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UBC'S OFFICIAL STUDENT NEWSPAPER | JANUARY 24, 2013 | VOLUME XCIV| ISSUE XXXV

# ENDORSEMENTS

**Still holding out on voting? Read our editorial board's official breakdown and rationale** **P10**

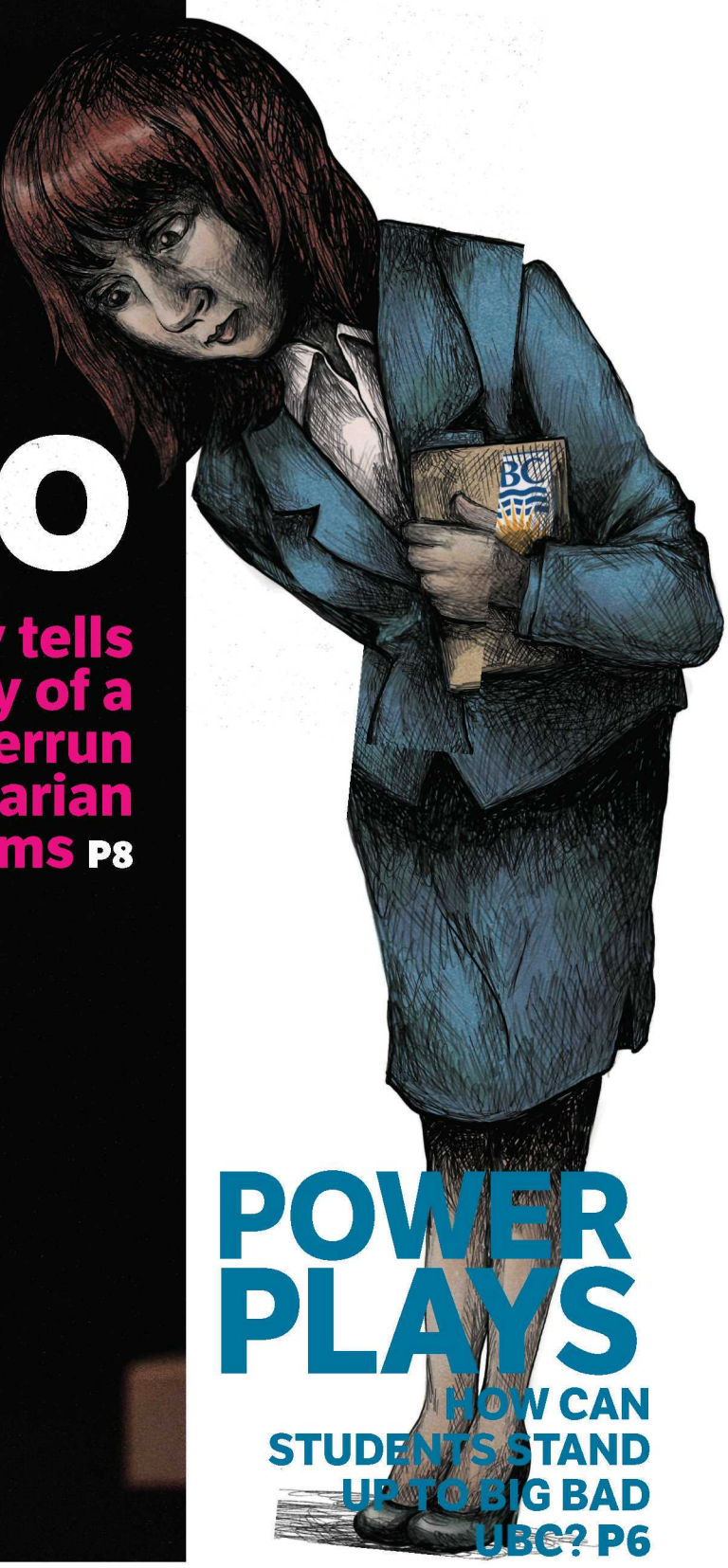
THE UBYSSEY

## GAS SPILL

**ACCIDENT IN SOUTH CAMPUS SENDS GALLONS OF DIESEL INTO STREAM** **P4**

## RHINO

**UBC play tells the story of a village overrun by totalitarian pachyderms** **P8**

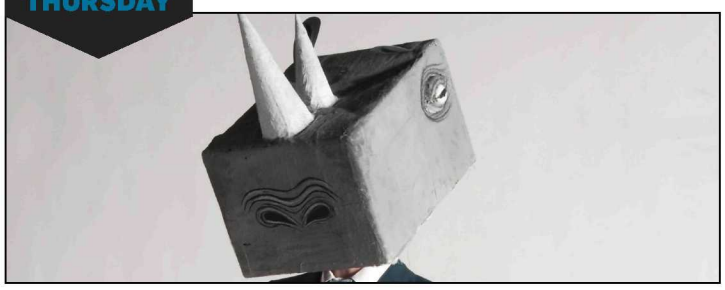


## POWER PLAYS

**HOW CAN STUDENTS STAND UP TO BIG BAD UBC?** **P6**

# What's on THIS WEEK, MAY WE SUGGEST...

## 24 THURSDAY — THEATRE »



**_Rhinoceros_: 7:30 p.m. @ Telus Studio Theatre**
Theatre at UBC's latest production follows French everyman Berenger, who is horrified to find that everyone in his small village is transforming into stampeding rhinoceroses. This absurdist exploration of conformity is playing at the Telus until Feb. 9. Directed by MFA directing student Chelsea Haberlin, performed by BFA acting students. *$10 for students.*

## 25 FRIDAY — ELECTIONS »

**AMS Elections Results Party: 5 p.m. @ the Gallery**
If you haven't noticed that it is election season, perhaps you should pick up Monday's issue of the paper. Make sure to come to this event to meet your future student government and discover the future of the U-Pass.

## 26 SATURDAY — SPORTS »

**UBC men's hockey vs. Mt. Royal Cougars: 2:30–4:30 p.m. @ Doug Mitchell Thunderbird Sports Centre**
Cheer on the Thunderbirds men's hockey team as they duke it out on the ice with the Mt. Royal Cougars. *$2 for students.*

## 27 SUNDAY — FOOD »

**Dine Out Vancouver @ restaurants all over the city**
Score cheap three-course meals at fine dining establishments that are way out of the average student's price range. *$18, $28 and $38 menus available; visit dineoutvancouver.com.*

## 28 MONDAY — VERY IMPORTANT »

**Data Privacy Day: All day @ The whole world!**
Did you know that today is Data Privacy Day? Use these 24 hours as an opportunity to hack-proof your passwords, PIN numbers and personal documents. Golly! Doesn't that feel better? *Priceless.*

Got an event you'd like to see on this page? Send your event and your best pitch to **printeditor@ubyssey.ca.**

## Video content

Make sure to check latest Ubyssey Weekly Show, airing now at ubyssey.ca/videos/.

THE UBYSSEY
JANUARY 24, 2013 | VOLUME XCIV| ISSUE XXXV

**EDITORIAL**
Coordinating Editor **Jonny Wakefield** coordinating@ubyssey.ca
Managing Editor, Print **Jeff Aschkinasi** printeditor@ubyssey.ca
Managing Editor, Web **Andrew Bates** webeditor@ubyssey.ca
News Editors **Will McDonald + Laura Rodgers** news@ubyssey.ca
Senior News Writer **Ming Wong** mwong@ubyssey.ca
Culture Editor **Anna Zoria** culture@ubyssey.ca
Senior Culture Writer **Rhys Edwards** redwards@ubyssey.ca
Sports + Rec Editor **CJ Pentland** sports@ubyssey.ca
Senior Lifestyle Writer **Justin Fleming** jfleming@ubyssey.ca
Features Editor **Arno Rosenfeld** features@ubyssey.ca
Video Editor **David Marino** video@ubyssey.ca
Copy Editor **Karina Palmitesta** copy@ubyssey.ca
Art Director **Kai Jacobson** art@ubyssey.ca
Graphics Assistant **Indiana Joel** ijoel@ubyssey.ca
Layout Artist **Collyn Chan** cchan@ubyssey.ca
Videographer **Lu Zhang** lzhang@ubyssey.ca
Webmaster **Riley Tomasek** webmaster@ubyssey.ca

**STAFF**
Bryce Warnes, Josh Curran, Peter Wojnar, Anthony Poon, Veronika Bondarenko, Yara Van Kessel, Lu Zhang, Catherine Guan, Ginny Monaco, Arno Rosenfeld, Matt Meuse, Hogan Wong, Rory Gattens, Brandon Chow, Joseph Ssettuba, Tyler McRobbie, Sarah Bigam, Stephanie Xu, Natalya Kautz

**BUSINESS**
Business Manager **Fernie Pereira** fpereira@ubyssey.ca
Ad Sales **Ben Chen** bchen@ubyssey.ca
Accounts **Tom Tang** ttang@ubyssey.ca

**CONTACT**
**Editorial Office:** SUB 24 604.822.2301
**Business Office:** SUB 23
ADVERTISING 604.822.1654
INQUIRIES 604.822.6681
Student Union Building
6138 SUB Boulevard
Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z1
**Online:** ubyssey.ca
**Twitter:** @ubyssey

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# OUR CAMPUS

## ONE ON ONE WITH THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE UBC

KAI JACOBSON PHOTO/THE UBYSSEY
AMS presidential candidate Jay Shah has been an active member of the Greek system since he came to UBC.

# Jay Shah talks REC, rappers

**Will McDonald**
News Editor

AMS presidential candidate Jay Shah has held numerous AMS positions, but he's most at home when he's with his fraternity, Beta Theta Pi, or participating in UBC REC activities.

"This is probably my biggest accomplishment: I came in fourth in the UBC REC campus-wide table tennis tournament," said Shah.

Shah said hockey is his favourite sport to watch, but he is also a fan of baseball and football.

"I knew something in my life was missing from October to November this year and I couldn't actually pinpoint it — and I realized it was hockey," said Shah.

Shah is active in REC sports, including ball hockey, basketball, soccer and Storm the Wall.

Shah has also played competitive hockey since he was in the seventh grade. He mentioned that winning the UBC REC ball hockey tournament on his fraternity's team was another milestone in his life.

"I never won an organized ball hockey tournament until this year, so that, I would have to say, was one of my bigger accomplishments," said Shah.

A Markham, Ontario native, Shah is in his fifth year of a BA in international relations and English literature.

In his first year at UBC, Shah lived far away from campus and had no network of friends or family in the area. He said that's when he got involved in Greek life.

"Obviously having that sort of familial feeling was hugely, hugely beneficial, initially," said Shah.

Shah is currently the executive coordinator of student services for the AMS and has held numerous elected positions in the Greek system, including president of Beta Theta Pi.

"[Fraternies are] not necessarily for everyone, but it's definitely something that has provided me with a lot of experience, with a lot of knowledge, with a lot of tolerance that has allowed me to grow as a person and help grow the organization," said Shah. "It's something that I think, overall, is just a fantastic experience."

Shah is known for his speaking ability and communication skills, which he developed as the AMS ombudsperson. Rumour has it that this affinity for public speaking stems from an obsession with rapper Jay-Z.

"I think that's actually been a little bit overblown. There were drinks flowing that night and so I can't really corroborate the extent to which I'm a huge Jay-Z fan," said Shah.

"I do have a lot of respect for him, definitely. Coming from where he came from and being able to build up what he's been able to is definitely hugely motivational, but do I have a huge obsession? I wouldn't necessarily classify it as that. But I'm definitely a fan of his music, for sure."

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The Ubyssey's annual creative writing contest is open for submissions! Have your work judged by published authors and magazine editors. Winners in each category are published in The Ubyssey and awarded $75 and a subscription to a literary magazine.

RULES
- Email submissions by Feb. 1, 2013
- 300-500 words for flash fiction
- 1 page or less for poetry

Visit **ubyssey.ca/literary/** for full submission guidelines.

INVENTIONS »

KAI JACOBSON PHOTO/THE UBYSSEY

Isabel Chen holds up a watch equipped with the panic device.

# UBC student designs panic button for sex trade workers

**Sarah Bigam**
Staff Writer

Isabel Chen, a medical student at UBC, is part of a team that has invented a mobile panic button for street-based sex trade workers in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

A voice or text message is first recorded onto a SIM card, which is inserted into a GPS-enabled device such as a pager that would only need to be charged once a week. Pressing a button on the pager activates the GPS and sends an emergency message and GPS location to a contact who can get help. Because the GPS is not activated until the device is activated, the user stays anonymous.

The other members of the team include Kyle Ragins, a fourth-year med student at Yale, and Vanessa Forro, a master's of public health student from Case Western in Ohio. Both Ragins and Forro have been involved in this project from its inception.

"We thought we would run the idea by local organizations and see what they thought. And we've received a lot of support so we've just sort of been trekking along," Chen said.

According to Chen, a few of the specifics are still to be decided. Once prototype devices are ordered, the three students will hold focus groups to determine which type of device is more useful. GPS-enabled pagers and watches have been considered, but they are also open to using something else entirely. Also to be decided is the recipient of these emergency messages; it could potentially be a friend, relative, community partner or the Vancouver Police Department.

After the focus groups, Chen, Forro and Ragins will launch a six-month pilot project by giving devices to 100 women on Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Chen said they are not currently working with the Vancouver Police Department. She noted that legal issues complicate the relationship between the police and sex trade workers; she is waiting for the focus groups to clarify what the users would be most comfortable with.

One group they will be working with is WISH, a drop-in centre that provides aid to female sex workers. "WISH is super on-board. They've been providing a lot of support and just, like, general advice.... We couldn't do this project without them," Chen said.

Kate Gibson, executive director of WISH, said the project is still in early stages and they are working to consult the sex workers themselves.

"We have to go to the women to find out.... We need to consult with the people who are most affected," said Gibson.

Chen said that the idea came from a variety of different influences, notably her research: at Yale, she studied intimate partner homicide as part of her master's of public health degree. In a January 2012 missing women's commission report, she read that sex workers mentioned GPS panic alarms as something that might be helpful. Panic alarms are already used in brothels, but women working on the street don't have that security.

The group is currently holding a fundraising initiative online. The initial goal was to raise $5,500 to pay for sample devices, focus groups and the first 100 pilot devices. Two days ago, the budget was expanded to $8,140, which covers the entire pilot project. "Any extra funds we'll just donate to WISH or whatever community organization ends up continuing the project," Chen said.

As of Tuesday night, according to the project website, www.rally.org/keep-safe, the total funds raised were $16,115.

BUSINESSES »

# e@UBC helps student start-ups thrive

PHOTO COURTESY MARTIN DEE

Francois Roux is the co-founder of 2Vancouver.com.

**Spencer Toffoli**
Contributor

At UBC, there's a program to help student businesses get off the ground.

Entrepreneurship@UBC (e@UBC) is a joint project started two years ago by the Sauder School of Business, the Applied Sciences program and the University Industry Liaison Offices. The project aims to facilitate new ventures in the UBC community.

Program director Anuj Singhal said that e@UBC can help bridge the gap between having an idea for a product and actually turning it into a viable business.

"Start-ups, especially ... scientists and engineers, are often quite good at product development and design research, but they don't have enough experience or exposure to things like customer research and building markets," said Singhal.

e@UBC offers practical aid for start-ups to fill that gap. This includes financial investment and a number of other types of support for fledgling companies, including workspaces, networking, mentoring and access to discounted professional services and advice.

Francois Roux, co-founder and managing director of 2Vancouver.com, said the support of e@UBC has had a significant impact on his company's development.

2Vancouver.com is a website that helps those who are new to Vancouver find employment, residence and education options. Roux said e@UBC gave his company a new office, as well as $5,000 worth of services from the university.

"We learned a lot about the start-up ecosystem and the kind of methodology we should be following to evolve from a start-up to a grown-up business," said Roux.

For such a new program, e@UBC has already supported a number of promising companies.

Another successful example is Convergent.io, a data storage company that started as a small operation in the e@UBC incubation workspace. It has now moved into its own offices after winning a $10 million investment from Andreesen Horowitz, a highly successful venture capital fund from Silicon Valley.

But e@UBC is about more than just supporting start-ups. Both Singhal and Deven Davé, executive director for the W. Maurice Young Entrepreneurship and Venture Capital Research Centre at UBC, emphasized that the program aims to alter the culture of the university itself.

Singhal said that anyone who is interested in starting a venture or taking their venture further can contact e@UBC, which will try to give them support.

"Whether you're wanting to start the next Lululemon or you just want a more entrepreneurial career, we really encourage students to check out a number of the different events being put on," said Singhal.

## NEWS BRIEFS

**UBC fundraising campaign breaks $1 billion mark**

UBC's biggest fundraising campaign has raised over $1 billion.

The campaign, launched in 2011, aims to bring in a total of $1.5 billion by 2015. 90,000 of the total 138,000 donations to the campaign came from alumni.

The campaign also aims to get 50,000 alumni involved at the university every year. "Their generosity and involvement is providing more student aid, improving learning environments and extending the impact of research and community engagement. With their help, UBC can really be a catalyst for change and transformation," said UBC President Stephen Toope.

**UBC-O study questions health benefits of fish oil supplements**

According to a study at UBC-O, fish oil may not have as many health benefits as previously believed.

The study found that fish oil supplements interfered with healthy mice's ability to repair cells in the digestive system.

The study has further implications into the supposed health benefits of vegetable oils.

"The vast majority of studies that show Omega 3 oils are beneficial are based on eating fish, not pills," said study author Sanjoy Ghosh. "When you eat a lot of fish you automatically eat less of other oils and it's a healthier balance."

PETITIONS »

# STOP UBC petition gaining traction

## 9,000+ signatures collected to protest invasive experiments

**Ming Wong**
Senior News Writer

An online petition to stop a specific type of animal research is close to reaching its goal of 10,000 signatures, but UBC maintains that animal research is "vital and essential."

The petition from advocacy group STOP UBC Animal Research had over 9,000 signatures at press time. It asks UBC to ban Categories D and E of animal research, the two most invasive categories.

"Those are the sort of experiments they show in those creepy science fiction movies. It's time to take those out," said Laura-Leah Shaw, director of Stop UBC Animal Research. "We don't have a right to be doing this to animals."

According to the Canadian Council on Animal Care, Category D represents "moderate to severe distress or discomfort" and the highest of five categories, E, represents "severe pain near, at or above the pain tolerance threshold of unanesthetized conscious animals."

UBC increased its use of Categories D and E research from 2010 to 2011. In 2011, 83,800 animals, up from 68,203 in 2010, were involved in Category D research. 2011 also saw 59 animals involved in Category E research, up from 31 in 2010.

Helen Burt, UBC Associate Vice-President Research, maintains that research involving animals in Categories D and E, such as surgical procedures, undergoes scrutiny by clinical veterinarians and the Animal Care Committee before it is approved.

"Categories D and E protocols receive the highest level of attention and debate, focusing on the ethical issues," said Burt in an e-mail statement.

According to Shaw, STOP is focusing its efforts on only the two most invasive categories of animal research at the moment.

"The goal is to ban all animal research, but we're realistic; we have to begin somewhere," said Shaw, who couldn't take *The Ubyssey*'s first call for an interview because she was in the middle of an "animal rescue mission" at Jericho Beach.

UBC spokesperson Lucie McNeill said the university hasn't seen the petition or the signatures yet, but welcomes public input.

"I like to emphasize that UBC is definitely proud of the outstanding research that's conducted by all of our researchers here.... It has continuously earned this university a reputation as a world leader in many, many areas, including biomedical research."

McNeill said that UBC has been transparent on the issue of animal testing. UBC started releasing its animal research statistics in 2011.

But Shaw said it was only after STOP put pressure on UBC that they released the numbers. She went on to say they want UBC to release more details on the protocols taken during research and the specific species of animals used.

Shaw hopes to present the petition to UBC President Stephen Toope and the UBC Board of Governors. This is the group's first petition targeted at Toope, although previously they've swamped the president's office on Valentine's Day with cards, emails and phone calls to "appeal to his heart."

Former STOP director Brian Vincent recently stepped down due to health issues, but Shaw said the group's mission is the same: to educate the public about animal research and "stop cruelty, not research."

"All groups evolve.... We may see a different approach now to some of our things that we do, but that's not a result of change in the organization," said Shaw.

POLLUTION »

# 300-gallon diesel tank spills in South Campus

HOGAN WONG PHOTO/THE UBYSSEY

About 100 gallons of diesel fuel leaked from a semi truck at the intersection of Birney and Binning in Wesbrook Village on Wednesday afternoon.

**Sarah Bigam & Will McDonald**
Staff Writer & News Editor

A diesel truck leaked approximately 100 gallons of fuel at the corner of Binning Road and Birney Avenue in Wesbrook Village today, according to Vancouver Fire Department spokesperson Gabe Roder.

The leak was reported at 12:45 p.m. today. Roder said some of the fuel entered the storm drains before the fuel could be contained.

Roder estimated 30 gallons entered storm drains, but said the exact amount couldn't be confirmed. Mike Giannias, a UBC staff member from Building Operations who was at the scene, gave a similar estimate.

"Some of it has gone into the storm system prior to us getting there," said Roder.

The leak happened after debris on the ground broke the truck's fuel line, which connected two tanks containing approximately 300 gallons of diesel fuel.

The driver of the truck described the incident as a simple accident. "I was backing the truck up, and probably some rocks and dirt got caught underneath my truck, and they ripped out one of my fuel lines. Then my truck stalled, and there was diesel coming out,... It was kind of a shitty situation" he said.

Giannias said the ripped fuel line ran between two separate diesel tanks, one of which began to spill. He said that when the fire department arrived at the scene, they wound up plugging the leak, and transferred the fuel remaining in the leaking tank to the other one.

As of 4 p.m., the leak had been stopped and bulk of the spilled fuel was contained with a sand dike.

Roder said an environmental company will take the diesel-soaked sand away to be decontaminated.

"It went into the drain, and supposedly it's made its way down to the bottom of the fish ponds down here," said Giannias. He said MacRae's Environmental, a Delta-based company, was being called to clean up the aftermath.

GLITCHES »

# Over 1,000 students kept from voting for BoG, Senate

HOGAN WONG PHOTO/THE UBYSSEY

Students were unable to vote in the Board of Governors and Senate races for approximately 12 hours due to a glitch in the voting software.

**Will McDonald**
News Editor

The AMS is trying to sort out the aftermath of a glitch that prevented 1,171 students from voting in two races on this year's online student government ballot.

From late Monday until around noon Tuesday, students couldn't vote in the Senate or Board of Governors races.

Elections administration Jenny Chen said the problem was caused by a glitch in the voting system that failed to distinguish between UBC students and students at affiliated colleges like Regent or Vancouver School of Theology. Students at affiliated colleges are members of the AMS, but are not eligible to vote in the BoG or Senate races.

Chen said voting is working now, and emails will be sent out to the affected students, giving them information to vote in the races they missed.

There was also another problem with the student government election ballot. The question about the VoterMedia contest, which allows students to vote on how much money is given to blogs covering the elections, was not set up correctly when voting began.

Two blogs entered the contest this year, AMS Confidential and Spilling T. The AMS has provided $1,200 to be split between them based on how students vote.

Students should have been able to vote to give 100 per cent of the prize money to one blog, and nothing to the other. But the ballot only allowed them to vote for a maximum of 40 per cent to one blog.

Chen said she is working on a formula to allocate the money correctly and fairly, but it has to be approved by both blogs competing for the money.

"That was an issue on our part.... We have a formula that we've come up with and that's something that we're going to discuss with the two VoterMedia blogs to come to an understanding," said Chen.

PENALTY BOX »

# Board of Governors candidate Lin fined for breach of election rules

KAI JACOBSON PHOTO/THE UBYSSEY

Conny Lin is also the president of the Graduate Student Society.

**Will McDonald**
News Editor

Board of Governors candidate Conny Lin has been fined $200 for violating AMS elections rules.

Lin, who is also the Graduate Student Society (GSS) president, sent out an email to all GSS councillors urging them to vote for her and the other four graduate students running in the AMS elections.

AMS elections administrator Jenny Chen said Lin was found in violation of the elections' conflict of interest policy. In addition to the fine, Lin was asked to formally apologize and revoke her endorsement.

"Obviously this is abusing of her power," said Chen. "Definitely it will be a violation,... both monetary and she will also have to send out a public apology to the students of GSS because it is highly inappropriate of her to do so."

Lin sent out a second apologetic email a few hours after the first, writing, "I will ask someone else from the executive team to send this notice out instead. Rushing through things is not good! Lesson learned."

Lin later sent out a third email revoking her endorsement from the GSS.

"This is a direct conflict of interest and misuse of Society's resources. Hereby the GSS endorsement to Conny Lin shall be revoked," read the email.

Want to write about fuel leaks?

Want to write about candidates abusing their power?

Write for News.

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BIKES »

# Purple and yellow pedal power

## The UBC Bike Co-op program turns ordinary students into bike masters

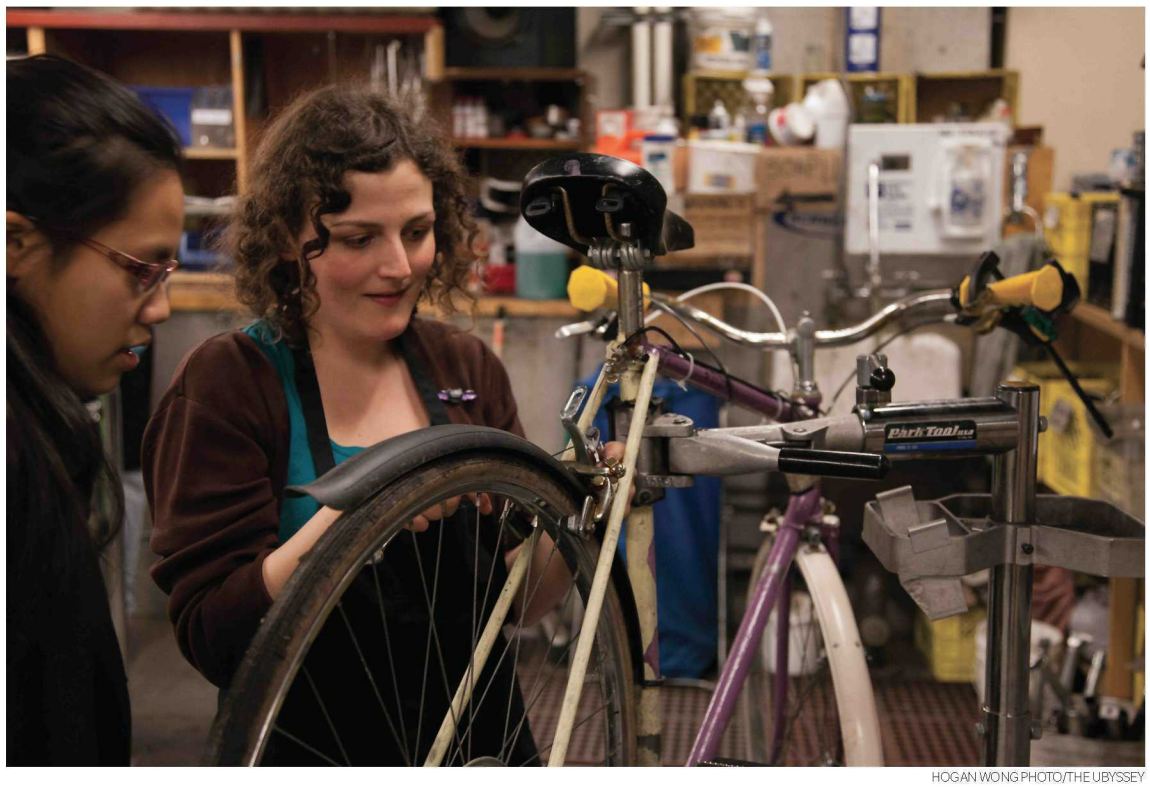
**Justin Fleming**
Senior Lifestyle Writer

"All the bikes are donated," shouts UBC Bike Co-op President Jean-François Caron as someone tests the strength of a bike's top tube with a hammer. "Department store bikes might not last that long, but many of their parts do." Caron, sporting a floral apron, glides off with tools in hand to where two volunteers inspect a bike clamped in a stand.

The atmosphere in the Bike Kitchen is light-hearted and industrious as volunteers tighten, ratchet, eyeball and prod. Clustered around bikes in various stages of assembly, volunteers joke and share tools while a song from the *Space Jam* soundtrack bounces around the cement room. It's Tuesday night, the Bike Co-op's weekly "Purple and Yellow Night." From 6 to 9 p.m., anyone can drop in to get free, hands-on experience and learn all the ins and outs of bike mechanics, from basic maintenance to full assembly. Then they apply these skills to turn donated two-wheeled cadavers into the Franken-bikes of the Co-op's fleet.

You may have noticed these garish beauties around campus, either locked up or whizzing down Main Mall in a smear of complementary colours. This aptly named "purple and yellow" fleet is part of a bike-share initiative run by the UBC Bike Co-op. The bike-share program has been around UBC since the '90s, and was inspired by similar free bike-sharing programs that started in the '60s and '70s in Europe. Eventually, the program found its way to the west coast of the United States and into Canada.

Of the many programs the Bike Co-op has offered over the years, the purple and yellow fleet has been its mainstay. The program's consistency, along with various grants and funding, has allowed the Co-op to grow from its humble beginnings inside a storage container to a loading bay outside the H.R. Macmillan Building to its present location in the basement of the SUB.



HOGAN WONG PHOTO/THE UBYSSEY

On Tuesdays between 6 and 9 p.m., students can go to the Bike Kitchen and learn how to build bikes.

The program is open to all students, no matter what their experience with bikes is. Guillermina Perez, who just finished her master's in health science, learned how to ride a bike last summer and now considers herself "really good." Perez, who had some free time and wanted to learn how to fix bikes, has been volunteering for the last six months. "I like it; it's kind of relaxing and different," she said.

If you want to obtain a key that unlocks any of the bikes around campus, you must become a member of the Co-op by attending two Purple and Yellow Nights and either paying $15 or volunteering for six hours.

While the fleet itself is an integral part of the program, Caron sees the volunteer night as more important; it offers a relaxed atmosphere for people to learn about bikes and just hang out.

"Volunteers can come in knowing nothing about bikes and learn how to fix bikes without having to pay any kind of fee," said Caron. "Within a few weeks you can learn how to replace brakes, change a drive train out, true a wheel — pretty advanced, beyond just basic maintenance."

Despite the successes of the program, there are also some setbacks. One of the biggest challenges facing the purple and yellow program is one that plagues most other bike-sharing programs: theft and vandalism. No matter how ugly the paint job, many bikes disappear.

"We generally say don't go down the hill and don't go past TRIUMF," said Cole Murphy, the purple and yellow program coordinator. He said he has occcasionally had to go out with a trailer to round up bikes taken off campus.

Since 2008, the City of Vancouver has been doing its own studies into the feasibility of a public bike share; a program is expected to launch this spring. The proposed system would have 1,500 bikes and 125 stations dispersed every two to three blocks.

However, the city's plan is not without speed bumps. Proposed stations could miss key areas like Commercial Drive and UBC, and there are also issues around B.C.'s helmet bylaws. Bike rental shops claim they would be put out of business, and the issue of taxpayers picking up the bill has many bristling.

What, if anything, would it mean for the purple and yellow program if the City of Vancouver's commercial bike share were to make it out to UBC? While it may be ideal for tourists and visitors to campus, it's doubtful the program would be cost-effective for students. Caron doesn't see much competition between the choice of swiping your credit card for a ride across campus versus volunteering for a few nights to get unlimited access to bikes and a welcoming community.

There doesn't appear to be anything slowing down the purple and yellow program at UBC, meaning that, despite its few setbacks, the initiative will continue to pedal forward into the future.

DOPING »

# T-Bird suspended for cannabis violation

## DB Kofi Kuma-Mintah has received a two-year sanction

GEOFF LISTER FILE PHOTO/THE UBYSSEY

T-Bird DB Kofi Kuma-Mintah appeared in three games for UBC last season.

**Laura Rodgers**
News Editor

UBC defensive back Kofi Kuma-Mintah has received a two-month sanction from playing on the UBC football team in response to a positive test for cannabis, according to a release from the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES).

The in-competition doping test happened on Oct. 13, 2012 after a 24-17 UBC win against Regina. It was a game in which Kuma-Mintah recorded 3.5 tackles and had a key interception in the fourth quarter to help seal the T-Bird victory.

His two-month sanction started in December and will end on Feb. 12, 2013. He will be prohibited from playing in any games until then, or participating in practices with the team.

"Obviously we're disappointed that the athlete didn't make the right choice, because we do provide substantial education for athletes on the dangers of drug use," said Theresa Hanson, UBC associate director of intercollegiate and high performance sport. "At the end of the day they have to make their own decision, and unfortunately, he made the wrong decision."

UBC football head coach Shawn Olson echoed the same thoughts, stating that he educates his players in hopes of them making the right decisions off the field, even when it comes to a substance like marijuana.

"It's becoming more and more mainstream, but that doesn't change our reality. They can't use it," he said.

Kuma-Mintah, who appeared in three games for the Thunderbirds last season, waived his right to a hearing, therefore acknowledging the anti-doping rule violation and accepting the suspension. Both Hanson and Olson also agreed with the terms of the sanction.

"It's not a performance-enhancing drug, so I feel the length of the suspension is probably fitting," said Olson. "It is still a stance against any kind of drugs really, so I think it's fair."

Hanson also stated that she found the punishment fair, as UBC supports the doping education program with the CCES and CIS.

*—With files from C.J. Pentland*

## THUNDERBIRD GAMES THIS WEEKEND

T-BIRDS

***Friday, Jan. 25***

**Women's volleyball**
UBC Okanagan (11-5) vs. UBC (15-1)
6 p.m. @ War Memorial Gym

**Men's volleyball**
UBC Okanagan (2-14) vs. UBC (10-6)
8 p.m. @ War Memorial Gym

**Men's hockey**
Mount Royal (4-17-1) vs. UBC (12-7-3)
7 p.m. @ Thunderbird Arena

***Saturday, Jan. 26***

**Women's volleyball**
UBC Okanagan (11-5) vs. UBC (15-1)
5 p.m. @ War Memorial Gym

**Men's volleyball**
UBC Okanagan (2-14) vs. UBC (10-6)
7 p.m. @ War Memorial Gym

**Men's hockey**
Mount Royal (4-17-1) vs. UBC (12-7-3)
2:30 p.m. @ Thunderbird Arena

# Loudmouths or lackeys?

Students elected to UBC's Board of Governors are in a powerful position to make change. But they must walk a fine line between pissing off powerful people and getting too close to the university **by Jonny Wakefield**

**Moe Sihota did not own a dinner jacket.** This was not a problem by day, when Sihota was a prominent figure in UBC's student protest scene. At a protest against proposed tuition hikes, Sihota might come decked out in a T-shirt reading "Fuck the Educators" (as noted in a 1977 *Ubyssey* article). His official duties, though, required a more restrained wardrobe.

After hours, Sihota was known to have dinner and drinks — "rather elaborate four- or five-course meals" — with members of UBC's Board of Governors. Their favourite haunt was the Faculty Club, a now-defunct dining hall and social club for professors. Dinner at the Faculty Club required a dinner jacket, and several were kept on hand in case somebody forgot the dress code.

These days, Sihota is more or less retired from public life. But even after a lifetime in politics — as an NDP MLA, cabinet minister, Crown Corporation board member and broadcaster — he still recalls those dinners as some of the best of his life, both in terms of the food and what they taught him about power.

"We'd sit there over a bottle of wine that the board provided and we'd chat," he said. "It gave you a chance to put down your weapons and actually have a discussion."

While the relationship between Sihota and the rest of UBC's Board of Governors was collegial, they did not always agree, and some considered Sihota a radical. He was censured by the board for alleging that professors in the Faculty of Commerce were racist. He leaked documents to *The Ubyssey* in an effort to open up how UBC's most powerful body made decisions. He was an outspoken critic of the administration's stance on tuition hikes and housing affordability.

Sihota was one of the first students to sit on UBC's Board of Governors, and while much has changed since those days, many of the issues remain the same.

While students are ultimately the reason the university exists, they're only here for a short time, allowing the university administration to sometimes move counter to student interests. Whether through campus development or tuition increases, students past and present have had to fight to make sure the university doesn't get away from them.

> **We'd sit there over a bottle of wine that the board provided and we'd chat. It gave you a chance to put down you weapons and actually have a discussion.**
>
> **Moe Sihota**
> Former UBC Board of Governors student rep

On the Board of Governors, the two elected student reps have to walk a fine line between becoming lackeys (concerned with letters of reference, resumé padding and not rocking the boat) or loudmouths (inflexible ideologues that accomplish little).

As current faculty representative Nassif Ghoussoub described student representation during his time on the board: "Some people were naysayers and rebels and fought whatever the administration did, but some people were more loyalist than the king, which is even more disappointing, because I don't think they played the role that they should play: the watchdog of the administration."

## HOW A UNIVERSITY WORKS

Power at universities is intentionally compartmentalized to stop any one party from influencing the academic mission. At UBC, the Senate, composed of deans, administrators, students and faculty, is in charge of the academic side of the university. The Board of Governors, on the other hand, controls the purse strings.

This arguably makes the board the ultimate decision-makers at the university. The two student representatives from UBC Vancouver are among the most powerful students in the province, despite constituting only a tiny minority of the board. The majority of the governors are provincial appointees.

PHOTO COURTESY UBC LIBRARY ARCHIVES

A photo from a 1968 occupation of the UBC Faculty Club. Many early Board of Governors student reps drew on this brand of student activism.

"With all the external members, you start to realize that your vote doesn't actually matter," said Sean Heisler, a student board rep from 2010–12.

Today's board is made up of former Crown Corporation board members, real estate moguls, B.C. Liberal party donors, law firm heads and other important people. The relationship between the appointed board members and the university tends to fluctuate. When the province is friendly with the administration, appointed board members tend to follow the university president's lead.

But sometimes the situation is more adversarial. The university and the province can have competing visions for the direction of the university. Such was the environment Sihota encountered when he joined.

"They were a bloc. They would say, 'Well, the minister says this,' and there you go," he said. This was frustrating for Sihota and the other non-appointed representatives; it made running a public university feel like a game of tug of war.

> **You're a student, you care about your career. That's why student representation requires some skill and self assurance.**
>
> **Nassif Ghoussoub**
> UBC BoG faculty representative

"There's been an ongoing tension between the government and the boards themselves about who really runs the place," explained Elizabeth Hodgson, a UBC professor who studies academic governance. "Autonomy is important for universities and necessary for the kind of work they do. But government can say, 'Well, we're paying the bills.'"

## A SEAT AT THE TABLE

Students were first thrown into this mix in the mid-1970s as part of changes to the University Act.

"It was exhilarating, quite frankly," recalled Sihota. "It gave us access to the highest level of decision-making at the university."

The 1970s were a heady time for student idealism. As a board rep, Sihota was backed by student protests and a pervasive sense that things could change. And through a combination of public dissent and backroom dealing, Sihota was able to influence the board. He takes credit for holding off a major tuition increase (back when general arts cost around $460), and keeping the board from increasing student rent at Gage Towers to recapture cost overruns.

Sihota said the victories were "reflective of the times. They had a lot of support from the student body.

"There was a lot of passion. And I think we tapped into that," he said.

But these days, students can serve entire terms on the board without any meaningful input from students. Unless they work hard, it's easy for representatives to lose touch with the people they actually serve.

"As soon as you lose that student perspective, you've lost the ability to see what the concerns really are for students," said Heisler.

PHOTO COURTESY UBC LIBRARY ARCHIVES

Svend Robinson (at right), seen here speaking with a colleague after a Board of Governors meeting, was a contemporary of Moe Sihota.

In the worst cases, reps can become too invested in the idea that they're important. They might become too close to an appointee. If they're interested in a career in politics, it might seem like a bad idea to stand up to the wrong people. If business is in a student's future, a term on the Board of Governors might seem like an extended job interview.

"It's extremely hard at the beginning. Somebody's not seasoned, there is an aspect of intimidation," said Ghoussoub, the faculty representative. "You're a student, you care about your career. That's why student representation requires some skill and self-assurance."

"It definitely is a surprise at the first meeting, when you realize that you have the same privileges and rights as everyone else," said Heisler.

## REBELS WITH/WITHOUT CAUSES

But rebelling against the administration can be just as detrimental to student interests. According to Darren Peets, who served on the board from 2007–2008, first impressions are everything.

"Absolutely, there was paternalism," Peets said in an email. "If you walk in there speaking a language [the other governors] don't understand (e.g. speaking Marxist theory to property developers) or insulting them, you may be ignored the rest of the way."

According to Peets, the best way to avoid becoming a lackey or loudmouth and accomplish meaningful work is by doing your homework.

During his time on campus (12 years, including a P.hD. in physics), Peets became interested in development at UBC. And it made him angry.

Peets is credited with killing the university's initial plan for University Boulevard, the current site of the new trolley bus loop and the building that contains Mahony & Sons and Shoppers Drug Mart.

In 2002, Campus and Community Planning had a much grander vision for the centre of campus: 17 buildings, including market housing, retail space, an underground bus loop and two 18-storey condos.

Peets felt that such development would ruin campus for students. To make a long story short, he joined a number of committees, drafted reports, pushed petitions and eventually got the mega-development scrapped. It was a huge victory for students.

## BELOW THE SURFACE

According to Hodgson, the professor who studies governance, the general public has little idea how universities are run. They tend to assume that universities are benign institutions, run by competent individuals with the best interests of students in mind.

Before Peets got involved in university politics, he felt much the same way.

"I assumed the university was run perfectly well — [that] there were a lot of smart people around that would use common sense," he told *The Ubyssey* in 2008.

A look below the surface reveals this is far from the case.

Had it not been for students who really cared about the direction of UBC, campus would look very different. The UBC Farm would be history, cleared to make way for market housing. MacInnes Field would have been developed into — you guessed it — condos. University Boulevard would be another Yaletown. The new SUB might be in bureaucratic limbo instead of nearing completion. And that's only looking at the past decade.

And if we don't have people who understand student concerns going forward — people who are more interested in ideology than having friends in high places — UBC will look very different 10 years from now.

Successfully advocating for students, especially to the Board of Governors, is no easy task. Students can be outnumbered, outlasted or ignored. Most of the people interviewed for this article agreed that the current board doesn't automatically dismiss student concerns. But that wasn't always the case, according to Sihota.

"Certain members felt students should have no place on the board," he said. "So you were always working on your standing and justification for being there.

"You ultimately had to prove your worth."

THEATRE »

PHOTO COURTESY OF TIM MATHESON

Forget about the flu: Theatre at UBC's got rhino fever.

# 'Be prepared for loud noises'

## Eugene Ionesco's absurdist play *Rhinoceros* charges onto the UBC stage

**Chris Lane**
Contributor

One by one, the townsfolk of a French village are turning into rhinos in Theatre at UBC's latest production, *Rhinoceros* by Eugène Ionesco.

"Expect a lot of stomping," said BFA acting student Matt Reznek, who described the play as "organized chaos."

One of the leading figures of theatre of the absurd, Ionesco aimed to bring to light issues of conformity, morality and totalitarianism in this play. His inspiration stemmed from his experience in Romania amidst fears of totalitarianism and the rise of Nazism in Europe. When he wrote *Rhinoceros* in 1959, concerns about fascism were still at the forefront of public discourse.

Reznek plays the protagonist, a villager named Berenger who is apathetic and bored with life.

That is, "until he realizes that slowly the town is turning into rhinoceroses," said Reznek. "Seemingly normal people are transforming and there's no explanation why, and he's the only one who seems to think there's anything wrong about that."

In the play, becoming an angry rhinoceros is an allegory for the horrible things ordinary people end up doing under totalitarian regimes. Ionesco's work raises questions about the line between exercising free will and blindly following everyone else, which is integral to the protagonist's inner struggle between apathy and a growing sense of responsibility.

But don't let this heady subject matter scare you off, said director Chelsea Haberlin, a student in UBC's MFA directing program.

Not only is the play multi-layered, complex and highly physical, it's also hilarious, said Haberlin.

"Primarily, it's entertaining, and the thinking comes secondary, through the entertainment. It's one of those plays where you laugh your way to a new understanding. It's not just for the intellectual elite," she said.

For Haberlin, what makes *Rhinoceros* stand out is its immersive nature. The show is being performed in the round, meaning that the stage will be in the centre of the theatre, surrounded by the audience on all sides. "There are actors everywhere.... You feel like the person next to you is turning into a rhinoceros," she said.

BFA acting student Joel Garner, who plays Berenger's friend Jean, had some advice for anyone attending the play.

"Always keep your eyes open," he said. "Wherever you look in the theatre, something will always be happening.

"And be prepared for loud noises."

TECHNOLOGY »

# New app lets students sync and swap schedules

**Justin Fleming**
Senior Lifestyle Writer

Arranging your schedule can be taxing. Between courses, part-time work and grocery shopping, finding out when your friends are free can be a nightmare.

Thankfully, a new app will make sure that you don't have to waste any more time taking screenshots of your class schedule.

The UBCme app, created by third-year computer science major Bio Cho, is designed to help students view, share and compare their class timetables.

Cho came up with the idea after noticing friends tagging other friends in screenshots of their timetables.

"For one or two people, that's fine, but if you have a group of friends, there is a better way to do it," he said.

Seeing inefficiencies in calendar sharing programs and the constant back and forth between his timetable and Google Maps, Cho was inspired to create an app that would fill in the gaps.

He got in touch with Farhan Patel, creator of a similar app with a few more goodies that has become widely popular at Simon Fraser University.

Cho, who had no experience in app development, had to sit down and learn its many intricacies on his own.

> **"There are a lot of things I'd like to improve with UBCme, like Facebook integration ... and a textbook marketplace.**
>
> **Bio Cho**
> UBCme app creator

"This is the first app I've ever made," he said. "There are online courses, free Stanford lectures on iPhone app development that I watched. Luckily I had the help of my friend from SFU."

UBCme allows users to stay constantly logged into their CWL accounts. With a few taps of the screen, users can access walking directions to classes; add friends, group partners and classmates to compare schedules; find mutual free blocks of time and organize meetings; and even search for friends who are taking the same class.

The app is still in its infancy, as far as Cho is concerned. He released it earlier than planned in order to submit it to UBC's Digital*U contest.

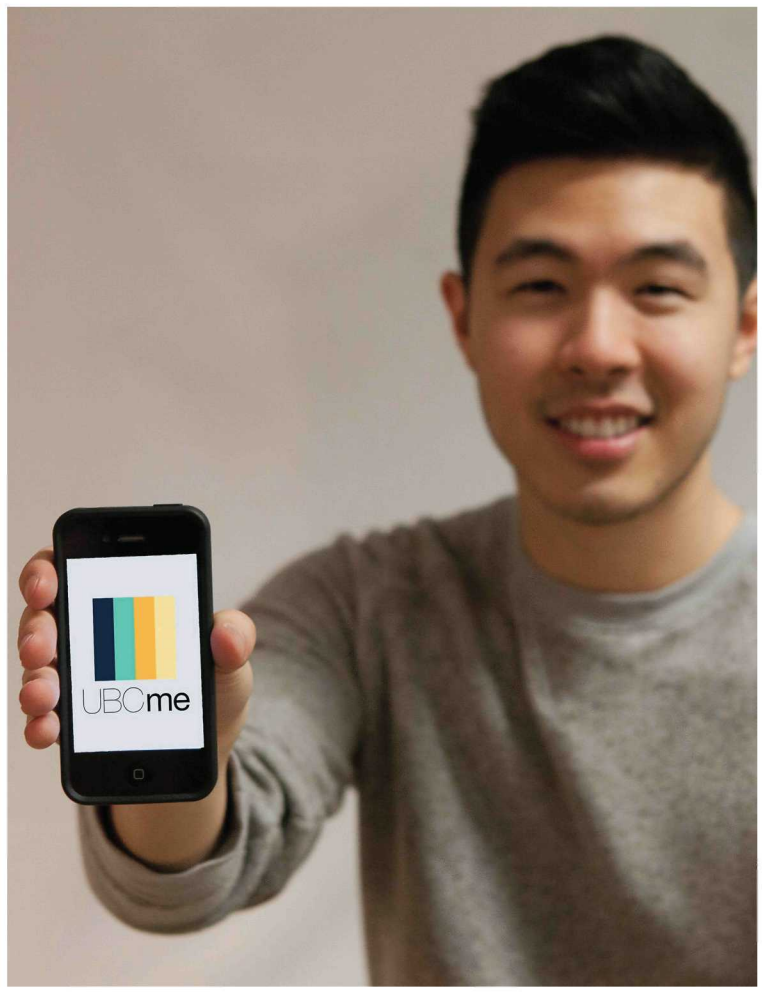
"There are a lot of things I'd like to improve with UBCme, like Facebook integration so you can add friends rather than CWL accounts, which can be a hassle. Also a books list and a textbook marketplace where only UBC students can buy and sell textbooks," he said.

The proposed "textbook marketplace" would allow students to put books on sale or see lists of all the people selling a particular book. For anyone with burst blood vessels in their eyes from scrolling through endless streams of books on the UBC Textbooks Facebook page, this should come as welcome news.

In this day of hacking, phishing and identity theft, online security is an issue. In order to combat this, Cho explained, information entered into the app is encrypted and only ever stored on their phones, not a server or database.

The UBCme app is free to download, and it seems Cho plans to keep it that way.

"I don't have any advertisements," he said. "It's purely a non-profit ambition to help the students."




HOGAN WONG PHOTO/THE UBYSSEY

Bio Cho created UBCme with no prior knowledge of app development.

FILM»

# Five Netflix gems that will have you dreaming of Europe

**Alina Anghel**
Contributor

Perhaps you've just returned from an exchange trip and now you're suffering from post-abroad blues, or maybe you just need a little culture.

To give you your fix of euro-scenery, we've compiled a Netflix selection of quality films from the big four: Italy, Spain, France and the U.K.

## LOOSE CANNONS (ITALY)

If you like movies with a twist early on, this is for you. Though it begins with the protagonist's decision to tell his family in southern Italy that he's gay, the film is not just another coming-out-of-the-closet drama.

A beautiful Italian woman, who is introduced with a scene involving stilettos (of course), complicates the protagonist's view of his own sexuality. The film reveals the complexities of family relationships, the gossipy side of small-town Italy and how life can make decisions for us. N.B.: If you love your grandma, you have an extra reason to watch *Loose Cannons*.

## BROKEN EMBRACES (SPAIN)

This movie takes the glamour out of gold-digging.

The death of a billionaire draws an unlikely assortment of people together: a blind, promiscuous, middle-aged writer, a young handsome Spaniard, his spiteful mother and a gay documentary filmmaker with daddy issues.

Hopefully this is enough info for you to hit play. If you're still not convinced: you get to hear Penelope Cruz speak her native tongue.

## THE MATADOR'S MISTRESS (SPAIN)

If you want more Penelope after *Broken Embraces*, then it's best to go straight for her English-speaking turn in *The Matador's Mistress*. Two Oscar winners, four different release titles and five Spanish locations will give you a fascinating glimpse into the famous bull-fighting tradition. The cinematography is beautiful, Adrien Brody's crotch-hugging costumes are glittery and Penelope Cruz wears a lot of red.

## QUEEN TO PLAY (FRANCE)

A French housekeeper at a hotel in Corsica catches of glimpse of intimacy between a couple playing chess on their balcony. She approaches her boss, played by Kevin Klein, to teach her the game.

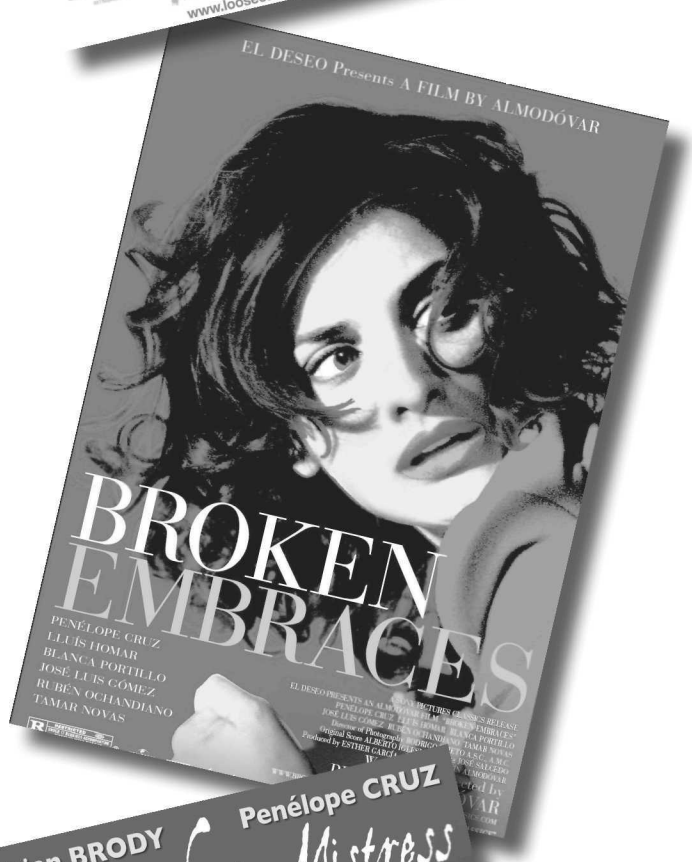
As the story unfolds, she slowly comes to redefine herself and her relationships through her newfound hobby.

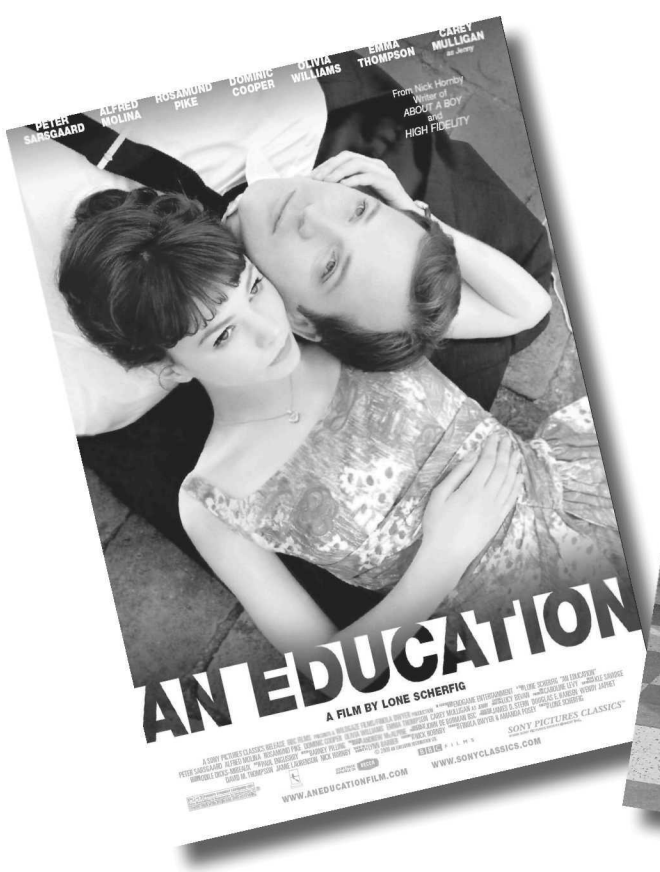
## AN EDUCATION (ENGLAND)

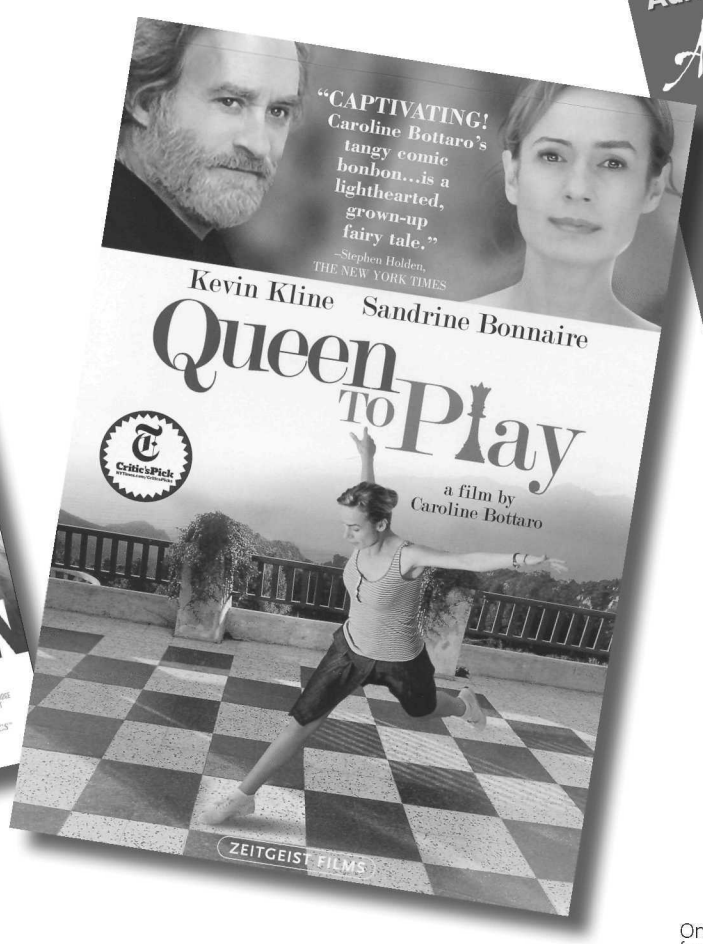
Set in 1960s London, this film follows a 16-year-old girl being seduced by an older con-man. He slyly convinces her parents that he is worth their daughter's time, and they both live it up glamorously in Paris until things go awry.

*An Education* was critically acclaimed at the Sundance Film Festival and Toronto International Film Festival.

It should hopefully convince all you first-years (OK, and second-, third- and fourth-years — we all have our doubts) to stay in school.



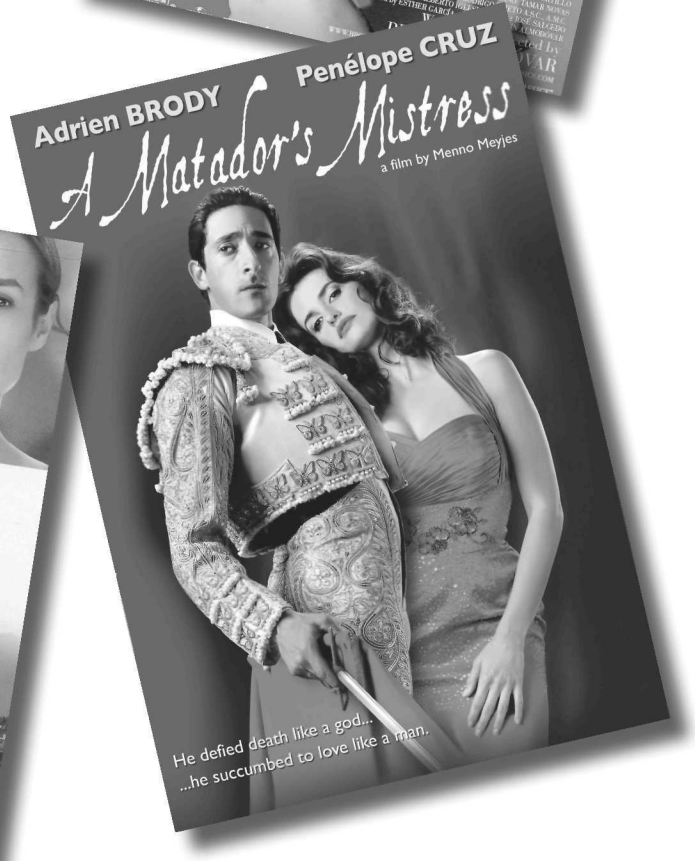




PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

One of these flicks could be your ticket out of a seasonal, rain-induced funk.

# AMS ELECTIONS ENDORSEMENTS

## OUR THOUGHTS ON THIS YEAR'S AMS ELECTIONS CANDIDATES

Each year, *The Ubyssey* endorses candidates in the AMS elections. We do this to give students a better sense of what we look for in a candidate for public office.

The editorial board was able to come to a consensus on the majority of races. When we weren't able to settle on one candidate/referendum proposal, we brought the proposal to a vote. Much like the Supreme Court, we've written majority and minority opinions. Unless otherwise noted, however, the editorial board was unanimous in its decisions.

Let's start from the top:

### PRESIDENT

**Endorsement: Caroline Wong**

At the beginning of this election season, we were not overly thrilled with the candidates for president. Indeed, it was hard at first to pick out where they differed in any substantive way. On the face of it, Jay Shah, Caroline Wong and Ekateryna Baranovskaya come from very similar backgrounds. They've all come from somewhere deep inside the AMS — from Student Services, Council or the undergraduate societies. They're all arts students, and they're all involved in Greek life. And they've all served on one committee or another (a point every candidate was all too happy to bring up in the debates). These candidates come from a monoculture that is interested in code, bylaws and Robert's Rules of Order.

Now, a week and a half into the two-week campaign period, the three hopefuls have yet to distinguish themselves. What these candidates represent, ultimately, is an AMS that has completely forgotten how to talk to actual students. Ninety-eight per cent of students don't care if a candidate has served on such and such committee unless it's clear as day why that matters. The intricacies of the organization only matter if they propel some larger vision, a vision of what a student society ought to be. These candidates have no such vision. It's a competition over who would be the better manager, who better understands pragmatically what the AMS can do over the next year. Steady as she goes.

These are the criteria on which we had to base our decision.

Baranovskaya offered a number of ideas for improving student engagement with the AMS (a lofty goal that has been trotted out by AMS politicians since time immemorial). She would do this by creating some sort of forum, or providing better support for undergraduate society elections. But "engagement" with the AMS isn't going to spring from a forum; it will only come from offering some new service to students, or from realigning existing services to better reflect what students want. Baranovskaya's platform point about the upcoming provincial election came across as equally unclear. And while creating an executive position to focus on student mental health and social life is a good idea, more or less every other candidate believes this should happen. It is not a new idea.

Jay Shah has tried to distinguish himself by arguing he is not a "career student politician." And while this is true (Shah has not held an elected position in the AMS), this argument doesn't go far in recommending him for the job of president. AMS services, which Shah headed this year, will exist no matter who's in charge. The department gets a dependable amount of money from students and has a large permanent staff. It will run no matter who's in charge (though that's not to say that there haven't been any hiccups in recent years). Shah has done little to rock the boat or try new things. Services such as Safewalk, tutoring and mini school are no more visible this year than they have been in the past. He may have been a fine manager, but we're not convinced that Shah would be a particularly effective leader.

Caroline Wong is the only candidate in this race with any past executive experience, having served as VP Administration under past president Matt Parson. This puts her in a better position than the other two candidates, as she knows the ins and outs of the new SUB project. The new SUB opens in a little over a year, and since the AMS is betting the farm on the hope the new building will increase business revenues and student engagement, the priority of this executive will be making sure the transition goes smoothly. They also have to make sure that the new SUB is something students are excited about. We think Wong is in the best position to lead this charge. While her term as VP Admin was largely uneventful, we believe she did a fine job keeping up communications with clubs and pushing the new SUB project. While her background is in administration, she knows what she has to do to step into a leadership role.

While we give her our endorsement, it's lukewarm. Even after almost two weeks of campaigning, no candidate stands head and/or shoulders above the rest.

*Full disclosure: Collyn Chan, one of The Ubyssey's paid graphic designers, worked on Wong's campaign for VP Administration, and served briefly as Wong's assistant. Chan has not participated in any AMS-related coverage and was not present at our endorsement meeting.*

### BOARD OF GOVERNORS

**Endorsement: Matt Parson and Tristan Miller**

BoG is a tough race this year. Let's start with who we don't endorse.

We can unequivocally do not endorse Harsev Oshan. He has a list of follies as the Arts Undergraduate Society president that make us wary of giving him our support. He has basic responsibility issues, such as signing dubious sponsorship deals with Gold's Gym, leaving thousands of dollars in a office that was broken into and missing meetings. His campaign has promised very little in terms of what he will do for students if elected to the big table.

We also have issues with supporting Conny Lin. She had a lacklustre performance at the debates and her answers to our candidate questions went off topic. There is something to be said for having a graduate student rep on the Board, but she seems to lack basic knowledge of key issues like governance.

While incumbent BoG rep Mike Silley didn't make any big mistakes during his time in office, we don't think he deserves another term. He doesn't have any concrete platform points this year, and some quotes (like the Board has "won him over") cause us to question if he has lost touch with the student point of view. We also have problems with him taking credit for the lower bachelor of international economics tuition during his time in office. He didn't take an active role pressing for it, and citing it as an accomplishment seems disingenuous.

We think Erin Rennie would be an OK choice, but she isn't in our top two. Her platform to fight the war on fun is appealing, but it is unclear if that can actually be addressed at the board level. She was away from UBC for years and might not be up to date on the campus culture. She also worked in a B.C. Liberal cabinet minister's office. On a board dominated by B.C. Liberals, her political career could put her in a tough position to disagree with her fellow board members.

Which leaves our endorsements for Matt Parson and Tristan Miller. Parson has extensive political experience and knows what's coming down the pipeline at the board. He has experience working on student housing, a valuable attribute for a student rep. But we have our concerns about his AMS presidency. He backed down on a number of his campaign promises and didn't wow us with his PAR goals. But ultimately, he understands students and understands how the board works. We think he will be an effective voice for students.

We think Tristan Miller would be a good foil to Parson on the board. He has the personality to be an effective bad cop. While he can come across as icy to the average student, he has concrete plans for housing affordability. We also think he wouldn't be afraid to take a stand against the board and will resist becoming a lackey.

### VP ACADEMIC

**Endorsement: Kiran Mahal**

Kiran Mahal has been an outstanding AMS executive this year and has strong ideas for continuing her work in a second term. Mahal has been active as an advocate for student housing, taking the lead on the Acadia Park issue after UBC moved to evict student families from the buildings. She has also drawn up a Student Housing Action Plan and worked on restructuring UBC's internal loan structure, the easiest way to bring housing costs down. It was Mahal who spearheaded the fight against the bachelor of international economics and succeeded in forcing the Board of Governors to reduce tuition, saving students around $500,000.

Challengers Anne Kessler and Montana Hunter have no business running for the VP Academic position. Kessler's rants against the university at debates and in her stump speech appear juvenile when she fails to couple them with any compelling policy positions. Hunter is running on a platform of "affordability," an issue already being addressed by Mahal. He has not presented any concrete or realistic ways to reduce student costs.

To say Kessler and Hunter's vanswers at the debates were boilerplate would be too kind. *The Ubyssey* wholeheartedly endorses Kiran Mahal for a second term as VP Academic and University Affairs.

### VP EXTERNAL

**Endorsement: Tanner Bokor**

It's hard to get excited about a race with only one candidate. While we endorse Tanner Bokor for the position of VP External, we do so with some caveats.

Bokor has made transit his sole focus as Associate VP External, and while it's safe to say students want to see advocacy focused on improving transit service to UBC, we worry that this approach will come at the expense of other areas of the portfolio. For one, WTF (the provincial campaign to improve access to education that the AMS supports) is awful. Its website hasn't been updated since early September, and there's no indication that the AMS or other area student unions are gearing up for any kind of advocacy push during this spring's provincial elections. If Bokor focuses exclusively on transit as VP External, his term will have been a failure.

All that aside, Bokor has done fine work in the VP External's office this year, and would be a good choice to take the reins. He's certainly better than the alternative: a "no" vote.

### VP ADMINISTRATION

**Endorsement: Derek Moore (7 for, 3 against)**

This was a tough choice. Our editorial board quickly moved past Justin Fernandes, who has gained a reputation in the Science Undergraduate Society as being hard to work with. And while we're not always keen to endorse someone based solely on prior AMS experience, Olivia Yung would need some more experience running an organization before we'd suggest handing her the keys to the SUB/clubs.

Derek Moore ultimately gets our endorsement. He's worked on the new SUB project extensively, and has an understanding of the thousands of little things that need to happen before the AMS can move into the new building in 18 months. That project is far from "done," as other candidates have suggested. Moore has worked hard over the past year to make sure all clubs and student organizations with a designated space in the new SUB were consulted.

Moore would be well suited to some of the more mundane administrative work that the position's title suggests. And while Moore has proven himself to be a hard worker, some on our editorial board were concerned about his lack of ideas.

On that front, one candidate stood out. We debated for some time whether to endorse this race's wildcard candidate, Barnabas Caro. Caro is well-known (as UBC students go). He's been a residence advisor and has served on the Student Administrative Commission, the AMS group in charge of managing clubs. He seems to have developed a good rapport with club execs, organizing a number of informal (and well-attended) beer nights. Much of his platform revolves around advertising the often untouched funds the AMS makes available for clubs. Of course, these initiatives are not the same as managing a multimillion dollar building, and Caro has shown in the past that he has some basic responsibility issues.

Ultimately, Moore is the safe choice. But part of us wants to see what Caro would do with the position.

### VP FINANCE

**Endorsement: Joaquin Acevedo**

VP Finance is not a glamorous job. It's mostly spreadsheet-crunching, telling other people they can't have things and cheque-signing. A LOT of cheque-signing. It's important the person who takes the job has a clear grasp of the job duties before they start, because the time between taking office in March and submitting the summer's first budget draft will inevitably breeze by.

Mateusz Miadlikowski seems like an eager chap, but he revealed in debate that he really doesn't know what he's talking about. His only experience with the AMS is slinging beers at the Pit. We don't want to disparage that, but it doesn't exactly prepare him to take control of the society's oft-confusing financial side.

Joaquin has the requisite experience and knowledge of what the VP Finance does. He's also a fairly affable guy who communicates well, which will make his role working between AMS Council and the new business board easier.

### RACES AT A GLANCE

Due to space limitations, we have not included this year's Senate and Student Legal Fund Society (SLFS) endorsements in print. Find our thoughts on these races and the referenda at ubyssey.ca.

- Senate: Kiran Mahal, Philip Edgecumbe, Yaniv Pereslavsky and Natalie Marshall
- SLFS: Students for Responsible Leadership
- Referenda: Question 1 (U-Pass): YES. Question 2 (AGM quorum): YES. Question 3 (substantive bylaw changes): YES. Question 4: (housekeeping bylaw changes): YES. Question 5: ($1/student for Bike Co-op): NO, 8 to 3).

LIFE »

# Kicking the "busyness" habit

REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PRESENT
by Kurtis Lockhart

We've all been in that frustrating situation: you ask a friend if she wants to go see a movie, or meet you at the pub for a drink, or simply hang out. And then you get that eye-roll-inducing response: "Oh, I'm suuuper busy, but ... I'll tryyyy and make time. I'll let you know..."

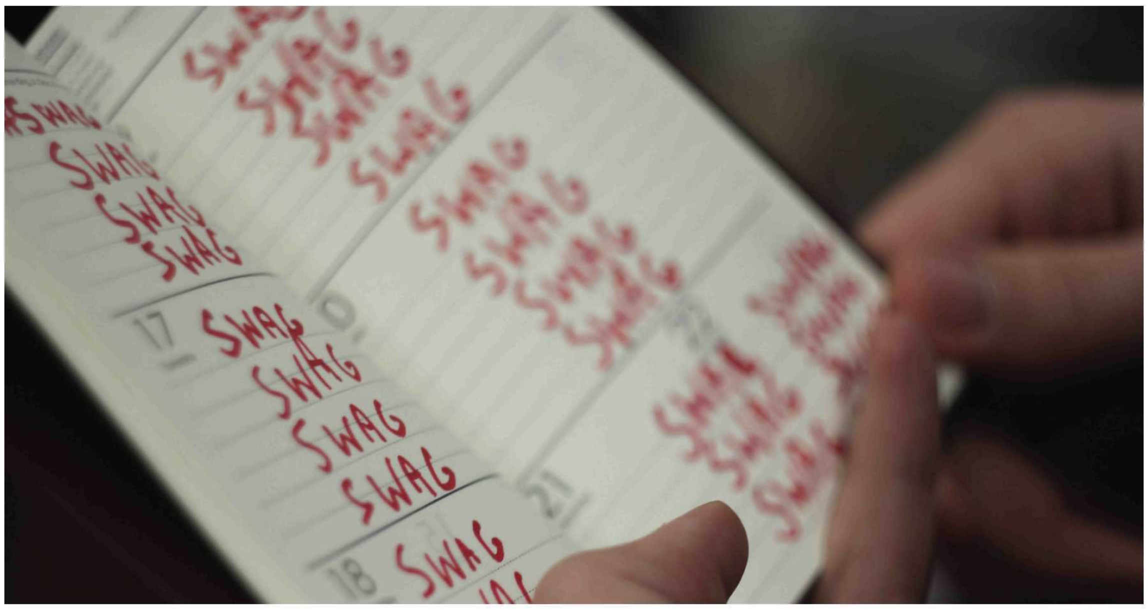
All the while, you know she's not as busy as she thinks she is, and could definitely "make time."

This problem of "busyness" – or rather, faux busyness — is not new. In the 1920s, Franz Kafka wrote of busyness in his masterpiece, *The Trial*. In one scene, a character laments that his case is taking up all of his time: "Most of all, I don't want to lose my trial,... [and if] you want to do something about your trial you don't have much time for anything else."

This sentiment has never held more currency than in today's universities. None of us wants to lose or fail in our own trials, and so we give everything — all of our time — to winning, to attaining our goals, to getting that A grade. Our trials make us busy and distract us from actually living.

The key piece of information that gives *The Trial* its absurd and surreal dimension is that Joseph K., the novel's protagonist, doesn't even know why he's been summoned to court in the first place. He never finds out, yet he is still forced, nonsensically, to try to win his trial. This is the perfect analogy to university life — and, I guess, to adulthood in general.

We allow these frivolous trials to overwhelm us, despite the fact that they make us exhausted, anxious and temperamental. Just like Joseph K., we don't know how they've come to take up all of our time, or to what end.



ANDREW BATES PHOTO/THE UBYSSEY

We may think we're busy, but be honest with yourself: you could reschedule.

I can think of two main reasons: one more readily obvious to us students, and the other more subtle, but no less potent.

The primary reason we allow ourselves to succumb to busyness is so we can get into the best schools or secure the best jobs. In place of idleness and leisure, college admissions boards and hiring committees require extracurricular activities and community service; they demand busyness.

In contrast, the second reason goes largely unnoticed: we take refuge in busyness because we don't want to be idle. With idleness comes either boredom — unbearable in our entertainment-crazed, one-click culture — or worse, actual introspection. That is, being alone with your thoughts. This may be the most frightening prospect of all.

We fear we might ask ourselves questions of true consequence during those rare moments of silence in an otherwise frenetically busy existence: Am I happy? Do I know what I want to do with my life? If so, am I doing it for the right reasons? Do I actually love my significant other? Does he or she love me? And, worst of all — who am I?

Just as Joseph K. didn't know why he was summoned, we too don't know — or don't want to know — the answers to these questions. And this lends the same absurdity and surrealism, the same lack of purpose, to our lives as it does to Joseph K.'s.

To avoid answering these questions, to avoid silence and introspection, we eschew idleness and take shelter in busyness. Busyness, almost like drugs or alcohol, becomes our escape.

One can't much scratch the surface of this subject in 600 words. This is all to say that midterms are just around the corner, and we are all going to be busy. But that isn't an excuse to stop living, because after midterms are finals and after finals is graduation and after graduation is real life where you'll have a real job and — spoiler alert — you'll be busy.

Busyness is a convenient fiction. And unlike Joseph K., we shouldn't make the mistake of allowing our absurd trials to distract us from things of real meaning and consequence.

## PIC OF THE WEEK

DAVID MARINO PHOTO/THE UBYSSEY

Land and Food Systems Undergraduate Society prez Whitney Hussain takes down Science Undergrad Society prez Mona Maleki at the AMS elections Jell-O wrestling contest. Each year, candidates roll around in Jell-O and attempt to remove their opponent's sock. The purpose of this contest is lost to time.

ELECTIONS »

# Candidates for prez don't offer much to chew on

KATICHISMS
by Gordon Katic

The presidential candidates this year — Ekateryna Baranovskaya, Jay Shah and Caroline Wong — all did a poor job distinguishing themselves. It was difficult to decide who to support in this election, but after evaluating their platforms and debate performances, I came to something of a conclusion.

Baranovskaya promises to "curb student disenfranchisement." But Baranovskaya has no real plan to engage students with their society. She writes of her plan to "open the AMS clique," while speaking in a way that only appeals to the AMS clique: constituent relations, committee reform, bylaw and code changes.

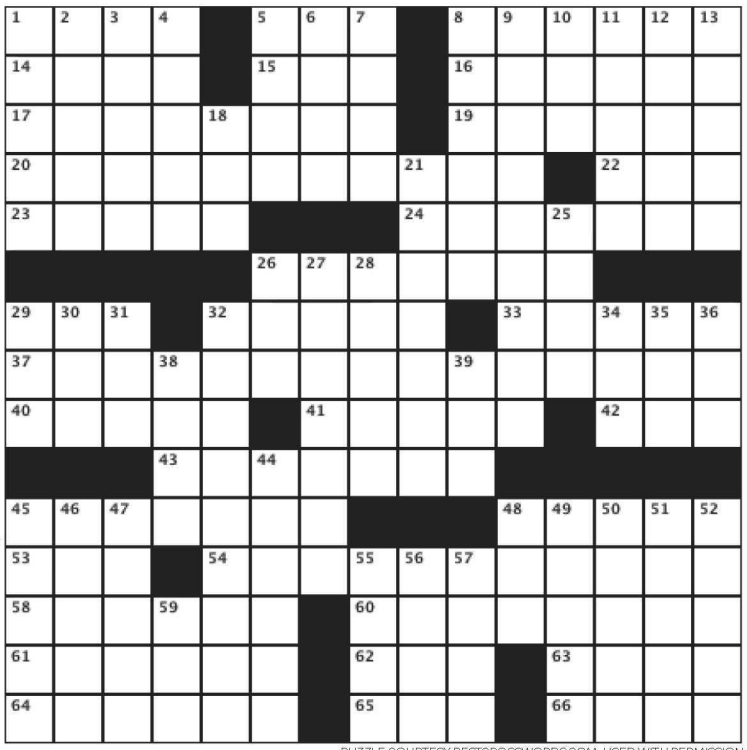
Wong and Shah approach the same issue, but contest that the problem is one of communication. Wong proposes a "customer relationship management model," which suggests a sort of sophisticated targeted marketing to UBC students. This type of thinking is emblematic of the way that the AMS perceives student apathy; it's not about AMS failing, but rather student ignorance. Shah also focuses too much on the superficial details of the AMS's branding and communications. For instance, he proposes implementation of "thematic, identity-based communication" so that students can "easily navigate our interfaces and find the information they desire." Inspiring.

On the plus side, much of Wong's platform is encouraging. She makes housing affordability a priority and proposes lobbying the provincial government for mental health support. Shah leaves both those important issues out of his platform, but he best articulates the financial challenges facing students before and after graduation. Baranovskaya is the only candidate to mention the crucial issue of UBC's undemocratic governance structure, though she offers no alternative.

In my previous column, I outlined the criteria I would use to evaluate candidates. I argued that this is a critical juncture for post-secondary education and that we need the AMS to put student voices in the centre of conversations about mental health, financial sustainability, educational technologies and other important issues.

Shah has the most substantive platform and was by far the most articulate candidate in the debates. He demonstrated an appreciation for the critical juncture of post-secondary education, and was not afraid to speak candidly about the AMS's failings. Through his experience with student services, he demonstrated real knowledge of the issues facing students on a day-to-day basis. In that role, he came in under budget while significantly expanding the capacity of the Sexual Assault Support Centre. I believe that Shah is the strongest candidate and am giving him my endorsement. I support his candidacy, though I am confident that Wong would also make a strong president.

On the whole, I am disappointed with the campaigns. The candidates portrayed themselves as insiders and mostly refrained from expressing strong values or opinions. All three are reformist candidates and if they continue to think so narrowly about the AMS's potential, they won't inspire much of the UBC campus.



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## ACROSS

1- Without
5- DDE's command
8- Aries
14- Lots and lots
15- Flyers' org.
16- Roman goddess of the dawn
17- Chosen
19- General tendencies
20- Salon stylist
22- Scooby-___
23- Mountain ridge
24- Three-cornered
26- State in W Mexico
29- ___ tree falls...
32- Dense element
33- Kate & ___
37- In spite of
40- Fresh
41- Sierra ___
42- Brandy letters
43- Alfalfa
45- Determined
48- Animal trap
53- Suffix with glob
54- Having an alert mind
58- Showing courage
60- Note well
61- King of the Huns
62- Writer Hentoff
63- Actor Ken
64- Closer
65- Dadaist Jean
66- Outlaws

## DOWN

1- Figure skater Cohen
2- Shed ___
3- I swear!
4- Hagar the Horrible's dog
5- ___'acte (intermission)
6- Biblical pronoun
7- Cutlass, e.g.
8- Spuds
9- Cyclonic storm
10- Before, of yore
11- Sonata movement
12- Passion
13- Person who dresses stones
18- Alphabet trio
21- Rich white cheese
25- Chilled
26- Deep black
27- Jock
28- Coherent light beam
29- Gerund maker
30- Pro
31- Munched on
32- Very small
34- Actress Tyler
35- Officeholders
36- Feeling of self-importance
38- Bring into complete union
39- "Wheel of Fortune" buy
44- Underground room
45- Pertaining to people
46- Having wings
47- ___-car
48- Ocean
49- Influential person
50- Journalist ___ Rogers St. Johns
51- Kidney enzyme
52- Paradises
55- Editor Wintour
56- Laugh loudly
57- URL starter
59- Evergreen tree

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| | 4 | | 1 | | 6 | | 2 | 9 |
| | 6 | 3 | | 8 | | | | |
| 1 | 9 | 2 | | | | | | 6 |

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