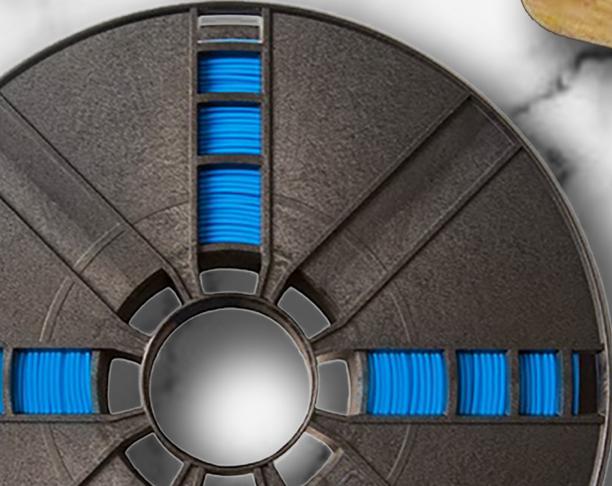


CONVERGENCE

A YEAR IN REVIEW

2018-19



CONVERGENCE

A SUMMARY OF THE ARTS AT UCC: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

MUSIC ENSEMBLES & BANDS

Fun fact: the UCC arts program is active outside of arts assemblies! Year 8 Band and Design aside, there are many opportunities for involvement in the arts at UCC, both in and outside the classroom.

One week before the Easter Long Weekend, the senior UCC Bands and the Blue Notes travelled to New York for the explicit purpose of "performing music". And perform they did: all three groups won Gold Awards in their respective categories (unlike in the competitive dance community, Gold is the highest award possible in music). The musicians gave three vibrant performances at the Riverside Cathedral, an impressive venue that once hosted Martin Luther King.

After a half a day of performance, the boys had some spare time in New York, capped off with a river cruise along Manhattan (check Instagram, the pictures are there). And that was only Saturday. Sunday started with a reflective visit to the 9/11 Memorial & Museum and was followed by a short walk around the city. Not long after, everyone had four hours of free time to go wherever they wanted, as long as they came back in time to watch Stomp. Monday was the inevitable 10-hour bus ride back to Toronto. Luckily, it was on a Coach bus that served as a venue for countless impressive (and sometimes tragic) Mario Kart performances. A great trip!

Moving forward, an issue of the bands is commitment. Clubs tend to have a high enrollment at the start of the year and quickly drop off. Bands are no exception. We contacted Mr. Smith, a music teacher and band director, asking what can be done to retain commitment in bands. He responded by saying that it is best to avoid conflicts that put boys in awkward positions. Mr. Smith suggested that this could be accomplished by signing agreements at the start of the year, locking in commit-

ment. Keeping the quality of the bands high is important at UCC: with many people afraid that the arts are declining, it is more important than ever to have committed bands. Luckily, their recent successes have shown that we are on the right track.

Most of the bands have wound down for the year, but if you're interested in participating next year, please contact the conductor of the band you want to join.

VISUAL ART

The visual arts at UCC are thriving. A walk around the Student Centre during Nuit Bleue shows just how many amazing artists we have. This is a fact that tends to get overlooked, which makes Nuit Bleue an even better event. While a lot of the works in the exhibition came from art classes, many came from art created for personal pleasure and quite a few came from art done as part of a club.

While there are many art clubs at UCC such as photography and art, the Digital Arts club is set to become one of the most popular, with a growing membership in the younger grades. You don't need any experience to join and you don't even need to take art. Here's a summary from the club heads, Noah Verhoeff and Sahir Farooq:

The Digital Arts Club has had a great year. Members use digital tablets, large screen monitors, and a variety of imaging, graphic, and 3-D modelling software to hone their artistic skills and learn about the intricacies and nuances of the digital art world. The club offers a variety of software, as well as instructions and guides on how to use them. Members of the club create art in several different styles. Some prefer digital drawing while others prefer collage making or photo editing. Some members have even gotten into pixel art, making characters in a retro

JOHN PAPANIKOLAOU & MICHAEL YOUNG
EDITORS

style. The club meets every Wednesday at lunch in the Arts Lab and is open to all. With a growing membership, the Digital Arts club has made plans for the future. Some of these plans will include additional lessons every few weeks about the use of software and equipment. These lessons will be in addition to our ongoing support of club members during club meetings. As well, we have had guest speakers come to our club meetings and assemblies, most notably the Biidaaban designers. Along with their schoolwide presentation, they collaborated with the Digital Arts Club in setting up virtual reality stations around the school, enabling all students to enjoy the mind-blowing Biidaaban presentation. The Digital Arts Club is an excellent way to further develop your artistic skills, learn how to create digital art, and hone your skills with digital art software and Wacom tablets.

CO-CURRICULAR THEATRE

This year, the co-curricular theatre program was as strong as ever. Students from UCC and BSS performed in various plays, including *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)*, *King Henry IV: Part I*, and *The Imaginary Invalid*. In *GNDGMJ*, notable UCC performances include Mack Lo as Romeo, Ethan Ullmann as Professor Night, Ophir Cundangan as Iago, and Bo Gonzalez Caranza as Othello. *King Henry IV: Part I* starred Kurt Karul as King Henry, Sean Manucha as Prince Hal, and Kumail Nathoo as Sir Falstaff, and Sarosh Waheed as Hotspur.

Next school year, the theatre department intends to update the roster of plays. There will be an increase in the number of plays that are open to UCC and BSS students of varying grade levels.

Auditions for these plays are typically held at the beginning of the school year. We're looking forward for all there is to offer with the changes to the theatre program.

MICHAEL YOUNG - EDITOR IN CHIEF

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BILLY SHI - LAYOUT EDITOR

MS. COLLEEN FERGUSON - FACULTY ADVISOR

DANIEL BOTROS
STAFF REPORTER

Earlier this year, the World Languages Week took place at UCC from January 14th to January 18th, an event dedicated to celebrating linguistic diversity and inclusion at Upper Canada College. Some of the activities included the showcasing of Portuguese music in assembly, a Chinese lion dance organized by the Mandarin club, and a lecture entailing the analysis of Indigenous linguistics.

When a survey was sent out to the student body, it showed that a significant portion of the school can speak and/or understand a second language. As Brazilian boarding student Thiago Rebello quoted in his speech during assembly, "to have another language is to possess another soul; language is not only words, but also the identity of a person." Language is integral to the expression of culture. It is used not only to communicate values, beliefs, and customs from generation to generation, but also to foster relationships with others and truly embrace the social aspect of humanity.

Now, I completely understand why many

WORLD LANGUAGES WEEK

people may not initially see World Languages Week as important. I myself have experienced what it feels like to be in a Period 4 French class and wanting to drop dead as class went past 3:30. However, I encourage you not to let these superficial experiences dictate whether or not you learn from events such as World Languages Week. I implore you to look beyond the surface of food and fun activities in order to truly see the significance of the event.

James Liao, chair of the World Languages Committee, emphasized the idea that the majority of students at the school perceive this week merely as a period of time where there are special buffets in the UDH. And while ethnic cuisine is very important to all cultures, World Languages Week is representative of something much more important. Even though we have come a long way in the last century, xenophobia and racism are still heavily prevalent in our society, and even within our school. Through events like the World Languages Week, UCC aims to show and educate the younger generation that diversity can be extremely

powerful. Our school should strive to be a beacon of hope in our community, showing that diversity is not a sign of weakness but of strength.

Mme. Berezowsky, the faculty advisor for the World Languages committee, agreed with James in a lot of ways. World Languages Week encourages students to be proud of their culture and their different language. It also encourages students to openly teach and demonstrate their cultural and linguistic differences to enrich the minds of the student body. Mme. Berezowsky was amazed by the interest in language learning. "We had over 30 kids come to the Indigenous language workshop that we hosted," she said. "It was great to see".

The World Languages Committee has worked tirelessly to expand the World Languages Week to other schools in order to help others develop a sense for different languages and to understand the power of diversity, and there are plans to expand this initiative to other schools.

THE NORVAL EXPERIENCE

As most of you know, the Y10s and Y7s have a trip together to Norval. Most of us have been on the trip as a mentee, mentor, or both. Everyone who has had the pleasure of attending the trip gives uniformly positive reviews. One piece of feedback that always stands out is that the older students feel like they were having a real impact on boys new to the Upper School, and the new boys testify to that, saying that they felt welcome. One of the best ways that UCC does that is by working through the house system, making the boys feel a sense of belonging before they even start at the Upper School.

The Mentoring program at UCC is ultimately one of its strong suits as, by design, it provides students with the opportunity to make a profound impact on others, apart from grades, sports, or the arts. Mentors consistently look out for at least one boy and foster a genuine relationship to help their mentee comfortably merge into this diverse community. Whether it's a simple "hello" or encouraging him to engage in an experience outside of his comfort zone, the older boy can truly plant seeds of passion

and positive reinforcement for that boy to aspire to, later on. The upcoming generation of students is, after all, who we'll be passing the torch to lead, excite, and produce a greater influence on their younger peers.

The Norval trip began with a tour of the Upper School. The Y7s were thrilled to go to the Upper School; the design lab stood out to them.

Next, the students left for Norval, with a Y7 and a Y10 sitting next to each other in every seat. The familiar 45-minute bus ride felt different this time. During its entirety, the prep boys were hearing, in many cases for the first time, an account of life at the Upper School from several different Y10s. At the same time, the Y10s were learning about the hopes and fears of the Y7s, and through those conversations were able to give advice and encouragement on how to break through those fears, realize those hopes, and make the next five years of their life unforgettable.

JOHN PAPANIKOLAOU AND CHRIS NOH
EDITOR AND STAFF REPORTER

Arriving at Norval well-acquainted, we split up again into houses and started with some team-building activities; basketball in the grassy field, watching the playoffs when the Leafs were still in it, etc. Nightfall came, we sat on the logs around firepits all over the property, and had heart-to-heart conversations within our houses.

The next day, we had more team building (low ropes, etc.), and then the main event: the Norval cup. There were six events, among them orienteering, trivia, and classic Norval games such as find the spot in the picture. The teams fought hard, with Mowbray's coming out on top in a spectacular fashion.

While the mentorship program has its strengths, the Board of Stewards would like feedback on potential modifications to the mentorship program to allow for the most positive experience for both parties. How can we most effectively create a community that invites all incoming new students?

LEAVING TEACHERS INTERVIEW

With the 2018-2019 Academic Year coming to a close, we as a community must say our farewells to some of the most esteemed members of our community. These teachers have served UCC passionately and as a final "Thank You" from our end, we have decided to take some comments from these teachers and wish them the best moving forward.



Mr. Chun

WHAT WILL YOU MISS MOST FROM THE COLLEGE (APART FROM THE TEARS OF YOUR STUDENTS)?

The fine food at the Upper Dining Hall; Fish Tuesdays are always a favourite.

HOW HAS UCC CHANGED YOU AS A PERSON?

I learned a lot about time management and students' mentalities; how often they forget to do their homework and come to class. I want to show them the way.

WHAT IS YOUR FUNNIEST EXPERIENCE FROM YOUR TIME AT UCC?

I was taking a class on a field trip. We were going to Boston and we had to get through security at the airport which was annoying, so we had to all split up and get checked individually.

I get through security and half the group is gone; we looked everywhere for them and couldn't find them.

Finally, they called me and said "We're on the plane". That's the one place I couldn't search for them. These were HL Math students by the way.

IF YOU WERE A UCC STUDENT, WHAT WOULD YOU TAKE?

Econ — gotta get into Queen's Commerce.

Mr. Turner

WHAT IMPACT DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE HAD ON UCC? WHAT DO YOU HOPE FOR YOUR LEGACY ON THE COLLEGE TO LOOK LIKE?

I hope that at my time in the college, I've been able to help students balance their academics and cocurricular activities. I've also tried to convey my passion for life and the environment through my classes as well as help students find their own passion.

As for a legacy, I hope for students to continue to respect learning and find enjoyment in their school-life despite the hard work. I've tried to help connect different aspects of life within my lessons and hope that this mentality of everything being connected becomes a part of learning.

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING MOST FORWARD TO AFTER LEAVING UCC?

Life as a teacher at UCC is pretty busy, so I want to pursue some of my other passions with my free time. I plan to get more into writing, the arts, and reconnecting with friends.

I also want to volunteer with environment friendly programs so that I can continue to have a positive impact on our Earth.

DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER COMMENTS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SAY?

I wish for you guys to find your passion in life and to find a career as rewarding and fulfilling as I have.

Ms. David

WHAT IS YOUR MOST CHERISHED MEMORY?

There was a moment when everyone was in assembly and singing O Canada. Just to hear all the voices simultaneously singing the anthem showed the spirit of collegiality of the school.

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING MOST FORWARD TO AFTER LEAVING UCC?

I am going on to teach at Switzerland at a school I had previously taught at. I am looking forward to getting to reconnect with students and colleagues there.

HOW HAS UCC CHANGED YOU AS A PERSON?

I've become more ready to make exceptions and help students out when they ask. I have also become more conscious of how the decisions I make for my students affect each of them differently because of their personal context. I haven't become more lenient with deadlines, but more flexible with individuals and groups needing more support to do their best work.

WHAT IMPACT HAVE YOU HAD HERE AT UCC?

I was able to direct the Imaginary Invalid, which provided an opportunity for younger students in grades 8-10 to get involved in theatre. Additionally, I helped Aryan Pasricha with his Wish Youth Network Society project. Finally, I think I made a positive impact in terms of my relationships with students and teachers.

DO YOU HAVE ANY FINAL MESSAGE?

Thank you very much for welcoming me and learning with me.

SAMIR MALICK AND DANIEL JIANG
STAFF REPORTERS

NEW BOARD OF STEWARDS INTERVIEWS

KARAM BAMBAWALE, GEN NISHIWAKI,

ALFREH SHI, AND HENRY WANG

STAFF REPORTERS AND EDITOR

An interview by Karam Bambawale with UCC's next Head Steward, Uche Ochuba.

AFTER A MONTH IN THE POSITION, HOW EXCITED ARE YOU FOR NEXT YEAR AS THE HEAD STEWARD?

I'm very excited to be serving in this position for the upcoming year. It's an honour and I take the responsibility of the job seriously. There are, of course, significant obstacles to any issue the Board of Stewards chooses to tackle, otherwise they wouldn't be problems at all, but I look forward to the challenge.

SO FAR, WHAT HAS BEEN THE BOARD OF STEWARDS' MOST NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENT?

It's only been a month and things take time to play out, but we've done a few things so far. First, we've been working hard to plan the Year 9/10 Semiformal and the May Day festivities which I hope everyone will enjoy. We've also secured a better relationship with the facilities staff to better deal with things like the temperature in the school and sinks and fountains.

WHAT DO YOU GUYS PLAN ON DOING BEFORE THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR?

I see the next month and a half as a time to gather the ideas of all 17 stewards and put them together in a way that makes sense, then weighing them against the initiatives that we already have in place. Sometimes less is more, and I don't think that every issue (especially student stress) can be solved by adding more things on. So, in short, I see it as time to plan out every change that we want to make definitively.

HOW WILL YOU UPHOLD ALL OF THE GOALS YOU MENTIONED IN YOUR SPEECH AND DECLARATION AND BRING THE OVERALL UCC COMMUNITY TOGETHER?

I think that the most important factor is to stay focused on the goals that we are currently fleshing out. It's easy to feel inspired during and immediately after the elections, but without sustained effort, nothing will get done. We have chosen to focus on three areas, which are communication, wellbe-

ing, and community love, which we plan to give more details on in a newsletter that will be sent out in mid-May. I think that it's important to realize that the students alone don't have as much power alone, so to achieve the goals in my speech, I plan to work with teachers and administration at the school.

WHICH TEACHER HAS HAD THE MOST SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON YOU THROUGHOUT YOUR TIME AT THE COLLEGE?

I would say that Mr. Bauld has had big impact on me. He always has good advice and can help you to weigh the values and limitations of your ideas.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE EVENT AT THE COLLEGE DURING THE ACADEMIC YEAR?

I enjoy rivalry week a lot, but nothing tops A-Day.

*

An interview by Henry Wang with UCC's next Creativity Steward, Kurt Karul.

WHAT NEW IDEAS DO YOU HAVE THAT COULD BE INCORPORATED INTO SCHOOL AND VARIOUS EVENTS?

I want to fix the timing of Nuit Bleue, because no one wants to wait until 7:30 for the music concerts to start. If we start them around 5:00, we can end earlier (not 10 PM) and get much better attendance from students who don't have to wait around for 3 hours.

HOW WILL YOU MAKE UCC A MORE CREATIVE AND INTERACTIVE SPACE?

Ms. Timusk and I were talking and we'd like to redecorate the hallway between the Music Room and the David Chu Theatre with old play posters from the archives along with a "Now Playing" lighting fixture that would showcase current productions.

WITH YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE ARTS, HOW WILL YOU HELP THE ARTS DURING YOUR TENURE?

I know that the arts don't always get the credit they deserve, but I'll make sure that every production, exhibition and concert gets assembly announcements. Also, I'm

going to start giving shoutouts to students with outstanding artistic achievements in assembly every so often to motivate them to keep on following their passions.

WHAT IMPROVEMENTS CAN YOU MAKE TO THE CURRENT ARTS PROGRAM?

I want to bring back posters with actors' headshots on them for senior productions. This year was the first time in almost 15 years that we did a graphic poster for the classical play and I can't say the students were very fond of that. Also, I'm going to try and check out donor options to see if we could reduce ticket prices so that students don't have to shell out \$20 to see plays.

WILL YOU INCORPORATE MORE EVENTS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR?

To be honest, no. I think we have a lot of events already and I want to focus on improving big events like Nuit Bleue rather than creating new ones. Quality over quantity.

HOW DO YOU PLAN ON BALANCING YOUR TIME BETWEEN EXTRACURRICULARS, SCHOOL WORK AND BEING THE CREATIVITY STEWARD?

I've already dropped some extracurriculars in order to streamline all of my efforts into the arts. That way, I can focus on music and drama while still being able to come up with something unique and entertaining for every Friday Assembly.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST MUSICAL ACHIEVEMENT?

At a music festival with Intermediate Jazz in Y9 our clinician pulled me aside and complimented my drumming and praised me a lot. I later learned that he was Gordon Foote, head of Jazz at UofT. He made my day.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE SONG?

Come a Little Closer by Cage the Elephant

*

An interview by Henry Wang with UCC's next Academic Steward, Ben Swan.

WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO BE UCC'S ACADEMIC STEWARD?

Academics are the central and unifying aspect of the school. I saw opportunities to start conversations with the administration to improve the daily lives of the students. Some of these areas include trying to bolster student wellbeing through a variety of specific measures. And others are about creating in general a friendlier and more cooperative academic environment so that all students can feel comfortable at school and thrive in their pursuits. I see the role of the Academic Steward as not being limited to the domain of academics but, as a member of the BoS, the Academic steward can help to enrich our whole school experience. I wanted to be part of that dialogue between students and the administration, and part of that effort to enhance our already excellent academic experience.

WHICH PART OF UCC'S ACADEMIC PROGRAM ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

It is undeniable that academics at UCC are rigorous and challenging. I really value and am most proud of the fantastic support each boy is provided by the school as part of his individual academic journey. Teachers are immensely dedicated, passionate, and consistently willing to devote the time to ensure students confidently grasp the content of a course. The CFL provides invaluable support in the form of individual coaching in areas such as time management, organization, test taking, and helping students to catch up on missed work. UCC also provides student-to-student support in the form of peer tutoring. In all these ways, the school provides excellent support for each student's learning that is really admirable.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF UCC'S ACADEMIC PROGRAM AND HOW WILL YOU BUILD UPON THE WORK OF PREVIOUS ACADEMIC STEWARDS TO IMPROVE ACADEMICS AT UCC WHILE BALANCING STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING?

The current academic program at UCC has clear strengths. It provides boys with an outstanding education, is intellectually challenging, and highlights the value of discipline and perseverance. In addition, I feel that some of the most meaningful

learning experiences we have come from our rich interactions and dynamics with both teachers and peers in the classroom. However, there are real challenges to the demands of the IB program and clear areas to address as a result. I feel my role as Academic Steward has two clear priorities: (i) to maximize the "wellness" that each student feels on a day to day basis, and (ii) to have each student achieve the maximum level of success they are capable of in their studies. Prior Academic Stewards have done laudable jobs in attempting to achieve these goals, such as changing the start time of exams by 30 minutes. I think to truly consider student mental health and wellbeing, there needs to be continued meaningful discussion about the balancing and distribution of assessment and assignment dates throughout the year to best set students up for academic success and personal wellbeing.

WILL YOU ADD MORE MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS DAYS AND WORKSHOPS?

The new BoS has highlighted mental health and wellness as a central and guiding pillar. While I don't yet know exactly how this focus will manifest itself, I think that there will be an increase in the number of mental health awareness days and activities facilitated through the BoS to help place a genuine focus on this important and central issue. I know it is a priority to see the focus on "wellness" and "mental health" translated into meaningful action. The new board is committed to making a genuine impact on promoting and supporting wellness in the student body.

HOW WILL YOU HELP STUDENTS OVERCOME ACADEMIC RELATED STRUGGLES INVOLVING THE DIFFICULT PROGRAM THAT IS THE IB?

I see my role as having the potential to make small yet meaningful contributions to academic-related struggles. The first thing I would like to initiate actually begins before boys enter into the IB Diploma Programme, during their course selection process. Students' course choices are extremely important in determining their success (both mental and academic) in the IB. I think too often boys make choices based on very little real information about the courses that are offered. I would like to change this by having a student led question and answer period during the course selection process where boys in Y10 can ask

boys in Y11 about their experiences in various courses, what to expect in terms of content, the learning that took place, the kinds of assignments, as well as the workload.

I would also like to allow for after-school makeup testing. Students should not be punished for getting involved in extracurriculars. Writing tests at 7:30 am is not the most conducive to academic success; boys are almost always tired and under slept, and thus don't perform as well as they could. I would like to make after-school makeup testing an option.

Another area I would like to address is the overall academic culture at UCC, one which is often dominated by intense competition. While some competition is probably a healthy motivator, I think boys should work together more often, and help support each other. One way this could be promoted is by designating two classrooms per grade during exams in which boys can study and help support each other in a more collaborative and cooperative learning style.

*

An interview by Karam Bambawale with UCC's next Community Service Steward, Shaan Hooey.

WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO TAKE ON THE ROLE OF NEXT YEAR'S COMMUNITY SERVICE STEWARD?

I've been involved in many aspects of the role of the community service steward for most of my time at the Upper School. I love the clubs and service programs at UCC, and my personal experience has given me a lens through which I can look for improvements. Further, by being involved in clubs and service at UCC I can better understand the opinions of other students to ensure that my thoughts on the program aren't unsubstantiated.

TLDL: I want to fix problems that impact the student body, not just a select few.

HOW HAS COMMUNITY SERVICE PLAYED A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON YOUR LIFE?

One story that I haven't really told people is why I got involved in service and clubs at UCC. It all started in Gr. 9 after I got a stress fracture in my back from cross-country only to fill all the time I suddenly had. I was so sad that I wouldn't be able to run for what ended up being more than 7 months,

but, over time, I found great pleasure in making other people's days a little easier or more fun or even less lonely.

I tried everything, from volunteering for the homeless at Holy Rosary Church to volunteering at Luminato, TIFF, and the Fringe festivals (all arts & culture events in Toronto), to working with disabled youth at the annual Youth Games hosted in August.

There was something powerful about seeing an eight-year-old homeless boy coming out of the cold not wanting food or drink, but just wanting someone to notice him and play soccer with him. I'll never forget when he came one hour earlier the next week because the previous week made such a difference in his life. That impact has been one of the most powerful and humbling experiences in my life thus far, and it would be an understatement to say that the moment changed the way I lived my life. My vision for service at UCC in the future is to try to allow students more choice in the volunteer initiatives they choose, but also open their minds to new experiences so they can be impacted by service in the same way I have.

TLDR: Unavailable → priceless experience.

PERTINENT TO THE COLLEGE, WHAT DO YOU THINK CAN BE DONE TO OPTIMIZE THE AMOUNT OF COMMUNITY SERVICE DONE BY STUDENTS?

I'll keep this one brief. If I can add two new things to student's UCC service experience by the end of next year, I will first centralize all the available volunteer opportunities available to students. This could be done through a weekly email, ManageBac (once I teach you how to navigate it) or a site linked to the main UCC site. I collected form responses already to inform which volunteer opportunities I try to bring to the student body for the coming year.

Secondly, I want to implement community service afternoons once per term for each grade. This initiative allows students from each grade to choose a volunteer opportunity that they like (there will be 4-5 opportunities available on a first come first serve basis) and can do alongside their friends.

As always, there will be a record high amount of doctors appointments scheduled during this time, but I want you to remember a few things before you do this:

- Events like these take months to plan and they are for no reason other than your enjoyment.

- You get service hours.
- There are very few events where you get to do something with anyone you like from your grade.
- It's also a great bonding experience.

- If even 5 people can walk away from one of these afternoons with a new outlook on service, I have done my job and will be so proud.

TLDR: Service afternoons & centralized place for volunteer opportunities

WITH THE CONFUSION OF LOGGING SERVICE HOURS AND ITS LONG-WINED PROCESS, HOW WILL YOU MAKE GETTING SERVICE HOURS EASIER AT UCC?

By next September, every student will have access to extremely detailed instructional videos on how to navigate every aspect of ManageBac as it pertains to service. ManageBac is here to stay, and is actually quite a good platform that streamlines the service process quite a bit. For example, when you are applying for jobs, Mr. Babits can print all your hours, reflections, and service experiences so you can add them to your resume with the click of a button. I believe the issue (grade level service forms have confirmed this) is that the student body has not been properly trained on how to use it, and I believe a video to which students can refer whenever they need (literally 2-3 minute videos with targeted instructional goals) is the best way to accomplish this.

TLDR: If you can't change the system, you have got to learn how to live with it, but I will be taking care of that next year so there are no areas of confusion with the student body.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MAIN GOALS YOU HAVE FOR NEXT YEAR, AND DO YOU PLAN ON ESTABLISHING A 'DAY 9'?

I want to commend Owen Meunier, who has been lights out in the service department for the past 365 days. He's done some great work with implementing a parents service night, which I plan to grow. I also plan to grow the service fair to better appeal to student wants. Unfortunately, this means you might have a few more forms to fill out this year :(

I also will continue to expand the CAS, Clubs & Service councils to include a greater representation of the student body, which means iDiv & sDiv voices, day boy and border voices, voices across all houses, and voices representing different co-curricular activities.

Finally, other than centralizing the volunteer opportunities available to the student body, I want to make the grade-level service afternoons your favourite volunteer experience yet, and I want to implement CAS workshops for IB students during PTI Thursday afternoons should there be any questions that I can help to clarify before it's too late.

TLDR: Keep expanding previous initiatives, implement CS afternoons & CAS project workshops on PTI days for IB students. No "Day 9" — kind of a modified version.

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An interview by Gen Nishiwaki with UCC's next Sustainability Steward, Chris Noh.

WHAT DO YOU PLAN TO DO TO MAKE UCC MORE SUSTAINABLE? ARE THERE ANY CERTAIN INITIATIVES YOU HAVE IN MIND?

Okay so "sustainable" is a very broad buzzword, but I see three pillars in the school that can define this term: Ecological promotion, Student well-being, and discussion with Food services. There are many plans I have to make this school more sustainable in these three areas, but I can't list all the ideas that many students have helped me come up with. Obviously, some are ambitious, "long shot" ideas, while others could be considered more achievable, but here are some just as a sneak peek: Mental health surveys available online or outside major rooms that can connect struggling students with health centre, an ongoing, public dialogue with Aramark so the students understand the progress we're in turning our feedback into results (probably through email or newsletter or steward announcements), a "No Drive to school day" that encourages all upper school students to take transit, bike, run, or walk to school (obviously during nice weather), possibly bringing Wifi to students during lunch and after school, and continued progress towards a Green Roof at the school (very long-term). I think as well, especially in terms of happiness and well-being at the school, you'll see a lot of collaboration among the board

of stewards to try to incorporate activities that are fun, stress-relieving, and creative to foster a strong community-dynamic in the college.

WITH THE CONSTANT COMPLAINTS OF ARAMARK AND OTHER SCHOOLS IN THE US DROPPING THEM IN VERY RECENTLY, HOW WILL YOU UTILIZE YOUR POSITION TO INFLUENCE FOOD AT OUR SCHOOL?

So it was slightly touched upon in the section above, but I really want to promote "transparency" (I know it's overused) with this conflict specifically. Look: I'm not going to promise permanent UD meal changes or the good ol' junky snacks in the LD. What I can promise is telling the student body what we (the Nutrition committee and Board of Stewards) are trying to communicate with Aramark and how they are responding to this feedback. We got to remember: Aramark is a private corporation that has a monopoly within the food and facility services field. We, as the student body, must give clear, coherent, and reasonable feedback for them to respond and comply with. Look out for some public info in the coming months...

WITH THE NOTORIETY OF THE SUSTAINABILITY STEWARDS HAVING THE LEAST INFLUENCE OVER THE SCHOOL COMPARED TO OTHER STEWARDS, HOW WILL YOU PLAN TO CHANGE THAT?

When I was younger, I totally heard and believed this as well, and I think this popular notion exists for two reasons: (1) It's the newest, most recently established steward, created in 2009 by the administration and (2) Sustainability is (as described previously) a broad, popular term that isn't directly associated with the pillars that make up a "school" (like Academic, Athletic, Community Service, etc.). This is 100% false by the way. Luke, and those before him, have dedicated great deals of time to speaking with Aramark, bringing in new LD items, working towards long-term projects, etc. Also, please note that all the Stewards obtain an equal "influence" and each has specific, tailored goals they work towards. Nevertheless, I truly believe that this position has a humongous room for growth and a large significance among the student body - being completely unbiased of course! Seriously: check your local news source or any TED talk. The need for ecological and societal sustainability is everywhere. Allowing this campus, and the students that give it life each and every day, to be more ecolog-

ical and waste-efficient is a necessity, not a preference. I'm genuinely passionate about my role and you'll figure out soon: **it doesn't take much to reduce your footprint on our environment.**

*

An interview by Gen Nishiwaki with UCC's next Social Steward, Troy Boydell.

WHAT PLANS DO YOU HAVE TO INCREASE THE INTERACTION WITH FEMALES FROM NEIGHBORING SCHOOLS?

Considering I've been going to UCC since SK, I've spent my fair share of time trying to 'increase female interaction'. But for the younger kids especially I think this is important. I'm going to try to implement at least 2 COSSOT events within our school this year, similar to the ones hosted at Havergal and other girls schools. I was thinking maybe a ball hockey tournament, talent show, dodgeball tournament, or even something as simple as a movie night or student concert. I think that would be a great way to have some fun and meet some girls. But at the end of the day, I can't be doing all the work for you, all I can do is set up events with girls involved, it's up to the boys to cross the metaphorical 'awkward line at the grade 7 school dance'. But really, it is something I'd like to address, and I think something really fun could come out of it.

HOW DO YOU PLAN ON MAKING SOCIAL EVENTS SUCH AS SEMI MORE ATTRACTIVE TO ATTEND?

This one's a little trickier. Semi is the first event I've planned so far, and for the most part, I try to improve them based on my own experiences. For example, in grade 9 I found dancing in the student center with a teacher DJ....interesting. So this year the dance will be in the Chu with a real DJ and a playlist chosen by the students, on top of that some outside of school snacks (no core powers or beef sticks). I'm also really open to hearing from what the younger guys like/dislike, to get some feedback directly from the people actually attending the dances. I think Stewards is an event where I get a lot more freedom to plan and make unique and I'm looking forward to creating more hype around those types of bigger events. I was also thinking of creating physical tickets for events and posters to put up around the school, just to make them feel a bit more legit and noteworthy.

*

An interview by Alfred Shi with UCC's next Athletic Steward, Aryan Pasricha.

HOW MUCH CAN YOU SQUAT AT THE SAS?

155 lbs.

HOW MUCH CAN YOU BENCH?

No idea.

ARE THERE ANY IDEAS IN MIND TO IMPROVE ATHLETICS OPPORTUNITIES?

I think there are numerous opportunities at the school. We have the most diverse number of sports of all ages. And for people that don't want to play in a serious league or didn't make a team, there are house sports to get involved with the athletics. In terms of increasing opportunities, I honestly don't know there is much more we can do. Possibly adding more big events like Winterfest and Varsity Day, but having too many will ruin the value of those days.

HOW DO YOU PLAN ON ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF STUDENTS PARTICIPATING ON TWO VARSITY SPORTS AT ONCE?

I don't think that is allowed. You can only play one Varsity sport per term. The only case I've seen a student play on two varsity teams at once is Varsity Rowing and Varsity Track.

WHAT IS YOUR POST WORKOUT MEAL?

Pasta and Chicken.

AND FINALLY, THE OBLIGATORY QUESTIONS: COKE OR PEPSI, AND XBOX OR PLAYSTATION?

Can't taste the difference between the two and neither of those two: Nintendo 64 all the way baby!!

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF @UCC_MEMES

JOHN PAPANIKOLAOU
EDITOR

We all know what happened. After “unrelated tensions on social media”, the esteemed UCC memes closed its doors to new submissions and shut down. What a lot of people don’t know is why it happened. We at Convergence would like to set the record straight, on ucc_memes in particular. We recognize that ucc_memes is only a small piece of the broader context of UCC’s many online communities, but it was one of the best known and will be focused on in this article.

Clearly, ucc_memes was a noteworthy moment in everyone’s feeds. With hilarious submissions from people school-wide, it clearly brightened up everyone’s day. It was certainly a good page, devoted to good purposes. Unfortunately, with the good pages, however, come the bad. At a time when multiple subreddits concerning UCC were discovered, the school began to take a hardline stance on school-related pages. The subreddits were shut down (for appropriate reasons) and the creation of any more pages were off the table.

At the time people started to hear about the subreddits, UCC memes shut down at last, with a statement from its administrator.

After interviewing the ucc_memes administrator (Kevin Liu, Y2), we’ve learned why the page was shut down; not directly because of school pressure, but by his own choice influenced by the atmosphere at that time.

It became apparent to Kevin that administrators of a social media account take on a lot of risk. They’re not just responsible for the content that they post; they’re also responsible for the reputation of the account that is tied to their name and for the comments posted under their posts, which they have no control over.

Kevin’s understandable decision to close down the page opens the doors to a broader, more “TOK-themed” knowledge question: What are the implications of having a meme account inextricably tied with a prestigious school like UCC? They could lie in two key areas: public perception of the school and how the page contributes to school life. Which one is more important?

Evidently, UCC cares about how it is portrayed. As one of Canada’s greatest schools, the administration cares that we are seen in a suiting light. How can a meme page affect this perception? Both positively and negatively. Positively, it can showcase the best UCC has to offer, albeit in a funny, slightly twisted way. Negatively, it can project an image of entitlement (making fun of a privilege only a select few have), and, if left unchecked,

"What are the implications of having a meme account inextricably tied with a prestigious school like UCC?"

make fun of individuals and turn toxic (which, on our view, never happened to ucc_memes). Not exactly ideal, even for a private account. While the school never asked ucc_memes to shut down, it would be reasonable if they would, based on how much UCC’s reputation helps the school as well as the students; one post could have the power to wreck, or seriously damage, that reputation for everyone. Damaging that reputation through memes is only hurting the school and student body unnecessarily.

On the other hand, ucc_memes had a lot to offer. With over 800 followers, it became one of the most vibrant online UCC communities. While it would be bold to say that it helped create friendships, it certainly gave a lot of people material to laugh about. For ucc_memes in particular, it didn’t hurt that it had one of the strictest filters to shut out any inappropriate content which could hurt UCC’s reputation. When the page shut down, the comment section served as a virtual exhibit of everyone’s respect and appreciation for the page, communicated through commenting “f”, and that alone. Mixed in with the “f’s” were heartfelt messages of support and gratitude for all the page had to offer. If one thing was for sure, it was that people were going to miss the page.

“ucc_memes was an integral part of my UCC experience. Arriving back home after a long day of school, ucc_memes brought my spirits back to life.... Your memories will be with me for the rest of my life.”

~ Brian Tu YII

On the whole, though, what’s more important? The way the school is perceived, or how much students appreciated the page? What’s the most important thing in the long term? Most likely, that’s for the administration to decide. Hopefully, they’ll take the fun side of it into account as well as the serious side.



OUR NEW DESIGN LAB: WHY IT MATTERS AND WHAT IT OFFERS

BY KEVIN LIU, MANAGER

Our new design lab at Room 302 has been a sensation in the UCC community. It has generated tremendous interest from students, parents, visitors, donors, and old boys. As such, I decided to conduct in-depth interviews with school leaders and lab staff to provide more information about the lab to the Upper School student body.

The interview request from Convergence received prompt support and response from everyone who was contacted. Convergence would like to specifically thank Mr. Bardai, Mr. Miskew, and Ms. Triff for their time and efforts in addressing our questions.

Why Does It Matter?

On November 13th, I brought this question to Mr. Bardai, Head of Upper School. In his office, Mr. Bardai talked very passionately about why the school had made this investment and what the school wanted to achieve with such a big investment.

Kevin: So why did the school decide to build the design lab upstairs and how does it fit into our Towards 2029 Strategic Directions plan?

Mr. Bardai: A lot of it stemmed from a desire for our school to take that next leap in terms of giving boys access to innovation and technology. What spurred it was the IB Middle Years Program. Because in the MYP, design is a mandatory course. And so, we said: you know what? If we're going to do that anyways, why don't we focus design on technology and go as "all-

in" as we can on this idea of giving boys access to a different way of thinking and a different way of knowing? Because design thinking, while not totally new or unique, provides a different way in which we can generate knowledge and solve problems. And then we wanted technology to be the tool that student have access to solve real problems. So we felt that when we look 5, 10 years in the future, that kind of skill-set will be really important in conjunction with all the other great skillsets the college offers to help make our boys successful in the future.

Kevin: Definitely. I am currently doing the design program, and although we're not located in the lab, we are in a similar environment downstairs. I think the renovations that have taken place downstairs and in the lab upstairs were a great investment.

Mr. Bardai: So for us, the lab upstairs was really a chance to build an ideal space almost from scratch. We were confined by the architecture of the space, as the soft walls changed but not the hard walls. But we had to really rethink what it means to create a space where boys can generate new ideas to solve problems. And we said we have to have a collaborative space. Because collaboration is key. One person cannot sit in a room alone and imagine in tremendous solutions to complex problems. And then we needed a place for people to work, you know, to have talks, and to discuss, which is now the middle section of the lab. And then we needed to have another section of the lab: where you have the tools, the fun stuff to play with, the tools that

can help you to create prototypes of what it is that you're envisaging. That was really the genesis of why we really wanted to create a space like that. The space downstairs that you were referring to is also great, and hopefully we can have more spaces like the one upstairs.

Kevin: You touched quite a bit on how the lab can advance our curricular programs with the MYP and the Design courses. Do you think there will be a similar effect on the co-curricular agenda of the boys?

Mr. Bardai: I would hope so. In classes, like design for example, you know that you're being assessed. You know that you have certain requirements you have to follow. So in some ways, you are confined. But in the co-curricular realm, we can let go of some of those confines. And that's where I think a lot more creativity can come. So I hope that the co-curricular aspect of things really begins to flourish. Part of what we want to do is that we want to develop something that is close to an incubator here at the College, where we are able to take the wonderful ideas that the boys have, and where we are able to harness or nurture those wonderful ideas and provide support. So the school gives support like business, legal, mentoring, creativity support. Support can come from people in the industry such as old boys, community members, parents, who have expertise and who can help. They can help to take the great ideas that are in the prototype stage and figure out how we can make them more broader-scale. So that's what I hope we can achieve.



Kevin: Definitely. How will the school continue to invest in this lab? Will there be any more improvements made?

Mr. Bardai: Yes, absolutely. One part of it is that the school itself is definitely committed to this and will continue to support the program. The other aspect of this is that the school community has such a generous base of old boys and families who believe in making the educational experience here as robust as possible for the boys who are here and for future generations of boys. So the amount of philanthropic support that the design lab has received has been quite tremendous. This is really a sign that the community is fully behind this.

Kevin: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Mr. Bardai: Well just that you know, what brings us great joy around this work is seeing boys like you and others developing new ideas, solving new, meaningful problems, in effort to make our communities and our world a better place, ultimately. That's what brings us great joy, to see you and others using the space that way. And imagine in 2029, hopefully the path we've started on now yields for the college and the community by 2029. I think it will be quite remarkable, the potential it could be.

Kevin: Thank you so much, Mr. Bardai.

What Does It Offer?

"...Desire for our school to take that next leap in terms of giving boys access to innovation and technology."

On behalf of Convergence, I emailed Mr. Miskew, Faculty Chair, Design & Innovation, many practical questions about the lab. Mr. Miskew and Mrs. Pakkala (known as Ms. Triff), Lab Technician, provided very detailed and informative answers.

WHAT RESOURCES ARE CURRENTLY AVAILABLE IN THE LAB IN THE AREAS OF CODING, PROGRAMMING, PRODUCT DESIGN AND FILMING?

Mr. Miskew: The design program looks at design through the lenses of product design, digital media and coding. Film is an important part of the digital media program, but we explore other areas of digital media design in this lens. In terms of resources available in the lab, we have lots of space to work in teams and collaborate. We have an area where boys can project when completing team projects that require they display some work.

We have lots of tools and building materials including a drill press and basic hand tools. We have a variety of 3D printers available as well as a laser cutter. In addition, students can work with small-scale electronics. There is a station for soldering and developing small scale electronics. Finally, we have a robotics equipment the boys can access and use in a variety of ways.

Ms. Triff: To further what Paul is saying, the digital media program also includes graphic design, photo-editing and media literacy.

WHO CAN USE THE LAB AND WHEN?

Mr. Miskew: Anyone in the Upper School can use the full lab, including equipment, after school from 3:30 pm to 5:00 pm. The lab space has been designed so that it is accessible at any time to work and collaborate; however, students won't have access to the tools and other equipment. Anyone in our community is welcome to visit. We are looking at ways to get the prep students up as well as other members from our community in a formal capacity. Ultimately, anyone is welcome to pop in after school to have a chat and we encourage everyone from our community from students to teachers to parents to do this.

Ms. Triff: We will be formally having teacher workshops taking place after school in the near future, so teachers can become better familiar with the laser cutter and 3D printers. This will include learning the entire process, from designing a product to printing or cutting it.



IF I WANT TO USE THE 3D PRINTER, HOW DO I LINE UP FOR MY TASK AND DO I NEED TO PAY FOR THAT?

Mr. Miskew: Emailing Ms. Triff and/or coming up to the lab is a good starting place. As the lab technician and year 8 teacher, she can get students up and running. Right now, there are printers available to be used and there is no charge for printing smaller projects. If you have an idea, come up and let's get it going. As the place becomes more active, we will have a formal system for requesting printing, but right now if you come up we can get you going pretty quickly.

SHOULD THOSE INTERESTED IN THE AREA OF FILMING UTILIZE THE LAB AND TO WHAT EXTENT? (THERE IS ALSO THE DIGITAL MEDIA LAB ON THE SECOND FLOOR)

Mr. Miskew: Again, our space is open to anyone that wants to engage in design thinking. So if film students, or students from any subject, want to come up and use the space, we are here. There are people here to support you and you can always bring along a faculty member. There is a great digital media lab one floor below that the boys can access as well. There is lots of things there to help produce amazing pieces of work.

IF I NEED TO BORROW SOME TOOLS AND MATERIALS TO TAKE HOME, CAN I DO IT? IF SO, WHAT IS THE PROCEDURE?

Mr. Miskew: Students can't take any tools home, but they can take their projects home

"...we will help you tap in to the expertise, both student and teacher wise, within our community."

when they are done. If a student has a plan and needs space to store their materials in the lab while working, we can help facilitate that.

DOES THE LAB PLAN TO OFFER FASTER ACCESS TO INTERNET FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT?

Mr. Miskew: No plans for faster internet access right now, but if the need arises, we can chat. If you need more bandwidth to do some serious machine learning, come talk to me.

CAN STUDENTS JUST GO TO THE LAB TO DO HOMEWORK (USE THE LAB AS A QUIET PLACE), RATHER THAN CONDUCT A DESIGN-RELATED ACTIVITY?

Mr. Miskew: If students want to come up and use the lab they are welcome. As long as they are respectful of the space and the people in the space, they can come up finish some homework. Ultimately, it does depend on how busy the space is. We want to prioritize students who are using the design space

to design something.

CAN I BRING MY FRIENDS FROM ANOTHER SCHOOL TO WORK WITH ME ON A DESIGN PROJECT IN THE LAB?

Mr. Miskew: If you have someone that is visiting you want to bring up with you, please bring them. If it is a larger project you are working on and it involves someone outside our school coming regularly, just come to talk to us and we can work to support you.

IF I AM PLANNING ON DEVELOPING A LONGER-TERM DESIGN PROJECT, WHO SHOULD I TALK TO?

Mr. Miskew: Come to talk to Mr. Miskew or Ms. Triff after school. If you are in a design course, start with your design teacher. That is a starting place. Depending on what you are developing we will help you tap in to the expertise, both student and teacher wise, within our community.

IS THERE ANY INFORMATION OTHER THAN THE ABOVE THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH OUR READERS?

Mr. Miskew: Our space is open to everyone in the Upper School from Year 8 to Year 12. Don't hesitate to come by and visit. Whether you have a specific project in mind, want to learn something but don't know where to start, or just want to do some tinkering and learning we are here to help. Come and talk to us.

UCC'S FIRST PRIDE WEEK

JOHN PAPANIKOLAOU

EDITOR

An interview with Carter MacLean.

WHY IS PRIDE WEEK SO IMPORTANT?

Having our first ever pride week at school this year was important and a step in the right direction for UCC. As a school community we don't talk enough about the LGBTQ community, and pride week paved the way for more discussions. It is important to cover topics about the LGBTQ community because it is not often talked about, which means people outside the community do not fully understand it. Our first pride week did a good job getting the ball rolling.

WAS THERE ANY RESISTANCE ENCOUNTERED WHEN TRYING TO MAKE PRIDE WEEK HAPPEN?

There was essentially no resistance encountered when planning pride week. Our school community has gotten to the point where the idea of a pride week isn't a far fetched concept that no one supports. No one made a fuss about it because most people respect the strides the GSA has made this year.

WHAT'S THE MOST IMPACTFUL PART OF PRIDE WEEK?

The most impactful aspect of pride week was the student assembly on Thursday. The assembly was the first time where an entire assembly was devoted to pride and it was an amazing platform to address the school. The GSA panel was effective at clearing the air on some topics that are unknown to many such as the differences between sexuality, gender identity and gender expression. Finally, the coming out speech in assembly was the most impactful event of the week. A coming out speech is something that UCC has not seen before, and delivering one to the student body is so important because it shows the bravery of the speaker and the belief that the school will be accepting. The overwhelmingly positive feedback proves this and gives closeted students more self-confidence and courage towards their own coming out journey.

*
An interview with Mr. Callegaro.

WILL THERE BE SIMILAR ASSEMBLIES IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE?

I would love to see similar assemblies to our GSA panel in future assemblies, but for other clubs and groups like the Black History club during World Languages Week or a panel of female teachers and staff during assembly. This is the direction I hope our community can grow to: one where these conversations are open, honest, and help the students to learn and grow. We have gotten such a positive response to our panel discussion and I hope it becomes an annual tradition, something that the students look forward to at each Pride Week.

WHAT ARE THE GSA'S PLANS FOR THE FUTURE?

The GSA has a few plans. The first is to begin doing more consistent work in the Prep. My dream is to have two GSAs - one at the Prep and one at the Upper - so that students can come from the Prep with ideas and goals that they wish to accomplish in their time at the Upper School. Next, we want to intersperse a larger variety of events and initiatives throughout the year. Finally, we want to continue to

improve Pride week, working toward a more inclusive and pluralistic community.

WHAT DID IT FEEL LIKE HELPING A TRADITIONAL SCHOOL LIKE UCC TO HOST A PRIDE WEEK?

Starting anything new is scary. However, the support from the staff and students made implementing Pride Week easy. I couldn't have done it had I faced a lot of push back or questions. Helping queer and questioning students feel more at home at UCC was my driving force, and knowing that others were behind me made it all the more attainable.

PERSONALLY, WHAT WAS THE MOST REWARDING PART OF SEEING PRIDE WEEK UNFOLD?

The most rewarding part of seeing Pride Week unfold was hearing about all of the positive conversations happening - students asking questions, feeling more comfortable in their own skin, and building a more positive community. It has been one of the most rewarding weeks of my (short) career thus far. I think specifically the reaction to the GSA panel in the Thursday assembly was incredible. The respect and care shown toward the students and questions was something I was worried about, but am happy to know that the community met the standard the GSA set.



CULTURE IN BOYS' SCHOOLS: MISCONSTRUED OR DAMAGING?

ALEX XIANG

STAFF REPORTER

Throughout the past five months, it feels like a magnifying glass has been placed upon all-boys institutions in certain areas of the media. The Atlantic, The Globe and Mail, and CBC have all published articles both examining and attacking various aspects of the culture at all-boys' schools, often citing a "rite of passage" and concluding with an accusation of a toxic culture bred within the halls of all-boys schools. These articles were sparked by events which occurred on November 12th, 2018, when six students at St. Michael's College School were both expelled and charged with sexual assault. Since UCC is an all-boys school just two kilometres away, the events at St. Mike's have also raised concerns about the culture at our prestigious institution. The purpose of this article is not only to examine the culture of Upper Canada College, but also the culture of boys schools as an entirety.

When studying the environment students are placed under at all-boys institutions, one of the most frequently mentioned aspects is the breeding of a "toxic culture". At Upper Canada College, where principles such as "Respect for Others", "Truth and Honesty", and "Caring", are emphasized by our shared ideals, it is difficult to imagine the "toxic culture" that many are accusing other all-boys institutions of breeding. However, to take the view that our school is radically different compared to other institutions of the same calibre would be naïve and foolish. This is not to say that a serious "toxic culture" exists at our school. Instead, it accentuates that our school, while progressive, must be cognizant that there are always steps to be taken.

The athletic programs at our school strive to promote a "brotherhood" between the athletes, yet incidents such as the one at SMCS point to the very same athletic programs fostering an atmosphere of aggressiveness and bullying. Personally, being involved in various sports including cross country, track and field, and hockey during my years at the college, I have never expe-

rienced the atmosphere of "aggressiveness" claimed by sources such as the National Post. However, the concept of a "rite of passage" has an underlying prevalence within our school, notably among sports teams. Terms such as "rookie" and "veteran" are ubiquitous, with many "veterans" viewing themselves as more important, often to the detriment of the "rookies". Nevertheless, many within our community, including teachers, coaches, and other players have drastically reduced the prevalence of these terms over the past few years. Regardless, there is still work to be done. The ultimate goal for Upper Canada College athletics is the so-called "veteran" mentoring the "rookie", eliminating the "rite of passage" and building the brotherhood we all strive for. By doing so, UCC can eliminate any notions of a "toxic culture" within its environment.

**"...to take the view
that our school is
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be naïve and foolish."**

Athletics aside, many supporters of all-boys schools believe that it helps the boys achieve. According to the Globe and Mail, all-boys schools foster an "achieving culture", encouraging boys to be competitive. However, this is undermined by many studies which demonstrate that all-boys schools do not foster an achievement culture, instead they show little to no academic progress. Instead, they are consistently outperformed by girls in both co-ed and all-girls' schools. The supposed lack of academic improvement in all-boys schools is perhaps the most misconstrued area of institutions such as ours. During my six years at Upper

Canada College, I have seen a multitude of students who clearly thrive as a result of an all-boys atmosphere, myself included. The all-boys atmosphere fosters a competitive environment, through which many of us thrive. As a result, students such as myself can fulfill their academic potential.

Finally, according to The Globe and Mail, one pressing issue involving the culture at all-boys schools is the presence of a "bro culture of silence". The aforementioned culture of silence is triggered by a guise of loyalty and results in many students not reporting serious incidents to a supervisor, leaving them burdened. Furthermore, this silence is also triggered by a difference in relationships. According to the Globe, "Girls tend to look at their teacher as a friend and ally, while boys don't." These very principles have mixed applications at Upper Canada College. The "bro culture of silence" has some merit, as often students do not report minor incidents to various supervisors, yet the network of support at UCC is much greater than those of similar all-boys institutions. The health center, house advisors, and teachers are all outlets for students to come forward with concerns. Furthermore, the supposed lack of a relationship between students and faculty members in all-boys schools is simply not the case. At Upper Canada, students and teachers build healthy relationships through areas such as classes, the extended essay, clubs, and sports. As a result, students are much more trusting of teachers, all of whom have the student's best interests at heart.

The culture at Upper Canada College, while imperfect, provides an environment where students may build healthy relationships, benefit from one another, and achieve their potential, academic or otherwise. However, our school still has a variety of steps which would help eliminate any vestiges of a "toxic culture" within our halls. Steps such as increasing the accessibility of areas such as the health center and promoting helpful relationships between athletes are all possible, which would make UCC an even better school in the years to come.

BLAZER

| UCC's Humour Publication Written By People Who Think They're Way Funnier Than They Actually Are |

Stewards Scouting Report

As the school year comes to an end and as students begin binge-reading Sparknotes in anticipation for their english exams, The Blazer Staff (who aren't studying for exams) wanted to create a brief scouting report for a few of our amazing school leaders going into the 2020 school year. Below is your guide to the strengths and weaknesses of our board of stewards. (P.S. we forgot most of them!)



Head Steward Uche Ochuba: I've come to know Uche better than most over the past few years and to this day, I don't know a single thing about his life either inside or outside of school. Very peculiar prospect.



Head of Bremner's Stefan Markarov: His hand movements really creep me out, enthusiasm is a plus but I can't see him excelling at the next level. For whatever reason, I honestly can't tell if he's being sarcastic or genuine. Once again, one of our most confusing prospects.



Head of Jackson's Rohun 'who's hosting' Nanda: Two words: goodness gracious



Head of Martland's Roy 'hey let's hang out' Taguchi: This prospect is quite possibly the most interesting of them all. Since all of his friends appear to have already graduated, Roy's focus appears to lie in making friends that are in his grade. I worry for the future of Martlands and would advise them to be critical of Roy's actions as a leader for their house.

The best university for a bowling scholarship - Penn state

Upper Canada College has had a multitude of skilled bowlers in the past. This year alone, three students have been offered scholarships to the undefeated Penn State Lions with scouts coming in every few weeks. With frequent games at Western and Queen's, students at Penn State are able to maintain the brotherhood as well as focus on their bowling career. The Lions boast a whimsical 47 UCC old boys on their team and regularly competes in NCAA tournaments. At these games, arenas are known to be so LOUD that the games are often shut down by faculty and staff nearby. UCC is proud to announce this year's Penn State commits: Charlie Dunbar, Chris Facy and Darius Mani. The future of the team is largely a mystery but newly elected captain Dean Swadron strongly believes that, with practice, the team can maintain the legacy of previous generations

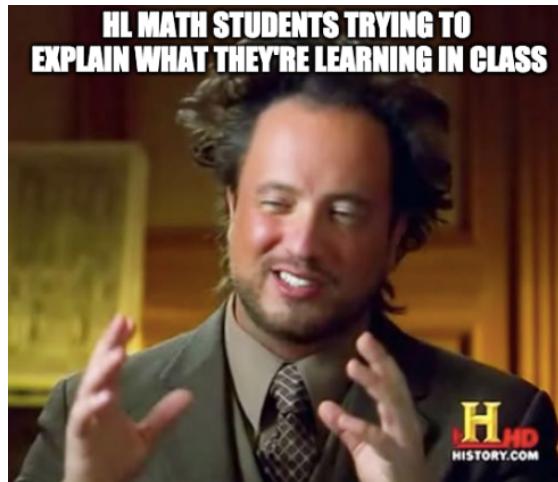
Student: Was my TOK essay any good?

Teacher:



Headlines

- TOK department releases official statement admitting: "we don't know what TOK is either"
- New Varsity Bowling Captain Dean Swadron begins preseason training at Bowlarama
- **THEY'RE BAAACK!!**
- "I really hate it when people cut me off in traffic" - Hudson Leon
- Mackenzie Lo gets DCI after wearing a Kevin Durant Jersey to Raptors casual dress day. Unfortunately, his lensless glasses went unnoticed.
- Chris Facy gets 45 IB total but does not complete CAS and is forced to attend another year at the college
- 'Honorary' Prefect Alishan Jessani has brought more house breakfast than any steward in the history of Bremner's.
- UCC Administration confirms that IB boost cannot apply to LD health inspections; Aramark reworking menu



Spoiler: Thanos dies