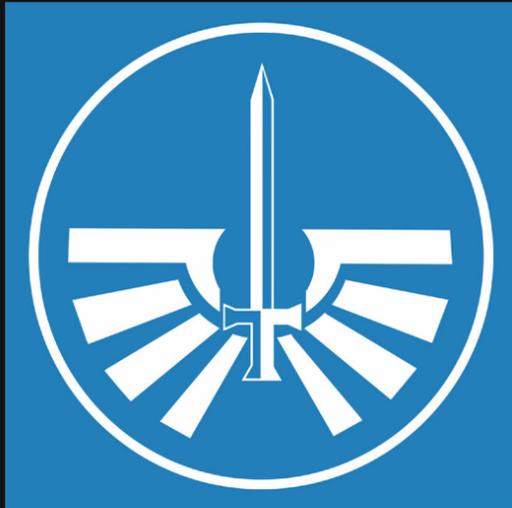


By Students, For Students



SMCSU's Transition to Virtual Operations

Chiara Greco, Editor-in-Chief

The University of St. Michael's College Student Union (SMCSU), like other student unions within the University of Toronto (U of T), has had to adjust to virtual operations. In an interview with The Mike, the SMCSU team outlined their plans and the challenges faced in starting the academic year online. In response to the virtual switch this year SMCSU Vice President (VP) Nicholas Pagano states, "SMCSU has been committed to promoting health and safety for all our students at St. Mike's". . .

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Across Canada, Universities Begin to Announce Their Winter Semester Plans

Lorenzo Cannari, News Editor

Amid concerns for student safety due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, many universities across Canada have begun announcing their plans for their winter semester. In Toronto, both York University and Ryerson have announced that they will extend their fall guidelines to include the winter semester as well . . .

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SMC Troubadours Meet COVID-19

Marcella Van Run, Editor-at-Large

The SMC Troubadours, established in 2013, are a drama society at the University of Toronto (UofT) affiliated with the University of St. Michael's College (USMC). The Mike interviewed Nour Ramzi, Co-Executive Producer, and Emily Villani, Equity Director, of the Troubadours to see how this campus drama society is adapting to COVID-19 . . .

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On Autonomous Agents Combatting Pandemic Burnout

Andrew Roberts, The Mike Copy Editor

Picture this, you are at your desk and you just finished your latest Zoom

lecture. As the waving hands of the students and professor flee the screen, you feel as if you are missing something from the ordinary lecture experience. Why would you feel this way though? It is all the same . . .

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Advice to My First-Year Self

A few things I wish I could go back in time and tell my first-year self that may resonate with newly enrolled freshmen students

Hannah Mercer, The Mike Contributor

Usually your last year of undergrad comes along with a heavy dose of retrospect, and hopefully joy of time well spent. I've summed up what I've learned about university life during my past three and a half years at the University of Toronto (U of T) in four slightly sappy pieces of advice to my first-year self.

Remember why you started

I'll never forget how difficult my first night of university was. My mom and I spent the afternoon on campus, moving in my things and exchanging our excitement about my upcoming year in our favourite city. My roommate was great, my room was fabulously decorated, and my colour-coded school supplies were perfectly in order. Nonetheless, as I laid in bed my first night as a university student, I couldn't ignore the feeling that I was simply not prepared. I thought I was excited, as I toured campus, enrolled in courses, and bought U of T sweaters, but that first night was not what I anticipated. I was terrified. I wasn't ready to leave the room I had lived in for 18 years. I wasn't ready to leave my friends and family at home, and embarrassingly enough, I wasn't ready to leave the high school I'd grown to love. Despite my roommate sleeping several feet away from me, and the bustling buzz of the city drifting through my window, I felt terribly alone. Instead of focusing on all that I gained by enrolling at U of T, I focused

on all that I've lost by moving away from home. If I could appear in first-year Hannah's bedroom, Christmas Carol-style as the ghost of university's past, I totally would. I would shake my 18-year old self and stress, to no end, that change is good. Dwelling on the past, I now realize, certainly clashes with setting foot on a new path. Today, I would tell my first-year self that this journey, beginning with that first night in residence, is about looking forward and bringing all the possibilities of the future into focus. U of T is not only a top university in Canada, but it is right smack in the middle of one of the coolest cities in the world. I was accepted for a reason, I enrolled for a reason, and there was so much ahead of me to explore, if only I could see it. I would share the same advice with any student beginning their university experience. At times, change will feel a bit weird, but you should embrace the excitement and novelty that accompanies change. I would tell my first-year self to simply remember why you started.

Put yourself out there

U of T is big. Like, really big. With 60,000 students and 3 campuses in the Greater Toronto Area, it can initially feel difficult to establish a sense of community. As a first-year student, I was fortunate enough to be a member of the inaugural Gilson Seminar at St. Mike's, a two-part course that

took a group of first-year students to Rome, Italy, to study faith and ideas. This course was certainly a blessing, but I wish I had gotten to know my fellow St. Mike's students earlier on. Granted, we became such a close-knit group by May, during our trip to Rome. If I had put myself out there my first semester, though, I know I would have acquired a sense of belonging much earlier in the school year.

Create a balance

I usually don't like to use sayings, such as, "been there done that," as they seem rather vague and unoriginal. However, I would say that "work hard, play hard," is one of the best pieces of advice that a university student can hear. My first year at U of T, I tended to opt for the latter. Enthralled by the vibrant nightlife, food, and art of Toronto, I spent a lot of time having fun. Admittedly, I didn't spend a lot of time studying at all . . .

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The Importance of Routine in the Time of a Pandemic

How to implement healthy habits while navigating online learning

Alessia Baptista, Lifestyle Editor

As we all know, the year 2020 has quickly snowballed into a complete disaster: countries like Australia have experienced tragic wildfires, the U.S government is slowly deteriorating, thousands of people have lost their lives, and all at the same time, we've been struck by a global pandemic. The world seems like it's falling apart, but that doesn't mean your personal life should start to do the same.

While our routines have shifted entirely as we slowly and painfully navigate this strange year, it's important we develop a new routine that is catered towards how we function in this new normal.

In the beginning of quarantine, I – like many – had no idea how to use all this free time. It felt like the days were just merging together, and with each passing day, I continued to note my lack of productivity and misuse of time.

Collectively, we've all experienced change in some way or another within the past few months that has completely altered the way we live. For many of us, myself included, we are stuck working at home. Now, while it always "could be worse," I've found it incredibly difficult to maintain my sanity completing classes online. I've tried changing up my work

space by utilizing other rooms in my house, but nothing will ever compare to the on campus experience. I'm sure we all miss the usual routine of being on campus and socializing with friends, but we need to make the most of our at-home situations because our safety is most important. On top of living through a pandemic, we as students now need to adapt to online learning. Now more than ever, we also need to take care of ourselves mentally and physically to avoid mental deterioration.

Being online means working on your own time, between asynchronous classes and completing assignments. The best way to properly manage our time while being confined to a singular space is to create a cohesive schedule that works best for our individual situations. In other words, we need some kind of a routine in place to ensure that we stay on track.

As children, our routines are often predetermined by our parents. For example, a set bedtime was always put into place. It seems that as we grow older, and our routines are no longer planned for us, we completely abandon the concept of a structured day, ultimately making it more difficult to gain self discipline and construct a routine on our own.

Without a routine, there are several factors that are detrimental to our mental and physical health, such as an inconsistent sleep schedule, increased stress levels, procrastination, and poor well-being overall.

It all begins with how well rested you are. As students, it's normal to find humor in how much we don't sleep, however the competition as to who is more sleep deprived should definitely come to an end. Poor sleeping habits only make life harder, because our bodies lack energy. We need to start taking better care of ourselves because the root of the majority of our problems stems from sleep deprivation.

Lack of sleep affects the body and its ability to function at its full potential. Sleep disorder expert Dr. Harneet Walia, M.D says, "We need to make sleep a priority," and also advises that young adults between the ages of 18-25 should receive seven to nine hours of sleep each night . . .

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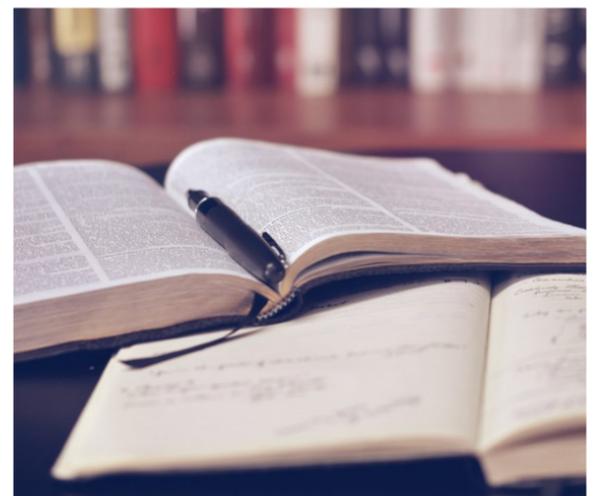
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