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INTERROBANG



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**FROM THE
EDITOR** Angela McInnes

October 2020 seems as good a time as ever to launch Interrobang's first-ever Politics Issue, so that's what we did.

In this issue, myself and Gazette editor Emily Tayler encouraged our writers to reflect on the political topic of their choice. The results include articles touching on period poverty, the possibility of healthcare privatization in Canada, and graduating into a COVID-19 world.

Our news section also includes a piece on why the U.S. election matters for Canadian students — a question some of you may be wondering as Canada grapples with its own recovery from the pandemic. Here are some key points:

- Poor economic conditions could endanger Canadian students living in the U.S.
- Some of the highest-risk areas for COVID-19 in the U.S. and Canada are uncomfortably close to the border
- There is potential for violence depending on the outcome of the election, thanks to Trump's authoritarian rhetoric.

Canadians must keep one eye outward and one inward if we want to get through the next few years, come what may. Opting out of political discussions is no longer a luxury we can afford to have. Ask questions about why things are the way things are, and never stop demanding a better future.

And so it goes,

Letters to the Editor: fsuleters@fanshawec.ca



TERRY KELLY



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Why the American election matters for Canadian students

Elan Pedersen
GAZETTE

The stakes are high in the momentous election just south of the border and the consequences could be great — even for students in Canada.

Matthew Lebo, political science department chair and professor of Western University’s “Trump vs. Biden 2020” course highlighted the potential dangers of the election results. The polarizing candidates each promise to steer the country in jarringly different directions — with contentious issues such as COVID-19 and the appointment of a new supreme court justice on the minds of many Americans and Canadian-Americans alike.

“We are next door to a country that is sliding away from democracy at a pretty steep pace,” Lebo said. “You can’t just live next to a country that stops being democratic ... without major, major consequences.”

The results of the election could impact Canadian students looking to study in America along with other international students, according to Lebo, making it more challenging for students to enrol in post-secondary institutions without support.

“Visa options [for international students] have now been drastically limited, programs have been put on hold, there’s fewer green cards ... so it’s much more difficult for international students,” Lebo said.

Although Canadians do not require a visa to study in the U.S., they do require documentation, such as an I-20 certificate.

Over one million international students attended post-secondary institutions in 2019 — including over 20,000 Canadians. As home to some of the most famous and prestigious universities around the world,

the United States serves as a destination for about eight per cent of Canadian students who go abroad.

American universities are already expensive for international students, costing over \$100,000 on average for a four-year undergraduate degree at a public institution. With poor economic conditions in the pandemic, Canadian students may have difficulty paying off debt incurred by living expenses and tuition — something which could prove more difficult for students living in the U.S. based on the economic policies of the future president.

“In the longer term, there’s been no help for students with large loans,” Lebo said. “So [there’s been] an inability to pay off debts [for students] going to expensive American universities.”

More broadly, the implications of this election for COVID-19 and Canada are also significant.

“The Trump administration has not done a good job of controlling the spread of the virus,” Lebo said. “It’s pretty much an uncontrolled spread across two-thirds of the states, the border is closed and no sign of it opening.”

The border closure has limited travel to and from Canada, which has impacted the country’s tourism industry, especially for towns and cities along the border. Additionally, some of the highest-risk areas in the U.S. and Canada are close to the border, such as Detroit, Cleveland and Windsor, which saw a high case counts due to their proximity to the border.

Lebo also raised the potential for violence depending on the outcome of the election. With U.S. President Donald Trump’s rising use of authoritative rhetoric and debasing the election’s legitimacy, Lebo

points out that Americans may not agree on the outcome if Democrat nominee Joe Biden wins.

But, as the virus remains at the forefront of the public’s mind, election results become uncertain — making it critical for all eligible voters to head to the polls.

“Western students who are American citizens should get their absentee ballot in quickly ... the youth vote, the votes on college campuses is sometimes not very high,” Lebo said. “A lot of young voters don’t feel like they are making a difference ... if they increase their turnout they’d have a huge effect.”

With students unrepresented in the political landscape due to low turnout in past elections, students’ votes are increasingly significant in determining this election’s outcome.

According to Lebo, when the margins are this tight, student votes can impact the outcome.

The 2016 election saw a narrow win for Trump by 0.2, 0.7 and 0.8 percentage points in Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin — three states which pushed Republicans to victory. This boils down to a difference of around 80,000 votes across the 3 states.

With an overall election turnout of 55 per cent of all eligible voters in 2016 — the lowest since 1996 — the election results could significantly differ with student votes.

The spike in voter turnout for generation Z and millennials during the 2018 midterm elections may foreshadow an increase in young votes for the 2020 election, as young people headed to the polls in higher numbers than ever before.

“Every voter has to confront ‘I’m only one person, I’m only one vote, I can’t make a difference,’” Lebo said.



CREDIT: MAAILAH BLACKWOOD (GAZETTE)

“We are next door to a country that is sliding away from democracy at a pretty steep pace,” said Matthew Lebo, political science department chair and professor at Western University. Pictured is a 2016 election rally for Donald Trump.

London Hall COVID-19 outbreak continues with new positive case

Rebekah Rodrigues
GAZETTE

One more student in Western University’s London Hall tested positive for the coronavirus this past week, prolonging the residence outbreak as quarantine is lifted for most students on affected floors.

Quarantine measures ended for most London Hall residents on Sunday Oct. 25, but according to Dr. Chris Mackie, the Middlesex-London Health Unit’s medical officer of health, the residence’s incubation period — a 14 day period without any cases — has not ended as of Monday.

London Hall initially confirmed four cases when an outbreak was declared on Oct. 11, over the Thanksgiving weekend. A fifth was confirmed later that week and the most recent case came last week, bringing the total number of cases to six.

Students on floors with confirmed positive cases were required to self-isolate in their rooms for 14 days and those who travelled home

for the Thanksgiving weekend were asked to quarantine in place and have since been offered refunds for their time away from residence.

With Fall Reading Week starting next week, the MLHU advises students to exercise caution when returning home.

“We know that travel to those [coronavirus] hot zones are one of the major ways that COVID-19 spreads and we know there are several large jurisdictions in Ontario where the rates are two to five times higher than what you’re seeing in Middlesex and London,” said Dr. Mackie. “So we definitely hope that people minimize unnecessary travel.”

It is up to students to follow distancing guidelines while at home to ensure London does not see an increase in cases after the break, according to Dr. Mackie.

“If people are going to go to the GTA and are partying over reading week, then we will see [an increase in cases and], potentially, an additional wave of infections on top of what we already have.”



CREDIT: TAYLOR LASOTA (GAZETTE)

One more student in London Hall has tested positive for coronavirus.

Police report a rise of break-ins at student homes

Elan Pedersen
GAZETTE

Thirteen student houses on the north-side of Western University campus were the target of break-ins this fall, a startling increase for the student-rental neighbourhood.

London Police Services' crime analysis unit detected an increase near the start of September and said thieves often break-in through unlocked windows.

"We want to push the reminders out about locking your door and locking your window because this is often a common way that thieves will gain entry into a house," Sandasha Bough, LPS media officer, said.

Residences can install extra security on their windows, ensure they have good exterior lighting or spring for a camera system to better protect their house.

LPS said it is also possible more than 13 student neighbourhood break-ins happened this fall, as many young people are hesitant to report it to police.

"There are a lot of instances where these crimes aren't being reported to us," Bough said. "The numbers may be higher than what we are reporting to the public only because they have not been reported to the police."



CREDIT: SAMIT KHALSA (GAZETTE)

Student houses have seen an increase in break-ins this fall.

Police said there is no trend in the timing of the break-ins.

Police are not sure why student homes are a particular target, but have noted money and electronics are common objects taken from

households.

"It is a deterrent if that individual who is looking to break into the house can't see those items," Bough said. "But if they are in plain view, it sometimes attracts them into

the home."

The LPS was only able to share the increasing trend, not break-in numbers from this time last year.

"Just a reminder to do those little extra things to keep your house

secure. So doors and windows locked, just be vigilant of your surroundings, pay attention to what's going on [and] if something seems suspicious, contact us," Bough said.



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Fanshawe College Pathways Fair goes virtual

Hannah Theodore
INTERROBANG

The Pathways Fair is an annual Fanshawe event helping students find information regarding external academic pathways for bachelor's and master's degrees. Amid COVID-19, organizers have converted the fair to a virtual format taking place on Wednesday, Nov. 11.

The fair will feature 20 of Fanshawe's international and out-of-province partner universities in a variety of panels and presentations. Universities in Ireland, the UK, Australia, Switzerland, and the U.S. will all be featured.

Pathways coordinator Gabriela Kongkham-Fernandez said the pandemic meant they had no choice but to make the event virtual.

"We have to do it, we have to make it work somehow," she said. "And so we explore different options. And we decided to do a series of panels throughout the day, just to have it over the same day. And the idea is that students can pick a specific destination, country or region, and then they can join the panels that they want throughout the day."

Education consultants will also be present among the panels to help students explore options for future education endeavours.

"It's an opportunity for students to connect directly with those partners' institutions and ask all the questions that they have, including pricing and scholarship opportunities," said Kongkham-Fernandez.

A recent addition to the Pathways Fair is the Pathways Scholarship, which launched as part of last year's



CREDIT: LAM LE

This year's Pathways Fair will take place in a virtual format on Nov. 11.

fair. This year the scholarship was awarded to its first two recipients, Franco Chan, a graduate of landscape design, and Kiana Halonen, a graduate of fashion design. Chan is continuing his studies at the University of Guelph, while Halonen is pursuing a bachelor's degree from the Limerick Institute of Technology in Ireland. Pathways offers a scholarship for a minimum of \$1000 to one student transferring to a domestic partner institution, and one for a student transferring to an international partner institution.

"The fair is free for students but the partners who participate pay a small fee that helps us fund the scholarship," explained Kongkham-Fernandez.

There's still time left to register online for the fair, and Kongkham-Fernandez said students have nothing to lose by attending.

"Basically, if you are even a little bit inclined or considering options, just go register and take a look," she said. "It's free, you can do it

from the comfort of your home. You don't need to go anywhere. And you can ask questions directly to the panel at the partner institutions and you can have a contact directly at that institution that you can follow up [with] afterwards."

For students that have concerns regarding COVID-19 and travel, Kongkham-Fernandez added that some of Fanshawe's international partners have options for online programs. She said now is the time to begin planning and asking questions.

"It is very timely, because we typically start planning one year ahead of when they are planning to go abroad or go to do their pathway program," she said.

The Pathways Fair is only for students seeking information about international and out-of-province opportunities. Another Pathways Fair is held in the winter for all of Fanshawe's other partners, including Ontario institutions.



CREDIT: PROVIDED BY LEAH MARSHALL

After three years of success, Man|Made will continue to offer male-identifying students a space to gather.

Man|Made sessions begin for fourth year

Angela McInnes
INTERROBANG

A leadership group for male-identifying students is returning for the fourth year at Fanshawe College.

Man|Made is a series of facilitated conversations around healthy masculinity, brought to students by Fanshawe's Sexual Violence Prevention Advisor, Leah Marshall, and London's Anova women's shelter. The aim is to create a space where men can come together and discuss how they can make the campus environment safer for all individuals.

"The group gives an opportunity for men from all different areas of campus to come together and have positive conversations around defining masculinity for themselves, and breaking free of some of those messages around gender that can be really toxic," Marshall said.

This year's program will be held over Zoom video conference.

The two hour sessions will take place once a week for four weeks, beginning on Nov. 11 and ending on Dec. 2.

For the first time in the program's history, the sessions are open to all students and not just student leaders. Participants who complete the sessions can add the experience to their co-curricular records and CVs as well.

Despite classes taking place remotely this year, Man|Made still has a valuable purpose to students who are part of the College community.

"The sessions will create a healthy community, even if we're not all on campus," said Marshall. "It's important for us to create spaces where men can come together and have conversations about things that maybe don't have a lot of space."

Male-identifying students interested in participating can email Marshall at lkmarshall@fanshawec.ca to register.

Fanshawe lab developments will help speed the validation process for COVID-19 treatments

Hannah Theodore
INTERROBANG

Fanshawe College's Centre for Research and Innovation has developed a faster and cheaper method of testing potential treatments for COVID-19.

Principal Investigator Abdulla Mahboob has developed copies of the SARS-COV-2 virus called "replicons." These replicons contain the genetic material of the virus but lack the instructions that allow it to infect other cells. This means the replicons themselves are non-infectious, which means they don't require the use of a biosafety level-2 laboratory.

Rather than use the genetic instructions to infect other cells, Mahboob said that what they have done is use genetic material from fireflies that encodes for luminescence.

"We put the gene into the genome of the replicon, and what that means is every time the virus makes a copy of itself, you have more and more luminescence," explained Mahboob.

This means if you were to test the replicon against a potential drug treatment, less luminescence would mean the drug was working.

While Mahboob said that the use of replicons is not new, the system that his team has created is one that is easy to manipulate.

"If you are trying to test a new kind of drug against resistant forms of the virus...you can, and you can do so very safely without the need of a biosafety lab," he said.

Fanshawe's replicon has been developed with two problematic mutations of COVID-19: one that is associated with higher mortality and another that is resistant against the current treatment remdesivir.

Another way the replicons will help speed up testing is that with this method, pharmaceutical companies would not have to measure the viral RNA (the amount of viral genetic material), they would just need to measure for the luminescence. Pharmaceutical companies often have thousands of drugs at their disposal that can now be tested at a faster

rate using something called high throughput screening.

"You have a plate and on that plate you have many, many wells," said Mahboob. "And in each well you can imagine a different treatment and you can then measure the luminescence of them all at the same time."

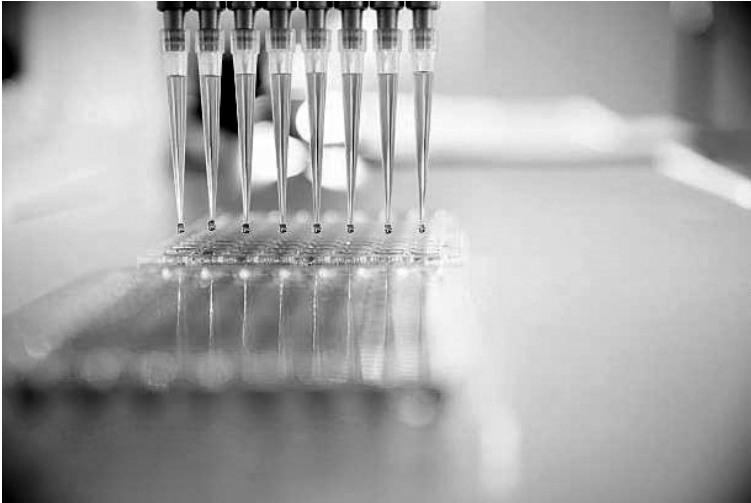
This could mean that 96 different treatments could be effectively tested at the same time.

"You don't need to have any sophisticated equipment to measure the viral genetic material because you don't need that," said Mahboob. "Every time the virus makes a copy, you make more luminescence."

Chair of Research, Colin Yates, said the next step for this development is to find a commercial partner to take it to a larger scale application.

"We're still looking for partners," he said. "We're actively engaging and pursuing various partnerships to help us get it past the proof of concept and into the prototype and clinical stage."

Ultimately, these developments could mean that people seeking



CREDIT: NICOLAS LORAN

Using high throughput screening, pharmaceutical companies are able to test up to 96 different drugs for effectiveness.

treatment for COVID-19 could potentially get the drugs they need faster, especially as the virus changes over time.

"As the virus mutates and evolves, as all viruses do, we can more rapidly figure out potential treatments," said Yates. "Rather than by the time

you figured out the new treatment, it's often mutated again. You're always one step behind, so hopefully this helps speed up that process."

"The faster we can effectively test the latest treatment options, the better our chances of potentially saving lives," added Mahboob.

Off the Radar: What's going on in the world

Ian Indiano
INTERROBANG

Right now, most eyes around the world are focused on the American election. I can't blame them.

Especially in a globalized world, it is important to know who the next president of the United States of America will be. However, the U.S. is just one of the 195 countries in the world and while they are having their election, we can't lose track of what is happening in other places.

Here are some important recent events around the world you should pay attention to:

The Election in Bolivia

After a polemic attempt of re-election, former president Evo Morales suffered a controversial *coup d'état* by the military in November 2019. After Morales' resignation, Jeanine Añez became the self-proclaimed president. Less than one year later, on Oct. 18, Bolivia held a democratic election in which Luis Arce, former Minister of the Economy and Morales' candidate, won with 55.1 per cent of the votes. One of the reasons that led to his victory was the support from the indigenous communities to his candidacy, which represent around 48 per cent of the population. The support was headed by Morales, who is indigenous himself.

The election in New Zealand

The successful policies against the coronavirus introduced by Prime Minister Jacinda Arden led her to a historical re-election on Oct. 17. The Labour Party won 64 of 120 seats in the parliament. It will be the first majority government of New Zealand. The new parliament will be the most inclusive yet. With 16 Māori MPs, and three foreign MPs (from Eritrea, Mexico and Sri Lanka). At least 10 per cent of the parliament is from the LGBTQ+ community, and more than half of the Labour Party seats are female. Arden promises more inclusion and equality.

The Armenia and Azerbaijan crisis

The current tension between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh territory is the result of more than 32 years of frozen conflict. Although governed and habited by ethnic Armenians, the territory was internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan in 2008. Since Sept. 27, after both countries accused each other

of unprovoked attacks, more than 1,000 Armenians and Azerbaijanis have died. It is not an isolated conflict. Turkey is supporting Azerbaijan and supplying it with troops and guns, while Russia is supporting Armenia, but is trying to maintain a peacekeeping role. Many other countries, like Canada, are calling for the de-escalation of the conflict.

Pope Francis endorsed same-sex marriages

"Homosexual people have a right to be in a family" Pope Francis said. "What we have to create is a civil union law. That way they are legally covered. I stood up for that." His declaration came in an interview for the documentary film *Francesco*, directed by Evgeny Afineevsky, which premiered in Rome earlier this month. Whereas it is too soon to affirm that the Vatican will follow its leader's opinion, his declaration

is very significant for the catholic LGBTQ+ communities around the world.

For the first time the World Trade Organization will be led by a woman

Former director-general Roberto Azevedo left office on August 31, 2020. Since then, the WTO, who is responsible to regulate and supervise international trade between nations, entered in a fierce election

process. But for the first time the two final candidates are women of colour. They are Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, former finance minister of Nigeria, and Yoo Myung-hee, current South Korea's minister of trade. Both of them have brilliant careers and are ready to face the difficulties of dealing with a post-pandemic world. The final selection should be announced in the beginning of November.



Here are five recent political events around the world that you should pay attention to.

CREDIT: IAN INDIANO

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STUDENT UNION FINANCIALS 2019 - 2020

Report of the Independent Auditor on the Summary Financial Statements

To the Members of Fanshawe College Student Union

Our Opinion

In our opinion, the accompanying summary financial statements of Fanshawe College Student Union (the Organization) are a fair summary of the audited financial statements, in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

The summary financial statements

The Organization's summary of financial statements derived from the audited financial statements for the year ended April 30, 2020 comprise:

- The summarized statement of financial position as at April 30, 2020; and
- The summarized statement of operations for the year ended.

The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations. Reading the summary financial statements and the auditor's report thereon, therefore, it not a substitute for reading the audited financial statements and the auditor's report thereon.

The audited financial statements and our report thereon

We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the audited financial statements in our report dated September 10, 2020.

Management's responsibility for the summary financial statements

Management is responsible for the preparation of the summary financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

Auditor's responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the summary financial statements are a fair summary of the audited financial statements based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with Canadian Auditing Standard (CAS) 810, Engagement to Report on Summary Financial Statements.

PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP

Chartered Professional Accountants, Licenced Public Accountants

London, Ontario

September 10, 2020

Fanshawe College Student Union

Summary Financial Statements

As at April 30, 2020 and for the year then ended

	2020 \$	2019 \$
Summarized Statement of Financial Position		
Assets		
Current assets	4,569,591	790,662
Investments	6,188,373	8,473,421
Capital assets	4,841,407	4,925,717
	<u>15,599,371</u>	<u>14,189,800</u>
Liabilities		
Current liabilities	3,687,886	2,733,300
Long-term debt	1,959,551	2,148,769
	<u>5,647,437</u>	<u>4,882,069</u>
Net Assets		
General fund	1,573,140	1,027,262
Reserve funds	2,193,916	2,220,211
Capital fund	6,184,878	6,060,258
	<u>9,951,934</u>	<u>9,307,731</u>
	<u>15,599,371</u>	<u>14,189,800</u>
Summarized Statement of Operations		
Revenues		
Net student fees	7,892,542	7,673,951
Organizations and programs	2,502,781	3,330,907
Interest	64,952	156,103
Rental	33,343	38,848
Other	124,276	132,827
	<u>10,617,894</u>	<u>11,332,636</u>
Expenses		
Health plan	2,875,574	2,444,204
Organizations and programs	4,444,477	5,132,820
General and administrative	2,253,640	2,284,962
Student relief	400,000	-
	<u>9,973,691</u>	<u>9,861,986</u>
	<u>644,203</u>	<u>1,470,650</u>
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenses for the year		
General fund	545,878	961,191
Reserve funds	(26,295)	405,718
Capital fund	124,620	103,741
	<u>644,203</u>	<u>1,470,650</u>

Approved by the Board of Directors

Kaivalya Dahale

Kaivalya Dahale – Chair, Board of Directors

Stacyann Stanley

Stacyann Stanley – Secretary, Board of Directors

How do politics and religion relate?



Michael Veenema
RELIGION

This might sound like an abstract topic that exists for people with more time on their hands than most. But with just a small effort we can see that it is very practical. For example, a look at the relationship between Islam and the politics of Iran would quickly yield some interesting insights. Or consider the relationship between the emperor worship that prevailed in Japan until the middle of the twentieth century and the politics of that country up to World War II. Or, again, we could examine the connections between the religious faith of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Buddhist leader of the Tibetan people, and his internationalist politics.

So, it is clear right away that we won't make much headway with this topic unless we first ask two questions. Which religion are we talking about? And whose politics are we looking at?

"Religion" is not a word I use because most often it is spoken by people who have no stake in any particular faith, say Islam, Judaism, Christianity or Buddhism. The word is often deployed in ways that marginalize those faiths. You can hold to a religion if you want to, so this way of thinking goes. But in the end, what really counts is reason and group consensus, possibly aided by a few religious ideas which can be used or not depending on whether they are useful to the reasoner or the group.

Here I am going to talk about Christianity. What is the relationship between Christianity and politics? As for the question, whose politics? well, I would say, hopefully yours and mine.

To begin, we can't really say very much here without recognizing the intersection of Christianity and Western Civilization. Christianity is not fundamentally Western. It is just as much African, Asian, Latino, and Jewish (Jewish in its origin) as it is

Western-European. But one of the key thinkers of Western Christianity is Augustine of Hippo (now Annaba, Algeria). He died in 430 A. D. when the Roman Empire was in danger of being overrun by organized barbarian raiders. They took the city of Rome in 476. No Roman emperor ever again ruled from that day.

Living in dangerous times, Augustine thought long and hard about politics and government. He wrote about this in his book, *The City of God*. Seeing the destructive hordes who wanted the blood of Roman citizens confirmed for him something that he had embraced when he left a life of self-indulgence to become a Christian. Human beings have a great ability to commit evil. It is the role of government to encourage good and to limit such evil.

This way of thinking has steadily influenced the development of politics in the Western world. It got a terrific boost with the European Reformation of the 1500's when church reformers insisted that the role of government is not first of all to acquiesce to the demands of bankers or military leaders. Politicians must recognize that human beings are tragically flawed. On the one hand, we are capable of incredible nobility. But we are never far from becoming cruel and barbaric. Therefore, political leaders, who have more power than most, must work to bring out the good in a society, and to discourage evil.

That's not a bad starting point. But are there more points of contact between Christianity and politics? Yes, absolutely.

The Christian Bible contains many stories of prophets. The thing about these prophets is that they were not that much concerned with making predictions about the future. Typically, they lived in desert locations where they would study and pray. From there they would make forays into the courts of ruling families. Typically, they would tell those rulers what a miserable job they were doing. Biblical prophets like Nathan, Elisha, Jeremiah and Isaiah (maybe the most famous of them) would bring messages from God condemning such things as



CREDIT: JSWINBORNE

Opinion: Christianity demands humility from political leaders.

the impoverishment of the poor, alliances with corrupt war lords, and in one case, a (successful) conspiracy to commit murder.

Jesus himself took on a prophetic role like this. He condemned the manipulative religious-political alliances of his time. This was a key factor in his being executed.

It is a very short step from embracing these accounts of the prophets demanding justice for the governed to realizing that, in our own time also, leaders must govern to promote the just treatment of those they govern. This means, among other things, that they must have a special eye out for the disadvantaged.

In addition, Christianity, correctly lived out, supports the development of societies that are orderly, creative, and generous. This is a conclusion easily drawn from the opening page of the Bible. In it God commands human beings to enjoy the abundance of the created world, to spread out

over the earth, and to rule it wisely. That means that someone will have to run the traffic lights, establish farm fields, and teach young people the things that earlier generations have learned. This presents us with another goal of politics. Our societies should provide stability and structure so that all persons will have opportunities for growth and fulfillment.

Lastly, I would say that Christianity demands humility from political leaders. They are not gods. They are not less than human. But they are not more either. And in the end, we will all see God. He will bring on a catastrophic end to the present order of the world to set all things right. He will meet with each one of us, political leaders included. There will be a recounting of, and an accounting for, what we have done. And those are, I think, sobering thoughts for any political leader who is tempted to believe that she or he has all the answers.

Why we should not cancel Halloween: Keeping a degree of normalcy in COVID-19

Hafi Sayed
THE CORD

The debate about whether Halloween should be cancelled has been a hot topic in not just Ontario, but all over Canada.

Recently, Premier Doug Ford stated that trick-or-treating should not take place this year. He said in one of his regular public speeches, that he felt it was an unnecessary risk that should be avoided.

Furthermore, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was asked if he had plans to take his children out trick or treating. He replied that he would not per the advice of Ottawa's public health officials.

So, our government leaders have decided that they do not think Halloween should go on this year, but it does not seem they have pushed any bills or legislation that has made it expressly illegal to do so. "I am not cancelling Halloween, but I do not recommend anyone go door to door," Ford said.

However, just because something is not illegal does not still mean it should be done.

Halloween is a two-pronged event. For children and their parents, it involves trick-or-treating, and for those who are too old, it's often a good break to relax with friends during the school year or a stressful work week.

I would argue that both can still occur if proper care is taken.

For trick-or-treaters, this could include masks being worn on top of a costume, using hand sanitizer, and wearing gloves.

For people wanting to hang out with friends,

this could include masks being worn in the appropriate physical-distancing environments, and caps on how many people can be at one party with strict adherence to that number.

Though it can be done safely still need to be careful as the biggest risk comes with those people potentially transmitting COVID-19 to someone who is at risk. Even if one person dies from a party of students enjoying themselves, then that is one death too many. It only takes one house party to be lenient on the rules for a mass "super spreader" event to occur.

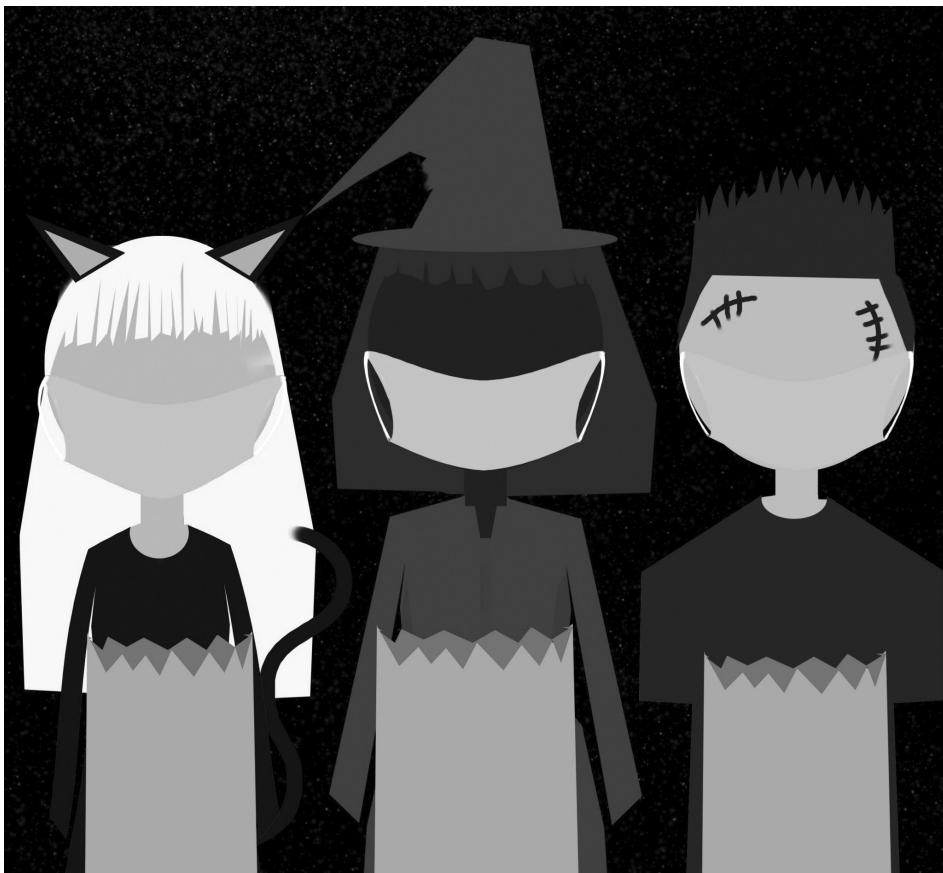
At this point, one may have to make the hard call of a cost-benefit analysis.

Even before the pandemic, Canada was seeing a rise in depression, anxiety, and suicide amongst all age groups. Now, according to a study from the Oxford Journal of Medicine, based on the data we have, these already alarmingly high rates have almost doubled.

The reasons for this, as deduced by the researchers, are due to a feeling of anxiety about the current state of the world, anxiety concerning the economy and an increasing reliance on social media for companionship and news. The biggest factor according to respondents was social isolation due to lockdowns.

Will Halloween be cancelled? Or will it help prevent the feeling of isolation and anxiety that everyone is feeling? Probably not. But Halloween is something people look forward to all year.

It's a time where children spend time with their friends, and we, students can relax during a busy and stressful school year semester or just celebrate with friends. We need a break



CREDIT: DANIYA SIDDIQUE

Opinion: Halloween can be celebrated with the right precautions in place.

from everything that is going on in the world.

If anyone is going to engage in any Halloween celebrations for a much needed and

deserved break, please adhere to physical distancing and please wear a mask whenever possible.

Division is a distraction from the bigger picture

Angela McInnes
INTERROBANG

On the evening of Oct. 21, the FBI held a press conference.

According to John Ratcliffe, U.S. director of national security, the bureau found that Iran and Russia had taken “specific actions to influence public opinion” in the upcoming presidential election.

Ratcliffe said that both countries had obtained voter information from U.S. databases. While he did not explain what actions Russia had taken, he said that Iran is behind a series of intimidating emails and other messages to voters in battleground states, as well as for spreading false information about voting.

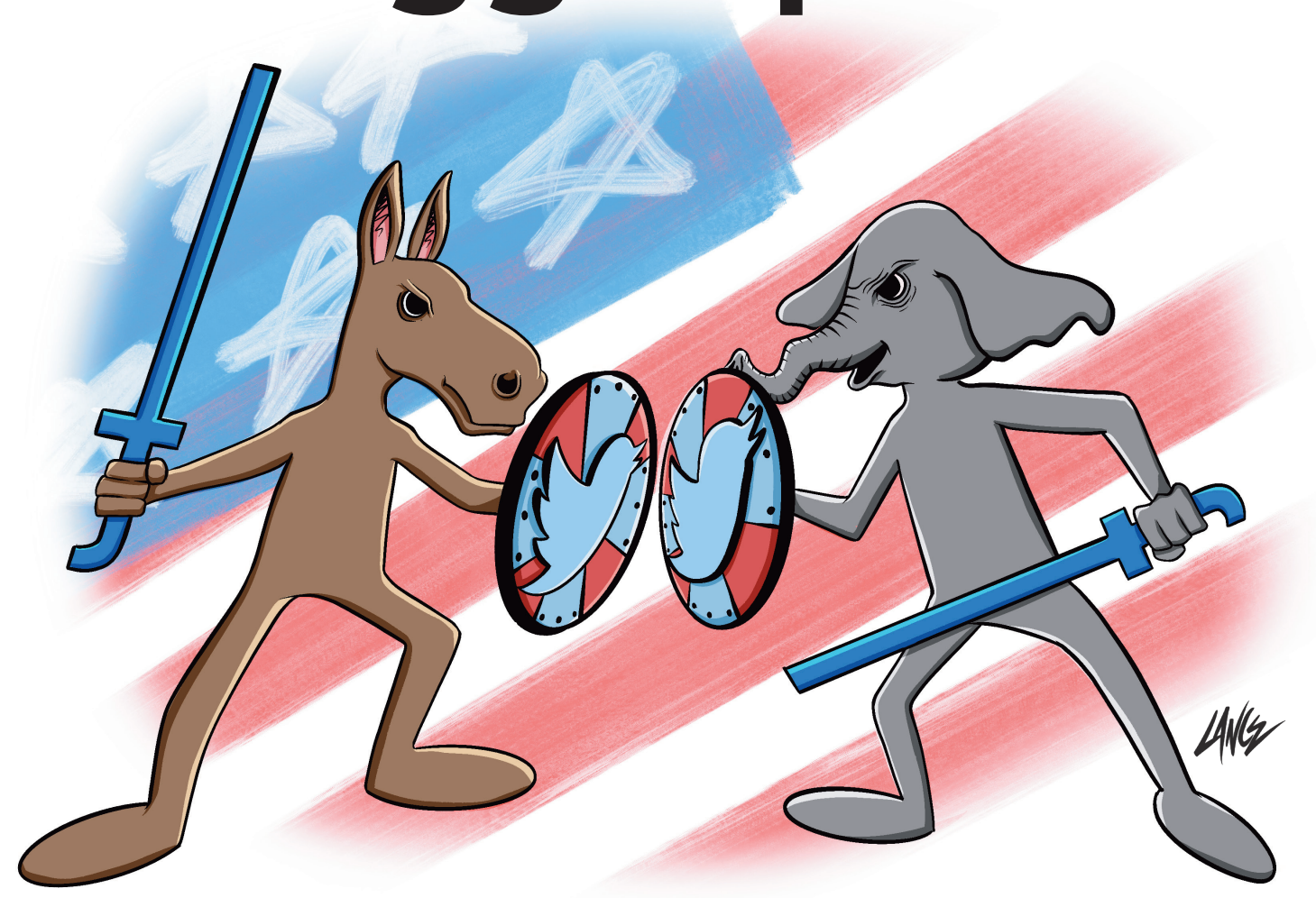
Specifically, the emails were made to look like they originated from far-right group the Proud Boys and said they would “come after” those who didn’t vote for Donald Trump.

The apparent revelation echoed events from the 2016 presidential election, when the Russian government created thousands of social media accounts claiming to support Trump over Clinton. Trump denied the interference then, saying it was a hoax to explain his victory. This time around, some democratic critics are saying Ratcliffe, a former Republican congressman, is making partisan claims designed to undermine voter confidence in the current election.

The truth behind the announcement may never come to light, as both Iran and Russia were quick to deny the allegations. But at this point, after all Trump has done in the past four years to embolden conspiracy theories and discourage reliance on the mainstream media, it almost doesn’t matter.

When it comes to the authenticity of Ratcliffe’s claims, the only thing that’s clear is that nothing is clear. Americans don’t know who to trust, and that’s been the intention all along.

Divide et impera: Divide and conquer. This tactic has proven to be, time and time again since Julius Caesar conquered Gaul in



CREDIT: LANCE DAGENAIS

Opinion: This division is all part of the plan.

52 B.C., a highly effective strategy used to, well, conquer populaces in history.

A conqueror creates a divide in one large group by telling a story that manifests a common enemy people are forced to be either for or against (for example, a cabal of democratic Satanists who drink children’s blood). Power is then gained and maintained by creating smaller, less powerful groups and pitting them against each other.

As Hitler said of the Nazi party: “Our strategy is to destroy the enemy from within, to

conquer him through himself.”

What better tool to achieve this than the internet? Than Twitter? Than Facebook? Than any social media platform where you’ll never know who is actually behind the account?

Give your fingers a break from defending your stances on social media, be they red, blue, black, white, conservative or liberal, pro-mask or anti, and look at the way division has been used throughout time to obtain power. Finding common ground with our enemies is difficult, but all we must do is study

our history to know we’ve been here before.

“In the 16th century, [Niccolò] Machiavelli — in an attempt to get back in the good graces of the powerful — wrote a slim volume called *The Prince*. In that book he showed the powers that be how to control the people. That book is a statement: separate and rule, divide and conquer. That’s five hundred years ago and it still works, because we allow ourselves to be led around with holes through our noses.”

— Maya Angelou

Opinion: Students should be allowed to rename themselves on Zoom

Bella Pick
GAZETTE

There are many reasons why someone might want to change their display name on Zoom. They may not go by their legal name, whether that be due to a gender transition, preference or safety reasons; or they may want to add pronouns to the end of their name to make the virtual classroom a more supportive environment for gender non-conforming peers.

The pandemic has been tough on everyone, and for some, seeing their legal name on a computer screen every day only makes it tougher. It is not the place of professors to take away students’ right to choose what they’re called.

Western University gave professors a set of suggestions and rules for their Zoom classrooms to brace against any security or privacy issues. A key suggestion requires students to access Zoom from a Western account. This process automatically sets students’ names as they appear on OWL — or, for Ivey students, Learn — and disables their ability to rename themselves.

But, as of Sept. 27, all professors are

required to have a waiting room or password on their Zoom room — rendering the requirement of the Western account authentication process unnecessary. With a password and waiting room included in the process, the security risk of the “rename” function remaining on in a Zoom room is incredibly low.

Not letting students change their Zoom name only results in an already marginalized group of students feeling even more trapped as their peers view them and call them by a name they no longer use.

School can be the one place students feel safe to express their gender identity or safe from past traumas associated with their given name.

While it’s true that students have the option to either perform a legal name change or use Western’s preferred name form in order to be recognized for who they are, both processes are lengthy. The Office of the Registrar currently has a backlog of one to two weeks for any requests and legal name changes taking weeks or even months and costs hundreds of dollars.

It’s also possible a student might select a name that is inappropriate or offensive, but Western’s Zoom best practices allows



CREDIT: BELLA PICK (GAZETTE)

Opinion: Zoom shouldn’t disable a student’s right to go by the name they choose.

professors to eject students if an incident like that occurs. Moreover, a few students making poor choices shouldn’t ruin marginalized students’ ability to feel validated in their chosen name.

Zoom authentication exists for a reason, but there are clear alternatives available that do not force marginalized students to be deadnamed by their professors and peers.

WHAT WOULD PRIVATIZING HEALTHCARE MEAN FOR CANADA?

SALMA HUSSEIN
Interrobang

In Canada, we enjoy the benefits of free public healthcare systems.

Healthcare today is provided on an as-needs basis, instead of on who has enough cash to acquire it. This system ensures free medical care to those with a Canadian citizenship, no matter their income. Considering privatization of Medicare would jeopardize the access to health services for all.

People may suppose if Medicare was privatized, those with money can get better and faster access to healthcare whenever they need it, but that won't necessarily be the case. According to a 2019 article from theconversation.com by Sarah Giles (lecturer in Family Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, L'Université d'Ottawa/University of Ottawa), Danyaal Raza (family physician and assistant professor, University of Toronto), and Rupinder Brar (clinical assistant professor, University of British Columbia), titled "Why private, for-profit healthcare is a terrible idea," the population as a whole, wealthy or not so much, would suffer. The article emphasizes the definite increase in prices, longer wait times, and predicted limited access to healthcare services.

Canadians risk spending more on unnecessary tests that will cost a lot of money each time we seek out healthcare services. The cherry on top is that these unnecessary procedures can be inva-

sive and, in the end, don't better the health of individuals. In addition, the article remarks on how expensive treatments will be at for-profit clinics.

Cancer chemotherapy fees, for example, would cost more than public non-profit healthcare institutions. The increase in fees would naturally drive people to seek out public services, and thus wait times would increase, and more and more people won't be able to receive necessary cancer treatments.

According to a scholarly article titled "Privatizing health care is not the answer: lessons from the United States" by Marcia Angell, for-profit healthcare in the U.S. is more expensive and often of lower quality than not-for-profit or government care, with much higher overhead costs. Following in the footsteps of our neighbours down south usually doesn't end on a good note, and Medicare privatization is no exception.

Healthcare should not be a privilege, but a right. That is why Medicare should continue to be provided on an as-needs basis, and not discriminate based on wealth or lack thereof.

The Ford government is pushing for healthcare privatization on the pretense of reducing wait times and better funding health care. An example of this is the passing of Bill 175 in June, which proposed to gut existing home and community care legislation and, according to the Ontario Health Coalition, enable privatization of home care.

However, as mentioned before, privatization will only make wait times worse and increase costs of many essential treatments. Giles, Raza and Brar suggest alternative solutions such as pilot projects that reduce wait times for procedures and use of MRIs. Other alternatives include the "eConsult" project designed to provide virtual access to physicians and specialists. This project reduces wait times and in person consultations, commonly used now because of the pandemic. These methods, among many more initiatives, are better and cheaper alternatives to privatization of healthcare. Methods such as virtual consultations will help Canadians keep money in their own pockets, and even ameliorate the kinks in our current healthcare system.

Privatization means that everyone would need healthcare insurance, and that adds to an individual's yearly costs. Canadians who are below the poverty line, and those who make \$40,000 a year (considered above the poverty line, even though it is well known that those individuals struggle as well) will have trouble in procuring an insurance to cover partial healthcare expenses let alone all of them. Those who cannot obtain an insurance will have to wait longer for necessary procedures while those who are insured will not have as much trouble.

In times like these, where microorganisms risk the livelihood of many Canadians, the need for an accessible healthcare system is more imperative

than ever. Benefits like free screening for COVID-19, and a free potential vaccine in the future are the reasons why free Medicare is essential and privatization would bring the country backwards in terms of healthcare accessibility.

Americans who are uninsured may have to pay out of pocket for the future vaccine, according to a Healthline article titled "How much will you pay for a COVID-19 vaccine? Here's what we know," by Shawn Radcliffe. Trudeau however, confirmed that when there is an approved vaccine, it will be free for all Canadians (Global Citizen by Sarah El Gharib).

Privatization of healthcare, all in all, for Canada would be a bleak future for access to healthcare for Canadian citizens. Instead of trying to make the healthcare system we have only accessible to those who have money, more resources into making healthcare better and accessible to all should be considered. Privatization will also impact the economy negatively by increasing overall costs on healthcare, and thereby increasing

LANE



CANADA HAS A LONG WAY TO GO IN ENDING PERIOD POVERTY

HANNAH THEODORE | INTERROBANG

Until 2015, Canadians who menstruated were paying GST on menstrual products like pads and tampons. These necessary tools for managing periods were deemed non-essential, a luxury, by the Canadian government.

According to Canadian Menstruators, in 2014, the government collected approximately \$36,398,387.00 in government sales taxes from menstrual hygiene products.

Thanks to a petition signed by thousands, this tax was ended, and menstrual products were finally considered essential items. They joined the ranks of things like cocktail cherries, incontinence products and wedding cakes as items there were no longer subject to the luxury tax.

But now it's time to take things a step further: it's time that these essential products were made free across Canada.

This is not a wild idea, either. In 2017, Scotland launched a pilot project making menstrual products free in schools and food banks following a £42,500 investment from the Scottish government. About 1,000 girls benefited from the project, and Scotland's Labour Party has since vowed to make the plan permanent.

In Canada, there have been talks since the luxury tax was ended to make menstrual products available in federal workplaces. Petition e-2636 is currently calling on the Federal government to "to provide free menstrual products (tampons and pads) in washrooms at all federally regulated workplaces and address menstrual equity at the national level by recommending its work on this proposal."

The petition has over 3,000 signatures and has been endorsed by London North Centre Liberal MP, Peter Fragiskatos.

The main driving force behind the petition is that no one should be forced to leave school or work because they got their period unexpectedly. It creates an equity issue in these spaces whereby a naturally occurring process hinders a group of people from contributing to the workspace.

The decision to offer free menstrual products in Scotland was ignited by the growing issue of "period poverty," where girls had reported using things like t-shirts, toilet paper, and even newspapers to manage their periods. No one should be forced to resort to these measures.

There's an economic benefit to this as well. If menstruators are able to manage their periods comfortably at work, they're likely to be more productive, happier, and trusting of their work environment.

Several items are covered under our government funded health plans, yet menstrual products continue to be something that people pay out of pocket for. To put things in perspective, a box of tampons costs about \$8. That means Canadians who menstruate are spending almost \$100 a year on tampons, let alone other menstrual products like pads and panty liners. That's \$100 that could go towards contributing to the local economy, or saving to buy property. If the government fully subsidized menstrual products, this would put more money in the pockets of women, girls, and gender non-forming folks who are often disproportionately affected by poverty.

For some groups, access to menstrual products is even more difficult. While the government's proposed plan to make products available in the workplace would impact a large portion of the population who work in federally regulated workplaces, it does nothing to help homeless women, Indigenous women, or sex workers.

This is why we must look ahead to even bigger solutions. Solutions that would make menstrual products readily available for all those who need them, for free. Groups like the Period Purse are working to make products readily available for marginalized groups. They receive donations with bags full of period products to be distributed to homeless people in need around Canada.

Periods are an inevitable part of life for over 50 per cent of Canadians. It's time that the products we need to manage this monthly occurrence were readily available for all.



THE NOTORIOUS RBG: The weight of a lifetime

IAN INDIANO | INTERROBANG

THE RBG WORKOUT

WARM-UP

Five minutes

FRONT PLANKS

Two sets/30 seconds

SIDE PLANKS

One set/15 to 30 seconds on each side

WALL SQUATS

WITH EXERCISE BALL

Three sets/10 to 12 repetitions

PUSHUPS

WITH WEIGHTED BALL

One set/10 to 12 repetitions on each side

KNEE LIFTS

One set/10 to 12 repetitions on each leg

SIT-TO-STAND

WITH WEIGHTED BALL

Three sets/eight to 10 repetitions

COOL-DOWN

Stretching neck, back, arms and legs

Now, follow this routine two times a week, eat healthy, and combine with over two decades of excellence as a justice of the Supreme Court of the US, and more than a decade as a judge of the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. Couple with being a brilliant university teacher, general counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union, mother of two (without mentioning being an octogenarian!), then maybe you will have a taste of the heavy weight Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg had to carry.

And she did so with immense grace, elegance and strength.

The RBG Workout, a book by her longtime personal trainer Bryant Johnson, gave the public a glimpse of Justice Ginsburg's private life. She died a few weeks ago, on Sept. 18, 2020, at 87 years of age.

One can argue against American colonialism or how annoyingly familiar non-Americans like myself are with the American zeitgeist. But this proximity also has its advantages. Because of it, the whole world has access to a pantheon of wonderful and inspiring figures, and Justice Ginsburg is undeniably one of the highlights of this group.

During the entirety of her career, she advocated in favour of women's rights and gender equality, paving the way for many women to come.

In the case *United States v. Virginia* (1996), the majority opinion was written by Ginsburg, in which it was decided that the Virginia Military Institute (at the time, a male-only institute) should start to accept women. The case was a breakthrough for women's rights and admission policies in universities.

In *Olmstead v. L.C.* (1999), the Supreme Court decided in favour of two women with mental disabilities who were previously ordered to remain living in a psychiatric institution, even after a number of medical professionals attested that they could live healthy lives in community-based programs. In *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015) many same-sex couples sued the states they lived in over policies banning same-sex marriages. Ginsburg's vote, along with her fellow Justices, ended up revoking the bans and legalizing same-sex marriage all over U.S. And these are just the tip of the iceberg of Ginsburg's career.

In 2013, already in her eighties, Ginsburg experienced an ascension to pop icon. Inspired by her recent dissent defending voting rights, law student Shana Knizhnik dubbed Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg the Notorious RBG by creating a Tumblr account with the same name in her homage.

The title is a take on the famous rapper The Notorious BIG, and they had more in common than just their names. As Ginsburg herself later said, they were both "born and bred in Brooklyn, New York." She never disliked the comparison. She embraced it with pride.

After the success of Knizhnik's Tumblr, the internet did its job and many images started to appear, often depicting Ginsburg with BIG's iconic crown. The powerful image is much more than just an obvious visual association, it ironically mixes two symbols of two district branches of power: the executive (the crown) and the judicial (justice Ginsburg herself).

This separation and independence of the three powers (legislative, executive and judicial) are fundamental to democracy, but for this reflection, we can benefit from an exception.

Justice Ginsburg was tolerant but unapologetic. Respectful but firm. She not only accepted changes, but she fought for them in her tireless search for equality and justice. These character traits found in justice Ginsburg are the least we should expect from someone holding the executive power. They are the least we should expect from a president or prime minister.

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg paved the way for many to come, when she subverted the oppressive structures around her and flourished in a world filled with unfair obstacles. Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg elevated our standards. Standards that we should keep high. She won't be easily replaced. She won't (and shouldn't!) be quickly replaced.

She will remain in our memories as a champion of human rights, a champion of women's rights, a champion of LGBTQ+'s rights. Long live the Notorious RBG!



CREDIT: ANDREW LASSETTER
DRIBBLE.COM/ALASSETTER

Fanshawe you win; I give up

Ilhan Aden
INTERROBANG

Guidance is something we all desire, something to hold onto to make sense of the darkness the unknown can bring. COVID-19 has made this all but more apparent to me.

What I did not expect is how alone traversing this new space would feel.

Isolation, whether through quarantine or social distancing, has made me rethink my expectations of the people I choose to surround myself with. When literal death is on the line not every hangout seems as important.

I've done what I believe is the responsible thing and wisely made use of the limited interactions I could have. I followed the rules and had my quarantine squad all summer long. I was excited to bring the same concept into the classroom thinking although this year will be different, at least we're in this together.

At that point, the "blended" delivery for my program was confirmed by Fanshawe; I believed I would have a fair amount of time on campus with peers and professors.

Oh, how naïve of me.

Instead, I realized being part of a program in which communal effort is required to create quality work, online learning isn't cutting it.

I feel the walls closing in as I'm stuck in a perpetual cycle of never-ending work. I'm on the cusp of drowning in a sea of pandemic fatigue and black zoom squares. And the worst part is... there is no lifeboat coming to save me. I'm on my own.

One might ask, why wait for help instead of seeking it out?

Trust me, navigating the apparent resources available to students is no easy feat.



Opinion: It's easy to feel lost in the now empty halls of Fanshawe.

CREDIT: ILHAN ADEN

Counselling is available if there is appointment space and academic accommodations exist if you have a professor willing to respond to your requests. It's all a bad game of tag via phone and email, but I digress.

My main concern cannot be as easily dismissed.

Where is my education?

The ongoing lack of transparency pertaining to the decision-making process has left students like myself with more questions than answers.

Why were we not given a say so in the type of education we would receive?

Why was there no comprehensive curriculum available for review prior to paying tuition?

How is it that we are paying the same tuition we paid last year — if not more for some

— for a compromised and reduced education?

"Maybe work in groups? You guys can figure it out, we're all adults here. Help each other out!"

I've heard a variation of this from almost all my professors when asked clarifying questions about the curriculum. Who knew wanting structure surrounding the education I am paying for was considered childish?

The consumer-focused and capitalistic society of our world places a heavy expectation on the monetary exchange of goods and services. In other words, if I'm paying for an education, I expect to receive one.

Students everywhere are feeling the same pressure from their academic institutions resulting in a surge of online petitions. There are

students fighting to be on campus, others to be off campus and many for a reduction and/or partial tuition refund.

Although segmented in our demands, we are all fighting the same fight and that is to be heard. So what will it take for Fanshawe to listen?

Do we need to start a petition, or will it take a student hurting themselves for the administration to wake up to the disaster that is this semester?

I and the many others feeling the same, are going to have to dig deep to finish this semester off decently. The only way to survive is to work 24/7 and honestly, I don't know if I have it in me.

So for now, Fanshawe you win; I give up.

Wow!
"After mob attacks, violence and destruction against First Nations, an old dispute between Indigenous and non-Indigenous fisherman is reascending in Nova Scotia."

Gee! I thought we were prepping for 2021, not the 18th century!



Illustration by Ian Indiano

Graduating in a world coping with COVID-19



Skylar McCarthy
INTERROBANG

The world is in a strange place right about now, huh?

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it so that life has become unpredictable. The world after the pandemic will be weird. But what's weirder is that I'm graduating at the end of this year. With a world full of uncertainty, things are looking off. Will we ever return to full normalcy? And what will that look like?

One of the first things I'd love to see in a "new" normal is how we actually stop climate change. Signs of climate change in this year alone are clear, considering the wildfires happening in Australia and in California. Obviously getting rid of this virus is priority number one but addressing climate change is also important.

It's discouraging how even with the consequences of these fires, some of our leaders still fail to acknowledge it as a reality. I feel like the planet is starting to fall apart.

According to a 2018 report from the International Panel of Climate Change titled "Global Warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius," if greenhouse gas rates continue the rate they're going, we could see worsening food supply and wildfires, and a massive dying off of coral reefs as soon as 2040. The study shows that if we don't do something, the world will be in a climate crisis by the time I'm 40.

Trust me, I want our generation to be good. While Canada's federal government says they will be banning single-use plastics by the end of 2021, that alone won't be enough. We can also help climate change by bringing in renewable energy, and we can also find a way to develop low-carbon fuel for airplanes and cars. We could also build cities more densely. There are multiple ideas out there, so let's do what

we need to do for the planet to be safe when I turn old.

Another thing I'd love to see after I graduate is progress on eliminating racial injustice in the world.

We all know what we saw when a police officer put a knee on the back of the neck of George Floyd, an unarmed black man who later passed away. But when people say that Canada isn't having the same issues, that is completely

untrue. First Nations people in this country are scared in their own homes. An example of which is earlier this year, when Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation Chief Allan Adam was assaulted on video by an RCMP officer at Fort McMurray. We need to be able to do better to those who were here before us.

While yes, I'd say Canada is more inclusive than the United States, we still have our dark pasts too. Defunding the police and giving

those funds to social programs like affordable housing, mental health will help people live better lives.

Finally, one of my biggest concerns with the world right now is the economy. The economy has taken a hit from this pandemic. The stocks have majorly fallen down to a significant level and the TSX stocks going red throughout the duration of the lockdown earlier in the year. Also, London's unemployment rate back in June at 12.6 per cent, was the highest unemployment rate since 2001 (the year I was born). While we needed to take a massive shutdown back in March, no money coming in and coming out meant the economy was going to struggle.

However, I feel there is an opportunity to create new jobs by working to solve climate change and adding more funding into social programs. It will take some time for all of these changes to take place, but these are major areas of work our politicians need to address. We need to stop climate change, we need to eradicate racial injustice, and we need to create innovative new jobs for our economy.

I believe that we can pull it out and live in a world like this, even after this horrible year and a pandemic that has made our minds shift in a blink of an eye. Sure, 2020 wasn't the best year, but heading in 2021, these are probably the three biggest concerns that I think all governments should take a look at.

I'm hopeful and optimistic because our generation wants these things to improve. Once those issues of climate change and racial injustice are addressed, the economy will grow back itself once the pandemic is gone and we will be fine. But, understanding these will take years to implement. Be patient, because these issues could last long into this decade.

Once we have found and administered a vaccine for COVID-19, we can focus on this and start working on solutions.

CREDIT: LANCE DAGENAIS

Opinion: Students graduating into a pandemic will have their work cut out for them to make the world a better place.



HAVE AN OPINION? SUBMIT YOUR STORY!
Letters to the Editor: fsuleters@fanshawec.ca

Creative Conversations over Coffee: Nikar Kim

Ilhan Aden
INTERROBANG

Creativity is what you choose to make of it.

It is not defined by the arts but rather a schema of the mind. It is a form of self expression, a means to understanding, a teacher, a listener, and a friend.

Although it took me well into my twenties to finally take the leap of faith on my own creativity, I will never forget the day the seed was planted.

In fourth grade I played Snug in my elementary school’s rendition of William Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

I was so bad my older sister—who attended another school—pretended not to be related to me. Lucky for me it wasn’t acting that I fell in love with, it was production.

I have wonderfully vivid memories of building sets, running through rehearsals, and learning how to go from concept to conception. It also didn’t hurt to see a woman in a leadership role be unapologetically herself, even if that meant yelling at nine-year-old children about her passion project.

That teacher’s name may have slipped my mind, but her impact is felt forever.

Fast forward to today and I am able to look back at that experience as the foundation that built my interest in producing. That foundation has afforded me entryway into many different creative spaces and for that I am forever thankful.

Being the curious person that I am, I want to explore the minds behind the creatives I encounter in hopes of learning from their creative pilgrimage.

Fortunately for me, I work for the paper so welcome to the first of many creative conversations over coffee.

This week I had the pleasure of sitting with Nikar Kim, a Fanshawe graduate of the music industry arts (MIA) program.

Nikar Kim

Nikar Kim aka beatzxneekz (pronounced Beats by Neeks) is a multi-instrumentalist producer, singer/song writer and creative extraordinaire.

With a similar creative awakening in the fourth grade Kim was destined to make music.

Realizing girls don’t have “cooties” anymore, Kim experienced his first heartbreak at nine. It was the loss of connection with another person that inspired him to write his first song, swiftly realizing the value of writing.

“When you’re writing stuff down...the paper won’t judge you. It’s not going to say anything back to you, it’s just listening to the words you’re saying.”

Pulling from his childhood influences, Kim built a catalogue that he



CREDIT: ILHAN ADEN
Nikar Kim aka beatzxneekz on set for his Night Rider video shoot.

was ready to bring to life, motivating him to self teach how to play the piano.

High school is where he began to shine working with Saidat Vandenberg, a motivational speaker fusing hip-hop to promote “positive energy, empowerment, inclusiveness and personal growth to overcome bullying, racism and other ills.”

Even at the early age of 15, he knew he wanted to motivate through creativity.

“Utilizing that creativity is always great because if we’re able to control [it] then we’re able to put music to it, or put a picture to it, or a script. You’re able to express it. That’s the beauty of how much is inside of us, like how [many] emotions flow inside that can come out at any moment from one reaction.”

Even at his talent level, Kim did not know music could be a career, instead he sought out to be a motivational speaker.

“You never really know [what to do] when you’re 18 years old. Right? That’s a lot of weight on your shoulders at that point. So when I was in that stage of life, my motivation was to become a motivational speaker. I wanted to be somebody like Saidat.”

Starting off in Fanshawe’s human resources foundation program, Kim was just excited to learn something new. It was not until a chance encounter in the D building that recalibrated

his journey back to music.

The window into an active classroom ignited a fire within he thought had disappeared.

“So I slip [into the classroom] cause [you] need a key card. I’m just passing through... open the door and then [and] all you hear is this guy doing a vocal, I’m like, what’s going on? And then [I see] his music board...his mixer board. I’m like, why would we have this stuff here?”

With the exposure to the plethora of high-end equipment, Kim knew second semester called for a change.

After a night of research, he discovered the MIA program and hit the ground running.

Virtually sleeping on campus, Kim completely threw himself into his work and it paid off.

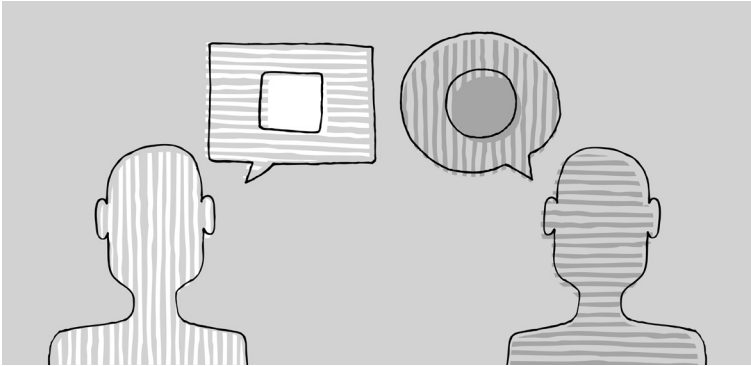
Grateful for the connection his program provided internship established, Kim has worked with music creatives from Los Angeles, Miami, Toronto, Colombia, and the United Kingdom.

Hoping to continue to help people develop a critical eye, Kim has a busy 2021 lined up.

“Definitely [working] one-on-one to start releasing music with some artists. I want to [possibly] start a podcast about artist’s etiquette [and] music video breakdown analysis.”

With an assiduous personality, wealth of musical knowledge and humility, Kim is well on his way into the history books.

Can you date someone you disagree with politically?



CREDIT: CURVABEZIER
Differing opinions make the world, and relationships, a more interesting place.

Catherine Danko
GAZETTE

The world would be a boring place if people agreed on absolutely everything.

Everyone has unique lived experiences and personalities that shape values and beliefs, manifesting how we live our daily lives.

These differences influence who we choose to befriend and date, who we vote for and why we vote for them. But sometimes our political preferences conflict with the views of those we choose to have in our personal lives. Where you draw the line between personal relationships and opinions is subjective.

While some students said relationships could work in spite of differing opinions on topics such as economics or international relations, they also felt there is a line when it comes to social issues.

Madison Paisley, a third-year political science and social justice student at King’s University College, says she wouldn’t remain friends with someone if they held different attitudes regarding racial or gender issues.

“It depends on the opinion. If we disagree on something as serious as women’s rights or racism, I probably wouldn’t keep them as a friend because there’s no way they’d reconcile,” says Paisley. “But if we disagreed on, let’s say, a policy about the environment and how to handle it economically, I wouldn’t stop being friends with someone over that.”

Jaclyn Siegel, a PhD student completing her thesis in social psychology and feminist identity, has mixed feelings about dating someone with opposite views.

“If I see someone with Republican in their bio [on Bumble] I usually swipe left. I could date someone who had different opinions on something like international relations, but when it comes to things like feminism and LGBTQ+ rights, there’s no room for disagreement there,” says Siegel.

Siegel is open publicly about her political views, so it can be difficult to discuss politics with certain friends because of how she is perceived.

“People know where I stand on issues... those who don’t agree don’t engage in political discussion with me,” reflects Siegel. “But I do believe that some form of civilized conversation is sometimes necessary. We live in a society of cancel culture where if you hold a different opinion, you are written off — this is wrong because it doesn’t allow for deeper conversations to happen.”

Students involved in Western University’s political party clubs had an open mind when it came to discussing politics with friends.

Laurent Ruffo-Caracchini, president of Western Liberals and fourth-year economics and political science student, mentions he is not afraid to have conversations with friends who have opposing ideological views as they allow for meaningful discussion.

“Being heavily involved in student politics, I meet a lot of people who fit the bill of voters for parties I don’t support, most notably the Conservatives. But this doesn’t mean that I’m afraid to discuss politics with them,” explains Ruffo-Caracchini. “I believe that non-discussion is much worse, because it creates a divide in which you bridge through discussion ... this shows that on the other side, there isn’t just this ‘right-wing person,’ there is a human being who has real fears and beliefs.”

Ruffo-Caracchini explains it is not an issue of different ideologies but rather imposing them in new relationships.

“When I choose not to pursue a relationship, it’s not so much an ideological question so much as it is methodological. Someone can have a complete inverse ideology than me, but so long as they are willing to change and participate in discussion rather than impose that ideology, it’s fine. Disagreement doesn’t necessarily mean you are unfriended — it simply means that more discussion needs to happen.”

James Chasmar, president of WesternU Conservatives and second-year BMOS student, agrees with this.

“Many of my friends have different political views, but there’s much more to friendships than that,” reflects Chasmar. “Obviously we all have our biases, but you always need to understand where the other person is coming from and be willing to change your perspective. Although you might say I’m a partisan person, I think it’s very important to be self-critical — many of my opinions have changed drastically over the years.”

So the next time you have a political conversation with a friend you disagree with, consider taking a moment to listen to where exactly they are coming from. You just might learn something.

Choosing not to force your beliefs on others, but rather actively listening to the other person’s experiences, can make relationships stronger. But, if your sole purpose is to convince them otherwise — you’re probably better off discussing something else.

Try as you may, you cannot hide behind a mask

Christopher Mischczak
INTERROBANG

One day my first-year psychology teacher stood in front of the classroom.

He held up a glass of water in front of his class and asked a question. We were expecting the question, “is this cup half empty or half full?” He instead asked, “how long do you think I will be able to hold this glass of water?” This one moment really stood out to me. It taught me how to think a little bit more critically, creatively, and innovatively. It illustrates that no matter how you look at things, whether it is negative or positive, at the end of the day it does not really matter; what matters a lot more is time and pressure. Most importantly, anyone and everyone has a breaking point.

My own story begins when I went out one weekend and I was having so much fun that I did not even notice that I had a mandatory mask on my face. I went to start having my lunch and practically got the thing messy. I could not help but laugh at myself in this moment. However, this experience got me thinking about how the new normal has become a little too normal. Is it possible that I am starting to get used to it?

How do these two things relate? I would argue that it is about

acclimatization: we get used to looking at the world in a perpetual positive or negative state. It takes the support of good friends to reel us back into an appropriate frame of mind. In this respect, I would argue that it is because of the support of our peers, friends and family that makes holding a glass of water or wearing a mask bearable for long periods of time.

In this case, as it relates back to my own story, it takes the support of good friends to forget about the new normal. To remind us that things are not as bad as we always make them out to be. It happened to the point where I forgot about the mask in the first place. How everything, even for a moment, felt like the old normal.

“The foundations of moral motivations are not the procedural rules on a kind of discourse, but the feelings to which we can rise. As Confucius saw long ago, benevolence or concern for humanity is the indispensable root of it all,” Simon Blackburn, an English academic philosopher, reflected in 2001.

Blackburn was quoted in a book called *Doing Right* by Phillip C. Hebert. This quote has a lot of meaning for the message that I think is very important to consider. That despite everything that is going on in the world right now, we should not let what is happening diminish our collective ability to simply hope and build a better life. The revelation

that I had with my own funny story is that it takes good friends and a great support system. To make us forget about what is happening in the world now. Instead to count our blessings and understand that life is still amazing.

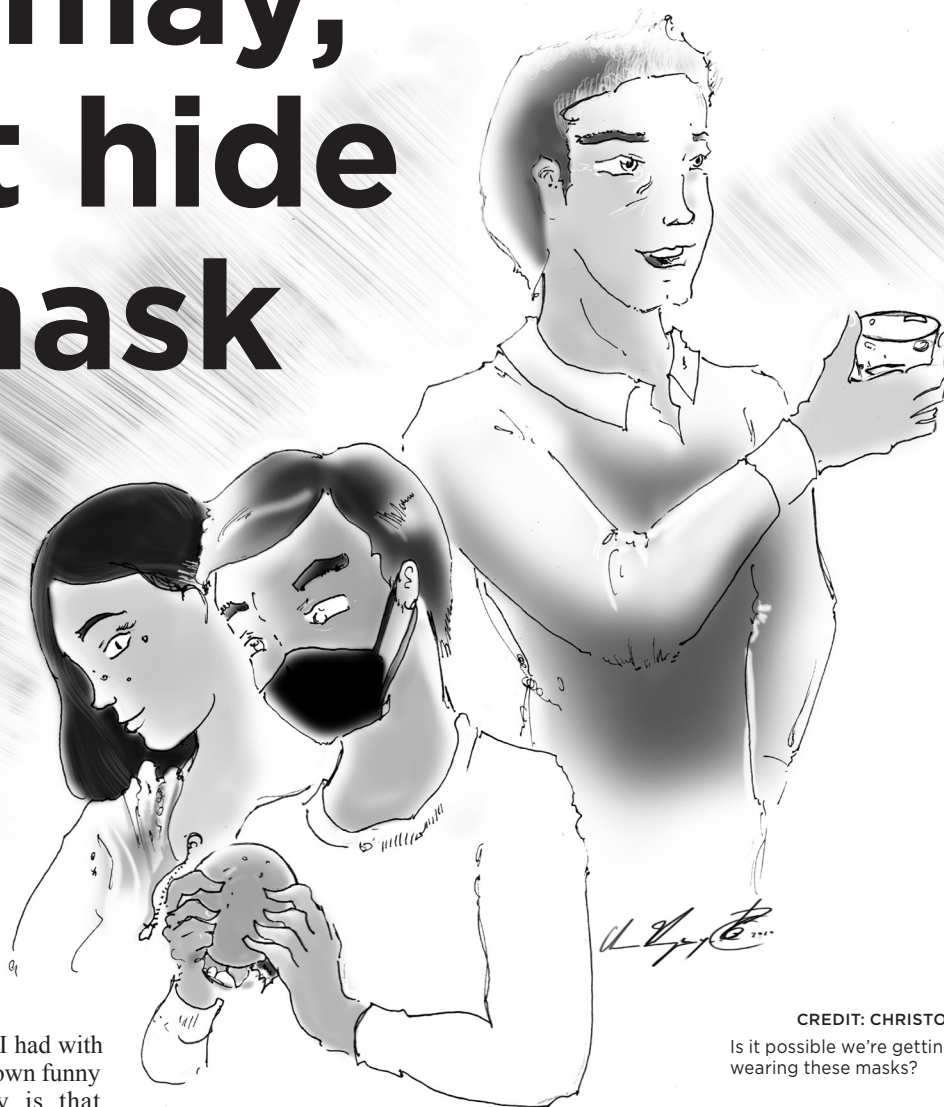
It is fascinating to consider the unique way that this new normal has changed our lives. From everyday meetings being moved to being online, businesses evolving to deliver as a part of their new model. There is even a significant shift in the educational model. Since practically every class that does not

require hands on experience, has moved online.

I cannot help but to reflect on my own experience of finding a silver lining in this change. Being able to wake up every morning in my comfortable home and bed. It is also the convenience of being close by to several of the amenities of home. Is this collective experience something that will change the way that education is done overall now? That is a question that I cannot answer, but it is important to consider.

I do not know if I am the right person to have those answers. However, it is in being an optimistic person that I like to have faith that things will always get better. As the societal norm changes, it should not change the way that we treat each other and that collective pursuit for happiness which is so important for so many of us.

Knowing that, I cannot help but wonder — what is your story in this strange but new normal world?



CREDIT: CHRISTOPHER MISZCZAK
Is it possible we're getting used to wearing these masks?

Profs cite academic integrity, time zones as reasons to use Proctortrack

Emma Fairgrieve
GAZETTE

Many Western students and professors have shared concerns about online privacy amid online learning, especially as a recent hack calls Proctortrack's security into question.

The remote-proctoring software's parent company, Verificient, experienced a security breach several weeks ago and temporarily shut down the program, leaving profs without proctoring in the height of midterm season.

Western University followed-up a day later, as the vice-provost emailed students, announcing they would notify students and faculty when the program is once again deemed safe.

“Western takes the data protection and privacy of its students very seriously and will not be proceeding with the use of Proctortrack until we are confident that it is safe to do so,” the email read.

Verificient has since confirmed no student data was accessed during the hack, but Western has not confirmed if they will continue to use the program.

Although Proctortrack is now back up and running, prior to the

breach, many professors had their own reasons to either use or avoid the software.

Qihuang Zhang, a biostatistician and Western professor, allowed his students to choose whether they are proctored over Zoom or Proctortrack. He believes that students should choose what proctoring system works best for them.

“On the one hand, some students have strong privacy concerns with Proctortrack and some students have severe technical difficulties,” said Zhang.

He offered Proctortrack as he wanted students to have an option to be asynchronous, which Zoom proctoring would not allow.

“My exam schedule is not on the same day in the class and thus students might have conflicts with the other exams or other courses. We also have students from different time zones and I do not want to ask them to get up at midnight to do the exam.”

Students' privacy concerns pre-date the hack, as over 10,000 students signed a petition asking Western to discontinue the use of Proctortrack within the first month of classes. Student concern has only grown since the hack.



Recent hacks have called Proctortrack's security into question.

Ricardas Zitikis, an associate professor in Western's statistical and actuarial sciences department, was using Proctortrack up until Western's announcement on Oct. 15. His primary concern is maintaining the integrity of testing.

“Even though I do not claim that students would misbehave ... we have to enhance their credibility in

addition to the honesty of students.”

Zitikis said he understands students' privacy concerns linked to Proctortrack. However, he still sees the value in the software.

“If someone tries to enter your house it does not mean you have to sell the house. You just have to think about how to enhance your security,” he said.

Although he has tried Zoom proctoring, Zitikis feels it gives students greater opportunity to cheat compared to Proctortrack. He hopes the university will make a clear decision on how professors should proctor online.

“It is not for me to judge. I think it is the registrars' office that should make this decision,” he said.

CREDIT: MARTIN ALLEN (GAZETTE)

35. Velodrome vehicle
36. How some plans go
38. Loosen, as laces
41. Unskilled worker
42. Mommy's sis
47. Record jacket
51. Disneyland locale, briefly
52. Foe
53. Dentist's direction
54. Cast member
55. Wigwam
56. Like a 911 call (Abbr).
57. Perlman of "Cheers"
59. Cinematographer Nykvist
61. Settings of four series in a CBS franchise
64. Not, to a Scot

"The ballot is stronger than the bullet." — Abraham Lincoln

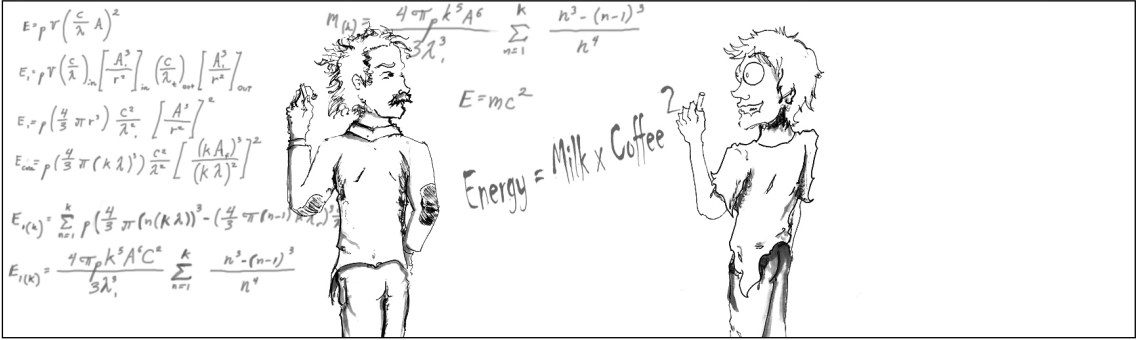
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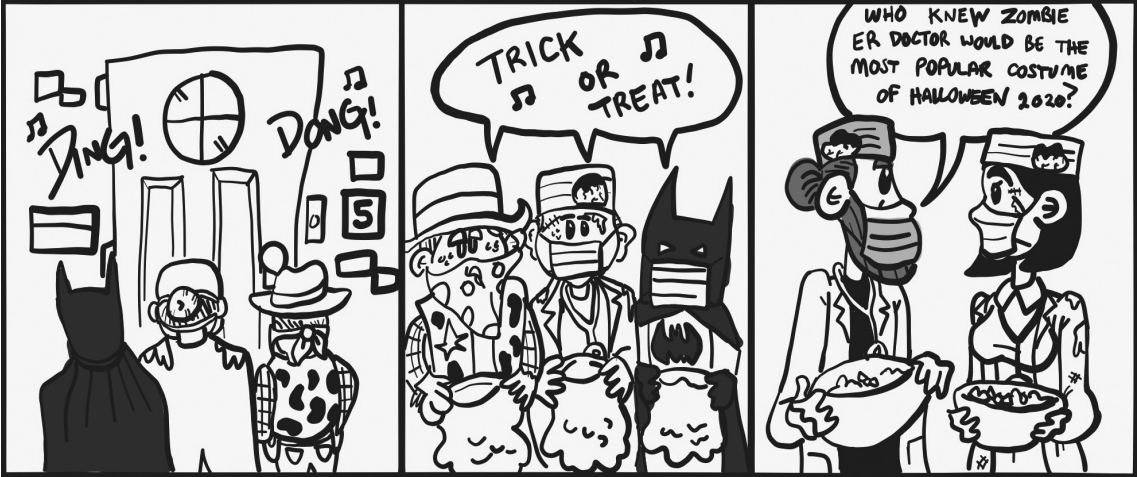
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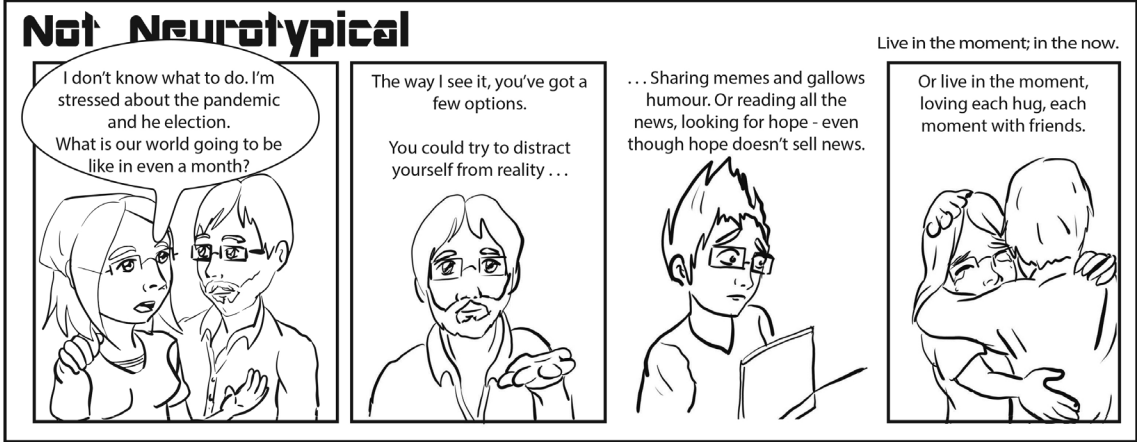
By Christopher Mischczak © 2020



Freshman Fifteen



By Alan Dungo



Horoscopes

Aries

Look for a healthy way to use pent-up energy these next few weeks. Overthinking a situation will lead to trouble. Take your time; observation will help you realize what's possible. Gather facts, and substantiate the best way to bring about change without causing upset. A partnership will need an adjustment before you can move forward with your plans. Emotions will swell if you try to make changes without sufficient preparation.

Taurus

Engage in a conversation with someone who has helped you or provided clarity. The information you gather will help you deal with a positive life adjustment. Take a unique approach to a situation that can affect your status. It's best not to prejudge someone based on what others say. Be resourceful, and offer a solution that will benefit everyone. Anger will mount if you let someone interfere with your schedule.

Gemini

Make wise decisions. Be less eager to please someone who doesn't appreciate you, and pour your energy into something that will benefit you. A suggestion someone makes may not be feasible or in your best interest. Consider what's best for you. Keep your emotions out of the equation, and you'll avoid a manipulative encounter. You'll see situations clearly. Take the high road, and resolve issues using intelligence, not ultimatums.

Cancer

You'll feel compelled to accept an invitation that poses a danger to your health that you should pass on. Your input will draw favourable attention from someone who can influence your future. A unique offer will be hard to resist. You may not like change, but don't deny yourself a better lot. Run your plans by anyone who will be affected by the decisions you make before signing a contract.

Leo

You'll face opposition if you get into emotional discussions with someone you need on your side. Take a step back and rethink how best to keep the peace. Compromise will be necessary. Focus on opportunities instead of trying to do something unrealistic. Know your limits, and use your skills wisely. Don't waste your time, effort or energy arguing with someone who will never see things your way.

Virgo

Make arrangements with someone you love. Discussing plans will ensure that you are heading in the same direction. A lifestyle change is encouraged. You'll receive unexpected feedback that will help you decide what you want to do with your life. When opportunity knocks, don't hesitate to open the door. A joint money matter will leave you worried. Before you agree to something, look at the consequences.

Libra

Take it easy. It's time to rejuvenate and contemplate what you want to do next. You have more options than you realize. Follow the path that leads you to a better and happier life. Don't be too trusting. Listen to what's being offered, and don't agree to anything that jeopardizes your professional future. You have plenty of energy, but if you don't channel it wisely, you will likely end up in an emotional situation that can disrupt your home and a close relationship.

Scorpio

Good things come to those who wait. Bide your time and position yourself for a brighter future. It's important to be ready when the right opportunity comes your way. You'll get a different point of view from someone you admire. Seeing a situation from a different perspective will give you the courage to prepare for the future. You'll face some uncertainty.

Sagittarius

Check in with a friend or relative you haven't talked to lately, and you'll receive emotional support regarding a personal problem that's weighing you down. A couple of changes at home will make life easier and possibly more affordable if you do the work yourself. An online video will help you more than someone who assumes to know more than you. A home improvement you make will make it easier for you to start a small business on the side.

Capricorn

Pay close attention to your expenditures. How you handle your cash and the people who depend on you will determine your emotional and financial stability. Refuse to let someone from your past interfere in your personal life. A sticky situation will develop if you get involved in someone's business. Be a good listener, but don't offer advice when you only have one side of the story.

Aquarius

Stick to what and who you know and trust and you'll avoid a manipulative situation that's not in your best interest. It's OK to want to please others, but don't let anyone take advantage of you. Do something creative and you'll find a way to turn it into a lucrative pastime. Follow your heart, and do what brings you joy. The more you put into something you enjoy doing the more you will get in return.

Pisces

Check out your options and make a decision based on who is involved in what you are trying to pursue. Align yourself with like-minded people who will contribute as much creatively and financially as you. A suggestion you offer to a cause you support will be taken seriously. Greater involvement will bring you in virtual contact with someone who will influence your future. Expect to face interference.



CREDIT: YIFEI ZHANG (GAZETTE)

The Ontario University Athletics (OUA) has decided to cancel the remainder of the 2020-21 sports season due to COVID-19.

Mustangs Athletics remains optimistic despite OUA cancellations

Alex McComb
GAZETTE

It was a tough day for Canadian university sports as Ontario University Athletics (OUA) decided to cancel the remainder of the 2020-21 sports season on Oct. 15.

Western Mustangs student-athletes will now have to wait until August 2021 to compete again, assuming the OUA deems it safe to return.

However, Christine Stapleton, the director of sport and recreation at Western University, said Mustangs Athletics is still working hard to get back on the playing field as soon as they believe it is safe for their athletes.

“There’s still an opportunity in January where it’s safe and obviously allowed by the respective institution to compete,” stated Stapleton. “We have a very strong Return to Play plan that we’ll continue to pivot and adjust on ... this [decision] today certainly will hurt.”

Although Western is one of the few universities in Canada that suspended non-academic activities, the athletics department shares the same Return to Play plan as directed by provincial and national sport organizations as well as the Mustangs sport medical team.

Western differs from other schools as it paused in-person practices with a rise of coronavirus cases on campus since classes started.

While Mustangs Athletics continues to monitor the pandemic, Stapleton said student-athletes and coaches are still hard at work. Teams are using virtual platforms to communicate and log their training sessions as well as keeping up with their academic responsibilities during this extended off-season.

“Obviously, they’re student-athletes so we do our academic mentoring and their focus on school is primary,” explained Stapleton. “We’re taking this as an opportunity to introduce a different curriculum to our student-athletes where we can work on their leadership.”

Kinduct, a digital athlete-monitoring program, became a major component of how Mustangs train virtually.

“[Kinduct] has become very central to the way we can monitor our student athletes and their strength and conditioning, their individual training and their mental health and wellness,” said Stapleton. “Now more than ever, the digital system of athlete-monitoring is more important. It’s been extremely beneficial for our coaches to stay in-touch with their student-athletes.”

Coaches have also been affected by the cancellations. Since they’ve been away from the field, coaching staff have had more time to recruit for the fall 2021 season.

Next year’s season is still in question as officials are unsure whether it will be safe for university sports,

however, Stapleton said there is hope for their future athletes to play in the post-pandemic era.

“Obviously, the coaches are still recruiting like crazy because there will be sport after COVID-19 and part of maintaining the strong programs that we have is the robust recruiting that we do,” said Stapleton.

Stapleton explained the cancelled season will have no impact on the university’s decision to hold recreational activities and intramural competition this year.

Western has still not provided an update about athletic ancillary fees, specifically the Western Sport and Recreation Service fee, as many of the services it pays for are no longer available for students.

Looking forward to 2021, Stapleton explained how sport is going to be a critical part of the pandemic recovery at Western because of the university’s winning tradition and spirit for athletics.

“This virus is difficult to predict,” said Stapleton.

“I think we are looking forward though because we know that sport is such a core piece of the spirit tradition up here at Western. We don’t know the timing yet ... we know that sport will play that pivotal role in our post-COVID-19 recovery; that inspiration and spirit that we’re looking for on the other side of COVID-19.”

A history of athletes taking political stances



CREDIT: GRINDI

Heavyweight world champion Muhammad Ali is one of many notable athletes to stand up for his beliefs.

Skylar McCarthy
INTERROBANG

Athletes are just like celebrities. Everyone watches them and idolizes them. And lately, we have seen athletes take a stand in the political sphere.

You can’t talk about political stands with athletes without mentioning Muhammad Ali. In 1967, he was a boxing heavyweight world champion. This was also around the time that the United States was really invested in the Vietnam War. Ali was drafted but didn’t enlist himself and declared himself a conscientious objector. He was then later arrested and found guilty on draft evasion.

Ali didn’t fight in the war based on his Muslim beliefs. Then, the Supreme Court overruled his conviction in 1971, and he won back the heavyweight world title in 1974 from George Foreman at the famed “Rumble in the Jungle” in Zaire. At the time polls showed that a majority of Americans didn’t agree with his decision, but as time has passed more people now agree with his decision.

Major League Baseball player Carlos Delgado, who played in Canada with the Toronto Blue Jays, took a stand by staying in the dugout during the 2004 season, when it had become tradition during the seventh inning for players to stand for the singing of “God Bless America.”

In a 2004 Toronto Star story, Delgado explained why he protested: “It’s a very terrible thing that happened on September 11. It’s (also) a terrible thing that happened in Afghanistan and Iraq, I just feel so sad for the families that lost relatives and loved ones in the war. But I think it’s the stupidest war ever.”

Some Olympic teams have taken political stands as well. There have been several occasions where entire Olympic teams haven’t competed in the games.

In 1908, Irish athletes boycotted the Olympics due to Britain’s refusal to grant Ireland independence. In

1980, 62 countries led by the U.S. boycotted the Moscow summer Olympics after the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan on Christmas Eve in 1979. But, it wasn’t the athlete’s choice to boycott those Olympics, instead it was U.S. president Jimmy Carter’s decision.

In the past decade, athletes have had more of an impact on their positions in politics. Two major sports in America had key superstars protest. In the National Football League (NFL), Colin Kaepernick, followed by then teammates of his, knelt during the National Anthem during the 2016 season.

Kaepernick was protesting police brutality against African-Americans that we continue to see today in America, while others thought he was protesting the military. He was criticized by the Republican presidential nominee and now U.S. President, Donald Trump. He eventually asked for his release and let go by the San Francisco 49ers and he still hasn’t found an NFL job since.

Also, in the National Basketball Association (NBA), the biggest superstar in the sport, LeBron James, hasn’t been shy in letting the world know the positions and stances he chooses. But it really all started when James made comments about Trump.

James said on the *Rolling with the Champion* podcast, “the number one job, the point of person, is someone who doesn’t understand the people, and who really don’t give an [expletive] about the people.” That’s when Fox News anchor Laura Ingraham called James out and said that James should just “shut up and dribble.” Since then, James has spoken on key issues and is helping unregistered voters to vote this year in the American election.

Sure, athletes aren’t politicians. Those two jobs are very different. But like any other athlete, they have people who look up to them. By taking these political stances, it shows their true character and shows that no matter what job you have, your voice can be heard.

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