

The

Reckoner

of Marc Garneau C.I.

SAC MIDTERM REPORT 2019–2020

The Reckoner has created an infographic tracking whether elected SAC members have fulfilled their campaign promises. The Editor-in-Chief notes that this is only a progress report, with a final report to be published in the June print edition. Additionally, the following is not meant to relate all of SAC's activities; it only reflects elected members' progress on fulfilling campaign promises. For more information on SAC, see the monthly SAC newsletter and the SAC Instagram account @mgci.sac. All of the information below was compiled using elected members' social media campaigns as well as interviews with members of SAC.



NELSON LEE

PRESIDENT

✔ Restored House Colour System

✔ Established a SeasonsPass, though not with the promised admission to all dances —instead with front-row seating at shows, separate lines for dances, and extra Spirit Points for purchases

✔ Publicized all SAC meeting notes and held open meetings to promote transparency

⚡ Implement Universal Mental Health Program with workshops to be held by Social Justice and Equity Committee during exam time

✖ Implement Self-Empowerment Initiative that would provide resources to help students identify and achieve career goals

✖ Create and enforce "Waste-Neutral School Events Policy" where SAC picks up pieces of trash and uses sustainable materials at SAC events

✔ Restored grade representative system

✔ Open communication between SAC and other clubs, promote accountability

✔ Accomplished

⚡ Planned for future

✖ Deferred



RYAN CHANG

VICE PRESIDENT

✔ Restored grade representative system

✔ Open communication between SAC and other clubs, promote accountability

✔ Accomplished

⚡ Planned for future

✖ Deferred



TAIRA MEHTA

SOCIAL CONVENOR

✔ Changed venue for first dance from JJ Best Western to Toronto Jam Factory

✔ Reduced ticket prices for first dance: \$25 for Winter Wonderland (2019) instead of \$26 for Fall Fest (2018)✓

⚡ Grade lounge in progress, planned to happen around exam time with focus on mental health

✔ Accomplished

⚡ Planned for future

✖ Deferred



EVAN WOO

SPIRIT CONVENOR

✔ Held more pep rallies

✔ Held more Spirit Weeks

⚡ Organize MGCI Fun Fair

✔ Accomplished

⚡ Planned for future

✖ Deferred



ERAM AHMED

ATHLETIC CONVENOR

⚡ Organize Athletic Banquet

✖ Students vote on intramural sports on social media

✔ Accomplished

⚡ Planned for future

✖ Deferred



QAYS MATADAR

SPECIAL EVENTS CONVENOR

⚡ International Street planned for second semester

✔ Accomplished

⚡ Planned for future

✖ Deferred



ZEINAB OMAR

GRADUATION CONVENOR

✔ Found new prom venue —Palais Royale

⚡ Sell senior sweaters with simple new design

✔ Accomplished

⚡ Planned for future

✖ Deferred

Note: For spacing reasons, the infographic includes some but not all of President Nelson Lee's campaign promises.

by BRIDGET HUH
Infographic: Andrew Zou Li

Mr. Haid

by BRIDGET HUH

Marc Garneau C.I. welcomed three new administrators to the school this year: Mr. Di Felice, Mr. Haid, and Ms. Papadopoulos. For this edition, Bridget Huh interviewed vice principal Mr. Haid.

Q: How does Garneau compare to the other schools you've taught at?

A: Garneau is large. It's diverse in what programming it offers. The physical building itself is also large, so it's quite different than the junior high I was a VP at, and it's quite different from Leaside HS, which is where I was before I came here. Leaside was about a thousand students and there were two VPs. Garneau is about double the size. From the perspective of programming, there are programs offered here that Leaside didn't offer, which I missed when I was at Leaside, and I'm glad to be in a school that has ESL support. I'm glad to be in a school with diverse special education programs. I'm really proud of the TOPS program, I'm also equally proud of the Garneau program. And the teaching staff here is excellent, the support staff, the caretakers, the office staff, the aids, the social worker, child youth worker, everyone really works collaboratively and I really do believe that everyone's here for the betterment of students.

Q: As opposed to...

A: Well, as opposed to just coming and not caring. Just coming for a paycheck. I think people really do care about students. And they care about making connections with students. If I ask staff what they like about Garneau, the answer is often "I come here because of the kids," or "I like to be here because of the kids," or "I really enjoy working with the students." That's not to say that that's always an easy task, that it's always an easy job, but I think the students here really appreciate what their teachers do for them.

Q: Yeah, I really like that about Garneau. I love the teachers here. Did you always want to work in education as a teacher?

A: Yes, I did. As a child, I always really liked to tell people what to do [laughs] so as a bossy person, it was natural to become a teacher, because you're always telling people what they should do based upon your frame of reference. tt

I didn't always envision teaching in a school necessarily, but I really enjoy working with young people—anyone, for that matter—and imparting what I know to them, but I also understand that teaching is a reciprocal action. I know that when I share what I know with others, that they're going to share with me what they know. And that's the beauty of the interaction of teaching.

One of my fondest memories was teaching a class of nine boys with very different approaches to school, they had different needs.

See MR. HAID on P2

The Uyghur Crisis: Explained

by MOHAMED DASU

If you have been active at all on social media for the past few weeks, you've probably come across a slew of sympathetic messages for the Uyghur, a people who have been systematically oppressed in the Xinjiang region of China. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has sought to shut down this discussion, being evasive and dismissive. But to their dismay, the *New York Times* published a report on 16 November 2019 on a leak of about four hundred pages of official Chinese documents [6]. In these leaked papers, President Xi Jinping is recorded as insisting that they "must be as harsh as them and show absolutely no mercy" [6]. This report, due to its finality and credibility in establishing the merciless treatment of Uyghurs, has been suggested as a further read in the footnotes.

According to researchers and some highly choreographed statements made by government officials, there are somewhere between eight-hundred thousand to two million Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities currently detained in "re-education camps" in Xinjiang, China [1]. Yet, there are numerous reports that these camps externally and internally resemble prisons more than the state-spread euphemisms of "vocational training centres" and "boarding schools" [2]. As Canadians, this should ring a bell; perhaps a black mark on Canadian history such as the utterly shameful residential schools that sought to 'educate' Indigenous children with 'Canadian' values. Just as the "Indian in the child" became the premise for the need for such education, Uyghurs are being targeted for potential extremist ideologies, which, in political jargon, is often synonymous with Islamic values. While many countries and organizations have condemned the human rights abuses against Uyghurs, most Muslim-majority nations have maintained an eerie silence. Why? To answer this question, let us first delve into the details of this crisis.

China has significantly increased its crackdown on the Uyghurs of Xinjiang in the last decade, especially under the freshly appointed, iron-fisted secretary of the region, Chen Quanguo. Chen was moved to the province in 2016. Prior to his installement, he held a top government post in Tibet. He has a track record of taking state-empow-

ering measures to ensure compliance, such as expanding the police force of the region and installing frequent security checkpoints. In Tibet, he also transferred control of Buddhist monasteries to the state. Unsurprisingly, he has taken a similar route in Xinjiang—Chen has since drastically "intensified security in Xinjiang" [1]. However, Chen's agenda does not stop at the streets; under his governance, arbitrary detention has become commonplace as a tool used by regional authorities at their whim. Although Xinjiang holds just 1.5% of the country's 1.3 billion people, there were 227 000 people arrested in the region in 2017 alone [4]. To put that horrifying statistic into perspective, one in five arrests in China that year occurred in Xinjiang—there was a ghastly 731% increase in arrests from 2016 [4]. What's worse is that this statistic doesn't even include the approximately 1 million Uyghurs currently detained in concentration camps.

Uyghurs are forced to face the reality that all Islamic expression in Xinjiang is recognized by the state as extremism. The CCP passed an anti-extremism law in March 2017 which any sane person could decipher as a ban on Islamic values: Uyghurs were banned from fasting during Ramadan, banned from wearing burqas or growing "abnormal" beards, banned from performing religious funeral rites, traveling overseas, and even giving their children names such as Mohamed and Medina. In fact, the CCP has gone to record heights of repression by prohibiting Uyghurs from refusing to eat pork, refusing to drink alcohol, and refusing to watch state TV or listen to state radio. In other words, the state forbade Uyghurs from practicing basic tenets of Islam. In the past few years, Chinese officials have closed and destroyed several mosques. Almost all the remaining mosques have communist slogans and Chinese flags installed on them; around a thousand have facial recognition security cameras installed [4]. It would be unfair to ignore the absence of fundamental human rights in China, as it is not at all a free country. There are no free and fair (real) elections, the CCP controls virtually all media outlets and censors major foreign news outlets, and the justice system is controlled by the CCP, a political party [5]. These are real issues in China for all

citizens, but the Uyghurs are taking the brunt of it.

Human rights have been explicitly violated, even outside of concentration camps. Yet, Chinese officials continue to claim that these "vocational training centres" or "boarding schools"—whatever their euphemistic tongues fancy—do not violate the Uyghurs' human rights. Supposing that a sane person would concede this argument, how can the CCP explain the refusal to share information about the camps, and the prevention of journalists and foreign investigators from examining them? This refusal to be transparent is not productive in answering why 10 000 new police officer jobs were advertised in the Xinjiang region in just January and February 2017 [4]. It would not justify the more than 90% jump in Xinjiang's security spending from 2016; the CCP currently spends significantly more on domestic security than defence [4].

Olsi Jazexhi is an Albanian-Canadian historian who had doubts about reports that China was systematically detaining its Uyghur Muslim minority. He initially believed it was an attempt by the West to rile up hateful sentiments against China. Olsi was absolutely stunned to find that his attempt to debunk the claims of widespread human rights violations ended up proving them instead. There have been several waves of journalists who have been admitted to tours of the camps. Granted, these tours were choreographed to the second, and the filming of it was scrutinizingly monitored. Olsi was amongst these selected journalists. He was shocked by the "concentration camps," and the fact that Muslims were prohibited from praying, were forced to speak Mandarin, and were in fact held in camps for at least a year of Communist brainwashing and indoctrination [2]. Essentially, if you visibly practice Islam or hold to your ethnic customs in the Xinjiang region, you will be forcefully subjected to indoctrination.

See THE UYGHUR CRISIS on P3

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Rising Above the Competition at DECA Regionals

By MIRANDA ZHAO



Photo: Justin Ye

On Friday 15 November, students from Marc Garneau C.I. won thirteen Top 3 medals and a total of ninety-nine awards at the DECA Regional Competition.

DECA is an international business competition with over 200 000 participants worldwide. More than 2 000 students attended the Toronto Regionals Competition at Cedarbrae Collegiate Institute, including sixty-five from Marc Garneau. There were three types of events that participants could choose to compete in: principles, individual series, and team decision making. Team events were done in groups of two, whereas participants in the principles and individual

series competed alone. The difference between principles and the individual series is that the former is reserved for first-year DECA competitors. Each of these areas are further split into clusters that cover different aspects of business, such as finance, marketing, and entrepreneurship.

All participants wrote an online, 100-question multiple-choice exam on 30 October at their respective schools that tested them on basic vocabulary and business facts related to their cluster. Participants then attended the regionals at Cedarbrae in order to do roleplays, which are case studies based on real-world business scenarios that require the participant to describe a series of business principles related to their cluster. After ten to thirty minutes of preparation, depending on the event, students presented their scenarios to a judge and were marked on their content, creativity, speaking skills, and visuals. Awards were presented to the students with the highest scores in exams, roleplays or both overall.

To help members prepare for the competition, MGCI DECA executives were assigned small training groups in order to

communicate efficiently and work individually with each member. Additionally, members of the club spent many painstaking hours before, during, and after school practicing roleplays with the help of executives. The club also held many meetings and training sessions.

Angela Xu, a Grade 9 student remarked that although she was nervous beforehand, her roleplay went well because of the amount of preparation she had done.

The students' hard work was recognized during the awards ceremonies. There were three awards ceremonies held throughout the day for the individual, principles, and team events. During each one, cheers erupted inside Cedarbrae's theatre as Marc Garneau students leapt to their feet in support of their friends who climbed on stage to receive their awards. "I'm really happy with our chapter's results, but more so I really enjoyed seeing so many people getting involved and seeing their improvement," said Tom Liu, the president of DECA.

Over sixty students from Marc Garneau C.I. qualified for the provincial competition, which will take place in February 2020.

Spending the Night at the School

By JACQUELINE HUO



Photo: Ilhaan Jivani

MGCI Key Club held its annual Sleepover Night from 29 to 30 November, 2019 to raise money for Doctors Without Borders. Around forty students attended the sleepover for a night of games, movies, and food. Students arrived between 5:00 and 7:00 pm on Friday and stayed at the school until 7:00 am the following morning.

To kick off the evening, students played musical chairs and participated in a photo scavenger hunt. Winners received prizes which included Tim Hortons and Cineplex gift cards. Dinner was served around 8:00 pm and consisted of pizza, biryani, and salad. Other snacks, such as chips, popcorn, fruit, vegetables, and cookies were provided as well.

After dinner, students spread out into small groups for a variety of different activities. There was a Nintendo NES System set up in the SAC Office, courtesy of Mr. Sharp, which had classic games such as Super Mario Bros and Duck Hunt. Several students brought their own video games and board games to play with their friends. In the gym, volleyball and basketball nets were set up, and balls were available for students to use throughout the night. At around 11:00 pm, students watched the horror movie *It*, projected on the large screen in the cafeteria.

Sleepover Night was advertised through the MGCI Key Club Instagram page, as well as through the morning announcements and posters around the school. Key Club Secretary Iris Quan commented, "In recent years, we've noticed a little bit of a decline in interest for our sleepover, so we tried to place more of a focus on marketing our event to people all over the school. We had stories and multiple posts on our Instagram page and continually updated them to make sure that people knew about the event and why we were doing it." Key Club had a table in the galleria during the two weeks leading up to the event, where they distributed forms to interested students.

Students attending the sleepover each raised \$25 in support of a charitable cause. MGCI Key Club obtains sponsors to cover the expenses of the event so that all proceeds can go directly to charity. Previously, the sleepover supported an organization called Sleeping Children Around the World, and was appropriately named SCAW Night. This year's charity was Doctors Without Borders, a non-profit organization that provides medical aid and responds to crises in over seventy countries. The sleepover managed to raise over \$1000, which will help provide healthcare for those in need.

Sleepover Night is Key Club's biggest event, and a lot of planning and preparation went into making sure it ran smoothly. Lynn Shibata, one of the Key Club executives, said, "This year we tried harder to elevate this into more than just a regular sleepover event. Our club spent more than four weeks planning decorations and activities to ensure that people had the best time." Several Key Club members volunteered after school on Friday to help set up for the sleepover. The cafeteria was decorated with Christmas lights, snowflakes, balloons, and streamers taped to the walls. Volunteers also prepared fruit and vegetable trays, and rearranged the tables in the cafeteria to create a more open space.

Overall, the sleepover was well received by the students who attended. They participated in many activities and had fun spending time with their friends. The money raised will be donated to Doctors Without Borders, and will help those in need receive medical treatment.

Artists of Today, Creating a New Tomorrow: MGCI Art Outreach Society

By NISHA IQBAL



Photo: Laura Lu

In September 2019, two Marc Garneau C.I. students founded a club that aimed to use art to tackle social and environmental issues: the Art Outreach Society (AOS).

AOS is a club comprising thirty members including four executive members: President Sophie Yang, Vice President Amy Peng, Marketing Executive Ivy Ding, and Treasurer Ivy Lin. Sophie stated, "As a club, our mission is to cultivate social and environmental change through the arts. We like doing projects and fundraisers, raising awareness about certain issues and creating a safe environment where artists get to know one another and develop their skills." In order to accomplish this, AOS holds meetings every Monday during lunch in room 243.

The club takes part in many projects throughout the school related to certain holidays and charitable causes. For Thanksgiving this year, they gave handmade cards and thank you notes to staff members to show their appreciation. For

Remembrance Day, members of the club participated in a project centred around Starbucks cups. Students decorated the cups with their artwork, filled them with recycled confetti, chocolate bars, and personalized notes, and sold them to teachers during lunch and spare. The club managed to make \$90 from selling these cups. All proceeds went to the Royal Canadian Legion, an organization that supports war veterans and their families.

AOS also collaborates with other clubs in the school to complete projects. Earlier in the year, they partnered with the Fashion Club for a sustainable project called Thrift Flip, which combined both fashion and art. This project featured students bringing in old clothes to paint, embroider, and sew to create upcycled pieces of clothing. For example, Sophie converted an old tunic into a dress, and used the material from the sleeves as pockets. As they move ahead in the month of December, AOS plans to collaborate with Marc Garneau's Origami Club to create origami cards and Christmas ornaments for nursing homes and veteran hospitals to brighten up the holidays.

Art Outreach Society also puts great importance on informing others and raising awareness about youth art groups and contests happening in the city. Every week, one member of the club must find

an opportunity and share it on the club's Instagram account for the followers to see.

Despite these projects and activities, President Sophie Yang consistently makes the last Monday of every month an Expressive Workshop. At these meetings, students can participate in therapeutic activities like painting and colouring, relieve their stress, and ultimately be granted the opportunity to convey themselves through their art.

Being the President of the club, Sophie said, "It means a lot to be a part of Art Outreach Society. I am able to use my skills to advance the community, educate people about art, and all the things you can do through art."

Members of the club are given the opportunity to develop their leadership skills by creating and taking charge of their own projects. In December, members Zakira Alkozaï and Maariyah Patel are planning to collaborate with the Fashion Club to make teddy bears and sock monkeys to be donated to homeless shelters and children's hospitals.

Vice President Amy Peng says the club is a great way to relieve the stress of school. She remarked, "Most of my time is spent [doing] school work and I never really have time to spend on my hobbies. Art Outreach Society has really helped my mental health and allowed me to destress from the load of school work."

Finally, to the rest of Garneau, Amy says, "Art Outreach Society is a great place to explore different mediums. We don't just do the traditional paintings and watercolours. We do a lot of big projects not only within the school but ones that allow us to branch out into the city and community."

Helpful Hints from Mr. Haid

TEACHER FEATURE
Continued from P1

They were all on the autism spectrum, and I was fortunate to teach them English for four years. And I learned more from them than they ever learned from me. I think of them all the time, I really do. I learned that everyone is reachable. I learned that no matter how prepared I was, no matter how wonderful a teacher I might have thought I was, I always had new things to learn. And it was a real great honour to teach those kids.

Q: What's one piece of advice you'd give to any high school student?
A: Oh, I have a lot of advice I'd give to students. Part of the reason why we give advice is so that we actually hear aloud what we say to others, to remind what we need to do to improve. I think young people hopefully understand that the advice that I give comes from errors that I made. Advice is meant to shelter others from mistakes that the self has made.

I would say that—this is probably going to sound a little bit dark—but I've been saying don't believe that high school is the best time of your life. That's a myth. It's not the best time of one's life. It's part of one's life. There should be no best part of someone's life, there should be constant improvement and betterment from health, happiness, achievement, and wellness perspectives. I think it's important that young people are good to each other, and are good to themselves. I think it's important that young people—and I understand that from a neurological perspective why this isn't the case—slow down and not let things escalate to a point where there's no going back. The most unpopular piece of advice I would give is to get rid of your phones. They're destroying civility. They really are. We're losing our ability to connect with other humans. I really love Atwood because she is probably the most consistent prophet (as someone who sees what might happen in the future) and I think that there is a real potential that there will be a time (I hope it doesn't happen) that we will have to depend on one another again, and not technology. It's better for us to not forget how to survive by working collaboratively. So if you're reading this, hopefully you're not reading it on your cellphone. And if you are, be sure that the person beside you has been said hello or good morning or good afternoon to before you both return to your screens.

Q: What books can you recommend? What are your favourite novels?
A: I loved Not Wanted on the Voyage by Timothy Findley, The Goldfinch by Donna Tartt, The Handmaid's Tale by Atwood. I liked the recent one, The Testaments. I didn't love it. I loved a novel called Annabel, I loved All the Light We Cannot See, which was very powerful. I loved Washington Black by Esi Edug-

yan—it's just incredible. I didn't think I would like it, but it's magical. She writes so beautifully. I love everything that Rohinton Mistry has written. They're just sublime. Oh and I do want to add that I really adored Harry Potter, because I think it was written with the idea that reading is fundamental to humanity, and that Rowling gave of herself so that others could enjoy and become better.
Q: If you were to write a novel, what would it look like?
A: I don't think I have the necessary intelligence or modesty or perseverance to write a novel. I don't think I have the requisite amount of discipline either. I think you have to be a humble person to be able to leave the self and create other characters, and I don't know if I can do that. I think you also have to know the self. Maybe writing is a way for authors to explore the self through the creation of other creatures.

Q: What do you do outside of school? What are your hobbies?
A: I play tennis. I really love to cook. You could describe my appearance as "he looks like he's well-fed." I love to read. I love watching British situation comedies. I enjoy spending time with my family and friends and my cats. I love to travel.
Q: Oh, where have you been?
A: I've been very lucky, I've been to many places. I've been throughout Canada and the US, most nations in Europe, I've been to Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, India, Pakistan, Japan, Thailand, Hong Kong, China, Lebanon, Syria. I think the world is a place that's meant to be explored and that humans are fascinating creatures.

The full transcript can be found at thereckoner.ca/teacher-feature.

EDITORIAL

Uyghur Concentration Camps: Re-education or Genocide?

THE UYGHUR CRISIS: EXPLAINED
Continued from P1

What makes the Uyghur repression particularly unsettling is the refusal of Muslim-majority countries to speak out against the CCP, implying their seeming support of the camps. Muslim nations are putting an emphasis and priority on their economic and strategic relationships with China, choosing to ignore the disastrous human rights violations against other Muslims. If physical torture, sexual abuse, and separation from family weren't enough for the Uyghurs to bear, now they must also suffer from the knowledge that their Muslim community has abandoned them. In July 2019, a group of almost exclusively European countries signed a letter to the United Nations human rights chief in an effort to condemn China's repression of Uyghurs [1]. This is all while more than three dozen Muslim states, including Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, do not partake in this response. Instead they do the exact opposite: these nations signed their own letter to China praising their "remarkable achievements" in human rights and its "counterterrorism" efforts in Xinjiang [1].

We often wonder how people could've been so passive during the Holocaust and other genocides, allowing unspeakable horrors to be committed right before their eyes. But that is pure hypocrisy. We must ask ourselves the same question when it

comes to the Uyghurs: how can we, in this day and age, turn a blind eye to the mass detentions of a particular faith group who have often committed no crimes except demonstrating religiosity. There could be nothing more ironic than the fact that the United States has taken the toughest stance on the Uyghur concentration camps, while the country itself, has proudly constructed its own concentration camps: “immigrant detention centres”. Muslim-majority nations must recognize this as an issue that they must act on to resolve. Muslim nations such as Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, to name a few, should not turn a blind eye to the Uyghurs because of their economic interest in China’s “Belt and Road” development project [2]. Perhaps they should be reminded of the Islamic value that is especially timely today: selective justice is a form of injustice. The Uyghurs are being repressed in camps for the same beliefs that many of these states claim to uphold. That alone should be the unifying factor for all Muslim-majority countries to take a bold stance on this issue. Unfortunately, it is highly unlikely that many Muslim states will give up their desire for quick coal and gas profits to fulfill their moral obligation to their Uyghur brothers and sisters. If this remains the case, then the most effective way for us to bring some form of relief for

the Uyghurs may lie, as odd as it sounds, with our star-spangled neighbours to the south. The United States should use its power to encourage its close allies, including Canada, to impose sanctions on China. The withdrawal of economic support for a nation may be enough to push them to reconsider their decisions: they must identify whether they prioritize the need to survive in the global community, or whether they want to continue their base behaviour in isolation. ■

Works Cited

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Illustration: Lauren Liu

Social vs. Natural Sciences: Debate Column

by SARAH ALI and JEFFERSON CHEN

The divide between STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and the social sciences is well-known to most high school students. Students often feel as though they must choose one area and stick to it for the rest of their high school studies. Others believe that it would be more beneficial to instead explore a wide variety of subjects in both areas and to gain a diverse range of knowledge and skills.

Naturally, course selection is a stressful task for many high school students. Students who already know the career path they wish to pursue worry about whether they should take courses in divergent departments in addition to core courses. Students who have no idea what they want to study are unsure whether they should choose one path and stick to it or enroll in a wide variety of courses until they figure it out.

This dilemma usually boils down to social sciences vs STEM, but what about students who are more interested in the arts and athletics? It's certainly not possible to have a schedule with nothing but arts or athletic courses, but would they benefit more from taking social science courses, STEM courses, or both? Why bother taking courses in multiple departments at all? Ultimately, should high school students study both the social sciences and natural sciences equally?

Yes

Going into grade 9, many students are still unsure about what careers they want to pursue and what courses they need to take to get there; however, most will have a pretty good idea about what they enjoy and what they absolutely despise. Students who would rather spend their day learning about physics and chemistry will bang their head against a table at the thought of writing an essay. Meanwhile, students who love nothing more than learning about history and anthropology will weep in agony when faced with equations. As such, many students will try to stick to one department and avoid other courses as much as possible.

But are the social sciences and natural sciences all that different? When it comes to real-life applications, the social sciences and natural sciences are very much intertwined. Scientific advancements usually originate as a means to solve humanitarian problems that are initially studied from a social or political perspective. At the same time, certain societal and political issues cannot be studied without also taking into account relevant scientific facts. Thus, it is important for students to have a basic understanding of various subjects no matter what career they wish to pursue.

Often students feel pressured to pursue STEM professions because they're deemed to be the most respectable jobs indicative of an individual's intelligence and work ethic. Social sciences and the arts, on the other hand, are often frowned upon as useless subjects to pursue. A common misconception is that a degree in the social sciences is impractical in terms of job prospects. Consequently, many students choose to focus solely on STEM courses and only take social science courses required for their high school diploma.

However, there are many respectable, well-pay-

ing, and important careers in the social sciences, such as law, politics, social work, journalism, urban planning, and many more. Even just remaining in the academic field, working either as a professor or a researcher, such as in the study of history, literature, and the arts, is important in keeping human culture alive. This push towards STEM fields is precisely why many social science professions are in demand, and also why certain social science university programs are less competitive in admissions.

Therefore, for students who are unsure of what they want to do, or are focusing solely on the natural sciences, it's important to push themselves to explore multiple subjects outside of the natural sciences should they find something they're very passionate about and would rather pursue.

will still benefit from taking STEM courses. These subjects call for several skills that are important for any future career, such as technological proficiency, data analysis and statistics, numeracy, and problem-solving skills. Social and natural sciences aside, the arts foster creativity and athletics develop teamwork skills. Furthermore, just being able to do well in a variety of courses shows adaptability and flexibility.

On the other hand, the courses you take in high school should not be solely for the sake of getting into a university and acquiring skills for your future profession. Learning for fun should also be part of one's high school experience. Even if a certain course does not relate whatsoever to your future goals, it's fine to take a course simply because you find it enjoyable and interesting.



Illustration: Helen Sun

No

Although the typical human does not match the physical prowess of other animals, it came to be the dominant species as a result of intelligence. While other animals usually occupy the same niches as every other member of their species, mankind developed a more methodical societal system where every individual has a different, specialized niche that contributes to the overall advancement of humanity.

This ancient system continues to carry on even in the modern age. Our bustling modern cities have a plethora of jobs and roles for the average citizen, but one thing remains the same: everybody

is doing something different. The doctors that work tirelessly to provide healthcare to the masses had a different educational path than that of the urban planners who created the maze of roads and highways. It is very likely that, from a young age, both had vastly different interests. They probably took different courses in high school, applied for different scholarships, and attended different university programs that specialized in their interests. It is undeniable that both are well-educated, successful people. Yet, the new social norm of the well-rounded student and stigma against people who are excellent in one subject but poor in another undermines the standards of civilization. Studying a variety of subjects when in reality a person will only use one in their chosen career leaves the others completely useless. Hours of wasted time accumulate on the study of random material—time that could have been spent on better things. In fact, studying the opposite subject can be more counter-productive than typical “time-wasters”: a person gets a little bit of fun playing Super Mario rather than miserably reading a book that will not benefit their life at all.

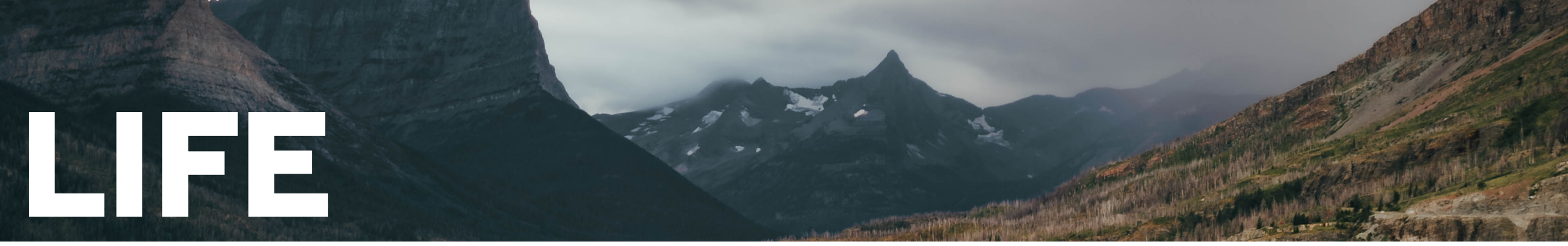
It is a perfectionist's opinion to say someone can select multiple career paths and still be successful. In the most populous and prominent western country, the United States, only 8.3% of people hold multiple jobs. Many of these people either work in the same career cluster, are low income individuals seeking to supplement earnings, or are women whose main occupation is an at-home mother. Yet, many of the people who hold multiple jobs can hardly be called successful. Most of them are forced into choosing secondary work due to insufficient finances. "Challenging students" into more subjects might make a person seem intelligent, but is realistically less practical—reflecting why the other employees of the United States choose to select one job is because they keep their focus on said job. The work that they produce ends up being better and they eventually earn more than the multitaskers.

However, this should not be taken as a manifesto against the exploration of new subjects. Students should take some time to look at both social and natural science career paths before making an educated decision about which one they will stick with for the rest of their lives. By making a wise choice early in life, students are bound for success. Students should be encouraged to research how their interests can link up to the studying of an eventual career path. However, once selected, one should allocate as little time as possible on random sources of knowledge that deviate from their choice.

Societal standards exist for a reason; a reasoning backed with 5 000 years of historical evidences and successes. If humanity were to discontinue using this job system to outclass all other living beings on the planet, catastrophic events will follow. ■

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Autumn Leaves

by ERIC ZHAO



Nightmares from a Niner

by AKSHAYA VARAKUNAN

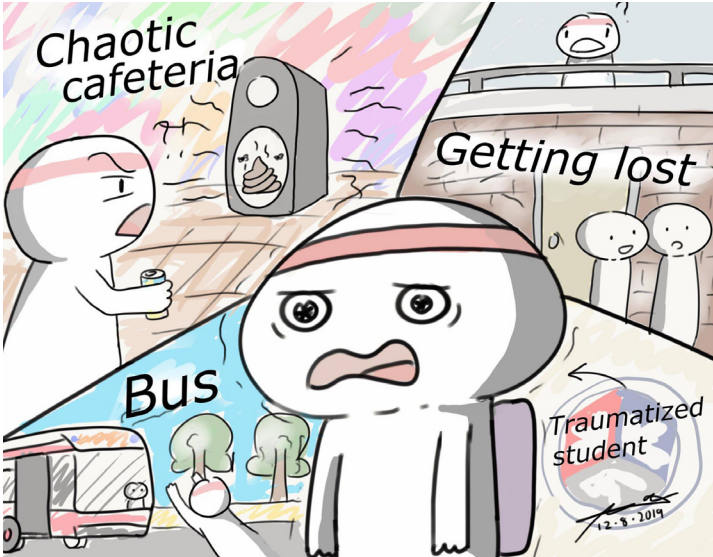


Illustration: Max Lu

I often forget that I’ve only been in high school for three months (at the time of writing this). On the positive side, it’s because I feel unexpectedly comfortable here - though it’s sometimes because I wish I’d already graduated. But to celebrate the fact that I can at least get to school without getting hit by a bus, here are three of my new student problems.

1. The Classic: Getting Lost

Getting lost is a staple of new schools - but it’s not a staple to have room numbers that are meaningless, which is what happens to be the case at Marc Garneau.

My social awkwardness always gets in the way of things, but I completely exasperate myself every time. Attempt number one of getting to class consisted of rigidly standing in the hallways and hoping someone would offer help. Attempt two was charging around tempestuously. Neither attempt was successful.

Eventually, I built up the courage to ask one of the scary seniors for directions, and got over my awkwardness! Just as the bell rang, I dove into the classroom in slow-motion as the world turned black-and-white! I lived happily ever after!

That did not happen. After circling around the floor multiple times, I charged into the right classroom shortly after the bell rang, enervated enough for the teacher to pity me and not mark me late.

2. Staircase Suffering

I had gotten lost in the hallways multiple times, but at least I could trust the staircases. How bad could the design of one building get?

I just wanted to go to Gym class, and I was already late by the time I cowered my way down the stairs engulfed in shrieking children. But no. I can’t fathom why someone would design a staircase that doesn’t go to the first floor - but I ended up in one.

Thank you, stairs. All this energy spent heaving myself through your repulsive little paths, and you do this to me.

3. The Cafeteria

Once upon a time, my unsuspecting self thought, “Wow, a cafeteria is supposed to be where people eat lunch, right? It only makes sense to eat my lunch there!”

That was a mistake. I could barely hear my own voice without screaming my throat raw, let alone holding a conversation. Why listen to music so loud? If your desire to deafen us all is that intense, at least offer free sign language lessons. I could have stood the music if it was decent, but it sounded like a goat vomiting its intestines out to background music.

Right then and there, my innocent self decided to never set foot in the cafeteria again.

The end.

I’m sure everyone reading this has experienced something similar at some point. There’s not much to conclude this rant - other than the fact that I strongly look forward to the day when I can laugh at my current stupidity, because I can assure you that there is a lot.

Ego, Confidence, and Razorsharp Appearances

by HARRISON CHIU



Illustration: Sophie Yang

In a few days from writing this, I’ll be Shaving for the first time since late October, roughly one month ago.

You shave??

Indeed, I do Shave. Shaving is one of those humdrum errands that play a part in my life (see: taking out the trash, washing dishes). The indicative end of an innocent childhood, the event horizon of a distant past, I engage in the act of Shaving. But that’s beside the point.

No-Shave November is an event dedicated to raising cancer awareness, where participants vow to let their facial hair grow uninhibited for 30 days. Years prior, without a single follicle to trim, I’ve always been engrossed by how people could muster up the courage to sport a clashingly new appearance for more than four weeks. *Four weeks*. I never thought that I’d be able to stick it out through such a feat, always backing down from the dread of ridicule, mockery, and the all-too-many contemptuous comments over Grandma’s dinner table. My friends would literally never look at me the same. Anyone I’d speak to—no, anyone I’d look at, would be automatically redirected to the bush surrounding my mouth and chin. After several con-

templative showers, I decided that I had to try it. After all, it’s my last year in high school; if I was ever going to do it, this is the perfect time. *It’ll be fine*, I reassured myself, ready to conquer the world and everyone in it. *If anyone asks, I’ll just say that I’m experim—*

—four days in, I remembered that November 15th was the day of DECA regionals. The scrutinizing judge who I’d have to talk to for ten minutes about professional business inquiries was surely going to subtract a mark for each hair beyond 1cm. Any sense of etiquette would be instantly lost, and it would all be due to some hairy first impression. Cringing at the thought of it all, my honorable self remembered that this was a vow. I continued unShaven. To my surprise, given my score results published a few days afterwards, perhaps the judges prefer competitors with a tad bit of facial hair.

It wasn’t until two days ago, during another contemplative shower, when I had a few more realizations about the non-Shaving.

Only three people at school pointed it out, two of which commented once and never again. My extended family never brought it up, and my parents joked about it only a handful of times. At the end of the day, no one cares about my facial hair.

Really, people don’t have the time to inspect and compare Shaving patterns. In reality, everyone’s growing a mustache of their own, carrying the same worries that I faced. Just as you may care if the right side of your chin hair is as short as the left, or that there’s still visible strands under your bottom lip from a three-foot distance, it’s doubtful anyone else is prepared or even willing to analyze those things. Of course, this is all a metaphor, but that’s beside the point.

Lost

by EMILY LAI



Illustration: Sophie Yang

I laid there for awhile, on the warm sand
My mind floated away, with the sweat and the tears
Alone with the redolence of the sea.

I left the blue waves behind
Before the ocean waters spilled again
Before the sea turned dark.

I want to go back to that day
I wish I could tell you, “Please wait for me to return”
But my words were swept away with the wind
And disappeared into the sky.

I just want to tell you that I’m waiting here
Walking alone along the shore
The tides are the only ones that hear me.

Someday, we’ll see each other again
Even if you are on a new path.

I wonder where I left you behind.

I just want my left sandal back.

Material Exploration

by AMY LONG



The Reckoner

of Marc Garneau C.I.

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