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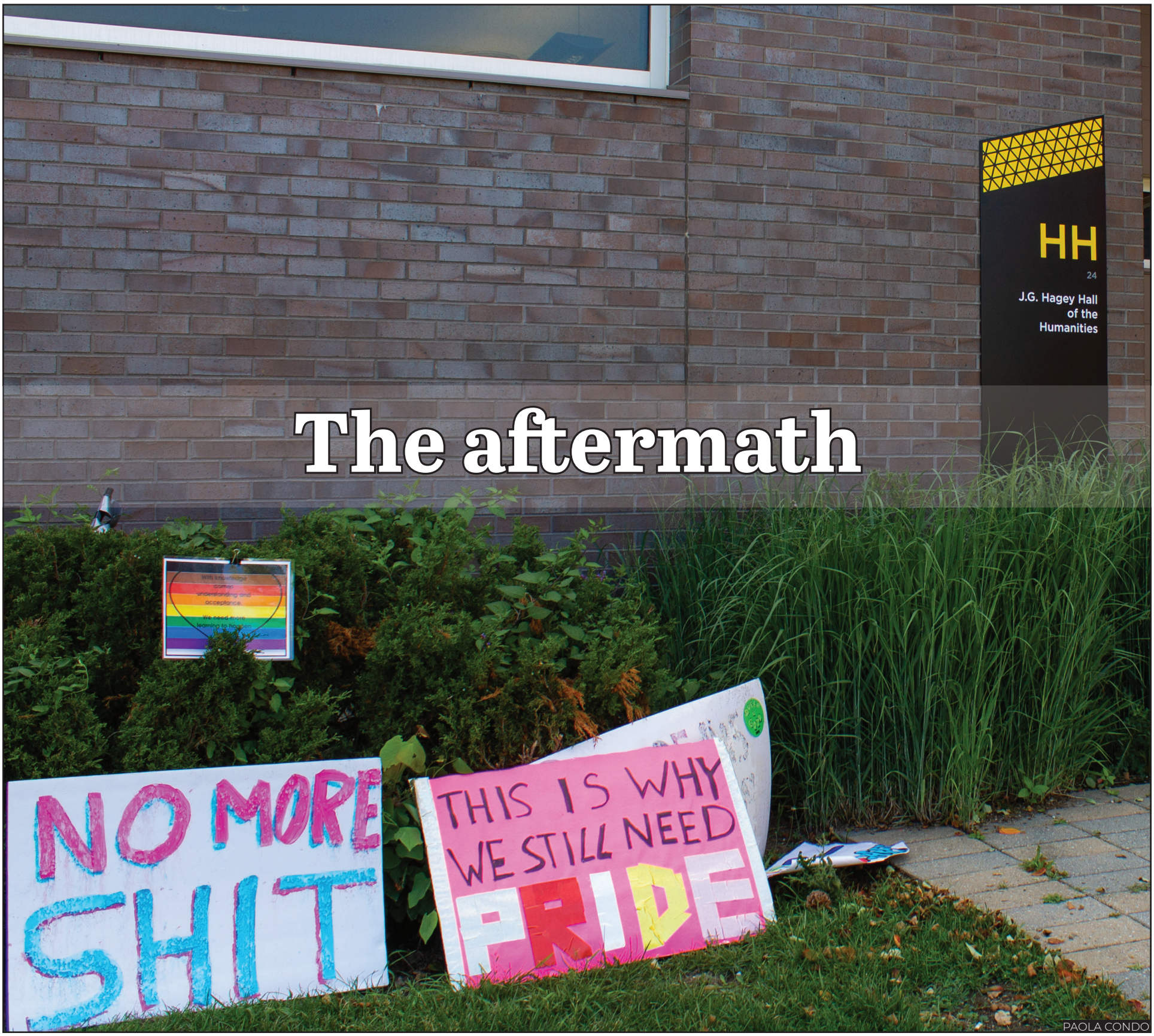
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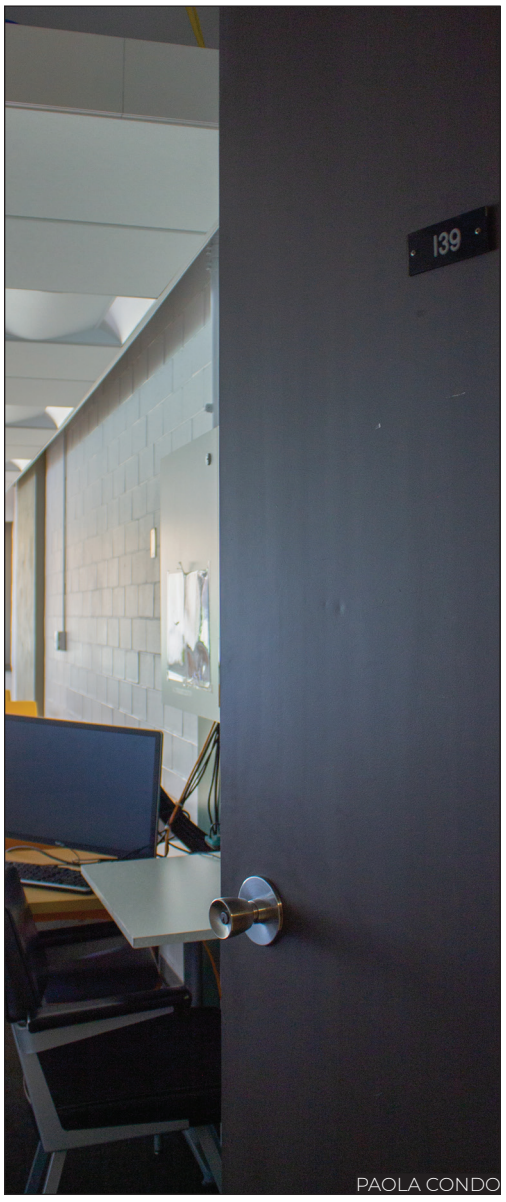
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# The aftermath

PAOLA CONDO

# Hate motivated stabbing



PAOLA CONDO

**Abhiraj Lamba**
*Staff Writer*

On June 28 at around 3:30 p.m. Geovanny Villalba-Aleman, a recent UW physics graduate, entered Hagey Hall (HH) 139, where a PHIL 202: Gender Issues class was happening, asked the professor of the class what the subject matter was, and then launched a stabbing attack that left the professor and two students in the class injured. The three victims were sent to the hospital, with one being sent to an out-of-region hospital, and all are in stable condition. The university's official safety app, WatSAFE, did not send out notifications until 5:24 p.m. In a press conference the day after, the Waterloo Regional Police Services (WRPS) confirmed that the attack was "a hate-motivated incident related to gender expression and gender identity."

**July 2, 2023 ~3:30 p.m.**

**Stabbing in HH 139 during PHIL 202: Gender Issues**

Geovanny Villalba-Aleman, a recent UW physics graduate, entered the classroom, inquired after the subject being taught and then proceeded to attack the professor of the class and two students. Villalba-Aleman also attempted a third unsuccessful attack on another student.

James Chow, a student who was in the class at the time, described how Villalba-Aleman's body language and tone of voice changed to become "more confident" after hearing it was a gender issues class, growing a "disgusting, mischievous smile" on his face.

Several students threw chairs at the suspect in an attempt to prevent him from attacking the professor. Students ran out of the building screaming at others in and around the building to get out and call 911.

**3:37 p.m.**

**Waterloo Regional Police receives 911 calls regarding the incident**

According to WRPS, they responded to the call within minutes of receiving it. According to Rebecca Elming, director of media relations and issues management, officers from the Special Constable Services were on site alongside WRPS officers.

**4:07 p.m.**

**Waterloo Regional Police tweets that they are on scene at the university**

**4:25 p.m.**

**WRPS updates via Twitter that the suspect has been taken into custody**

Villalba-Aleman attempted to blend into the crowd but was caught due to eyewitness descriptions.

**4:27 p.m.**

**UW quote tweets WRPS and says they are cooperating with the investigation**

This was the first public acknowledgement of the incident from the university. They also added that there was no further threat to the campus community.

# Breaking down the charges

## Aggravated assault (three counts)

Aggravated assault is an attack in which the perpetrator has the intention to wound, maim or disfigure the victim, or to endanger the victim's life. It is classed as an indictable offense – the most serious classification for a crime. Indictable offenses usually involve violent crime and are most commonly punished through imprisonment. Those who are arrested for committing an indictable offense must appear in court, with the option of representing themselves or requesting a lawyer.

The maximum punishment for a charge of aggravated assault is 14 years in prison. The sentence is determined by the harm caused, the intent, and the circumstances of the assault. This charge is often paired with other assault charges.

## Possession of a weapon for a dangerous purpose (two counts)

This charge is laid when an individual carries a weapon (or imitation of a weapon) without a license or permit, and has the intention to use the weapon for dangerous purposes or to commit a crime. "Weapons" include items that are prohibited under Canadian law, such as knives and guns.

The punishment for this charge depends on whether it is prosecuted as an indictable offense. If it is, the offender can be sentenced to up to 10 years in prison.

# at Hagey Hall: Timeline of events

**4:49 p.m.**

They also reshared this tweet on their Instagram story.

**UW tweets asking students in HH to "VACATE IMMEDIATELY and leave all doors open"**

**5:31 p.m.**

**UW announces that all classes in HH are canceled for the remainder of the day**

All other classes and campus events continued as scheduled.

**5:56 p.m.**

This update was not shared on their Instagram account, where the "VACATE IMMEDIATELY" post remained up.

**UW tweets update asking students in HH to "shelter in place" until police escorts them out**

**July 3, 2023 ~9:00 a.m.**

**Email "acknowledging the trauma of Hagey Hall incident" sent out to all UW students and employees**

UW provost James W.E. Rush sent a memo to all students and employees sharing information about the incident. Rush did not share any motive for the attack and instead asked the community to "be patient and have confidence in the judicial process."

This was the first email communication from the university regarding this incident. Rush's statement was also published in the UW daily bulletin.

**10:48 a.m.**

This was Goel's first public acknowledgement of the incident.

**UW president Vivek Goel tweets about the incident**

**2:00 p.m.**

**WRPS holds press conference to provide updates regarding the incident**

Chief of Police Mark Crowell shared that investigators believed that the attack was a "hate-motivated incident related to gender expression and gender identity."

Villalba-Aleman was charged with three counts of aggravated assault, four counts of assault with a weapon, two counts of possession of a weapon for dangerous purposes, and mischief under $5,000.

**3:15 p.m.**

Goel, dean of arts Sheila Ager, and WUSA president Rory Norris gave speeches at the gathering addressing the incident.

**UW holds gathering "in recognition of" the violence in Arts Quad**

**4:00 p.m.**

**Community led rally organized by GroundUpWR held near HH**

Local grassroots activist organization GroundUpWR organized a rally to "stand against transphobia, queerphobia and misogyny." Speeches were given by students as well as members of the larger KW community including Laura Mae Lindo, the MPP representing Kitchener Centre. Rally attendees expressed their frustration with what they felt were lacking security measures and emergency response times.

**July 4, 2023**

**A justice of the peace remands Villalba-Aleman to custody in Milton at Maplehurst jail. Villalba-Aleman's bail hearing is set for July 11.**

**Andie Kaiser,** *Staff Writer*: Several charges have been laid against Geovanny Villalba-Aleman following his arrest on June 28 after his attack on the professor of the class and two students during PHIL 202: Gender Studies. The following is a comprehensive explanation of the charges laid against him.

## Assault with a weapon (four counts)

This type of assault refers to when an individual — while committing an assault — carries, uses, or threatens to use a weapon or an imitation of one. This crime is prosecuted based on the severity of harm that was caused. It can be prosecuted as an indictable offense if the offender causes bodily harm using a weapon, and the maximum punishment for this charge is 10 years in prison.

## Mischief under $5,000

According to police, this charge was laid in relation to a ripped Pride flag. This charge falls under the larger umbrella of "mischief" charges. According to the Criminal Code of Canada, mischief occurs when an individual wilfully destroys or damages property, or interferes with the lawful operation of property. Mischief charges are divided into sections depending on the financial damage caused.



SHARANYA KARKERA

# UW community reacts to stabbing

## Community members express fear for safety, concerns on environment at UW




PAOLA CONDO

**Abhoy Hriddo & Alicia Wang**
*Staff Writer, Senior Editor*

Following the attack on a gender issues class on June 28, UW community members have expressed concerns about their safety, the university's ability to respond to emergencies, and how it will maintain the openness key to a productive learning environment.

Aaron Miu, a second-year arts and business student who was near the classroom where the stabbings took place, described the fear he felt amidst the students running out of Hagey Hall and the police running in. "I later heard of the incident finally from one of the students and it did not make me feel good that I was not informed by the campus via email or anything. I do still feel safe around the campus, so long it's not near the humanity courses," Miu said.

Mira Wong, a first-year medicinal chemistry student, expressed her concerns regarding the delay in alerting the community of the situation, and acknowledged that while the university's email "[brought] attention to the slow response of the emergency alert system and how it affected responders," such incidents made her worry about the potential for other services to act similarly during an emergency.

Other students expressed their shock, with Brian Shi, a second-year honours science student, stating that the closeness of the event "opened [their] eyes." "Usually, these events would happen far from home, but having such things happen so close to me to the point where I was almost at the scene when the stabbing occurred … I had originally thought UW was a much safer place than most," Shi said.

Community members have also expressed their feelings online, which range from fear to disappointment to outrage. In a tweet responding to the information that the attack happened in a gender issues class, associate professor of English language and literature Aimée Morrison stated that "everything about everything [felt] very unsafe to [her] now."

Morrison described how the stabbings have affected her mindset on campus, never having had to think about where the exits in the classroom were located or the need to keep a chair beside her to fend off a potential attacker.

"I don't want to lose the vulnerability and trust that's necessary to teach and learn with other human beings who I'm trying to get to know," Morrison said. "Because I'm always looking over my shoulder. And I fear that I'm not going to be able to get that out of my head."

She also described how despite the attack's representation of the danger of teaching certain topics, the option to stop teaching or to teach differently is simply not there for her, comparing it to the necessity to breathe despite increasing air pollution. "To stop teaching the material that I teach or the ways that I teach or [to stop doing] trust falls with my students intellectually … is not an option," she said.

Morrison pushed back against the idea that the stabbings were purely nonsensical. "As soon as you hear [the news], and you get a little bit of the context, you're like, 'Oh, I know exactly what happened.' And that is so depressing. To not be surprised. To be able to make sense of it."

Morrison also pointed out how "lone wolf" characterizations of the attack are harmful. On one hand, they continue to "stigmatize forms of defense that are already highly stigmatized," such as subgenres of music or certain video games, as well as neurodivergent people or those with mental illnesses. On the other hand, they ignore any role society has played in creating an environment where such an attack could be thought of and carried out.

Citing the increasingly polarized politics in online spaces, Morrison stated that Canadians are being led to "moral panics about things that really are no danger to anybody," which do not justify any sort of violent action.

"It allows us to not think about how responsible our political languages are or how responsible our social media platforms and our information silos are for creating conditions in which people think it is reasonable to go into a gender studies classroom and start stabbing people," she said.

Morrison also discussed how though the attack did happen in a gender issues class and directly affected those in it, it also impacted all members of the arts faculty. "It's difficult to teach in the humanities without touching on gender," she said. She also reflected on the implications of the attack having come from a UW student, and what that says about the school's impact on students.

"We maybe have to rethink about what kinds of pressure we're putting students under, how much we silo our own students in different disciplines apart from each other, how scared our students are generally about what their futures are going to look like and how that can really lead to isolation and fear. And anger," she said.

Amir Tabatabaie, a second-year honours psychology student who, at the end of UW's gathering of solidarity on June 29, expressed the need for better mental health services at the university, shared similar sentiments.

Tabatabaie spoke of his goal to create a club focusing primarily on students' mental health and providing them with a platform to voice concerns to the administration, as well as promoting a stronger sense of connection and collaboration within the student body.

"Hopefully by having these cross-society events, it can promote more inclusion, and provide [students] with events where they can meet other students from other places," Tabatabaie said.

Regarding the lasting impact of the attack, Morrison had this to say: "I think it takes something really special away that we were very lucky to have, but that everybody should have — it shouldn't be luck to go to class without worrying you're gonna get killed. Feels like not a high bar to reach, right?"

Fall 2023

# Something new is happening to Imprint.



# UW holds gathering following stabbing at Hagey Hall

## Students disappointed at lack of concrete action by administrators, raise concerns of pattern behaviour




**Eduardo Matzumiya**
*Copy Editor*

Following Wednesday's attack on a gender issues class in Hagey Hall, students and faculty were invited by UW administration to gather on Thursday at 3:15 p.m. in the Arts Quad to "stand in solidarity against gender-based violence and all other forms of hatred and bigotry," as stated in an email from the Registrar's Office.

President and vice-chancellor Vivek Goel opened the event at 3:30 p.m. with a speech in which he confirmed the targeted nature of the attack, aimed at the concepts of gender expression and gender identity, and reiterated UW's commitment to "fostering an inclusive, safe, and welcoming environment" to all its members. "There [are] those who'd like to intimidate us. They want us to be afraid … to learn … to share … to speak our truths. But we will not let them deter us from proclaiming loudly our values of inclusion and openness," he said.

Goel also announced that the Pride and Two-Spirit flags currently hanging on campus to celebrate Pride month will remain in place until the end of July as a symbol of UW's stance against hate-motivated violence and continued support for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

Goel's remarks were followed by a minute of silence at 3:37 p.m., matching the approximate time at which the stabbing incident took place the previous day.

Brief speeches by Dean of Arts Sheila Ager and WUSA president Rory Norris followed.

Ager acknowledged her own shock and anger at the fact that a hate crime had taken place on campus, but emphasized the need to foster a strong community and continue to support one another. Similarly, Norris stressed the importance of reconnecting and building supports, but also highlighted student's perspectives on the situation and his desire that policies and procedures be reviewed to improve how violent incidents on campus are handled. Norris also noted that WUSA's student-run services will struggle to operate in the short-term as student staff require time to recover before they can support the community.

A traditional smudging ceremony led by Elder Myeengun Henry of the Anishinaabeg tribe, resident Indigenous Knowledge Keeper at UW, marked the end of the event. Henry expressed gratitude towards the UW administration for incorporating Indigenous perspectives into the event and emphasized the importance of initiating a collective healing process as soon as possible to promote growth within the community. The smudging ceremony itself consisted of a traditional Indigenous healing song, followed by lighting a tobacco-filled smudge bowl, whose smoke was slowly blown around the Arts Quad to complete the cleansing ritual.

Goel, Ager and Norris each addressed the disproportionate impact the attack is likely to have on women and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, with both Goel and Ager encouraging members of these communities to take time off from their work and academic obligations if they deemed it necessary. The two also thanked WRPS Chief Mark Crowell as well as the emergency responders, paramedics, and IMPACT mental health specialists who provided aid at the time of the incident.

### REACTION OF STUDENT ATTENDEES

Before Henry lit the smudge bowl, Amir Tabatabaie, a 3A honours psychology student, stood on a table while holding a sign reading "UW'S MENTAL HEALTH IS NOT GOOD. LISTEN!" and proclaimed his dissatisfaction with the current state of mental health services at the university, as well as drawing parallels between Wednesday's events and the stabbing incident that took place last year at the CMH residence on campus.

Tabatabaie later explained his demonstration, saying, "It was meant to be more organized; I was meant to write a technical report, so I have all the evidence and the facts… However, yesterday's incident made it seem more urgent to me, so I decided that today I would speak up and hopefully gain the platform to voice my concern later down the line."

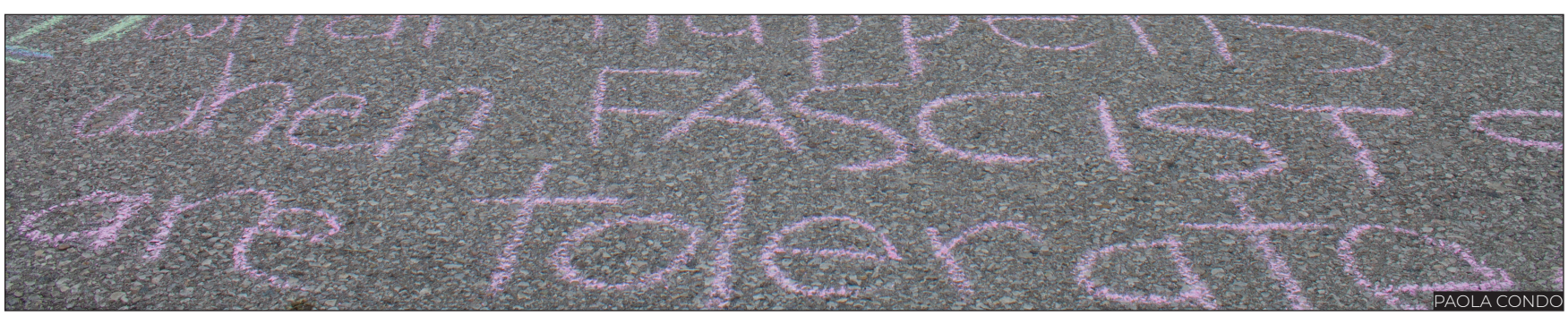
When asked about how exactly Wednesday's stabbing made the situation seem more urgent, Tabatabaie explained how Wednesday's stabbing fit into a pattern of violent events on campus followed by an unsatisfactory response by UW authorities, highlighting a lack of transparency between the administration and the student body.

A week after the gathering, Goel expressed no concerns with Tabatabaie's choice to express his views at that time and in the way he did, emphasizing UW's commitment to freedom of expression. "I think the student raised important concerns about the response to this incident as well as the previous incidents… concerns around support for student mental health… We had an opportunity to follow up and have a conversation with them, and we will continue to respond to people's concern[s]," Goel said.

James Chow, a graduate student and PHIL 202 class member who was present at the time of the attack, was similarly dismayed at the university's seeming lack of concrete action. "I found it a bit embarrassing that a student holding up a sign had to bring up that the university does not have enough counselors… We honestly should just have more counselors period… It's specific, actionable, and objectively you can measure it. There's no way for the school to get out of [it with] some wishy-washy, feel-good bullshit."

Similar feelings of frustration and dissatisfaction were echoed by other students present at the event. "I think that this is not fair and it feels as if that could've been me, and that doesn't make me feel like UW is necessarily a safe space to be in," said Leonardo Cabrera Ortiz, a 3A nanotechnology engineering student. "We thought that was a one-off event, and it's really bizarre for that to happen two years in a row… seems like something should've been done to prevent this from happening," said Mark Ositashvili, a 2B nanotechnology engineering student.

"I do acknowledge the point of symbols, of leaving up the Pride flag stuff and whatever, but I think we should have the attitude of 'yes and' — yes this plus other things," Chow concluded.


PAOLA CONDO

# Students demand safety, accountability from university

## GroundUp rallies for change after stabbing attack at UW

Nadia Khan
*Staff Writer*

Local inter-activist group GroundUp held a rally outside of Hagey Hall at 4 p.m. on June 29 to stand against transphobia, queerphobia, and misogyny. The event was organized in response to Wednesday's stabbing attack at Hagey Hall, which the Waterloo Regional Police Services believes "was a hate-motivated incident related to gender expression and gender identity."




"I have honestly been wired since yesterday after hearing the news about the stabbing that happened," said Zara, rally speaker and current UW student. "Wednesday's attack is the culmination of rising hate and bigotry in Canada. We have seen a huge rise in transphobia, in misogyny, in attacks from the far-right, and fascists."

In her speech, Zara also cited the failure of the university's emergency broadcast system "which did not notify students that they were in danger" as one way that the UW administration failed to protect its students. Another way the university failed, she said, was by keeping campus open right after the attack.

"We are being forced to go back to work where some have midterms just outside of this building where three [people] were stabbed," she said. "We should not pretend that the UW administration is listening to us, and we should demand change."

Carla, one of the rally speakers and a recent graduate, also urged for greater honesty not only from the university administration but from community members who distanced themselves from local issues of bigotry and fascism. "I think we're honestly just gaslighting ourselves into thinking the problem isn't here for us," she said. "If it's not you today, it could be someone you love tomorrow, and that's a big scary real reality that only now are some people beginning to understand."

"When I saw the news, my morning was so rough, I cried," she added. "I felt this sense of 'Wow, I've taken a women's studies class before, I recently just finished being a student.' I think places I thought were guaranteed safe places no longer are."

### STUDENTS DEMAND BETTER SECURITY

"I am furious, I am frustrated, I am angry," said Monica Straehl with regards to the university administration's failure to inform students as soon as the attack began. Straehl is a rally attendee who recently graduated from UW's psychology program. "There were people on the fourth floor who weren't even told until it was too late. People were wandering out in the hallways."

"Three people were injured, [and] it could've been so much worse," she said of the attack, which she compared to the massacre that occurred at Montreal's Polytechnic Institute in 1989, where 14 female engineering students were murdered in a targeted attack.

"Thirty years later, nothing has changed," Straehl said.

Straehl also criticized the university's refusal to renovate arts classrooms on campus like the one where the attack had taken place. "There's no way to escape out the window, through the back. You're gonna have forty students crammed in a class? And then what? There's only one door, only one exit," she said.

According to James Chow, a graduate student who was in the class at the time of the attack, there were around 15 people in the class at the time of the attack.

Another rally attendee, fourth-year psychology student Kalyani Menon, felt, like Straehl, that the university needed more security measures on campus. She specifically listed the lack of emergency buttons, the campus being poorly lit, and the absence of a program where students can be safely walked home at night like the one at McMaster.

Menon also emphasized the need for the university to foster a greater sense of inclusion. "There's this culture at UW that really needs to change," Menon said. "There are definitely echo chambers within the community, specifically within the men community, [and] these echo chambers that embolden certain attitudes."

Aaliyah, rally speaker and current third-year liberal arts student, also believed that the university could do a lot more in terms of security, citing, like many others, the failure of the WatSAFE app. "The university should take actions at increasing their security and making it safe for everyone."

### COMMUNITY TOGETHER

Event attendees first arrived on scene carrying various Pride flags and signs with slogans and taglines such as "No More Shit," "This is Why We Still Need Pride," "Protect Trans Kids," and "Misogyny is an Epidemic." Similar messages were scrawled on the ground in rainbow chalk.

"In a way, it's overwhelming," Aaliyah said on seeing all the students, faculty, and community members gathered at the rally. "But it's also nice to see a massive crowd of people attending… I'm really glad we have a massive community in UWaterloo."

Jazz Fitzgerald, manager of Student Equity and Community and event attendee, said it was "really beautiful" to see folks gathering together as a community after Wednesday's events. "I've been in this work a long time, and I think just knowing many of the students here, it feels like the only thing we could do … so I'm really thankful for the organizers of this."

Concerning a perceived lack of support based on UW's decision to run their own event,

Rebecca Elming, director of media relations at UW, stated that, "[UW] did reach out to that group, just to say thank you for organizing the event, and to welcome them to the earlier event as well. We wanted to be sure that they felt welcome on campus, and to thank them for their show [of] solidarity."


PAOLA CONDO

# WatSAFE failure

## Community expresses concerns

**Alicia Wang**
*Senior Editor*

Around 3:30 p.m. on June 28, a recent UW physics graduate launched a targeted attack that left the professor of PHIL 202: Gender Issues and two students injured. However, according to a screenshot posted on Twittter by professor James Skidmore, chair of Germanic and Slavic studies, WatSAFE notifications weren't sent out until almost 90 minutes later, at about 5:24 p.m.

WatSAFE, the university's official safety app developed in coordination with the Safety Office, was launched on Sept. 28, 2015. Nick Manning, then-director of media relations and issues management, told Imprint that a key benefit of the app was the app's ability to push information to people via notifications on their phone.




Skidmore was sitting in the Arts Quad when he saw the SWAT team run up the paved path from South Campus Hall.

"My first thought was, well they're testing the WatSAFE app earlier today. Maybe this is a drill. Maybe there's more to the test [than] I realized, maybe they were doing like a drill of how they would respond," Skidmore said. "Then the SWAT team started yelling at people, 'Where's Hagey Hall, where's Hagey Hall?' ... I realized that that seemed really too serious."

Skidmore, having not received any notifications from the WatSAFE app, checked the UW Twitter, on which there was also nothing, before proceeding to the Waterloo Regional Police Service (WRPS)'s Twitter, who had posted at 4:07 p.m. that they were responding to a stabbing on campus.

At the press conference on June 28, WRPS superintendent Shaena Morris stated that SWAT "might've just been asking until right when they [met] up with somebody, but we have a Waterloo Region Police staff sergeant that works here every single day ... so we have a direct link into the special constable services for any type of immediate response like this."

Jordan Brenner, a first-year philosophy student, only heard about the failure when his friend informed him that the app had been tested on the same day as the attacks. "That, I think, is pretty awful, like, especially considering they had done tests before on the day, I don't see why they wouldn't effectively use it," Brenner said in response to the failure.

The WatSAFE app had been tested at 2 p.m. on the same day as the attack, with the WatSAFE website announcing that the emergency communication channels being tested included the app itself and tweets to the UWaterloo and WatSAFE Twitter accounts.

Skidmore also described the conflicting emails he received from administrators of the faculty of arts: "Stay in your office, don't stay in your office, that kind of thing." He stated that while some confusing information was understandable due to the developing nature of the situation, he felt that it "didn't even seem that there was clarity as to what was trying to be communicated."

Skidmore said that was why he focused on the WatSAFE delay in his tweet, because it seemed to him that "in a situation like that, the WatSAFE app should be that sort of definitive source of information ... and it wasn't."

Sumedh Singh, a first-year computer engineering student, pointed out the critical nature of working safety alert systems, stating, "If there's an emergency, these systems should work, so I think that the university should work on it and ... whenever there's an emergency these systems should respond so that everyone's safe." Singh stated that he wasn't aware of the app until hearing of the news, only that there was some safety system in place.

The university's official emergency plan, dated February 2023, describes an Incident Management System with a chain of command including the director of the special constable services (SCS).

When asked about the role of the SCS in the incident, UW president and vice-chancellor Vivek Goel clarified that it is not standard protocol for SCS to respond to such situations. "When we have this kind of violent incident, it is WRPS that is responsible. We do not have a campus police service, we have special constables on campus. And, you know, while they're trained and available to respond to emergency situations, if it's any kind of violent event, it goes through 911... the protocol is, it is WRPS that leads the response."

Out of five people Imprint spoke to, only one, Puneet Sharma, an analyst at the Institutional Analysis and Planning Department, had the WatSAFE app installed on their phone. According to a poll on Imprint's Instagram, 38 per cent of respondents had the app installed on their phones.

"I got to know about it from a colleague, I don't think I did receive a notification," Sharma said. "[Information] coming from the right source, getting alerts, I think, does make a difference in calming everybody down too. I was worried when I got to know from a colleague instead of [an official] UWaterloo source."

Erica Dang, a fifth-year biochemistry student, explained that she had never downloaded the WatSAFE app because she felt like the university "didn't really publicize it or really have that much information coming out about it."

Aparajita Bagchi, another fifth-year biochemistry student, said that the university could've better utilized other communications systems. "I definitely think they should've sent out the notification much quicker, like I obviously don't have WatSAFE but they could've sent out an email or something just to tell everyone what was going on."



# Wat(un)SAFE?

## Student starts petition in a call for action against WatSAFE failure

Alicia Wang
*Senior Editor*

Dimitri Jorgji, a second-year health sciences student, wants to see change from UW following the failure of its official safety app, WatSAFE, to alert community members about the attacks in Hagey Hall as they were happening.

Various UW community members, such as professor Emmet Macfarlane, posted on Twitter that they had not received any notifications from WatSAFE, despite it having been tested earlier the same day. Other community members, including professor James Skidmore posted that the first notification he received from the app came at 5:24 p.m.

Jorgji started the petition on change.org, titled WAT unSAFE, on July 3, the Monday after the attacks. As of the writing of this article, the petition has 169 signatures.

In the petition, Jorgji calls for UW to "completely rework" their emergency alert system and install multiple methods of emergency alerts.

Jorgji said that the word-of-mouth way from which most people learned of the situation only made things worse, stating that "a proper learning system would have given people proper information instead of relying on word-of-mouth, which could have been misleading, could have been damaging to the investigation and the overall safety at the time."

"I don't really plan on stopping until something actionable, in my opinion, is done by the administration," Jorgji said. He cited research he had done into other universities' emergency alert systems and the variety of methods those systems employed, including text messages, automated calls to phones on campus, and instructions from PA systems, in comparison to what he called UW's "one-dimensional" system. An example of this is McMaster University, whose emergency alert system sends notifications to its desktop and computer systems, video information screens in buildings around campus, and their safety app.

"We don't have that, all we have is an app that will tell you that there was an incident one hour after it happened," he said.

The current communication channels of the university's emergency alert system include notifications to the WatSAFE mobile app, tweets from the UWaterloo and WatSAFE Twitter accounts, Portal alerts and push notifications, and pop-ups for desktops and laptops which have the WatSAFE Desktop Notification tool installed.

Jorgji also cited UW's initial Instagram post about the incident, a screenshot of text from the Notes app with the picture-in-picture feature visibly enabled, as another reason why he was disappointed with the university's response. "That's not [the] way a world-renowned university should respond to an incident like this."

Nick Manning, associate vice-president of communications, stated, "These things don't happen everyday, and [to] get information out really quickly and be really clear about what's happening and what people needed to know, our team did the thing that was most obvious to them, which was to write a message and post it from their Notes app."

In response to community members' comments on UW's Instagram account discussing the now-deleted Notes-app post and their dissatisfaction with it, Manning said, "I don't know that it's insensitive … in fact I would say it was sensitive of the team to think that they needed to get information out as quickly as possible and use whatever means they could, and that's what they did."

Jorgji also hopes that the university will clarify what the "comprehensive review" of UW's emergency systems, as stated in the president's email sent out on July 4 to students and staff, will entail.

"I'd really hope it's some of its students, staff, faculty, the Waterloo Region Police Service and not just you know, the people who might have been setting up the WatSAFE app, like the Special Constable Service, the executives, the Safety Office. It needs to really be an all-around effort to best improve safety on campus," he said.




Jorgji promised to be present at the community forums taking place on July 17, where community members will have a chance to voice their concerns and questions regarding campus safety and inclusivity. "Some people, they might not want to step up in a way that you know, the university will listen, and I think, you know, it's unfortunate, but someone needs to do it. And if it has to be me, I'll do it."

# UW president responds to concerns following Hagey Hall attack

## Goel reiterates UW's commitment to freedom of expression, emphasizes the need for dialogue around new potential security measures




UW president and vice-chancellor Vivek Goel giving his speech at the gathering of solidarity on June 29 in the Arts Quad the day after the attack in Hagey Hall

**Eduardo Matzumiya**
*Copy Editor*

Following the recent attack on a gender issues class in Hagey Hall (HH), students and faculty were invited by UW administration to gather on June 29 in the Arts Quad to "stand in solidarity against gender-based violence and all other forms of hatred and bigotry," as stated in an email from the Registrar's Office. The event included speeches by UW president and vice-chancellor Vivek Goel, dean of arts Sheila Ager, and WUSA president Rory Norris. The event concluded with a traditional Indigenous smudging ceremony led by Elder Myeengun Henry of the Anishinaabeg tribe, resident Indigenous Knowledge Keeper at UW.

*Imprint* had the opportunity to speak with Goel a week after the HH attack took place and inquire about students' concerns in the aftermath of the event.

With respect to UW's decision to continue operations normally for the remainder of the day following the incident, Goel stated that there was no threat that justified closing the campus, as within an hour of the incident WRPS had secured the site, apprehended the attacker, and determined the attacker had acted alone. Goel also emphasized the need for the university to take a stand following the attack, to show that the university "[would] not be intimidated" by threats to academic freedom.

"If we choose to stop as a result of events such as this, then those people that want to silence us, that want to keep us from teaching certain subjects — which is exactly what this attack was about — win… So I think the most important response, from my perspective, to this threat to academic freedom is for us to continue with our operations," Goel said.

In response to students' calls for increased security, Goel emphasized the need for caution if and when these added measures are implemented so as to not compromise the core values and academic mission of UW as an institution. "If we had cameras, for example, in classrooms, what [might] the impact of that be on teaching and people's willingness to express their own views?" Goel said. "I'm not saying that we shouldn't be doing these things, [but] we need to have a discussion about what the trade-offs are, particularly in light of [the fact that] a fundamental characteristic of our institutions is [to] be open, be inclusive, having everyone able to express their views, and the more we try to secure ourselves, the more like a fortress we will become and less like that ideal of a university."

When asked about how exactly the student body is going to be consulted regarding the implementation of additional security measures on campus, Goel stated that an open town hall event will take place some time in the coming weeks, where students will have the opportunity to get their initial input in. The date for the town hall, July 17, was announced later that same week in an email from the Registrar's Office. Goel also stated that both WUSA and GSA will play a role in providing a platform for students to voice their concerns as recommendations are implemented.

In their initial statement regarding the attacks, WUSA pledged to "continue to advocate for a supportive, civil society that respects and upholds diversity, thriving equity initiatives and human rights for all." WUSA also committed itself to a number of short-term and long-term actions, including but not limited to communicating student concerns to university officials, working towards creating more safe spaces on campus, and ensuring that advocacy work prioritizes student safety and inclusion.

In an update to the statement a week later, WUSA confirmed they are working on gathering student feedback and setting up meetings with relevant university authorities with the goal to "connect with the university and have important discussions on efficient emergency response systems, student safety, and welfare both on the Senate level and internally through [UW]."

Regarding students' perceived inaction by UW administrators following last year's CMH and the recent HH stabbing incidents, Goel said, "I think it's important that students look at all the work that has been done… I know students who [have] only just arrived may not see the changes that have been happening, but I think they should really be assured that there is a considerable amount of attention and focus on these issues of concern."

Goel referenced the Committee on Student Mental Health (CoSMH) established in 2018, as well as the Waterloo Student Experience & Engagement (WatSEE) framework that arose from the 2019 External Reviewers' Report on UW student experience, as examples of long-term strategies implemented by UW administrators to improve student mental health on campus.

With two events of differing tones taking place on campus after the attack, Goel expressed his belief that both had their place and emphasized that the goal of the Arts Quad gathering was not to exclude anyone, but rather to respond to requests UW administrators were receiving to demonstrate their support following the attack. "I know many of those individuals [at the GroundUp event] were at our event and then moved and had their event outside of Hagey Hall. So we welcome events on our campus, and … everyone has the right to peaceful protest."

imprint

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**Pitch/post-mortem meeting:**
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UW INDIGENOUS STUDENT ASSOCIATION

# It happened. What are we going to do about it?




Chalk art on the pavement outside Hagey Hall during the community rally hosted by GroundUpWR

The attack on a gender issues class that occurred on campus exactly two weeks ago is a wake-up call to those who haven't been paying attention, and a grim reminder to those of us who have.

Transphobia, homophobia, and misogyny are on the rise, with police-reported hate crimes in Canada rising by 72 per cent from 2019 to 2021, with an increase of roughly 70 per cent from 2020 to 2021 in the Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo area. And what's worse, so are the justifications for violence — subtle or overt — against those who dare to speak out against them. Increased censorship on topics like gender and sexual identity, of the kind we're seeing more of in school boards across the country, is dangerous not just because it's an infringement on our right to speak and learn freely, but because it obstructs our ability to learn at all. How are we, as a university, expected to continue pushing academic boundaries when we're already at the point where people's lives are put in danger for daring to question the status quo of the binary gender structure?

The presence of hateful rhetoric on university campuses and in society in general is not something new. Jordan Peterson was a University of Toronto professor before he grew to fame on a platform of anti-left rhetoric and videos of him "destroying" trans students for asking him why he refused to use their pronouns. If you want a more local example of hateful rhetoric, in 2022, there were four incidents reported to the UW Special Constable Services which met the definition of a hate-motivated crime, including three incidents of a swastika drawn on white boards outside offices and disrespectful verbal comments directed towards a female student based on her ethnicity. This kind of rhetoric, especially when received in online echo chambers, can turn into radicalization. It does have a few different causes, including real or perceived social injustices, the need to feel like part of a community, and the desire to escape personal problems. It is also not within the university's responsibility or capacity to fix all of those, many of which are society-driven. However, it's hard to argue that UW doesn't play a particular role in one of the main factors: the need to belong, and the isolation and lack of community that implies.

UW's gruelling study terms combined with the time-consuming (not to mention stressful) co-op search that students must handle on top of that already makes each academic term a lot to handle. And it doesn't help when the campus lacks the community and mental health support required to prevent the worst effects of this isolation from materializing. James Chow, a student who was in the class when the attack happened, told Imprint that he could think of at least five friends of his who waited anywhere from a week to two months to talk to a counsellor. In a report on student mental health from the Office of the Provost dated 2021, the top concern from a student survey regarding Counselling Services (CS), was the long wait times, followed by concerns regarding the quality of CS and the need for more counsellors.

Another problem with the UW community is that such a thing doesn't really seem to exist. There is community within individual faculties — each faculty seems to have its own special event or traditions, including the math faculty's student-run publication mathNEWS and the various balls and semi-formals for the AFM program and the science, math, and engineering faculties. But that's just it. Where there exists a semi-formal for AFM or for the science faculty, there is no such thing for the overall UW student community that extends beyond the boundaries of a particular program or faculty. A quick look at other schools shows what UW is missing: the University of British Columbia hosts an annual series of on-campus races, while the University of Western Ontario's student pub hosts weekly Bingoes, the winner of which is allowed to smash fruit with a sledgehammer. And let's not get started on the meager voter turnout that the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association is increasingly subjected to year after year, while other universities boast enough student politician hopefuls to host actual debates.

The point is that UW has none of that. We have no campus-wide traditions, no space in which students are actively encouraged to let go of their faculty affiliations and view each other as peers on equal footing. All the while we continue to push students through isolating, potentially exhausting academic and co-op terms for about five years straight with insufficient mental health support and practically no community or bond they can turn to that isn't in some way related to or built off of their studies.

We can't yet say, with certainty, that it was these conditions that drove the attacker down the path to Hagey Hall 139. But we do know that the attacker, a physics graduate, was shy and struggled to connect with people, making it easy to imagine how the demands of such a program's workload could exacerbate the parts of someone that are more likely to be fostered when left alone, something familiar to students in a university where the grueling demands of the co-op structure force the country's best and brightest to work long hours, often alone, just to keep up. As students, we're well aware of the culture that pretty much defines our campus — we've known about it for a long time. And now that its potential impacts have been made clear, as if the constant complaints from students about the lack of adequate mental health support and sense of community weren't clear enough, it's up to the university to do something about it. Hopefully, their actions will speak louder than their words.

*Imprint Staff*

# Resources are available for your support

We have all just experienced something traumatic. Please know that support is available. If needed, please communicate with your supervisor or professor about temporary adjustments to work or studies. You can also contact any of the following resources:

**Employee and Family Assistance Program** is available 24/7 for counselling, coaching and support. **Call** 1-800-663-1142 or visit Homeweb.ca.

**Talk Suicide Canada** - connect to a crisis responder to get help without judgement.
**Phone:** 1-833-456-4566
**By text:** 45645

**St. Mary's Hospital** serving Waterloo Region and surrounding area.
**Phone:** 519-744-3311

**Grand River Hospital** operates on 2 campuses, Kitchener-Waterloo Health Centre and Freeport Health Centre
**Phone:** 519-749-4300

**Empower Me** is a mental health and wellness service that seeks to contribute to a resilient student community by supporting existing on-campus and Studentcare mental health resources.
**Toll-free 24/7:** 1-833-628-5589

**Here 24/7** is your front door to the addictions, mental health, and crisis services provided by 11 agencies across Waterloo Wellington.
**Phone:** 1-844-437-3247 (available for immediate support)

**MATES** is a one-to-one peer support program that provides services to students who are experiencing personal or academic concerns or low-level mental health and wellness difficulties

**Good2Talk** provides free, confidential support services for post-secondary students in Ontario and Nova Scotia
**Phone:** 1-866-925-5454

**Counselling Services at Campus Wellness** strive to provide a secure, supportive environment for students of all orientations and backgrounds. Counselling services are provided, at no charge, in a private and confidential setting to the University of Waterloo students.
**Phone:** 519-888-4096

**IMPACT** (Integrated Mobile Police and Crisis Team) is a partnership between the UW Special Constable Service, Counselling Services, and the Canadian Mental Health Association. IMPACT workers provide Mental Health care in after-hours settings when counselling is unavailable. IMPACT workers are available by **contacting the UWSCS** at 519-888-4911.