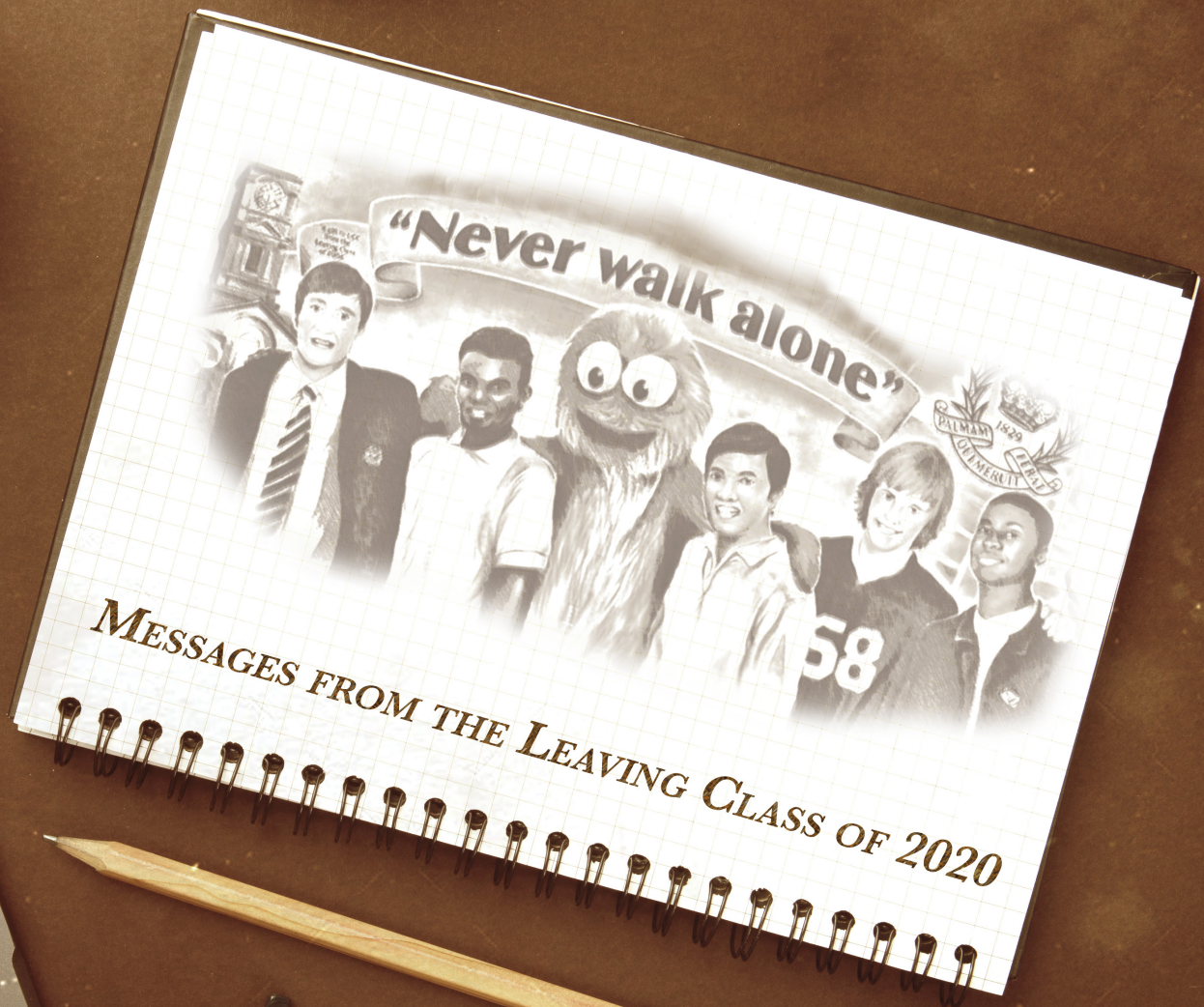


GILDED MEMORIES,
BARREN PEWS, A SOMBRE
STAGE,
UNTIL WE NEXT MEET.



CONVERGENCE

FAREWELL MESSAGES

FROM THE CLASS OF 2020

It is without a doubt that our lives have all been affected greatly by the COVID-19 pandemic, but imagine if the months most affected were those last ones at the College that you were hoping to enjoy with your UCC brothers. This is exactly what our 2020 Leaving Class has to face now. As Billy Shi observed, he never would've thought his rushed meal of pizza in the Seaton's common room before March Break would turn out to be his last meal at UCC.

This is why I proposed to create a column for the last issue of *Convergence* this year, where the Leaving Class can publish their farewell messages for the whole UCC Community. Having just finished compiling this column, I realized that I have gotten so much more than what I had expected. As such, we have decided to publish it as a standalone, special edition of *Convergence*.

While reading through these messages, I've appreciated how beautiful and thoughtful they are, how humorous yet moving they are, and how informative and enlightening they are. These messages prompt me to imagine what kind of message I myself might be able to deliver two years from now, and more profoundly, to imagine what kind of UCC graduate that I hope I will become in just a couple of years.

I am sure that after our readers read these messages, we will all deeply appreciate the time, efforts, and emotion the eight Y12s put into writing their farewell messages to the UCC community. We are also grateful that Jake Moffat has allowed us to publish the script of his extremely well-received *I Believe* speech.

Thank you very much, **Phillip Kong, Gaurav Dogra, Billy Shi, Samir Malick, Chris Noh, Shaan Hooey, Alex Xiang, James Liao, and Jake Moffat** - *Convergence* and the UCC community in general appreciate your thoughtful messages, moving stories, and valuable advices.

Among the Leaving Class of 2020 are some of *Convergence's* most dedicated and most talented executives. Princeton and I also would like to express our sincere thanks to our old **Editor-in-Chief Michael Young, Editor Jeffrey Zhu, Layout Editors Justin Lee, Billy Shi, and Uche Ochuba**. We will always treasure the unforgettable moments that we worked together, and we will try our best to reach and maintain the high bar you guys have set for *Convergence*.

We wish you and all your classmates the very best in your college life and your future pursuits.

Kevin Liu, Co-Editor in Chief



SO LONG, CIAO, AND AU REVOIR

CHRIS NOH

Greetings.

If anyone does read these lines - hidden away in the dense pages of *Convergence* - I thank you. I know it must be incredibly challenging given the sucking power of Netflix and hoards of e-comments overflowing your inbox, dm's, or stories.

My time here at UCC cannot be summa-

rized in one word. Even a day cannot be summarized in one. So, I don't want to attempt to encapsulate my experience with a singular idea (perhaps because I'm lazy) but rather express that my memory is bombarded - much like an inbox - with sensations of this community. Joy, sadness, revelation, guilt, mediocrity, vibrance, friendship, and boredom. Chaos, serenity, fury, ennui, "burnout", and elation. Busyness, fatigue, stress, adrenaline, and motivation. UCC has been a platform

of introspection and just as expression. I have learnt an immense amount...but still have much more to swim.

As I sit alone typing in my room, witnessing the biological tragedies around us, I'm so grateful for this downright *exceptional* community. To the leaving class, thanks for all of it. The rallies, the light-hearted laughs, and the miracles. I do believe this is a special group of boys. Till we meet again... Good travels my brothers!

CLICHÉ LESSONS WITH A NOT-SO-CLICHÉ PERSPECTIVE

SAMIR MALICK

Hey everyone.

Most of you probably see me running down the halls faster than Shaan Hooey to get to my next destination, or dumbfoundedly scoring baskets in Stewards' Madness. You might think I'm a busy person with little time to do lots of things, and therefore must be a master at controlling my own life (at least, that's what I think you might think). It's quite the opposite (especially in the IB), and I'm usually dominated by one task, another one, and even more, barely scraping by every day. **But**, this time at home has given me time to think about what I've learned at UCC, and how I've changed since entering the big blue doors for the first time. I'm going to share some of these lessons in a list (and at the same time make my message hell for the *Convergence* staff to edit):

1) Relationships with peers: Upon initially starting at UCC, I felt that I was impossibly different to everyone else there. I

believed that I'd never fit in, as I looked on at my peers who I thought I'd never become friends with. Though I haven't exactly become the social steward, I'm familiar with all my peers and have a good group of friends. So as weird as this may sound, you should try to make friends, because you will find them in the wide array of personalities here at UCC.

2) Extracurriculars: Again, as a new boy I had (almost) no prior experience with athletics. In fact, I hated them because I was so bad at every sport I played. Even after joining the cross country team on my very first day and butchering practice, my sentiments didn't change. However, I had committed to the team, and was determined to change my view on sports. I'm truly glad that I didn't give up back then, as I began to see myself slowly (get it?) improve and get to know my teammates. So, in addition to never giving up, you should try new things whenever you can. You never know what you might gain.

3) Organization and planning: This one is a little different. It's probably the most important (and hardest) lesson that I am still struggling to master. As I mentioned, in the IB you might feel like you're jumping from one test or IA to the next, and your whole year might pass by like nothing. To avoid this, to build strong relationships with your peers, and to be able to take part in extracurriculars you must have strong organization skills. You need to know what you want to do, how you're going to do it, and when, all the while accounting for the other millions of tasks you might need to take care of. It's challenging, and I admire those who can do it. But if you can make a plan and commit to it, then you will become a leader and will be seen as one by everyone around you.

Though some of these lessons themselves are intuitive, I hope that you can take away something new from the way I've described them.

Thanks everyone, and see you later!

WHY IS UCC SPECIAL?

JAMES LIAO

Gradually over the years I came to understand why UCC is such a special place. When I first came to the school in grade 9, I was intimidated by the talented student body full of athletes, musicians and scholars. Honestly, I felt like a small fish lost in

a vast ocean. Luckily, I was blessed to have received the undivided support from great teachers/mentors such as Mme Berezowsky who trusted my ability from the very beginning and invested time and effort in my development. Their dedication and commitment made me want to be the best version of myself. UCC has no shortage of

such amazing people who care about the students. I will be forever grateful for the last 4 years of learning and growth. Today, standing upon the shoulder of such giants, I look forward to the new horizons!

TO MY CLASSMATES, TEACHERS, AND YOUNGER STUDENTS

ALEX XIANG

When I first arrived at UCC in the fall of 2013, I longed to graduate: To finally be considered an adult and to finally be given the responsibilities and freedom to do whatever I wanted, whenever I wanted. I would imagine what it would be like to graduate in seven years time - the celebrations, the happiness, and the inalienable sense of accomplishment that would go hand in hand with that precious diploma. Well, regardless of what ten-year-old Alex thought, leaving this school would not be as easy as I predicted.

I had no idea about the incredible friendships I would make, the invaluable lessons I would learn, and the enriching opportunities I would have in the next seven incredible years all thanks to this amazing school. And if ten-year-old Alex knew the experiences that lay ahead for him, he probably would have thought twice about being so excited to leave these timeless halls. He might have learned to appreciate everything more and to be thankful for the seemingly limitless resources this school has to offer. At least I hope.

Well, I am no longer ten years old, and there is no point in dwelling on the past.

Regardless of the countless experiences I took for granted as a UCC student, I can still take the time right now to say thank-you to all members of the UCC community.

To my fellow members of the Class of 2020, I just want to say what an honor it has been to call you both my classmates and friends. We have been gifted this year with a diverse group of extraordinarily talented graduates, and the possibilities for each and every one of you are endless. You guys have had an indescribable effect on me as a student, an athlete, and a person. Explore your passions, seize every opportunity that presents itself, and never apologize for who you are. Brothers may fight, brothers may argue, but at the end of the day they will always be brothers. Stay healthy and stay in touch!

To my teachers, both from these two years and in previous years, each and every one of you have inspired me in a different way, and regardless of the lax word count writing a thank-you message for each and every one of you would probably last longer than a Mr. Moon rant about how Dosis is the best font (it isn't). All of you have had to put up with my incessant energy and constant enthusiasm, and I know

that must be difficult. But you persevered and were always available when I needed help, which is more than I could have ever asked for. The same applies to all my coaches, advisors, and mentors that I have had the pleasure of interacting with in these past seven years. We all look up to you guys more than you know, and I am already looking forward to catching up again in the fall.

Finally, a message to all the younger students at UCC. You guys shouldn't make the same mistakes I made when coming to the Upper School of staying in your comfort zone. Don't. It's only when you push yourself and try new things that you truly find what you're passionate for. Join that club, try out for that sport, or just reach out to someone you've never spoken with before, because by not doing so you are potentially missing out on a wealth of experiences and memories.

There's a sense of finality right now as I write this last paragraph, as it somehow feels like I'm closing a chapter in my life by doing so. But my journey is hardly over, and neither are my relationships with this school and the people affiliated with it. Thank you, stay safe, Never Walk Alone.

OUR SMALL UCC CITY

GAURAV DOGRA

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight a few things around the school that don't often get enough attention. As students, sometimes we simply clock in and clock out, just go through the motions, and get through the day or week. Sometimes, we don't actually realize everything happening around us and all the people working tirelessly to make our UCC experience possible and as great as it is.

Teachers - the teachers at UCC are some of the kindest, most dedicated, and most compassionate people you will ever meet. I have never had a teacher at UCC who isn't more than happy to go above and beyond, put in the extra time, and motivate their

students to be better. We often don't realize this, and when things get tough we think our teachers are overbearing, but they really know what's best for us and want to see us succeed.

The UCC staff - UCC is like its own little city, with thousands of small moving parts coming together to make everything run smoothly. A big part of this is the staff members who work when we don't have to, after hours, early in the morning, and much much more. These staff members, whether they be Aramark employees or the cleaning team, are extremely essential people but often go unnoticed.

Towards the end of my time at UCC, my mindset started to shift towards thinking

about what things would be like without these people - and all their hard work and dedication - and it's a bleak picture. It is this very idea that makes me so grateful to be a part of a community like UCC's, that has so much to offer - resources, people, a sense of community, brotherhood, among hundreds of other things.

What's the point? Don't take everything for granted - every once in while, try to stop and think, reflect, and find gratitude in small things, and help the system flourish. Be an active part of the community, give back to something that gives you so much, and most importantly, always strive to have a positive impact on others and our little UCC city.

SOME “FIRSTS” AND “LASTS” OF MY UCC CAREER

BILLY SHI

My UCC career is certainly not among the longest ones, but to me, memories still hit me harder than any news headlines these days or - if you are reading years from now - “those days”. I thought I’d reflect by looking at some “firsts” and “lasts” of my UCC career.

First class: Math class with Ms. Aust. I still remember I was sitting in the first row, on the right side. I still remember Ms. Aust introducing new boys (Michael Young and I), and to ask new boarders to stand up (well, only me). I remember her cartoons at the top of every quiz or test, and the “quick math” warm-up game we play at the start of every class.

Last class: Econ class with Mr. Chan (Or technically, TOK with Ms. Sehgal). Went over last bit of Development content. Chatted for 10mins. Presented him a digital card. Some best last-time memories were Ms. Metalin’s reaction to a teacher-impression video we did, showcasing her endless love towards Hamish and some funniest moments of Neo asking questions and Shaan trying to answer questions.

First email: English Language Support email from Ms. Barnes. That’s the first of

over 16,000 emails in my inbox for the past four years. Now thinking back, I’ve enjoyed writing all my exams in the CFL, especially enjoying the mints they give out.

Last email: Not sure yet...probably either a reply of thank-you emails from a teacher, or a reminder email to attend a meeting, or an all-capital, scheduled email from Ms. Timusk saying “LOCKER CLEAN-OUT BY TOMORROW AT 3:30 PM”.

First A-Day: Woke up at 6 am. Gave a tour of the Upper School. Stayed on Oval for the whole day.

Last A-Day: Woke up at 7am to organize Horizons Fun Run. Gave a tour of the Prep School (hmm...). Ran back and forth between the Oval, Lett Gym, Tennis Court, everywhere...

First Meal: Boarding Family Welcome Dinner. The usual steak and the usual turkey. I was told that would be one of the best meals I’d have in the next four years. I obviously didn’t take that too seriously then.

Last Meal: Pizza in Seaton’s common room. I was rushing to leave after for March Break that meal, but never thought we won’t be back to school this year. I

wish we’d ordered some nice burritos and played werewolf that night.

First friend(s): my first roommate, Alex Schutz - we’ve enjoyed some disputes about early morning breakfasts and open windows, as well as enduring a 3am fire alarm. My first science-classmates, Andy Wang and Roy Taguchi.

Last friends: there’s no such thing. All I can say is there are so many of you. Those smiling at me or saying hello in the hallway, you are part of the list. Those sat beside me in a meal or across me in a meeting, you are part of the list. Those have helped me and those “just wanted to see my work”, you are part of the list. Those who yet to know me but who carries a title called “UCC Student”, rest assured you will be on the list.

To everyone, thank you. You’ve been part of my life - the best four years so far in my life. I wish my eyes are cameras, filming every second of what I got to experience here. But I am afraid, after that, I will be watching those recordings for the rest of my life. So, as I physically leave this place, I hope we will meet again soon and bring surprises, smiles, and stories to each other. Till we meet again.

THREE TIPS FOR YOUR TIME AT UCC

PHILLIP KONG

Three tips to get the most out of your time at UCC:

First, get to know your teachers and other faculty. They are human like you and have exceptional backgrounds like everyone else at UCC. They can teach you so much more than just academic content. Your teachers also want to learn from you as much as you want to learn from them - they know that you all have unique stories that contribute to the rich tapestry of experiences at the College. Plus, you never know when a good opinion of you from a teacher might be helpful in the future.

Second, don’t specialize in a field of study too early. In fact, don’t specialize at all during high school if possible. Not only do universities want to see well-rounded students with a strong foundation for all disciplines, you will also find that what you learn in courses that appear to have no relation to each other can actually enhance your understanding of both courses. TOK is also theoretically the most impactful course you will ever take at UCC for that matter.

And lastly, it is never too late to start. Pave your own path in terms of extracurricular activities and school involvements. If you

feel that you can be doing something different that is a better fit for you, it is better to start fresh with something enjoyable than continue on a path of dissatisfaction from the choices you made as a younger, more naïve Year 8.

Boys, the College is a special place, I would not have traded these past six years for anything else. However, there are always parts of the UCC experience that can be improved. Don’t stop striving for change, even if the measures seem daunting.

I BELIEVE

JACOB MOFFAT

I hope that during this time you are still finding your way and everyone feels connected to friends and family as that is the jist of this message.

For those of you who do not know me, my name is Jake Moffat. Over my time at the upper school, alike everyone I have faced my absolute highs, however it comes with absolute lows.

Over these past two years, there have been two big things that have saved me. The idea that "everything happens for a reason" and family. I believe in the importance, the connection and the power of family. It is unimaginable the influence and connection you can build if you let people into your life. At a time this year, I gained this fear where I was scared to become close or let someone come into my life. I still do struggle with this.

Two years ago, I was eager to start the IB. To see what challenges I would face. Unlike the IB challenge in itself, my biggest challenge actually wasn't in the classroom. Just like a lot of you, my family is very easy-going. I have loving, siblings, parents, uncles and aunts, etc.

However, over these last two years, I found another family I could rely on too, my UCC family. I found it easy to talk to my friends and my teachers about how I was feeling. When my family changed, I knew my other family would help. It all started in grade 11, in September, when my family lost my 22 year-old cousin. It was an experience I would have never wanted to come back to. But saying that, it was only two weeks until my family was struck again by cancer. However, this time it was my mom. I didn't know what to do. I felt useless because I couldn't physically help her. However the more I thought, as my mom's health declined, I knew I could gain my school knowledge, but never recreate my relationship with her. I remember spending more time with her, I remember wishing I had spent more time with her. I remember when everything changed.

I remember mid-term exams. I remember studying for my exams. I remember thinking everything was going to get better. I remember thinking things were going to be

normal. I remember being woken up by my dad at 9:30 am. I remember that I was supposed to write my physics exam that day. My mom had passed during the night. The feeling was none. I felt defeated. All of my wishing and believing everything would magically change were gone. I felt empty. I remember realising I wouldn't have another Christmas with her, I remember realising I won't graduate in front of her, I remember knowing she won't be able to see me grow up and live. However I remember knowing she will always be looking down on me and leading me in the right way. This was the start of this bottomless pit I felt I was falling into deeper and deeper every single day.

Even before she passed, the thought of losing my mom was indescribable and I had to overcome sleep deprivation, depression, anxiety, and a lack of concentration on a daily basis. I was balancing school, sports, and co-curriculars on top of coping with these events.

I felt that not only was I failing in terms of meeting my school goals, it left me feeling that I was failing as a brother, a son and a friend. I have always been a person to keep my emotions inside and still have. It has brought me immense amounts of guilt and fear because I have built and reinforced this wall of emotions that I still refuse to break down in fear I won't be able to rebuild it. I felt pressured to move on because it has been 4 months since she passed. I felt pressured to make everything "normal" again and things weren't. I didn't think I could do anything right: I couldn't concentrate in class in fear of letting my dad and my teachers down, I couldn't play basketball in fear of letting my coaches and my teammates down to the point where I almost ended up quitting, and I couldn't be with my family in fear of disappointing them. It led me down an endless path of spiraling emotions. I was scared of who I was becoming and it left me with days and nights of failure.

This was when I gained my fear of letting new people into my life. I gave up on making new connections, I gave up on love. I felt I was taking advantage of people, I felt sharing would just make them pity me. I was afraid emotions would just end up hurting me in the end. I still struggle with accepting I have feelings of compassion and love. I bury

that emotion so deeply, because I think if I don't get close enough to anyone, then I will never be hurt.

I didn't change overnight, but over 4 months I have realised. Why do I call these people my family if I felt expressing myself came across as weak? Family is always going to be there for your struggles, family is always going to put you back on your feet. I gained support, I learned the power of family. I learned that you can always rely on someone. Whether it's your relatives or your friends or a teacher. Family doesn't have to be blood-related, family is not only a group of people who you care about. It's an emotion. The emotion of feeling comfortable, the emotion of feeling protected, the feeling of trust. Family is not defined by biology, or marriage, or even a home. Family is the people you love and who love you back, the people you feel safe around, and the people you can count on to be there when you need them. I'm still not perfect, nobody is. I am still becoming a better version of myself. Where I am comfortable with myself and it all starts with building a family.

Before I conclude, I want to just thank everyone. Friends, family, teachers, coaches. There were many points, especially this year where nobody's support could've led to darker times. Cancer took away my biggest supporter, someone who I could always rely on. Now COVID has taken away my UCC family and what was supposed to be the best part of it. Whatever you may call it, if it was not for this community, this family, my family. I would not have changed, I would not have opened up, I would not have tried new things, I would not have met new people. Most importantly, I would not have made so many memories and friends because of it.

In times like these, no matter how far or disconnected you may feel. For me personally, whether it was my mom or the family here that's been given to me over the past 13 years. Family will never change and that's its true power. I want to thank everyone who has helped me find myself. As I turn a new page in my life onto University - whenever that may begin - any family I have built here can never be replaced.

Thanks everyone, for your support and unforgettable memories.

WORDS TO EXPRESS WHAT WORDS CANNOT EXPRESS

SHAAN HOOEY

School bells chime for hallowed halls,
A lifeless stage awaits no one in particular.
Wind whistles, unobstructed, past the flagpole
On what some call a beautiful spring morning.

I call it the day I graduate: April 24, 2020.
And it's the worst day of my life..
At least the lunch lines are quick.

I recall a time before this day.
I remember when that school bell mattered to the boys rushing to P2,
When that stage supported every boy that dared to show the world what they were capable of
And when wind pushed the boys running on the track just that little bit harder.

200 Lonsdale was a community of controlled chaos.
We were all busy and addicted to it.
And while we are now filling the void to some extent, one question remains:
Did we do the best we could in the time we had together?

Time is finite.
Our days are numbered, and our days in highschool even more so.
I do not regret doing what I did during the time I had.
I regret thinking what I thought.

I regret that I spent my last week as a UCC student worrying about a math test,
I regret thinking that I couldn't wait for March break,
I regret ever complaining about how busy I was,
And I regret not appreciating the last week I will ever have with 154 of my closest friends.

The College will ever only be as amazing as the people in it.
While it is important to remember to strive for your goals,
Take time to care for and appreciate all those around you,
Simply because they are a brother in blue... and that's enough.

Be grateful for every moment.
Be strong in every challenge.
Be a brother to everyone that calls 200 Lonsdale their home.
It'll take a lot more than this to break up a family.
The Class of 2020.