An Interview with New Title IX Coordinator Kate Nearpass

Kate Nearpass, senior counsel member for labor and employment at UR and key investigator during the Jaeger trials, has been named the new Title IX Coordinator and assistant vice president for Civil Rights in the Office of Equity and Inclusion.

The Campus Times recently talked to Nearpass about her new position and goals for Title IX and the Office of Equity and Inclusion at UR.

The merger of the Title IX Coordinator and OEI is a new but necessary step according to Nearpass. Back in August, federal regulations and rights were revised with two major changes affecting schools around the country: employees are now covered under the Title IX grievance process, and the threshold for a Title IX complaint has been changed.

Previously, Title IX investigated complaints filed by students against students. Complaints by or against employees, such as those filed against Florian T. Jaeger in 2016, were dealt with under policies outside the Title IX office. Now, charges filed by and/or against employees are also under Title IX, subject to both UR and federal policy.

However, the requirements a complaint must meet to fall under Title IX have become slightly stricter. Barring single events that create a "hostile environment," in which a student is denied access to equal education, all other complaints must now be both severe and pervasive to fall under the scope of Title IX, Nearpass said. Previously, a miscellaneous complaint had to be either severe or pervasive for Title IX to investigate.

"What that means is not every complaint of sexual misconduct is going to rise up to the level of going through the Title IX process," Nearpass said, emphasizing this decision did not come from UR. "But of course, the University wants to resolve all complaints of sexual misconduct, not only the ones that rise up to this very high level." She explained that there are other policies and processes in place to take complaints.

"For those complaints that fall short of that threshold, we now are going to use other mechanisms we have available to us, like our policy against discrimination and harassment, which was previously really thought of as an [exclusively] employee policy," Nearpass said. "That’s another way the employee and the student worlds are merging, and there is so much overlap that it did not make sense to be looking at them separately, because when you look at them separately you leave an opportunity for employees or students to get sort of lost in the mix."

Nearpass’s role in OEI will include oversight of these new policies and compliance areas such as Title VII (discrimination), affirmative action, and sexual misconduct resolution and investigation.

Students had mixed feelings about this year’s election. However, a common denominator among students interviewed for this article was their confusion over what SA does, their roles, and what they have accomplished.

"It’s hard to see concrete results for what people are working on," first-year Noor Akhter said. "Some students had trouble voting due to confusion over how to do so, and for a period of time, the link to vote was down on CCC. Students also expressed that they were unable to find a platform they were passionate enough about to vote for.

"To be honest, we didn’t have a platform that provided us with more information about the people, we just heard a lot of very generic statements about their promises," junior Mahmud Jumaev commented.

"Due to COVID-[19], I don’t think people were able to advertise as much," first-year Bonnie Dong said. "When you go onto social media and see all these different posts about the same thing and the same picture saying, ‘Vote for Me,’ it’s not like we’re going to take the time to read everyone’s platform."

It was mentioned during the interviews that some students received direct messages on Instagram from the Bothe-Sussman campaign imploring them to vote for them. While some of the students who received the message were not swayed by it, others simply felt unsatisfied.

"For me, it was honestly a turn-off," first-year Sabrina Terando commented.

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Leon Harvey Looks at Plant Proteins to Explain Evolutionary Quirks

By Hourra Ahmed
CAMPUS TIMES

Leon Harvey is a graduate student, McNair Scholar, and researcher studying Biochemistry at UR.

In 2018, Harvey graduated from Monroe Community College, where he developed an interest in biochemistry and molecular biology. Currently, he serves as a research assistant and leader in the Ghaemmaghami Lab, located in UR’s Biology Department in Hutchinson Hall.

Harvey’s research focuses on genetically engineered plant alcohol dehydrogenase (ADH) protein in Drosophila melanogaster, where he studied their propensity to aggregate under increasing temperatures.

His overall goal was to further understand an evolutionary concept known as balancing selection.

In balancing selection, a less beneficial variant of a gene persists in a species population due to a compensating advantage. Harvey explained, “We hypothesized that the less active variant of ADH persists in natural populations because of balancing selection, and [we] proposed that a less active variant of ADH is able to fold into a more stable conformation and is thus advantageous at higher temperatures that induce protein misfolding.”

Harvey also designed experiments testing the hypothesis that protein activity-stability tradeoff is a potential mechanism of balancing selection.

This was an interesting project because it was a relatively new concept. Harvey said, “To be part of a novel research and potentially bringing forth new knowledge is an exciting feeling.”

However, academia and research is not all roses and rainbows. Sometimes, it takes time for undergraduates to establish their footing when transitioning into the college lifestyle, where they are forced to learn how to manage newfound independence and responsibilities on their own. I have had a few obstacles in my academic life, and after reflecting on them, I noticed they had to do with my time management,” he said. “When I transferred from Monroe College to UR, I found that the course rigor at UR was manageable; however, the commitment was a lot faster than in high school. This caused a lot of stress and burnout in my first two semesters.” After talking to family and mentors, I learned to find joy in what I was learning by creating a time management system.

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‘While it was important to stay focused on my studies, it was also important to take breaks and reward myself by having fun,’ Harvey commented. “This helped a lot, because I found that I actually enjoyed what I was learning when it did not consume my entire life. As for time management, I still struggle with this every now and then, but I found the most effective solution is to document your entire week on a calendar. This really made me more aware of the actual time I have to complete assignments and has been the best solution for me.”

When asked how COVID-19 and impact ed his graduate education and research work in the Ghaemmaghami Lab, Harvey expressed that things had changed and how he adapted. “The transition to online learning has been difficult for a number of reasons,” Harvey said. “One, we no longer had the collaborative environment that motivated some of us. Most of us got around this by meeting in socially distant settings, but it was not an easy transition, nonetheless. Research had to be paused, however once safe, research continued with limited capacity.”

After graduating from UR, Harvey decided to pursue graduate school in Rochester for Biochemistry. Currently, he serves as a rotating student to help determine which lab to continue his graduate education in. When asked about advice he would give to students pursuing research, Harvey emphasized the importance of experiencing pitfalls.

“Whenever you experience setbacks in your research, that is the rite of passage. It is that you reflect and seek to always improve while maintaining your enthusiasm.”

Ahmed is a member of the Class of 2022.
Nearpass Talks Changes to Title IX

By Melanie Earle
FEATURES EDITOR

Senior Antoinette Nguyen, co-leader of Justice for Asian Americans (JFAA) saw the recent mass shooting that claimed the lives of eight Asian Americans in Atlanta, as more than a one-off incident.

"I think immediately I would say [I felt] a deep-seated sadness, and also with that comes a frustration and an anger about how this is not an isolated event," Nguyen said. "It represents and symbolizes decades [...] of oppression in America against Asian Americans."

Nguyen’s first thought was to call her family and friends, due to how close the act of violence hit to home. "I have a lot of family, they’re Vietnamese Americans who work in nail and hair salons," she said. "So quickly, I could have been hit if I have been my own family members, and that was just really hard to deal and reconcile with."

For Nguyen, the Atlanta shooting, various leaders from student organizations on campus were inspired to develop an online network to build solidarity between the different Asian and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities, both on campus and in the greater Rochester region. Founding members of JFAA included leaders from the Asian American Student Union, Spanish and Latinx Students Association, National Society of Black Engineers, and more.

Senior and co-leader of JFAA Sunnie Limson pointed to "a lot of fire and frustration" as the catalyst for JFAA.

One of JFAA’s main goals is to build solidarity between the different Asian and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities on campus. They want to offer healing and resources through discussion and education to help foster community and inclusivity between AAPI communities, while understanding that those communities are not homogeneous.

"It’s a matter of building solidarity within our own community and with other minority communities, because the Asian community is usually treated as a monolith, [which is] very inaccurate," junior and co-leader of JFAA Arnav Sharma said. "There are many different ethnic groups within singular countries, and then they are enveloped together — we all fill out the same bubble [on the census]. We do have a shared history and shared struggle within western countries and the United States especially, but at the same time we have our own cultural identities [...] It’s about supporting each other and our communities, building a Pan-Asian solidarity coalition.

JFAA pointed to a lack of response and support from UR over the increase in Asian American hate crimes over 2020 and felt that AAPI students should have been supported sooner.

Nearpass Talks Changes to Title IX

Nearpass said that the student community knew there was an interim Title IX coordinator and four investigators who have been working on EO and Title IX complaints.

"I want to make sure that the students understand that the commitment to this work has been high and that it will remain high," Nearpass said.

"I want to make sure that the students understand that the commitment to this work has been high and that it will remain high."

"We will continue to figure out the best way to serve students and employees [...] the most effective way, and the most trauma-informed way that we can.

Nearpass plans to work on educating the UR community about the Title IX/EO complaint process, to make sure the UR community understands how to report complaints, what will happen to the complaint, what the investigative process will look like, and what resources are available afterward.

"One thing I hear often is people feel fearful of coming to OEI with a complaint, because they don’t know what’s going to happen to it," Nearpass said. "I think the best way that OEI can show that complaint resolution processes are, it’s not just one process, there are a lot of things that we can do to get to an outcome that will be satisfying for a complainant."

One of Nearpass’s goals as coordinator is to begin working on education about the reporting process. She also hopes to increase the number of reports that are filed through the OEI reporting system.

"One thing I hear often is people feel fearful of coming to OEI with a complaint, because they don’t know what’s going to happen to it."
Hello everyone. In the weeks since we last spoke, I’ve been reflecting on a piece I wrote earlier this year about the cyclical nature of fashion in which I touched on how the early 2000s has made a full comeback. I’ve been thinking about it (and my obsession with the Y2K aesthetic) ever since, and it seems, the rest of the internet has as well.

Early 2000s fashion is all over the place — on social media, online shopping, in culture magazines. The makeup brand ColourPop recently released a Lizzie McGuire collection. Last week, I saw a woman at the grocery store wearing a “Simple Life” sweatshirt (Paris Hilton and Nicole Richie’s popular television show that ran from 2003 to 2007). And a few days ago, New York Magazine’s culture website The Cut published an article called “Why Will I Be Cool This Summer?”, by Safy-Hallan Farah. Among her predictions? Y2K and Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen.

The fact that Farah mentioned the Olsen twins, got me thinking about another facet of early 2000s culture that’s come to light recently, which is the vulturous nature of the paparazzi. While so much has changed in the world since the 2000s, the field of media coverage has stayed stagnant — female bodies are still mercilessly scrutinized by media publications. This relentless probing of female celebrities — and the high standard by which they are compared to their male co-stars — is not, by any means, a new phenomenon. But the emergence of the so-called “tabloid decade” came on the heels of a new, unprecedented obsession with celebrity culture and brought media to accessible new heights.

Last month, on the heels of their Britney Spears documentary, the New York Times published an article called “Lessons of the Day: Speaking of Britney... What About All Those Other Women?” in which columnists Callie Holtermann and Katherine Schulten describe normalizing the stereotypes about women that run rampant in media coverage — and in our own lives — throughout history. At one point in the article, they talk about the detrimental effect of the portrayal of young celebrities and refer to tabloid publicity as the “celebrity media machine.”

The Olsen twins are two distinct young targets of this media machine which, ultimately, led to their retreat from acting in 2004 and their official departure from the entertainment industry in 2014. Tabloids picked apart their bodies, their habits, and their lifestyle, pinning them against other female celebrities of the time. Mary-Kate in particular was thrown into the spotlight with rumors about weight loss due to a cocaine addiction — which, in reality, was the result of an eating disorder. The Olsen twins’ departure from the scene is just one example of the toxicity inflicted by the early 2000s media frenzy. Lindsey Lohan was relentlessly exploited by the media and was characterized as a drug-addicted, alcoholic craze by the paparazzi that followed her incessantly during the peak of her fame. Paris Hilton has come out in recent years to announce that her socialite party girl persona and voice — that low drawl in which she uttered her iconic catchphrase “that’s hot” — was actually a character she was using to satiate the image the tabloids had carved out for her.

As we’ve seen from the New York Times’ documentary, the absolute insanity of the paparazzi’s steadfast and ever-tightening grip on Britney Spears resulted in the deterioration of her mental health, and ultimately, her imprisonment in an unjust conservatorship under her father. Similarity, Amanda Bynes was pursued by the paparazzi for years until the tabloids’ obsession with both her mental state and her body resulted in a mental health downfall, a suspension of her acting career, and a complete departure from the entertainment scene.

There is a certain narrative expected of young women in America, and those who are unable to live up to such impossible expectations are immediately shunned by the double standard that scrutinizes women’s behavior more than men’s. The resurgence of the early 2000s in the past few years has illuminated the detrimental effects of the tabloid decade, but such behavior doesn’t stop there. America, and society at large, patrol women’s behavior and tells them what they can and cannot do. The double standard in the media is merely a reflection of the double standard we hold as citizens. While this may no longer be just in the grubby hands of the paparazzi, we can still see it in social media and all over the internet. Why are there so many rules around gender? Why can’t we just let people do their thing? I don’t know. Clearly, though, we can’t — or, at least, we haven’t been able to yet. While Y2K resurges in popularity, we have to keep our biases away.

Alger is a member of the Class of 2022.
Jeph Loeb and illustrator Tim Sale’s “Superman For All Seasons” as the beginning of my reevaluation of the hero, because as I vaguely recalled, “Superman For All Seasons” is a thoughtful, subversive, and even naive in nature, these qualities can still inspire idealism in me. Even though the unlikeliness of Superman grapples with the high expectations he places on himself, he eventually strives to do as much good as he can in the face of failure. When he inevitably becomes tortured by a loss he can’t overcome, he starts to question the myth of Superman. He begins to see himself as a man rather than a god. When I was younger, when my view of the world was far too idealistic for a world as dark as the one we live in today, Superman was the main target of this cynicism: to me, he was emblematic of naive optimism and reductionist American nationalism. His catchphrase is “truth, justice, and the American way,” for God’s sake.

My disdain for hero worship and disillusionment with the United States spurned me to revisit Superman as a character; I wanted to verify if my cynical view of him was truly representative of what he stands for as a superhero. I chose author Chris Silverman’s “Superman For All Seasons” as the beginning of my reevaluation of the hero, because as I vaguely recalled, “Superman For All Seasons” is a thoughtful, subversive, and even naive in nature, these qualities can still inspire idealism in me. Even though the unlikeliness of Superman grapples with the high expectations he places on himself, he eventually strives to do as much good as he can in the face of failure. When he inevitably becomes tortured by a loss he can’t overcome, he starts to question the myth of Superman. He begins to see himself as a man rather than a god. When I was younger, when my view of the world was far too idealistic for a world as dark as the one we live in today, Superman was the main target of this cynicism: to me, he was emblematic of naive optimism and reductionist American nationalism. His catchphrase is “truth, justice, and the American way,” for God’s sake.

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Next Year, SA Has More Opportunities Than Ever Before to Make Change

At the time of writing, UR’s Students’ Association (SA) election results have yet to be announced, not that it matters: Outside of 2024 Class Council and the Presidential ticket, all positions are uncontested. Normally, SA does and can do very little. Despite the lofty presidential platforms we skim every year, SA’s successes are usually very small, or at least don’t come from the internal political leanings of the candidates. In Donald Trump’s 2016 presidential campaign, the campaign benefited from free national airtime as Trump was exposed as a misogynist, a racist, and much worse. Each of these stories was lapped up by every news outlet from CNN to Fox News, and while each put their own spin on the incidents, Donald Trump was the most “clickable,” we get a biased view of reality. Will professors reinstate these policies moving forward?

Will tests continue to be delivered online? After getting tests, many have developed a preference for a format that leaves away from remote memorization and into conceptual demonstrations of learning. Will professors honor this, or do they continue with remote tests now that they’re allowed to?

Will the support systems from offices like Student Counseling Center, the Office of Student Affairs, and the Kneur Center support students using these new modes of learning, or will they instead continue with the old ways?

This misconstrued story is emblematic of a greater issue in reporting, particularly for TV news. American media has been deeply influenced by policy battles between activists, policy makers, and corporations. Plus, these media corporations have parent companies who push for stories that increase viewership and strengthen ratings. News stations bend to focus on the stories that get the most viewers. This makes it hard to be accurately reported and sensationalized. The best example of this is science reporting.

One poignant example of this is the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced Americans to become more familiar with the science behind infectious diseases. For example, when the CDC released guidelines to prevent the spread of coronavirus, there was an onslaught of news stories focusing on the changing conditions. Stations could get more viewers by discussing the information in that format? Will professors’ office hours? How much should in-person support systems return?

There are a lot more questions than answers when it comes to the differences between last year, this year, and next year. The student body, and the administration, will look to the recently elected student government to help find those answers.

This year’s ballot was so small that there weren’t enough candidates to fill all the empty seats. There are a lot of possible reasons for this. Despite efforts of club leaders and the Student Programming Board, the pandemic still decreased exposure to campus politics, meaning there are fewer interested people to fill open spots.

Relatedly, many students haven’t even been to Rochester yet, or haven’t been here in over a year. Even if you wholeheartedly intend to be involved, it’s hard to maintain a consistent interest in campus life if you haven’t been living here.

It’s not necessarily an intentional shift away from student government, but an unfortunate hindering one. The very reason students are less involved — the pandemic — is a reason why now more than ever SA must have complete and qualified representation. SA has the potential to make unprecedented changes during the next school year, but to do that, we need the people in charge to mean it when they say they care. And that’s pretty much impossible when we don’t have enough candidates to pick.
Corporations Need to do More to Protest Georgia's New Voting Law

By Sarah Woodams STAFF WRITER

If you haven’t already heard about the Election Integrity Act of 2021, Georgia recently enacted new voting laws problematic enough to make President Biden call them “Jim Crow in the 21st century.” This is coming from a guy who lived through the tail end of the original Jim Crow era, so I think I’ll take his word for it.

Many lawsuits claim that parts of the Act are discriminatory and unconstitutional. Dozens of corporations based in Georgia, including Coca-Cola, Delta Air Lines, UPS, Home Depot, and the Atlanta Falcons, have all issued statements against the law and criticisms of some kind, citing concerns about “equitable voting access.” Major League Baseball (MLB) has even decided to move its All-Star Game out of Atlanta in response to the law.

None of these companies are overreacting. To get an idea of just how seriously this new law threatens Georgian democracy, here’s a sampling of its worst parts:

Despite no evidence of increased voter fraud with mail-in ballots during the 2020 election, there are now stricter voter ID laws for mail-in ballots, making this voting method unnecessarily more difficult.

Mail-in stations, like the two previously used in Fulton County, are banned except in cases of emergency. Fulton County also happens to be the Georgian county with the most Black residents and where 72.6% of residents voted for Biden in 2020. Coincidence? I think not.

The law prohibits "anyone except poll workers from handing out water to voters in line, and outdoor[s] passing out food and water to voters within 150 feet of the building that serves as a poll, inside a polling place or within 25 feet of any voter standing in line." Did giving people food and water cause voter fraud? As long as the food and water bottles aren’t labeled with endorsements of a political stance on something that benefits more than their wallets. I just hope these companies’ next step is a little more substantial.

Woodruff is a member of the Class of 2022.

My Plea to You: Get Vaccinated

By Samuel Gerecke CONTRIBUTING WRITER

I got my COVID-19 vaccination last Thursday at Strong Memorial Hospital. Conveniently, the University spared me time. For six messages telling me that I (and everyone else in the school) was eligible to schedule a vaccine appointment. To appease my crippling needle phobia, I decided to get Johnson & Johnson’s single dose vaccine to avoid a second appointment and a second jab.

Getting the vaccine was probably the easiest medical appointment I’ve ever had.

That night, however, the vaccine absolutely kicked my ass. I’ve heard a variety of stories from different people about the severity of their reactions, but I was having a bad time. For the next 24 hours, I was achy, had a slight fever, and suffered a pounding headache.

I felt awful. But I’d do it again in a heartbeat.

The reason I’m so enthusiastic about getting vaccinated saves lives. Neither the CDC nor the WHO know what percentage of the population needs to be vaccinated in order to achieve herd immunity against COVID-19. But in the case of other common viruses, we typically need around 95% to 99% of the population to be vaccinated, meaning that people who are eligible to get the vaccine have a moral obligation to do so.

I have every reason to believe that I don’t need the vaccine. I’m a healthy young adult with a low probability of contracting the virus, and an even lower probability of being severely afflicted if I do get it. I don’t have a job that puts me at a high risk, nor do I have any obligations that require my in-person presence. Despite all that (and my fear of needles), I still got the vaccine.

There is no excuse. Get vaccinated. Gerecke is a member of the Class of 2022.

A Hug on a Plate

By MUSKAA N VASANDAN STAFF WRITER

When you live miles away from home for the better part of the year, it’s normal to experience bouts of homesickness. This is something that us college kids often go through—especially during the holidays. So, what to do? What’s the quickest, fastest, and most effective way to cure homesickness?

The best way, I think, is to indulge in a plate of food that reminds you of what you’re served at the dinner table back home.

Growing up, I despised cooking. I thought it was way too much work and needlessly messy.

It could be the simplest of things—maybe a mac and cheese your mom makes. Or it could be the most elaborate curry that’s made only for the dinner table back home.

In my first two years at Rochester, I tried every Indian restaurant in the city and all of the microwavable Indian meals at Hillsdale, but, after a month, nothing really stood out.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I ended up going back home to India and stayed there for the fall semester. Like anybody else during months of isolation and with absolutely nothing to do, I turned to TikTok and YouTube. I just had to keep my idle brain occupied. I was sucked into the world of the homemade dalgona coffee. TikTok tortillas, cloud bread, mug cakes—I did it all.

Cooking was no longer cumbersome when I had so much time on my hands, and I was in love with the end result every single time. The satisfaction I got from a bite of my own food was immeasurable. Eventually, I learned how to make my favorite home-cooked meals too, and cooking finally became something I genuinely enjoyed.

When the time came to return to Rochester this spring, I was relieved and comforted knowing I wouldn’t have to go back to those microwavable meals from Hillsdale. Eating food that I actually made has been having grace throughout my week. Now, when I’m eating something so easy to feel low, and when it’s so difficult to go out and socialize, good food has lifted me up every day. Cooking is an essential life skill, because sometimes all you need is a hug on a plate.

Vasandan is a member of the Class of 2022.
The University’s Tone Deaf Response to Burnout

By Rachel Breining
STAFF WRITER

I don’t think I have to preface this piece with a definition of burnout. Almost all of us are experiencing it — that exhausting feeling like you’re constantly running but not actually going anywhere. Like a treadmill you’ve been on for a year and a month now.

Administration keeps throwing the word around, along with several other nouns that might make them look sympathetic to our situation. The most recent tactics have been particularly offensive, though. I’m sure some of you have noticed the brightly colored posters and Instagram posts. Let’s talk specifically about why these efforts aren’t just unhelpful, but actively mocking the issues students are facing.

The Orange Poster
“Ughhh.” isn’t exactly a good descriptor of what you’re trying to advertise. It just seems like a lame attempt at relating to the youths. It continues: “total isolation is a choice.” Um, ouch? It’s a pandemic. Feeling isolated, or physically being isolated, are very real, serious, and sometimes unavoidable consequences of a deadly pandemic. Such a general statement is a terrible way to address it.

They even go on to recommend: Group counseling vent sessions (not exactly what everyone is looking for, since you’re likely to spend most of that time listening to stranger’s problems), physically moving spaces (as if it’s possible for many people to get off campus regularly), and signing up for CCC events (most of which are either over Zoom or a “Take and Make”).

The language of the orange poster dumps all the responsibility on us, phrasing issues of isolation as a personal shortcoming from students who aren’t trying hard enough to connect.

The Purple Poster
“‘Oof. Right?’ That’s what the kids would say, right? We, the administration, understand what it’s like to have deadline after deadline with no pause, no interaction with your professors, and nothing but asynchronous lectures. To have no idea what kind of job market you’ll be going into. It makes you feel, ‘oof,’ right?” It’s like being talked down to by a robot. Why would they think such a dismissive title followed up with the same list of mediocre resources they regularly share would make us feel heard or supported in any way?

They even go on to recommend: Group counseling vent sessions (not exactly what everyone is looking for, since you’re likely to spend most of that time listening to stranger’s problems), physically moving spaces (as if it’s possible for many people to get off campus regularly), and signing up for CCC events (most of which are either over Zoom or a “Take and Make”).

The language of the orange poster dumps all the responsibility on us, phrasing issues of isolation as a personal shortcoming from students who aren’t trying hard enough to connect.

The Green Poster
“Yeah...$#!%” is exactly a good descriptor of what you’re trying to advertise. It just seems like a lame attempt at relating to the youths. It continues: “Well shit, pandemics happen.” Sure — once in a century. At UR, maybe one other cohort ever has had to deal with a full-fledged pandemic. Why are they trying to play off a once-in-a-lifetime crisis so lightly? Extend a little sympathy beyond telling us we aren’t using the Basic Needs Hub enough. Your eye-catching censored curse word is way too blasé.

This Instagram Post
Again, they’re making students responsible for their own burnout and stress, when it was never our fault. Switching study spaces isn’t going to change the fact that so many of us have multiples more work and no set lecture schedule. The smiley face mocks me with its smugness.

These resources could potentially help. But they’re much less effective when admin shifts the blame for burnout and pandemic-related stress onto students through dismissive and trivializing language. According to admin, it’s up to the suffering student to actually do something about the problem that admin helped create, while admin feigns empathy. Don’t fall for these lame excuses for outreach.

Breining is a member of the Class of 2023.

Write for the Campus Times!
opinions@campustimes.org
“Got Lamps?” My Lampstagram, a Chronology

By Isabella Mihok
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Mon, Apr 19, 2021

By Isabella Mihok

Even since pre-pandemic times, students at the University have been searching for and creating new ways to connect with one another. Enter salacious social media accounts like the facebook page Overheard at Rochester, which, in terms of journalistic integrity and accurate quoting, was highly questionable. Keeping up with the trend, @ur_confessions_secrets, is an Instagram account where UR students can anonymously ask for help on homework, complain about the administration, and even answer polls about anal sex!

The wildly popular @ur_confessions_secrets (which has garnered over 2,500 followers since it’s first confession post in December 2020) and @ur_loved585 (with over 1,100 followers since November 2020) are consistently the talk of the collegiate town. Whispers can also be heard through the halls of Rush Rhees about the less popular, but slightly more niche, @URVirgins, @URVirginsbutnotbychoice, @URTimbs, and @URReahis.

‘As an attention seeker who yearns for fame, I have been interested in creating my own niche.’

As an attention seeker who yearns for (at least campus-wide) fame, I have been interested in creating my own niche UR Instagram account for some time now. And with pandemic boredom bringing about more and more accounts, I figured it was now or never. Seeing as I’m not particularly interested in anything of substance, I landed on the bright idea of @URLamps, the new designated spot for all UR students’ lighting fixture content! To get ready for my new venture into this domain, and to prepare myself for the inevitable stardom that was to come, I decided that I needed to consult an expert.

I was lucky enough to (anonymously) interview the lovely admin of @ur_loved585, an account dedicated to spreading love and positivity via anonymous submission. They had much to say about their own success, as well as some commentary on why they think this trend has become so popular.

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First, I wanted to know how this account got so successful. If I was going to achieve the kind of accolades and notoriety I was looking for, I needed some insight from the best. The admin of @ur_loved585 attributes their success to the account being “something that was long overdue!” Just like my lamp idea! They continued, “You have all these confession pages, but none of them specifically focus on having an outlet for your crushes or expressing appreciation for your loved ones. Also who doesn’t love secret admirer vibes?” I do love secret admirer vibes! Even more so than lamps! Dammit, why didn’t I think of this idea before you, @ur_loved585?!"

While my reason for starting my account is sheer narcissism, @ur_loved585’s reason was slightly more wholesome, stating, “I believe that we don’t spend enough time to unapologetically and loudly appreciate our loved ones. It’s definitely one of the more ‘little things,’ but the impact is unfathomably large!”

If little things are what the people of Rochester are needing in these dark, dark times, then my lighting content would certainly get the job done, right?

‘If this is what the people of Rochester need in these dark times, then my lighting content would certainly get the job done, right?’

Before venturing into the world of Instagram account management, I needed to learn what I was getting myself into. When I asked what the hardest part of running such an account was, @ur_loved585 mentioned “just keeping up with notes sometimes. I try to remind myself that it’s okay to pace myself and no one is mad at me for being inactive.” Seeing as I refuse to put maximum effort into anything, I knew that I would not experience similar struggles.

‘No idea is too crazy.

Having learned about the difficulties and inspiration behind their account, all that was left to ask @ur_loved585 was tips to ensure that I would become the most popular account on campus. They suggested that I “really pay attention to what people respond to and just interact with them as often as possible!” A page is nothing without UR students. Always remember that whatever you’re doing should be geared towards the students… ALSO: No idea is too crazy. If you want to create an account for people to submit notes to their friends about how much they’ve pooped that day, do it.”

No idea is too crazy, says the anonymous, omniscient presence of @ur_loved585? Well, we would see about that! And so, @URLamps was born. The concept? Simple. I would accept submissions via direct message of any and all lighting fixtures from around campus and post them. While I started out beaming with confidence, I must admit that my lamp dreams were dimmed pretty quickly. Maybe I should have gone with the poop thing, because apparently, nobody cares about lamps.

My Lampstagram Timeline:

Day One:
My first step was to follow as many people from UR as possible and see how many followers I could get back. Day one went well on the follower-count front. (Not to brag: 61 followers)

I posted my first “submission,” which consisted of a grainy photo of a street lamp outside of Todd Union that I took approximately three minutes after creating the account. I realize this may be cheating, but I figured that this was allowed for my initial submission (just to get the account started… to illuminate it, if you will).

Day Two:
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Day Three:
I was already losing steam. Still no submissions. I had to bribe my roommate with Starbuck’s to send in a photo of the Blue Light outside of our building. I posted it, and received a real comment from a real UR student, who said “holy shit that light is stunning.” It lit up my day.

Day Four:
No Submissions

Day Five:
I am a failure

My Great Big Lampstagram Experience was a total flop. I dropped the bulb, big time, and it shattered all over the ground. Maybe I didn’t put in enough effort, or maybe my dream of being in the limelight clouded my judgement, but either way, the content wasn’t doing it for the people of UR. My not-so-near brush with Instagram stardom left me feeling light-headed and disoriented, much like the overhead lighting in iZone (that was, sadly, not featured on the page).

Instagram may not end up being my claim to fame. But it’s fine, I guess I’ll just keep submitting wild accusations about myself on @ur_confessions_secrets!

Mihok is a member of the Class of 2023.
Best Places to Have a Semi-Public Breakdown

By Sara Vechinski
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

We live in an interesting time, and with every day bringing new reasons to stress, we no longer need to wonder if people are lying when they say they’re fine. We know they’re not fine, and neither are we.

“That being said, crying in the middle of Fauver Stadium might not be the vibe. If it is for you, go ahead!”

Sooner or later we all reach a breaking point, and who doesn’t want an audience for that breakdown?

That being said, crying in the middle of Fauver Stadium might not be the vibe. If it is for you, go ahead! Make that breakdown a spectacle! However, if you’re looking for a more controlled population, here are the top five places for a semi-public breakdown.

1: Rush Rhees Library

While Rush Rhees has many great spots to break-down in front of a small number of people, it’s so overdone that people probably won’t even notice you’re crying. They’re probably having a mental breakdown themselves. I mean, have you ever been in there during finals week? Try to find someone who isn’t crying.

2: Your Zoom Room

While likely half those cold, unfeeling, faceless black squares are hiding equally apathetic and dis-tant people, they’re going to be at least a few people paying attention. Instructors are always begging you to turn your camera on, so show them what’s going on behind the screen. On the bright side, they probably won’t ask anymore.

3: University Health Services (UHS)

“My favorite is walking from UHS to Sue B. I cry and shut it all down. Catharsis is real and it is great.”

Vechinski is a member of the Class of 2024.

Misadventures in egg hunting

By Jeremy Reguer
STAFF WRITER

Someone at the Rochester Easter egg hunt swapped the normal easter eggs with real eggs, and the man to blame is event organizer Mr. Tom. To get the full picture, we have to go back to the start, before it went frittata control. I don’t know how to call someone an intern, so we have to have a quote from him.

“The plan was simple. All we needed to do was go to the supermarket, get some fake eggs, hide them, and the event would be over easy,” Tom said.

Needless to say, once the students found out about the mishap, there were dozens of problems. The swap had some students shellshocked. Others were hatching all sorts of nefarious plots.

One student crowned himself king of the eggs, demanded to be called “Benedict Cumberbatch,” and covered himself in egg.

The students came up with an egg toss game, where one student would throw an egg to their partner, who would hatch it. Of course, some students tried to beat the system and be their own partners. Students fried and fried, but no pair of partners could get it just white and beat the self-partner strategy. After students realized that being your own partner was too good, they decided to keep the event going, giving the students free range.

Eventually, Tom decided un oeuf was enough, and shut it all down.

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