Students Occupy Frigid DPS Lot, Mangelsdorf and DPS Chief Promise Discussion

By Henry Linsky
PHOTO EDITOR

They made their demands directly, in-person, in 34 degree weather.

Six hours into their Saturday occupation of the Department of Public Safety’s parking lot, student activists spoke with President Sarah Mangelsdorf and Commissioner Mark Fisher over issues surrounding DPS.

They demanded the release of DPS’ budget and disciplinary records, and that DPS cease responding to mental health calls, instead replacing the position with a trained mental health emergency response team.

By the end of the hour-long discussion, Mangelsdorf and Fisher had committed to holding serious discussions including representatives of the student group, particularly about their requests for a new mental health emergency response system and budget transparency.

“We know words mean nothing without action,” the UR Abolition Coalition (URAC) wrote on Instagram, “so we look forward to holding a dialogue about DPS’ history and gave a brief history of Black activism at UR.

“We know words mean nothing without action.”

“College campuses across the country have histories of activism and college students as change-makers,” junior Indy Maring said towards the end of the rally. “So we have to step into that role as college students.”

Mangelsdorf and Commissioner Mark Fisher — speaking in 34 degree weather.

Students looking to stay on campus over the extra long winter break will be able to snag a room free of charge if they already have a housing contract for the school year.

Unlike previous years, River Campus students will not be relocated, and will remain in their regular dorms for either a short-term or long-term stay, according to the Residential Life website. The former is from Nov. 25 until Dec. 19 (last day of finals), and the second from Nov. 25 to Jan. 22.

Students looking to stay from November to January will have a mandatory $895 dining fee. This is their only fee. Short-term students do not have a mandatory plan.

“We wanted to make sure that there’s enough people to make a [dining plan] viable.”

“We wanted to make sure that there’s enough people to make a [dining plan] viable,” Executive Director of Residential Life and Housing Services Laurel Contomanolis said. “In order to do that, we [...] need to have a certain number of students, so that we can have a dining plan for that period [...] This is a different kind of situation this year.

She explained that although students might be in facilities with kitchen access, most of those kitchens will be shut down for the break.

Students staying short-term or long-term must remain within 100 miles of the University at all times. Students who leave at any point are not allowed to return until the scheduled move-in at the end of January, at which point they will have to quarantine and take a COVID-19 test while they wait for the results, according to Contomanolis.

Looking to the spring, Contomanolis does not expect any significant changes to the COVID-19 policies currently in place.

Students looking to stay on campus over the extra long winter break will be able to snag a room free of charge if they already have a housing contract for the school year.
UR Reacts to a Rocky Election

By Nicole Greenberg

FEATURES EDITOR

On Nov. 3, millions of people from around the world — including much of the UR community — watched as the results of the American election began to trickle in. But some close states took days to count, causing increased anxiety and anticipation.

President-elect Biden did not claim victory until major news networks called the election for him on Saturday, Nov. 7. President Trump has not yet conceded, and allegations in lawsuits that illegal voter fraud is responsible for his defeat, and that he won the election if only legally-cast votes are counted. So far, there is no substantive evidence of voter fraud.

Classes on Election Day were cancelled this year. Ostensibly the day off, which was officially referred to as a “Study Break” or “Mental Health Day,” was granted in response to a student petition asking for days off to quell academic burnout and make up for the cancellation of fall break.

Having Election Day Specifically off was a request the petition, “On November 3rd, the Election day,” the petition read, “students require a day of rest, and by the signs that indicated a coup was not imminent, election night was not particularly reassuring. ‘I’m addicted to Twitter like everybody else, which generally does not make a person feel good,” he said.

He expressed concern that the Democratic Party is not committed enough to policy change. “Where I’m encouraged is with the rising power of the social democratic faction inside the Democrat Party [...] to my mind this growing faction represents our last, best chance at pushing back against empire (abroad and at home), economic and health disparities, and gathering climate collapse.”

Elaine Sia, a professor in the Department of Biology, similarly found election night stressful. “We had all agreed not to watch, but easily broke down around 10 p.m.” Bethlendy said “Sitting with my housemates we alternated espresso and hard alcohol in the way that doctors don’t recommend. But I figured this would be the last celebration of ‘American not listening to good reason, so I went ahead with this combination.” He later added that he managed to fall asleep despite the coffee and alcohol.

Ped Pavlicki, an associate professor in the Computer Science department, spent election night looking at results online. “I didn’t watch any broadcast news shows, as I consider modern corporate news more hype and entertainment than information,” he said.

Pavlicki was hoping for a strong victory for President Trump, as well as a clear winner on election night. “I am proud that there is no ‘quit’ in President Trump,” Pavlicki said. I am thankful that the Democrats did not immediately begin the type of rioting and looting that we have witnessed during the past months.” To Pavlicki, mail-in voting was a “debacle” that needs to be re-evaluated along with other election security issues.

He also added that he was encouraged to see students react to the drawn-out post-election drama maturely. “I am saddened by the fact that so many young people feel the need to self-censor their political opinions,” he said. “Over the past year or so, I was continually encouraging young people to get involved in the hands-on political process.”

After Biden was declared President-elect, there were several impromptu celebrations by his supporters throughout the city, ranging from an organized gathering at the Liberty Pole to drivers honking their car horns in celebration.

Greenberg is a member of the Class of 2022.
COMMUNITY

Chanel Hines, Trans Woman, Shot by Parole Officer

By Alex Prideaux
STAFF WRITER

On Tuesday, Nov. 3, Chanel Hines was shot three times in the chest and hospitalized by Jeff Smith, her parole officer.

Early media reports on the situation, and the official Ontario County Sheriff report both misgendered Hines, who is a trans woman.

In the report, the Ontario County Sheriff’s office stated that Chanel Hines (referring to her by the wrong name, and using male pronouns) had attempted to run down her parole officer Smith, which resulted in Smith firing his weapon seven times, hitting Hines three times.

Hines is accused of violating parole by stealing a bottle of liquor. According to Bonnemere, Hines, who was taken to Strong Memorial Hospital and is stable, is being denied basic rights. For the first 10 days of her hospitalization, Hines was denied any form of contact from friends and family outside of one five-minute call.

“They told me she was out of surgery and that the NYS division of parole had blocked all access, so I could not have a phone call, I would not be granted, she was in ICU, […] I could not send a letter or a card,” Bonnemere said in a video.

Before the sole five-minute phone call Hines was granted with her mother, Bonnemere said she was told “to not ask her what happened or you’ll be disconnected,” as she was “on speakerphone.” While she was speaking with her daughter, Bonnemere said that, “[Hines] asked me why she shot her.”

In addition, when Hines was allowed to meet with her attorney, two parole officers remained in the room during the interview. “Whatever happened to attorney-client privilege?” Bonnemere said.

Where are the parole officers? Members of a community activist group known as L.A.B.L. — otherwise known as Liberate All Black Lives — protested outside the Public Safety Building on Nov. 12, demanding that Bonnemere be granted access to her daughter. Many of the chants that night referenced violence against trans people across America. For example, according to various studies, trans people face a suicide rate between 14 and 25 times higher than cisgender people.

On Oct. 7, all the way back in 2011, there’s been a grand total of 100,657 crimes reported, said Shango. “In the past 9 years, 0.3% of crimes in Rochester have been a murder […] 0% of crimes have been manslaughter, there’s been one manslaughter in the past 9 years, 5.2% of crime has been motor vehicle theft.”

In addition, 94.1% of crimes were property crimes which led the Rochester Police Department to spend “100 million dollars for policing property crime,” according to Shango.

“The police are obsolete,” he said. “Imagine getting paid 100,000 dollars to fix a fucking barricade; imagine accepting 100,000 dollars to brutalize people.”

These statistics match ones reported by the RPDP Open Data Portal, a database of information compiled by Rochester Police Officers. The remaining 9.7% of crimes are composed primarily of aggravat- ed assaults.

After the protest was called for the night, L.A.B.L. stepped aside to share a few messages with the press: “Fuck 12.” “Protect our Black trans women.”

“We want Chanel Hines free, we want [Smith] arrested, we want the transphobic media to stop misgendering her: Chanel Hines.”

The next day, following another protest outside Strong Hospital, Bonnemere was granted access to call her daughter for 30 minutes per day, but protests planned to continue until significant reform is made in Rochester.

Prideaux is a member of the Class of 2022.

CT EATS

CT Eats: Szechuan Opera Has Me Singing Its Praise

By Olivia Banc
COLUMNIST

This week, I bring you yet another break from our regularly scheduled programs… whoops. I’ve been neck-deep in grad school applica- tions all week. After I finalized and submitted my very first one (woot!), I was craving some Chinese food on that cold, cold Saturday night. I truly did scour the internet for a Black-owned Chinese restaurant in Rochester, but I could not find a single one. If anyone happens to know of one, let me know.

Anywho — Szechuan Opera! I’ve had food from Szechuan Opera maybe twice before this occasion and, oh my goodness, it fucks, every time. (I mean that in the most elegant of ways, of course). Everything I have ever had from them has been so incredibly flavorful, balanced, and perfectly cooked. They absolutely delivered on that again this time around. This was exactly the delish Chinese meal that I was craving after my stressful week.

‘I truly did scour the internet for a Black-owned Chinese restaurant in Rochester.’

For our appetizer, I switched things up and tried out some dan dan noodles, which I’d never had before. They were a complex mix of nutti- ness, umami, meatiness, and spice. The light meatiness came from some sparse bits of a mystery meat (I think it was beef?). It brought the heat. The stew was not limited to: the lotus root, soupy style tofu, which there was a great variety) were cooked perfectly as well. They brought many differ- ent flavors and textures to the dish. There was an overall deep, bright flavor to the sauce as well as quite a bit of heat — which seemed only mild-medium at first, but built up quite forcefully.

Our next entrée was filled with some sneaky spicy sauce. The cumin style chicken had a strong, rich flavor. It was moist, topped with tons of yummy cilantro, salted perfectly, and oh my god it was spicy like no other dish. The heat was strong right from the get-go and continued to build up progressively. This was the first time that I’ve ever felt the heat in my ears, which was a wild sensation. If you have this HSI (like me), I’ll warn you that this dish hurts. But if you love heat (also like me), then it’s definitely worth it.

‘I’ve had food from Szechuan Opera maybe twice before […] and oh my goodness, it fucks, every time.’

I also had the great pleasure of trying out some desserts! Szechuan Opera offers quite a compelling list, so it was hard to choose, but we eventually settled on a combo plate of sesame balls and pumpkin pies. The sesame balls were textbook perfect in every way. They were crisp and just lightly fried outside, rich and chewy inside, nice and hot, sweet and nutty, and real- ly flavorful. The gummy doughnut, which normal- ly is pretty plain, actually had a lot of sweet- ness and sesame flavor, which was really nice.

And the pumpkin pies were more like chewy pumpkin donuts than little miniature pumpkin tarts. They were slightly flattened, fried, and rolled in sugar. They were super crispy outside because of the coarse sugar, but the inside was an interesting chewy and cakie texture that felt like a cross between a chewy sesame ball and a fluffy donut. The pumpkin flavor was light but prominent, and really lovely. Much like everything else from Szechuan Opera, I’d recommend both of these desserts.

Other honorable mentions from Szechuan Opera that I’ve enjoyed in the past include but are not limited to: the lotus root, soupy style entrées, spring rolls, and all of the bubble teas (no, I have not tried literally all of their bubble teas, but based on the ones I have, I’d bet mon- ey they’re all delightful). Szechuan Opera is pricier than your typical Chinese takeout, but it truly is miles above the rest, so I’d encourage everyone to try it at least once if you can; it’s a real treat. Consider me singing for Szechuan Opera and, if you try it out, I guarantee you will be, too.

Banc is a member of the Class of 2022.
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Apply to be an editor!
Neutrality Accomplishes Nothing

By James Gunn

EDITORIAL BOARD

The Campus Times Wants to Hear Your COVID-19 Experiences

By James Gunn

PRESENTATIONS CHIEF

M easures for Justice is a Rochester-based nonprofit creating measures to address and end police violence in communities. Admireable. They recognize communities’ inability to adequately self-reflect. They try to be non-partisan — by that they mean they suggest no policy, and they identify no individuals whose behaviour is reprehensible, or even criminal. Justice is a simple word. It is not a simple act. Not to be easily accomplished. It is a constant test. It is a constant reminder to stand alone, that your conscience will not sever to the status quo, an admission that you’re unwilling to sacrifice in order to improve patterns of inequality and wrong. It relies on the misunderstanding that people are capable of acting in pure goodwill, and that it’s worth working with everyone out of an expectation of “fairness.”

If I say All Cops Are Bastards, you might scream, “No! That isn’t fair. That isn’t just, to condemn one because of the actions of others. They’re good people, with just a few bad apples.” You could say one bad apple spoils the bunch if it weren’t so horribly cliché, and if it weren’t so wrong.

Because cops aren’t apples. Apples don’t reinforce the institutions that make life hell. To be a part of an institution is a choice, a decision to act on them. The will to fight comes from the misunderstanding that people are capable of acting in pure goodwill, and that it’s worth working with everyone out of an expectation of “fairness.”

For everyone, there’s a self-truth, a framework to their lives, that they’re too cowardly to fight. Our self-interest binds us to a group, chains our minds to dogma. We internalize expectations of how the world should work, and recoil when that’s challenged. We act a certain way because that’s just how things are done. That’s what’s proper.

For that, we all are the bastards. By “institutions” I don’t only mean formal institutions like the police force, government, or laws that are in focus. I mean the structure behind your behaviour, your disposition, your attitudes towards other people and concepts. Concepts like justice.

It’s so easy to forget where privilege comes from. It’s easy to forget the self-interest that leads us to lie passively with institutions. That’s why it’s so easy to forget the alienation that perpetuates societies. Humanity suffers for that stagnation and the lives we live because of it.

Measures for Justice is a tool. Tools accomplish nothing without the will to use them. That will doesn’t just emerge. It doesn’t just arrive because Black men and women are murdered in their homes and on the streets, it doesn’t appear because of the genocide of Indigenous peoples. It isn’t the product of city councillors doing their job.

That will is the result of the painful realization that things are wrong in the world, and then the decision to act on them. The will to fight comes only from confronting the fact that everything you’ve lived for, everything you were raised on, is intertwined with injustice.

No, tools are not enough. Support is not enough. Words are not enough. Frankly, I haven’t had the necessary courage. Few have. It’s isolating, standing as an individual against a group. But the willingness to stand alone is what separates you from the “bad apples.”

What we need isn’t tools, or change from within, or the slow chipping away at the vast inequalities that structure all human relationships. We need those willing to stand alone, together.
Why Dining Halls Should Give Meatless
Mondays a Shot
By Muskaan Vasandani
STAFF WRITER

Imagine: It’s around one in the afternoon, and you’re waiting for class to end so you can finally grab lunch. You’re starving because you skipped breakfast in the rush to get to your 9 a.m. class and have been busy since then. After a torturous wait, your class finally ends, and you dash to a dining hall, only to see that it’s filled with food that you can’t eat due to dietary restrictions. Sounds like a nightmare, huh? But for vegetarians and vegans, this is our sad reality.

Contra popular belief, people who don’t eat meat aren’t always stuck-up, fancy folks from LA who shop exclusively at Whole Foods. A lot of us choose this lifestyle for sensible reasons and have never seen the inside of a Whole Foods.

‘A lot of us choose this life-style for sensible reasons and have never seen the inside of a Whole Foods.’

Forgoing meat is a conscious and thoughtful choice that people make because they think that easing the burden on our earth is more important than satisfying their taste buds. These people come from all walks of life — from famous celebrities to broke college students.

I know what you’re thinking: What difference is one person who doesn’t eat hamburgers going to make? Researchers at the University of Oxford found that cutting meat and dairy products from your diet could reduce an individual’s carbon footprint from food by up to 75%. If everyone stopped eating these foods, they found that global farmland use could be reduced by 75%, an area equivalent to the size of the U.S., China, Australia, and the EU combined.

My intention here isn’t to persuade anyone to quit eating meat entirely — one article isn’t enough to do that. I just want to ensure that every Yellowjacket has the opportunity to have a good, filling lunch and maybe even get a peek at what a meat-free lifestyle looks like.

I strongly believe that having Meatless Mondays at just one dining hall every week is a great idea. It’s inclusive, as there will still be options available for meat eaters in other dining locations on campus. An added benefit is that this will reduce the University’s carbon footprint significantly, while giving people a taste of vegetarian food — which really isn’t bad at all.

One vegan counter in Danforth is definitely not enough to serve everyone on campus. Take it from someone who hasn’t touched meat in four years — it isn’t easy to fill yourself up from the salad bar alone. But if an entire dining hall served bean burgers and eggplant lasagna, even for just one day a week, it would be an absolute treat for vegetarians and meat-eaters alike.

Vasandani is a member of the class of 2022.

Students’ Complicated Relationship with WiFi
By Mirah Greenberg
FEATURES EDITOR

On Thursday night, I was in the middle of a club’s weekly meeting. The meeting was going well until, suddenly, everyone’s Zoom square froze, and the audio cut out. About half a minute later, it was back, but a third of the people had been booted from the meeting.

Soon I found out what happened through my hall’s group chat: The WiFi had cut out for the entirety of Riverview A, and likely for other Riverview buildings, too. When someone called IT, they learned that they were doing maintenance from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. and that they didn’t know when service would be restored.

Luckily, the WiFi was restored in about an hour. But some people had assignments due that night and had to scramble to find ways to work on them in the meantime, whether by using data to create a hotspot or by writing offline if possible.

This wasn’t the first time this semester that I’ve had WiFi issues. It feels like at least a couple times a week, everyone in my meeting freezes as I’m greeted by the ominous warning, “Your internet connection is unstable.”

Students often joke about renaming the University’s WiFi network from “UR_Connected” to “UR_Not_Connected,” and I’m beginning to understand why.

Likely, the WiFi this semester is no different than in past semesters. My WiFi definitely cut out in the past, but since being online is so important — and so constant — this semester, I notice it more.

Of course, it’s extremely difficult to build a system that can handle thousands of students streaming classes at once. And I’d much rather the University spend money on testing, subsidized housing, meal plans for winter stay, and quarantine capacity than on reducing the amount of times my WiFi cuts out from five times a week to once a week.

Additionally, I understand that the University can only make a difference for people living on campus, leaving people who were unable to return to campus to figure out their internet issues on their own. But this semester more than ever, WiFi matters to us.

In order for online classes to work, we need WiFi to work. In order to take online tests and turn in online assignments, we need WiFi to work. In order for clubs to function online, we need WiFi to work.

When Zoom tells me, “Your internet connection is unstable,” it’s a reminder not just that the WiFi is unstable, but also that my personal connections with others in general are subject to the random whims of poor internet service and a global pandemic.

This year, running social and academic life through a screen has become a necessity. But it’s also becoming a habit. Is that a problem I don’t know. And even after the pandemic, we’ll all still use computers and want good WiFi. It’s just important to remember how dependent on it we’ve become.

Take the time when your internet freezes to reflect on what you want your relationship with technology to be after the pandemic, or to think about just how much scientific innovation has improved our lives.

Alternatively, spend the brief periods your WiFi cuts out praying that the meeting is being recorded so that you can go back and find what you missed.

Greenberg is a member of the class of 2021.
My First Weekend with the PlayStation 5

By WILL LEVE
CULTURE EDITOR

Getting my hands on the PS5 was a pain in the ass, but boy was it worth it. I would have never secured one on launch day had it not been for the help of a close friend, but I’m happy to report that it was totally worth the headache.

The PlayStation 5 is an awesome piece of tech with great games, and my first weekend with the thing was unforgettable.

After the longest car ride of my life, I unpacked the console and set it up inside one of the shelves of my TV stand. I was honestly grossed out by the design of the console when it was first revealed online, but I’m glad to say that it’s a slick looking machine in person. The white arches that sandwich the console give it a premium and futuristic look, kind of like what you’d imagine Elon Musk’s house looks like. And even though it’s massive, the added space gives the console airflow, so it runs much cooler and more quietly than the PS4. In fact, the machine is virtually silent when playing games at their most hardware intensive settings.

‘It runs much cooler and more quietly than the PS4.’

PlayStation 5’s upgraded hard drive is a pleasant surprise as well. It reduces load times to virtually nothing, and makes the console’s menu systems feel far snappier than any console I’ve used before. These reduced load times drastically streamline the experience of certain games as well. One of the PS5’s exclusive launch games is a remake of a 2009 PS3 classic, “Demon’s Souls.” In the OG version, “Demon’s Souls,” you die a shit ton ‘cause the game is hard, and it sends you back to the beginning of the level after every death. On the PS5, it would take upwards of two and a half minutes to load back to the beginning of a level, but even two minutes on the PS5’s new harddrive, the remake’s load times are usually about five seconds.

I have to mention the Dualsense as well, which has to be the best gaming controller I’ve ever used.

The mechanics of the game are basically unchanged from the 2009 version besides aspects of its presentation, but this is a good thing since its gameplay didn’t need much revision anyways. Don’t play this game unless you’re in for a brutal challenge, but if you like that sort of thing. "Demon’s Souls” might end up being one of your favorite games.

I’m happy with the launch of the PlayStation 5 than I ever imagined I would be. The speed of the system, its controller, and its incredible launch games make this my favorite console launch that I’ve had the pleasure of experiencing. If you have the chance, go out and get a PS5; you’ll have a good time.

Leve is a member of the class of 2022.

Check Out Four Armenian Men Yelling For Armenian Rights!

By JENNA HRAKI
STAFF WRITER

Have you heard that one song with all the men yelling at you to wake up, grab a brush, and put a little makeup on? If not, maybe it was the yelling about self-righteous suicide that left a mark, or thinking super hard about the right thing to do but nothing ever works out and you get yourself screaming, “Chop Suey!” by System of a Down. This song is one of the most influential bands in metal, and the mushroom cloud design of their most hardware intensive settings.

The mechanics of the game are basically unchanged from the 2009 version besides aspects of its presentation, but this is a good thing since its gameplay didn’t need much revision anyways. Don’t play this game unless you’re in for a brutal challenge, but if you like that sort of thing. "Demon’s Souls” might end up being one of your favorite games.

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The World is Ending, But Not for Me
By Brianna Lindsey

As a student on campus in these unprecedented times, it’s important to me to remain positive in all ways. We all, of course, except test results.

Test results that might make me a danger to all those I care about or whatever, but more importantly mean that I have to go be isolated for two weeks, which would make me very sad. Remembering to wear my mask, wash my hands, and stay six feet away from others can all drastically reduce my chance of catching and spreading the virus is great, but kind of hard. While I’ve never regularly done any of these things, the habits are certainly good for other people to form.

So long as I maintain a life devoid of human connection, I seem to be safe. But I’m on the swim team, and we got special permission to practice, so I hope everybody else is working hard to keep us safe. Herd immunity: if everybody else does the work, I’m golden!

As golden as the leaves on the trees! To be honest, I’m grateful that all of it’s been as it’s been for as long as it’s been; normally, by this time of year, I’m breaking out my expensive winter coats which were doubtless produced through borderline slave labor, but thanks to global warming I can appreciate temperatures above 50 degrees for the small price of disastrous environmental consequences. What a steal!

‘Herd immunity: if everybody else does the work, I’m golden!’

In addition to the wonderful weather, I’m taking countless steps to keep myself motivated for when the world returns to a state of normalcy! I’ve been on the lookout for internships each weekend, and I can’t wait for the chance to apply when the world returns to a state of normalcy!

Honestly, I don’t have much to show for having completed three quarters of my degree, but that’s not important because college is a status symbol, and if you go to college it means you’re intelligent and have value and contribute to society in a meaningful way because existing is a privilege not allways. All ways, of course, except test results.

My biggest ambitions might be realized in the coming years, such as: Make Something and Be meaningful way because existing is a privilege not allways. All ways, of course, except test results.

‘All the little things COVID-19 took from us besides, oh, y’know, what was it… upwards of a million human lives or so?’

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US students at UR are doing our best to adhere to the safety protocols, but in the shadows, under the premise of a study session, sometimes even the best of friends have lost touch with each other.

The bliss of skin against skin, that shameful thrill. Having experienced a COVID-19 fistbump or two, it is with the utmost confidence that I say they are indeed everything they’re cracked, or rather, knucked, up to be.

Lindsey is a member of the Class of 2024.

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In addition to the wonderful weather, I’m taking countless steps to keep myself motivated for when the world returns to a state of normalcy! I’ve been on the lookout for internships each weekend, and I can’t wait for the chance to apply when the world returns to a state of normalcy!

Honestly, I don’t have much to show for having completed three quarters of my degree, but that’s not important because college is a status symbol, and if you go to college it means you’re intelligent and have value and contribute to society in a meaningful way because existing is a privilege not allways. All ways, of course, except test results.

My biggest ambitions might be realized in the coming years, such as: Make Something and Be meaningful way because existing is a privilege not allways. All ways, of course, except test results.

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‘All the little things COVID-19 took from us besides, oh, y’know, what was it… upwards of a million human lives or so?’

US students at UR are doing our best to adhere to the safety protocols, but in the shadows, under the premise of a study session, sometimes even the best of friends have lost touch with each other.

The bliss of skin against skin, that shameful thrill. Having experienced a COVID-19 fistbump or two, it is with the utmost confidence that I say they are indeed everything they’re cracked, or rather, knucked, up to be.

Lindsey is a member of the Class of 2024.
A Closer Look at the Freshman BME Major

By Alyssa Koh
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

With the rise of COVID-19 cases and the imminently real possibility of campus closures due to the semester's coming to a close, the student ecosystem has begun to adapt.

The cycle of metamorphosis begins. Packs of first-years taking BIO 110 and CHEM 171 have succumbed to early onset burnout, and intended pre-neds drop like flies as winter arrives. While this is to be expected, as we all know how many wannabe doctors come out with an anthropology degree, this new year has only expedited that process.

For their fellow students, witnessing the fallout from this shift can be heartbreaking. However, for the nature documenter, being in the thick of this transition can be heartbreaking.

"The Hajim class (the taxonomic rank under which the genus of BME majors falls) operates primarily within the engineering quad and under piles of depression laundry in each organism's respective dorm habitat."

Each student arrives on campus with a complex spreadsheet that comprises their schedule, and the constraints prove to be equal parts beneficial and detrimental.

The comfort in knowing what lies ahead and only needing to fulfill one cluster requirement lulls some into a false sense of security, but that is immediately disturbed by the intensity of the course load they face. Their Zoom-centric domain is wrought with incorrect textbook answers and confused TAs, and their main forms of sustenance are declining-fueled Starbucks runs and ungodly hours and the occasional crumbs from the beginning of a Douglass Commons study sesh.

Going against the theories of recuperation and adaptation, caffeine replaces not only food and sleep but also every possible substance in the bodies of these students. When interrogated about their means of persisting in this manner, common answers are awkward laughs followed by a sigh or the phrase, "I'm just built different."

When it comes to social interaction, struggling first-year BME majors follow in the footsteps of their upperclassmen by using Hirst Lounge, iZone, and Rettner Hall as equal parts social crutch and study space, and each has their own individual benefits.

Hirst is adjacent to the sole reason to continue forth in life, which happens to be the slice of cheesecake in the PepsiCo Plaza that calls your name each time you pick up your GrubHub order. iZone feels just enough like a library space that you can imagine completing work there, but the seating is just cushy enough to provide a comforting backdrop to the hellescope of Panopto lectures.

Finally, the pain of the multi-flight stair climb makes Rettner feel familiar, and it serves as a change of scenery for the study grind.

To the most delusioned, or those considering the medical optics concentration after having it shoved down their throat by the entire department, rotating between these three locations can be even considered "the college experience."

Despite all of the adversity, the life cycle of a first-year BME major has the occasional splash of solace, such as the dreamy, coma-like state that is entered when searching for grad schools during your first semester of college. Other paltry examples include needing to wipe down your fogged-up glasses and adjust your mask mid-aspiration and reconsidering everything after a single experience outside of the Hajim Realm, but there are two main peaks that occur in the emotional states of these scholars.

The first is the euphoria of attending a cluster-fulfillment class, which can be easily compared to the biological mechanisms experienced during mating. The second, and inarguably most impactful, is the knowledge that there is no BME course for first-year spring.

I feel that I have compiled enough information over the past week to give a general overview of this fascinating species and how those within it are adapting to the struggles that plague this semester. Their tale is one that I will carry with me for my fans' personal use.

Koh is a member of the class of 2024.

Gourds!

By Ethan Busch
HUMOR EDITOR

Last week, I wrote about pumpkins being out of fashion in November. In that article, I proposed replacing your properly placed but poorly timed decorative pumpkins with a perfectly practical alternative: acorn squash.

I received many letters, Google Sheets documents, and rocks with messages painted on them from excited readers who loved my piece. Some of them couldn’t wait for me to check my phone, so they threw their message through the window. A notable theme in the messages was that people were dissatisfied with my suggestion of acorn squash. They wanted more gourds.

"I, unfortunately, am no connoisseur of gourds, simply a common admirer."

So I asked a friend and gourd connoisseur, sophomore Gillian Reeder. Gill agreed with my recommendation of acorn squash, but prefers to eat it rather than look at it. She explained, "For purely decorative gourds I’m a big fan of Tennessee dancing gourds, and bi-color egg gourds."

Her recommendations for decorative squash are both small and delightful; they would do well in bowls on coffee tables or hidden around the house with little faces painted on them. Though I appreciated Gill’s help, I wanted to identify more gourds for my fans’ social use.

My first thought on how to find more gourds was Wikipedia. I started with the list of lists of lists. This is a rather self-explanatory page, and a good place to start for any search. This took me to the list of foods. Another aptly named Wiki page. This led me to the list of vegetables (for which there is a long and stringy Wiki page) and from there I found the pages for any search. This took me to the list of fruits, which finally led me to my ultimate goal: the list of gourds and squashes. The lesson learned? If you’re bored, I highly recommend Wikipedia lists.

Anyways, here are a few of my favorite gourds and squashes from the list. Calabash, also called Bottle Gourds, is one of the oldest domesticated crops. It is grown all over the world to eat and to use as… bottles. Shocking, I know.

Pattypan squash is a little green boi that people like to eat. I like it because it reminds me of the little purple pentapus from "Avatar: the Last Airbender." I promise I didn’t include this one just to reference the show.

Spaghetti squash, the favored squash of the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster, does not look like spaghetti from the outside. Spaghetti is long and stringy. Spaghetti squash is not, until you cut it open! Then it’s long and stringy, like spaghetti, or burnt hair.

I hope I have satisfied your solicitations of succulent, stunning, and superb squashes and gourds. If not, to gather greater gobs of good gourd information, check out the aforementioned list of gourds and squashes. Or talk to the campus's gourd connoisseur, Gillian Reader at gourds@campustimes.org.

Busch is a member of the class of 2023.