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Philosophy, Existentialism and Connection: A Conversation with the Ukulele Guy

“This is the philosophical tie into the ukulele: There’s a chance at connection if you put yourself out there.”

Nammi Nguyen

If I were to ask USask students if they knew who the Ukulele Guy was, I would venture to say that over half would know who I’m talking about.

The Ukulele Guy has become a campus legend ... but who really is he? What’s his name, and why does he do what he does?

My curiosity got the better of me, and through the USask subreddit and some direct messages, I managed to find his contact information and set up an interview.

While I knew I was bound for an interesting conversation, I was pleasantly surprised that what we spoke about extended far beyond the ukulele, but into a meditation on philosophy, existentialism and connection.

The Ukulele Guy’s name is Stéphane Gerard, a third-year doctoral student studying existentialism and French literature. He comes from south of the city in rural Saskatchewan.

Gerard traces his musical roots back to his family, with experience playing the piano and violin. He is also a member of several choirs, including the USask Community Chorus and the Sherbrooke Community Center Choir.

His father got his family into the ukulele many years ago. Slowly, Gerard started bringing the instrument around more frequently.

“Habitually, I keep it clipped [to] my backpack most of the time, or I keep it up in the graduate student offices ... I'm still not great, but my competencies are growing.”

Gerard enjoys the challenges that come with learning something new.

“A good thing about learning an instrument is that it's a tool for self-mastery. It's the idea that, okay, this is difficult. I've not really done a fretted instrument before, and there's a new set of skills to learn, a new set of attitudes to adopt and a new set of discoveries to explore.”



Stéphane Gerard | Cheyenne Lehmann

His public playing began in 2018 during his master’s degree, after he discovered the perfect location to practice.

“A few years ago, I discovered that the [Gordon Oakes] Red Bear Centre has that loop underneath where it's an echo chamber ... it has fewer corners, so the sound just keeps bouncing around and around. You can almost harmonize with yourself in that zone [with] the tail ends of your own echo.”

As a New Year’s resolution, Gerard set the goal of practicing the instrument for an hour a day, which then evolved into an hour and a half. He now tries to play every weekday from noon to 1:30 p.m., and if he shows up late, then he stays late to get in

his 90 minutes of practice.

The location also allows him to be mindful of those around him:

“You don't corner people. It's not like an ambush. And if people don't want any part of it, they can just walk right on by. Most people, I assume, are mildly curious, but it doesn't change their day much one way or another. And if they, for some reason, don't feel that that's something that they want in that particular moment, well, 10 seconds, and then they're on their way. The sound, once you're out of that tunnel, fades out very quickly. And more importantly, it's far enough away from any classes.”

Ultimately, outside of the pleasure of the

experience, Gerard has the simple hope of bringing passersby some joy with his music.

“So what would I like people to take out of it? Number one, most importantly, I hope that they're not bothered by it. Number two, I hope that they go towards their next destination with a little bit more of a positive feeling.”

Over time, Gerard has built a repertoire of over 300 memorized songs. His favourite is usually the one he’s working on, but some of the artists he mentioned were Stan Rogers, Steve Miller and Simon & Garfunkel.

When I mentioned his growing “campus-legend” status, Gerard was pleasantly surprised.

“Well, I'll attribute that then to being solid and being regular, being steadfast and keeping a resolve. Essentially, there's a lyric in Radiohead's ‘Creep’ to notice when someone's not around, and I feel like that. That's quite heartwarming to know that I've built myself up to the point where it's noticeable, at least when I'm not there.”

I also told Gerard how some students have expressed wanting to donate money for Gerard’s performances, but that is not his intention.

“Many people have assumed that it's a busking situation, and that's definitely not what it is. I think if there is any sort of repayment, it would be repayment in kind. I would be thrilled to see other people joining me there ... I'm very flattered that people think that this would be worth money ... I appreciate the compliment, but no, save your money for other, more important things.”

For Gerard, the ukulele is an invitation to connect. He encourages people to initiate conversation, make song requests, join in and sing, harmonize or bring their own instrument to play along.

“I spend a lot of time on my own, and that's fine, but life is better when you share it with people.”

Continued on page 11.

Far From Home

A look into the struggles that international students face at the University of Saskatchewan.



Hand holding globe | Sydeen from Getty Images | Canva Pro

Emily Mainprize

Canada, known for its multiculturalism, high-quality education and promise of opportunity, is often promoted as a welcoming destination for international students. Each fall, international students from around the world arrive in Saskatoon with hopes of academic success, new friendships and life-changing opportunities. Yet for many, the reality of studying at the University of Saskatchewan includes challenges that go far beyond coursework.

While USask prides itself on diversity and accessibility, international students often navigate financial stress, academic pressure, cultural adjustment and policy obstacles that make their journey uniquely demanding.

Financial pressure

One of the biggest issues for international students at USask is the high cost of tuition and living expenses. International tuition at Canadian universities can be significantly higher than domestic rates, and estimates show that in most programs, international students may pay roughly four times more than Canadian students for the same year of study.

Reports and student voices from across

campus suggest that tuition increases over recent years have hit international students especially hard. According to interviews with international students conducted by Global News, some students say their tuition has nearly doubled since they began their degree, raising fears about staying enrolled and completing their program.

High fees often force students to stretch limited savings, take on debt, rely on family support back home or work extensive hours at a place of employment, all while dealing with living costs in a city with a competitive rental market. And that’s only if they are able to even stay and finish their degree, which many international students have decided not to pursue after surges in prices.

Policy Barriers

Recent changes to federal immigration and study permit policies have had a noticeable impact on international students coming to USask. Stricter requirements, such as doubling the financial requirements for international students and issuing work visas to graduates only in fields related to labour shortages, have contributed to a decline in new international student enrolments at Saskatchewan’s universities, including USask. In 2024, the number of new international students at USask appears to decline.

These policy shifts create uncertainty for future students and complicate long-term planning — especially for those hoping to work after graduation or pursue permanent residency. Students often arrive with hopes of building a life in Canada, but these changing rules make it harder to know what opportunities will be available once classes begin.

Academic and language challenges

In addition to navigating tuition fees and the financial stress of living in the city, international students are also attending classes conducted in a language that, while familiar, may not be their first or primary language. Adjusting to university academic expectations is another common hurdle with understanding academic conventions, discipline specific language and social and cultural nuances of classroom communication presenting significant challenges.

These students may work harder to read and understand texts and assignments, to use consistent and correct grammar or incorporate a wider ranging vocabulary, feel self-conscious about presenting their ideas in class among peers or directly to instructors, feel anxious to ask questions about academic integrity out of a fear of being judged negatively by instructors, adjust expectations and practices in other educational systems and fear the use of GenAI detection tools that falsely identify human written work of non-native speakers with AI content.

Beyond language, adapting to unfamiliar teaching styles and academic norms can be an additional source of stress.

Mental Health and Social Isolation

The transition to university life in a new country carries an intense emotional weight. According to the Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health, these international students who don’t have family nearby or established community networks often confront loneliness, stress and anxiety, particularly when academic workload and financial worries compound the struggles and challenges of daily life.

Mental health professionals emphasize the importance of equitable access to support services that address these challenges, noting that many international students experience elevated stress due to cultural

adjustment alongside typical academic pressures. Peer Health is a resource at USask that students can access for support.

Support Services and University Response

USask has expanded services designed to help international students acclimate and succeed, including the International Student and Study Abroad Centre (ISSAC), which offers advising on immigration matters, settlement issues and cultural transition. They also plan events to encourage international students to meet with one another and make friends, easing the transition that many students face when moving from a place with lots of family and friends to a place where they know very few people, if any. By having these events, a community of international students can mingle and interact, creating long lasting friendships and a shared community between students.

ISSAC provides one-on-one support for navigating visas, work eligibility, health care and housing questions which can be extremely helpful for managing finances and figuring out how to live in Saskatoon. This can ease the stress that many students face when transitioning to living in Saskatchewan and trying to manage costs, allowing them to focus on their schooling and making friends within their communities.

Looking Forward

Despite these efforts, international students at USask continue to confront structural challenges that require community, institutional and policy-level responses. With federal immigration policies evolving and global competition for students intensifying, how USask balances support with recruitment and retention will shape not only its international community but the broader cultural fabric of campus life.

For many students, the promise of global education remains a powerful draw but one that increasingly comes with real-world financial, academic and emotional costs. Being an international student at USask can be an extremely rewarding experience, but it can also be an intense struggle for community, understanding and financial comfortability.

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Enactus USask: In the Business of Community

Interviews with Enactus executives on how this student-led entrepreneur group is giving back to the community practically and sustainably.

Colton Danneberg

Enactus is a worldwide non-profit that operates through student-led volunteerism on campuses, focusing on creating sustainable practices and the application of business skills to address issues in the community. While Enactus is business-oriented and generally more attuned to students in the Edwards School of Business, it accepts members from any college.

Sauyna Vohra, a second-year Psychology student and President of Enactus USask, and Marium Baig, a third-year Management student and the group’s Vice-President of Marketing, sat down with *The Sheaf* to talk about the group’s three main projects: Re-colour, Build-A-Business and Giving FWRd.

Re-colour

Re-colour is one of the group’s projects that focuses on reducing waste by recycling used crayons. Used crayons are donated from restaurants around the city and then are melted down by volunteers during the group’s meetings and cast in a mould to create new ones. The group sells kits of crayons that are reinvested into other projects and also donates crayons to local daycares.

Baig explains that “Every Thursday [during] our meetings, we’re actually melting and peeling crayons. We peel them, put them in our pot, stir them, they melt, then we pour them into our moulds. We wait about 20 to 30 minutes, [then] it’s ready for packaging.” Vohra adds that “We [also] make recycled paper out of the peels [because] we don’t want to waste anything.”

Build-A-Business

Build-A-Business is Enactus’ four-week program that partners with another nonprofit, SaskAbilities, that teaches business skills to individuals with intellectual disabilities. The program includes three workshops devoted to the introduction to entrepreneurship, budgeting and marketing, respectively. As Baig explains, this project “focuses on empowerment, confidence building and accessibility ... A lot of these people have great ideas, but they just don’t know how to get started ... We give them the knowledge, skills and [tools] to actually start their project.”

“We also try to provide them with financial grants,” Vohra adds. “Last year, it was \$1,000 we provided.” SaskAbilities acts as a mediator between Enactus and the individuals with disabilities, because each individuals’ needs are different. “SaskAbilities helps us bridge that gap and tells us the participants’ needs, and that’s how we cater our presentation.”



Enactus USask | Enactus

Giving FWRd

Giving FWRd (Food Waste Reduction) aims to reduce food waste by making meals out of food found in grocery stores that are nearing their expiration date.

Baig explains that “we take large amounts of food that are often discarded because they’re near the expiry date, and then we make it into food. We [also] include menstrual kits. We’re partnered with the Saskatoon Food Bank, where we receive all the pads and tampons, [and] we’re also partnered with Shoppers, where we get discounted items to make hygiene kits as well that [get] distributed to people in need.”

Baig continues that “Last year, we decided that we wanted to incorporate Indigenous culture into Giving FWRd, so we had an Indigenous chef [who] came out from a company called CHEP and he made an Indigenous soup.”

Vohra and Baig explain that they’re partnered with Mustard Seed, a nonprofit organization that feeds and shelters unhoused individuals in communities. Vohra says that “We make the meals and then [they] go directly to Mustard Seed, and then they just hand out the food to the people that are living there ... We also do clothing donations as well. Our members, friends and family bring clothes, and [then] we send [them] to Mustard Seed as well.”

Baig says that she first wanted to get involved with Enactus in her first year. “I just wanted to make friends and do something, so my first position was a photographer for the club ... The first event I attended was Giving FWRd, and so I took photos for that event, and I think we were doing so much that it kind of connected to me. And so the next year, I applied for the Project Manager of Giving

FWRd, and I worked on making the project better. That’s how we got menstrual kits and hygiene kits, because I added that into our project ... I really wanted to be part of Enactus because I know that we are helping the community and I wanted to do something that [would] actually help people.”

Personal Experiences

Enactus USask also participates in regional and national competitions with other Enactus campus groups across Canada annually. Members who have put in the most volunteer hours are selected to attend the regionals or nationals competitions each year. The competition involves a presentation of the projects each group has been working on and is graded on innovation and impact. “We tell them [how] many years these projects have been running for, and the average amount of work has been put into it,” Vohra says.

“One thing we’ve heard in all our competitions whenever we go is that Re-Colour is so innovative,” Vohra continues. “It was one of our students at USask who was in a restaurant having a family dinner, and they saw that [the crayons] her cousins were using got thrown away, [even though] the crayons were hardly used.”

When asked about their favourite memories of being involved in Enactus, Vohra and Baig pointed to their time spent with other members. Baig said that “Our nationals trip last year, when we went to Calgary, was probably one of the most memorable, because we had [a lot of] fun ... We spent a lot of time together as a team, we were doing a lot of team bonding, and we did really good in the competition.”

For Vohra, “My best memory would have been in December of last year, when we decided to have a Christmas card night. So

in one of our Re-colour workshops, we had Christmas cards and each one of the team members [was] writing cards for each other. It was super sweet.”

When asked about why someone should join Enactus, Baig said that “I think that it’s a good opportunity for students to create a real impact while you’re still in university. You gain leadership experience, teamwork skills, and [it’s all] hands-on. You’re getting business knowledge that goes far beyond what our classrooms teach, and it’s about [causes] you care about. If you care about sustainability, if you care about social justice, entrepreneurship or community service, you come together, and you turn those ideas into action.”

“We want to create as big of an impact as we can in the community and for the world,” Vohra added. “Whether it comes to sustainability, community service or just helping people out in any way, [either] mentally or physically, the more people we have, the more impact we can make ... That’s [a] reason [we want] more people to join.”

She adds that “What we are aiming at as an organization is to bring sustainability as an everyday concept into the community ... It’s like brushing your teeth. You know that you have to do it every morning and every night. That’s how we want the coming generation to see sustainability. They should understand that protecting the environment is something that is not just your responsibility or duty — it’s just an everyday thing.”

Students who are interested in volunteering with Enactus are encouraged to reach out to the USask club @enactussask on Instagram for more information.

Beyond Black History Month: How the University of Saskatchewan’s Black Students Are Advancing a National Movement

Anti-Black racism advocacy does not end after February. It is a year-round commitment.

Pan-African Students Association

At the University of Saskatchewan, Black student organizations like the Pan-African Students Association (PASA) have been busy investing in the Black community and pushing for institutional change year-round. This Black History Month, PASA programming also includes the Black History Month Gala, which is a cultural celebration that highlights Black History, heritage and community through arts, dialogue and shared cultural experiences. This year, PASA’s Black History Month Gala, Love in Colour, will take place on Feb. 21 featuring a “Two Cultures, One Love” experience that celebrates unity across Pan-African traditions, with ticket information available via PASA’s Instagram @pasa.usask.

While the institutional recognition of Black History Month has created essential spaces for dialogue and visibility, what happens after the posters come down? Universities have an opportunity and a responsibility to turn recognition into sustained, measurable change that improves Black students’ experiences throughout the academic year.

For years, Black student organizations (BSOs) have been forced to plan around a predictable cycle.

February arrives, attention increases and clubs are expected to deliver major programming with limited resources, often while carrying the emotional labour of educating their peers and transactional collaboration. It’s done because our communities deserve to be seen and supported. But too often, the month ends and so does the institutional support.

That lack of continuity is not just disappointing; it is damaging. Access to resources, institutional knowledge, decision-making pathways and consistent relationships with those in power are not issues that can be solved in four weeks. When institutional support is time-limited, Black students’ needs become easier to ignore, and the same barriers return year after year.

This is not a problem unique to one campus. Across the nation, Black undergraduate students face the same structural challenges and the same cycle of temporary attention. That is why the PASA joined the Black Undergraduate Coalition (BUC). The BUC is a national, student-led network bringing together BSO’s and equivalent organizations to strengthen leadership, share resources and coordinate advocacy across institutions. Where campuses often treat these issues as

isolated, the BUC treats them as connected, because they are.

This March, PASA will join 350 students representing a nationwide coalition of over 30 BSOs at the Convergence Convention, hosted at the Kaneef Centre, University of Toronto Mississauga campus. Organized by the BUC, Convergence is a national gathering designed to move beyond conversation and toward coordinated action. It is a space where student leaders build relationships across campuses, exchange strategies that work and shape national discourse so progress does not depend on the changing priorities of university administrations.

Last year’s inaugural Convergence brought together more than 120 Black student leaders from 13 universities across Ontario to tackle these issues directly. Students participated in high-impact discussions and received practical guidance on advocacy, leadership and building sustainable club operations. One of the featured speakers was Nicholas Marcus Thompson, President and CEO of the Black Class Action Secretariat (BCAS), a litigation and advocacy organization addressing systemic discrimination within the Canadian government. He emphasized the importance of Black students leading their own change.

“Black students organizing across Canada to challenge the negative outcomes they face is historic. BCAS is working alongside this effort, because better classrooms must lead to better workplaces, and ultimately to a stronger Canada,” said Nicholas.

This year, PASA is proud to be part of the biggest growing national movement of Black undergraduate students, ensuring that the concerns and experiences of Black students here at USask are represented at a nationwide scale. Historically, compared to BSOs in Ontario, efforts made tend to be in isolation. However, now, joining the BUC

means we are not alone. It means our campus advocacy is strengthened by shared tools, knowledge and standards for what Black students should be able to expect from their institutions. It also means our university’s commitments, including those made under the Scarborough Charter, cannot remain symbolic.

The Scarborough Charter, formally known as the Scarborough Charter on Anti-Black Racism and Black Inclusion in Canadian Higher Education, is a national framework that the University of Saskatchewan and more than 50 postsecondary institutions across Canada have signed. Launched in 2021 by Universities Canada, the Charter outlines guiding principles and action areas that institutions have committed to in order to address anti-Black racism in teaching, research, student support and campus culture. By signing the Scarborough Charter, universities have publicly acknowledged that anti-Black racism is truly embedded within higher education systems and requires intentional and long-term strategies to dismantle it. The Charter has already made huge strides in data collection, transparent reporting and community consultation, helping to sustain more than just one-off programming. But in truth, signing the Charter is only the beginning. It is now time for clear timelines, measurable outcomes and mechanisms for accountability that student groups like the PASA can rely on.

Black History Month can’t be the only time Black progress and excellence are acknowledged, and it cannot be the only time institutions show up. Black students are organizing year-round because our lives, our education and our futures do not pause on March 1. Across the country, Black student leaders are building networks that outlast any one event and any one administration.

We move further and faster when we move together.



Nicholas Marcus Thompson addresses Black undergraduate students at Convergence 2025 | King-David Olajuwon

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7 Nights of History Lecture Series: Bringing History into the Community

A look into the Department of History’s “7 Nights” Series, with interviews from faculty members Jim Clifford and Hannah Wood

Colton Danneberg

The 7 Nights of History lecture series is put on by the Department of History each month that features faculty and PhD student speakers. A theme is chosen each year by the organizers, and this year’s theme is “7 Terrible Leaders in History.”

This year’s organizer is Jim Clifford, an Associate Professor in the Department of History. Clifford explains that “the audience is normally a mix of people from the community and people from the university ... it’s a way for faculty to create an opportunity to connect with the public here in Saskatoon.”

The talks are hosted at Better Brother Brewing, and Clifford says that “these events are not just an undergraduate lecture, so the goal is to make it engaging and interesting for the audience. It’s also just in a fun location. They have the best root beer in town ... so it’s a fun way to connect with faculty at the university in a very different setting than watching us at the front of a big lecture room.”

Clifford says that “the basic goal [is] being out there in the community, making those kinds of connections and sharing history. All of us in the department believe that history matters and that we can learn from the past, and that the past helps us think about the present and where we might want to go into the future. And so we do that through a variety of ways ... a lot of us are involved in community engaged research, where we work directly with community organizations. But this is just another way to go out into the community, and in this case, in a more social and fun way, share some ideas.”

“[The talks] are going to still be different from a purely commercial YouTube history channel,” he continues. “It still is university professors. We’re going to have some kind of a thesis and an idea that we want to convey. We’re just going to try and do it in an engaging way, but hopefully people who come do leave thinking about the world in a slightly different way.”

Hannah Wood, a faculty member in the Department of History, is delivering a talk on Jan. 28 entitled “King John, the First and Only: How to Lose Friends and Alienate People.” Wood is a historian of late medieval England, from about the 14th to the 16th centuries. She explains that “as a late English medievalist, I get to talk about one of the more infamous of the English kings, who is known to have this very deserved bad reputation.”

Wood says that when choosing the topic for her lecture, King John was the first person who came to mind. “People are



King John of England is depicted in a medieval illustration | History Today

aware of King John, especially if they’ve ever engaged with some of the popular media around him, like Robin Hood ... So if you’ve ever watched anything that’s medieval themed, you might know of him. And like I said, he has this really bad reputation. Some of the leaders we’ve talked about [in the lecture series] aren’t so terrible when we parse what they did, but he’s pretty bad. There’s a lot of king Henrys, there’s a lot of Edwards, [but] there’s only one King John. And there’s a reason that there’s only one King John.”

Wood’s talk will feature how King John’s story eventually led to the creation of the Magna Carta, which “came out of a major prolonged dispute between King John and his barons.”

“But there’s also some interesting things about John that just make him quite unlikable. He tended to hit on the wives of his nobles, which wasn’t a popular move. He married a very young girl — and even in the Middle Ages, where we tend to think of younger marriages as more de facto, they weren’t really to that extent, and so people were grossed out by the fact that he married this very young girl ... he [also] screwed over his closest ally, one of his best friends, alienated his brother ... he made a mess of things.”

“It’s always fun to craft a narrative and have a bit of story time, but we always want to think a little bit about the political factors at the time. What was the religious and political environment that he was operating within? Why did he feel pushed or compelled to make these certain decisions? So it’s not all a question of a

bad personality. It is a lot of bad decisions that were, in some ways, the result of tricky political circumstances. [So] I definitely want to take what people know about John and give him that background information as to what made him into this kind of king in the first place.”

When asked about the community aspect of the lecture series, Wood says, “I think academia is trying to reinvent itself so that it’s not viewed as this ivory tower or insular practice, especially now that subjects like history and English literature are under threat at a lot of universities. It’s a boon to us to be able to communicate to the public why these things matter and to incite interest in these particular subjects.”

“I think moving it outside of a university and bringing it into the public so that it doesn’t feel so stuffy [and] inaccessible [also] invites a lot of people to come and participate and listen who might feel like they’ve been aged out of the university environment, or they’re not undergrads. The really cool thing about being at a chill brewery [is that] people come from all different areas, with different interests, even if they just have a marginal interest in history or if they’re really big history buffs, it’s a fun environment, and it’s a welcoming environment for them.”

“It’s [also] a reciprocal thing. It allows us to reach the public, get them excited about history, prove why the humanities and the social sciences are so important, while also giving back and allowing people who might feel cut off from the university environment a taste of the sort of things that we do here.”

Wood also says that the talks feature a lot of variety. “You hear about everything from colonial Latin America to modern Saskatchewan to queer rights and struggles. And then there’s me with the medieval stuff. So there’s something for everyone.”

When asked about what she hopes people take away from her talk, Wood says that “I would want people to take away the fact that history isn’t necessarily dry and boring and static. Something we really try to teach is that you can’t access history through one textbook. It’s not a set-in-stone sort of thing, and it’s so subject to interpretation. It is the construction of human beings looking back and taking their own ideas about what happened. This is my idea about one particular leader, but someone else might look at the sort of things he did and have more sympathy ... And so I think the discussions after are really helpful in that sense, because we do get that pushback and we can get those sorts of questions. I want people to understand that history is really an interactive process. It doesn’t have to be a cut-and-dry, boring narrative. It’s lively and open to interpretation, and even if you’re not a historian, you’re still able to ask questions and point out loose ends.”

Dr. Wood’s talk will be hosted at 6:30 p.m. on Jan. 28 at Better Brother Brewing Tap Room, at 536 2nd Avenue North #150. Students interested in learning more about future events are encouraged to visit the Department of History’s page under the Arts & Science tab.

Huskies at the FIFA Futsal World Cup: ‘Believe in

Huskie coach Jerson Barandica-Hamilton and alumna Jade Houmphanh share their experience at

Nammi Nguyen

Last December, Canada competed in the first-ever FIFA Women’s Futsal World Cup in the Philippines. The roster included three Huskie Women’s Soccer alumni — Jade Houmphanh, Erica Hindmarsh and Jadyne Steinhauer — along with Huskie women’s soccer head coach Jerson Barandica-Hamilton.

The Sheaf spoke with Houmphanh, a recent College of Nursing graduate who wrapped up her Huskie career last spring, and with Barandica-Hamilton about their journey to this historic event.

Barandica-Hamilton grew up playing futsal on the streets of his hometown, Isla Mujeres, Mexico.

For those unfamiliar, futsal is a fast-paced, five-a-side version of soccer played on a hard court that emphasizes technical skill, quick passing and creativity.

“I would play every day at school, recess, unstructured, and then a lot of times after school ... we would play [for] hours and hours, and I learned to love the game from playing.”

When he took the helm of the Huskie Women’s Soccer team, he saw an opportunity to implement the sport into their training.

“The weather, accessibility to facilities and the style of play that I wanted to implement suited what we wanted to do. So we started to incorporate it with our university program as an extension of the winter phase.”

Houmphanh remembers being introduced to futsal by Barandica-Hamilton when she was 13.

“I remember vividly [that] it was outside at the Education tennis courts. We played a couple of games, and I really liked it. It suited my playing style, and it was a lot of fun dribbling and scoring goals.”

Over the past decade, futsal has surged in Saskatchewan, culminating in back-to-back national titles for women’s teams heavily composed of current and past Huskies. Houmphanh played on both championship squads — Saskatoon Green & White in 2024 and SK Impact in 2025 — earning tournament MVP both years. This success is especially notable given the presence of provinces like Quebec and Ontario, which have far more established futsal leagues.

In early 2025, Barandica-Hamilton received the call to join the first-ever Canadian Women’s Futsal Team’s coaching staff. He believes Saskatchewan’s recent futsal success, along with being located in Western



Erica Hindmarsh, Jadyne Steinhauer, Jerson Barandica-Hamilton and Jade Houmphanh (L-R) | Move Photography

Canada, while the rest of the staff from the East, played a key role in his selection.

Alongside scouting players, he served as the team’s lead set-piece specialist — a crucial role in a sport defined by frequent stoppages.

Houmphanh, Hindmarsh and Steinhauer impressed at club nationals and at the first-ever national identification camp, held in Saskatoon. They were later invited to Montreal for additional camps and ultimately earned spots on the team.

Houmphanh recalls the moment she received the good news.

“I had come off my third day shift while I was in nursing school, so I was exhausted ... [the head coach] told me ‘I’m really happy to offer you a spot’ and I thanked him for the opportunity. Then I went upstairs and jumped up and down with my family.”

The team went on to compete at the CONCACAF Championship in Guatemala last May. Entering as unknowns, they stunned tournament favourites the U.S. and

Mexico to win the tournament and qualify for the World Cup. Their group draw, however, was daunting, featuring Spain, Thailand and Colombia — all ranked inside the global top 10.

Canada’s reality was stark — limited funding, players scattered across the country and many balancing full-time work, school or university competition. On top of that, players were expected to follow a rigorous running program and get regular futsal-specific touches on the ball to stay sharp each week. The team also met frequently over video calls to review tactics and film, trying to make up for the lack of centralized training.

However, Barandica-Hamilton didn’t feel too much pressure going into the competition.

“Truth be told, we were the number 74-ranked team in the world in a 10-month project, and we were competing against teams that have been 30 years in the making, so I didn’t feel a lot of pressure or expectations to win other than our own. It was more about representing ourselves the best way possible, establishing a good

reputation for Canada and laying the foundation for future teams.”

Canada ultimately fell 0–2 to Colombia, 3–6 to Thailand and 0–7 to Spain. Still, the competitive performances in their first two matches showed that the team could hold their own on the world stage.

Barandica-Hamilton said the difference came down to details.

“The margins are so small, and you have to be close to perfect in your decision-making and your opportunities if you aspire to win.”

He admits that while their debut laid a strong foundation, Canada still has a long way to go. Still, both he and Houmphanh remain proud of the team’s performance.

“Given the resources we had and the lack of experience at the international level, I think we outperformed what our reality is ... even though we didn’t win, we represented ourselves really well ... It shows that if we truly invest, Canada can go up the ladder quickly,” said Barandica-Hamilton.

Houmphanh adds:

“I was proud of how we stuck as a group. We believed in each other ... Even though it wasn’t the result we wanted, we were at the world stage representing Saskatchewan. Who would have thought girls from Saskatchewan would be on Team Canada and at the World Cup?”

Having people from the same province around her made a big difference, too:

“Seeing those familiar faces definitely helped me when I was doubting myself. We had very honest conversations with each other. Getting [an] outside perspective from someone that you know personally from back home was just super comforting, and then having Jerson on the bench brought me a sense of familiarity that I was able to still rely on him to give me positive, constructive criticism.”

Houmphanh describes the World Cup experience as unforgettable.

“It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. I don’t know if I could ever top that in my soccer or futsal career ... In my mind, I was representing back home — everyone in Sask, the Huskies, my family and friends.”

Barandica-Hamilton adds:

“It’s the pinnacle of sport. The broadcast, the facilities, the logistics — everything is top-notch. But there’s also the routine and daily grind. It’s not a vacation ... It was three weeks of being mentally so detailed, so focused, so sharp in terms of everything



Jerson Barandica-Hamilton | Move Photography

Yourself Long Enough”

the inaugural 2025 FIFA Women’s Futsal World Cup.

because it’s the highest stakes. Once it was done, it was emotionally, physically and mentally draining.”

Although exhausting, he highlights some of his favourite moments.

“The first training session in the World Cup venue was special because I was like, ‘okay, it’s the World Cup, it’s go time.’ All three games were special, singing the anthem, and you’re about to see if what you’ve practiced is going to work in terms of the game.”

Houmphanh echoes the special pre-game feeling:

“You run out one at a time, [there’s] smoke, they announce your name and then you stand with your teammates and sing the national anthem. Seeing the crowd ... I was emotional and trying not to cry.”

However, her favourite moment of the World Cup was her assist against Thailand:

“It was a move that I always do and just the fact that it went in and then celebrating with my team ... the classic hands up, jumping up and down [in a] circle.”

Houmphanh’s parents also travelled to the Philippines to support her.

“Seeing them there, on the big screen, rocking their custom Canada shirts with my name on the back ... my dad seeing me in the Team Canada Jersey playing the world stage, he got to live his dream through me ... they put in a lot of work to help support me in my soccer journey, so it was super rewarding.”

Alongside her family, Houmphanh credits her soccer development — from her early clubs to her Huskie career — for helping her build confidence and lean into her strengths. Being a student-athlete in nursing also shaped her discipline.

The future of Canada’s futsal national team is uncertain, but both believe their participation in the World Cup put Saskatchewan futsal on the map.

“It’s super exciting to see myself and two other incredible female athletes be early trailblazers and show young athletes from here that you can compete for the national team, as long as you have the drive and the commitment and are willing to work. It’s not going to be easy, but it’s definitely doable. I hope we opened the door and showed there is talent in Saskatchewan, and you just have to keep working for it,” said Houmphanh.

Barandica-Hamilton agrees.

“Typically, you don’t see Saskatchewan athletes represent our nation ... We tend to be the forgotten province, the black hole of

opportunities. I’m a big believer that it’s not because of talent — just exposure, opportunity and maybe respect. Having three athletes plus myself be part of the national team, win CONCACAF and go to the World Cup is unheard of. I really hope that it’s inspiring for the up-and-coming players in our province to see that there’s a pathway to achieve this.”

Houmphanh currently works as a maternal services nurse at the Jim Pattison Children’s Hospital and continues to play futsal for the club SK Unity alongside Hindmarsh, Steinhauer and other Huskie alumni.

Barandica-Hamilton remains head coach of the Huskies Women’s Soccer team and simultaneously leads Saskatoon Green & White, a club composed of current Huskies.

Both teams will face off at Provincials next month for a spot at Nationals — a fierce matchup sure to deliver excitement.

Barandica-Hamilton encourages USask students to take an interest in futsal and support the local league as well as the Huskie Women’s Soccer team when they compete again in the fall.

“I think the general fan would love futsal 10 times more than soccer. There’s so much more action. It’s fast-paced, and it’s such an exciting sport ... and come and watch our university team, because you’ll see a lot of the futsal principles implemented in 11v11 games ... We want players that are very dynamic, technical, can play collectively and are very good in transition because futsal teaches a lot of that.”

To anyone chasing a dream, Barandica-Hamilton offers this final advice:

“You just never know when opportunities are going to come to you ... I never thought that there would be a women’s national futsal team. I never thought that we would win CONCACAF and qualify for [the] World Cup, and to do it with three alumni players ... I’ve been so fortunate to live experiences that I never thought would ever be possible, coming from Saskatchewan, this small, little province in the middle of nowhere that no one really gives a lot of respect to ... I always tell our university players: you can control a lot in your life. You’ve just got to be intentional, and you have to believe in yourself long enough.”

Houmphanh and Barandica-Hamilton’s journey to the Futsal World Cup stands as proof of what discipline, community and belief can achieve.

From the Prairies to the world stage, our four Huskies have made Saskatchewan proud!



Jade Houmphanh | Move Photography



Jerson Barandica-Hamilton | Move Photography



Canada at the FIFA Women’s Futsal World Cup in the Philippines | Move Photography

The Protein Apocalypse: Is It Possible We're Overconsuming Capitalism's New Favourite Nutrient?

The rise of protein in our diets, and the other star nutrient we should be focusing on

Laila Haider

If you've gone outside in the last year or two, you'll have noticed that influencers, restaurants, fast food companies and the food industry at large have decided that we now live in the era of protein. From protein shakes, protein bars and cottage cheese, to protein pasta, protein pancakes, protein seasonings, protein popcorn and protein lattes, the fact of the matter is that no matter where you turn, you cannot escape it.

Marketing campaigns, podcasters and influencers alike have convinced the people of the world that they aren't getting enough protein in a similar fashion to the early 2000s, when the world was convinced that any form of fat was a product of the devil.

You would think that the world has fallen into a protein deficit, when it may be, in fact, quite the opposite: Experts at Harvard University's School of Public Health say that we may be eating too much protein.

In previous years, the only people you would find hustling to get their max protein intake were bodybuilders and athletes. It was uncommon to find aisles upon aisles of protein supplemented products like we have today. Now, consumers everywhere are looking for enriched versions of their everyday staples. Experts have noted that, over the last

decade, food companies have increased the amount of high-protein products sold across the world by 400%.

This boom in production hasn't occurred because of some sort of sudden widespread, worldwide protein deficiency, but rather because protein has become something of a cheat code for health, discipline and self-improvement. A higher protein count is marketed as the solution to all of your problems, with the added moral superiority over your peers who still eat the normal stuff. In a world that is becoming increasingly obsessed with gains, protein offers the illusion of control — something measurable, trackable and easy to fix by swapping one product for another.

Social media has also accelerated this shift dramatically. Viral recipes, "what I eat in a day" videos and fitness podcasts reinforce the idea that living your best life means being constantly aware of how many macronutrients you are consuming—or failing to consume. We're witnessing the world once again diminish complex dietary needs into a single, one-size-fits-all metric while ignoring differences in age, activity level, health status and cultural eating patterns. At the same time, we're being encouraged to follow uniform consumption habits that conveniently align with corporate profit motives. The sudden push toward high-protein versions of food is less of a response to gaps in nutrition, but rather a reframing of what people are

already eating, repackaged and sold back to them at a premium.

While it may be convenient to find protein in different forms in every aisle of the store — especially for those on a vegetarian diet or with specific dietary restrictions — consumers should be aware of how minimal many of these "high-protein" upgrades really are. In some cases, the difference between the original product and its protein-washed counterpart is only a few additional grams per serving, which is sometimes barely enough to register in a daily intake that already meets recommended levels. A protein granola bar might have two or three extra grams compared to a regular one, only offering a little more than a spoonful of added protein isolate.

Despite this, the price difference between the products is anything but small. Protein versions of everyday staples are often significantly more expensive for a smaller product. The premium is justified through buzzwords and bold packaging instead of meaningful nutritional change, turning protein — a substantial dietary benefit — into a market surcharge.

To understand how unnecessary many of these upgrades are, we should look at what our bodies actually need. Experts recommend that adult diets contain at least 0.8 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight per day—approximately seven grams for every 20 pounds. For someone who weighs 140 pounds, that means their goal should be around 50 grams of protein per day.

In reality, most people already meet this requirement through ordinary everyday foods, rather than supplements or specialty products. Protein is abundant in meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dairy, legumes, grains and vegetables. For most people, regular, balanced meals already provide more than enough protein to meet their dietary needs, without the help of shakes, bars or fortified snacks.

This isn't to say that protein is unimportant, or that you should avoid high-protein diets entirely. In fact, as far as over-eating any macronutrient goes, protein is probably the best one to choose. It increases muscle mass, improves bone density, boosts metabolism and plays a crucial role in supporting the functioning of your cells, organs and tissues. If you want your body to function properly, you need protein.

High-protein diets are great for individuals who take part in strength training or other high-intensity sports, or for individuals trying to lose weight. Protein helps your muscles grow and rebuild, and increases satiety.

According to several studies, high-protein diets can reduce the levels of ghrelin, also known as the "hunger" hormone, produced by endocrine cells in your stomach. Reduced levels of ghrelin mean that your body won't send as many hunger signals to your brain. Furthermore, emerging research proposes that high-protein diets can also increase the amount of leptin your body produces, decreasing your appetite and increasing your energy expenditure, which is great when you're trying to lose weight. In short, protein keeps you full longer.

That being said, it should be noted that there are consequences to consuming far more protein than you should. Like anything else, macronutrients should be kept in moderation. High-protein diets are typically healthy, however restrictive versions — such as the carnivore diet, where one cuts out all carbs in favour of protein — can cause constipation, bad breath and increase risk of heart disease, kidney stones and osteoporosis.

While high-protein diets are unlikely to lead to serious health concerns, it's still important to be aware of where your protein is coming from. Protein sourced from animals can be worse for your health than plant proteins when eaten in excess or exclusively, due to the amount of saturated fat and cholesterol it contains. Plant proteins, alternatively, are healthier, offering more unsaturated fats, antioxidants and fibre, an often overlooked nutrient that is just as important as protein for maintaining long-term health. However, it is important to note that plant proteins are less "complete" proteins, since most don't have all of the amino acids we need, while animal proteins do. Eating plant proteins exclusively would make it more difficult to get a proper protein intake. So, be sure to eat both plant and animal proteins in a balanced diet, your body will thank you in the long run.

Although protein is currently dominating our lives, it isn't the only nutrient that matters — and it definitely isn't the one we're lacking most. While we focus on how to get the max amount of protein into our daily food intake, and how to make it taste good, a far more basic nutrient is missing from many people's diets altogether. Fibre, found primarily in plant foods like fruit, vegetables and legumes, rarely gets the same attention, despite the critical role it plays in our long-term health.

Fibre supports digestion, stabilizes blood sugar and can even reduce the risk of chronic heart disease and type 2 diabetes, yet it rarely gets any attention. In fact, it's almost worryingly overlooked.

Continued on page 20.



Going Analogue: Gen Z’s Return to Physical Media

In the last few years, the cultural craving for physical media has been insatiable. Why is the first generation to grow up with technology now rejecting it?

Hannah Ha

The iPhone 17 just dropped, AI is running rampant, Spotify thinks I’m 74 and Elon Musk owns space. In the most technically advanced age, young people are trading it in: swapping high-resolution iPhone cameras for digital and film cameras and swapping music apps for vinyl and CDs.

Rather than holograms and flying cars in 2025, young people are rediscovering vintage photo booths, paperback books and wired earbuds. Seemingly, Gen Z is rejecting modernity rather than thirsting for technological advancement the same way millennials did.

Much of this can be explained simply by consumption habits and trends. Perhaps consumers want to display vinyls as trophies, perhaps digicams are just a Y2K trend.

But is it just nostalgia, or does it signal the failings of modernity?

The Y2K tech revolution seemed limitless at one point, promising access and convenience on the virtual landscape to eliminate the physical media that “burdened” us. At one point, technology sold cutting-edge, convenient solutions. Take the iPod: a portable digital music player that eliminates the inconvenience and cost of buying separate CDs or cassettes, replacing CD players and Walkmans. Flash forward to today, it has been consolidated into a music app on everyone’s mobile devices, with a monthly subscription.

This convenience, by way of technological advancements, has been undeniable, but it begs the question: Do we truly own anything? Buying a \$10 CD along with a \$30 CD player guarantees ownership and access to an album forever. But as soon as the monthly payments to Spotify stop, consumers lose access to their media, no matter how many monthly installments have been paid.

Instagram has also become our digital scrapbooks, with young people even making secondary “finsta” accounts to share more intimate moments with a small circle of friends. Each moment is carefully curated, much like a physical photo album, allowing us a place to share and immortalize moments for free. Taking a walk down memory lane now looks like flipping through Instagram highlights and scrolling through a photo dump.

Your phone also likely houses dozens of gigabytes of photos, voice memos and notes — we seldom realize the sheer amount of digital storage we take up until we need to switch it over to a new phone.

Every bit of media that should be our own

can only be accessed through another app and tech company. If you threw your phone in the river and forgot the digital landscape, could you still access any of those moments yourself? The truth is that if the internet died tomorrow, most of us would have nothing to show for the media that we have amassed over the years.

At the mercy of tech companies, consumers volunteer their data to be

and videos backed up, otherwise lose all the dozens of gigabytes of storage over the years.

This reversion to physical media is likely born out of a desire to be able to have something to show for our interests and hobbies, a cure or cope for this subscription fatigue. Gen Z is likely realizing the instability and uncertainty that these apps have to offer, and making the

Despite these inconveniences, more and more consumers are becoming reliant on streaming platforms. It’s no coincidence that box office attendance has dwindled in the last few years. Uniquely, the younger generation is still making it out to the box office.

In 2024, a survey by Telefilm Canada and the Movie Theatre Association of Canada found that 84 per cent of Canadian moviegoers were under the age of 35. The same survey saw a 19 per cent drop in Canadian moviegoers as a whole since 2019, but a majority of that drop was among those above 65. Clearly, the streaming experience is not going to cut it anymore for Gen Z. There is maybe a novelty in the uninterrupted experience that was promised: pay for the product, get the service. No finicks, no ads, no silly business.

The irony of it all is that Gen Z is not making any radical swaps and seems to be cherry-picking what technology to keep. It goes without saying that social media and digital technology have become so integrated into our daily lives that it would be nearly impossible to eliminate our reliance on them. It is unlikely that any young person would be able to get rid of their phone and go completely “analogue”. Unfortunately, the world has been designed around the ease and accessibility of technology in a way that is hard to take back.

We are moving in a direction that forces consumers to rely on tech companies, with little assurance that they will not, at any moment, change their business practices to leech out a couple more dollars.

The convenience that technology once promised has now fallen by the wayside. With the knowledge that consumers rely on their apps and services, companies can begin to implement predatory subscription plans or flood the app with advertisements, knowing that there is little choice but to stay.

Gen Z is getting film photos developed the old-fashioned way, while simultaneously using AI to make their flashcards for their organic chemistry final. Clearly, Gen Z is not rejecting technology because it is obsolete. If anything, young people are clearly signalling that they have become more reliant on it than ever. But opting for analogue forms of media consumption speaks to a frustration with technology, a small protest to take back what is rightfully ours.

In small ways, Gen Z is taking the best of technology while attempting to discard the cluttered digital mess that technology has become. In this analogue endeavour, the generation of technology attempts to reach equilibrium, one digicam photo at a time.



Polaroid friends photo collage | Nassy Art | Canva Pro

safeguarded. For the sake of convenience, many of us begin relying on these free apps and their data banks to keep our photos and videos safe and stored.

Snapchat similarly allowed consumers to store years’ worth of Snap “Memories”, conveniently stored off the cloud, with unlimited storage, free of cost. That is, until 2025, when the app began rolling out a monthly subscription if consumers wanted to keep Snapchat memories exceeding five gigabytes of storage. Pay a monthly subscription to keep your photos

switch to something they can hold in their hands.

On top of this subscription fatigue faced by consumers, everything is an ad. We can watch movies and make mood boards on our phones — with the stipulation that our phones have become a billboard. With consumer needs being consolidated to free apps, they pay for convenience and accessibility by sitting through unskippable ads back-to-back. Even paid streaming services have subscription “tiers”, which include a basic “Paid, with Ads” option.

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A Conversation with the Ukulele Guy

The conversations he’s had while playing have integrated him deeper into the USask community.

“I’ve made a couple of friends, and I’ve even gotten onto some Campus Rec teams. I’m quite happy for whatever adventure is going to be opened up by a random conversation ... So the student clubs, and knowing what people are up to and learning something about a different college that I’ve not really had much exposure to — all of that is well within the scope of the types of conversations I’ve had. There was a fellow who came up with his guitar one day, and we had a jam session.”

Gerard doesn’t see playing the ukulele in public leaving his life anytime soon.

“This is a strongly enough ingrained pattern at this point that I very much assume that I will be doing it for the foreseeable future. Unless I can get a different outlet creatively, then, yes, I will continue doing so as long as I can, and I will do it wherever I end up in the world.”

There is also a relation between Gerard’s studies and his ukulele playing.

“There’s a direct and indirect reason why the ukulele and philosophy are intertwined. The direct reason is that I was going a little stir crazy spending a lot of time on my own, which is normal and good ... [but] the mental reset [from playing the ukulele] was very valuable ... and number two, the indirect reason, is that the philosophy itself is more or less about taking charge of what your decisions are.”

Outside of academics and music, exercise has been another anchor in Gerard’s life. He loves trying all kinds of sports and is heavily involved in Campus Rec. Running has also been a reprieve for him:

“When I lived with my parents outside of town, I used to run in and out of school every day, over 10 kilometres ... there’s a Latin phrase, *mens sana in corpore sano*: sound mind, sound body. I realized that my thinking patterns were quite strongly affected by specifically the pandemic, where all the social activities and sports were shut down. And then retroactively, when I erased my calendar, I realized, ‘Oh, wow, I’ve done very little in terms of physical activity.’ And the phenomenon where you read and reread the same sentence over and over again without really absorbing it started happening to me ... So let’s try to build back in some physical activity to essentially reorient myself, to be able to sit for long periods of time and read uninterrupted.”

Gerard’s running ability dates back to his time as a Huskie on the Cross Country team, competing for four years from 2008 to 2012 before beginning his master’s degree. He still has a year of eligibility left, but doubts he’ll be able to get back into the

same shape as he was during his prime.

That desire for intentional living extends beyond music and exercise, including his choice to use a flip phone and avoid social media. He shares several reasons for this.

His first reason is practical:

“The accountability is much, much more direct to me, where if something is connected to real life, like for instance: I said I would be here. If I’m not here, that’s on me. That’s my word.”

His second reason is tied to reading:

“It makes me feel more connected to the authors that I’m reading who lived and thought and articulated their ideas in a time well before the internet was even conceived of.”

He also points to the social dynamics he witnessed growing up:

“A bit of a storm was kicked up on this pseudo-society online, where by the time a weekend had elapsed, two very good friends had been convinced by other people, essentially, that they were no longer supposed to be friends ... I thought, ‘this is a disconnect from what really happened,’ and if someone doesn’t say something directly to you, I don’t know what the circumstances are under which they said it. So in that sense, it needs to be nuanced in person, or it needs to be reified.”

And finally, he admits the final reason with a kind of self-awareness:

“One last very important reason is that I fear the internet greatly because my obsessive mindset does not really lend itself well to even searching Wikipedia without being distracted.”

He insightfully adds: “The reality of our biology, the reality of our socialization, the reality of our upbringings [is that] we’re not raised by the internet. The internet is the thing that we’ve created, and the digital world is maybe very well realized, but only a facsimile of the world in which our attitudes and instincts and proclivities are best encapsulated.”

Gerard’s curiosity and sense of exploration have also extended into his studies.

His academic path throughout university has been anything but linear. He switched majors half a dozen times, sharing that he’d find an excellent professor and be drawn by their enthusiasm towards their specialty, but then realized that he had to find what he really wanted. He eventually finished his undergraduate degree in French Studies and then, following the recommendation of several professors, pursued a master’s degree.

This degree carried personal significance,

inspired by his grandmother.

“My grandmother was working in French literature, and she was doing her master’s when she got pregnant with my aunt and uncle. She became a homemaker after that and never quite finished ... So in her honour, I sort of said, ‘yeah, there’s this author that she was working on that I’d really like to explore.’ And the more I read of him, the more interested I was in this existentialist mindset [of] Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, who wrote *The Little Prince* ... I have no idea if this is exactly what she would have wanted to do, but the master’s was extraordinarily satisfying to be able to bring that to my aunts and uncles and parents and say, ‘this is sort of a full circle moment for her.’”



Stéphane Gerard's ukulele leaning against the wall and Stéphane in action | Cheyenne Lehmann

Gerard is now working on his doctorate and says he’ll be at USask for at least another two years. He is also bouncing back and forth between Saskatoon and Paris as he is in a combined degree program with Sorbonne University.

“I would very much hope to be in a position to try for a professorship. That would be grand if I can stay associated with academia in any way. I’ve been very, very happy here. The University of Saskatchewan has brought me many things, and if I can sort of contribute to its reputation as an educator, then I will keep walking through those doors if they remain open to me.”

To end our conversation, Gerard returned to the idea that had quietly threaded through our entire conversation: connection.

“And once again, this is the philosophical tie into the ukulele: There’s a chance at connection if you put yourself out there. You take a risk to do so, of course, but if you don’t take that risk, there’s a real threat that you go through life without ever connecting with anyone ... That sensation of thinking that there’s someone on your side, that there’s someone [alongside] whom you can stare out into the void — it’s a very lonely existence if you don’t

Continued from the front cover.

have that feeling and [a] sense of connection to other people, [a] sense of solidarity with other people, the sense of hope that’s granted by others when you’re in very dire circumstances. Sometimes the world can be a bitter and cruel place, and if you don’t have the sense that other people could stand a chance of pulling you out of it — if you don’t put yourself out there to try to pull other people out of whatever that might be on their behalf, it’s very difficult to find a reason not to check out.”

Gerard’s words made me reflect on my own encounter with him.

Being curious enough to take the steps to reach out and ask questions led me to one of the most insightful conversations I’ve



ever had, and a chance at a connection with a new friend.

Ironically, I had never actually heard Gerard play in person before this interview; I’d only heard of him. Maybe that made me more curious, but now I know where and when I can find him!

A lot can be said about the importance of human connection and the unfortunate lack thereof nowadays. Gerard’s philosophy of life is something we can all take from, and speaking to him, it was clear how deeply he believes in what he says, and how intentionally he lives by it.

His music isn’t a performance so much as an invitation to pause and feel less alone for a moment. And in a place where thousands of students cross paths without ever meeting, that kind of presence is its own form of connection. The ukulele may be a simple instrument, but the community Gerard has created is anything but small.

So next time you see the Ukulele Guy — or Stéphane Gerard, as we know now — make sure to give him a smile or wave. Maybe even start a conversation or join in for a song!

Merci pour tout, Stéphane!

Diapers, Deadlines and Degrees

Parent students face unique barriers at the USask.

Emily Mainprize

University life is demanding for any student. Long days in class, late nights studying and juggling work alongside academic responsibilities are common. But for students who are also parents, the university experience often involves a far more intricate balancing act, where diapers, daycare pickups and family responsibilities intersect with essays, exams and deadlines.

At USask, student-parents form a meaningful yet often under-recognized community within campus life. From financial stress and childcare challenges to social isolation and mental health pressures, the struggles they face are multifaceted and deeply personal. Despite growing awareness and support initiatives, many student-parents still navigate systemic gaps and day-to-day obstacles on their path to graduation.

While precise numbers are difficult to quantify, an internal estimate from USask suggested that around 10 per cent of the student body are parents, a significant portion that cannot be ignored when planning services and support.

For many student-parents, especially single parents and those without local family support, university life can feel isolating. In interviews conducted on the experiences of student parents at universities across Canada, a recurring theme is a lack of belonging. Parents frequently describe feeling different from their peers and struggling to connect with students whose lives don't include caregiving responsibilities.

Time management is consistently cited as a primary struggle for student-parents. Balancing course schedules, study time, assignments, work and childcare leads to chronic time pressure. According to the Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health (CICMH), this competing demand for limited hours is one of the core stressors for parents juggling academics and family life on top of financial stress, commutes, difficulties finding a community on campus, stigma, structural barriers and an intense lack of resources tailored to student-parents.

Unlike typical students, student-parents cannot easily devote uninterrupted evenings or weekends to studying; those hours are often filled with parenting tasks. When children fall sick or daycare availability is inconsistent, parents are forced to adjust their academic commitments, sometimes at the cost of their own participation in class or study groups.

Childcare, both availability and affordability, remains one of the most significant barriers for student-parents across Canada and at USask. Research into parent-students nationwide highlights the limited access to affordable, flexible childcare as a common reason students delay enrolment or even drop out.

While there is the USSU childcare center, the fees can still be extremely high, which many student-parents are unable to afford on top of their rent and tuition. This often causes parents to take their children to other daycares or to spend their days with a family member. This, however, means that these student parents must spend their time

driving to different areas of the city, which is time-consuming and often expensive when considering the costs of gas.

While USask centres do prioritize students, they often operate at market rates and provincial subsidies, while helpful, do not always cover all fees. Parents who work part-time or have limited income may still struggle to afford full-time care. The reality of daily expenses of childcare, food, rent, transportation and textbooks adds another layer of financial stress on top of academic costs.

In response to this need, some community-driven financial support initiatives have emerged. In 2023, USask PhD student Kate Loseth founded the Single Parents for Social Change Bursary, designed specifically to assist single parents enrolled at USask with some of the financial burdens associated with their education.

While such bursaries bring welcome relief for individual students, they also highlight the gaps in systemic support, that specialized funds are often needed simply to keep student-parents enrolled.

For student-parents, traditional academic structures of rigid class times, inflexible attendance policies and limited remote learning options can pose serious challenges. The CICMH notes that structural barriers, such as fixed course schedules and a lack of alternative learning formats, disproportionately impact those with caregiving obligations.

When children fall sick or daycare arrangements fall through, parents may have no choice but to miss classes or vital

lectures. Many rely on professors' goodwill for accommodations, which are not always consistent across departments.

Beyond logistical barriers, many student-parents report feeling isolated on campus. Events, clubs and extracurricular activities are essential parts of the typical student experience and often occur at times that are not feasible for parents to attend. This limits opportunities for connection and reinforces a sense of separation from the broader student body.

Campus groups aim to bridge this gap. Parents on Campus fosters community among student and staff parents through networking events, study sessions with childcare provided, family fun days and swap meets.

For Indigenous student-parents, the Gordon Oakes Red Bear Students Centre Parent Circle offers programming focused on family health and shared meals, enhancing a sense of community among peers with shared lived experiences. At the moment, this is on hold, but will hopefully be open again to parents in the future.

Student-parents face elevated mental health risks due to chronic stress, fragmented sleep and ongoing role strain with the pressure of fulfilling both academic and caregiving roles without adequate support. Research notes that these stresses can lead to anxiety, depression and burnout, particularly for new parents adjusting to academic life.

USask provides general mental health and crisis support through services like Student Affairs and Outreach, which is a team of registered social workers offering immediate support, crisis response and counselling.

However, while these services are valuable, student-parents often require tailored resources that specifically address the dual stressors of academic demands and parenting responsibilities.

The struggles faced by student-parents at USask reflect trends seen across post-secondary institutions in Canada and beyond. Across multiple studies and campus experiences, student parents consistently identify barriers rooted in time scarcity, financial strain, childcare limitations, social isolation, stigma and structural inflexibility.

By expanding support and integrating child-family considerations into campus planning, USask can continue to foster an environment where educational pursuits and family life are not mutually exclusive, but part of a holistic approach to student success.



Single parent | miodrag ignjatoviv Getty Images Signature | Canva Pro

Still Watching? Netflix and The Bleak Future of Entertainment

With Netflix set to acquire Warner Bros., how does this bode for television and movies?

Hannah Ha

The cinema and TV landscape has changed drastically in the last few years. Streaming has dominated most households, with one if not multiple monthly subscriptions to services like Netflix and Disney+. Streaming has replaced many traditional forms of entertainment, phasing out audiences from cable television and movie theatres.

More sweeping changes are imminent for the industry. Netflix is now in the final stages of an acquisition deal with Warner Bros., which would mean Netflix acquiring all HBO and HBO Max franchises. The studio has agreed to buy the studio and its assets for USD\$83 billion.

Netflix’s M.O.
Netflix’s business model was built to substitute mainstream forms of media, aiming to replace Blockbuster, movie theatres and cable all at once by offering an all-in-one solution. They have streamlined the viewing experience, positioning themselves as the one-stop shop for all your viewing needs.

Incidentally, there exists an annual downward trend in households having cable TV. According to Convergence Research’s annual “Couch Potato” Report, an estimated 46 per cent of Canadian households did not have a television subscription with a cable, satellite or telecom-based provider at the end of 2024, and that number is expected to rise to 54 per cent in 2027.

Networks have followed suit with this streaming model and moved a lot of their funding and attention toward their on-demand content, competing with each other in price, access and original shows.

Netflix announced to investors in December: “Beloved franchises, shows and movies such as *The Big Bang Theory*, *The Sopranos*, *Game of Thrones*, *The Wizard of Oz* and the DC Universe will join Netflix’s extensive portfolio including *Wednesday*, *Money Heist*, *Bridgerton*, *Adolescence* and *Extraction*, creating an extraordinary entertainment offering for audiences worldwide.”

Paramount has placed and lost counterbids to block this move, recognizing how this acquisition has the ability to substantially impact cinema and TV.

The Binge Model
The streaming world birthed a new television model: eight episodes, 90 minutes each, all released at once. Introducing this binge model to television meant that entire seasons were now released and consumed in one sitting. Limited series like “The Queen’s Gambit”



Clapboard | Stokpic from Pixabay | Canva Pro

(2020) benefit greatly from this format, operating more like an eight-hour movie, which would never exist with traditional TV.

This format can also be uniquely limiting. Viewership would be limited to audiences already willing to pay for a subscription, despite the hope that these shows will bring in new subscribers to the service; many original shows go under the radar and have little chance for renewal.

This binge model has changed the writing process of TV shows. TV arcs would historically be developed as the show aired weekly, spanning 30 episodes and weighing audience reactions. Episodes dropped all at once means that their staying power and cultural impact are diminished. Shows do not stay in the topic of conversation for long, as audiences are watching the show within one weekend, dissecting the entire plot in detail in video essays until a new show comes.

Recall that 2025 saw the release of Season 3 of *Squid Game* and Season 5 of *You*, both being Netflix’s biggest titles with hundreds of millions of views. Within a few short months, the culture has already moved on. With this binge model, even if a TV show is able to gain a large viewership, it burns hot but goes out fast.

Creatives behind the shows are not encouraged to create a quality viewing experience, either. Netflix executives have admitted to catering the viewing experience for “second screen viewing”. Essentially, the streaming service creates shows with the assumption that audiences are likely viewing their shows with a phone in their hand and divided attention. The streaming service labels certain shows as “second-screen shows”, where writers

are given the note to make dialogue more “second-screen” friendly; in other words, “tell, don’t show”.

This might explain the increased expository language in the newly released season of *Stranger Things*, which had viewers criticizing it as having “overexpository” dialogue, that seemingly had characters overexplaining plot points to the viewers. Out of fear that their audiences will get lost in complicated plots and allusive dialogue, Netflix seems to be willing to sacrifice quality for digestible content.

Compensating Creatives
Creatives are, in fact, actively discouraged in the process. For decades, cable television operated on a residuals system that was relatively simple and equitable by industry standards. When an episode aired for the first time, actors and writers were paid an initial fee. Networks owed payments to cast, writers and crewmembers for every subsequent rerun, whether on cable, in syndication or through international licensing.

Because cable networks relied on advertising revenue tied to ratings, audience size mattered. The more a show was watched and rebroadcast, the more its creators earned. Residuals functioned as a consistent wage, allowing successful series to provide steady, long-term income and making it possible for working creatives, including those behind the camera, to build sustainable careers.

Netflix and other streaming platforms dismantled that model. Streaming shows do not “rerun” in the traditional sense, but instead live in on-demand libraries. Rather than paying residuals based on viewership or frequency of use, Netflix uses formulas

that account for subscriber counts and overall platform size. These payments are largely disconnected from the actual audience engagement of the show itself. Viewership data is kept private, meaning creators cannot verify a show’s success or benefit proportionally from it. A hit series that attracts millions of viewers may generate only modest residuals, while payments decline sharply over time regardless of continued popularity.

Movie Theatre Apathy
Movies are not safe either. Cinema is quickly changing, especially in light of this new acquisition. Movie theatre attendance is dwindling by the year. According to a study done by the Movie Theatre Association of Canada, Canadians purchased an average of 1.6 movie tickets in 2024, down 46 per cent from 2019. The study found that 62 per cent of Canadians saw a movie in theatres. However, much of that number is concentrated in the top 12 per cent of viewers who watched more than 10 movies in theatres. The average audience member is not leaving their house to go to the theatres, and likely waiting instead for movies to go to streaming.

Directors themselves are aware of this shift. Since 2020, theatrical windows have been shrinking. Most wide releases spend an industry average of 37 days in theatres in 2023.

Most major studios like Sony and even A24 have deals with large streaming platforms, waiting approximately 4 months before putting them on streaming. Warner Bros. has historically pushed its titles to its streaming service, HBO Max, the quickest among all major studios, at an average of only 76 days.

Continued on page 20.

A Career Carved into Hollywood: Emma Stone’s evolution from comedic relief to cultural icon

She was like a shot of espresso – an expert on waking audiences up.



Superbad movie poster | Columbia Pictures

Laila Haider

Emma Stone’s career is somewhat of a marvel. The two-time Oscar-winning actress and producer has had a prolific and incredibly successful career, both commercially and critically. She’s shown the world time and time again exactly what it means to have range as a performer, portraying anything from a bubbly young cavewoman to an intimidating, calculating CEO.

Stone started out as a supporting actress in movies like *Superbad*, *The House Bunny* and *Easy A*, where her expressions, comedic timing and effortless delivery made her a standout performer. She became a major player to watch later in her career, when she came into more substantial roles in films such as *The Help*, *The Amazing Spider-Man 1* and *2* and *Crazy, Stupid, Love*.

After establishing herself as a supporting actress, co-starring in several critically acclaimed films and making her Broadway

debut as Sally Knowles in *Cabaret*, Stone began to move further into the world of prestige films. Following her run in *Cabaret*, Stone was cast in *La La Land*, earning her an Oscar, a Golden Globe, a SAG award and a BAFTA for Best Actress.

From here, it’s clear that her trajectory was pointed all the way to the top. In 2018, Stone starred in the satirical, absurdist, dark comedy film *The Favourite* — her first collaboration with Greek filmmaker Yorgos Lanthimos. This is the performance that truly set her apart from her contemporaries and proved her ability to breathe life into more complex characters. Her transformation into Abigail Hill found Stone playing an innocent and downtrodden young girl, who eventually charms her way into the aristocracy. Although Stone was back in her comedic wheelhouse, the audience watched her wholly become a cunning, yet vulnerable young woman whose life takes a series of twists and turns that eventually lead her into a life of ultimate opulence and

emptiness — earning her a second Oscar nomination.

Continuing her partnership with Lanthimos in 2022, Stone starred in the short film *Bleat* and the feature film *Poor Things*. Here, Stone once again gave a master class on physical comedy and absolute absurdism, playing a fearless character entirely liberated from the pressures of society. The performance was praised for its oddity and unabashed nature — something Stone has always excelled at. It is for this role that Stone won her second Academy Award and BAFTA for Best Actress.

The latest collaboration between Stone and Lanthimos, *Bugonia*, might not be the most mind-blowing movie to hit the silver screen this past year, but it is by no means their worst work. The movie is vibrant and funny, the way Lanthimos’ dark comedies typically are. It’s a compelling and nuanced film disguised as a much simpler one. While you may go in expecting to know already how it ends, you’ll soon enough be wrapped up in a story twice as complex as it appears.

Bugonia, like much of the duo's work, is compelling and confusing. A remake of the 2003 South Korean film *Save the Green Planet!*, the film follows a pair of cousins — Teddy and Don — who believe the CEO of a pharmaceutical conglomerate is a member of an evil alien species called Andromedans that has been sent to subjugate the people of Earth.

In creating *Bugonia*, Lanthimos and Stone worked together to create a movie that felt strangely more believable than you would expect. In a world filled to the brim with AI, misinformation and constant propaganda, conspiracy theorists that border on murderous are not as uncommon as you would hope.

Starring Stone, Jesse Plemons and Aidan Delbis, the audience is sucked into a story that never quite settles on one tone. Instead, it veers between satire, paranoia and violence as the audience watches the two leads try to out-manuever each other — in a way that’s almost reminiscent of the old comic strip *Spy Vs Spy*.

Stone plays Michelle, the CEO at the center of the plot, whose cool disposition makes her difficult to read. She is the image of a woman in control, her movements precise, her words carefully chosen and her demeanour detached. Plemons plays Teddy, the paranoid conspiracy theorist — and beekeeper — at the helm of Michelle’s abduction. His mother became comatose after participating in a clinical trial for a drug manufactured by Michelle’s company, and

he becomes convinced that there is something much larger at play than anyone else has realized. Teddy convinces his cousin Don — played by Delbis — to help him capture Michelle so they can uncover the Andromedans’ plot and negotiate with their leader to save the human race.

Critics have lauded both Stone and Plemons’ performance in the film, believing the pair to be at the top of their game. Their momentum is electric, equally commanding the audience’s attention like duelling tennis players aiming for a career grand slam. Their dialogue is witty, natural and guides the audience through a series of convoluted ups and downs as they try to figure out the seemingly inevitable plot twist. Stone and Plemons deliver throughout the film, carrying this precarious dynamic with them until the very end.

Unlike Stone’s previous roles in Lanthimos’ work, her performance as Michelle doesn’t rely on her physical comedy. Instead, she relies on her ability to convey emotion in the most controlled way possible — making Michelle the perfect suspect for the cousins’ conspiracy theory. Michelle is impossible to discern, leaving the audience in suspense as they consider the plausibility that she truly is a malignant alien or if she’s just an emotionless corporate shill.

While Stone has shown the world time and time again that she is an adept physical performer, in this role she moves minutely, precisely and clinically. She does nothing to invite the audience’s empathy, giving only enough to keep the audience questioning what they’re seeing. She plays Michelle as an inaccessible symbol of power and wealth. The epitome of what the elite represent to those who are forced to look up to them.

Stone’s performance as Michelle has once again solidified her place amongst the modern greats. She commands respect and demands attention. She lights up the screen and breathes life into even the dullest of moments.

Scientifically, we call on reliability and validity to ensure our conclusions are correct and predict future patterns or outcomes. If we were to claim that Stone is an incredible actress and will one day be amongst the greats, her consistent performances across the span of her career, her accolades and recognition she has earned from her peers, critics and audiences alike would lead us to believe that it is a reasonable conclusion. It would not be a stretch to say that a long and fruitful career awaits Emma Stone, and that she has successfully carved her way into the spotlight.

Bless me, Father, I did not see that coming

How Netflix’s latest Knives Out mystery made me rethink religion

Katherine Walcer

When I pressed play on *Wake Up Dead Man: A Knives Out Mystery* on Netflix, I expected a classic Rian Johnson whodunit with quirky suspects, clever clues, loveable sleuth Benoit Blanc and a murder mystery elegantly untangled. What I didn't expect was how deeply the movie would engage with religion, forgiveness and the human experience, especially through the eyes of a skeptic like me.

Set in a gloomy, atmospheric church in upstate New York, the movie begins with the shocking death of Monsignor Jefferson Wicks, a charismatic yet certainly controversial figure whose fiery style of preaching has polarized his congregation. Everyone has a motive. The locked room setup feels like a classic Agatha Christie puzzle, but the setting, overlaid with stained glass, easter symbolism and spiritual tension, signals that this isn't just another murder mystery.

What elevates *Wake Up Dead Man* beyond puzzle-solving is how it weaves themes of faith and self-reflection into its narrative. As someone who identifies as agnostic, religion has always seemed like a topic best explored in deep, earnest conversations and not in pop culture escapism. Yet here I found myself unexpectedly moved, challenged and open to seeing positive sides of religious beliefs I had rarely considered before.

At the heart of this exploration is Father Jud Duplency, played with gentle intensity by Josh O’Connor. Duplency isn't a stereotypical pious priest; he's a former boxer turned clergyman, sent to serve at Wicks’ church after an impulsive fight with a deacon. He's human in every sense, flawed, unsure, compassionate and sometimes hilariously unprepared for the weight of his vocation.

What struck me most about Duplency was his unshakeable commitment to empathy. Unlike Wicks’ thunderous condemnation, Duplency approaches people with kindness and curiosity. He listens first, judges last. He genuinely wants to understand his parishioners, even when they have done terrible things. This is not the triumphalist religion we often see repackaged in the media; it's a religion of humility. Duplency does not preach fire and brimstone. He preaches forgiveness, presence and grace.

There's a moment in the film that's quiet, almost easy to miss, where Duplency prays with a shaken parishioner on the phone. It struck me as more honest than anything Blanc’s sharp logic could deliver. Here was a man acknowledging pain without dismissing it, without trying to fix it immediately.

Even though he was so occupied by the mystery of the murder of Wicks, as soon as

the parishioner delivered the words that weighed heavily on Duplency’s heart, saying, “Father...can you pray for me?”, Duplency snapped back to his true purpose and passion. Nothing else mattered in that moment except for an unbridled love and grace he had for a stranger who came rushing back to their religion in a time of difficulty. That held real weight for me as someone who often views religion from the outside.

The movie doesn't shy away from the strengths and weaknesses of religion. On one hand, Wicks represents the worst excesses of organized faith, a leader who preys on guilt, manipulates emotions and drives away those who need community the most. His sermons are divisive, his charisma feels sharp rather than warm and his authority fractures rather than heals.

On the other hand, Duplency’s presence reveals the power of faith as a facilitator of community and hope. His belief isn't about dominance or performing righteousness; it's about connection. In a world riddled with pain and mistrust, Duplency's faith reminds others that they are seen, valued and loved. This duality felt especially poignant and, for me, eye-opening. It underscores that religion isn't a monolith. It isn't all harmful or all healing. It's a human endeavour, shaped by individual intentions and actions.

From my agnostic perspective, the film didn't try to convert me. Instead, it invited me to see that religion can be a well of meaning when practiced with empathy instead of ego. This was refreshing, especially in a media landscape where religion is too often treated as either cartoonishly good or patently bad.

Then there's Blanc, our beloved detective who brings southern charm and keen deduction to every case. But here? His familiar confident logic isn't enough. Blanc is portrayed as a “proud heretic” pushed out of his comfort zone by the spiritual fog of a church mystery. His skepticism is played not as a virtue but as one piece of a larger human puzzle.

Blanc and Duplency’s dynamic is the emotional heart of the movie. They represent two worldviews that often misunderstand each other, like the rational and the spiritual. Yet, instead of dismissing one another, they learn from each other. Blanc doesn't abandon skepticism, but he slowly recognized the value of faith narratives and compassion. Duplency doesn't reject logic; he interrogates it, making him a more grounded spiritual guide. This evolution feels like a conversation we all need to have more often.

Another one of the film's best gifts is how it treats its female characters, especially those who are misunderstood or

underestimated. Characters like Martha Delacroix and Vera Daven initially appear one-dimensional, only to reveal hidden depths, motivations or struggles that defy easy judgment.

For instance, Martha seems like a simple, zealously devoted churchwoman, but as more is revealed, her story becomes tragic and layered with devotion, guilt, fear and ultimately, the desperate hope for forgiveness. Her journey is heartbreaking, not because she fails, but because she shows how good intentions can be twisted into harmful choices when humans act out of fear instead of reflection.

These characters remind me that people are more than their roles in our assumptions, especially women who are too often boxed into stereotypes in mystery stories. This treatment of female characters resonated deeply with me. It spoke to the broader theme of misunderstanding and redemption and not just in religious spaces, but in everyday life. It reminded me that people deserve patience and empathy, not snap judgments.

If there's a final lesson in *Wake Up Dead Man*, it's that forgiveness matters. This isn’t portrayed in a saccharine, simplistic way, but in a gritty, vulnerable, human way. Forgiveness here isn't just a theological concept, it's an active decision to release hatred, grudges and blame. It transforms characters, even as it doesn't magically ease pain.

Duplency’s capacity to forgive and to invite others into forgiveness becomes a turning point. This isn't about ignoring wrongdoing; it's about recognizing shared humanity. For me, that was the most powerful takeaway. As an agnostic, I might not subscribe to heaven or hell, but I do believe in the power of letting go, of choosing mercy over resentment, of believing that people can grow and change. The film's portrayal of forgiveness made that feel sacred, even without doctrinal belief.

At its core, *Wake Up Dead Man* is still a clever murder mystery. It’s stylish, surprising and sharply written. But it's also a conversation starter about faith, about understanding, about how we view those whose beliefs differ from our own. What surprised me most was how much I cared about this conversation by the final credits. Watching Duplency embrace compassion and seeing Blanc soften without losing his skeptical edge reminded me that different worldviews don't have to clash. They can complement each other. Watching misunderstood women reveal hidden truths reminded me that people, like beliefs, are rarely what they seem on the surface.

For someone like me who is always craving stories that expand our sense of self, curious about their meaning and skeptical about certainty, this movie was more than entertainment. It was eye-opening, and honestly? I'm grateful to have watched it.



Promotional poster for the film *Knives Out* | Lionsgate
OPINIONS / 15

The Death of The Student Locker

Do we even use them anymore?

Katherine Walcer

Take a walk through campus when you're killing time between classes. Not to the library, not to the bowl — just wander the halls. Thorvaldson, Engineering, Arts. You'll notice something kind of funny once you start looking for it: Lockers. Long rows of them. Metal doors, faded numbers, some with bent doors or dents, some with stickers or written words (like the famed “Smashley” locker in the arts tunnel to Edwards) from years ago. Most of them ... completely untouched.

They’re everywhere and yet, somehow, they mostly seem to sit untouched.

Which raises the question: Do we even use student lockers anymore?

At the university, lockers have not disappeared. They have not been removed or banned or replaced. They are still bolted to the walls like they always were, some even being used on rare occasions. But outside of one specific part of campus, they feel less like a useful resource and more like a forgotten background prop. Something that exists because it always has.

Let's get this out of the way first: gym lockers are alive and well.

If you go anywhere near the PAC or the Education gym, lockers are not just used; they are necessary. You can't really avoid them. You've got a backpack, a jacket, winter boots, a water bottle, maybe indoor shoes or a towel. You can't bring all of that into the fitness area, and honestly, you wouldn't want to.

This is especially true for athletes and people who train regularly. If you're on a varsity team, play intramurals or just go to the gym multiple times a week, lockers aren't optional. They are part of the routine. Show up. Lock up your stuff. Train or play. Shower. Repeat.

The gym is the only place on campus where lockers still make complete sense. You are always bringing things with you — your change of clothes, extra gear and items you need close at hand. I play racquetball and badminton, so even though I live on campus, I use those lockers because I need a place to store the bag of my indoor shoes, extra racquetballs or badminton shuttles, my winter jacket and winter boots. There's a clear expectation that lockers are how things work.

Because of that, the PAC and education gym lockers actually feel alive. They are used daily, rotated constantly and clearly serve a purpose.

Outside of that? It's a very different story.

When was the last time you actually used a locker in the other academic buildings? Not walked past one. Not leaned against one while waiting for class. I mean actually functionally used one. For a lot of students, the honest answer is never. It's not because students don't carry things anymore. It's because the way we move through campus and the way we learn has changed.

Lockers made sense when students hauled around massive textbooks, binders, notebooks and loose papers all day. You'd drop off stuff between classes, swap materials and move on lighter.

Now? Most of what we need fits in a backpack like a laptop, charger, notebook and pencil case.

Readings are online. Notes are digital. Assignments live on Canvas. Even when textbooks exist, many are PDFs or shared copies. There isn't the same volume of stuff that needs a dedicated storage space anymore. That's a lot of effort for something a backpack already solves.

Another big reason could be trust, leaving a jacket in the locker? Maybe. Leaving a

laptop, headphones? Absolutely not. Most hallway lockers aren't monitored spaces. They are in public corridors, sometimes in quieter buildings and most of the time far away from where your next class is. Even with a lock, students don't feel great about leaving expensive gear unattended for hours.

Gym lockers work because you're nearby, the use is short-term and there's an unspoken culture of respect in locker rooms. Random academic building lockers don't have that same feeling of security.

Students move fast. Schedules are tight. The executive function is already stretched thin. If a locker isn't directly on the way or doesn't clearly make your life easier, it's going to get ignored.

Lockers still exist, but they just idly take up space, which is interesting because they are convenient and available. They're just scattered across different systems. Some are in tunnels and tucked away corners, some are rented through student unions. So if you really want a locker, you can find one. But the fact is that most students don't even know how to get one.

Lockers aren't advertised. They aren't centralized. They aren't framed as essential. They exist quietly, waiting for students who already know they want one, which isn't many.

A lot of USask students aren't on campus all day. They come for classes, maybe study for a bit, then home or to work. If you're not spending eight straight hours on campus, a locker just isn't worth it. Why store things when you're leaving in two hours anyway?

There's also a vibe shift happening. University spaces now emphasize study lounges, group work areas, flexible seating and “setting up wherever you land” energy. The modern student experience is mobile. You bring your things with you, claim a

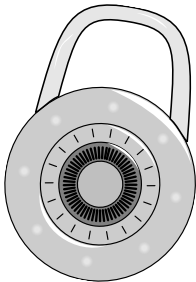
spot and stay put. Lockers belong to a more segmented, bell schedule style of life and that's not how most students operate anymore. So what replaced lockers?

Students didn't stop needing space. They just adapted by using bigger backpacks, tote bags, coats on chair backs and corners of study rooms. In a Saskatchewan winter, we all know it's annoying. Carrying heavy winter jackets everywhere isn't fun. But for most students, it's still easier than relying on a locker system that feels optional, scattered or inconvenient.

After COVID hit, we got used to doing stuff in the comfort of our homes. We came to appreciate online classes more, or going to university to take your class and then head home directly, because it became more convenient to just go home to study in a familiar and cozy space. Even people living on campus like me find it easier to just bring a bag to their classes, then head back to their dorm room to drop off things or study there instead.

Student lockers are not technically dead, just situational now. The idea that every student needs a locker, that it's a core part of campus life, is pretty much gone. What's left behind are rows of metal doors that quietly tell the story of how student life has changed. They're not broken, they're not useless. Just no longer central.

So the next time you walk past a hallway of untouched lockers, maybe ask yourself: are they waiting for a comeback, or are they just campus fossils?



Highschool hallway lined with lockers | David Wood from Woody's Photos | Canva Pro

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By **ELIZABETH SHIH**
Contact: shih.ea@gmail.com

University Archives to Heraldic Authority

My Contributions to Updating USask’s Coat of Arms Entry

Tyler Walker

In 1908, the University of Saskatchewan designed the first version of the coat of arms that all USask students have come to know and love. The original purpose of the design was to create a seal for authenticating the university’s important documents. The seal included a shield within a ring bearing the university’s Latin name, *Universitas Saskatchewanensis*, and the institution's founding date in Roman numerals, MCMVII — 1907.

The shield that was chosen was based on the well-known Arms of Oxford University, with a few modifications. Oxford blue became Saskatchewan green, and Oxford’s three crowns became garbs of wheat. Like Oxford, the university’s motto — *Deo et Patriæ* [God and Country] — was inscribed prominently upon the book.

This design of the coat of arms was used without authorization until 1978, when it was brought to the university’s attention that heraldic emblems borne without royal approval are "assumed," and thus technically illegitimate.

Realizing that such behaviour was unbecoming for an institution of higher education, the university’s Board of Governors applied to the English College of Arms for a grant of heraldic emblems based on the design already in use.

The petition was approved by England’s Earl Marshal in 1978 who then issued his warrant to the kings of arms to begin the process of scrivening, painting and gilding the letters patent that would formally grant the university its emblems on a sheet of vellum. The patent was then signed and sealed by the kings of arms in wax skippets hanging from the document. Once they were finished, the letters patent were presented to the university.

In 1993, the arms’ registration with the Canadian Heraldic Authority (CHA) were authorised by Canada’s deputy herald chancellor on the recommendation of the chief herald. The CHA is a uniquely Canadian institution established in 1988. Its creation — the first of its kind among the Commonwealth realms outside of the United Kingdom — removed the necessity for Canadian individuals and institutions desiring coats of arms to apply to England’s College of Arms or Scotland’s Court of the Lord Lyon. The CHA is formally headed by the governor general, though in practice it is their secretary, in their capacity as herald chancellor, who administers the institution, with the chief herald providing day-to-day administration. The CHA is largely funded by the fees paid by petitioners for their grants of arms.

As a heraldry enthusiast (yes, we exist, and

yes, we are a riot at parties), I did some research into the university’s coat of arms entry in the Public Register of Arms, Flags and Badges of Canada. I was disappointed to discover that there was very little listed under the entry; only the formal written description, called the blazon — "Vert an open book Argent inscribed DEO ET PATRIAE in letters Sable between three garbs sheaves Or" had been recorded. If you're wondering why they couldn't just say “on a green background, a white open book with DEO ET PATRIAE written on it in black letters between three gold wheat sheaves”, welcome to the ancient tradition of heraldry, where the vocabulary hasn't changed much since the 14th century.

Remembering that I had previously obtained photocopies of the original letters patent granting the arms from the university's archives, it occurred to me that it might be possible to have the university's entry updated.

My quest to get this information on the Public Register began by contacting the Canadian Heraldic Authority, which is a department of the Office of the Secretary to the Governor General of Canada.

I submitted an inquiry to the CHA, providing the images I had obtained and a message expressing my hope that the university’s entry could be updated with them. I also provided the symbolism of the various elements of the coat of arms, which had also come from the archives, as this information was also absent from the existing entry.

Within a short time, I was contacted by the Miramichi Herald, one of seven heralds at the Canadian Heraldic Authority — all of whom are named after one of Canada’s many mighty rivers. If you ask me, it has to be one of the coolest job titles in the federal government. Who wants to be a policy analyst when you can be the 'Miramichi Herald'? Heralds are officers of arms who are responsible for the administration of heraldic matters, including the registration, approval, confirmation and creation of heraldic emblems.

The herald was interested in updating the entry but emphasized the need to obtain permission from the armiger; in this case, the university. Thus, my quest continued with the university’s administration.

The herald informed me that her office would begin contacting the university, but that I could also help to identify the proper contact person to expedite the process of obtaining permission. I reached out to the university's media relations department, who doubtlessly were surprised to receive such an odd request. They seemed willing to help but required more details about the information that would be shared with the heraldic authority.



Hand-painted emblazonment of the University's arms | University of Saskatchewan Archives and Special Collections

I provided the relevant information and some information about the Public Register. I also emphasized that many, if not most, other Canadian universities already have their arms in the register, and that these included McGill, Alberta, Toronto, British Columbia, Calgary and Regina. It turns out that nothing moves the administration quite like the fear of looking less cool than the University of Regina.

After some time, I received a reply from the media relations department that the matter had passed into the hands of the university secretary — one of the highest-ranking university officials after the chancellor and vice-chancellor — for the final decision. I was excited to receive this message and was cautiously optimistic, but I understood that there was a decent chance that permission would be denied.

More time passed, and I was eventually forwarded an email by the media relations department regarding communication between the university secretary and the heraldic authority. It turned out the authority had reached the secretary before me, although I like to think that my inquiry through the media department reminded the secretary of the request.

The email revealed that the authority informed the secretary that "a University of Saskatchewan student" (yours truly) had reached out to them and that the authority

was requesting permission to use the images I had obtained from the archives to use in the register.

The email indicated that the secretary had been in communication with the university’s archivist and that they had concluded that the request was of importance to both the university and to Canada as a whole, and that permission was granted to the Canadian Heraldic Authority to use the material on the register.

As of writing this article, the heralds and their assistants have updated the university's entry on the register to include the image I provided to them, as well as a description of the symbolism of the arms. It can be seen on the Public Register’s website at gg.ca/en/heraldry/public-register/project/198.

I had a lot of fun with this project, and I am extremely pleased with the result.

I would like to give a very special thank you to the university secretary, the University Library Special Collections staff, the university’s media relations department, the Miramichi Herald and all of the wonderful people at the Canadian Heraldic Authority for considering my request and their willingness to help me preserve and document this piece of Canada’s heraldic history.

The University Should Not Be a Business: Why Students Should Be More Critical of How Our University Operates

A critique of the university’s rhetoric around its economic output at the expense of students’ wellbeing and education, and what ought to be done about it

Colton Danneberg

A few months ago, the Vice-President of University Relations sent out a university-wide email titled “USask social and economic report.” It tells of the university partnering with Research Triangle Institute (RTI) International, an independent scientific research institute that collected data to measure USask’s social and economic impact.

The email reads that, “RTI International’s analysis aimed to quantify the significant economic impact of USask’s operations, student and visitor spending, research activities, innovations and startup activity and alumni contributions.” It also identified the “outstanding social value that USask provides to its community, while showcasing the university’s leadership role in driving economic resilience, reconciliation, sustainability and innovation.”

The study notes that “every \$1 invested in USask by the Saskatchewan government generates \$3.64 of GDP and \$1.99 in labour income.” It touts USask as an “economic engine for the province” and a “workforce generator.” The study also says that in the 2024/2025 year, USask generated \$2 billion of Saskatchewan’s GDP.

This is seemingly all good and well. We’re constantly told that a rising GDP is a good thing. By and large, that’s how people measure the success of societies. This report is a nice, bulky chunk of data that confirms that your hard-earned cash is improving the economy of the province and country at large. Simultaneously, this fulfils our university’s duty of kissing the ground the provincial government walks on so it doesn’t cut funding.

However, isn't it a little odd that we’re all being fed information about how USask benefits the economy and that it grows the province’s GDP, yet most of us can hardly afford to pay rent? Most of us also have to take out loans and are constantly forced to work menial service jobs to lessen the crushing debt that university puts us in. So doesn’t it sound a little tone deaf for the university to be bragging about how much of a good boy it’s been for the provincial government because it fulfills its mandated role of labour output, instead of focusing its time and energy on looking for solutions to make students’ lives better?

As the study goes on about how much its economic output is a boon for the provincial economy, it also says that “the average annual living expenditure for



Numbered desks in an empty USask classroom | Colton Danneberg

students was \$16,860, including shelter, food, personal expenses, entertainment and transportation. Thus, total student spending was estimated to be \$449.2 million.”

The university is proud of the fact that Saskatchewan’s GDP grows due to high student spending on basic needs of human life, such as food and shelter. It reads like a sick joke — the university is not proposing solutions for the tuition crisis or the worsening housing insecurity that students are faced with, instead it’s saying, “look at how much our students spend, and isn’t that great?”

The obvious reality is that this email is not meant for us. The university is primarily funded by the provincial government, accounting for about 40 percent of USask’s total revenue of \$1.34 billion in the 2025 fiscal year. The province wants a return on their investment — i.e. the training of labourers and workers that will stimulate the economy. So, here’s a report that shows the province, and all USask investors for that matter, that the university is going to improve the economy.

But this was a university-wide message sent to students — not a report made discreetly to the provincial government. I’d like to see a report about student well-being and quality of life. Or a report on the level of happiness our student body has about the cost of their tuition and fees paid to the university every term. Or a study on the quality and level of support given to students, and a plan to address gaps in the student support system offered by the university.

I don’t care about how much GDP is generated. This is not an effective measure

“However, isn't it a little odd that we’re all being fed information about how USask benefits the economy and that it grows the province’s GDP, yet most of us can hardly afford to pay rent?”

of social progress, nor relevant for students who have bills to pay and are sacrificing a lot of time, money and energy in the pursuit of education. I want to know what the university is doing to improve the quality of life of its students and the practical steps it is taking to do so.

The other part of the study conducted by RTI was on USask’s social impacts. The university calls itself a “catalyst for change” and discusses its Indigenous student recruitment, its goal of reducing emissions and the amount of Huskie programming it offers, among other categories. This section does discuss the positive social policies put in place by the university, such as its requirement of ten percent of seats at the College of Medicine designated for Indigenous applications and its reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 21 per cent between 2010 and 2024.

However, the entire section reads as just more corporate pandering. While some claims are valid and warrant praise, others either feel like a reach or remind one of corporate messaging claiming to be sustainable because they made the switch to paper straws.

One headline says that USask has “reduced food waste by 25-30 per cent per person by

changing consumption behaviour,” but this was just because culinary services had “introduced smaller plates and removed trays from dining facilities” — which reads like penny pinching instead of a real commitment to environmental sustainability.

The university’s insistence that it has a positive work culture and that USask is rated “as one of Saskatchewan’s top employers in 2025” also overshadows many real concerns from faculty and staff about their workload, autonomy and low wages for positions like sessional lecturers. In an article for *University Affairs*, Christie Schultz and USask’s own Loleen Berdahl point out that academia leads to exhaustion and burnout from long hours, heavy workloads, stress and the emotional labour of caring for and mentoring students. Why isn’t the university conducting a study on that, which undoubtedly affects the quality of teaching students receive and the quality of life our professors have?

In the entire report, there rests a common theme: the propagation of the idea that everything is great and nothing is wrong with what the university is doing. Our economic impact is great.

Continued on page 20.

Hello February break, it’s me again, your friend guilt

Vaidehee Lanke

We all know the feeling. It appears like a thunder cloud on a spring day — uninvited but expected and always unpleasant. After years of experiencing it, I wonder, is it possible to take a break without feeling guilty about it?

Guilt can hold entire vacations captive. Although appearing in different forms, moments and activities, the premise goes something like this.

You finally take the time to do something for yourself. A little book reading, watching a movie or spending one evening with the family. But even before you start, guilt is there to remind you that your chosen activity is a waste of time, and that you could perhaps be doing something more worthwhile.

If you manage to ward off the initial guilt somehow — kudos to your battle skills — it appears again and again throughout the activity, ensuring your to-do lists are always on your mind.

Like a sticky piece of taffe, guilt doesn’t leave after you’ve finished your moment of relaxation. Rather, it sticks with you, for hours, days and sometimes weeks. It’s always there to remind you that no matter how much fun you had, you should have used that time for something else.

Sometimes, we give into the guilt and end up spending most of the break doing some form of work. However, we are human and our bodies and minds require breaks. Without it, we take hours to do simple

tasks. What was an initial attempt to be productive during the break fails too.

As a student, this feeling has been present on almost all of the breaks I’ve taken over the past few years. Like many fellow students, experiencing this guilt before, during and after break leaves me drained of energy. Rather than start afresh after the break, I’m tired and don’t have much productivity to show for it.

So, in the spirit of Valentine’s Day, how does one break up with guilt successfully? I’ve been thinking about this break up for a while, strategizing how to do it just right.

First, I want us to acknowledge that we are human beings and therefore need breaks. Immanuel Kant once said, “I think, therefore I am.” My twenty-first century motto is “I’m a human being, therefore I need breaks.” I encourage you to adopt it too.

Although not quite as philosophically insightful as Kant’s original quote, it reminds me that breaks, small and big, are important to our physical and mental health and overall wellness.

Second, let’s challenge how we think about productivity. In today’s hustle culture — which I think has somehow intensified even more during the pandemic — we think of productivity as solely related to work, school and side projects.

Although all those aspects are very important to our lives, so is our health, spending time with the ones we love and indulging in hobbies. While these activities



Anh Phan | Former Design Editor

may not result in immediate wealth, or provide a breakthrough in your career path, they are just as important. So let’s think of productivity as a whole, not only as a slice of the life pie.

Lastly, some of the best things come out of the times we let our minds wander and let ourselves just be. When we soak in the emptiness of the day, our next move in life might dawn upon us. Or when we let our hands create, we may create the next painting, book, article or dance that moves hearts around the world. When we spend time with those we love, we are making memories that will last long after.

Or, we may just have a day off. And that is perfectly fine too.

Having a guilt-free break is possible. It doesn’t require massive to-do lists or scheduling the week down to every hour, rather it requires fundamentally changing our mindset.

This February break will be a radical departure from the rest because I’m going to let myself have a break — and you should too.

Just remember, you and I have nothing to feel guilty for.

Good news: the dentist recommends reading The Sheaf while you wait.

Dr.

Aaron Bazylak

Dentist

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f

The University Should Not Be a Business

Continued from page 18.

Our social impact is great. People are happy working here, and our students are happy giving up thousands of dollars to attend our institution. There is no plan of action to fix any problems — because, according to the rhetoric of this study, there are none.

So what am I proposing? I’d like to see an honest attempt by the university to engage in difficult topics and take a serious look in the mirror about what it should change. Students do not benefit from economic


pandering. Faculty and staff do not benefit from being told their institution is one of Canada’s top employers. The university should work to find the gaps in what it’s doing, be honest with its students and look for ways to solve its problems.

Students, faculty and staff should work towards this aspiration by asking themselves whether they think their university is meeting their needs. They should be critical of the fact that tuition and fees have risen exponentially in the



past couple of decades. They should ask themselves why the president of the University of Saskatchewan is paid over half a million dollars annually — and if this ought to be the case. They should ask themselves whether or not they feel satisfied with the quality of education and support they receive during their time at university. Most importantly, they should act on these questions. Look for ways to hold the university accountable, instead of accepting university-wide emails that tell us that USask is an “economic engine” and

a “catalyst for change.” Beginning a conversation with other students, faculty and staff on these topics is a good way to start. Critique things like the university bragging about its economic impact, and think about how campus can refocus attention on the important issues that ought to be addressed. Students ought to have a larger say in what direction the university goes in. At the end of the day, a university is nothing without its students. Don’t let them forget that.


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Netflix and The Bleak Future of Entertainment

Continued from page 13.

Superman, released by Warner Bros. in July of 2025, was only in theatres for 35 days despite its box office success. The movie was released digitally a month later in August of 2025. The director James Gunn explained that this short theatrical window would allow audiences to see Superman on streaming platforms in time for the new season of another DC show, Peacemaker, on Warner Bros.’ streaming service HBO Max.

There is seemingly a rush to get these titles onto streaming platforms, and studios are growing apathetic to the box office

performances of their movies.

What’s Next?
Netflix is adamant that there is nothing to worry about. At a conference, Netflix CEO Ted Sarandos responded to counteroffers and public reactions about the acquisition:

“There’s been speculation about what we would do with this. I think it’s important to note that all we are going to do with this is staying deeply committed to releasing those movies exactly the way they’ve released the movies today, all three of these new businesses we want to keep

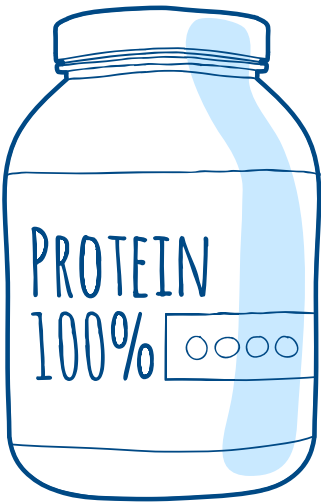
operating largely as they are, the theatrical business we have not talked a lot about in the past, about wanting to do it, because we’ve never been in that business. When this deal closes, we are in that business, and we’re going to do it.”

The trajectory of entertainment is moving in a trend that harms audiences, creatives and the art itself, while maximizing revenue for large studios. One can only hope the pendulum swings back around and studios are able to make the most of the digital medium.



The Protein Apocalypse

Continued from page 8.



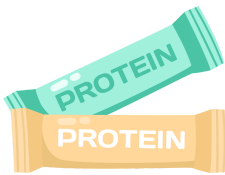
According to Health Canada, most Canadians are only getting half of the required amount they need in a balanced and nutritious diet.

Lacking fibre in your diet—which many college students do—is strongly linked to a higher risk of colorectal cancer. As colorectal cancer prevalence continues to rise rapidly in younger adults, it’s important to pay close attention to how everyday diet choices can help protect us from preventable, life-threatening illnesses. Consuming more dietary fibre reduces

inflammation in the colon and fosters a healthy population of bacteria in your body necessary for nutrient absorption.

Despite these benefits, we hardly see any marketing campaigns revolving around fibre, which highlights a much larger issue: how often we let marketing, packaging and buzzwords dictate what we consider “healthy,” rather than paying attention to actual nutrient content and what we need. Instead of chasing flashy “high-protein” packaging, it’s important that we slow down to read nutrition labels carefully,

compare the actual nutrient content and focus on balanced, whole foods. By doing so, you can make informed choices that actually benefit your health, rather than relying on marketing campaigns, influencer hype or the illusion that a single nutrient can solve all your problems. Plus, you can save money you don’t need to spend.



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ASK THE SHEAF

Campus Advice Column

Got a question about university life? From academics to friendships to navigating campus stress, **Ask the Sheaf** offers honest advice from our staff who’ve been there.

Q: If you were to go back to the start of your degree and/or university experience what’s one thing you would do differently?

A: I would take more time to talk to professors, mentors and older students, because they have perspectives about the degree you can’t get from a syllabus. For so long (and honestly sometimes still) I felt intimidated talking to these groups of people. I thought I needed to know everything about the field before I was "qualified" to sit down and talk with them. In doing so, I missed out on valuable lessons they were willing to share. University isn’t just about earning a degree; it’s about learning how you learn, what excites you and the kind of life you want to lead – and that part goes by faster than you expect.

Q: I want to switch my major what should I do?

A: Wanting to switch your major is completely normal. I’ve switched majors multiple times myself, and I know many others who have done the same. For me, the decision usually comes down to two things: whether I actually enjoy the classes required for that major and whether I can see myself doing that kind of work as a future career. Sometimes it’s easy to think you like a major because you enjoy the professor teaching the class or because your friends are in it. But once you remove those factors, you may realize you don’t actually enjoy the content itself. That’s why it’s important to spend time with the material and learn what people in that field really do. Look into research opportunities and industry work, and pay attention to what genuinely fascinates or inspires you. If you find yourself excited by the work and curious to learn more, it may be worth switching your major. You can declare or change your major through PAWS, and for more guidance, I’d recommend talking with an academic advisor.

Q: I am new to the country, what’s your favourite winter activity?

A: I enjoy just bundling up and going for a nice walk! The cold air can be quite refreshing and it’s even better when the sun is out. Other activities you can try are skating and cross-country skiing, although they require some equipment. Check out the USask Outdoors club for organized winter activities! And if it’s too cold out, I love spending cozy time inside baking, crafting or playing board games!

Q: You guys seem like a really confident group, how do you get over the nerves of like performing in front of others/giving a presentation/talking on camera/trying something new that sorta thing...I think I am just shy

A: This is a tough one and I honestly still cringe at myself several times a day. But, I just remind myself that I’m my biggest critic and people are not judging me as harshly as I am. All you can do is try your best and be yourself and people will appreciate that. Building confidence takes practice so the more you put yourself out there, the easier it will feel! You just have to take the leap and start somewhere!

Q: I feel like I have a lot of friends but have no “friend group “ is that normal and groups only exist in highschool?

A: I think that’s totally normal. Once you’re out of high school, you’re not around the same people every single day anymore, so friendships end up being more one-on-one than big groups. If you want to build more of a friend group, joining clubs, student unions, or sports makes it easier because you’ll see the same faces consistently. And honestly, don’t be shy about mixing your friends together – little crossovers can turn into a group as most people are looking for more connection anyway!

Submit an anonymous question through the link in our instagram bio (@sheafteam) or by scanning the QR Code

No topic is too small - If you’re wondering it, someone else is too.



CROSSWORD

Across

1. Not up
5. Barbara nickname
9. Covered with frost
13. Ancient letter
14. Buck _____
15. Imrie or Cruz
16. British texter’s farewell
17. Famous couple: “When ____ met ____”
19. Dylan song “_____ Babe”
21. One of the first hormonal IUD’s
22. Jean-Claude’s woman
23. Saint ____ of Assisi who founded a female religious order and others
24. Edna Mode does one for security at her house (2 words)
28. Longest river that rises and ends in Switzerland
29. One quarter of M
30. Famous couple with Wilhelm
32. Bradley known as “the Big Panda” in basketball
35. Icy Genshin Impact character Lawrence
37. Second human to orbit the Earth, Gherman
39. Asian sea that dried up in the 2010's
41. Lang. often spoken in Iran
43. Famous couple with Elizabeth Bennett
45. Deg. at Julliard or Berklee
46. Famous couple with 34 down from Napoleon Dynamite
48. Steak that is not well done or crocodile, for example (2 words)
50. Fortnite or Minecraft Java Edition (2 words)
53. “_____ talk?”
54. “I got this” (3 words)

55. It may be done with bulbs and candles
58. Circulates (2 words)
60. Name meaning “pure” in Japanese or “luck” in Arabic
61. Response to a bad joke
62. Cincinatti fictional radio station from sitcom
63. One to Caesar
64. Japanese coins
65. Perceives
66. “Am I?” in the third person (2 words)

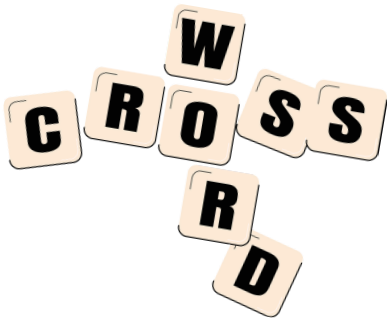
Down

1. Clever trick
2. Famous couple with Wesley
3. At home, in Paris (2 words)
4. Jeans and jackets
5. Thai currency
6. What Abraham kills (2 words)
7. Snoozefest
8. Frat. neighbour, perhaps
9. Room at back, for example (2 words)
10. More sick
11. A.A. _____, author of Winnie-the-Pooh
12. “Get Yer _____ Out!” (Rolling Stones album)
15. Where one might test for blood stains or fingerprints on TV (2 words)
18. Village People hit
20. _____ Creek Music Festival
25. Tax on company profits, abr.
26. Amongst
27. Cigarette specification (2 words)
31. Writer of 17 across, Ephron
33. Neighbours of Georgians
34. Famous couple with 46 across
36. State that is the birthplace of Walmart
38. DVD player predecessor

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12
13					14					15			
16					17					18			
19				20						21			
22										23			
24					25	26	27			28			
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35			36		37				38		39		40
	41			42		43				44		45	
				46		47		48			49		
50	51	52								53			
54								55	56	57			
58						59					60		
61						62					63		
64						65					66		

Crossword | Greta Mader Stevens

40. Second half of a doubleheader (2 words)
42. Apelike
44. “Gross!”
47. Czech alternative to “Pierre”
49. 2009 World Series MVP Hideki
50. Famous couple with Kermit: Miss ____
51. Slangy summons
52. Boarded (2 Words)
55. Famous couple with Lorelai
56. Concerning (2 words)
57. Some economic figs.
59. Yelps of pain



Answers will be posted at thesheaf.com next week



VALENTINE’S WORD SEARCH

P	P	L	C	T	L	H	E	A	R	T	G	S	D	J
C	E	U	V	E	P	X	K	H	A	E	U	S	P	Y
J	V	X	X	E	L	E	J	S	V	C	H	I	V	F
B	O	V	T	W	I	T	X	U	A	M	C	K	J	T
R	L	Q	Y	S	Z	A	M	R	X	E	D	Y	T	W
E	C	E	N	C	X	D	D	C	N	A	M	O	U	R
C	D	Y	P	U	P	L	L	I	R	R	O	S	E	N
N	E	N	G	P	Q	G	T	L	P	F	V	K	L	O
A	V	T	X	I	A	N	I	M	L	T	J	K	F	I
M	O	N	L	D	E	N	I	O	M	Q	I	U	L	S
O	L	L	J	L	G	O	W	C	Y	T	S	L	C	S
R	E	R	A	T	D	E	Q	D	U	O	X	O	X	A
Q	B	V	C	A	R	Q	N	W	I	P	S	Y	U	P
Q	T	C	N	S	G	A	K	E	R	I	M	D	A	B
U	L	U	V	R	C	C	H	O	C	O	L	A	T	E

- LOVE
- ROSE
- CANDY
- ROMANCE
- FLOWERS
- AMOUR
- CRUSH
- HEART
- KISS
- CHOCOLATE
- DATE
- ADMIRE
- PASSION
- XOXO
- CUPID
- SWEET
- VALENTINE
- HUG
- BELOVED
- DARLING
- CARD

SUDOKU

	1	2	5			4	7	
	5			9	7		2	8
		7	1		2			
		1			5			
	3	4				8	5	
		5						2
4	6							
	2			4	3	7	9	1
		9	2	5	8	6	3	4

USSU BACKPAGE

MENTAL HEALTH
AWARENESS WEEK
FEB 2-6



Crush Culture
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