



THE SHEAF PUBLISHING SOCIETY

The University of Saskatchewan's main campus situated on Treaty 6 Territory and the homeland of the Metis

Visit us at
thesheaf.com | @sheafteam

YOUR UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN STUDENT NEWSPAPER SINCE 1912

Creating Relationships Starts with a Conversation: Why the New USask President Should Turn Words into Action and Make A Meaningful Effort to Engage with Students

Since assuming the role of President, Vince Bruni-Bossio has emphasized creating relationships, but if he won't speak to USask's only student newspaper, how are we to believe him?



USask president's residence | USask

Colton Danneberg

USask's 12th president and vice-chancellor, Vince Bruni-Bossio, is a long-time faculty member in the Edwards School of Business and a respected member of the USask community. He won the 3M National Teaching Fellowship in 2022, a prestigious teaching award, and previously served as USask's interim provost and vice-president academic.

In a media post announcing his appointment as president in August of last year, Bruni-Bossio emphasized that his plan of "Moving forward together" is founded on the idea that "the best ideas come forth when we prioritize relationships founded in transparency, listening and shared decision-making."

The Sheaf was excited to sit down with a new president who emphasized relationships and transparency in our institution, and as such, we reached out on Jan. 2 of this year for a brief interview with the president. Since then, we've been bounced around by USask Communications, had promises made of scheduling something as late as April 2026, and have been generally ignored by our own university.

On Jan 5, we were told to check back in February because he was settling into his new role. We checked back on Feb 2, to be told that an interview might be possible after April. USask Communications also

told us they'd get back to us with a timetable, but there's been no follow up to our original request since.

The Sheaf asked the USSU, who had a chance to meet with Bruni-Bossio briefly earlier this year, to forward the president's office our interview request again. Nothing. We figured that he must be pretty busy to be unable to spare less than an hour with USask's only undergraduate student newspaper.

However, since his appointment as president in August, Bruni-Bossio's staff did find time in his busy schedule for an interview with *The Star Phoenix*, 650 CKOM and Global News. Ouch.

So, does the president's office not take *The Sheaf* seriously enough to schedule an interview? That's definitely a possibility.

If they didn't care about what we wrote at all, then they shouldn't have a problem with *The Sheaf* pointing out that last year, the salary for the president of the university was \$460,410, plus a bonus of \$46,041, right? They also wouldn't mind us reminding students that this puts the president in the top one per cent of earners in the nation, according to Statistics Canada. They also probably wouldn't care if *The Sheaf* pointed out that, say, our USask president's salary (much of which comes from students' tuition and fees) is nearly \$41,000 more than the Prime Minister of Canada's salary. Who's to say

which job deserves to be paid more, though? One runs a country, and the other runs a university...

Whether USask doesn't take *The Sheaf* seriously, or if they knowingly ignore us or both – it's in the university's interests to do so. It makes sense. University administration is crossing its fingers that *The Sheaf's* criticisms fade away and that students don't ask questions of their institution. Because if nobody speaks up, then nothing will change. But I digress.

What I'd really like to focus on though is that, during the interview with 650 CKOM, Bruni-Bossio said that "I really want to be known as the president who listened to people, connected with people, focusing on authentic relationship building and collaboration."

I'm going out on a limb here, but I do think Bruni-Bossio genuinely means that. I've heard good things about him as both a professor and a member of the campus community. The guy's got a 4.7/5 on RateMyProfs – so he must be doing something right.

In the newly released University Plan 2035, Bruni-Bossio says that "We need the thoughts and insights of the USask community, now more than ever." A part of shaping this plan is gathering information from students, faculty and staff via surveys being sent to USask emails. I think this is a step in the right

direction — but I know we can do better. A dialogue that really addresses the thoughts and insights of the USask community should be much more than a five minute survey.

At the end of the day, our university shouldn't be worried about an interview with *The Sheaf*. If we ever get the chance, I should hope that our student newspaper asks hard questions of its institution. I'd like to know what our president plans to do about rising student tuition and costs, what he plans to do about the steep fines and fees that students pay for parking, what he'll do to address university investing in weapons manufacturing, what he plans to do about our shrinking course options, and faculty not being replaced and so on.

If USask is worried about risking its reputational image by having their president agree to an interview, then that ought to signal that things need to change. Ideally, these should be easy questions to answer if USask had a plan to address and fix these issues that students and the campus community are faced with. The worst thing USask could do is hide and dodge questions, because that means you either can't justify your own decisions or genuinely don't know why you've made them.

A new president means new opportunities. It means our institution can move forward and address questions that weren't answered before. Despite my sarcastic comments, I hope USask does realize I'm only interested in asking these questions because our university is very important to me. I want to see our institution succeed and be the best it can be. I want students to be engaged and supported by their university. Sometimes it takes addressing the difficult questions. And sometimes it starts with a conversation.

So, Bruni-Bossio, I hope that you have a fruitful relationship with *The Sheaf* during your time as president. I think you'd find that our newspaper is full of motivated and engaged students who want to make students' lives better on campus. If you're ever interested in talking, our door's always open.

80 Years of Breaking a Leg: USask Drama Department Celebrates its 80th Anniversary

An in depth look at the people celebrating 80 years of drama at USask



From left Leanne Griffin, Laurin Griffin, Sugith Varughese, Hope McIntyre and Clare Middleton | USask Drama Department

Emily Mainprize

For the past 80 years, the Drama Department at the University of Saskatchewan has been giving students a space to showcase their talents, nurture their love for the arts and be a part of a community that welcomes others with open arms.

As the first university drama program in Canada, as well as the entire British Commonwealth, it has shaped generations of theatre artists, influencing both local and global performance landscapes.

This anniversary is not simply a celebration of longevity. It is a reflection on a department that has helped shape Canadian theatre culture, fostered generations of artists and established Saskatoon as an important center for the performing arts.

This March, for their 80th anniversary, they engaged with this legacy through the creation of one-act plays that explore theatre in Saskatoon with nods to theatre student lore as well as creative interpretations of the Prairies as a whole.

These brand-new one-act plays were commissioned from five alumni of the School for the Arts Drama Program. They premiered at the Emrys Jones Theatre in the John Mitchell Building on campus from March 19 to 28.

A Ghost Named Hank

A Ghost Named Hank is a play written by Leanne Griffin, who has a Master in Drama from the University of Saskatchewan. She has taught acting classes in the Northern Teacher Education Program and at St. Peter's College. Her acting credits include *Much Ado About Nothing* and *The White Devil* at Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan, *Steer Clear of Kafka* at 25th Street Theatre and various Fringe productions. Leanne Griffin has written and directed three plays for Fringe Theatre Festivals.

The play, which is set in 1993, is about the

ghost that was said to hang around in the old "hangar" building, which was where drama classes were held before they switched to the new John Mitchell building. It follows a group of students who try to convince the ghost to move to the new building before the hangar gets transformed into a parking lot.

MUD: A Prairie Fairytale

This is a play written by Lauren Griffin, who has a BFA in Drama and minors in psychology and English, and was awarded the University Medal in the Fine Arts. Awarded Outstanding Emerging Artist at the 2025 Saskatoon and Area Theatre Awards, Lauren acted in and wrote *The Mooneaters*, which won Best Local Show at the 2025 Saskatoon Fringe Festival. She is also an actress and stage director who has worked on many Saskatoon theatre productions.

Her play covers a story of a character named Mud, one of the Fae, or fairies, who rules over the Prairies. Mud is attempting to uncover the mystery of who poisoned their father, Rain. Through three stories and conversations among the Fae, the audience must discover who poisoned Rain and decide their fate.

Double Major

Double Major was written by Sugith Varughese, a pioneering South Asian Canadian in the arts. A Writers' Guild of Canada award-winning screenwriter and Gemini award-nominated TV writer, he is best known for writing and starring in the first multicultural romantic comedy produced by CBC TV, *Best of Both Worlds*, and the iconic Muppet series *Fraggle Rock*.

He was the first South Asian writer-director to attend the prestigious Canadian Film Centre. He is extremely significant within the theatre and film industry, and between his acting, directing and writing, he has over 150 screen credits and has been nominated for 11 awards.

Double Major is an autobiographical one-act play about his time at the University of

Saskatchewan. It's based on his experience of being the very first pre-med and drama major at USask 50 years ago. All of the characters' names have been changed, including his own.

His story is told through a character named Sunil and his journey of finding friends, falling in love, facing discrimination and his everyday life of following his passions.

Samein Dorazahi, the actor who plays Sunil, when asked about what makes the 80th anniversary of the Drama Department important to him, said: "I personally am really glad to be part of it, especially as a minority, to be a part of something bigger than I."

Idyll in the Wild

This play was written by Hope McIntyre, whose training includes a BFA in Performance from the University of Saskatchewan and an MFA in Directing from the University of Victoria. McIntyre is an award-winning playwright and director. She is an Associate Professor at the University of Winnipeg's Department of Theatre and Film.

Idyll in the Wild follows a character named Sass who is contemplating what to do as a new graduate with a theatre degree. They are stuck between staying and striking, or seeking adventure and new experiences. Ghosts and visitations have a lot to say to them without really offering any helpful advice.

This play explores the struggles that many students face after they graduate from university as they decide what they want to do with their future.

In the Middle of Every Storm Is a Moment of Silence

This play is written by Clare Middleton, who has a BFA in Acting from USask, an MFA in Creative Writing from UBC and has been working in theatre and film for the past several decades. She has taught theatre classes at USask, UBC and U of R, and is a founding member of the Live Five theatre season in Saskatoon.

In the Middle of Every Storm Is a Moment of Silence invites the audience to participate collectively as it follows a woman at a crossroads, forced to analyze her life and her experiences as she contemplates what really makes us who we are and what really shapes us: our failures, choices, experiences or the people that we surround ourselves with.

This play explores what exactly makes us alive and who we are as human beings. It forces the audience to look at themselves and reflect on who they are as people and what they value within their own lives, just as the main character does.

When asked about why it was important to her to be part of this production, Jasmine Keck, who plays the protagonist, responded, "It's important to me, because these are creations that were made from people that come from here, and so I think it's important to represent what we're doing in our own program."

Grace Hecht, another actor from this production, said: "I love working in theatre and just seeing how much theatre impacts people and brightens people, and seeing how it's impacted people for this long."

The Directors

The director for *Idyll in the Wild*, *A Ghost Named Hank* and *In The Middle of Every Storm* is Skye Brandon, a sessional instructor who teaches consistently in the drama program at USask.

He first came to the USask as a commerce student who decided to take a drama class. When asked what the Drama Department meant to him, he replied, "Had I not started taking acting classes to see if I was any good at it, I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing. That's where I met my wife. This is where I met a lot of my really great friends, the people I met here while I was a student here."

Ken Mackenzie, directed *MUD: A Prairie Fairy Tale* and *Double Major*.

Continued on page 18.

World Domination: USask Model United Nations Club's Generational Comeback

After eight years of hiatus, USask's MUN Club is putting their name on the map.

Hannah Ha

What does it take to revive a club? In the case of the USask Model United Nations (MUN), one month and a lot of determination.

Merely three months ago, USask MUN was a club that had been inactive for eight years due to "insufficient interest". The club lost club ratification status in 2018 and effectively disbanded. This January, in only a few short weeks, President Paula Orata and the USask MUN executive team breathed it back to life. Within a single month, the club went from applying for club ratification status to competing out of province alongside dozens of other universities.

In its first two weeks as a ratified club, nearly 80 students signed up, and an executive team was put together. Tasked with finding funding and providing lesson plans to members of the club, the executive team was given two weeks before USask MUN attended their first conference—the Alberta Intercollegiate Model United Nations (AIMUN) Conference — sending 20 delegates to MacEwan University in Edmonton. There, two of USask's delegates, Seth Loeppky and Stacy Kim, received Outstanding Delegate awards at their first-ever conference.

One week later, 14 delegates hopped on a plane to the Concordia Model United Nations (ConMUN) Conference hosted by Concordia University in Montreal.

The club meets weekly on Mondays, which they have dubbed colloquially as "MUNdays."

Orata's idea came from independently attending Model UN and Model NATO conferences at other universities. "I realized that almost every single student attending came from a university with either a Model UN club or a Model NATO club. I approached Dr. Gaal, and I said, 'Well, why don't we have a Model UN club?' He said, 'We used to have one, but it dies off every eight years or so, but you can always start it again if you want'. Dr. Gaal is one of our faculty advisors now, [and] now we have a Model UN club of almost 100 people."

But what is Model UN? In short, the environment simulates operations within the UN, in all its diplomatic, public speaking, collaborative, bureaucratic glory. Members, also known as delegates, are assigned countries or diplomatic roles that they roleplay within a diplomatic environment. Their goal? To solve global issues by working with other delegates without sacrificing the interests of their assigned countries.

In packed rooms, delegates engage in debate and proposals, writing papers that hopefully solve all the global issues which the actual UN have yet to solve.

According to Orata, "the purpose of Model UN is to open the door of networking and travel and meeting people from peer institutions, and to come together and come up with solutions that will simulate solutions that will affect how we approach issues in our world."

Orata believes Model UN's value transcends the General Assembly setting. "We needed something to bridge the

"For me, it's all about political engagement." Yazdani noticed Ontario and Quebec universities had highly politically involved student populations, no matter their major. "I found that these eastern delegations that were being sent from other provinces have students from multiple backgrounds. I met a master's student in chemical engineering. His name was Raphael. He was a great guy, and he was one of the best speakers that I think I saw at this conference."

Yazdani is clear on his mission for the club. "I wanted to bring some of that expertise back to USask, to be able to

according to Orata, the hardest part is just getting started. "It might seem daunting at first, but once people come in, they get comfortable with the procedure and learn the basics of it. It's really easy after people learn the basics."

She highlights the heart of Model UN conferences: the friends you make along the way. "It's really easy to get them hooked onto Model UN and realize how much fun it actually can be, because it's not just about attending conferences and being all so serious, but people have fun at our delegate socials in the evenings, discussing with other with peers from different institutions outside of moderated caucuses, like [at] ConMUN in Montreal, we met students from UCLA, from West Point, from UVic, from McGill, [from] U of R ... It puts USask on the map, because it gives our students opportunities to see other students from different universities."

Yazdani adds, "I find that people are honestly more inclined to be engaged with these types of activities once they really open the space for the first time ... I think that Model UN represents a very opportunistic environment in which we give people the floor to be able to voice what they aren't necessarily confident enough to voice in their day-to-day lives."

Senior Head Delegate Loeppky believes the club plays to his strengths as a student in Political Studies. "It's been an opportunity to talk about and represent the issues that I care most deeply about, whether that's inequality or human rights violations or freedom of speech. These are things that are personally important to me, and it's been an opportunity for me to vent and to expand and really articulate these issues, not only to myself, but to others."

Even without Model UN experience, brand new members like Ilia Rezaei have found that the club gives practical experience outside the classroom. "It helps us use the class resources that were taught by our professors, and actually [use] them to integrate it into a real-world situation."

Member Eric Dodge gets candid when it comes to the biggest hurdle he's encountered since joining the club. "Public speaking. I've never done public speaking before. So at ConMUN, I did my first hour of public speaking. But I feel like through Model UN I've become a way better public speaker already."

"I mean, I want to develop these skills like diplomacy." There's another side of the coin for Dodge, "and I mean, going and hanging out with friends and doing things with your friends is also just a lot of fun."



USask Model UN members | Hayley Allen

academic theory that we learn in our classes with practical, hands-on application, and that's what Model UN provides."

Though networking and collaboration are one part of the puzzle, delegates also compete against each other. In their suits and lanyards, delegates are scored on skills like public speaking, writing, networking and even their diplomacy and ability to follow parliamentary procedure.

Beyond competing, Vice President Kayhan Yazdani believes in a unique value that the club provides to USask's campus, closing a gap that he has noticed between West and East coast institutions.

shape a more politically engaged environment and a more open and inclusive environment."

Aiming for a well-rounded club, Orata makes it known that USask MUN is not limited to students aspiring for a political career. "Our club is open to any student from any college at the university, because it's really not just about Model UN, but building skills that will help people in their everyday lives, like speech skills, writing resolutions, writing their speeches and just being in front of a room of people and being comfortable talking in front of them."

Although seemingly intimidating,

Continued on page 22.

From One Act of Kindness to a Citywide Winter Outreach

“Donate what you cherish”: A Student who started a winter initiative for helping the homeless



Man in winter clothing outdoors in cold weather | Rayees Sofi from Pexels | Canva Pro

Katherine Walcer

For Abd Alfatah Alras, a third-year medical student at the University of Saskatchewan, one such night changed the way he viewed homelessness in the city and inspired a community initiative that continues to grow each year. The Sheaf conducted an interview via email with Alras to learn more about the Muslim community of the U of S for the Homelessness Support Initiative.

Every winter, volunteers from several muslim organizations across Saskatoon come together to prepare and distribute winter care packages and meals for people experiencing homelessness. This year, volunteers assembled and distributed 150 winter packages and 150 meals, bringing together students, community organizations and donors to support some of the city's most vulnerable residents.

The packages contain basic necessities designed to help people survive the harsh prairie winter: gloves, socks, toques, scarves, blankets, bandages and hand warmers. Hygiene supplies such as shampoo, soap, lip balm, moisturizer, toothbrushes, toothpaste, wet wipes and nail clippers are also included. Alongside the care packages, volunteers distribute simple meals consisting of a sandwich, banana and juice.

But behind the initiative is a deeper motivation, one rooted in both faith and personal experience. “One of the five pillars of Islam is to give a fraction of your wealth to the needy,” Alras said. “It purifies wealth and the soul, and it is especially directed toward helping the poor and vulnerable.”

He pointed to a verse from the Quran that has become a guiding principle for the project:

“You will never achieve righteousness until you donate some of what you cherish.”

For Alras, those words are not simply philosophical. They represent a responsibility. Yet the moment that pushed him to act happened outside the hospital during his first year of medical school.

Late one night in 2022, Alras left the hospital around 11 p.m. As he stepped outside into the bitter cold, he noticed a man sleeping near the entrance. “What caught my attention immediately was that he wasn't wearing gloves,” Alras recalled.

As a medical student, his thoughts went immediately to the potential consequences of prolonged cold exposure. Frostbite and nerve damage can develop quickly in extreme conditions. Concerned, he went home, grabbed a spare pair of gloves, and returned to give them to the man.

The man told Alras he had once worked as a truck driver. After a serious accident, he lost his ability to continue working. Debt began to accumulate, and eventually he lost his housing.

“That moment stayed with me,” Alras said. “It reminded me that hardship is often not the result of laziness or lack of effort, but circumstances that could happen to any of us.”

That encounter became the foundation for what would eventually grow into an annual winter outreach initiative.

Groups supporting the initiative include the Islamic Dawah Society, Saskatoon Islamic Academy, the Amal Humanitarian Club, the Muslim Medical Association of Canada, the Saskatchewan Arabs Society, the Muslims Professionals Society, Islamic Relief U of S and the One Faith Foundation.

While organizing so many groups could easily become complicated, Alras said the collaboration has been remarkably smooth.

“Those clubs have a passion to help the community,” he said. “Many individuals leading them are already volunteering around the city. Bringing them together was a natural process because we all share the same goal.”

Volunteers gather ahead of the distribution to assemble the packages, sorting items and preparing supplies before heading out across Saskatoon. On the day of distribution, volunteers travel both on foot and by car, reaching individuals across different areas of the city.

Despite its growth, the initiative still faces challenges each year.

Funding is always a concern, as organizing hundreds of care packages requires months of fundraising and donations. Time is another obstacle.

“It takes months to put everything together,” Alras said. “Every year we try to hold the event earlier in the winter, but sometimes logical challenges push it later than planned.”

Another challenge is finding a location where volunteers can safely organize and distribute supplies.

“Finding a place to do the distribution is not always easy,” he explained. “Sometimes it can result in an increase in homelessness in the area, which can affect surrounding businesses.”

This year, organizers were able to use the parking lot and facilities at the Saskatoon Islamic Academy to coordinate the project. Alras also expressed gratitude to Affinity Credit Union, which had allowed volunteers to organize distributions outside one of its branches in previous years.

Despite the difficulties, the initiative continues to grow with each passing year.

“It grows every year,” Alras said. “More people are willing to help, and more people are willing to donate. It's becoming something our community looks forward to.”

Alras also says that the most meaningful

impact of the project is not only felt by those receiving the packages, but by the volunteers themselves.

“I truly believe that we, as volunteers, benefit from this just as much as the unhoused community does,” Alras said. “This experience forces you to feel a level of gratitude for things you once took for granted.”

Participating in the distribution can shift perspective in unexpected ways. Something as simple as having a warm jacket, a meal waiting at home or a roof overhead can suddenly feel far less ordinary.

“When was the last time you paused and felt grateful for simply having a jacket during the winter?” Alras asked.

Through years of organizing the initiative, Alras has also gained a deeper understanding of homelessness in Saskatoon. One of the biggest misconceptions, he said, is that homelessness is always permanent.

“Before starting this project, I thought many individuals had been homeless for a long time,” he said. “But in many cases, homelessness is transitional.”

Unexpected life events, medical emergencies, job loss and rising housing costs, can quickly destabilize someone's life.

In one instance, Alras even met a person experiencing homelessness who had previously been a student at the University of Saskatchewan.

“They were an international student who couldn't afford rent anymore because of increasing tuition and living costs,” he said.

For Alras, the lesson is clear: addressing homelessness requires compassion, awareness and a willingness to act.

“Saskatchewan is our home,” he said. “We live in a province with harsh winters and a significant homeless population. A society is judged by how it takes care of its vulnerable, the children, the elderly, the sick and the poor.”

Through a simple act of giving things like gloves, a meal or a moment of human connection, volunteers hope to remind people experiencing homelessness that they are not invisible or alone.

And perhaps, just as importantly, the initiative reminds the community that compassion can begin with something as small as noticing someone in the cold.

Other Universities Have Acted on Revoking Buffy Sainte Marie's Honours and Awards: Why isn't USask?

The Sheaf sits down with Indigenous Student Union members to chat about the controversial singer-songwriter's honorary Master of Letters from USask, which has not yet been revoked

Colton Danneberg

Buffy Sainte-Marie is an American-born singer-songwriter who has released over two dozen albums and received numerous awards over her lifetime. Sainte-Marie has claimed to be born and raised Cree from the Piapot First Nation in Saskatchewan, and the majority of her work has used this claim to Indigenous ancestry for the success and fame of her career.

Sainte-Marie rose to prominence as a folk singer-songwriter in the 1960s and 1970s, being named "Favorite New Female Vocalist" by entertainment magazine *Billboard* in 1965 and appearing on numerous Canadian and American television programs. Most notably, Sainte-Marie appeared regularly on *Sesame Street* in which she showcased Native American and Indigenous culture for the first time on the program.

However, in Oct. 2023, an investigation by the CBC questioned her claim to Indigenous ancestry after receiving a tip that she was of European ancestry. The resulting investigation found a string of inconsistencies and inaccuracies in her claim to be Indigenous, supported by accounts by Sainte-Marie's biological relatives and documentation that proves she was born in the United States and not in Canada as she had previously claimed.

The CBC investigation led to Sainte-Marie being stripped of the Order of Canada, her Juno Awards and Polaris Music Prizes, as well as the revocation of her inductions into the Canadian Music Hall of Fame and the Canadian Country Music Hall of Fame.

Sainte-Marie was also awarded numerous honorary degrees by universities across Canada. Early this year, Dalhousie University revoked the honorary degree it gave to her in 2018 after an Indigenous student advocated for its removal.

The Sheaf recently received a comment from its tip line with similar concerns, which reads, "It is time the U of S revokes the honorary doctorate bestowed upon Buffy Sainte-Marie (aka. Beverley Santa Maria) in 2003. Her actions in assuming a cultural identity for whatever motives stole opportunities, awards and recognition from deserving Indigenous people here in Saskatchewan, across Canada, and internationally ... As a graduate of this university, I am ashamed that the U of S has not moved more quickly on revocation. I urge the U of S to revoke this honorary doctorate without delay."

For a student-led and Indigenous perspective, *The Sheaf* reached out to members of the Indigenous Student Union (ISU) for an interview.

Nate Desjarlais, whose portfolio is Student Support & Advocacy for the ISU, said that his opinion on Sainte-Marie was that "[If] you've led your career on being disingenuous, you might have taken opportunities from other Indigenous people who might have had those [opportunities]. But it's important to [have] a balanced opinion. I had thought [that] there were benefits to her doing that as well. She inspired a lot of people. I know Indigenous people who knew her and thought, 'wow, she's doing amazing things. She's promoting the culture. She's taking part in it. She loves Indigenous people' ... [But] it's dangerous to promote somebody who's built their whole career on lies, because it sets a precedent that other people might follow and decide, 'you know what, I will take the same viewpoint. I will apply for these scholarships [because] I'm Indigenous at heart.' But these are limited resources at the end of the day, and they have to be reserved rightfully towards Indigenous ancestry, which is what they're designed for."

Mya Graham, Public Relations, Internal Communications and Coordination Director for the ISU, adds that "I was very concerned with taking resources and the voice away from Indigenous people ... A lot of people are passionate towards advocating for certain marginalized groups, so by her stepping into that role and pretending, it's very strange, because she could have been an ally, she's very passionate about this — she could have taken an initiative to just simply be an advocate ... I think there's an important distinction to be made between cultural appropriation and cultural appreciation in this situation, because you can support and be an ally, and if you grow up on reserve [but] are from European origins ... [you] still aren't Indigenous. And with being Indigenous, there is also the aspect of ancestry and your ancestors that still lies in you and lives through you. That's a huge part of being Indigenous is that ancestry is your lineage."

Graham continues, "I think it's great that people want to appreciate the culture, want to learn about it, want to be a part of it, because it's so fun, it's so beautiful, it's such a good community. It's a great thing to be a part of. And I totally love any interest that people have in it or wanting to learn, because that does help keep the culture alive ... But there is that line that needs to be drawn between giving teachings or pushing something as if you're Indigenous when you're not, because that's just really not your place."

Noah Merasty, Research and Analysis Director for the ISU, says that "For me personally, my mom was her biggest fan growing up ... A lot of times she viewed

Buffy Sainte-Marie [as a] source of inspiration. And I know when this news came out, she was very hurt by it and she felt just as confused, because she was like, 'Okay, Sainte-Marie did do great things for Indigenous people. But the bottom line is, I believe a lot of her platform is built on lies, not ignorance.'"

When asked if they thought USask should revoke Sainte-Marie's honorary degree, Graham said that "They should revoke it, that is something they should do. And I think that this is going to be very important to start the conversation of [needing] to remove it because one of the [university's] supporting pillars is reconciliation. I don't think that they're necessarily being malicious [by] having her page up [about] her degree. It honestly might have just slipped through the cracks. It was a long time ago, [and] I don't think we should condemn the university ... I think they need to do it. And once it's called out, then that's where the condemning factor might come in [if they say] 'we're not taking it down.'"

Merasty added, "I agree that we shouldn't necessarily condemn the university for doing it because it might have been ignorance. If the response is [them] saying 'no, we shouldn't revoke it,' then yeah, we can condemn you."

The Sheaf reached out to USask for a comment on the Sainte-Marie situation. They responded that, "Any decision around revoking an honorary doctorate at the University of Saskatchewan would be made by our Senate, in accordance with The University of Saskatchewan Act, 1995. Discussions related to individual honorary degree candidates or recipients are confidential in nature, although decision outcomes would be made public."

Under USask's Guidelines for Honorary Degrees, revocation can be because "The individual, after investigation, has obtained the honorary degree or been added to the honorary degree nominees list by fraud, deception, or any other inappropriate means."

USask did not provide any further information on when a Senate meeting would take place or what the procedure is during these meetings.

A final conjoined statement from Graham, Desjarlais and Merasty on the matter is the following: "We want the university to do what is right by revoking her honorary degree and status. Follow suit with other institutions by acknowledging the fact that her platform was built on lies."



Buffy Sainte-Marie attends the TIFF Tribute Awards in September 2022 | Arthur Mola | Invision/AP

**Have a USask story idea?
We want to hear about it.**



editor@thesheaf.com

The Myth of AI: Checking in on the AI Industry and its Rhetoric

Is AI as bad as it's been made out to be... or even as good as it's been made out to be?

Hannah Ha

AI has not left public conversation in years. AI is bad, AI is profit, AI will replace us all, AI is the future, AI is killing the planet.

Arguments against AI defend human intelligence, pushing for integrity behind art and the human touch. Arguments promoting AI claim convenience and technological revolution, marketing it as highly profitable. AI is integrated into every app and search engine, yet it seems that people are spending more time managing AI tools than they actually save by using them.

Attitudes are very divided: the industry side is optimistic and investing heavily, while public sentiment is one of AI fatigue. So, after the last few years of supposed "innovation," what is there to show for it? What are we mistaking as advancement, and what happens when the smoke clears?

Under the umbrella of machine learning are large language models (LLMs), used for chatbots like ChatGPT and Gemini. LLMs are designed to recognize patterns in text and generate human-like responses. They don't think, feel or possess awareness. What is often mistaken for "intelligence" is just prediction and pattern recognition.

When given an input, LLMs calculate the most likely next word based on training data. There's no inner experience, intention or understanding behind it. The myth of intelligence and expertise persists because LLMs are very good at mimicking conversation, creating the illusion of personality or consciousness. However, this is less like a human mind and more like autocomplete on a keyboard.

The AI Boom and Bubble

When Wall Street told tales of exponential profit in the stock market, it crashed and led to the Great Depression. When

previous economic bubbles. Companies are now participating in an AI arms race of sorts, investing heavily in AI by building data centers, launching startups and racing to adopt new tools, all driven by fear of missing out.

Despite this investment, firms like OpenAI are burning cash. In 2025 Open AI collected \$4.3 billion in revenue while still posting a net loss of \$13.5 billion during that six month period. OpenAI is not the only one. An economic report from MIT concluded that despite investing US\$30-\$40 billion into GenAI, 95 per cent of organizations are not seeing returns on their investments. The same companies are cycling the same investments amongst themselves, creating an illusion of profit and abundance within the industry.

This is where cyclical investment patterns come in that explain the illusion of endless growth in the AI sector. In the early phase of a tech boom, companies overspend on infrastructure like data centers, chips and capacity, anticipating explosive future demand. At the beginning, this can look like growth and a promising industry. That's exactly what firms have begun to do in this AI boom, stockpiling to avoid falling behind in AI. If everyone is spending, there must be a good reason, right?

The risk is that this turns into overinvestment. If demand doesn't keep pace or if companies realize they've built more capacity than they can profitably use, spending slows sharply. This has been observed in other tech bubbles, where there is intense buildup, followed by a cooling-off period when reality catches up to expectations.

The AI boom has created a bottleneck that runs straight through the AI chip maker NVIDIA. Most modern AI systems depend on powerful graphics processing units to train and run models. Whether it's startups or Big Tech firms like Microsoft, they're all buying the same core ingredient: NVIDIA chips. The entire AI industry is stacked on top of a single supplier, causing their profits to surge. In this AI digital gold rush, many are saying that NVIDIA is selling the shovels.

With the sale of its AI chips, NVIDIA's total profits for the fiscal year was USD\$120 billion in 2025, which has grown hugely since the \$4.4 billion of profit that they saw in 2023. This means that the entire tech industry is investing in physical infrastructure and supporting the growth of one firm, which also happens to be the only firm to see any profit in this AI boom.

Public Perception

Over the last few years, AI has developed

and improved at a rate that was hard to foresee, with regulations lagging behind. In the early days of OpenAI and DeepSeek, the public met generative AI with curiosity but skepticism. Many were immediately against a tool so inaccurate and dysregulated. Others were excited by the consumer-level access to services like ChatGPT and, seemingly overnight, being able to generate texts and images at the drop of a hat. Though intrigued by its ability to mimic human speech, generative AI engines did not yet have the access to information needed to maintain accuracy, nor flawlessly mimic human speech.

Today, AI is an educator's worst nightmare; teachers rush to reel in AI usage among students while AI continues to improve and better mimic human speech but not necessarily factual accuracy. Government regulation has also not moved as fast as the development of AI, which has led to society working around it rather than effectively integrating it. According to a 2025 study by Abacus Data, 51 per cent of Canadians distrust AI, and 55 per cent reportedly never or rarely engage with it.

Despite the narrative that AI is a magic wand that the public and professional sectors will integrate, there is major distrust and skepticism stemming from a lack of regulation and exploitative data gathering. According to the study, the top five concerns of the Canadian public regarding AI are malicious uses of AI, spread of misinformation and fake content, loss of privacy, safety and security concerns, as well as increased unemployment.

On the other hand, the leading perceived benefits of AI are increased efficiency and productivity, reduced human error, enhanced convenience, improved healthcare and medical advances and better access to information and education. The study found that 45% of Canadians use AI tools on a regular basis. This means that for some, AI is a neutral tool that has become a part of everyday life. This is true for younger Canadians especially: the study found that 72% of those aged 18 to 29 and 62% of those aged 30 to 44 regularly use AI tools in their everyday lives.

AI's Achilles Heel

Though there is distrust, public perception agrees that the potential is there. An article by The Kuwait College of Science and Technology published in 2025 looks at how students and faculty apply AI tools in post secondary education.

Continued on page 21.



Artificial intelligence concept | Metamworks from Getty Images | Canva Pro

Wait, What is AI?

Science fiction novels and Black Mirror episodes often forewarn of AI gaining sentience and replacing humans. Tech companies also play along with this idea of rapid development of a tool that can replace humans in the workforce, selling this promise of innovation to investors.

It is important to dissect these narratives and understand what AI actually is. AI is not an overnight invention growing beyond control; it has been used in machine learning models in the past for many professional and scientific fields. It enables systems to learn patterns from data, gradually improving performance by training itself. Autocorrect on a Word Document uses these traditional machine learning models, placing that squiggly red line under a misspelled word or suggesting the next word based on the user's most frequent typing patterns.

widespread confidence in the U.S. housing market proved to be wrong, it led to the 2008 housing crisis. NFTs and cryptocurrency saw the same hype and sharp fall, leaving investors out to dry.

Economic bubbles are a market phenomenon that describes rapid increases in asset prices, where the promised value of an asset does not match the asset's actual intrinsic value. It usually plays out like so: inflated prices caused by optimism in market behaviour and speculative investment, causing an eventual burst of these bubbles when market sentiment catches up and firms and investors bail and incite rapid sell-off.

Many economists noticed a similar trend surrounding the AI industry. The AI bubble hypothesizes that the massive hype and investment surrounding the AI industry exceeds actual profit, similar to

A Unified Voice and 300 Racquets later

The Student-Led Revival of Badminton at USask.

Katherine Walcer

When the University of Saskatchewan's badminton club first launched, it wasn't chasing medals or headlines. It was chasing something simpler, a voice.

"We felt our sport needed a unified voice," says Doris Yim, co-president of the USask badminton club.

Before the club was formally established and was only a few people, the badminton community at USask was struggling quietly. Court times were shrinking. Scheduled gym slots were occasionally cancelled or moved to less accessible hours without much notice. What had once felt like a thriving pocket of campus life was slowly thinning out.

"It hurt seeing a thriving community shrink simply due to lack of communication and opportunity," Yim explains, through a shared interview through email.

The idea to change that came casually, during a study session after playing. Yim and her now co-president, Alex Camacho began talking about what badminton could look like if students had stronger representation and better communication with university recreation management.

"We wanted to give our community a unified voice to talk to the university directives with."

What followed was not a solo effort, but what Yim describes as "a massive collective effort" involving the executive team, existing members and USask Rec. Since forming the club, they've established direct, reliable communication with sports management, which is something that has already changed the landscape for players.

And the response? Immediate.

"We started with only ten registered students," Yim says. Within weeks, that number jumped past 100. Just a couple of months later, the club is now sitting at nearly 300 officially registered members, and counting.

And that figure doesn't even include community members outside the university who regularly drop in to play. The growth speaks to more than just interest in a sport. It reflects something students at USask are actively looking for: connection.

Especially in Saskatoon winters, when daylight fades early, and motivation can fade with it, organized recreation becomes more than exercise; it becomes mental health support.

"It's about getting out of your apartment, playing a sport and seeing people," Yim says. "That's so incredibly important for mental health during these very cold winter seasons."

For students who might feel intimidated walking into a competitive gym space, Yim is quick to emphasize something important: This club is for everyone. "Badminton is a very beginner-friendly sport," she says.

Skill levels range from students who picked up a racquet for the first time a week ago to players who have been competing since childhood. The club does not currently separate competitive players from recreational ones through tryouts.

"Right now, we don't have a tryout to separate competitive players from recreational players, as we want everyone to just play and enjoy themselves," Yim explains. "Even if you are a total beginner, you will always have someone to play with."

That inclusivity has become one of the club's defining characteristics. Still, the executive team has bigger plans in mind. Creating a separate competitive team is something they would love to implement down the line, especially as interest continues to grow.

Growth hasn't slowed the club's ambition; it's expanded it.

"Our future goals include hosting self-funded tournaments with amazing prizes to push the sport into the university's competitive scene," Yim says.

They've already discussed inviting players from other Canadian universities for tournaments. Bringing inter-university competition to USask isn't just a dream; it's a direction forward.

The club is also planning to bring in professional coaches for both beginner and intermediate players. That step would allow new members to develop fundamentals while offering more experienced players structured improvement.

It's clear the leadership isn't thinking small. But what makes badminton distinct on campus is not only its competitive potential.

"What makes badminton unique is the perfect balance it strikes," Yim says.

"It's a highly social sport that pushes you to catch up with friends, but it's also a sport that is easy to pick up and very hard to master." That balance, casual enough to laugh between rallies and competitive enough to keep you chasing improvement, is part of what has sustained interest.

Yim speaks about the "constant chase of improving." The sharp snap of the racquet against the shuttlecock signals progress.

"There is nothing like finally hitting that one shot you've been practicing." For many



Members of the USask badminton club | USask badminton club

members, that incremental improvement is what keeps them returning week after week.

When asked what surprises people about the club, Yim doesn't hesitate. "How welcoming and embracing the community is to newcomers." She speaks from personal experience.

"I am someone who initially struggles to pick up sports," she says. But veteran players encouraged her. They wanted to see her improve. That culture of support pushed her to continue.

Now, she wants to be that supportive presence for the next wave of beginners.

Sports can be cost-prohibitive, but another positive of badminton on campus is the cost, or lack thereof.

"It's offered for free by USask Rec on campus," she says. "You don't even need to own a racquet or a shuttlecock to try it out." In an era where cost can be a barrier to participation in student activities, keeping badminton accessible has been a top priority.

"One of our top priorities is keeping costs down so the sport remains accessible."

Students can attend open rec sessions hosted by USask at the education gym, and the club is planning frequent low-cost learn to play sessions, particularly for beginners. The message is simple: Show up.

When asked about a proud moment so far, Yim doesn't cite a championship or a single event. She talks about numbers. "The sheer volume of students showing up to our events."

Dozens upon dozens of players are arriving eager to play and support the scene.

"We do not take that for granted."

That turnout validated something

important: this wasn't just a small niche interest. There was demand. There was hunger for this space.

The club plans to continue expanding by hosting bigger events, developing resources, building brand identity and even launching merchandise. But underneath those ambitions is a constant priority.

"Our members are, and always will be, our top priority."

At its core, the USask Badminton Club represents something larger than rallies and tournaments. It represents student initiative. It represents reclaiming space. It represents what can happen when a small group of students sees a gap in campus life and decides to fill it.

From ten to nearly 300 in just months, the growth isn't an accident. It's built on accessibility, intentional leadership and an environment where beginners aren't sidelined, they are welcomed.

In a university environment that can often feel isolating, especially in winter, spaces like this matter.

They give structure to the week. They give a reason to leave the apartment or dorms.

They give a sense of progress that isn't tied to grades.

And sometimes, they give you the satisfying snap of a perfectly timed smash.

As the club looks ahead to inter-university tournaments, professional coaching and expanded programming, one thing remains constant: the original goal.

A unified voice. A stronger community. A sport that finally has its place.

And judging by the energy in the gym, that place is only getting bigger.

Black Excellence on the Runway: Olamide Olaloku's

The Huskie star reflects on representation, resilience and the community that carried her to U



Olamide Olaloku | King Studios

Nammi Nguyen

This March, Olamide Olaloku made history, topping off her Huskie triple jump career with a U Sports gold medal, a program record and the performance she'd been chasing for years.

The final-year sociology and psychology major came into the competition confident and in strong form.

"I was excited going into the competition seeded number one. I wanted to have fun, do this for the last time and enjoy myself."

Arriving in Winnipeg four days before the competition, Olaloku felt relaxed. But when the day came, she suddenly found herself anxious and unexpectedly ill — something she had never experienced before.

"I took some Gravol and then ibuprofen, but the combination of those things made me so drowsy ... I was just super weak, tired and off my game, so the competition was by no means easy."

Her muscles felt heavy, and she relied on caffeine just to stay awake. When it came time to jump, the physical strain and mental fog made everything feel even more difficult.

"I was still a bit overwhelmed with feeling

ill and trying to overcome that mentally. There was a moment where I thought, 'I guess I can go home with second, that's fine.' Then I caught myself — no, you came here to win."

With the support of her teammates and coaches, and drawing on years of perseverance, Olaloku managed to flip the switch.

On her penultimate attempt, she broke her own Huskie record, surpassing the 12.73m distance she set at the Canada West Championship, earning gold with a leap of 12.88m.

"Having that determination of wanting to win and my teammates encouraging me between jumps really helped me. Winning was such a beautiful moment, getting to celebrate with my teammates and coaches."

To her, the victory means much more than just a medal.

"I feel like I'm on top of the world. It means so much for this to happen in my last year. I've been setting goals for so long, and I checked off nearly everything on my list. I wanted to break my record so many times, and I did. It's the process that got me there."

Throughout her time at the University of

Saskatchewan, Olaloku has built an impressive résumé: U Sports triple jump gold medallist (2026), U Sports triple jump bronze medallist (2024), three-time Canada West triple jump gold medallist (2022, 2024, 2026), Canada West long jump bronze medallist (2022), Canadian national outdoor U20 triple jump silver medallist (2022), seven-time Huskie triple jump record holder, Canada West triple jump record holder and a member of five Canada West women's team championship titles and three U Sports women's team podium finishes.

Furthermore, competing is deeply individual. You're essentially up against yourself, chasing centimetres or milliseconds.

"In track, you have to be a little bit delusional. In my first year, I said I wanted to jump 13 meters — a full meter ahead of what I was already jumping, which is so unrealistic. But being a little delusional and saying, 'It's going to be me, it's going to happen,' kept me going. I definitely went through periods where I thought, 'I need to quit, this sucks, I hate it,' but having that

"I feel like I'm on top of the world. It means so much for this to happen in my last year. I've been setting goals for so long, and I checked off nearly everything on my list. I wanted to break my record so many times, and I did. It's the process that got me there."

But the journey hasn't always been easy, with Olaloku facing her fair share of setbacks and challenges along the way.

Track and field teams face a different reality due to the roster size and nature of the sport. They don't have a team room, some athletes pay out of pocket and assistant coaches juggle full-time jobs in addition to coaching — a stark contrast to the situation many other teams face on campus.

"The older you get, it can go one way or another — [it] can make you frustrated or more appreciative of the people who are there. Our [assistant] coaches are volunteers [who] get an honorarium. This is something they do in their own time, and the way they invest in us is huge. I think this just makes our success that much more impressive. We might not have as much funding that backs us, but the support from the people who show up means so much."

There has been growing support for the team in recent years through the Huskie Women of Influence Breakfast fundraiser, private donations and their own vertical fundraising. Olaloku hopes that momentum continues for a program now onto its eighth consecutive Canada West championship.

That support and having the right people in your corner becomes even more crucial in a sport where your body is constantly evaluated.

"It can be overwhelming when it comes to the body piece, because your physique is so important in track. It's overwhelming thinking about all the different things you have to pay attention to. I'm thankful for the coaching staff's care and the team around me so I don't have to carry all that alone."

hope that it could happen, and sticking with it, made the difference."

The isolation of the sport hit her hardest in her first year.

"I'm so jealous of team sports. I wish I could have that bond — the way you interact, the closeness you have because you depend on each other and go through losses and wins together ... I definitely struggled with that a lot in my first year ... I was so lonely."

With time, Olaloku found empowerment in the independence.

"That was difficult: figuring out my place, who I wanted to be, where I wanted to fit in. But I'm still very grateful that I am in an individual sport, and how that's helped me develop my character and be more accountable to myself — not just in track, but in life, in my relationships, in school — kind of holding myself to a different standard, because I know no one else is gonna pick up the slack for me, except me."

Olaloku has also found a support system in other Black athletes. Black representation within Huskie Athletics is limited — especially for women — and that absence is felt. On the track and field team, where the presence is strongest, being surrounded by teammates who share her identity has made a world of difference.

"It's just so hard to put into words. Feeling seen and understood has just made the biggest difference, having people who know where I come from ... They understand the expectations that are on me as a Black woman. They understand the struggles and the difficulties, but also the dreams that you have and the things that you want to achieve."

Record-Breaking Jump

Sports gold.

She also wants to be someone who encourages young Black girls and women of colour to get into sport in general. Just this year, Olaloku was part of a group that established the USask Black Student-Athlete Association.

“I’m kind of upset it took us this long. We’re always talking about how well we do when we support each other, when we understand each other, when we can see people who look like us ... It’s a good start to create community and build unity among Black student-athletes, to support and encourage one another, to show up for one another, because we know the difference it makes ... Fisayo Moibi, Kyle Conteh, Timi Adelugba and I were part of the founding group, and Darnell Wyke and Caitrin Hodson were super helpful in

bringing us together to do so.”

Although graduating this year, she hopes to leave a legacy with the association, supporting Black Huskie athletes for years to come.

When she looks back on what carried her through her own journey, the answer is clear. For Olaloku, success has never been something she achieved alone. Her faith, family and coaches form the foundation she returns to.

“Knowing that I have a greater purpose in this life — to help others, to be like Christ, to love others — made track seem less important in the fact that I have this gift and I can do amazing things, but I can also just be the person that I am, and God’s still

gonna love me.”

Her mother, in particular, has been a constant source of strength and direction.

“My mom — just learning from the example that she is in her life, and how resilient she is, how strong she is, how she’s always encouraged me to do my best and put my best foot forward, and always use every opportunity that I’m given to do things well.”

She’s also quick to mention the coaches and support who helped shape her into the athlete she is today.

“A huge shout out to Ryan Bilanski, Jayden Wiebe, Kevin Cumming, Frantz-Kwame Smith and Mavis Dzaka from

earlier in my years ... they also shaped how I saw things. I would say that’s what I reflect on most — the people.”

Olaloku plans to continue training and competing after graduation — something she didn’t think she would do, but after how well the season went, she very much looks forward to it.

“I’m just excited. I feel like the world is my oyster ... there are just so many opportunities that are out there. I’m very excited to see what the future holds.”

Congratulations on an incredible Huskie career, Olamide!



Olamide Olaloku | Electric Umbrella



Olamide Olaloku after winning gold at the U Sports nationals | Mike Still



Olamide Olaloku | Electric Umbrella

Dr.

Aaron Bazylak
Dentist

fresh
dental

306.664.8737
1-3130 8th St E. Saskatoon

www.draaronbazylak.com
@freshdentalsaskatoon



Ella Murphy Wiebe Closes Out Her Huskie Career

The Huskies Women's Basketball Team captures their second straight national championship

Nammi Nguyen

Ella Murphy Wiebe capped off her Huskie career at the highest of highs. The mechanical engineering student and Saskatoon product helped lead the University of Saskatchewan women's basketball team to its second straight national championship — and earned tournament MVP honours in the process.

Journey to the Huskies and Family Support

Growing up, basketball wasn't always the plan for Murphy Wiebe, despite her deep family ties to the Huskie program. Her father, Dean Wiebe, is a Huskie Men's basketball legend and ranks fourth on the program's all-time scoring list. Her aunt, Kathleen Murphy, was also a Huskie Women's Basketball player. Still, for most of her childhood, she played soccer.

"My dad didn't force it or anything. I kept playing soccer until I started playing a bit of basketball. I really liked it because it came more naturally to me. Then it was getting to the point where I was having to decide which one I was actually going to choose."

At about 13, she made the switch. At the time, she didn't picture herself as a future Huskie, let alone a national champion.

"I just liked playing. I didn't really like the super competitiveness, which is ironic since I'm very competitive as a person. It wasn't until Grade 11 [that] I was like, 'Oh, I think I should continue playing.' So that's when I decided, yeah, Huskies would be cool."

Being recruited during the pandemic wasn't easy, but head coach Lisa Thomaidis saw something in the "awkward player with red socks," as Murphy Wiebe describes her younger self.

Huskie Basketball continues to run in the Murphy Wiebe family, as two years ago, her brother Owen joined the men's team.

"I was super happy because I knew that in my first year it was pretty tough, and I think that's a common experience for everybody. So I was happy that I could be there for him if he needed."

Having so much familial support in her life has been invaluable to Murphy Wiebe.

"It allowed me to just enjoy basketball ... Having people to talk to and vent to, and to get outside perspectives that I know will always be truthful — I think that allowed me to really enjoy the experience."

Balancing Basketball, Academics and Adversity

Off the court, Murphy Wiebe studies mechanical engineering.

"I thrive on stress. That's what gets me



Ella Murphy Wiebe cuts down a piece of the net after winning the national championship | Connor Jay

through. Sometimes I need a day of rest, because it's not actually rest. If I'm stressing about how I'm not doing things, it'll just make me do things."

Throughout Murphy Wiebe's career, she's dealt with injuries and setbacks. This year, being injury-free in the crucial latter stages of the season was a major factor in her consistency.

"Being able to not think about injury — just that alone is such a big thing. I definitely took it for granted before, but I don't think I did this season. I worked hard to keep myself injury-free."

As a fifth-year, she also embraced a leadership role shaped by her past experiences of feeling like an outsider.

"I think I have a different perspective on things than a lot of people ... I was homeschooled until Grade 11, so I came into high school not knowing a lot of people. I was the weird homeschooled kid."

It's why she became intentional about creating the kind of environment she once wished she had.

"I've always wanted everyone to feel

included, and that's been my goal as a fifth-year — to make sure everyone feels that and feels like they're part of the team. I hope that when people remember me, they remember that."

Entering the Season as Defending Champions

Coming off last year's national title, Murphy Wiebe admits the challenge of being the team everyone is out to get and having to live up to the high standards they've set.

"It was scary, almost, because I always think the most unpredictable teams are teams who have just lost, and we were not that. That's an edge we didn't have."

Despite the pressure, the Huskies picked up exactly where they left off, going undefeated in all 20 regular-season games and extending their winning streak to 51.

This run set up a CanWest Quarterfinal matchup against the Calgary Dinos, who stunned the Huskies at home 58-61, knocking the Huskies out of the playoffs.

"It sounds crazy, but losing — I forgot what it felt like ... that feeling is the worst. But it's also the best type of catalyst to get you working and to make you realize how special winning is. It's easy to take it for granted when you've won 51 straight games."

The loss shifted the team's mindset.

"There was always that thought of, 'What if this is the game we're going to lose?' Losing the game against Calgary was the best thing for us, because that thought completely went away. We were now the underdogs."

After the loss, the Huskies went right back to work in the gym, banking on the lone nationals wildcard berth granted to the best-performing team that didn't automatically qualify.

Their dominant regular season paid off, and the Huskies were off to Laval for Nationals.

"The important thing was that we went into nationals with the mindset that winning doesn't come easy — you have to work for it."

The Final 8: A Championship Run at Laval

Located in Quebec City, Université Laval is known nationwide for its passionate fan base. Two years ago, their men's basketball team hosted nationals as the lowest seed — the team didn't even qualify through playoffs, but received an automatic berth as the hosts — and went on to win the whole tournament.

This year, the eighth-seed women's team were hoping to do the same. In the



Ella Murphy Wiebe for the basket against the UFV Cascades | Electric Umbrella

as a National Champion and Tournament MVP

as Murphy Wiebe earns tournament MVP honours.

quarterfinals, Laval upset No. 1-ranked Toronto Metropolitan University, and the No. 5-ranked Huskies overcame the No. 4-ranked University of British Columbia. The women's semifinal was set to be a blockbuster matchup featuring the defending champs and the challenging hosts.

"It was a really cool atmosphere. The lights were really bright, and it felt like we were on a stage. The Laval game was really loud. It might have been a mix [of] me not knowing French and me not really hearing things because it was so loud, but it didn't affect me personally. I don't think it affected many of us — it was just background noise."

In that game, Murphy Wiebe delivered a career-best performance with 26 points and 16 rebounds, helping her team win 55-43 and move on to the finals.

The Huskies went on to defeat the University of New Brunswick in the final 77-68, securing back-to-back national championships.

When the buzzer went off, a huge weight was lifted off Murphy Wiebe's shoulders.

"For me, it was just relief. It's been five years of anticipation ... I really wanted to end my Huskie career with a national championship."

The physical toll of the tournament was undeniable, too.

"I kept getting hit in the face, hit in the knee — I was just happy the game was over. I was exhausted. I've never felt the muscle fatigue and tiredness in certain places that I felt that week."

Across the three games, Murphy Wiebe played a vital role in the Huskies' national win, totalling 55 points and 34 rebounds. Her standout performances made her the clear choice for tournament MVP.

Still, she credits her success to the people around her.

"I think the support of my coach and my teammates was such a big thing. I've struggled with confidence. I really do think the thing that's held me back most, other than injuries, has been my own confidence. My coach has been saying that for years, and I knew it at the time. But this tournament, I just wasn't thinking about that. I felt the support of my coaches and teammates, and I started to believe it."

Anyone watching Murphy Wiebe could see that her confidence was undeniable. She was unstoppable in the paint, using her footwork and strength to finish possession after possession.

A Dynasty Built on Culture and Community

Head coach Lisa Thomaidis' influence has shaped the program for nearly three decades, building what many consider a true Huskie dynasty.

"What Coach has built — she's so detail-oriented. We make fun of her for certain things, but I really do think the culture she's made is a winning culture. It doesn't only focus on the court aspect. It's about who we are as individuals. That has been the deciding factor in our success. How you are together as a team can decide if you're a good team or a great team. I think it really came down to Coach."

Murphy Wiebe couldn't be prouder to represent the University of Saskatchewan for the last five years.

"There is such a deep-rooted basketball community here, and I think we have the best fans in the country ... With it being such a small city and province, we're a lot more connected. How tight-knit the basketball community is here — that's more powerful than whatever they've got going on in big cities."

The Bronze Baby — the U Sports Women's Basketball Trophy — will be staying in Saskatchewan. Murphy Wiebe shares her reaction to winning the iconic but rather unorthodox trophy.

"After we won last year, people kept asking us why we were so excited for getting third, because bronze means third ... I don't know the actual little lady, but I've grown to like her."

Looking Ahead

Now that Murphy Wiebe's Huskie career has come to a close, she hopes to continue playing basketball professionally abroad.

"I'm going to play pro next year [and] take a year off. I don't have a team yet — that'll happen in the next month or two because their seasons are just finishing. I'm really excited to see where that takes me."

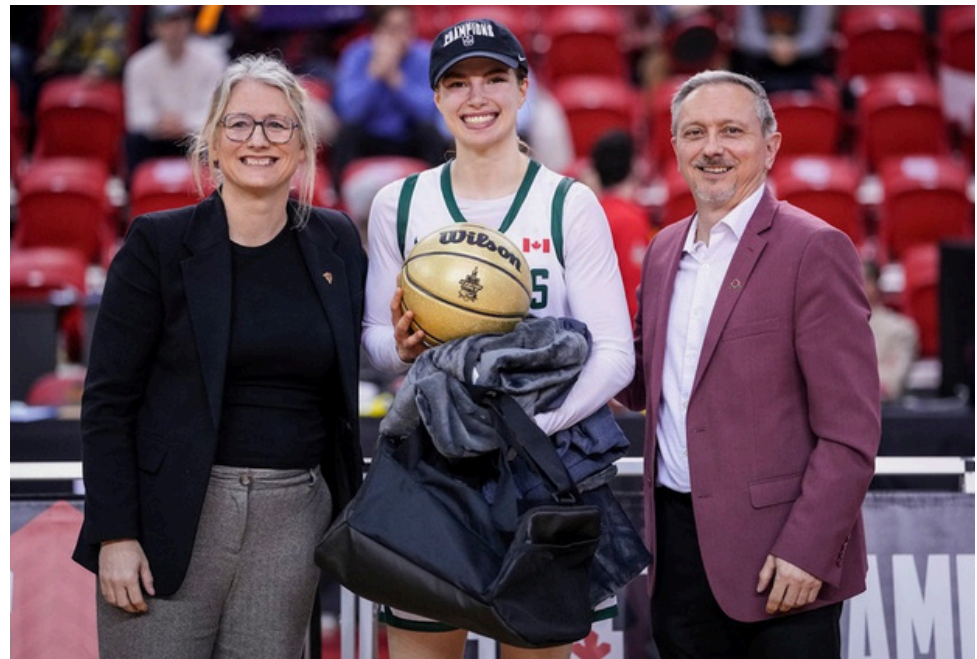
The excitement of what's ahead is matched only by her gratitude for the people who shaped her journey.

"To everybody who has been along through this process — thank you. To my coach, [Lisa Thomaidis], who believed in me always, even when I didn't. And also Ali Fairbrother — she's my bigs coach. She's always been there for me, and she always looks after the bigs. And to my teammates — I've never had such a supportive team as I've had this year. And then my family — they've obviously always been there for me, and they're pretty awesome."

Congratulations to Ella and the Huskie Women's Basketball team!



Ella Murphy Wiebe and her teammates celebrating after winning their second national championship | Connor Jay



Ella Murphy Wiebe being awarded tournament MVP | Mathieu Belanger



From left Andrea Dodig, Ella Murphy Wiebe, Jordyn Reding, Téa DeMong and Elliot Liefiers | Connor Jay



The 2025/26 U Sports back-to-back National Champions, Saskatchewan Huskies | Mathieu Belanger

Who Gets to Be Seen?

Analyzing representation in modern media and its importance.

Emily Mainprize

In a world that is increasingly becoming more reliant on technology, media serves as one of the most powerful tools for shaping perceptions, reinforcing cultural norms and influencing individual identity. From film and television to social media and advertising, the stories we consume fundamentally play a role in how we understand ourselves and others.

Representation in the media is not simply a matter of fairness or visibility. It is a fundamental component of social development, psychological well-being and cultural progress. Especially in the inclusion of diverse identities across race, gender, sexuality, ability and culture.

The media does not merely reflect reality; it helps construct it. Sociologists often describe media as a “socializing agent,” meaning it teaches audiences about norms, values and acceptable behaviours. When certain groups are underrepresented or misrepresented, audiences may internalize biased or incomplete understandings of those groups.

This phenomenon is supported by cultivation theory, developed by George Gerbner, which posits that long-term exposure to media content can shape viewers’ perceptions of reality. For instance, if the media consistently portrays certain racial or ethnic groups in criminal roles, audiences may begin to associate those groups with criminality in real life.

with disabilities remain significantly underrepresented in film and television.

Moreover, when marginalized individuals are given the opportunity to tell their own stories, whether as writers, directors or producers, the result is often a more accurate and meaningful representation. This shift not only improves the quality of storytelling but also challenges dominant narratives that have historically excluded diverse voices.

One of the most powerful functions of representation is its ability to challenge stereotypes and foster empathy. When audiences are exposed to stories that humanize individuals from different backgrounds, it can reduce prejudice and promote understanding.

For example, the portrayal of individuals with disabilities in complex, multidimensional roles can challenge assumptions about their capabilities and experiences.

A report by the Pew Research Center indicates that exposure to diverse media content is associated with more inclusive attitudes toward marginalized groups. This suggests that representation is not only beneficial for those being represented but also for society as a whole.

This inclusion is not only important for visibility but also for employment equity for the actors and members of these groups. It’s important to have individuals who represent these groups both in the writing room for movies and shows, in addition to on the screen.

It’s also extremely important to point out that many people identify with more than one historically marginalized or underrepresented group, particularly when gender is added to the equation.

Legal scholar Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw coined the term “intersectionality” to conceptualize the way that different identity markers, such as race, gender, sexuality and class, interact and affect each other.

Media can also be a powerful tool for shaping and changing societal norms, being a voice for change and visibility. Stories that are told, as well as those which are omitted from the narrative, help to shape the view of what is considered as being “normal” to the rest of the world.

By having more people depicted in books and shows, these authors and directors are not only providing an inclusive environment where people can feel comfortable and seen, but directly calling for societal change and inclusion. These creations are really a part of a larger initiative to push for inclusion, not just online and within media, but in the world in general.

When asked about how representation in media affects real-life perceptions of certain groups, third year sociology major and business graduate Felix Crawford explained that surface level depictions aren’t enough, “We need diverse people in the news, critically acclaimed performers, successful people in all kinds of industries. It isn’t enough for a reporter or script writer to throw a drug user, an amputee, a Haitian person or transgender woman into the background of a story. These characters need intentionality and depth, because these demographics have depth in the real world.”

“Everyone is sick of the same stories and stereotypes the media has pushed for years. Find something that subverts expectations made by the media that so desperately wants to see everyone adhere to the same boxes. Let representative individuals or characters be more than their diversity.” He said.

When critiquing, creating or even just casually viewing media, we should consider not just whether individual characters are stereotyped but if a broad range of diversity, including intersecting identities, is represented. Media is not simply a tool for entertainment, but rather a greater picture for the stories of individuals to be seen and heard. But it’s equally important to make sure that the struggles that these people face in real life aren’t the characters only focus.

“It’s great to show diverse folks have more going on than their identity. This way, the marginalized identity is shown to the public as more than just the trials they face. Show a disabled person who’s worried about getting into graduate school, or a person with an intellectual disability who’s coping with the mystery of her daughter’s disappearance. Show Joy too. Why can’t an indigenous person be friendly and happy? Why can’t a queer couple go on a perfectly good date? Diverse joy is resistance against the dominant narrative.” Crawford said.

It’s critical that we view and support media that portrays individuals from marginalized groups as well as displays intersectionality, because ultimately, representation is not merely about visibility. It’s about equity, understanding and the power to shape a more inclusive society.



Colourful mosaic portrait of diverse faces | Your Name from ninjaDesigns | Canva Pro

When people are depicted on screen, they feel a sense of belonging and having their community seen. The majority of people, when asked, can come up with a character or a film that they really relate to. But, for many individuals who are part of one or several marginalized groups, this may not be the case.

In the media, there are some groups of people who are fundamentally underrepresented or discarded. The effects that this has on the members within these groups of people are profound.

One of the most significant reasons representation matters lies in its influence on identity formation and self-perception. According to the social identity theory, individuals derive a sense of self from the groups to which they belong. When people see themselves accurately and positively reflected in the media, it can reinforce a sense of belonging and self-worth.

Conversely, a lack of representation, or worse, negative or stereotypical portrayals, can lead to feelings of invisibility or inferiority. This is particularly impactful for children and adolescents, whose identities are still developing.

This creates a false narrative and perpetuates stereotypes, especially in children who derive much of their views about people and the world in general from their family as well as the media that they consume.

Similarly, gender representation in media has historically reinforced rigid stereotypes, depicting women as passive and overly emotional and men as dominant and unemotional. These portrayals can influence everything from career aspirations to interpersonal relationships.

Representation is not solely about inclusion; it is about authenticity. Tokenism, or the superficial inclusion of marginalized characters without depth or complexity, can be just as harmful as exclusion. Authentic representation requires that stories be told with nuance, cultural sensitivity and input from the communities being depicted.

Organizations like the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media have conducted extensive research demonstrating the disparities in media representation. Their findings show that women, people of colour and individuals



Latent Swamp at PAVED Arts: Endless Ecological Inquiries

Duckweed and Deconstructing the Politics of Attention.

Laila Haider

At PAVED Arts, where visual media and experimentation often collide, *Latent Swamp* by Kelly Jaclynn Andres is both its newest installation and latest proposition: what if the smallest, most overlooked forms of life held the most expansive possibilities for rethinking our relationships to the environment?

At the centre of the exhibition is duckweed. While it appears to be nothing more than an unassuming aquatic plant — often dismissed as pond scum — Andres reframes it as something much more complex: a living system capable of transformation and communication.

The installation is a speculative wetland. It's an amalgamation of both biological and technological life, through Andres's utilization of human participation, machine learning and living systems to create the work.

Trained as an interdisciplinary artist with a PhD from Concordia University, Andres's broader practice consistently engages with what she calls "multispecies" relationships — collaborations between humans and non-human entities like plants, fungi and microorganisms. Rather than treating nature as a passive subject, she positions it as an active participant in meaning-making. Her installations are often alive, unstable and evolving, blurring the boundaries between art object and ecological process.

Latent Swamp continues this trajectory, but with a specificity that feels especially urgent in our current era. Duckweed, in its ability to absorb toxins and purify water, becomes something of a symbol of resilience in an era of environmental degradation. Yet Andres resists the temptation to romanticize. The swamp, after all, is not only a site of renewal — it's also a site of decay, ambiguity and entanglement.

The installation uses water as a material and as a metaphor. Inside a bioremediation lightroom, duckweed filters water reused for cyanotype printing, folding image-making back into ecological cycles. Edible water-lentil treats invite visitors to encounter the swamp through ingestion, extending the circuit from data to metabolism.

Latent Swamp resists the comfort of the picture as an image that frames, resolves

and reassures. Instead, it proposes image-making as a form of response-ability: an entangled practice in which images participate in the world's becoming, clouding perception, redistributing agency and asking what it means to see from within a living system rather than above it.

What makes *Latent Swamp* particularly compelling is its sensory and conceptual layering. Andres is known for creating immersive environments — soundscapes, tactile materials and bio-responsive elements that encourage viewers to engage with their bodies as much as their intellect. While the specifics of the installation may shift depending on its configuration, the underlying approach remains consistent: knowledge is not delivered, but encountered. The viewer is not positioned as an observer standing outside the work, but as a participant entangled within it.

This entanglement extends to the exhibition's conceptual framework. By centring duckweed, Andres draws attention to the ways in which value is assigned — or denied — within ecological and cultural systems. Why do we overlook certain forms of life while elevating others? What does it mean to care for something that is small, diffuse and difficult to individualize? In a culture that often prioritizes visibility, scale and spectacle, *Latent Swamp* offers a counterpoint: a slow, distributed and relational mode of attention.

There is also an implicit critique of anthropocentrism running through the work. Andres's practice, informed by

fields like environmental humanities and critical plant studies, challenges the assumption that humans occupy a central or superior position within ecological networks. Instead, she proposes a more horizontal framework, where agency is shared across species and systems.

This reframing of the narrative requires not just a change in perspective, but a reorientation of values — away from control and extraction, and toward reciprocity and co-existence.

Experiencing *Latent Swamp* is something of an exercise in unlearning. The installation invites its audience to linger in contemplation. The swamp is not something to be drained or simplified; it is a place to be inhabited, even if that habitation is uncomfortable. This discomfort is productive. It opens up space for new ways of thinking about environmental responsibility — not as a set of solutions to be implemented, but as a set of relationships to be navigated.

On a personal level, the exhibition prompts a reconsideration of what counts as meaningful engagement with environmental issues. It is easy to think of sustainability in terms of large-scale interventions — policy changes, technological innovations, global movements.

While these are undoubtedly important, *Latent Swamp* shifts the focus to something more intimate and immediate. It suggests that attention itself is a form of care. To notice duckweed — to take it

seriously and consider its capacities and its role within a larger system — is to begin reconfiguring one's relationship to the environment.

This emphasis on attention resonates beyond the gallery. In a world saturated with information and urgency, there is a tendency to prioritize what is loud, visible and easily digestible. Andres's work pushes against this tendency, advocating for a slower, more attentive mode of engagement. It asks us to consider what we might be missing when we move too quickly, and what might become possible if we allowed ourselves to dwell in complexity.

Ultimately, *Latent Swamp* is less about providing answers than about cultivating a particular kind of awareness. It does not tell us what to think about environmental crises, but rather how to think — and how to feel — within them. By foregrounding the small, the overlooked and the interconnected, Andres creates a space where new forms of understanding can emerge.

Intrigued? Want to get your hands wet in duckweed for yourself?

Join Andres on April 23 at PAVED Arts to take part in the water lentil trials. Participants will have the opportunity to taste test samples of water lentil, take part in conversations about perception, sustainability and the future of food, and reflect on how cultural narratives, ecology and place-based knowledge inform what is considered edible.



Duckweed Growth Module II (detail), mixed media, 2026 | Kelly Jaclynn Andres

@sheafteam on



@usasksheaf on



thesheaf.com





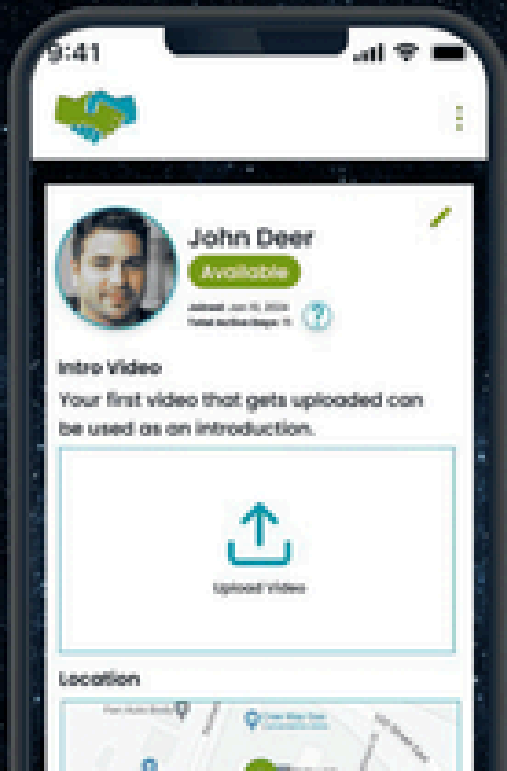

Did you know that Len's Hauling is now the largest locally owned disposal company in Saskatoon? We are proud to provide a lot more than just bins!

- Manual Pick-Up • Snow Hauling • Demolition Services
 - Temporary Fences • Salt - Sand spreading • 15 & 30 yd Bins
- Text Us for your free quote - 306-241-0821 LensHauling.com**



Did you know we provide ...

What else is Len's up to... A FREE App.

Help your community with LEND A HAND

Search for help and offer your support in the Lend a Hand community

Help others across a range of skillsets



Physical



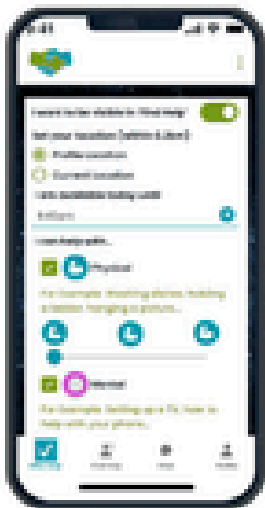
Mental



Outdoors

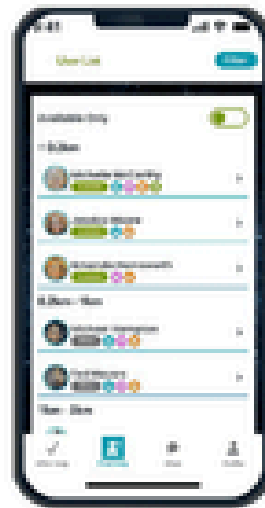


Indoors



Looking to help out and make a few extra bucks?

- Set the type of work you can support
- Set your location where you are available
- Pick the hours you can work
- Set your availability



If you need help, we've got you covered!

- Search for help in your area
- Chat with other users to find help
- Get the help you need

Download Lend A Hand

Scan the QR code with your mobile device to download the Lend A Hand app for FREE.



How to Hack Finals Season

Some science-backed study hacks for your final exams this month.

Laila Haider

University finals season has a way of distorting time — weeks collapse into days, sleep becomes elective and motivation swings between panic and procrastination. During these times, it's easy to fall into the trap of believing that success during finals comes down to grinding harder than everyone else around you.

In reality, research suggests something less dramatic and more useful to getting through these hellish weeks: how you study matters far more than how long you study. Getting into the right mindset isn't about pushing yourself to exhaustion — it's about working with how your brain actually learns.

The first step is letting go of cramming as a strategy. That's right, those all-nighters you've been pulling? They might be hurting more than they're helping. It can feel productive to sit for hours and revise non-stop the night before an exam, but cognitive science has repeatedly shown that distributed practice — often called spaced repetition — is far more effective for retaining information.

Instead of trying to absorb everything in one sitting, you should revisit material over multiple sessions spaced out across time. Plan out a detailed study schedule for these next few weeks, blocking out time to study, time to eat and relax and time to sleep. Each return to content will strengthen your memory and interrupt forgetting, helping you prepare better for the actual exam. Studies across thousands of students and learners have shown that this approach consistently leads to better exam performance as opposed to massed practice, even if it feels less efficient in the moment.

The feeling that spaced studying is somehow less productive is a huge part of the problem facing many students. While it might seem unproductive in the moment or harder than your usual methods, it's infinitely more effective. In fact, some of the most effective study strategies feel more difficult while you are doing them. Psychologists call this “desirable difficulty,” where the effort involved in learning actually improves retention. When you reread notes, everything feels familiar

and easy. When you try to recall information from memory, it feels slow and uncomfortable. However, that discomfort is doing the work. If you're looking to score high in April, you might want to try trusting strategies that feel harder because in the end, the experts say they work better.

Instead of passively reviewing material — highlighting lecture notes and skimming slides on canvas — you should implement retrieval practice. Actively test yourself through practice questions, flashcards or even just writing out what you remember without looking at your notes. In doing this, you're simulating your exam settings and determining where you're strongest and where you need to put more effort in before your actual test. Research consistently shows that retrieval strengthens memory more effectively than rereading.

Testing yourself is not just a way to check what you know — it's one of the best ways to learn it in the first place. A good study session isn't one where everything feels obvious and familiar from the jump. It's one where you struggle, make mistakes, correct them and walk away knowing more than you did at the start.

Another part of the finals mindset is choosing consistency over intensity. The all-nighter is still treated like a symbol of academic dedication, but it's actually one of the least effective ways to prepare. Learning doesn't happen in a single sitting, unfortunately. It builds over time and relies on processes that continue even when you are not studying — especially during sleep. Research in education and neuroscience shows that regular study habits, adequate rest and basic physical activity are all linked to better academic performance. Skipping sleep to study more often than not backfires on students, making it harder for them to focus, recall information and think critically during the exam.

Sleep is not a break from studying — it's part of it. During sleep, the brain consolidates information, transferring it from short-term to long-term memory. Without that process, even well-studied material that you know like the back of your hand becomes harder to access. This is why the days leading up to an exam matter just as much as the hours before it.



Girl sleeping with her head on books | Karola G from Pexels | Canva Pro

A consistent sleep schedule can do more for your performance than an extra late-night review session.

At the same time, managing stress is equally as important as managing time. Finals naturally come with pressure, and a certain level of stress can actually improve performance. The goal is not to eliminate it, but to keep it within a manageable range.

When stress becomes overwhelming, it interferes with concentration and memory. Simple strategies — taking short breaks, going for a walk, practicing mindfulness — can all help regulate that stress and keep you functional. Even stepping away from your desk for ten minutes can reset your focus in a way that pushing through cannot. What's critical is that you don't neglect your studying for your peace, taking hour-long “brain breaks” to scroll TikTok in favour of dealing with the source of your stress — your study materials.

Planning plays a significant role in ensuring your mindset is in the right place for finals. During those weeks, when everything feels urgent, it's easy to shut down or procrastinate. Breaking your workload into smaller, specific tasks makes it more manageable and gives you a clear starting point. A good tactic is making a list of all of your tasks based on urgency and priority to give you a sense of what needs to be done first, and what you've already accomplished. This approach works naturally with spaced repetition, since it encourages you to

revisit topics over time instead of trying to cover everything at once. It also gives you a sense of control, which can reduce stress in a way that half-hearted, last-minute, panic-induced studying can't.

Finals have a way of making students question their academic capabilities, especially when the material feels difficult. It's easy to interpret that difficulty as a sign of inadequacy or even incapability. But research on learning consistently points in the opposite direction. In fact, struggle isn't a sign of failure; it's actually part of the process of understanding. Adopting a more flexible mindset, where ability is considered something that develops through effort and strategy rather than something you're born with, can make a real difference in how you approach studying. It makes it easier to persist, adjust your methods and recover from any setbacks you might face.

Yes, finals are demanding, but they don't always have to be so chaotic. When your study habits line up with how learning actually works — spaced repetition, retrieval practice, consistent routines, proper rest — the process can become more predictable and effective in the long run.

While none of these strategies are new or flashy, they are backed by years of research. So even if your dramatic hacks and last-minute improvisations seem more effective, chances are that if you take advice from people who study studying for a living, you'll perform better on the big day.

Good Luck on Exams!



The Way Time Feels Different Depending on What You're Doing

Time feels fast or slow because emotion, attention, routine and presence change how fully we experience our lives.

Hajra Ghuman

Time may be measured mechanically, but it is also experienced emotionally.

That is one of the strangest and most universal parts of being a person. The same 60 minutes can feel wildly different depending on what you are doing, how you are feeling, who you are with and whether you want the moment to last or end immediately.

A 10-minute wait for an email reply can feel longer than an entire movie. A week during exam season can feel like both a lifetime and a blur. A single awkward conversation can stretch endlessly, while a whole semester can disappear without asking permission.

We pretend time is consistent because our schedules require us to. Society depends on the fiction that everyone is moving through the day in the same way. Classes begin at a certain time. Shifts end at a certain time. Assignments are due at 11:59 p.m. We organize our lives around neat little units of measurement and call that order. Internally, most of us are living in a completely different system, one shaped less by the clock and more by attention, dread, joy, boredom, stress and anticipation.

That is why there are some hours that feel almost physical in their slowness. Boredom does that, and so does discomfort. So does waiting for something you care too much about. Few things distort time more dramatically than wanting it to move. The more aware you are of each passing minute, the slower it seems to go. You check the clock, and somehow only four minutes have passed. You check again after what feels like a small lifetime, and it has been two more. Time, in those moments, becomes less like a flow and more like a wall.

This is why unpleasant obligations tend to drag. It is not necessarily that they are longer, but that you are fully conscious of enduring them. There is no disappearance



Time concept | KarolZeflerli from Getty Images Pro | Canva Pro

into the moment, no loss of self, no lightness. You remain painfully aware of the fact that you are in the middle of something you would rather not be doing, and that awareness stretches everything. These experiences do not just take time, but force you to feel every inch of it.

Meanwhile, enjoyable moments behave with almost insulting speed.

The irony of time is that the moments we want more of are often the ones we feel least while they are happening. Suddenly, it is late, or the trip is over, or the person has left, and time reappears only to tell us it has been moving all along.

This is one of the more unfair parts of life. Misery lingers, and joy rushes. The moments we would gladly shorten seem endless, and the ones we would gladly expand vanish almost immediately.

I do not think this is only about pleasure versus pain. Time also changes depending on how full your attention is. The busier or more mentally occupied you are, the less visible time becomes. When you are absorbed in something, whether that is writing, talking, cleaning, creating, studying well or even spiralling productively through a sequence of errands, time often stops feeling like

something you are carrying. You are simply moving through it.

This probably explains why childhood and adulthood feel so different, too. Children are constantly encountering novelty. Everything is slow because everything is new. A trip feels enormous. A school year feels endless. Summer seems to stretch forever. As adults, or even just as students deep in routine, entire weeks vanish because repetition compresses them. We stop noticing, and Tuesday blends into Thursday. One assignment becomes another. Days become categories rather than experiences. We look up in mild horror and realize it is somehow the end of the month.

There is something almost existentially unsettling about that. Time passes differently depending on how awake we are to our own lives. The most forgettable periods are often the ones that vanish the fastest in retrospect. Routine, while necessary, can flatten our sense of time so thoroughly that months feel like they were skimmed rather than lived.

At the same time, highly emotional moments can do the opposite. Grief, anxiety, heartbreak, fear, anticipation, embarrassment, excitement. These feelings

alter the texture of time and make moments denser. A short conversation can replay in your mind for hours and take on the weight of something much larger than its actual duration.

That is why some days feel long in the best way, because they are full.

Time feels different depending on whether we are enduring, escaping, anticipating or living. We pretend it is objective because it is measurable, because calendars and clocks give it structure, but lived time has always been more emotional than mathematical.

What changes our experience of time is that we move through it without really inhabiting it, and later it can feel as though whole stretches of life went missing. Anticipation alters time, too. It pulls us forward, making the present feel temporary, sometimes thin, as though real life is always about to begin somewhere just ahead of us.

Living, though, creates a different relationship with time. To really live in a moment is not necessarily to make it extraordinary. It is simply to occupy it fully enough that it becomes real while it is happening. That fullness can make time feel slower in the best sense, not because the moment drags, but because it registers. A day made of such moments often feels richer in retrospect, even if nothing particularly dramatic occurred within it.

That is why people can have periods of life that were outwardly busy, successful or eventful and still feel that those years passed in a haze. It is also why an ordinary season can feel strangely full and memorable. Time is something we meet, resist, waste, fear, savour or barely notice. The quality of that time matters.

In the end, the shape of a life may depend less on how much time we had than on how often we were truly present enough to feel that it was ours.

**More than just a paper.
It's your student newspaper.**

Seven ways to screw up

Seven Sundays' lack of accountability for harming the most vulnerable populations in Saskatoon.

Hana Shaarawy

On March 13, the vintage store Seven Sundays, located in the heart of Saskatoon, posted a video on their TikTok captioned “POV you’re an empath that works retail downtown”.

A woman wrapped in a blanket appears on screen and starts grabbing merchandise as an employee hovers over her. Investigative, *Law & Order* adjacent music plays in the background as the video shows the woman trying to place socks and toques in her jacket.

The text then transitions to a “Please and thanks count”, with the number increasing as a staff member repeatedly asks the woman to return the items and informs her that the police have been called. One staff member commented that they had never laughed so hard while editing a TikTok.

This video goes on for mere seconds, meant to be seen as a comedic watch as people doomscroll through social media. To Seven Sundays’ displeasure, the video did not send the audience into fits of laughter; rather, it sparked the ire of the masses.

The backlash has been loud and critical of the decision to film and post someone in a vulnerable state.

Shortly after the TikTok began garnering criticism, the business posted a six-slide statement on Instagram defending the video. While they garnered over 1700 likes on the statement, support in the comment section seemed few and far between.

The original video was quietly removed on March 18, with the Instagram statement and a video response from Seven Sundays co-owner Sam Murphy taken down in the days that followed.

In their Instagram explanation, Seven Sundays claimed that they built the store in the vision of bringing together their community and wished to show their audience how these situations can “[...] be handled with patience and empathy, regardless of how scared [they] are, or how much danger [they’re] in.”

In a video on his personal Instagram, Murphy says, “There was nothing but compassion, care and patience displayed in that video.”

Rather than backing down and taking the time to listen to the concerns of their audience, Seven Sundays fought back against what they claimed in their statement to be a “loud minority of individuals who seek not to improve our community, but instead choose to virtue signal [...] and bully or shame anyone who does not fully agree with their worldview [...]”.

On the fourth page of their now deleted post, they publicize that Seven Sundays has reinvested \$300,000 into the local community and state that they have created nearly 20 jobs. The post chose not to indicate which organizations they support or the general causes they have donated money to, explaining that it felt “disingenuous ... [they] prefer to let [their] actions speak for themselves.”

Regardless of what Seven Sundays has done in the community, their TikTok and subsequent response displayed a lack of empathy.

I will not assume what the woman wrapped in the blanket is going through, but with the rise in insensitivity around the city for people without housing, going through mental health issues and addiction issues, it is undeniable that the video Seven Sundays posted only furthered harmful ideas about what people who are struggling look like.

At the end of the day, these people are human beings who deserve the singular shred of autonomy and decency to not be pointed and laughed at.

Not only is there an issue of autonomy with posting someone in a vulnerable state, but their response also promotes the idea that people who are struggling with homelessness are inherently dangerous, exacerbating the challenges these communities already face.

When people assume an already marginalized group is unsafe to be around, constantly carrying weapons and is a source of harassment, they are less likely to support important organizations providing essential services to these groups, such as Prairie Harm Reduction or Saskatoon Interval House. Homeless shelters, while not perfect solutions to housing instability, provide some form of support in a broken system.

In 2024, community members pushed back against the Wellness Centre in the Fairhaven neighbourhood, claiming it created an unsafe environment. However, statistics from the Saskatoon Police Service and Saskatoon Fire Department showed there was little correlation with an increase in violent crime. While property crime spiked to double the typical rate when the shelter opened in 2022, it was dropping to normal levels in 2024.

Members of the community said the statistics did not paint the full picture, and they still felt uneasy; one alleged crime was still occurring, but they had simply stopped reporting it and advocated for the shelter’s closure. Even when crime statistics are unchanged, this sense of unease pushes people to reject shelters in residential communities.

A review article in *Health & Social Care*

in the Community identified community integration as a cornerstone of assisting individuals facing housing insecurity. Community integration is not only about physically being present in residential communities, but also socially and psychologically.

The acceptance of people who are unhoused into communities is part of the solution to the roots of the problems Seven Sundays identifies in their statement; however, they actively worked against this with the framing of the video and their response. People cannot be helped without the compassion of others and without places where they can build healthy relationships.

In the Instagram post, Seven Sundays states that ignoring issues “perpetuates the same cycles generation after generation.” This vaguely worded statement, which pinpoints theft as a generational cycle, arguably carries racist overtones towards the Indigenous community — 83 per cent of Saskatoon’s unhoused population is Indigenous — and also uses passive language that does not identify the systematic perpetrators of these cycles.

Seven Sundays has made it clear that their ideas of community only encompass those within their vicinity; only those in their line of sight should have access to the spaces they have created. Out of ignorance, discomfort, or a lack of compassion, they refuse to look towards those who have been relegated to the margins of their stories.

Their statements, especially when viewed alongside their previous social media posts and campaigns, hint at a fairly narrow vision of the future — one that is white, thin, and able-bodied. People of colour and diverse body types are rarely featured on their Instagram, with the only recent instance being in the background of their USask By the Pound sale post.

Profiting from marginalized bodies — in this case, by getting likes on TikTok from posting a marginalized individual nonconsensually — while refusing to platform them in any meaningful way is indicative of the type of community Seven Sundays wants to build. The colour of the hand doesn’t matter as long as it’s holding out money.

The ignorance towards marginalized voices is further highlighted by their unwavering support of the police, who play a key role in enforcing the harmful cycles mentioned in the statement.

The statement holds the Saskatoon Police Service in high regard, failing to recognize that law enforcement is reactive and not proactive. The reality is that police clear encampments and remove those who are struggling out of spaces at the whims of those who have higher socioeconomic (and oftentimes racial) status.

Continued on page 22.



Photo by @sevensundayssk | Instagram

When Things End Before We Are Ready

Not every disappointment arrives with closure, but there is still dignity in how we carry what did not work out.

Hajra Ghuman

Abrupt endings are always unsettling. There is no satisfying conclusion to it. The comfort in a slow unravelling of an expected ending is taken away. With no proper explanation, it is difficult to understand what happened and to cope with the unexpected hurt.

Some things simply just stop.

Sometimes, it is an opportunity that vanishes before you have a chance to relish in the possibility of it. Sometimes, it could be a plan you built your weeks around that suddenly no longer exists, making you feel dumb for even making time for it. Even small disappointments can carry too much weight and importance when they arrive too quickly, because the mind is left scrambling for the version of events it expected. We are not only grieving what ended, but also grieving the fact that it did not end in the way we thought it would.

This may be one of those many unpleasant lessons we gain as we get older: not everything concludes pleasantly. We are taught to admire resolution. We like explanations, neat lessons and satisfying final statements. We want endings that confirm our effort meant something, that our hopes were not misplaced and that what happened can be tied into a neat conclusion dignified enough to carry forward.

However, real life is often less generous.

Sometimes things do not go our way for reasons that are clear. Sometimes they do not go our way for reasons we never fully get to know, even when we try to seek out what happened.

In all cases, the disappointment can feel larger than what actually happened. Often, what hurts most is not only the loss, but the collapse of the possible future we had attached to our hopes.

We do this all the time without noticing by building emotional architectures around a variety of possibilities. We imagine how conversations will go, how a semester will feel, how we may be perceived in job interviews and how a certain hope will eventually reward our patience. When reality disrupts that imagined future, the loss can feel disproportionate to outsiders and deeply personal to the person living it.

Unrealized expectations have a specific loneliness to them. They are hard to explain because they often lived more vividly in our minds than in the visible world. Other people can see the event that ended, but they cannot always see the future that ended with it. They do not see the private optimism, the constant daydreams, the small ways you had already begun making room for something that now will not arrive. That is why disappointment can feel so isolating.

Something imagined had already begun to feel real, until it quickly changed.

It for sure stings when things do not go your way, because not only have you been denied an outcome, but it also exposes how much meaning you had already lent to it.

Although there is no glamorous way to handle that, you can still be graceful about it.

Grace does not mean you need to pretend not to care. It also does not mean you need to act above disappointment or convince yourself that every setback is secretly for the best. Sometimes, that kind of language only makes people feel lonelier in what they are already trying to endure.

Grace, more often, is something else entirely. It is allowing yourself to be disappointed without turning hard. It is resisting the urge to make one bad ending proof that everything is unstable, unfair or doomed to repeat itself. It is feeling hurt without hurting your entire mindset and personality.

It also means resisting the modern pressure to turn every painful experience into immediate wisdom. Not everything needs to become a lesson overnight. Sometimes disappointment is simply disappointment. Sometimes an ending remains jagged for longer than we would like. There is dignity in admitting that, too, and in recognizing that not all healing looks enlightened in real time. Sometimes it just looks like restraint and saying less. It could also look like choosing not to chase what has already withdrawn.

This kind of restraint is difficult. Abrupt endings tempt us toward dramatics because they create such immediate disorder. We want to chase explanations and assign meaning where none has yet appeared. We want to know why or whether we could have changed it. We want the comfort of thinking that one different path or choice might have preserved what is now gone.

Maybe, sometimes, that is true. Often

though, it is only our mind searching for control after the fact.

There is maturity in recognizing that some endings will remain inelegant. Some disappointments will never look fair enough to justify themselves and will leave us with more silence than understanding. The challenge is to remain intact while it still feels unfinished for you.

The hardest part is accepting that dignity does not always come from resolution. Sometimes it comes from your conduct after the abrupt ending has occurred. It takes a lot to gently speak about what hurt you and to carefully avoid letting one disappointment poison the rest of your successes. It is crucial in the end, no matter how abrupt it is, how you continue, even without the closure you thought would make continuing easier.

It will be hard to try to gain a lesson from endings like this immediately, because not everything that goes wrong will reveal its purpose on schedule. Some experiences remain disappointing for a long time before they become useful, and some may never become useful at all. That does not make them meaningless, but it makes them real.

There is an opportunity for elegance in this reality that we may not usually want for ourselves. This elegance showcases composure when met with an imperfect ending. It is important to reflect on what did not work out without diminishing your character. Trying to accept that abrupt outcome may be disturbing and unsatisfying, but choosing to remain graceful and thoughtful anyway is something to take pride in. Even when you may have every valid reason not to.

Not every chapter closes beautifully. However, the way that it is dealt with can be beautiful.

The ending itself is not what matters the most in the end. Usually, it is the manner in which we survive it.



Woman sitting alone on an empty road | Elisabeta Dirjan's Images | Canva Pro

USask Drama Department Celebrates its 80th Anniversary

Continued from page 2.

He's an assistant professor in the Drama Department and has been at the university since 2021.

Mackenzie believes, "that some of the most important value in drama and in theater is its ability to create empathy and to teach right, to help people understand the world around them. So I'm really happy to be in a position of passing on what so many mentors did for me, which has really helped me understand the world."

They were both enthusiastic about being

able to direct plays which were created by alumni and being able to highlight the work that comes from the drama students, both currently at USask as students, but also the alumni who came before them.

Costume Designer and Head of Wardrobe

Beverley Kovelsky is the instructor for the costume construction and design class. But on top of this, she works as head of wardrobe and as either the costume designer for all the main stage shows or as head of wardrobe when there are student designers.

Kovelsky has been with the drama department since she was a student in the 80s, when she was a visual arts student. During this time, she took a drama class and found that she really liked it, so after going away for her Master in Visual Arts, she came back to USask to get a drama degree in design.

Since then, she has been working in costume design and has been the head of wardrobe for many theatres around Saskatoon for many years.

Kovelsky emphasized how important the

Drama Department is and has been for both students and faculty. "It's welcoming. It's collaborative. It's one of the college departments that is extremely valuable, I think, for just being a service college where we learn collaboration."

Even after 80 years, the Drama Department at USask has been going strong and with many future shows planned and countless students working both on the stage and behind the scenes, there is sure to be many more performances to come.

Finally Free ... Falling?

Reflections on graduation, and everything it's taken to get here.

Laila Haider

It's strange how something you've been working toward for years — something that you've dreamt of like a form of salvation — can arrive so suddenly. Graduation, that looming, abstract milestone, has a way of feeling both impossibly far away and then all at once, unavoidably here. A paradoxical paradise and prison wrapped up in a pretty bow. One minute you're figuring out where your classes are, and the next you're standing at the edge of something that feels much bigger than a ceremony and 10 times as heavy as your cap and gown.

There's excitement, of course. How could there not be? Graduation is proof of your endurance. It's the amalgamation of your late nights and early mornings, stress and burnout and those small moments of clarity that you strung together with your own blood, sweat and tears into something that resembles achievement. It's the satisfaction of knowing you made it through — through assignments you thought would break you, through exams that felt insurmountable, through entire semesters where motivation seemed like a theoretical concept. There is a real, undeniable pride in reaching the end.

Sitting alongside that excitement, however, is something less concrete and harder to name. A kind of unease. A feeling that this moment, which is supposed to feel like a conclusion, doesn't quite wrap things up as neatly as you might have hoped.

How can one event possibly encompass years' worth of effort?

It's difficult not to reduce everything to the symbolism of it all: a stage, a handshake and a piece of paper. The simplicity of the ceremony feels almost at odds with the complexity of what it represents. Years of learning, of changing and growing into someone new — condensed into a few seconds of recognition. Just enough time for you to cross the stage, pose for a photograph and hear your loved ones cheer. It raises a question that lingers longer than expected: Is a degree really representative of everything you've done?

At first, the answer to that seems simple, instinctive. Obviously not. How could a piece of paper and two minutes of a three-hour-long ceremony reflect your years of gruelling academic hardships?

A degree doesn't capture the moments that didn't make it into your transcripts. It says nothing of the deep conversations you've had with professors and peers that completely shifted your perspective, the failures that forced you to lock in, the friendships that became foundational to who you've become. It doesn't reflect the version of yourself that arrived on campus, meek, uncertain and tentative, compared to

the one that's leaving, weathered, weary and shaped by experience in ways that are difficult to verbalize.

Yet, that brief moment, when your name is called in a hall full of hundreds, means something. Even if it's imperfect, even if it simplifies something that cannot be simplified, it still stands as a symbol. Not of everything, but of enough. A symbol that tells the world that you were capable. That you had enough persistence, enough discipline, enough willingness to keep going when stopping would have been easier.

There's also something undeniably liberating about graduation. The thought creeps in almost immediately — hooray, I'm finally free! Free from deadlines, from readings, from the constant undercurrent of dread — something needing to be done, but not being able to put a finger on what exactly that is. Free from structuring your life around a syllabus and your professor's office hours. There's a lightness in imagining a life that's not dictated by academic calendars or exam schedules any longer.

However, that freedom is complicated.

Because right behind it comes another thought, smaller but scarier — what comes next?

University has a way of providing structure, even when it feels chaotic. There are expectations, timelines and clear markers of progress. You know what you're working toward, even if you're not entirely sure why. It acts as a shield between you and distant relatives who ask what you're up to these days. It gives you a sense of abstract purpose. A goal you're slowly working towards.

Graduation disrupts that. It removes the support scaffolding that you've unknowingly built your life upon without immediately replacing it. Suddenly, your path forward in life feels less defined, more open in a way that is both exciting and deeply petrifying.

There is pressure in that openness. The idea that now, more than ever, you are responsible for shaping what comes next. Your life is truly in your own hands. The choices you make carry a different kind of weight. It's no longer about choosing classes or majors, but about choosing directions, careers and identities.

What if you don't know?

That uncertainty can feel like failure, even though it isn't. There's an unspoken expectation that graduation should come with clarity, with a plan neatly mapped out guiding you towards your inevitable finish line. However, for many, it doesn't. Instead, it comes with questions. Am I



Graduation day | PBXStudio | Canva Pro

ready? Did I make the right choices? Did I pick the wrong degree? What if I change my mind?

In that sense, graduation is less of an ending and more of a transition into a different kind of ambiguity.

It's also a moment that invites reflection in ways that are difficult to avoid. Looking back becomes almost inevitable. You think about who you were when you first enrolled, what you thought these years would look like. You remember the things that mattered to you then and compare them to what matters now. More often than not, they're not the same at all.

You come to the realization that growth doesn't always look the way you expect it to. It's not always visible or linear. Sometimes it's minute, almost imperceptible until you're forced to look at it all at once. Graduation creates that moment. It forces you to pause and acknowledge that everything has changed, even if you can't fully articulate how.

At the same time, there's a sense of loss that threads through the excitement. University is not just a place of learning, but a space where a particular version of life exists. One where your primary responsibility is to learn, to explore, to experiment with who you are and who you might become. Leaving that behind means letting go of a certain kind of freedom, even as you gain another.

It means saying goodbye to routines that once felt tedious but are now strangely comforting. To spaces that became familiar without you realizing it. To people who may not be as present in your life moving forward.

Graduation, then, becomes a collection of contradictions. It is both an ending and a

beginning. Both relief and anxiety. Both pride and doubt. It is the culmination of years of effort and the starting point of something that feels far less certain.

Maybe that's why it feels so difficult to fully come to terms with.

Because it isn't just one thing. It isn't just a celebration, or a conclusion or a stepping stone. It's all of those things at once. It's a moment that can't be simplified, even as it's packaged into a ceremony that tries to do exactly that.

So yes, a piece of paper cannot fully represent everything you've done. It cannot capture the complexity of your experience or the depth of your growth. But it doesn't have to.

It's not supposed to be the whole trip — it's more like the souvenir you got from it. What matters more is everything that exists beyond it. The knowledge that you carry with you, the resilience you've built and the ways you've learned to navigate uncertainty. Those things don't end at graduation. If anything, they become even more important.

But maybe that's the point.

Graduation isn't about neatly tying together the past or providing clear answers about the future. It's about standing in the vast canyon between the two and acknowledging what you've done while stepping into what you don't yet know.

It's exciting. It's terrifying. It's freeing. It's overwhelming. It's everything, all wrapped up together in a pretty bow, all at once. Congratulations to the class of 2026! To everyone who's still chipping away at the stone — enjoy your time while it lasts, the workforce is coming for you, too.

A Manifesto for Eritrea

A vision for a just, democratic Eritrea free from dictatorship and corruption, where opportunity is open to all.

Yonas Sbhatu

Eritrea is a small but strategically important country on the Red Sea coast in the Horn of Africa, home to nine ethnic groups, with Islam and Christianity as its major religions. Rich in natural resources — including gold, potash, oil, natural gas and copper — along with fertile land and abundant marine life, Eritrea's ports, Massawa and Assab, serve as vital gateways connecting Africa, the Middle East and Europe.

Its strategic location made it the target of colonisation by the Ottoman Empire, Egypt, Italy, the United Kingdom and Ethiopia, which together ruled the territory for over 400 years, before Eritrea gained independence in 1991, following one of the longest and most destructive wars in modern African history. During this struggle, women made up thirty percent of the forces, and all nine ethnic groups were united. Eritrea was officially recognised in 1993, after the resounding independence referendum votes.

Since, the country has been governed with an iron fist as an authoritarian one-party state by President Isaias Afwerki and the People's Front for Democracy and Justice party (PFDJ), with no constitution, indefinite national service and conscription, strict suppression of political freedoms and the press, widespread human rights violations, and arbitrary detention, forcing many Eritreans to flee abroad in search of safety and opportunity.

Like many fellow Eritrean brothers and sisters, I have long witnessed decades of oppression, injustice and corruption. I dream of a nation where freedom, dignity and opportunity belong to every citizen.

An end to one-party rule without a constitution, without elections, without a free press and without the rule of law — and an end to the countless human rights abuses and violations.

Moreover, as we know from the history of many nations that have endured similar eras of tyranny, ending an authoritarian regime is only the first step towards

liberation and civil society. What comes after is just as important — if not more.

Rebuilding after decades of injustice and transitioning towards a consolidated democracy will demand costly, tiresome, long and challenging efforts. However, it is during such times that Eritreans shine the most, and I have no doubt that we will succeed in our quest for justice and democracy. Because Eritrea is ours — and its future is in our hands.

A Vision for Renewal

It is in this faith, and in this dire state, that I dream of this:

A reformed Eritrea — reborn with liberty, growth and justice. A new renaissance rooted in democracy, with a well-established constitution and a government of the people, by the people and for the people.

I carry a dream that rises above narrow, short-sighted ideas of progress. A dream of Eritrea guided by justice, strengthened by unity and driven by the purpose of its people.

Equality and Democratic Rights

I have a dream that my people will not be judged based on who they know, but what they know.

I carry a dream of a democratic Eritrea where democratic rights are protected, and where every citizen has the right to vote for whom they trust to represent them. I dream of witnessing the end of a generation abused by corruption, replaced by the rule of law.

An egalitarian system that ensures equality and opportunity, irrespective of one's status, class, title or means.

Freedom and Human Rights

I dream of an Eritrea where fundamental freedoms are protected.

Where threats, arbitrary and political detention, suppression of free expression, censorship of media, elimination of political opposition, disappearances,

torture, silencing and killing end.

A nation that terminates injustice committed in the name of the state or individuals and guarantees accountability and protection of rights. A system that provides fairness. A system that ensures equality.

I dream of an Eritrea where a mere dissent, a difference in opinion or a belief will no longer be seen as treachery, as being an enemy or as being less of a proud citizen, but as a fellow citizen with a distinct perspective.

Rule of Law and Justice

A system that establishes an independent judiciary so that courts interpret the law based on constitutional norms and legislative intent, rather than the discretion of a single authority.

I dream of freedom of mobility, where my people can travel freely without fear of armed checkpoints: from Karora to Assab, from Teseney to Massawa, from Anseba to Adi Quala.

Our heroes and heroines did not sacrifice themselves to free us from foreign rule, only for us to live like prisoners in our own country.

I dream of justice being served across every corner of our land — from the heights of Emba Soira to the plains of Gash Barka, through the Filfil rainforest and the Danakil desert, along the Red Sea's pristine coastline — where no place is too high, no valley too remote, no shore too distant for justice to reach.

Rebuilding Society

I dream that the more than 300 prisons arbitrarily confining over 10,000 conscious and political prisoners in such a small country will be replaced, turned into schools where minds can grow, hospitals where bodies can heal and centres where communities can gather, learn and play.

I dream of an Eritrea where its youth can dream of greatness — and have the opportunity to pursue their passion, energy, innovation and intellect in their own country. Where they can decide their own future without fear, without coercion and without being forced into paths they did not choose.

I have a dream that the indefinite conscription — the nightmare fate of Eritrean youth and young adults — will end.

It is only in such an open society that citizens can better their lives and develop their country.

I envision an Eritrea where the average citizen can freely engage in matters of politics, economy, society and religion, in

concert with one another, without fear.

A Nation Reclaimed

I dream of an Eritrea where its biggest export is not its people, but its abundant natural and marine resources.

Where the protracted displacement of over one million Eritreans living abroad ends. Where Eritreans can build a life at home, surrounded by their families, friends, communities and values.

I dream that no Eritrean will have to cross deserts or seas in unsafe journeys, risking their lives and the lives of their children to escape hardship.

I dream that no one will face sickness, violence, exploitation or extortion along these journeys, nor fall victim to smugglers or armed groups that traffic, abuse or kill the vulnerable.

I dream that Eritreans will no longer be forced into life in refugee camps as the only alternative.

These are not choices — they are symptoms of a system that must change. I dream that this will end.

I dream of an Eritrea no longer known for war, poverty or exile, but for resilience, innovation and culture.

Let Democracy Ring

Let it ring from every ethnic group — the Kunama, Nara, Rashaida, Bilen, Beja, Afar, Saho, Tigre and Tigrinya peoples.

Let it ring from every region — Anseba, known as the vibrant crossroads; Maekel, the heart of Eritrea; Debub, the cradle of history; Gash-Barka, the nation's breadbasket; the Northern Red Sea with its Dahlak Islands; and the Southern Red Sea with Assab port.

All will be able to join hands and say: Justice has prevailed.

A Call to Action

That is when my dream will be manifested: an Eritrea governed by a consolidated democracy.

So let this not remain a dream. Let us, Eritreans, once again unite to restore our freedom and end the cycle of injustice and corruption, just as our heroic mothers and fathers did a generation ago.

Let our oppressor remember — we are the sons and daughters, the descendants of those heroes and heroines.

Let us remember: Eritrea is ours.

It is not a personal fiefdom for the dictator and his inner circle to control, exploit and oppress. Its future belongs to us, not to the mercy of tyranny.



Keren and the surrounding hills, Eritrea | JordiStock from Getty Images | Canva Pro

Why is Grandma in my Political Studies Class?

Navigating the path to a degree as a mature student.

Colleen MacPherson

I always feel a bit self-conscious walking in on the first day of class. Not because I'm in the wrong place, but because I don't outwardly present as an undergraduate student. The dead giveaway is my grey hair — I look more like your mother, or your grandmother, than a member of your cohort.

At 66, I stand out in this youthful, energetic place called the University of Saskatchewan. I'm an odd duck, for sure, but I share your aim of getting a university degree. My path here is circuitous, but I couldn't be happier surrounded by smart, engaging people who love learning.

I've returned to an institution that I hold in high esteem, as I do all centers of learning. It's not perfect — no institution is — but I believe education, from kindergarten to PhD, is the key to our collective future as a community, a province and a country.

So, how did I end up here, a woman of a certain age with the dream of a political studies degree? Here's the back story.

In the fall of 1977, when virtually all my high school classmates packed up and headed south to Saskatoon and the U of S (now USask — old habits die hard), I got a job. For financial reasons, university was not in the cards for me, but the editor of the Prince Albert Daily Herald thought this 17-year-old working part-time in the advertising department would make a good news reporter. I jumped at the chance, and I'm lucky to have been part of a generation where a job could turn into a career.

For the next couple of years, I covered and wrote about everything from courts to sports, prison breaks, city council meetings, fires, labour strikes, best-in-show pigs and cows at the local exhibition,

politics and Zamboni drivers. Yes, he let me take a couple of spins around the rink.

In short, I was paid to go to the school of life.

Once in Saskatoon, I wrote for various publications, then took time off to raise my boys. In 2001, I found myself on campus as a writer for, and then editor of, *On Campus News* when it was still a print publication. I was enthralled with this place and told many stories about great people doing fascinating and important work in many disciplines. The confluence of intellect and storytelling was intoxicating, but I always felt like an outsider, having never had the student experience.

Then I discovered the union I belonged to paid tuition for members to take one class a term, and I signed up. In 2003, I took my first class, and one every term after that, jumping around to my heart's content — political studies, English, geology, art history, sociology, geography — driven purely by curiosity.

I resigned from the university in 2015 for a lot of complex reasons, but I continued working as a freelance writer, as well as serving as an elected trustee for Saskatoon Public Schools. Then, in late 2024, I stepped down from the school board — 15 years, four of them as board chair, was enough — but I needed a retirement plan.

I've always been someone who likes to have a goal. For my 40th birthday, I got braces, and two years, two months and 13 days later, I had the smile I'd always wanted. For my 50th, I talked my sister into hiking the Chilkoot Trail with me from Alaska into Yukon. Google it — it's a trek. So, in January 2025, at age 65, I re-enrolled to put my old credits to good use toward a degree.



Mature student in a classroom | Canva Pro

It's been a joy. I take two classes a term, I take notes by hand (another old habit), and I try not to ask too many questions. I heard once that mature students are not really appreciated because "you ask about stuff that isn't going to be on the final." Mature students can also give instructors pause — one prof posted a photo of a former Canadian prime minister and then said, "Does anyone but Colleen know who this is?" Of course I did.

It's been a while since I was a student, so here are some random things I've noticed.

Everything is online! I remember handing in printed copies of essays and having to make a phone call to get a grade. No more. I doubt I will ever plumb the depths of Canvas capabilities, but to my classmates, a big thank you for teaching me how to upload assignments and how to use WhatsApp for group work. Your tech support is appreciated.

The seating has improved in lecture theatres; in classrooms, not so much. I will always love the library — real books! Lower Place Riel is a great place to eat lunch, but if you wear AirPods, you miss a

lot of interesting conversations. Sad to see Student Central and the Arts and Science undergrad office still haven't figured out how to stagger staff lunches so they can serve students between noon and 1 p.m. So much talk about the perils of AI, but what about the kid I saw scrolling his phone during a midterm? Also, who schedules a final exam for 7 p.m. on the Saturday before Christmas?

The class content is challenging as ever, but with just two on my schedule, I have the luxury of time for assignments and studying. One of my university-educated kids mocks me for my diligence — "Cs get degrees, Mom." Nope, not how I operate. To those of you taking a full load of classes — bravo! You have my admiration.

I want to make it clear that any feelings of being out of place are mine; you have all been kind and accepting.

At the rate I'm going, I'll still be at this project long after you've graduated and are making your way in the world, but I look forward to joining you one day as a proud graduate of the University of Saskatchewan.

The Myth of AI

Continued from page 6.

Titled "Integrating artificial intelligence in higher education: perceptions, challenges, and strategies for academic innovation", the study found that both students and faculty recognize AI's potential in enhancing teaching and learning, while simultaneously distrusting its reliability and ethics. The article argues that while AI tools have value in settings like the classroom, barriers to AI integration exist because of a lack of ethical guidelines and training.

Clearly, AI is undeniably powerful but currently highly capitalized; privatization and subsequent smoke and mirrors surrounding AI is impeding its value in making meaningful changes in the way it was promised.

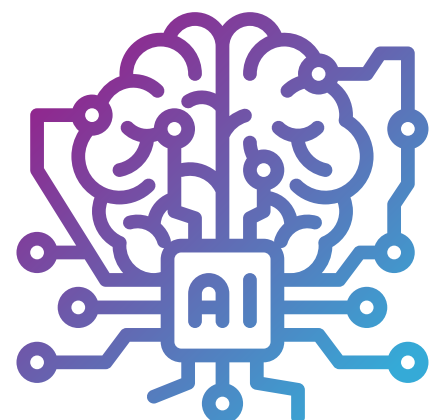
The good news is that the technology is still very real. The artificial intelligence models are undergoing real advancements that have undeniable gains. This means that without market forces and lack of regulation, AI can live up to the expectations of providing net benefit in sectors like research and healthcare.

While other economic bubbles and fads burst as fast as they ballooned, AI's trajectory may more closely resemble the dot-com bubble during the 2000s. The dot-com bubble occurred when the tech industry theorized that the internet would change the world. Though those predictions panned out to be correct in the long haul, the timeline and returns promised to investors were highly inflated

at the time, causing stock markets to crash and a majority of tech startups to go under. However, after the bubble burst, the technology and infrastructure was what remained, and the world relies on the internet to this day.

AI has the potential to be everything it was promised to us, without the ethical concerns, the lack of integrity and the dysregulation and that it has thus far turned out to be. The first step is to understand where these inflated narratives are stemming from, so we might understand not only the real harms but also real advantages. With proper government regulations and ethical guidelines on both usage and development of AI, the industry might begin to course correct in the right

direction. By addressing the barriers that challenge AI has all the potential to add, rather than subtract from humanity.



USask Model United Nations Club

Continued from page 3.

Club Secretary and Social Media Manager Mia Szabo echoes this sentiment of connection and travel. “I think the opportunity to just build community is really great, and it allows our delegates to experience different people from different places, which USask doesn’t always get to do.”

Junior Head Delegate Mika Soroño, with three years of Model UN conferences under her belt, looks for more than LinkedIn connections when in conference halls among hundreds of other delegates. “They have similar goals, similar values. I think that seeing that there are other people just like you gives you more motivation, especially since you’re put in a room with people who have maybe achieved more than you, that puts — not necessarily pressure — but definitely more incentive for you to be just like them, to strive just like them. So I think, on a personal note, Model UN is definitely an engaging environment.”

Yazdani, a seasoned Model UN delegate, still finds something new in the environment with every conference. “I

think that for as long as I’ve been doing it, what surprises me most is the fact that I still learn every time I’m a part of the space. I find that even with the experience I have from high school and kind of my early undergraduate years, I find that even meeting people who have never done it before, the way that they prepare, the way that they give speeches, I feel like it always renews my abilities. It always renews my commitment to these spaces. My commitment as Vice President especially makes me adapt to be able to fill the environment in a way that creates a platform for these students.”

Despite being a new club, Orata explains that Model UN has a lot on its horizon. “We’re really excited. Next year, we want to take our delegation to the National Model United Nations Conference in New York, and also a Model UN conference in Barcelona, as well as some here in Canada. We’re especially excited about our own Model UN conference.”

Model UN is gearing up to host their very own conference at USask this upcoming Fall Semester, planning to invite other

institutions and opening more doors for its delegates.

“We’ll be hosting it here in Saskatoon, which will give our USask students an opportunity to participate in Model UN without having to take on the cost of travel, which is the biggest cost in attending Model UN conferences.”

Orata hopes for longevity in the club’s future. “Hopefully, doing that will open the door to more students and to keep the spirit of Model UN alive at the University of Saskatchewan, and also, because we want to carry this on for the coming years, and so our club just doesn’t die off in another eight years.”

Yazdani has his own visions for the club and its members. “We’re kind of trying to push the club for excellence. The idea [is] that we want to be able to push higher for awards, and be able to push not just to participate, but to compete.”

President Orata has learned a lot since her whirlwind of a semester. “As President, I think my role has really made me look at

myself and think about the way that I interact with the people around me, for example, the executive team. I’ve really learned to delegate and ensure that everyone—”

Soroño interrupts with a “Point of information?”

She commandeers the microphone, continuing: “Our president actually takes on too much, so I think she doesn’t give herself that much [credit]. I think that since the club started in January, and she’s taken us to Edmonton and Montreal, I think that’s something that’s really great and nothing short of amazing.”

Though their calendar has been packed, this is only the beginning for the club. The success they have found in the last two months is no small feat, truly proving that nothing is impossible with a bit of teamwork and diplomacy.



Seven Sundays’

Continued from page 17.

The police cannot address the root causes of homelessness or drug addiction in our society, and are only enabled to act upon the consequences of these issues, pushing those who are struggling out of neighbourhoods and out of sight.

The Instagram post, as well as the owners themselves, repeatedly claim they care about solving these issues while not engaging with proven methods of de-escalation and community support.

Moving forward, Seven Sundays has signified its unwillingness to train its employees in harm reduction strategies and naloxone administration. One comment recommends that Seven Sundays provide Naloxone training to employees; Murphy himself replied, saying, “naloxone administration feels like a bandaid solution we are seeking to address at the root.”

A comment encouraging Murphy to go to Unhoused, Not Unseen – A Call to Action at TCU Place was liked by his personal Instagram account. In his response video, he says he “will embrace the opportunity to learn.”

Some comments Murphy liked expressed critiques and offered resources; other statements in support of the video received a red heart. One that said they supported the original video “100%”. Another liked comment joked that Murphy’s wife probably forced him to post an apology video.

A comment on the Seven Sundays
22 / OPINIONS

Instagram post admonishes the public for “defending criminals” and how homelessness and addiction do not give people permission to “commit whatever crimes [they] desire without consequence.” This comment was pinned by their Instagram. This ensured that it was the very first comment seen under their post, before it was quietly unpinned after a few days.

The Seven Sundays brand, as well as Murphy, has been repeatedly giving mixed messages regarding their response to this situation. They liked one comment calling people “druggies”, while also liking comments that encourage accountability and forward resources for helping the homeless.

Em Oyen, a USask student, took matters into their own hands and decided to sit down with Seven Sundays on March 18 to start the conversation that the business desperately claimed it wanted. After being blocked, unblocked, followed and having her comments deleted, she was still open to meeting with Murphy. The TikTok was taken down following their conversation. After their discussion, Oyen sent an email hoping to set up another meeting so they could continue the conversation and connect the Seven Sundays team with training and resources to better handle these issues. She is still awaiting a response.

When asked if they think that Seven Sundays can make a comeback, Oyen said: “I wish I could say ‘yes’ confidently.”

Elaborating on her stance, Oyen believes that the community needs to think more critically about who they support. “Our dollars speak so loudly, our money is power, and I wish a lot of people would recognize that.”

In the wake of this controversy, attention has been drawn to other small businesses, especially those in the downtown Saskatoon area.

An up-and-coming plus-size vintage store, Think n Thrift, posted a statement on its Instagram a few days after Seven Sundays’ initial post. They outlined their responsibility as a business in assisting the most vulnerable populations in Saskatoon and declared that they would be carrying Naloxone on site, along with other essentials such as socks, mitts and menstrual products. Their store has recently opened in Drinkle Mall on 3rd Avenue South and will be accepting donations of these items.

Another small business in the downtown area, which requested to remain anonymous for the sake of staff safety, said that they have provided de-escalation training. They emphasized that small businesses should not have to carry the burden of these systems, but also recognize their role as members of the community in providing aid.

The most poignant moment for me in the video was when the woman handed back the socks she had taken. Socks are among the highest-demand items in homeless

shelters; a basic human comfort becomes a prized possession for those facing emergencies, mental health challenges or simply unfortunate circumstances.

Instead of being met with compassion and care, the woman in the blanket was dehumanized and othered when she was posted online with satirical editing. She is not a criminal – the law is fallible, and the line between criminal and not is pushed around by those with the right amount of money and a certain skin tone. She got the short end of the stick in a system that was built with holes the size of humans.

True empathy is not saying “Please and Thank you” while nonconsensually posting someone for an audience of nearly 2000 followers. True empathy looks like showing up for your community and not cherry-picking who gets to be a part of it.

Channelling support and funding into local organizations is the most immediate way to aid marginalized populations in Saskatoon. Saskatoon Interval House, the YWCA and the STC Emergency Wellness Centre all provide emergency housing and counselling to those who are in need. Prairie Harm Reduction, which provides naloxone and safe drug disposal are currently looking for donations, which can be done through their website.

CROSSWORD

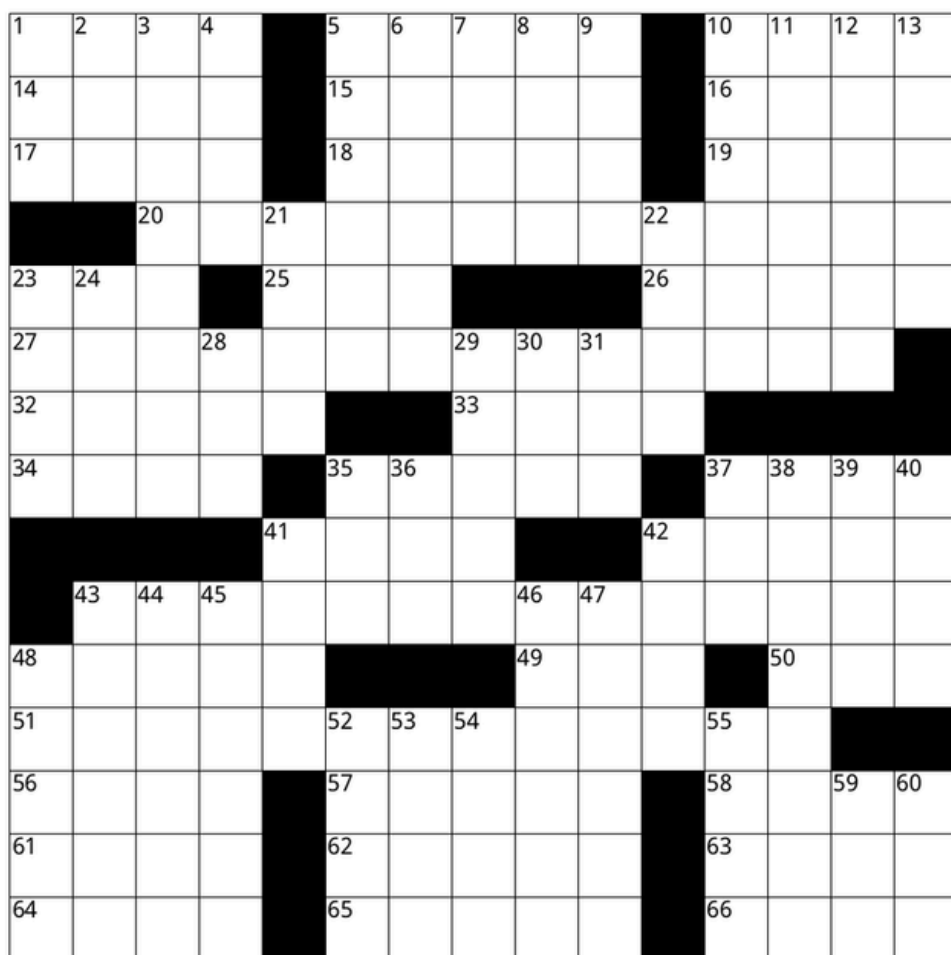
Across

1. Acted like an angry llama
5. Wrestling's ____ the Giant
10. Egyptian Christian
14. Helper
15. Broadcast again
16. Mars: prefix
17. Future attorney's exam
18. Ankle bones
19. "99 Luftballons" singer
20. Spring bloom: it is the first flower from the soil (2 words)
23. Play a role
25. Alphabet trio
26. <3
27. Spring bloom: it has white flowers that lead to summer pies (2 words)
32. Spy's info
33. Tartan wraparound
34. "You have ____": obstetrician's news (2 words)
35. Flinch or gasp, say
37. Sir's counterpart
41. Ooze
42. Room at the Louvre
43. Spring bloom: it is a tree with fluffy catkin flowers (2 words)
48. Salary increase
49. Rower's need
50. Cooling units, for short
51. Spring bloom: they have white flowers that lead to bitter-sweet and mouth-puckering fruits
56. ____ d'Ivoire
57. Person doing laundry, often
58. Alternatives to Inc. or Corp.

61. U.S. citizen abbr.
62. Tree-lined walkway
63. Library acquisition
64. X-ray units
65. Incline
66. Diva's delivery

Down

1. Mineo from "Rebel Without a Cause"
2. Greek letters
3. Gets comfortable with (2 words)
4. Half of oct-
5. Picasso or Van Gogh
6. Not far from (2 words)
7. One of two official languages of Afghanistan
8. Get out of bed
9. Rocker Clapton
10. One who may be up a creek with a paddle
11. Mine vehicle (2 words)
12. Extreme poverty
13. Brownd bread
21. Shrinking sea in 23 down
22. Half of Mythical Morning with his end chopped off
23. Thailand's continent
24. Some recyclables
28. "I'm just ____"
29. Giraffe's cousin
30. Actor Cage, familiarly
31. Sandwich initials
35. Civil War soldier: Johnny ____
36. Sushi fish
37. More, in Madrid
38. Taco order with pineapple (2 words)
39. Actor Baldwin
40. The "M" of Y.M.C.A.
41. "Peter Pan" pirate
42. Indian wrap
43. Indigenous name of Mount Rainier
44. Took to the streets
45. Glacial ridges
46. Irish girl's name related to the word "honor"
47. Small attic
48. Wirelessly driven toy, for short (2 words)
52. Tax pros for short
53. Jack and Jill went up one
54. Jazz great Fitzgerald
55. Actor Idris
59. Persistent internet link used for citing
60. Jamaican music genre



Answers will be posted at thesheaf.com next week

Crossword | Greta Mader Stevens

STUDENT COMICS WANTED!

HAVE A COMIC THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE?

SUBMIT YOUR WORK TO EDITOR@THESHEAF.COM



USSU BACKPAGE

Good Luck
with YOUR
Exams!



Spring U-Pass

CAN BE LOADED **TUESDAY, APRIL 21**

NEED TO OPT-OUT?

Opt-out applications may be submitted online for eligible students enrolled in Spring Term
Opt-out Deadline: May 8 for Q1 (May only) and Q1/Q2 (May and June)-or June 2 for Q2 (June only)

? Visit ussu.ca/upass for more information



Results Are In!

Visit ussu.ca/elections



USSU
Elections

LONG ROADS BIG LOADS TOUR
APR 26
LOUIS'
SASKATOON, SK

TRIP STATE
MAY 14
MAY 15
MAY 16
MAY 17
MAY 18
MAY 19
MAY 20
MAY 21
MAY 22
MAY 23
MAY 24
MAY 25
MAY 26
MAY 27
MAY 28
MAY 29
MAY 30
MAY 31

Virtual Health Care



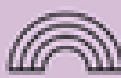
HI
Powered by Dialogue

Need medical advice ASAP?
Consult trained professionals online!

Students are becoming
ALUMO



2SLGBTQIA+ Support



Gender Affirmation Care

Coverage from the heart

Students are becoming
ALUMO



STRUNG OUT
PLAYING
SOLID REACTORS, NISHASTEL, ANGEL LIPS

CANADA TOUR 26

Bejvedere

APRIL 29
LOUIS' - SASKATOON, SK

www.itsoskocoutofficial.com

Visit ussu.ca/events for more information!