



# CONVERGENCE

what  
matters  
to you?...

# CONVERGENCE

## TRYING TOO HARD

**PHILLIP KONG**

STAFF REPORTER

There is no doubt that our school, the most prestigious boys' college in Canada, has a unique culture. Within the walls of this institution, it is often too hectic to stop and reflect about how this culture is so different to those at other schools. Not to worry, this will not be a criticism of the culture, but rather an in-depth look into one of the characteristics of the values at UCC, ultra-competitiveness. While it is true that a competitive environment can bring out the best in people, as they push themselves beyond their limits to achieve their goal, there are often side effects too, some of which are negative. This article aims to examine the competitiveness at UCC, where it originates from, and the impacts it may have on individuals.

Looking at the Lett Gym, the classroom, and the dining halls, there are constantly students competing to be the best, or better than one another. Some examples would be athletic ability, artistic talent, and video game skills. This competitiveness originates from in various ways. First, because the talent pool in our school is so diverse, certain spots in sports teams, bands, or clubs are more competed for. Almost every boy at the college was accepted because they are elite in some way. According to the UCC admissions website, it is committed to attracting the best students. The leads to a large number of guys who are qualified for certain positions. Chances are smaller for students who want to represent the school in different disciplines.

What does this competitiveness look like? In most cases, it is subtle, but noticeable. For the majority of students, they look up to someone in the sense that they are trying to reach the level of skill of that individual. To illustrate, a lot of football players want to be like that running back who can bench 285 pounds. To have an idol or a bar to reach can have a myriad of benefits. It allows the student to work harder to reach that goal. It can also inspire a lot of people as they can see the humble beginnings and the overcame hardships of these great athletes, artists, or debaters. However, the downside to this is that not enough students are able to realize their progress and may only be focusing on the goal that will take a long time to reach. Thus reducing the satisfaction and self gratification. This is detrimental to one's own mindset as it can make them feel like they are not getting anywhere. The simple solution to this is to compare yourself to the past, and look at your progress from there. However, in the competitive environment at UCC, it can be hard to do that, as everyone is expected to be reaching the goal of making OFSAA, qualifying for a tournament, or making the cut of an ensemble.

In more extreme cases, the competitive air at the college can intensify casual situations. Take pickup sports games for example. Though not a huge player myself, I have constantly heard arguments about whether "ankles were broken". Although it is a part of the passive and friendly chirping at UCC, it has often made situations more competitive than they should be. Moreover, these chirps go far beyond just the game itself. What was supposed

to be a fun game for friends during recess has turned into a defining match. If you slip up in a game that was supposed to be fun and relaxed, it can be carried for weeks. Ultimately, what was supposed to be an enjoyable experience has gained a competitive edge, and changes things drastically. This applies to much more than just the athletics. It can be seen in the arts, clubs, and even academics.

While competitiveness can have a myriad of benefits, including pushing each person to their limits, and allowing them to compete against others at a high skill level, it is important to realize the impacts it can have on the college. The competitive environment at UCC can actually damage the mindset of the students at the college. It is very hard, or even impossible to change the situation at hand, and I must admit that I am a culprit of the above mentioned felonies, but it is good to understand how to mitigate the negative impacts while maximizing the benefits. Firstly, one should always focus more on how much they have achieved, but not how much more there is left to accomplish. That allows for a much more positive mindset, and can improve your progress in the long run. Also, take things with a grain of salt. Know that not everything is as important or intense as the final minute in a Varsity basketball game, or a Musicfest final, or the final rounds of debate at a tournament. You can take things casually and not too competitively, so others can follow suit, and create a more relaxed environment. "A flower does not think of competing to the flower next to it, it just blooms." - Zen Shin

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# DRUGS AT UCC: EXACTLY WHAT ROLE DO THEY PLAY?

**CHRISTOPHER MUNN**

STAFF REPORTER

Stress is felt all throughout the school in many different ways. Many students experience stress due to academics, and with good reason. UCC has always held the academics in high regard, which means the things students might value the most often get put on the backburner. Most people have a pretty good idea of what makes them happy, or rather they have been told what helps make them happy. This includes things like exercise, family time, doing things you enjoy, basic things which are supposedly easy to implement into your timetable. But what if you do not have time to do these things because your life is overwhelmed with acronyms instead of achievement? IA, EE, IB, CAS, and the list goes on. With just the stress of school alone and the lack of time to do things students enjoy, it is easy to see why many start to turn to drugs. Not to mention social pressure to fit in, family pressure to succeed, and just general self-inflicted pressure that starts to emerge after being in such a competitive environment for so long. It is a miracle that so many students are able to keep their chins up every day.

The National Institute of Drug Abuse claims there are five reasons why teens do drugs: to fit in, to feel good, to feel better, to do better, and to experiment. I'm sure all of them exist, but which one is most common at UCC? To me it seemed pretty obvious. Students do drugs because they help to alleviate stress and they want to fit in. So, I sought out to test this theory by reaching out to a fellow IB2 student to ask him a few questions about drugs.

## WHAT WOULD YOU SAY ARE SOME OF THE MOST COMMON TYPES OF DRUGS AT THE SCHOOL?

Alcohol is by far the most common. Then probably nicotine, then marijuana. I have been at parties where people have been doing coke or molly, but I rarely see kids from our school doing those kinds of drugs.

## DO YOU FEEL AS THOUGH DRUGS ARE ESSENTIAL TO YOUR SOCIAL LIFE?

No. None of my relationships rely on drug use. I do it for me, not for other people.

## HAVE YOU FELT PRESSURE TO DO DRUGS?

Yes, but I have never been pressured to do something I didn't want to. I have seen other kids get pressure as well, but no one is really affected by it as much as you think.

## WOULD YOU SAY SOCIAL DRUG USE IS ACCEPTABLE?

Yes. I would say there are very few people who would judge you in a negative way, and some kids might even think it's cool, but I have never done drugs to look certain way.

## WHERE DO YOU DRAW THE LINE BETWEEN USE AND ABUSE?

Abuse is when you are dependent on it, but I would say use is when you are only doing it recreationally. Many people are not able to identify when they have become addicted to something, which can be really dangerous.

## HAVE YOU EVER FELT AS THOUGH YOU WERE ABUSING DRUGS?

No, but others might have different opinions. Like I said, it's hard to identify when you have crossed the line, but I really don't think I'll ever get there.

## WHEN DO YOU DO DRUGS?

Really only at parties or big social events. I have never done drugs alone just because I feel that there is no point to do drugs alone. I don't do it to alleviate stress, I just do it to have a better time when with other people.

## WHY DO YOU DO DRUGS?

Well obviously to feel good. I feel as though it is just an enjoyable experience.

## HAVE YOU EVER GONE TOO FAR?

Yeah, there have been weeks where I use more than I should, but I always feel as though I have good control over my drugs use.

## WOULD YOU SAY THERE ARE STUDENTS AT THE SCHOOL WHO USE DRUGS TOO REGULARLY?

Yes, but not to the extent where it would change the rest of their lives. But for some people, I feel as though it impedes their academic performance.

## HOW FREQUENTLY?

It depends on the time of year. Around exams, usually once a month, but for the rest of the year, probably once or twice a week.

## AND WHY IS THAT?

Because I only do them socially, and people are less prone to go out when there is a lot of school work.

## DO YOU FEEL COMPELLED TO DO DRUGS

## WHEN YOU ARE IN A HIGH STRESS SITUATION?

No, I only do them when I feel as though it will not impede other aspects of my life.

## DO YOU EVER SEE STUDENTS DOING DRUGS AT SCHOOL, WHAT KIND OF DRUGS?

Yes, but mostly just nicotine and marijuana. Being drunk is difficult to hide, but it's way easier to hide the effect of nicotine or marijuana. Especially nicotine, which gives you more of a quick head rush than anything else so it doesn't have any long-lasting effects. Vaping is really easy to hide because it doesn't really smell or make any smoke so that's probably why so common at school.

## WHAT ROLE DO YOU THINK DRUGS PLAY AT UCC

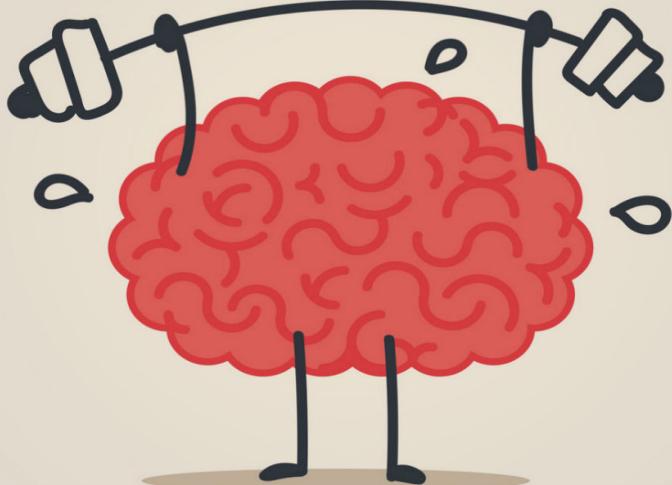
It really depends. Most people, like me, just do them socially. Others who do drugs to alleviate stress often do them more frequently. I would say most students just do them to feel good above anything else, and I don't see a problem with that.

## HOW MANY KIDS AT SCHOOL WOULD YOU ESTIMATE DO DRUGS OR HAVE DONE DRUGS?

I would say only 60-70% of students have tried vaping before. I'm guessing most of the kids at the school have gotten drunk, and probably less than half of them have ever tried that good green – ya know?

Well, there we have it. Of course this is just one student's opinions, but you just have to trust me when I say these responses come from a 'reliable' source (sorry, no MLA citations for this one). Though we can't really draw many conclusions from this one interview, I hope we can start to realize that drug use certainly does exist at the school, and it certainly isn't uncommon. Initially, I thought I would find that most students are just caught up in all the stress, so they turn to drugs as a way to relieve some of that pressure. Rather, students turn to drugs just because they enjoy being under the influence. Nothing can really be determined from one student's opinions, but my hope is that we can start to talk about drug use more and what the root cause might really be. Maybe drug use at UCC is best summed up by the words of Summer from 'Rick and Morty' when she said, "I am mad that I can't huff enamel without people assuming it's because my family sucks. I hope to be seen one day as someone who just likes getting high."

# NEVER WALK ALONE



**SHAFIQ QAADRI**  
STAFF REPORTER

I was talking with a friend recently, who remarked that seemingly despite the best efforts of all his teachers, every week for the past month has been dreaded hell weeks. Looking at my own schedule, I noticed the same trend.

UCC is difficult, of that there is no doubt. You will spend countless coffee-induced nights studying for tomorrow's test, doing extracurriculars or nervously wracking your brain (and maybe even your peers') to finish that TOK essay. While these stressful experiences can be opportunities for personal growth, it increasingly feels overwhelming. Too often we are drowned in homework, assignments, and tests, and that is just the mandated academic curriculum. Add to that a sport team or club, and while you may become UCO-worthy, your social life, physical and mental health and sleep take severe hits. This is not news to anyone - this is the reality faced by virtually all students struggling to keep pace at UCC. Teachers and the administration try to strike a balance between the demanding and overwhelming. I applaud the effort, but lament its lack of success.

To learn more about the current state of the student body's mental health, I spoke to Ms. Susan Boeckh and Ms. Avia Peacock, who work in the Health Center. Since arriving at UCC 20 years

ago, Ms. Boeckh has noted a sizable increase in the overall anxiety levels of students. She explains that in small doses, anxiety can harness your focus and help you complete tasks. But by and large, the anxiety faced by UCC students is the other kind, the awful feeling that keeps you up at night and stops you from doing anything productive. The IB is likely a large factor for this - its patented blend of overwhelming work volume, deadlines, and limited flexibility doesn't exactly contribute to a balanced mental state. Further, there exists a "culture of competition" between peers, whether for marks or otherwise. Shouldn't we instead be helping each other out, going through the IB together? The intense pressure and rigors of school are always going to be there, but Ms. Boeckh emphasizes that it's the way you alleviate the stresses that are going to help you get through them.

Cliché as it might seem, she recommends friends as the easiest, and by far most effective measure against stress and anxiety. This is especially important if you experience ongoing symptoms of anxiety, which can include:

being excessively irritable, feeling like you can't cope, having trouble getting restful sleep, always being worried about what comes around the corner, and being nervous for no discernible reason. If conditions like these persist, particularly if it's for more than two weeks, that's the time to seek immediate attention—whether through the school or your own physician.

At UCC today, the workload, expectations, and fear of failure among students are all still growing. However, only a small number of students ever make it to the health center. Why is this? The stigmatization that we hear so much about at assemblies, by advisors and in class is still a very real and present obstacle that impedes students from accessing valuable support. In a survey of important issues at the school sent out by Convergence, 51% of the 304 respondents maintained that the stigma surrounding mental health is a very important issue to address. The only way to defeat this stigma regarding mental health and wellness is to spark meaningful conversations regarding the topic. Too often, we dismiss mental health as inconsequential, and those who experience it as too emotional or melodramatic. While often mental illness consists of no tangible or observable injury or pain, mental illness holds the same undeniable importance as other illnesses. Statistically, one in four of your UCC brothers have experienced, or will experience mental illness at some point in their life. While mental illness may not be easily seen, it is nevertheless always there. Never be afraid to talk with others: nurses, parents, friends, teachers, advisers or anyone else who you can trust. There is no reason to suffer in silence, when there are people you can talk to who can help you out.

A great thing about our school community: you never walk alone.

# THE STATE OF FEMINISM AT UCC

**ADAM HENRY**

STAFF REPORTER

I am proud to call myself a feminist, to take part in a movement that fights for equal opportunity and choice for women, and continues to combat inequalities. The unfortunate truth is that to many, the value and importance of the movement has been misconstrued to represent a radical group that is belittled by major American media outlets and is the subject of teenage jokes in schools across the country, including at UCC. It doesn't take a keen observer to hear the classic locker-room-talk sweeping the halls that one would expect at an all-boys school, and that's a considerable problem. It not only confirms the common belief that the institution fosters misogynistic discussions, but more importantly does not help to solve the inequalities that women face in modern-era Canada, and also hinders the success of the movement. While I recognize that it is a broad claim to suggest that UCC has a major impact on the national feminist movement, the school has the potential to set a standard when it comes to discussing women's issues. If one of the premier schools in Canada, especially an all boy's school known for its history of misogyny can develop a dialogue surrounding equal gender rights, then that is a massive step in the right direction for the movement.

The main issue surrounding feminism at Upper Canada College is that there is a lack of understanding of both historical and modern feminism in Canada, which causes difficulties in feeling compassion for those affected. But while learning about the wage gap, culture of sexual abuse and objectification, lack of opportunity, and actions taken by feminists is important, it is also crucial to open a dialogue with women in order to discuss our thoughts, concerns and points of contention with those who are primarily impacted. In order to fully understand the challenges that women continue to face, it is imperative that as men we become comfortable speaking about feminism and women's rights. This is where the school administration must perform to a higher standard in creating events that support a conversation about feminism which allow students to learn about the movement in an interactive manner. While I recognize the attempt to educate and create a dialogue on the issue of proper consent in last Monday's

assembly, there were clear flaws in its structure that were not conducive to a proper discussion. Male students are not going to discuss their emotions and feelings in front of the entire student body. The school fails students when it does not provide outlets to discuss difficult but immensely important feminist topics. Instead of sitting students in a massive assembly hall and asking them to stand in front of all their peers, the school should moderate small group discussions where it is easier for students to express their thoughts. I had a conversation with a student last week who opened our exchange by making jokes about the feminist movement; however, as soon as he recognized that I was listening to his concerns we began to have a meaningful discussion. The power of small groups is that students feel more comfortable with difficult conversations due to their intimate structure and that all their ideas are heard within a small committed group. These types of conversations are also easy to organize as advising time can be used to moderate discussions. They can then be expanded to include students from girl's schools so that a dialogue on pertinent feminist issues can be developed with the opposite gender. UCC administration must support these kinds of developments in order to improve the knowledge and understanding of students at the College. In doing so, the school works to establish meaningful dialogue on the topic of feminism which improves the knowledge of our students and allows them to make more informed decisions on related topics.

The lack of understanding, however, is not only the result of the school administration's lack of action, but also due to the closed-minded attitude of UCC students towards education on feminism. I remember hearing comments leading to the date of the consent assembly regarding the "pointlessness" and "stupidity" of a "useless" assembly, and while it's obvious structural flaws could be seen before the completion of the event, the negative attitude does not help to remedy a serious issue. While it may not occur in initial conversations, we as students must place ourselves in uncomfortable situations and attempt to create a dialogue on the delicate topic of feminism. This way students can address prominent concerns of not wanting to be blamed for the actions of others, and the advancement of women's rights creating inequality for men. But this

is why open-minded dialogue is imperative as it allows students to express concerns and have them addressed by those with different perspectives. As students, we must set aside our preconceived notions in order to understand the challenges women face and to develop collective strategies to solve them.

But although students may not believe that misogyny and sexism reside at the college, one common theme among conversations is a clear objectification of women. I am often disappointed and sometimes ashamed to attend a school in which students consistently demonstrate a disgusting lack of respect for women. On a daily basis walking through the basement I hear stories laced with casual sexism, and on one occasion overheard the downplaying of a potential rape. Another obvious example of this lack of respect and casual sexism has been prevalent in multiple assemblies throughout the year. The first situation is when Ronald Cohn, chief of pediatrics at Sick Kids Hospital, delivered an excellent presentation on how his laboratory is making great strides to end muscular dystrophy. But many UCC students, instead of respecting his work, decided to disrespect Cohn and his daughters by whistling and hooting on multiple occasions when he showed photos of them. It was an act of blatant sexism when many decided to objectify his daughters rather than respect his work, and all those who participated in the act should feel ashamed. But this isn't the only time this has occurred at UCC. At Monday's assembly, there was an emotional presentation remembering the victims of the Polytechnique massacre in which fourteen women were murdered because of their gender and the fact that they were feminists. But not five minutes after the moment of silence, as a student was presenting on his Australian exchange, UCC students again decided to whistle and hoot at a photo of the Australian boy's sisters. The lack of respect, compassion, and empathy is shameful, especially considering the seriousness of the previous presentation. It is moments like these where I question the morality of many students at the school, and which demonstrate the necessity for discussions about feminist issues, and eventually for the feminist movement to be more prominent at Upper Canada College.

# What Issues Do You Care About?

A Convergence Survey

Infographic by Layout Editor Liam Corelli

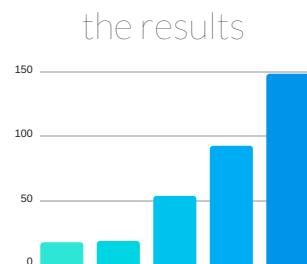
 325 out of 730 students responded

that's 45% of all students

## IB Work Levels

this was the most important issue<sup>1</sup> that was surveyed

70% of responders ranked it as important<sup>2</sup>

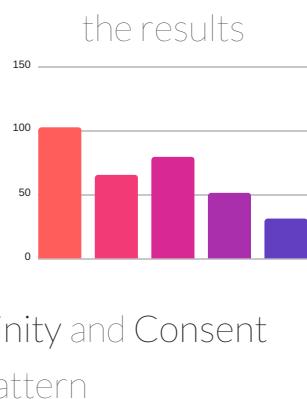


## Feminism

this was the issue students cared least<sup>4</sup> about

51% of responders ranked it as not important<sup>5</sup>

the issues of Toxic Masculinity and Consent followed this pattern



<sup>1</sup>highest % of responses of 4 or above  
<sup>2</sup>a 4 or above

<sup>3</sup>Issues with over 50% of responses of a 4 or above  
<sup>4</sup>highest % of responses of a 2 or lower

<sup>5</sup>a 2 or lower

## The Issues

14 questions were asked and students ranked them from **very important** to **not important**

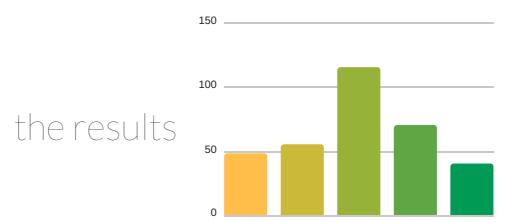
## Other Important Issues<sup>3</sup>

- Stigma Around Mental Health
- Extra-Curricular Involvement
- School Spirit
- Diversity

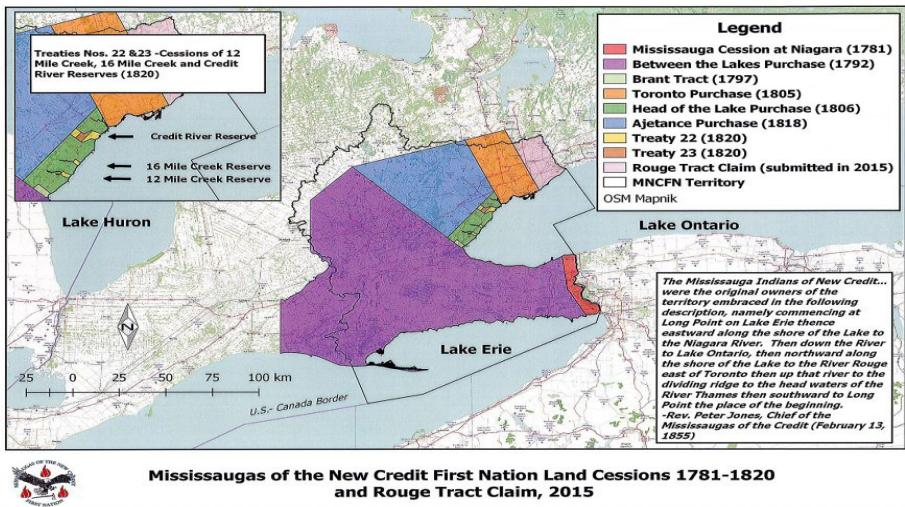
## Mr. McKinney's New Vision

35% of students answered that they were indifferent to this issue

this suggests that students don't fully understand Mr. McKinney's plan



# NORVAL BEFORE UCC



**SHAAN HOOEY**

STAFF REPORTER

We all know the essentials when it comes to Norval, as it is brought up time and time again through our experiences at UCC. UCC bought it in 1913. It was going to become our only campus and, had the World Wars not impeded this plan, we wouldn't have been where we are today.

But this basic knowledge, in addition to what we have witnessed from our time at Norval over the years, has given rise to many questions. We have looked for arrowheads at some point of almost every Norval trip, but have we ever looked at who brought them there in the first place? How did the Indian Meadows get its name? What Indigenous affiliation was there with the Norval property.

The one commonality between all of these questions is that we must look back farther into Norval's history -- Norval's history before UCC -- to understand how the property got to where it was today.

The Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, prior to European Contact, actually inhabited the lands North of Lake Superior. It was the Huron that first inhabited the land that surrounds Norval today. The Mississaugas migrated to Southern Ontario as a means of military conquest, as in 1649-1650, the Iroquois has expelled the Huron from their home in Southern Ontario. The Iroquois then continued Northeast, clashing with the Mississaugas of the New Credit. By the end of the 17th century, the Iroquois had been pushed back to their homelands

south of Lake Ontario. This is our first major misconception about the Norval property - all of the arrowheads found on the Norval property likely do not belong to its original owners. The Huron were known as a peaceful and agrarian society, so the arrowheads were likely from the war between the Mississaugas and the Iroquois in the late 1600s. The Mississaugas were then able to defend their property in the Norval area until 1818, when it was "sold" to the Crown as part of the Ajetance Purchase. Chief Ajetance was left with no choice but to sell his People's land to the Crown - with a recent influx of settlers into the Mississaugas territory, the Mississaugas of the New Credit suffered a weakened economy and a rapidly decreasing population. As a result, Chief Ajetance traded their 648,000 acres, including the Norval property, in exchange for £522.1 of goods annually. As much as the Mississaugas knew this decision wasn't ideal, the alternative of having their lands being stolen by settlers for nothing in return was even worse.

The first settler into the Norval property was a British Loyalist by the name of James McNab, who arrived along with his family in 1820. McNab built a grist and saw mill on the Credit River soon after his arrival, which was placed very strategically as he was able to float white pine masts down the Credit River that were used in the British Navy. Because many of the settlers in Southeastern Ontario at the time were astounded by the incredible abundance of Canada's natural resources, McNab's decision to build a mill was a major reason for why Norval's owners before UCC were so interested in the property. In 1838, the mills, named "Esquesing Mills"

by McNab himself, were bought by General Peter Adamson in 1838. He continued to profit tremendously off the mills until it was bought by Robert Noble Sr in 1868, and was invested enough in the profitability of the mills that he reconstructed brick flour mills on the Norval property. The flour mill could produce over 200 barrels/day and proved to be very financially successful, but burned in 1930. The grist mill was damaged in Hurricane Hazel in 1954. When UCC bought the property in 1913, they bought it from Noble's son, Dr. Robert Noble Jr.

This history brings us to UCC's much more well-known history with the Norval property, but there is still one unanswered question that remains: "How did Indian Meadows get its name?" Mary Maxwell - who lived next to the Norval property for most of her life and passed away in 2009, spoke to Mr. Elgie, the director of UCC's campus at Norval, about the history of Indian Meadows. Her father, Charlie Coupland, was employed by UCC as Norval's caretaker in the early 1900s. Along with Mary's brother, Warwick, they would constantly be maintaining UCC's 400 acre property. Of their plethora of maintenance duties, one of them was pushing the ploughs on the open fields at Norval. In the 40s and 50s, UCC students would follow the plough and look in the ground for artifacts. Because so many artifacts of Indigenous arrowheads were found in that particular field, it was named Indian Meadows.

What does this all mean? Norval is a place with such a rich history but has so many unanswered questions, and I think this is largely because it isn't used enough by the UCC community. Just because Norval's history very seldom includes UCC doesn't mean we shouldn't care about it. While our time at Norval isn't much, it is important not to just think of Norval as a time away from school, but rather take in the people, events, artifacts that make this place so interesting and keep questioning the vast history that has made Norval the way it is today. Why don't we use the property on the far side of the Credit River? Why don't we explore differentiating factors between Iroquois and Mississauga arrowheads? Hypothetically, what would life have been like at UCC if Norval was our main campus? Would UCC have still achieved the reputation it has gained if it were so far away from the city? There is so much that has yet to be answered about Norval, but it's our job to ask these questions for any progress to be made.

# SCHOOL SPIRIT AT UCC

**ADAM MENIKEFS**

STAFF REPORTER

Ah, school spirit, the topic that has seemingly come up about a dozen times over the past few years here at the college. From "I believe" speeches, TBAW articles to the comment sections of our esteemed Facebook group, Student Blue Army, arguments over the issue have surfaced everywhere, incorporating varied opinions and many points of views. Despite the storm of personal insights and diatribes, however, it is clear our school does not actually understand the reasoning for the lack of enthusiasm at school events, or why certain teams attract larger crowds. Hence, I will present some logic to the debate, and dispel some myths that are a part of the dispute, concluding with some realistic suggestions as to how we can improve as a community in supporting our brothers.

## SAC AND SMC HAVE HUGE CROWDS, SO WHY CAN'T WE?

As much as I dislike our neighbours over at the Loblaws parking lot and our rivals in Aurora (wherever that is?), it is not unfair to say that, aside from A-Day, the crowds at St. Mikes and SAC are relatively larger for the majority of sporting events. Despite the fact that our crowds could improve, for people to say that we must have a similar attendance to our rivals is simply unrealistic. Here's why. It is no secret that our academic program is more rigorous and demands more time spent towards school than our counterparts. The IB students and even the lower grades have a much tougher workload relative to students of the same age at other private schools around the cities, meaning they have less time to attend games and events, even ones happening on campus. As Mr. Paschalidis says, "You must first be a Varsity scholar, then a Varsity Athlete". This quote ultimately holds true as athletics will always take a backseat to academics, and therefore with all the "hell weeks" and IAs and TOK essays, it is simply unrealistic for UCC to match schools such as SMC and SAC in terms of attendance at sporting events.

## SPORTS TEAMS CANNOT COMPLAIN THAT THEY GET SMALL CROWDS WHEN SOME SPORTS HAVE NONE

As many of us know, there are sports at UCC that have little to no attendance at games or matches. Whether it be due to the lack of interest or distance from school, people do not want to take time of their day to watch certain games. As someone who runs Varsity track and plays Varsity Football, I fully understand the disparity in passion and would never complain that some of my fellow students would not want to come to Etobicoke Centennial in almost freezing temperatures to watch kids run around a track for hours on end. By the same token, I also understand why hundreds of people would want to come and watch Varsity Football at A-Day or FNL. It is not about performance (considering that both teams have top programs in the province), but rather about the fact that football is simply much more enjoyable to watch. Would I like to have more support at FNL? Sure, but I am not going to use the fact that track never has any crowd as justification for why the football team cannot complain about attendance. Unfortunately, as evident from last year's Facebook posts, not everyone understands this concept and the lack of interest in certain athletic events. While the Varsity hockey team and community were upset about the fact that only 30-40 students signed up to attend the final game of their season (a fully justified criticism of our school spirit), athletes from other teams thought the critiquing was unjustified. For example, arguments were made that because zero students came to watch the Urg Rowing competitions in middle of nowhere, Ontario, Varsity Hockey had no grounds to complain. As easy as it was to just laugh at the IB3's "roasting" the rowers, the question of "why can some complain but others can't?" was a valid one. As said before, it ultimately comes down to appeal and interest. As many arts students have come to understand, events such as musicals, plays, and band performances will always have a much smaller fan base than sports. In relation to that, sports such as rowing, swimming, track and volleyball will most likely never surpass sports such as football, basketball and hockey in terms of interest and attendance. This is something that will not change in the foreseeable future, and though

I would agree that it can be seen as unfair, in the words of Ray from Trailer Park Boys and UCC Old Boy, "That's the way she goes boys".

## OLDER STUDENTS DON'T SHOW ENOUGH SUPPORT SO WHY SHOULD THE YOUNGER STUDENTS?

It is no secret that students that have graduated in recent years have expressed their opinions that the school has experienced a steady decrease in terms of passion and support for the Blues. Although it is a rather bitter feeling, I would be lying if I said I did not agree. It is not necessarily events such as A-Day and winterfest that have been lacking, but rather the small things that build us as a community. Yes, saying that banging on the pews on a Monday morning and Jackson Suboch yelling at kids in the LD constitute school spirit might seem senseless. However, three or four years ago, those were what my Year 1 (Year 8 now?) self loved about our school. It is truly unfortunate that our school has slowly lost its touch in these smaller spirit areas, but it is not too late to steer future leaders of the college in the right direction. In the status quo, popular scapegoats for the lack of school spirit are the IB/older students. Frankly, that is just unjust. Knowing many older students and leaders at our school, I know with confidence that they really do care about our teams and programs, and do try their best to gain support for our athletes, artists and performers. Despite the fact that our senior student attendance could improve, the blame must be also partially shouldered by our younger students. I know it has become a cliché to complain about the iDiv students, but support from Year 1's or Year 2's is undeniably lacking. Events such as winterfest or Battle of the Blues have been well attended by senior students, but fail to be packed due to the absence of junior pupils. Some might say that it has always been this way, but I am certain that the current senior students showed up in larger numbers to school games and events when they were in Y1 and Y2. Regardless of the past, I am hopeful that we can shift the culture of the school both in the present and the future, but simultaneously maintain realistic and achievable goals for our athletic and arts community.

# RACIAL BIAS

**PRINCETON ZHOU, SAHIR FAROOQ, AND  
BASSEM SANDEELA**  
STAFF REPORTERS

## Introduction

BY PRINCETON ZHOU

From affirmative action to income disparities among ethnicities, racial bias is a real and pressing issue which frequently serves as a point of discussion in today's society. However, what does not get as much attention are instances when youth experience racial bias, as they oftentimes internalize their experiences and have no clear platform to share their stories. In this article, Sahir, Bassem and I will discuss experiences in which we have had encounters with racial bias and the lessons we took away from them.

## Personal Experiences

BY PRINCETON ZHOU

During my past four years at UCC, I have been transformed in ways I could never have anticipated. The boys here, it goes without saying, are some of the toughest, hardest working, and talented people I know. However, through my time here, I have observed several instances of racial bias. The first of these took place while I was on the U14 badminton team.

It was just another practice-- my teammates and I were warming up and simply trying to have fun at a sport many of us were new at. Soon, a group of Y9 badminton players walked into the gym. During which time, I heard one of the players on the court whisper to his friend, "it's the Asian invasion," while pointing at the boys coming in.

This wasn't the first time I had heard the term "Asian invasion" thrown around at UCC. Usually, it doesn't bother me too much (although I do feel discomfited upon hearing it), I understand that people probably don't realize how marginalizing the term is-- and oftentimes it really isn't their fault. However, hearing it said on the

court that day was particularly jarring for me, because it was made with regards to a group of boys on the same sport team in the year above. If playing the same sport cannot even be a uniting force among us here at school, what can?

It's undeniable that there's a prominent Asian community at UCC, but is the term "Asian invasion" really appropriate? There's no doubt in my mind that every student at the school brings a unique and valuable skillset, regardless of their ethnicity. It would be delusional to think that the Asian-Canadian community at UCC does not contribute equally to the college, or, as implied by the term 'invasion,' that the Asian community is unwelcomed and detrimental here. I wanted to share my statement here to let other boys know that if they have had similar experiences, they are not alone. These conversations are difficult to have, but need to occur more frequently if we are to become leaders in our communities and beyond. Together, it is our responsibility to recognize and speak out on these instances of racial bias, so people do not feel judged or left out. We all earned our way into UCC for a reason, and we all deserve the chance to be understood.

## Personal Experiences

BY SAHIR FAROOQ

I have lived in Canada- a place of incredible racial diversity all my life, and yet I have experienced quite a few situations where I've been insulted or marginalized based on race or skin colour. However, even with what I have faced, I still feel that I luckier than most in the sense that I have not been targeted by these actions as other people have been. Nonetheless, there is one occasion (which happened at my old school) that stands out and still affects me today.

Many years back, I was in class with my friends, doing what every student did- watching the clock until the bell rang for lunch. Upon hearing it, we dashed into the lunchroom and sat

down.. It was fine until just one person took a seat next to us. He stayed silent for a few moments and then suddenly exclaimed "I don't want to sit next to brown people". My friends and I were taken aback and we had no idea what to do. I was especially surprised. Had he come to the table and said that since we were sitting there first? There was literally no justifiable reason for the person to come and say that to us. Regardless, as the surprise slowly faded, the boy walked away and we were left in a state of shock.

At the time, we didn't know his words fully meant since I was a mere second grader when this incident occurred. But in the years following that day, after much reflection, I understood the true meaning of what he had said that day. It made me wonder, why would a kid so young say something so like that? Kids don't usually judge others, they simply do what is fun until they get older. Why was this kid different? Had he come to these ideas on his own, or was it someone he knew who has passed these concepts to him? Regardless of what it was, it made me realize that judging others based on race isn't something just a few people do. Racism can be passed on in a family, much like a genetic disease. Simply put, the exposure of kids to their parent/guardian's actions can make them do things they wouldn't naturally or normally do.

## Personal Experiences

BY BASSEM SANDEELA

I've lived in six different places and I've seen racial bias no matter where I've been, even at UCC. I was born in Egypt and resided there for three years. From there, I moved to Halifax, Nova Scotia. It was there I experienced racial bias for the first time. I remember one of the first questions asked to me in elementary school was "why are you here?". This is something that still bothers me to this day. 10 years ago, Nova Scotia was not very diverse and there were hardly any other expatriates there. In turn, people wondered why I was even in Cana-

da in the first place. Although things have changed dramatically, our past cannot be denied. Back then, things were different.

After Halifax, I moved to Dubai. Despite being the most diverse place I have ever lived in, I still occasionally found myself in uncomfortable situations. As a city known for having many Pakistani taxi drivers; my Pakistani descent lead to people often jokingly saying that I'd become a good taxi driver. This upset me greatly, because in my opinion, everyone is put on this planet for a good reason, and it is absolutely not to follow racial normalities and do the same things as everyone else. You are put in this world to be a trailblazer, to break

down boundaries and to not blindly conform to what people say you can or cannot do.

When I moved to Malaysia, things changed again! Being a diverse place with expats everywhere, it also featured around 2 million people of Indian descent- thus making up a third of the local population. It should be said that my ancestors a century ago were Indian, but I am not. However, many people assumed I was Malaysian or Indian (which I guess was somewhat understandable), yet really bothersome at the same time. When I played basketball for my school team, I was the only person of my skin color. People would jokingly say that I should have been playing cricket instead. Why were people so judgemental? I

just wanted to be myself and do the things I enjoyed doing.

When I returned to Canada once more, my destination was not Halifax, but Toronto. In turn, I came here- to UCC. While I feel like our school is diverse, I also think that something is missing in terms of overall racial inclusiveness. During the cricket club meeting of the year, comments were made on how only 'brown people' were able to join. Again, why were we limiting what we could or could not do? My best friend in Malaysia was Australian and he loved cricket, although ethnically, he was Vietnamese. Some people make assumptions about others due to their race, but we have to recognize that we are all human and race should not define who each of us are!

**JAMIE ONESCHUK**  
STAFF REPORTER

I am a survivor. The past 13 years of my life have been spent at this school, and it has molded almost everything about my life. Almost all of my friends are from UCC, and the majority of my activities relate to the College in some way.

What I love most about UCC is that so many people are involved in so many different aspects of the school. Few people only play sports, only do the arts, or only are involved with clubs, and those few that are only involved in one aspect are so dedicated to that area of the school that it is hard to see them having time to get into any other area. As a result of this, it becomes hard to categorize people into groups, as is stereotypically done in high school. There is no group of athletes, there is no group of art fanatics, there are no nerds, and often kids can fit into most of these categories in some way.

During my time at the college, I have never really been able to place myself into any of these categories. If you see me in the hallway, I am the last person you would think of as an athlete, and I have never thought of myself in that way, but I am a member of 3 sports teams at the school, two of which I play at the varsity level, as well as a member of two outside school hockey teams. I am a member of the band, multiple clubs, and a prefect, but one of the

## BLEED BLUE

things I enjoy doing most is playing videogames, be that Mario Kart or League of Legends, with my friends. These games help me connect with people in our community who I did not know prior. Some of my closest friends now I've connected with through late night league games, and discord calls.

I am an introvert, and I have had social anxiety since I was in my early teens. However, the UCC community has allowed me to feel comfortable, and if any of you see me, or more likely hear me, in the halls, you wouldn't be able to tell I was scared of talking to new people, because I am allowed to be myself when I am around all of you. I don't fear social interactions at our school because I feel the brotherhood that has formed between all of us, whether have I met you before or not. We have shared knowledge of what it means to be a UCC student, which is someone who is accepting of people with all interests or hobbies. It doesn't matter if you enjoy spending time on the soccer field, or time playing World of Warcraft, we all support each other. My social anxiety is muted whenever I am at school because I feel like I can talk to all of you, whether you have known me for 13 years, or 13 days.

And this support doesn't stop whether

we can make it to a sporting event or not. Recently, there was an article released on TBAW discussing how our school lacked spirit, and I vehemently disagree with that idea. Just because we don't have time to show up to a football game, or a cricket match doesn't mean we don't support our brothers. I think that asking fellow students in the hall how their day was, or talking to members of sports teams about their previous games can often be just as impactful as actually attending a game. Brotherhood doesn't mean going to sports games, it means being there for those at the College that need you. In 30 years, members of our varsity teams are not going to remember who was or was not at a specific game, but they will remember people who helped them catch up with their math, or who listened to them when they needed to talk to someone. Everyone can help with school spirit; there are so many ways to support one another and attending sporting events is only one avenue to explore.

I love this school so much, and I will miss every second of being here when I graduate next year, but I know that the school will be in good hands in the future, because all of you will continue our brotherhood, and honor what it means to bleed blue.

# BLAZER

| UCC's Humour Publication Written By People Who Think They're Way Funnier Than They Actually Are |

## What's In Your Bag, UCC?

Lets face it, no student has ever read an issue of Heads Up, and its pretty hard to listen to important announcements in assembly when you are either asleep or never there. As a result, the only way for students to stay updated on UCC life is by liking the UCC Facebook page, unless you're younger than IB1, because then apparently you're too cool to have Facebook. The UCC Facebook Page always shares information on upcoming events, and more importantly, displays kind reviews from parents and Old Boys such as the ones below:

**Best School in Canada! Beautiful and really good place for kids!**

Like Comment Share

Yeah, I mean this barn hosted me pretty darn well for the past 9 years. I mean heck BSS is down the road, McDonald's is just up the old Ave and the McVillage is we'll I mean there's a Starbucks... you get where I'm going. If you were a teacher hunter and were looking at the college for some steals, I'd say the your 3 prime suspects are Sharpe, Mirk and Griem. Ciao

Like Comment Share

UCC's incredibly hip and #woke social media team, probably comprised of two middle aged adults, also engages the community in fun interactive opportunities. A recent example was the #whatsinyourbag initiative, which The Blazer took time to make a submission for. Below is what can be found in an IB2 bag.



Upper Canada College  
Yesterday at 10:26am ·

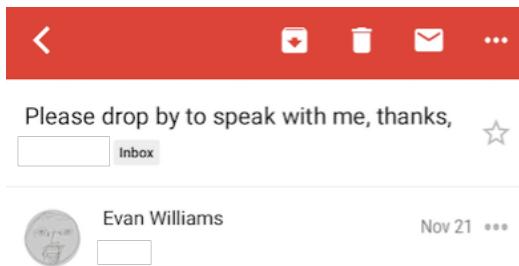
#Whatsinyourbag UCC? We're bringing this fun meme to our social media channels to give our wider community a glimpse into #uclife. Post pictures of boys' bags using the above hashtags and show us how you prep your sons for the day. Here's an example of a typical Year 7 bag: laptop, binders, healthy snack, pens and pencils, phone, charger, water bottle, gloves and hat. Very prepared indeed!



<b>PARKING VIOLATION</b>	
No. 0001	
This vehicle is improperly parked. Reason for Violation:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle has no valid Parking Permit <input type="checkbox"/> Parked In No Parking Area / Space <input type="checkbox"/> Parked in Fire Lane <input type="checkbox"/> Parked in Handicapped Space <input type="checkbox"/> Parked in Reserved or Assigned Space <input type="checkbox"/> Blocking Driveway or Access <input type="checkbox"/> Blocking other Vehicle <input type="checkbox"/> Parked in 2 spaces <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
Your license number has been recorded	

## Guessing Game

We love guessing games! This segment is dedicated to guessing what caused EW send out this email to a student in IB2.



Was it because:

- The student gave another student a swirlie in the LD bathroom
- The student set an alarm for 2:45pm so their teacher wouldn't forget about their 4b spare
- EW wanted to congratulate the student for his hard work and outgoing leadership
- The student drew the symbol of a 20th Century fascist regime
- The student parked on the avenue 5 days in a row.

**Thanks for a great 2017  
gents! Let the senior  
slide begin.**

## A-Day Update



## Headlines

- Students wonder if relationship with TOK is consensual in wake of Monday Assembly
- Chooooouuuu budddddaaaaayyyyy
- UCC Students confused as Aidan Harradence's 10-minute art presentation does not end with a plea to be a Parent Teacher Interview Monitor
- Mr. Denstedt **LOVES** Festive Marketplace!
- Lavar Ball and Principal McKinney engage in twitter war after Lonzo benched during assembly
- Mr. Heffernan invites entire school to the stage to shake hands with the Varsity Football coaching staff
- Josh Golden seems to believe in bullying more than the LD
- Ethan Ullmann's slick solo moves earns him a spot on next week's episode of "Dancing With The Stairs"
- Robotics Club to replace LD; maintained popcorn inventory past 12:21