campus organizations dedicated to serving commuter interests. The Victoria Off Campus Association (VOCA) is one of the key groups representing commuters.

Emilia De Fabritiis, VUSAC's Commuter Commissioner, describes VOCA's role on campus and the various services it offers: "VOCA is the official VUSAC Commuter Commission and we offer a variety of social events for commuter students. Our most widely known event is our weekly free pancake brunch in the Cat's Eye. This year, I am making an effort to collaborate with one residence don every month for an event where residence and commuter students can mingle. VOCA hosts other events such as Home for the Holidays (a holiday semi-formal) and movie nights. Through VOCA, students are able to rent out free lockers for a semester. Lockers are located in the second basement of the Goldring Student Centre."

Tabina Ahmed, the VOCA Commuter Co-Chair, also weighed in: "Overall, our mission at VOCA is to facilitate the everyday hustle of the commuter student body at Vic, and to create a bridge between non-commuters and commuters in order to promote an accepting and fun environment for everyone!"

The resources provided by VOCA make commuting easier by offering on-campus accommodations, and by providing venues for commuters to access the campus social scene, which can be particularly difficult when you aren't living in residence. Being a commuter can often seem isolating, and it's important that students know what they can do to feel socially engaged and involved on their campus.

"Personally, I really tried to make an active effort to get involved," says De Fabritiis. "Of course, not everyone is like me and it also helps that I'm very connected to social media so I always stay in the loop. I also went to Commuter Orientation in my first year which helped me [...] meet a lot of new people and upper years who really made me feel wanted."

Although commuting can feel tiring and tedious, it is reassuring to know that Victoria College has such a welcoming atmosphere that makes it much easier to participate in campus social life and culture. By making use of the support systems available to Victoria commuter students, and with just a little bit of active engagement in campus life, commuters can make their time at Vic much more rewarding and find their place in a community that has so much to offer.



Ask, listen, talk

A guide to mental health services at UofT

KATHY DU
CONTRIBUTOR

Office of the Dean of Students
Goldring Student Centre, 150 Charles Street West
Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm
416-585-4528

At the Office of the Dean of Students you'll find staff to help resolve issues ranging from academics to mental health. Students can speak to the staff members at the front desks, Megan Junke and Wanda Hughes. From there you will be directed to a staffer who can help resolve the issue(s) you're facing.

Health and Wellness Center
214 College Street, 2nd floor
Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm
416-978-8030

The Health and Wellness Center provides an array of mental health services, such as individual therapy, appointments with licensed psychiatrists, embedded counselors, and online counseling via Counselling.

Victoria College Personal Counsellor
Ground floor of Goldring Student Centre, Room 122
Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 9 am to 12 pm and 1 pm to 4 pm
416-978-8030

These one-on-one meetings can help students with personal, academic, and basic mental health issues. Appointments can be booked through the UofT Health and Wellness Centre with the number above.

Victoria College Registrar
Northrop Frye Hall, Second Floor
Monday to Thursday, 9:30 am to 4:30 pm and
Friday, 10 am to 4:30 pm
416-585-4508

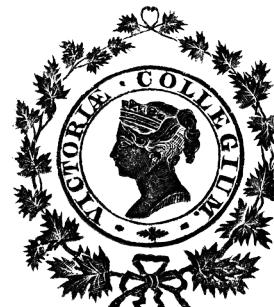
The registrar primarily handles academic issues. If you have any physical or personal difficulties, such as an illness that would impact your academic performance or attendance, you can book an academic advising appointment to discuss options such as deferring an exam. Appointments can be booked by phone or in person.

Victoria College Learning Strategist
Registrar's Office, Northrop Frye Hall, Room 106
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm
416-585-4508

Consider consulting a learning strategist to help you with time management, note-taking, concentration, stress management, and planning for tests and assignments. Appointments can be booked by phone or by drop-in at the Registrar's Office.

Good2Talk
24/7
1-866-925-5454

Good2Talk is an over-the-phone student helpline for information and referrals related to mental health. They can recommend services and supports both on- and off-campus. Additionally, students can speak anonymously to a professional counsellor.



27TH ANNUAL VIC BOOK SALE 2018 Schedule

NEW OPENING DAY HOURS:
Thursday September 20: 2 pm – 8 pm*
Friday September 21: 10 am – 8 pm
Saturday September 22: 11 am – 6 pm
Sunday September 23: 11 am – 6 pm
Monday September 24: 10 am – 8 pm

in Old Vic
91 Charles Street West
(Museum Subway Exit)

*(First Day Only: Admission \$5,
Students FREE with I.D.)

For more information call
416-585-4585
www.vicbooksale.utoronto.ca
vic.booksale@utoronto.ca

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Moving beyond others' perceptions

University should be a time for personal growth

PHOTO | JAY BAWAR

**SABRINA PAPAS**

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

You've made it—your first day at Vic! Whether you're ready or not, you're going to meet countless new people. Between orientation events and classes, there won't be many moments when you're *not* encountering a fresh face.

These first few weeks of school can be daunting, exciting, taxing, or all of the above. Choosing UofT over other schools might mean leaving behind the friends and family who form your most secure support system. They are the people you feel closest to, but this same closeness often makes change difficult. They know who you are and who you've been and see you, in this moment, as definitive. Even if it's not what they intend, their expectations of you can hinder your growth. You're still figuring out who you are, because that's a process that never ends. The process, however, also sometimes requires taking a step out of the box that restricts you.

The new friends you'll make here won't hold the same narrow ideas of what it is that defines you. They won't have expectations based on your past self, because they don't know your past self—you're a blank slate. Take this new beginning as an opportunity to let go of the limitations on who you can be.

In high school, my closest friends and peers had a clear picture of who they believed me to be. There was an implicit obligation to act within these confines, and I felt that I couldn't stray beyond them. As the friend who was considered "alternative," my identity was reduced to the most surface-level qualities. I often felt like I was playing a part, rather than doing what I truly wanted. People knew what to expect from me: how I dressed, what music I listened to, and even what career I wanted to pursue.

Their expectations, however, made me feel like I was being put on a pedestal—one that I couldn't step down from. I didn't feel as self-assured as my peers perceived me to

be, but I couldn't shatter that illusion, even to myself. I initially worked hard to present a distinct image of myself, but then it became cemented. When I wanted to try something new, I felt that it wasn't possible to surpass the perfectly defined bounds of who I was to my peers and still remain myself.

This term, I'm entering my final year of university. I haven't changed in any major ways in the past three years since high school, but I've naturally grown. I've learned how to be comfortable with the decisions I make, to understand why I'm making them. These choices are rarely transformative life decisions, but are small choices that contribute to the person I'm becoming each day. Now, I consider whether I'm doing something because I genuinely want to, or because I think I *should* in order to indulge the perception of others. There are times when friends of mine from high school have told me: "that isn't you." What they mean is that "that" might not be something I would have done when I was 18 years old. But you shouldn't be confined by the person you were in high school or any time of your life.

Even during this time of growth, you'll need some of the same people who may have placed limitations on you in the past. They're the people you'll turn to when things get tough. Change is difficult around them because they like the person they feel you are, not because they want to hold you back. Make it your goal to form a system of friends who will support you and be open to sharing new experiences with you.

You have at least four years ahead of you, in a city with endless opportunities for new experiences. The changes you make don't have to be drastic. See more live music, take a pottery class, wear that shirt you never would have worn before. Nothing is inherently "you." Identities are constructed—you get to define who you are.

Seeing through the bureaucracy

Barriers to social change at UofT

KATHLEEN CHEN
OPINIONS EDITOR

Our cohort of university students has been characterized by some media as well as the political right as “Generation Snowflake.” The media is concerned that our generation will melt in the heat of opposing ideas, that we are too quick to take offense, and that we lack the backbone to withstand the demands of “the real world.” They see mandates for safe spaces and accommodations as the symptom of another issue: overprotected, coddled youth.

The snowflake narrative is constricting and disempowering, particularly for student activists and marginalized groups. It’s a strategy to control young people who are hungry for social change and who are motivated to fight for it. It’s also a logically weak argument.

It’s an ad hominem argument: an attack against people’s character that circumvents actual discussion of the systemic and societal issues motivating people to speak up. It misconstrues lobbying for progressive ideas as being overly sensitive. This misrepresentation is unfortunately all too familiar for people of colour and LGTBQ+ folks, who are told that the system works just fine, that they are just overreacting. And delegitimizing the experiences and complaints of marginalized groups is exactly how systemic injustice is normalized and perpetuated.

Media has taken an interest in explaining contributing factors to so-called millennial fragility. This narrative is also nothing new. Each generation tends to be condescending toward and dismissive of younger groups, whom they perceive as entitled, spoiled, ungrateful, and weak. Again, this narrative draws attention away from discussions about social justice.

The most glaring flaw in this narrative is the assumption that there is nothing wrong with the system and that the young people who speak out are simply exaggerating everyday inconveniences. This assumption reveals how internalized and institutionalized systemic injustice is. Not only do people experience systemic discrimination and harassment, but the system is rife with structural barriers that make social change difficult to enact—and UofT is no exception to these systemic issues. On June 27, the Governing Council

at UofT approved a policy that allows the Office of the Vice Provost to impose a mandatory leave if, due to mental health issues, a student is deemed to “[pose] a risk of harm to self or others” or is considered “unable to engage in the essential activities required to pursue an education at the University” (Article 22). Since the policy’s origin in October 2017, it has been met with opposition from student unions and student groups at UofT. In late January 2018, the Ontario Human Rights Commission wrote a letter urging the University to reconsider the policy in light of the human rights it concerns.

The policy upholds the stigmatizing and incorrect stereotype that mentally ill people are dangerous. The University claims that the policy is one of last resort, only to be used when mental health accommodations and resources have already been exhausted. But, with long wait times and convoluted information about accessing mental health services, the assumption that UofT has adequate mental health support at all falls flat. The University also claims that the policy is not disciplinary in nature, but its terms have punitive consequences. Invoking the policy and withdrawing a student from their studies can also limit their co-curricular involvement, and asking a student to leave university residence can have financial and visa-related repercussions in an already destabilizing time. The policy empowers UofT to remove supports for students in crisis, when the more effective—and more compassionate—response would be to extend help. The implementation of this policy will likely discourage students from seeking help for their mental health for fear of having the policy invoked at the discretion of the Vice Provost.

Alarming, too, are the structural barriers to students’ ability to challenge the policy. Despite statements from multiple student unions condemning the policy, the University was prepared to vote on the approval of the Mandated Leave of Absence Policy on January 30 and only took the item off the voting agenda after the Ontario Human Rights Commission voiced their concern. The University did not take student opposition seriously, choosing only to reconsider the policy after the Commission took notice. Furthermore, the University released an updated version on

April 26, inviting students to give feedback online over a period of only three weeks. These student consultations opened at the end of the school year, when students are busy with, among other responsibilities, working away from campus, relocating their accommodations, and passing on extracurricular duties to their successors. This bureaucratic delay was conveniently timed.

It is difficult to juggle the responsibilities of being a student as well as an activist, especially at an institution as academically demanding as UofT. Furthermore, the students who are most disadvantaged by systemic inequities and who have additional academic and everyday barriers are often the ones doing the emotionally draining and thankless work of advocacy.

UofT’s response to the Mandated Leave Policy is just one example of its resistance to social change. UofT, like most universities, also faces the systemic problem of a lack of redress against sexual violence. In March 2017, Silence is Violence, a student collective dedicated to combating sexual and gendered violence on university campuses, launched a poster program as part of their “Survivors Speak Back” campaign with stories of sexual violence from UofT students, staff, and faculty members. These anonymous testimonials highlighted a trend of institutionalized silencing of sexual assault reports. One of the posters read: “When I told my professor I was raped they said that university is hard for all students and I am no exception.” UofT’s response to the campaign was to remove the posters, citing the University’s poster policy. UofT should have instead taken a self-reflective look at improving their policies on sexual violence.

The University is covertly and overtly dismissive of student opposition and student voices. UofT does not want to acknowledge that it is complicit in perpetuating systemic injustices, unless there is a critical mass of negative media attention that compels them to. UofT advertises that it is committed to social change, but its resistance to confronting its own systemic biases suggests otherwise. As students, we must continue to write our own narratives and to validate one another’s experiences of oppression, especially when institutions deny the validity of these stories and hide behind bureaucracy.

PHOTO | HANA NIKCEVIC



Balancing act

Tips for juggling academics and extracurriculars

VIVIAN LI
CONTRIBUTOR

If you were highly involved in high school, or if you want to start getting involved at university, you may be wondering how to balance your academics and extracurriculars. If you've heard stories about the intense academic environment at UofT, you may be wondering if this balance is even possible. Although I'm still learning myself, here are a few tips that I wish I had known in first year:

Scheduling

Different schedules work best for different people. The first step is to understand yourself—what kind of schedule do you prefer? Some people like to have set arrangements for breaks, study sessions, and extracurriculars, while others prefer to make their plan just one day in advance. I've found that I like to select my top two priorities for the day in the morning, make a physical note, and then cross out a task once it is completed (or sometimes carry it over to the next day). It also helps to keep a paper copy of your schedule near your

desk and an electronic one on your phone. If you keep your schedule tucked away in a binder, it may be easier at the end of the day to avoid planning what's next.

It's essential to have a monthly calendar as well. I like to keep my deadlines both on my phone and on paper, but it can be a hassle to cross-reference and to keep everything updated. I recommend that you experiment to find what works best for you. Keeping a monthly calendar is an essential part of balancing your academics and extracurriculars, because you can't possibly keep every deadline in mind while trying to do your readings and problem sets on top of other responsibilities!

If you want more information about maintaining a schedule, you can book an appointment to see a Learning Strategist here: www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/asc/ hours.

Combining your interests

Try to combine your interests. This is something I'm still experimenting with. For instance, when I was as-

signed a research report for a philosophy course, I decided to choose a topic related to a short story I was writing. See if you can accomplish personal and academic goals at the same time.

Pacing yourself

Consider exploring a few interests during your first few months, then slowly branching out. If you have many interests, it may be difficult to hold yourself back from joining multiple different clubs on campus, but try to pick one or two that really speak to you. It can be overwhelming having too many responsibilities at once, so give yourself time to adjust to university life and take it easy in the beginning.

Self-care

It's important to pursue your interests, but it's equally important to take care of yourself. Take some time for self-care every week, whether by meditating, practising yoga, drawing in the park, or spending time with friends.

Take note

Advice from students about navigating your first year

GEORGIA LIN
ASSOCIATE OPINIONS EDITOR

The first year of university is a multifaceted learning experience. Students can find both gratifying successes and daunting challenges when trying to strike a balance between academics, social activities, and other commitments. It's important to stay grounded and to reach out for help from support systems during your time at UofT.

Here, five second-year students offer their advice about first year and what they've learned from their own transitions to UofT:

Valentine

Don't just take classes that relate to what you think you'll major in. Take a few classes simply because they sound interesting. Who knows, maybe you'll find a new major!

Erica

Making friends in classes can be intimidating because of how large the lecture halls can be, but don't be afraid to even just say hello to the person right next to you. It's especially nice to have a friend in your program's classes to study or stress with, since it's likely you'll be seeing them for the next couple years. This is much easier in smaller classes and tutorials. Seminars especially give you great opportunities to talk to people who are interested in the same things you are. It's scary to be hurled into a new environment like university, but it's made infinitely better with a buddy.

Tabina

My first year didn't go as expected, but I definitely don't mean that in a bad way! I was able to make lots of new friends, join a multitude of new activities and clubs, and reinvent my idea of what it means to "manage time properly." For any new students who are starting their journey at Vic, I would tell them to try their absolute best in their academics, but not to forget about their mental health and the little things that make them hap-

py. It's important to make the best of every opportunity that is available to you, and to take every obstacle one step at a time.

Alysha

Make lists! It helps you organize your thoughts so you're not as stressed out by thinking about all the tasks you need to complete. It also helps you prioritize which assignments and readings you need to finish first.

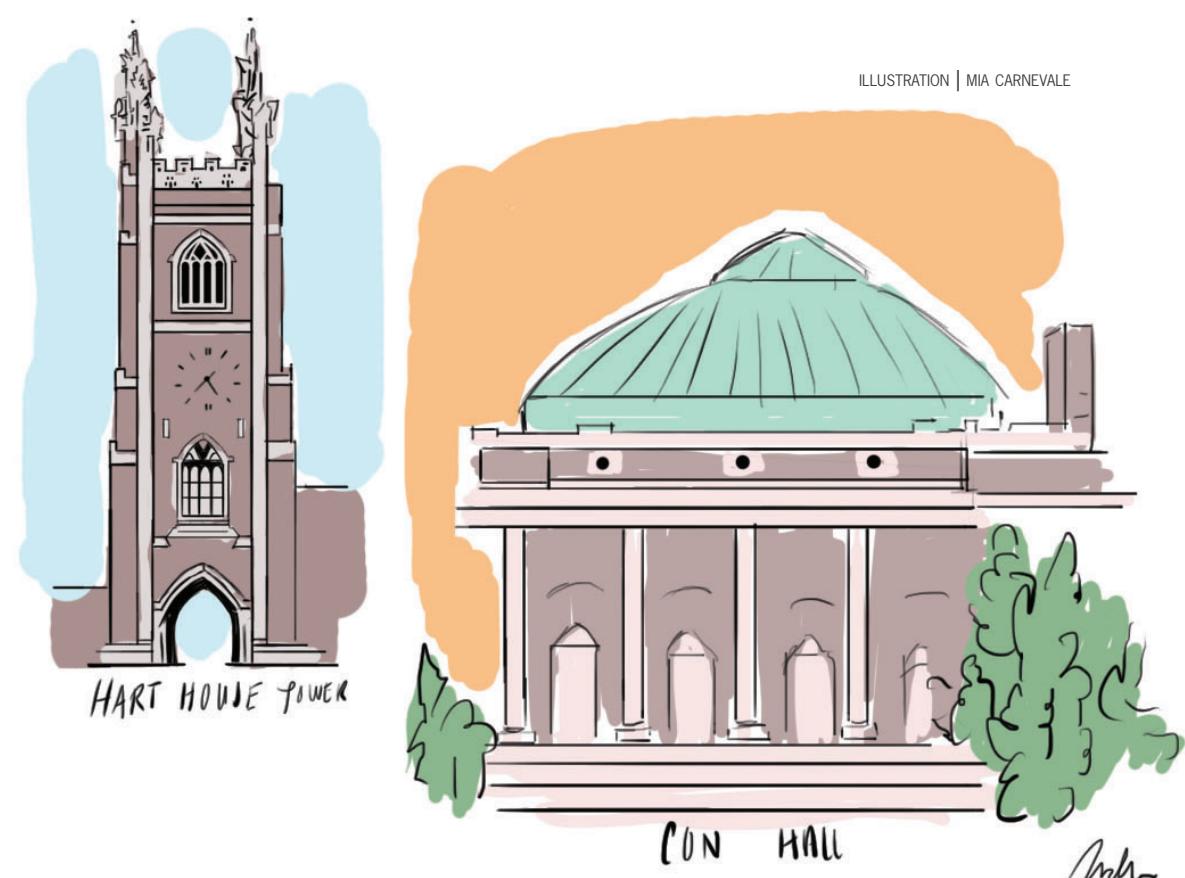
Vibhuti

Don't stress too much about making friends as soon as orientation starts. Go to events that sound interesting to you and you'll meet your friends there! Also, have a general idea of where your classes are before Thursday morning, so you don't freak out last minute, and buy

your textbooks (secondhand if possible!) the first week of school!

Go to class, even if it's at 9 am! If you can keep up now, then you won't feel behind once midterms come around. Cherish the first month of school; you'll have lots of fun and it's before midterms start. Go to office hours, even if you don't think you need help. It's important to scope the place out and show your professor your face.

Finally, get involved early with groups that you're interested in! Don't be afraid of showing up.



Marginalized at Vic

Vic needs to be honest about its lack of support

PHOTO | HANA NIKCEVIC



GEORGIA LIN
ASSOCIATE OPINIONS EDITOR

I've developed a habit of counting the number of people of colour present in traditionally white spaces, such as when I watched the procession of our college's leaders during the 2017 Orientation Traditional Ceremonies. At Victoria College, I've found that the final tallies often do not exceed what I can count on my ten fingers.

Vic's institutional leadership is mainly composed of powerful, white individuals who want to provide a welcoming, beneficial undergraduate experience for its students. This goal results in higher student fees, exorbitant prices for meal plans, and blanket services offered by Vic offices that are intended to benefit as many students as possible. However, Vic's established operating systems do not address the specific needs of its marginalized students. These systems cater to Vic's majority demographic of upper middle class, privileged students who can afford to live in residence or pay steeper incidental fees, such as the \$200 yearly Victoria Goldring Centre charge on our invoices, without much concern. Moreover, Vic students with racial and socioeconomic privileges are not sufficiently aware of the daily obstacles that marginalized students face on our campus, since the administrative and student leadership has not made a concerted effort to expose these entrenched issues.

During my time at UofT and Vic, I've interacted with affluent people who are oblivious to the necessity of working two part-time jobs, an experience of many marginalized students, and others who do not notice when a syllabus reading list consists of exclusively white male authors. Class disparities and other forms of discrimination are only made more complex when the intersections between additional systemic barriers are considered, such as the struggles of identifying as a queer person of colour, a person of colour with visible

or invisible disabilities, or being an Indigenous student in Vic's white colonial spaces.

While Vic wants incoming students to "find [their] place" here, we are still welcoming first-years to a campus that was never designed for all of its students. Racialized and marginalized students do not receive enough support at Vic because our college has yet to address its structural inequities. The lack of representation can be discouraging to first-year students who attend O-Week events and see that the majority of student leadership positions at Vic, whether they be VUSAC members or levy heads, are held by white students. The incoming Class of 2022 should not be deterred by this fact, but instead work to implement meaningful, lasting change at Victoria College.

For example, there are no programs at Vic specifically dedicated to benefiting new students of colour. Many post-secondary institutions in the United States offer orientation sessions tailored to prospective students from marginalized communities that introduce them to life at schools where they are historically underrepresented. Amherst College's Office of Admissions hosts fully-funded Diversity Open Houses for rising high school seniors; and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology selects 100 Black, Latinx, and Native U.S. high school seniors to attend their Weekend Immersion in Science and Engineering program. With its endowment, Vic has the means to establish similar application-based programs for students from underrepresented minorities that would enable them to visit UofT before they apply, to help increase access to the campus for low-income students. As well, the Vic Registrar's Office and the Office of the Dean of Students could create merit-based admission and special scholarship awards for racialized students that recognize systemic discrimination in higher education. Vic's problems should not be hidden from first-years only to be

discovered when experiencing a racist slight in the line at Ned's, or when watching students protest at Bader against an all-white panel questioning whether social inequality is "a real problem."

Marginalized students deserve the excellent level of post-secondary education UofT touts on *Boundless* banners, and attaining such excellency requires honesty from our leaders and our student body about how we treat our most vulnerable students. The intention must not be to simply fill a diversity quota or accomplish a superficial goal of equality or parity; Vic is flawed and must enact change to begin operating under an intersectional, anti-racist, and decolonized framework at every level. All students, especially first-years, should feel comfortable when speaking out to the administration or to their student representatives within governing bodies about the college's shortcomings—for instance, if they consider a Vic One syllabus to contain an insufficient number of writers who are Black, Indigenous, and people of colour (BIPOC) in comparison to the number of white, canonic writers.

The lack of visible representation on our campus is evident to me when I sit in a VUSAC meeting or look around a Vic One Hundred seminar class. An effective personal solution to this is to connect with upper-year students who have lived experiences of being racialized students at Vic. University gives you the freedom to shape your time, and I encourage incoming minority students to reach out to someone and start a lasting conversation throughout first year. The support and advice I've received from my mentors and role models at Vic have carried me thus far in an institution that has a reputation for being a white, elitist college with outdated practices. The Class of 2022 should not be denied these truths; instead, Victoria College should use its resources to dismantle the racial and socioeconomic stratification of its student population.

navigating university as a mature student

Not all students enter university at the same point in their lives

REBECCA GAO
FEATURES EDITOR

Every September, thousands of first-year students step onto the UofT campus for the first time. While most first-year students at UofT come to university directly out of high school, some students begin their university careers years after what is traditionally thought of as “university aged.” Though many of these students are only a few years older than the average first-year, they are referred to as “mature students.”

UofT does not publish demographics regarding the specific age of their students. The University’s annual “Facts and Figures” report, a document created by the Office of Planning and Budget, details various statistics, but it does not include any explicit information regarding the age distribution of their student body. While they do cite the median age of their undergraduate population as 20.6 years old in their 2017 report, the report makes no explicit reference to mature students at UofT. The report does, however, refer to the number of students enrolled in access-to-university programs—programs that are intended for people who do not have the formal qualifications for university admissions to help them gain admission to UofT. One such program, Woodsworth College’s Transitional Year Program, had 71 students enrolled in 2017. While this is not an exact number, it provides some insight into the number of mature students currently enrolled as undergraduates at UofT.

Though mature students make up a minority of undergrads at UofT, their unique position as students outside of the general age range of university students means that they may require specific resources from the university in order to make their education accessible. Age itself is never a limit to education or how much an individual can learn. However, because mature students have generally spent time away from an academic environment—some mature students may have been out of school for years and others may not have finished high school at all—they typically need to ease back into an academically intensive environment like UofT.

For students who have been away from school for a long time, there can be a bit of “culture shock,” according to Dr. Thomas Mathien, the former Interim Director of the Transitional Year Program. “Every student has to adjust to how

a university operates, but it can be more complicated for people who are returning to school after a number of years or when their situation in a school has forced them out early.”

“The Academic Bridging Program [another access-to-university program at UofT] taught me how to use the library, university-level writing skills, and critical thinking skills... they got me in the mindset of being a university student after having been out of school for a while,” notes Shea, a mature student studying Sociology.

In addition to academic resources like access-to-university programs, mature students often need to access on-campus resources such as housing services and childcare services, which are available to all staff, faculty, and students at

marginalized community. Race, gender, and sexuality are often closely linked to socioeconomics and the ability to access resources such as education; being a mature student from a marginalized community often means even fewer resources to draw upon. For example, some students may be the first in their family to attend university. There can be less family support, as students’ families may have a limited understanding of what being a university student involves. There can be familial responsibilities that often accompany students who may have left school to provide for their family. There can also be pressure to leave school and return home to be close to family, and home could be halfway across the world. There are also programs and resources available to students who are in this situation. The First in

the Family program can connect students with peer mentors, learning strategists, and opportunities to meet other first-generation students like themselves.

There may even be benefits to entering university as a mature student. “Older students who know their own minds, who may have matured, who may have developed a deep

interest due to what they’ve done in the rest of their lives—they very often are the best students. They’re there because they want to be there, not because it’s a custom to go,” Dr. Mathien notes.

Chiao, a mature student studying Cognitive Science and Psychology, says, “Age has actually been my greatest asset. I worked for four years before school, and because of that I knew more what I wanted to do.”

Shea also comments that “because I was financially independent, I feel as though I care more and I’m more invested in school because I’m financially responsible for it. It’s made me more diligent.”

Education should be accessible to anyone regardless of when in their life they choose to pursue it. It’s important to keep in mind the resources that are available to all students which make UofT more accessible—resources like Accessibility Services, the Family Care Office, and First in the Family—and to understand why they are important to the development of a university that provides equal access to all students. While mature students are a small minority at UofT, they should not be overlooked. The image of a “university student” should shift to include those who may be outside of the stereotypical fresh-faced freshman.

BEING A MATURE STUDENT FROM A MARGINALIZED COMMUNITY OFTEN MEANS EVEN FEWER RESOURCES TO DRAW UPON

UofT. There are, however, huge limitations to the services that UofT can provide. For example, childcare services, a very important resource that many mature students need in order to pursue their studies, are often finite and hard to access. “There are very limited spaces in the university childcare centres and a limited amount of funding offered through municipal officers. And there’s no guarantee that you’ll get either,” says Dr. Mathien. Apart from childcare services, on-campus resources such as the Family Care Office also provide important educational and informative resources to students. They provide workshops, academic success advising, support for LGBTQ+ families, and much more.

Another example of an important on-campus resource is Accessibility Services. According to Dr. Mathien, “Sometimes the reason someone may come to university later on in life is because of a past education history that reflects a disability. So developing an accessibility service, even though it’s an overextended and overwhelmed system, definitely helps students who may not have been able to pursue a university education because of their accessibility needs in the past.”

Issues faced by mature students can also be exacerbated when students are members of a



Finding research opportunities

Upper year students discuss searching for university placements

JASMINE NG
PODCAST EDITOR

The University of Toronto is a centre for cutting-edge research, providing many opportunities for students to lead and participate in projects. It can be daunting, however, to find a professor or laboratory to join, especially in first year. For many students coming out of high school, it seems like the most fascinating and innovative research projects exclude new undergraduates simply based on qualifications and experience. Further, Research Opportunity Programs may not be a perfect fit for some schedules. However, there are many paths to finding research opportunities at the University. We interviewed some upper-year students about their experiences in research.

Quinlan Sykora

What do you and your team research?

My research team works in robotics. Specifically, we work on swarm robotics and aerial control. We are searching to control a swarm using local “policies.” Simply put, we are trying not to use one computer to control the drones, but are instead trying to distribute the control of the swarm among every individual drone. Therefore, each drone is responsible for understanding its position and planning its action based on where it is. Interestingly, this is how neurons communicate and how intelligence arises on a high level.

How did you find this position?

I was thinking about how I wanted to spend my summer, and decided that research would be productive for getting more experience in robotics. So, I made a list of every professor that worked in a field I was interested in and emailed away. It was actually disheartening at first, because only about twenty-five percent answered to say that I didn't have the prerequisite knowledge from upper-year courses to contribute to their research. Robotics is an exclusive field because you need to know enough code to even begin to understand the project itself, let alone create new experiments. This year, there were way more applicants mainly due to a popular lecture one professor gave on getting undergraduates involved in robotics. However, at this talk, I asked her a question during her presentation and emailed her afterwards stating my interest. I ended up working in her lab this past summer!

What makes for a good research applicant?

I think the undergraduate researchers that do well in a lab are those who are the most engaged. Professors like someone who can self-manage. It's important to remember that the undergrad is never really at the centre of the research. If they work hard and help the project progress, then that's good enough! You also want to be a person that professors enjoy being around for an entire semester. Some things, like having experience, you can't control, but you *can* control how you act. You'll set yourself up really well if you show that you're ready to learn.

Michal Leckie

What do you and your team research?

I have worked with the Placenta Lab at the University of Ottawa for the past two summers. We work on understanding the structure and function of the placenta, specifically its role in preeclampsia. Preeclampsia is a disorder of pregnancy in which the mother experiences high blood pressure and the beginnings of organ failure. The placenta is thought to often be the culprit. Our lab works to subclass preeclampsia based on morphological and molecular changes in the placenta, and relates these findings to clinical presentations.

What helped you get started when looking for research positions?

I started by looking on university websites as well as in the research sections of hospital websites, checking out every researcher. I contacted a wide range of researchers, and kept the area of research broad. I sent many emails before I got any replies, and most labs responded saying they didn't need students at the moment. What helped me was persistence! You should keep emailing people even when it seems late, and keep an open mind about the nature of the position and the research.

Do you make cold calls? How do you put your best foot forward?

“Cold emails” are easier! In emails, I wrote a brief note about who I was, what and where I was studying, and what I was in search of. I wrote about the areas of their research which interested me most, and how I would like to be involved. I then provided a few relevant experiences (like prior lab work, research courses, etc.), and some less relevant details (such as my involvement in environmental activism at school and racing with the mountain bike team).

Christopher Sims

What do you and your team research?

The G20 Research Group researches how well the G20 member states have fulfilled the commitments they made at the last year's summit—in this case, the 2017 summit in Hamburg, Germany. These commitment areas range from preventing corruption to improving women's access to labour markets to combating climate change. We write a three- to four-page report on each member state's progress in each of ten commitment areas—as you can imagine, it's usually a pretty long report (last year's was over 600 pages). I'm a lead analyst in my group, so I, along with the compliance director, supervise a team of ten compliance analysts who each write two reports.

What helped you get started when looking for research positions?

Well, I had kept my eyes peeled for these sorts of opportunities, although I completely missed the first recruitment cycle. This one came to me as an email—definitely pay attention to those mailing lists your departments send you! They are usually where a lot of these opportunities are communicated to you. I applied fairly late, but still got an interview and eventually

got a position as a compliance analyst for the Corruption Committee, analyzing South Korea and Japan. I later took on Germany and France in the second half of the year.

What makes for a good research applicant?

Well, I can easily tell you what makes for a good researcher once your foot's in the door: follow the instructions given, be prompt in your correspondence and in following the deadlines, and edit your products before you submit them. Although our Corruption group was overall very good this past school year, it really impressed me when the compliance analysts took the extra time to make sure their reports were well written, were well researched, and conformed to the fairly demanding style guide.

Annissa Ho

What do you and your team research?

The Rochman Lab investigates microplastic pollution sources and sinks! I work in quantifying microplastic concentrations in different San Francisco Bay areas. We get samples from several locations such as Central Bay, South, and Lower South Bay, and analyse different matrices of interest. Some matrices include wastewater, surface water, and sediment. We count the amount of microplastic in each sample under microscopes!

How did you find this position?

I found this position through the Research Opportunity Program (ROP) at UofT. During March, applications are due for different labs advertised on the website.

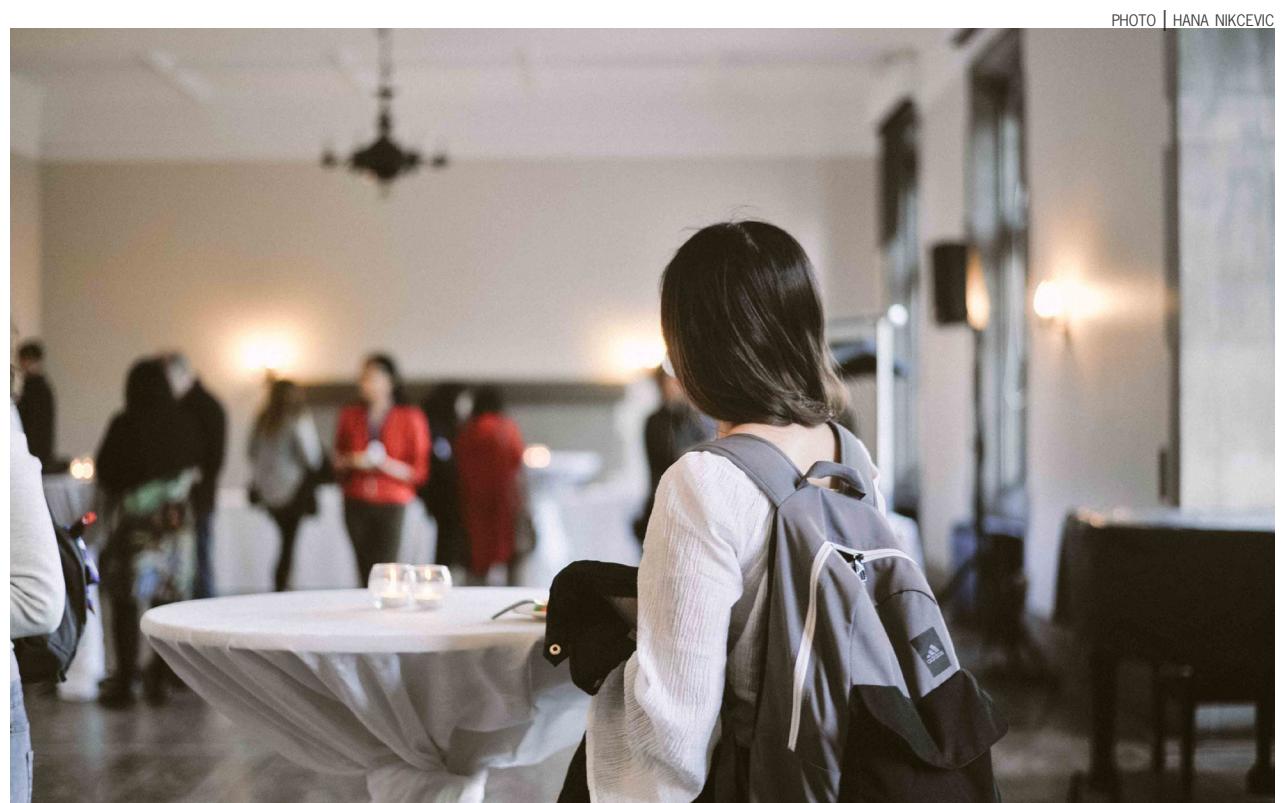
What advice would you have for first-year students looking for research opportunities?

Do not be too specific about what kind of research you want to pursue! It is good to know what you want to do with your life, but gaining more experience in other areas won't hurt.

What is the most rewarding part about doing research?

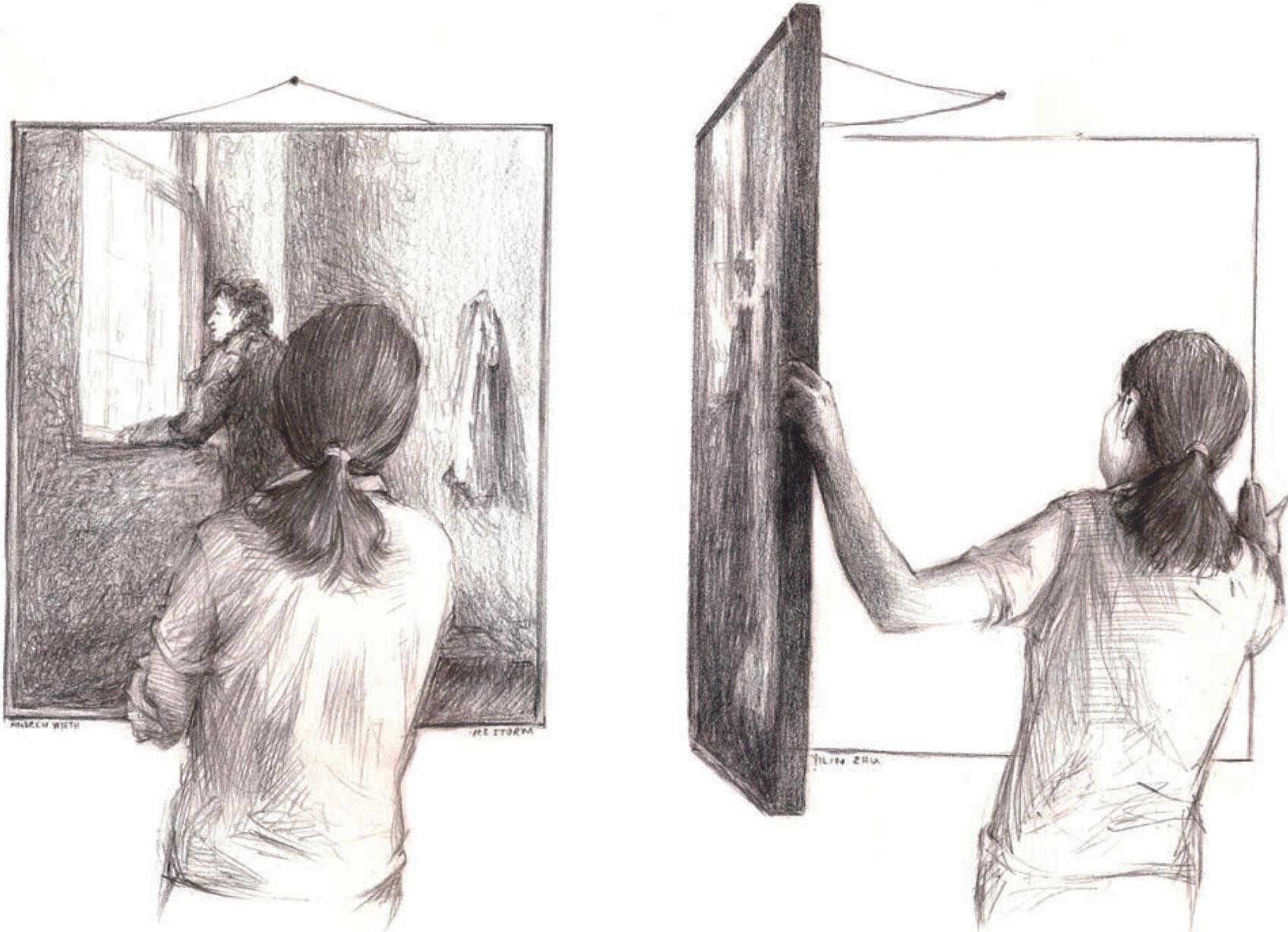
The most rewarding part is the feeling of actively contributing to change! We are pursuing post-secondary studies because we enjoy learning and pushing the boundaries of what we know. Research is a fun and challenging way to apply your knowledge from classes and it is satisfying to know that your efforts yield impactful results.

PHOTO | HANA NIKCEVIC



Personal narratives

An introduction to Arts and Culture



IF THERE'S ONE THING I'VE LEARNED THROUGH WRITING ABOUT ART, IT'S THAT, INVARIABLY, YOU'RE ALSO WRITING ABOUT YOURSELF

HARRISON WADE
ARTS AND CULTURE EDITOR

Two years ago, I picked up a copy of *The Strand* for the first time. I was early for my first class in Northrop Frye Hall and was waiting on the first floor. A stack of bright newspapers was piled next to my chair. I flipped to the Arts and Culture section and read about albums your dad likes that are surprisingly good, adult ballet, and arts around campus. Frye Hall, new to me, suddenly seemed less intimidating; the articles were welcoming. I folded the paper into my bag before class began.

I didn't write anything for *The Strand* until December of that year, but I would pick up a copy wherever I found it around Vic and read through the Arts section. I was intrigued by its boldness. On my own, I had been writing reviews that I didn't share with anyone else. And here was a group, on campus, of people writing reviews and essays and inter-

views. They were practicing and offering an alternative form of essay-writing. In that first issue, the then-Film and Music editor (a section which has since been combined with Arts and Culture) wrote about his hopes for the section: it would be a place where readers could build social capital by staying informed about contemporary pop culture.

This is something of a similar statement of intent. My hope is that Arts and Culture will continue to include writing that is timely and relevant, but it might also become a space for the local and the personal. If there's one thing I've learned through writing about art, it's that, invariably, you're also writing about yourself.

What openly personal writing might offer is an approach to art and culture without barriers. Essays are free to circulate when they aren't tied to form or place. Recently, I've read pieces about us-

ing *Animal Crossing: Wild World* as a diary (by Terrence Abrahams), about dance within and without *The Red Shoes* (by So Mayer), and about the faded restaurants of LA's Pico Boulevard (by Jonathan Gold). They've offered me ideas about digital play, performing gender, and memory—even though I've never played that game, seen that movie, or been to that street.

To value the emotional means to let a conversation unfold between the artist and the writer, and then between the writer and the reader. The person, or people, behind the art become conspicuously present. Interviews are located in a specific time and place. A review might be prefaced by its author's lived experience, which informs their interaction with the art in question. This kind of writing strikes a balance between old and new experience. It doesn't claim objectivity, but it also doesn't overwhelm the art with personal history.

This arts writing will not, and should not, replace traditional arts and culture coverage. Concerts, openings, and fundings need to be recorded and reflected upon as they happen. Local artists need support and exposure. The personal writing I'm interested in is only another way of reading and writing. Often, it's located in the past, with art and places that have had time to gather meaning for a person. These objects become local in another sense, tied to experience or identity.

So, tell me about your passions and obscurities: write about the bar or restaurant that makes you think of home, the band that still conveys a sense of political urgency, the childhood movie that's wildly different from how you remember it, or the pop song that needs to be talked about. Uncover the personal and the local, wherever that might be.

Performance and play

The Strand's ultimate guide to theatre at Victoria College



PHOTO | HANA NIKCEVIC

ARIN KLEIN
CONTRIBUTOR

Victoria College Drama Society

The Victoria College Drama Society (VCDS) is a student-run theatre group that celebrated its Centennial Season this year. Each VCDS production relies on many members, and you can get involved by performing, lighting, designing, assistant stage managing, costume designing, being a musician in the band, and more!

I've been involved with VCDS throughout my three years at Vic. I started with acting, but I've since become more comfortable with trying new roles. Theatre encourages adaptability: I've been a performer, an Assistant Stage Manager, a Props Master, and an Assistant Communications Director for the VCDS executive team. I decided to be Props Master for a show after not getting cast. I ended up learning a lot about a part of the theatre I didn't know much about before. Don't be afraid to expand your horizons, especially since VCDS is always happy to have help on their crews.

You don't have to be a certain type of person to be involved in theatre. Sure, there are stereotypes, but I've met a wide range of students who love what they do, and productions need all types of personalities to succeed. You don't need to study drama to be part of VCDS, and you don't need to be particularly theatrical either. If you're good with building, you could be great as an Assistant Technical Director; if you love fashion and clothing, you could try costume designing.

The balance between extracurriculars and school is something you'll figure out along the way. Being part of a production is a commitment that requires a lot of emotional and physical energy. If theatre is a stress reliever for you, like it is for me, it will be manageable because it's a break from the stresses of school and it

makes your brain happier. Creating art with your peers really is amazing, and you don't necessarily have to devote huge amounts of time to it. As an Assistant Stage Manager, I didn't have to commit to rehearsals until about a week before the show opened. Being an audience member is even less commitment: only a few hours one evening to enjoy yourself and learn a bit more about the world.

An essential thing I have learned through Vic theatre is the importance of representation. This year's season follows a theme of queer identity, which—despite the theatre world's growing acceptance of this aspect of self-hood—is still underrepresented onstage. I have learned from the people I've met through VCDS, from stories that have been told—or not told—onstage, and from ongoing conversations about improving diversity and representation. I'm thankful that I am learning in this artistic community, because it is through words, art, and music that we come to understand others.

Keep an eye out for posters and information on VCDS's Facebook about an info session in early September. The VCDS team will explain the application process for positions on the executive team and provide general information about the upcoming season.

2018/19 Season

A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare. Directed by Abby Palmer.

The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde. Directed by Rachel Bannerman.

A New Brain by William Finn and James Lapine. Directed by Meredith Shedden. Music directed by Shreya Jha.

Confessions of a Female Disorder by Susan Miller. Directed by Molly Simpson.

Mamma Mia! by Benny Andersson, Björn Ulvaeus, and Catherine Johnson. Directed by Ronan Malloy. Music directed by Emma Wallace.

Upcoming Performance: September 27 to 29, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by William Shakespeare. Directed by Abby Palmer. In the Emmanuel College Quad; \$5 for students.

The Bob

The Bob is Canada's longest-running collegiate sketch comedy revue, with hilarious sketches written, directed, and performed by students. It's a fun environment in which to express creative and weird energy. As an audience member, I continually admire how The Bob's cast members aren't afraid to put themselves out there, try different things, and perform work they've written themselves. The show is always hilarious, wacky, and clever. Every time, I come away with a greater appreciation for the minds of my peers. Since there isn't a huge cast and there are numerous sketches, each person gets to play multiple roles and experiment with different characters, which is an exciting challenge as a performer and entertaining to watch as an audience member.

If you're not sure about performing or writing but you still want to be involved, The Bob is looking for a Stage Manager, a Technical Director, and a Costumes and Props Manager. Auditions to be in the troupe will be September 17, 19, and 20. Visit The Bob's Facebook to keep up-to-date with audition and show information, and for fun promo shenanigans!

Upcoming Performance: November 23 to 24, at the Isabel Bader Theatre; cost TBA.

Live and intimate

A guide to Toronto's smaller concert venues

MENA FOUDA
ASSOCIATE ARTS AND CULTURE EDITOR

Music is one of those media that can force you to react, whether that's by swaying to a song, jumping to the beat, or just closing your eyes as you lay on the floor. This urge, to allow your body to express how it feels, is even greater with live music. While seeing artists you admire at big arenas can be rewarding, there's a special experience that comes with the intimacy of a smaller space.

I've been lucky enough to attend concerts over the past few years, and my enjoyment always partially depends on the venue. Sometimes, the best thing about a space is its accessibility, other times, its acoustics. In either case, Toronto has many hidden gems that attract musical talent.

My first non-arena concert was at **Mod Club** in Little Italy. This was where my 14-year-old self attended her first garage rock concert. The venue is set up without a barricade, meaning that you can be up against the stage and close to your favourite artists. The sound can be intense if you're too close to the speakers, but the stage is high enough that you can stand anywhere in the room and have a great view. Plus, there's a giant mural of The Weeknd's face.

If you're 19 or older you can catch a show at the historic **Horseshoe Tavern**. Located on the hip street that is Queen West, this bar has hosted iconic bands from The Ramones and Talking Heads to early Arcade Fire.

The walls are lined with photographs of concerts across genres, making the history of live music in Toronto tangible. This venue is small without being claustrophobic, and there is seating at the back if you prefer a casual approach to your concerts.

On to **The Opera House**, which has a distinct look. It's on the East side of the city, but making the trek to this venue is worth it. It retains elements of intimacy due to its size, but the ornate paintings and the elaborate stage arch give an illusion of grandeur. The space was originally constructed as a Vaudeville theatre in the 1900s, but it has since worn down. It has gone through several transformations, even acting as a movie theatre from

here, in a series titled "Live at Massey Hall," making the concert an experience that you can re-watch at any time.

One of my favourite concert venues in Toronto is **Lee's Palace**. I was first exposed to this space by way of the movie *Scott Pilgrim vs. The World*. For years I waited, until at 19 I could finally hand the security guards my ID and get in. I got to see Canadian indie rockers Born Ruffians for my first show at this venue and the experience was fulfilling. Lee's tends to draw crowds that are relaxed and friendly, but who are also not afraid to do some serious dancing. It's an unspoken rule here that you don't use your phone to record the entire concert,

but instead stay present in the moment. Aside from the dancing pit, there's a raised level with casual seating, allowing you to watch the show from any view. The top floor of this venue is called **The Dance Cave**, which often hosts themed dance parties. These spectacles are free for students (with ID) every Friday and Saturday—allowing you to have fun without breaking the bank.

These spaces are just a glimpse into Toronto's live music scene, where each venue offers something unique to its audiences. Not only do they tend to be cheaper than the gigantic arenas, but they can make you feel connected to your favourite artists. Pick an intimate venue in Toronto and allow yourself to feel the music. Dance, scream the words at the top of your lungs, or simply sway—the most important thing is to just let your body feel.

THERE'S A SPECIAL EXPERIENCE THAT COMES WITH THE INTIMACY OF A SMALLER SPACE

the 30s to the 60s. Due to its adaptability, this venue successfully hosts all types of live entertainment.

If seated venues with wicked acoustics are more appealing to you, then be sure to check out a show at Massey Hall. It's a gorgeous space located in the heart of downtown. I've seen mellow acts (Father John Misty) and upbeat bands (Glass Animals) here, and the quality of sound is consistent. Seating in the upper sections can be uncomfortable as the chairs are compact and close together, but it's worth it. Special shows are often filmed

Songs for August

A track list to mark the end of summer

MAIA KACHAN
CONTRIBUTOR

August is a time to feel both nostalgic and excited, to obsess about where the summer went and how quickly things change. All of these songs deal with a push and pull: between reality and another place, within a relationship, of time's progression. They come from my Discover Weekly playlist, people I love, concerts I attended when I was 17, and moments in between that I can't latch onto but wish I could.

"21" by Samia

A song about growing up and reminiscing about what it means to be an adult and a child at the same time. With an expressive voice, Samia sings about the constant push and pull of acting however you want while distancing yourself from your family and confronting new responsibilities.

"S T R E T C H" by Orion Sun

All of Orion Sun's lyrics could be the soundtrack to coming of age in 2018. They highlight her Blackness and the way it influenced her youth in America. She has opened shows for Daniel Caesar, and there's a similarity to their music. "S T R E T C H" is a mellow song that speaks about wealth, summer, and power as a young adult.

"The Next World" by Opus Orange

A six-minute-long love song about connecting with a person in another place or time, in a circumstance that could somehow work. Opus Orange's dreamy pop sound is at its best here, highlighting poetic lyrics and vocals with simple, consistent drumming.

Scan and listen now on Spotify!



"400 Lux" by Lorde

This is a song that I will always connect to my eleventh-grade crush. Lorde's progression from *Pure Heroine*'s teenage suburban angst to *Melodrama*'s breakup party night is evident here. She reminisces about the stagnant comfort of being in one place and of the teenage buzz of first loves.

"Holy" by King Princess

King Princess is an obsession-worthy emerging queer icon whose entire first EP deserves a listen. This pop hit speaks about the future, rather than the past. It's

an intimidatingly cool love song that's still honest and relatable.

"Flaming Hot Cheetos" by Clairo

Clairo began producing her signature synth pop beats in her bedroom for YouTube, and this immediate relatability with her listeners is still present as she rises to music stardom. She speaks explicitly about her bisexuality and the confusing in-between feeling and idealization that comes from a complicated relationship with a friend.



PHOTO | MAIA KACHAN

How many times can I lick my room-mate's iPod Nano while he's sleeping before I've crossed the line?

The Strand's ethics expert answers your tough questions.

Dear Ethicist,

I'm so nervous to move into residence, and I have so many questions! What if my roommate is really messy? What if my Don is mean? And most importantly, how many times can I lick my roommate's iPod Nano while he's sleeping before it gets weird? I've never had a roommate before, but I used to share a room with my brother. However, he never let me lick his iPod Nano. I wish they taught us practical stuff like this in high school instead of calculus and Shakespeare.

*Thanks,
Danny Lee, Brampton*

P.S. I don't actually know whether or not my roommate has an iPod Nano. Is the answer different if he has an iPod Shuffle or a Zune?



ILLUSTRATION | MIA CARNEVALE

Hi Danny! If you want to do something, you should do it. For example, when I want to butter my fingers and put them in the toaster, I do it. I call it finger bread. My wife tells me I should call it finger toast. And that I should butter my fingers *after* I put them in the toaster. And that I'm going to destroy the toaster. But I don't let that stop me.

That being said, if you're licking his iPod out of a feeling of obligation rather than desire, don't do it. You're not in high school anymore, and no one is expecting you to do this if you don't want to. Some jerks might tease you, but just ignore them. Sometimes the neighbourhood kids tease me because I share 60 percent of my DNA with bananas. But did I let it bother me when they handcuffed me and tried to throw me into the monkey exhibit at the zoo? No I did not.

I hope you found this helpful, and best wishes at university!

P.S. Your brother sounds like a real butthole. It's normal for an older brother to tease you, or fight with you, or try to sell your kidneys on Amazon. That's just what brothers do. But your brother just sounds like he wants to watch you suffer. If I were you, I would spray his iPod with vinegar so that the next time he tries to lick it he gets a nasty surprise.

Top napping spots at UofT!

Pick your favourite and get snoozin'

WILFRED MOESCHTER
CONTRIBUTOR

A nice nap is the key to keeping your mind sharp and fresh for the rest of the day. For students who live off-residence or have a tightly packed schedule, finding places to get some shut-eye can be tricky. Fortunately I've taken the time to share some of the best napping spots on campus for you!

The pipes beneath University College

Not many people are aware of this sweet snoozing location, but it's actually been used by students in the know since the 50s. More likely than not, your parents met here.

President Robins' office

It's no secret: adults need naps, too! If you catch President Robins in his office at the right time, he'll definitely let you take a nap on his desk—a quirky tradition started by his predecessor Paul Gooch. What nice guys!

The Peace Garden, Victoria College

Nobody knows how the Lester B. Pearson Garden for Peace and Understanding got its name, but I bet it's because of all the peace and quiet you can get from this



cool pond! Surrounded on all four sides by Pratt Library, it's truly a hidden gem—although I can't guarantee the hidden part once this article's been published! ;)

Lindsay Lohan's tomb, Convocation Hall

Lindsay Lohan was the most famous person to ever set foot inside Convocation Hall, and as a result, the University stepped up and erected a tomb in her honour. If you're ever feeling cranky during a lecture, this is a nice, discreet place to catch up on some Zs!

That discount textbook store run by that nice family

Any student who's looking to save a buck knows to hit up "that" store right across from the UofT Bookstore. It also turns out that this place's "Napping" section is way bigger than the Bookstore's. Way to kill the napping game AND the textbook game! Yang family: 2, University of Toronto: 0!

Here

Yup. Apparently this spot is as good as any.

My top six years of undergrad

Ranked

SUMEETA FARRUKH
VICTORIA COLLEGE ALUMNA

Throughout my many years of undergrad, I spent many years. Sometimes it's hard to keep track, especially as my brain continues to age. I wrote this for my fans and me, for us to celebrate my glory days and pay tribute to some of my proudest moments. Here is Buzzfeed Presents: *The Strand's* definitive ranking of all six years of my undergrad career:

#1: Fifth year

I was a Don at Victoria College during this time. While it was a very stressful and chaotic year, I think I only managed to lose, like, two students in The Great Accident.

Bad: President Robins caught me straddling the statue

of Northrop Frye and taking selfies. I agreed to do another year at Vic so long as he never spoke of it again. We signed a blood pact and I haven't seen him since.

#2: First year

We started off with a bang!

Highlights: GPA at all-time high, found a rock that looked like a squirrel. Cons: Never figured out where the bathrooms were in my res, so I just held it in 'til I went home on weekends.

#3: Fourth year

Justin Bieber released "Sorry." This was a good decision. Found a squirrel that looked like a rock—another solid decision. We give this year three thumb emojis out of four. [thumb emoji][thumb emoji][thumb emoji]

#4: Second year

My cat died, so that wasn't very chill.

#5: Third year

Got a new cat, pretty chill.

#6. Third year, second semester

Zayn left and I do not wish to talk about this. I give this a big bad rating of one star out of five stars.

#7: Sixth year

VUSAC tries to assassinate me via poisoned coffee but I am strong and the case is settled out of court.

Aside from that, I graduated, but that's it.

12 Orientation themes more out-of-this-world than “Planet Vic”

Which is your favourite?

NEVIL DOWTON
CONTRIBUTOR

Don't get me wrong, Planet Vic is a stellar theme. Truly one of the greats in Vic Orientation history. But with every year and every new orientation theme come literally dozens of missed opportunities. Here is just one dozen of them:

1. Call Me by Your Vic, or, Gay in Vicaly
2. Keeping Up With the Vic-dashians
3. Anti-Vic Vic Club
4. Anti-Trin Vic Club
5. Fuck Jordan Peterson
6. Vucci (like Gucci but Vic)
7. Bust a Vic!
8. Chicken VicNuggets, or, I'm Lovin' Vic
9. It's Vic-ney, Bitch!
10. Victoria's Secret
11. Bikini Bottom
12. Big Vic Energy

Oh well, there's always next year!



Big Vic Energy

“The TTC is the best transit system in Toronto”

- Michelle Obama



PICTURED: MICHELLE OBAMA (LEFT), MAX'S GRANDPARENTS (RIGHT)



MAX NISBETH
ASSOCIATE STRANDED EDITOR

At first, people were skeptical of the Jackson 5 when they invented music. Everyone was like, "My eardrums are pulsating at a frequency that is pleasurable and I don't know what to do," and Michael Jackson was like, "if you don't like it, Beat It." The same is true with the TTC.

The Toronto Transit Commission is extremely reliable, in the sense that it is always unreliable. Many passengers of the 2017 Best Transit System in North America will be quick to point out how the system seems to be run by mice on the tracks. This is wrong. First of all, it is run by German-engineered super rats—and you KNOW that! Secondly, they need to be on the tracks at all times in order to monitor traffic because obviously they don't know how to use computers. They are rats, people!!

In fact, the only transit system better than the TTC is the Skånetrafiken in southern Sweden. The buses all have smörgås (sandwiches but Swedish) counters with a tiny little meatball station. Every train includes a shower, but no toilet; to quote the old Swedish adverb, "always clean before emptying." Some trains even have an IKEA inside of them, while some IKEAs are actually trains. If you have any doubts about this just ask my grandparents who live there, Dag and Karen. You can find their contact info on the Stranded website. They'd love to recommend a good read or give you advice on maintaining a tomato garden.



A picture of my family you can cut out and use to decorate your dorm room if you don't have any pictures of your own family

LEO MORGESTERN
STRANDED EDITOR

What you'll miss about high school versus what you won't

MAX NISBETH
ASSOCIATE STRANDED EDITOR

MISS

- Having the opportunity to go to awkward dances
- Tamagotchi
- Knowing everyone!
- Recess
- Daily mandolin classes
- Bellbottom jeans (I know)
- Hallways (don't got 'em)
- Toilets (definitely don't have those)
- High School Musical* flash mobs every day at lunch
- Being able to tell the substitute teacher your name is "Clare" when your name is "Claire"



ILLUSTRATION | MIA CARNEVALE

WON'T MISS

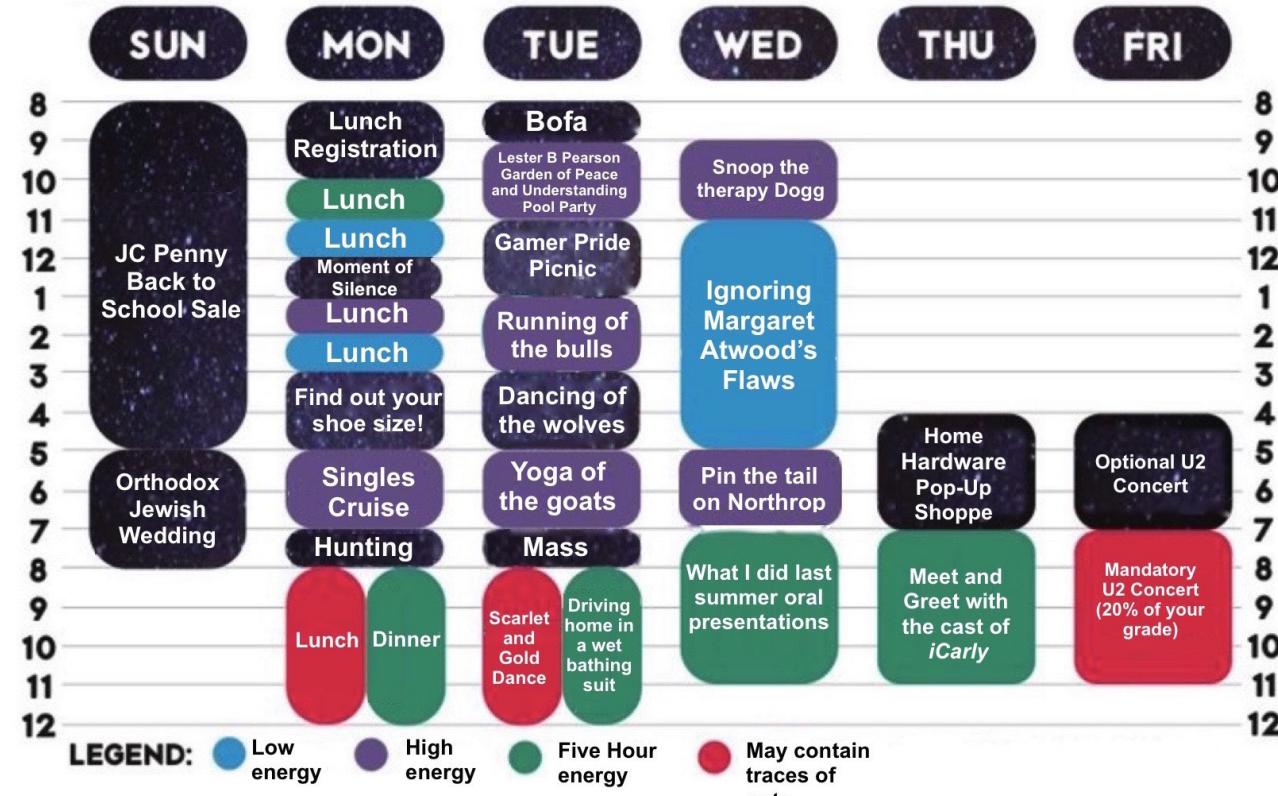
- Actually going to awkward dances
- The repeated references to *The Breakfast Club*
- Knowing *everyone*
- Everyone assuming they had the ability to beatbox
- Scooters
- Bellbottom jeans
- Morning announcements done by a student who got the job because no one else wanted to wake up half an hour earlier every day to talk about the badminton team's tryouts at lunch
- Having your mum pick you up from parties at 10:30 pm
- Having to play Zeke in the *High School Musical* flash mobs because all the good roles were already taken
- Jason



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