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**MENTAL HEALTH AT UW**

A look into the University of Waterloo's approach to student mental health.



**VR WAR EXHIBIT P4**

UW Games Institute puts the viewer in midst of the Ukrainian conflict.

**ARTIST SPOTLIGHT P7**

Young artist praises local hip hop scene and Waterloo youth culture.

**SPORTS BRIEFS P9**

Highlights from University of Waterloo Sports this weekend.

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Higher education is classist: the struggles of lower income students.



MELISSA HUGHES

# Fashion trends on campus: What are you wearing this winter?



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# Student experience and mental health at the University of Waterloo

Abhiraj Lamba  
Managing Editor

Over the past few years, UW students have had concerns regarding mental health and student experience. Imprint looked into what the university is doing to address these concerns.

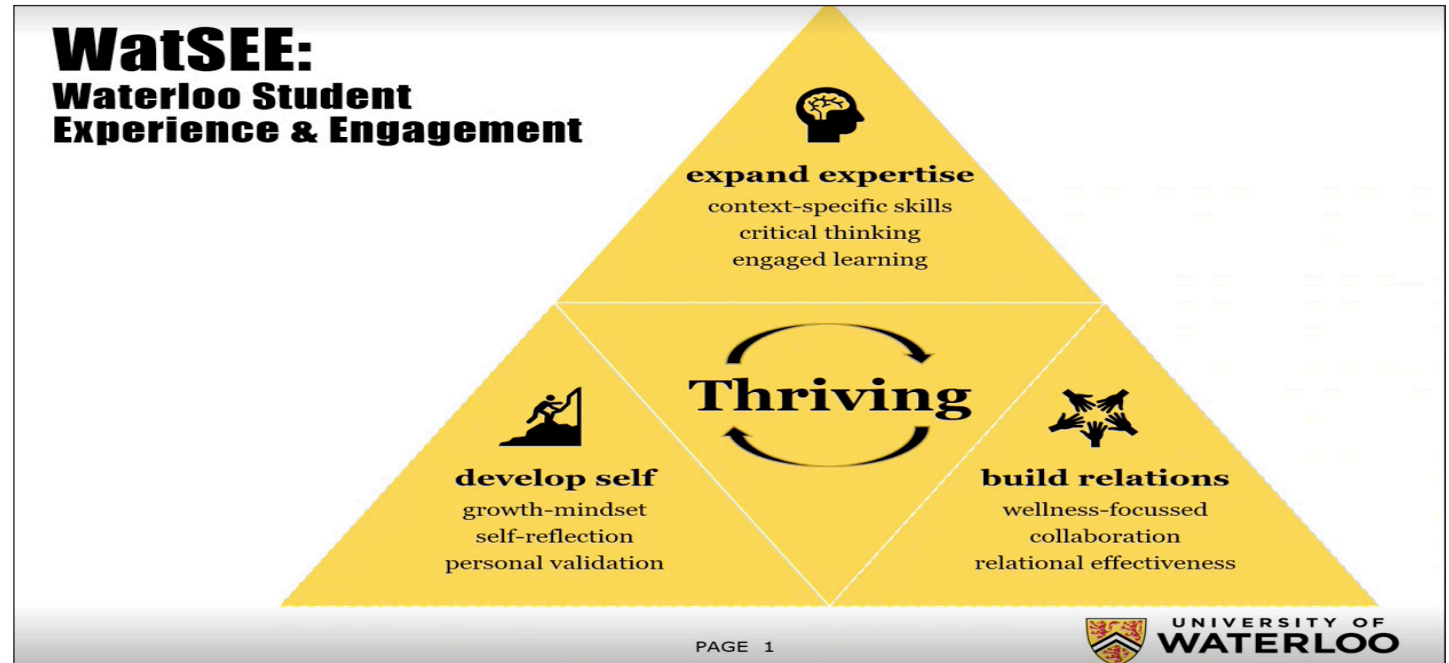
According to a 2019 external review report of student experience at the University of Waterloo released by the UW office of the provost, “some of UW’s strengths – academic rigour, the co-op experience, and the focus on STEM disciplines, to name a few – also create additional challenges for an institution in search of strategies to enhance students’ experience and satisfaction.”

“We want the University of Waterloo to continue to be known for attracting and graduating top students. We don’t want that to change. The way some of us talk about it is this balance between the rigor that exists here and care for our students,” said Chris Read, the associate provost, students said. “We have to find the balance between our academic rigor and our care for our students, and we’re gonna have to make adjustments because this is a rigorous place, but going forward, we’re really going to need to continue to try and balance how rigorous it is for students and what expectation level is appropriate... and I think we’re still pretty early on in that journey.”

Read acknowledged the importance of supporting students with their mental health concerns and highlighted the need for both reactive and proactive support systems.

“Ultimately we know that if students feel well and are well, then ... they have a better chance of succeeding academically, and when you come to university, you come for a whole experience — academic and non academic. We want graduates who have thrived in their time here and feel a real affinity towards the university,” Read explained. “The reactive support services are one important element of that, but the proactive student culture and environment is another big part of that, and so that’s where the university is trying to address it from a holistic perspective.”

In terms of the reactive support system, and talked about the counselling and mental health support on campus. He said, “When I compare what counselling services and the mental health clinical program [at UW] look like now compared to what it did



WatSEE framework developed by Dr. Marlee Spafford, special advisor to the provost on student experience

10 plus years ago, it’s just so different.”

“We were a little bit ahead of our time back [10 years ago] with things like embedded counselors — counselors embedded that were dedicated to specific faculties. Most universities do that now. Our program has grown since then, but having said that, the counseling model was pretty pretty one-dimensional back in those days,” Read explained. “If you needed mental health support and you needed to see a counselor, you got on the waiting list, you waited for a counselor to be available and then you started engaging in ongoing therapeutic relationship with the counselor.”

While UW still has the ongoing therapy model, Read emphasised that the university has also added other forms of support systems like walk in same day sessions and group therapy models.

According to Cheri Bilitz, the director of counselling services at campus wellness, the university now has a team of counsellors who provide same day crisis appointments and support requests, with approximately 15 appointments available to meet these needs of the students on any given day.

Bilitz explained how counselling services has students connect with an intake specialist to identify their needs and help guide them through what supports are available.

“In that conversation with the intake specialist, [the students] are gonna be talking about.

what’s bringing them to counselling, what types of concerns they might be dealing with, and through that conversation, they’re going to be talking about what they’re hoping to get out of a counsellor. So they might be looking for something specific out of a counsellor. It might be somebody with a similar lived experience or racial background ... or it might be a counsellor who may speak a different language,” Bilitz explained. “It might be somebody who has specific training in an area such as eating disorders or substance use ... So in that conversation, we’re trying to do the best matching of student need and clinicians that we have on our team.”

Read also acknowledged that there are concerns about the workload at the university. “The workload concerns still exist. It’s not even across the institution though. Not every student is having the same experience. Some academic programs are more intense. Some students are in Coop and have that added complexity. So what the university is trying to do is build a culture where there’s an understanding that student wellness is tied to workload and locally decisions are going to need to be made about,

you know appropriate levels of workload and how assessments are done.”

To address the student culture at the university, Dr. Marlee Spafford, a professor at the school of optometry and vision science was appointed as a special advisor to the provost on student experience.

Spafford has been working on the Waterloo Student Experience and Engagement (WatSEE) framework to help guide the university and the different faculties with regards to how university culture can be developed in a way to help students thrive. The framework recognises that students need to expand expertise, develop self and build a sense of self. These are meant to guiding principles for the university in its development of student experience.

“There is the university’s recognition that it [wants] to add additional focus to student well-being and a more holistic student experience,” said Spafford. “So this framework was created after a period of consulting students, staff and faculty [and] looking at literature on post secondary student thriving and student success.”

Spafford added, “It is a goal to be thinking in a holistic way, to be wellness focused and to explore ways that, let’s say in the faculties they can think about what they’re doing.”



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Halyna Padalko giving a tour of the photo exhibit



Group of people listening to the stories and news behind the photos



BETHANY POLTL



## The Virtual Reality of War

### Ukrainian Photo Exhibit on Display

Bethany Helaine Pörtl  
Science & Tech Editor

Standing amidst the rubble in Kyiv, looking around at piles of exposed rebar is heartbreaking. In every direction, buildings and lives have been destroyed, but the Ukrainian people are resilient.

“They are so strong — they come back and think about next year, already rebuilding. It’s inspiring,” said Ukrainian student Kateryna Padalko.

On Jan. 17, over 50 people gathered at the Balsillie School of International Affairs (BSIA) to view a photography exhibit created by Ukrainian students at UW.

The students are at UW finishing their degrees after fleeing their country due to the current war. They are among the eight-million Ukrainians that have been displaced since the Russian invasion of Ukraine began in February 2022. The exhibit was created to remind UW students and the surrounding

community of the ongoing war, since there has been a decrease in news coverage.

“We organize this exhibition to bring awareness to UW people about the war in Ukraine and the Ukrainian people in war. During [the last] 11 months, Russia is terrorizing Ukrainian people using a different arsenal of horror from shutting electricity and heat to raping kids and killing hundreds of people by one rocket hit,” explained Halyna Padalko, a Ukrainian student doing her masters in Global Governance at BSIA. She is also one of the lead organizers of the exhibit.

“We wanted to tell about courage and our struggle for freedom and democracy by showing pictures from [the] everyday life of Ukrainian people. We showed our bombed universities and people who have lost their home[s], but not their hope. We wanted to show how we believe in our victory, [why] it is important for us and encourage you to believe in us and continue to support Ukraine.”

The exhibit has been travelling around the UW campus hosted by various faculties.

A virtual reality (VR) headset was recently added to the exhibit to immerse viewers in the destruction of war.

The VR tour was developed by creators in Ukraine using drone footage taken before and during the war. The UW Games Institute provided the VR headset technology.

The VR exhibit shows various locations including Kyiv, Odesa, and the Mriya aircraft. All locations have seen heavy bombing and attacks. The images moved several viewers to tears.

“VR is a powerful tool. You connect with it on an emotional level and have a physical reaction,” said Susan Roy, associate professor at UW’s history department.

“It was the first time I had done VR. It was really empowering to see how beautiful Ukraine was before the destruction and then really unsettling to see the degree of destruction. I hadn’t seen images like that before.”

Along with the VR tour, the exhibit is made up of five photo boards. One is focused on education — universities that

have been hit by multiple missiles. There are students in their prom outfits, standing among the crumbling buildings, and professors teach virtual classes from the front-line. A virtual map was also created to track the status of schools — from kindergarten to universities.

Ukrainian culture is also threatened by the war. Artifacts and paintings have been stolen from museums, and heritage sites are being targeted. Underground concerts in metro stations, which are being used as shelters, protect and promote culture while raising morale.

Along with the photo exhibit and VR experience, there are Ukrainian treats and drinks to enjoy.

The Ukrainian photo exhibit is on display at BSIA until Jan. 23. After that, it will be at the health and arts faculties. To learn more about the campaign or donate to the war effort, visit the University for Ukraine website at <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/pages/university-for-ukraine-u4u/>



Join Ukrainian association at UW



Ukrainian song playlist



Latest news from Ukraine




Destruction in education

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## Candidate Social

 Monday, February 6th, 2023

 5:00-7:00PM  Multi-Purpose Room

## Trivia Night

 Thursday, February 9th, 2023

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## Artist Spotlight: Vinnin



Nadia Khan  
Arts & Life Editor

Scarborough musician and UW Honours Arts and Business student Vinuson “Vinnin” Sunthareson was a normal kid just like everyone else in high school. Unlike other students his age, however, Sunthareson had already been featured on the NBA 2K21 soundtrack and been the subject of a publication on Toronto.com before he had even received his diploma. “People just started looking at me differently and started talking about me.”

The increased attention he received beginning in high school soon became a double-edged sword. He struggled with suddenly receiving “more hate and more love” as a result of his musical success.

“I wasn’t exposed to that [before] when I was just growing up,” Sunthareson said. It was also alienating because certain peers wanted to befriend him solely because they believed he could offer them opportunities or clout. “Some people just wanted to benefit off me.”

It’s perhaps easy to forget that before all

this, he was just another kid who played the trumpet and sang in the school choir. He performed at talent shows and liked receiving honest feedback from the audience, positive or not, because feedback helped him to fine-tune his craft. He grew up listening to Malayalam music and hip-hop artists like Eminem and Tupac Shakur on the weekends.

Music later became an outlet for tumultuous events from his personal life. “Before I was making music, I was going through a very dark experience in my town.” He struggled with “how people used to treat me in high school... I used to get bullied in Grade 7 and 8. I kind of used music to cope with it.”

His new single, “Save My Soul,” details some of these inner demons from high school, singing lines like “Losin’ my soul, I was broke, can’t let ‘em know” over an upbeat rhythm. More melodic rappers like Lil Tjay, Boogie wit a Hoodie, The Kid LAROI, and Lil Tecca influence this newer work. His lyrics have also shifted to be more authentic. “Way back in Grade 9 when I used to make music, I’d say things that I really don’t do.” He added that, “You want people to genuinely like you for you being you.”



COURTESY VINUSON SUNTHARESON

Over a year later in university, Vinnin believes that at Waterloo, he is forging more authentic connections with others and doesn’t like introducing himself as an artist. “I’m getting treated like every single other person which is nice,” he said. Even while some may recognize him, everyone will mostly “keep it cool.”

When asked about why he decided to continue studying at Waterloo, he explained that he doesn’t want to commit to music full-time and felt drawn to the co-op program. “My parents are brown,” he said, explaining how his family instilled in him the value of getting an education. “I can still work and have a normal life while also funding my music on the side.”

He is interested in the business side of the ARBUS program and wants to prepare for a regular nine-to-five job someday. “Social services interest me too, getting to talk to people,” he said.

Beyond school and making music, he also makes time to stay in touch with his spiritual side. “I’m into self-improvement books like *The Secret* by Rhonda Byrne, and it just talks about laws of attraction.” He is also interested in manifestation. He writes what he is grateful about everyday, as well as his goals, in addition to reading quotes and positive affirmations.

While Vinnin may be allowing himself the time and space to figure out what he wants to do and engage with his spiritual

side, he’s far from being done with music. His song “See You Later,” produced by Yan-chan, reached #16 on Vevo under the R&B/Teen Hip Hop category. Last year, he had an impressive 175.6K Spotify streams with listeners from 131 different countries.

He has his routine down. Weekdays, it’s class, homework, and day-to-day life on campus. “Saturday, Sunday, I will go from [Waterloo] to Downtown Toronto or Brampton or to Mississauga to record at a studio,” he said. He collaborates with friends and fellow creatives from around the world who send him beats that he later transforms. “I write to a beat, then I come back to it, and revise like three to four times.” It takes roughly four hours to make a song, but sometimes, it’s a lengthier process.

“It’s a feeling, whenever you’re going through something, you kinda let it out, you can’t force it,” he said.

He plans to grow more involved in the local Waterloo music scene. He’s met some undercover DJs in Uptown Waterloo and sees value in being in a city in which the main demographic are young people: his main listeners. “A lot of doors opened for me coming to this school.”

When asked what advice he would give aspiring artists. “At first when you’re starting out something... you’re gonna look like you’re lost,” he said. “But if you work every single day on something, you’re for sure gonna go somewhere.”

# What UW students are wearing

From tote bags to claw clips: Winter fashion on campus

Macy LeConte  
Reporter

They say school isn't a fashion show, but University of Waterloo students are here to prove that wrong. Take a quick stroll through any of the UW campuses and you'll be met with looks that rival those found in fashion schools.

A common trend amongst students is tote bags. While they are a great way to carry around books, laptops, and any school-related necessities, they're also the perfect way to show off your interests. The most common one seems to be the Harry Styles Love on Tour tote bag.

Shreya Jain, a 2B Global Business and Digital Arts (GBDA) student, explained why she has been loving her tote bag: "It's so much more convenient than a backpack, and backpacks can be bulky and uncomfortable when over an already bulky winter jacket."

Jain mentioned the "super puff" from Aritzia (one that she says seems to be an incredibly popular coat on campus) as one that fits better with a tote bag rather than a traditional backpack.

With winter weather still in full effect, you're more likely to see dark colours and neutrals than bright and bold.

As Grace Osmond, 2B Social Development Studies, pointed out, "Neutrals, and especially darker colours, are just so easy to style, they're quick to be thrown on and everything just works so well with each other," adding to a commonality amongst students and their reasoning behind outfits — comfort, warmth, and overall cute factor.

Humreet Sandhu, 2B Legal Studies, notes that comfort is priority, "My main goal when choosing an outfit for a 9 a.m. class is comfort, I don't want to be stuck in a three-hour lecture being uncomfortable the entire time."

Walking around campus, it is easy to see that over-the-ear headphones have taken

over. They provide more comfort than traditional earbuds, offer great sound quality, and they're the perfect accessory for any outfit.

All people interviewed noted that walking across campus with over-the-ear headphones makes any outfit a bit cuter and gives major main character energy.

When asked which trends she's been enjoying, Manal Khan, 2B GBDA, comments on what seems to be a growing trend, "Loose fit pants, For one, skinny jeans just aren't as comfortable, but any sort of looser fitting pants, whether that be jeans or joggers, make any outfit seem a bit more put together, a bit more intentional." She also mentioned how claw clips can be found throughout campus and are arguably the most popular hair accessory at the moment.

It can be hard to find a balance between staying warm on walks to class and wearing an outfit that makes you feel good during winter. But the students of UW walk that line in style.



NADIA KHAN

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# sports & health



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## TLDR: This week in UW sports

Meagan Leonard  
 Executive Editor

JAN. 22

### Warriors women turn it around to defeat Guelph Gryphons

The Warriors women's basketball team bounced back after a tough loss on their home court Jan. 20 to defeat the Guelph Gryphons 82-73, securing their 10th win of the season. The Saturday afternoon game in Guelph saw the Warriors take better control of the ball, with Vanessa Hughes scoring 22 points and six 3-pointers, Beth Howlett contributing 15 points and four 3-pointers, and Summer Pahl posting 13 points. Kaitlyn Overeem rounded out the game with 11 points and eight assists, with Maddy Adams and Jaime Newell contributing 14 rebounds to help secure the win.

The Warriors will return home to play the Algoma Thunderbirds Friday, Jan. 27 at 8 p.m., following a Raising of the Eagle Feather ceremony at 6 p.m. The Warriors and Thunderbirds face off for a second time Jan. 28 at 6 p.m.

Source: UW Athletics

JAN. 24

### Warriors track and field team secure 14 lifetime bests

The Warriors track and field team had a successful weekend, adding more personal bests to their record at the Don Wright Team Challenge. The team finished the competi-



COURTESY UW ATHLETICS

First-year athlete Syiera Stuart competes in the high-jump competition at Don Wright Team Challenge held in London, Jan. 21.

tion with six season bests, 14 lifetime bests, and two top 10 all-time improvements. Hannah Blair and Celia Markovinic placed 1st and 3rd in women's long jump — both achieved personal bests with jumps of 5.55 metres and 5.07 metres respectively. Blair's jump ranks fourth on the Warriors' "All-Time" list.

Steven Mu and Jared Milligan finished 1-2 in men's triple jump, while Mason Brussee

placed third in men's high jump, and Blair took fourth in women's shot put.

Hillary Clark had a new personal best time in the 1500-metre race, finishing in second place with a time of 4:33.41. Clark ranks eighth overall in the USPORTS Championships and sixth on the Warriors "All-Time" list.

Tom Huynh and David Gbenjo ran personal bests in the 300-metre dash with times of 38.35 seconds and 37.96 seconds. The men's

relay team took second and third place in the two 4x200-metre races with four of its eight members achieving personal bests. In the 4x400-metre relays, the men's team took silver with a time of 3:29.05, and the women took gold with a season-best time of 4:10.61.

The Warriors will compete at the York Open on February 3 and 4.

Source: UW Athletics

**THIS WEEK IN ATHLETICS**

WATERLOO WARRIORS

im print

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 JAN. 27 | (W) 6:00 PM (M) 8:00 PM  
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# opinions



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When hearing the words high-speed rail, some might conjure images of Japan's Bullet Train, while others are left scratching their heads. It was not long ago that the Ontario government announced plans to develop such a line from Toronto to Windsor, with a stop right here in Kitchener-Waterloo. This would reduce travel time between Kitchener and Toronto to a mere 48 minutes. According to the CBC, that plan has since been put on the backburner, but there is no harm in wondering if our region would truly benefit from such a connection.

High-speed rail is defined as being 250 km/h for new train lines and 200 km/h for existing ones, with its primary use being passenger rail. Over 30 countries have these advanced transit systems, with the leading regions in this technology being Asia and Europe. Though there have been many proposed high-speed lines in Canada, as it stands, the country still lacks the infrastructure.

Firstly, it is critical to look at the existing infrastructure between Kitchener-Waterloo and the rest of Southern Ontario. The region is serviced by four provincially-maintained highways including Highway 7, 8, H85, and the 401. In terms of bus connections, GO Transit offers two routes to and from Mississauga's Square One and Brampton's Bramalea GO. These routes, which are certainly familiar to many students from the GTA, start right here at the newly-built University of Waterloo Terminal, with stops at Laurier and Kitchener GO among others.

There are two rail connections to the east and west of the region: VIA Rail's Quebec City-Windsor Corridor and GO Transit's Kitchener Line. VIA Rail's service offers one round trip connection per day between Kitchener and Sarnia, with a stop in London, and two round trips to Toronto's Union Station. GO Transit offers weekday service to and from Union, with stops in Guelph and the GTA, and a new two-year pilot launched in 2021 that offers once-a-day round-trip service to London.

## Should Kitchener-Waterloo be connected by high-speed rail?

Before we delve into the idea of high-speed rail, it is important to consider the value of connecting the Region of Waterloo to other communities in Southern Ontario. The Toronto-Waterloo Innovation Corridor is the largest tech cluster in North America outside of Silicon Valley. The area is home to more than 15,000 tech companies and over 300,000 high-tech workers. On top of that, it has 16 post-secondary institutions, with UW being one of the primary technology and engineering schools attracting top talent to the region. With Toronto being the fourth-largest city in North America and having the largest economy in the country, improved integration in the corridor would have profound economic benefits. The hour-and-a-half drive in a personal vehicle between the two regions, often worse during peak hours, does not rival the capacity of a train that could cut the aforementioned travel time in half.

Speaking to a student at UW regarding the proposed high-speed rail along the corridor, which she lives on, Alison Zangrilli said that "not only would high-speed rail benefit the surrounding areas, but it would allow Kitchener-Waterloo to be a monument for change and hopefully inspire other cities to ride into a new frontier."

A high-speed connection between London and Toronto would cost \$11 billion, according to the province's initial estimates. Though this might be a dream come true for many, Canada's struggle to actualize high-speed rail casts a shadow over this hope. The benefits of this line are clear, but considering the province is lagging behind on more crucial transit projects, it is unlikely this will translate to reality. That does not mean there is no hope for faster, more consistent, and more reliable train service along the Toronto-Waterloo corridor.

GO Transit is working on a major Kitchener GO rail service expansion to convert its service into a truly regional express rail. The biggest challenge currently facing the Kitchener line is the ownership of the

tracks between Georgetown and Bramalea GO by CN, a freight service, and the lack of double platforms at some stations, including Kitchener GO.

In GO Transit's ideal scenario, the trip would be reduced to 90 minutes between Kitchener GO and Union, making it similar to a car trip. It would also cost north of \$1.5 billion, significantly less than the high-speed alternative. GO expects annual ridership to increase by four million passengers with the expansion.

The project would run one train per hour all day between Kitchener and Union. It would also offer train service during off-peak hours between Kitchener and Guelph, with better service between Bramalea and Union. Though there are no plans for weekend service as it stands, the business case for the expansion highlights the need for a parallel bus service when trains are not running.

In addition to the actual service improvements, the Kitchener train station is planning to move to the Kitchener Central Station that is currently next to Google's offices this summer. Although the station's building still has not secured enough funding, the stop itself will move and have the double platform required for the expanded service. This will serve as a central hub connecting train service with the Ion LRT and GRT buses.

For many students living in the GTA, expanded GO service might be a better alternative to high-speed rail because of stops in the suburbs and outlying areas of Toronto. For those who would benefit from the 48-minute service to Union Station, there is no real silver lining. Since there is no longer a firm timeline for this expansion, we all will likely have graduated before these plans come to fruition. Oh well, at least we can dream.

Yasseen Mobada  
 Planning, 2B

# The cost of university makes learning a challenge

MELISSA HUGHES

One thing all university students can unanimously agree on is that education is expensive. At the University of Waterloo, tuition for domestic students ranges from \$9,000–17,000 for two terms. For international students, it is three times higher. Good education is priceless — however, universities find it really easy to set one.

Expenses don't stop at tuition. In your first year, there is the cost of residence and meal plans. Then there are the school supplies; depending on your program you may need a fancy calculator, paper, pencils, and other stationery. It is also important to take into account the cost of software programs such as Adobe Creative Cloud, and other expensive technology needed to complete courses. And don't forget about the beloved textbooks, which range in price from \$50 to \$300, depending on how many you need. I spent around \$150 dollars on textbooks in each of my first two terms. I'm a Global

Business and Digital Arts student, so I have to consider the cost of travelling from Waterloo to Stratford in the upcoming years. I would like to think that part of the \$14,000 I pay in tuition should cover transit.

University is stressful enough as it is without watching the bills pile up. Every time I log in to view my term balance on Quest, more weight is added to my shoulders. The high cost of university diverts my attention away from my studies and toward answering the questions, "How am I going to afford this?" and "How am I going to pay back my loans?" Some people may argue that because university is expensive, it increases its value, pushing us to work harder. I strongly disagree — since it is so expensive there are more things to think about. I'm not just studying to do well, I'm studying because if I do poorly, I will have lost \$2,000 for every bad grade.

Many students have part-time jobs to

compensate for high tuition costs. However, students like myself don't have room in their schedule for a job that would be worthwhile financially. Many of the students who do work either fall behind in their studies or face increased stress, which takes a toll on their mental health and ability to perform academically.

I believe that many universities are classist. I was fortunate enough to be born into a financially stable home; however, this is not the case for many. University is not made for those in lower economic classes. Many people could do well in university and positively affect the world, yet financial status remains a barrier to education. Low-income students may not perform as well as higher-income students in their studies because they may have to balance multiple jobs to fund their studies. Student loans are available as aid for students; however, with current salaries and rates of inflation, those

loans will take years to fully pay off. A common argument is that there are plenty of flexible employment opportunities for students. However, I would argue that students shouldn't have to work long hours while enrolled in full-time education to compensate for the cost of their studies. These students will not have time for a social life or participation in university activities because they have to work or study. Universities need to find better ways to support their low-income students, not only to protect them but to promote equal opportunity. The cost of a university education makes learning and enjoying school difficult because you're always thinking about the cost. It turns your life into one big economic decision.

Sincerely,

An angry, broke university student

Melanie Menezes  
GBDA, 1B

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