

ELIMINATING STUDY STRESS

Final exam study tips on
page 7

NEWS

Residence fee reactions

TRU students staying on campus feel disrespected by new fees

04

NEWS

Violence in Mexico

Following the death of 'El Mencho,' cartels in Mexico cause chaos

05

ARTS AND CULTURE

Transformative art

Local TRU artist has work displayed during exhibition

08

SPORTS

Top of the pyramid

The WolfPack cheerleading team continue their winning ways

12



ARTS AND CULTURE

Saira Bano isn't afraid to talk politics, but there's more to her than that

09

ON THE COVER



An Amaryllis flower soaks up the sun during a calm spring morning at TRU.

Robert McAlaster/The Omega

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SPORTS

After a tough season, the women's volleyball team can stand proudly

11

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SPORTS

From TRU student to radio broadcasting producer

14

Geopolitical tensions cause market chaos

The United State's and Israel's war with Iran is causing major issues worldwide

ELLEN KAZEMBE STAFF WRITER

The ripple effects of tensions arising from conflict between the United States-Israeli forces and Iran are hard to ignore as they have resulted in rising oil prices, risk of recession and an increase in the cost of living in Canada.

BMO economists, including Managing Director and Chief Economist Douglas Porter, noted that there are risks that could extend the conflict, leading to disruptions to key shipping routes and potential damage to regional energy infrastructure in Iran and other Gulf countries, adding that these factors could keep markets on edge for weeks.

Laura Lamb, chair of TRU's economics department, emphasized that much of the concern centers on the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most important oil shipping routes. Roughly 20 per cent of global oil supply passes through the narrow waterway, making the region a critical artery for international energy markets.

Because such a large share of global oil moves through the strait, even minor disruptions can ripple across global supply chains. Energy markets were quick to react to the instability.

"Oil prices have been volatile, and the price of crude oil has risen as well as the price at the retail gas pumps in Canada," Lamb said. "For instance, earlier this month, the national average gas price in Canada jumped

14 per cent in one week."

Movement along major shipping routes has been disrupted, with vessels being forced to take alternative paths. Attacks on key ports and energy infrastructure have further strained an already pressured supply system.

"Consider that gasoline, diesel and jet fuel are made from crude oil, thus the prices of those products will also rise, affecting prices of commercial transportation and airline industries," Lamb said, adding that many oil industry experts expect prices to continue climbing if tensions escalate.

Canada's position as an oil-producing country may soften the economic impact compared with nations that rely heavily on imported energy, BMO economists, including Porter, emphasized.

"Since Canada is an energy producer, some sectors will benefit from higher oil prices," Lamb said. "For instance, higher oil prices result in higher profits in the energy sector as well as government royalties and tax revenue associated with oil production."

Still, Canada remains exposed to global energy fluctuations.

"In sum, the Canadian economy is vulnerable but less vulnerable than oil-importing countries," Lamb added.

Economic sanctions are often imposed by national governments and

international bodies as an alternative to military action in times of conflict.

"[Sanctions] often fail to produce direct behavioural change and may generate unintended consequences," Lamb said. "The humanitarian concern is that the sanctions can cause hardship for civilian populations rather than the ruling elite."

History shows that sanctions can have mixed outcomes. International sanctions targeting Iran's oil exports and financial system helped push negotiations that led to the 2015 nuclear agreement, Lamb noted. But other sanctions have been less effective.

"U.S. sanctions on Cuba since the 1960s caused economic hardship but failed to produce major political change, illustrating how sanctions may impose costs without achieving their intended policy goals," Lamb said.

The focus now shifts to the present-day context, where ongoing developments continue to shape potential outcomes and influence how the situation may evolve in the coming weeks.

"[It is] difficult to say if current sanctions in Iran will result in their desired effect," Lamb said. "There is some economic impact on Iran, but their effectiveness in changing government behaviour during the current conflict is unclear."

A key global shipping

route has been disrupted, limiting the flow of oil, gas and other essential exports while placing additional strain on supply chains.

"When global conflicts threaten energy markets or supply chains, governments typically respond with a combination of emergency, fiscal, and structural measures designed to stabilize prices, secure supply and protect the economy," she said.

One recent response by several governments has been the release of oil from strategic reserves, a move Lamb believes is intended to offset rising energy costs and stabilize global markets.

"The International Energy Agency (IEA) and its 32 member countries recently agreed to release roughly 400 million barrels of oil from emergency reserves, the largest coordinated release in history," said Lamb.

On March 22, President Trump said that the United States would be giving Iran two days to open the Strait of Hormuz or face attacks on its power plants. The following morning, however, Trump said he would extend the deadline by an additional five days. In the wake of the announcement, oil prices dipped while the stock market rebounded slightly, only to rise again the next day. For now, rising costs remain a key concern, with households likely to feel the impact across everyday spending.

Students frustrated by new residence fees



Student residents say they are frustrated and let down by the upcoming increase, suggesting that the value they pay for what they receive is disproportionate

SENNA ROCK CONTRIBUTOR

On Jan. 12, 2026, TRU Housing sent an email to current residents informing them of a fee increase effective September 2026. The email stated that the increase is due to operating costs and ongoing maintenance of on-campus housing.

While many of the students residing at TRU may have been aware of the increase beforehand, the news was still met with shock and concern.

Recently, residents of North Tower spoke on the issue. Some described their feelings towards this increase as frustration, sadness, unhappiness and confusion.

"I am not very happy, and I am questioning if I want to come back here," Chanel Lopez said.

At odds, some student critics say, are the fee increases and TRU's commitment to affordable housing. According to TRU's housing website, "TRU is committed to providing affordable and accessible housing through a combination of direct housing options, financial support, and affordability assessments." Some residents feel this statement is being undermined by the upcoming fee increase, prompting questions about whether the increase can be justified.

Currently, the rate for a one-bedroom suite in the Coyote Den is \$10,300

per academic year, while two-bedroom suites or apartments range from \$9,560 to \$10,160 per student. In contrast, for the upcoming 2026-27 academic year, a one-bedroom suite in Coyote Den will cost \$10,810, while two-bedroom accommodations in the North Tower and East Village will range from \$10,035 to \$10,060 per student, respectively.

Residents were asked if they believe the current quality of residence life reflects the price they are paying. Those who responded said no, suggesting there remains a mismatch between the price they pay and the quality of their accommodations. A common concern among several residents was the condition of the dorm kitchens.

"We don't have ovens, for example, in our kitchens, which is like a huge thing you would get in an apartment building," said Kalli Krehbiel, a North Tower resident.

Residents find it hard to justify paying this upcoming increase when they are not given a full kitchen, which is likely something they would get in an apartment or a basement suite.

"If students are expected to pay an increased rate, the amenities should improve as well," Krehbiel said.

There are common kitchens in the building that residents are welcome to use, but according

to North Tower resident Sarah Prestmo, they're not often convenient.

"Every time I have gone to the communal ones, [they're] always full," Prestmo said, explaining that scheduling conflicts make it difficult for residents who need an oven to cook their meals.

Another concern raised was the rules that come with living in residence, which Prestmo called "unnecessary."

Some residents pointed to restrictions on visitors and check-ins by resident advisors, finding such rules overly restrictive. These rules, students say, require visitors to be checked in. Additionally, rules concerning restricted hours and times during the semester – where residents are not permitted to have visitors – have also been instituted. This puts limits on social interactions, which are very important for students. Residents have complained, finding the practice irritating and unnecessary, with frequent check-ins from resident advisors viewed as excessive by many. Residents argue that check-ins reduce independence of living on their own, and at times serve little purpose.

"You're living on your own, and they make sure you're responsible for everything, but then they are constantly checking in," Prestmo said.

TRU Housing is home to many domestic and international students, coming from all over

the world. With costs for international students rising, those who decide to live in residence are now having to pay higher fees as well. International students already face higher costs, as they pay higher tuition rates to attend a Canadian university. This is discouraging for many of these students.

The convenience of on-campus housing is what makes it appealing to so many students. All three residence buildings are located within walking distance to classes, grocery stores, restaurants and more. The increase has now left students debating whether the location is worth paying the higher cost.

Looking ahead, some residents have said they plan to live on campus for one more year and then will look at other options, including moving to off-campus housing or, in some of the more extreme cases, returning to their homes and finishing their degrees online to try to help manage the rising costs of university. Other residents have said they will seek alternative living options for September 2026.

"I don't plan to live in residence next year, especially since this increase has happened. I will be seeking either an apartment-style building or a basement suite just because they are cheaper options now," Krehbiel said.



Cartel mayhem in Jalisco

LUIS ZABLAH STAFF WRITER

In the last decade, Mexico has had a prominent cartel presence across the country, the most notable of which is El Cártel Jalisco Nueva Generación (CJNG), which emerged around 2010 and quickly expanded into one of Mexico's most powerful criminal groups. The CJNG built its reputation through extreme violence and military-style tactics, often carrying heavy weapons and committing coordinated attacks. The group is known for trafficking fentanyl, methamphetamine and cocaine. Operating in many Mexican states as well as internationally, the organization was led by the ruthless kingpin Nemesio Oseguera Cervantes, also known as El Mencho, for whom the United States offered a US\$10 million bounty for information leading to his capture.

As the news spread and violence unfolded across many states, The Omega spoke with political science student Emilio Figueroa to understand how young Mexicans are feeling.

"It is important because he was the most wanted person in Mexico. But at the same time, it's not as important as it sounds,

because he's probably going to get replaced by someone else," Figueroa said.

On Feb. 22, El Mencho was killed by Mexican federal forces. Military and intelligence forces located his hideout in Tapalpa, Jalisco, after tracking down a romantic connection. The whole operation involved Mexico's army and National Guard, with strategic and intelligence support from the United States government. According to the Associated Press, authorities described the mission as a targeted intelligence-based operation. The confrontation led to a gunfight, where El Mencho was wounded and later died on the way to a hospital.

As the news of his death rolled out, violence erupted across Mexico almost immediately, with cartel members setting fires, blocking highways and attacking security forces in multiple states. Roads were blocked with burning vehicles in coordinated arson attacks reported in at least six states. According to Euronews, Mexico went into high alert, suspending various public operations while airlines temporarily cancelled flights to parts of Jalisco amid the chaos. Additionally, The

Guardian reported that the cartel's revenge appeared to be organized, suggesting the CJNG maintained order even with their leader's death.

"To be honest, it was somewhat expected," Figueroa said. "Previously in Mexico, we had something called El Culiacanazo, which was when one of the sons of El Chapo was detained; they did the same thing in Culiacan. It was expected that if they killed the kingpin of the cartel, this was going to happen again."

According to ABC7, at least 25 National Guard members were killed in gunfights and clashes across Jalisco and other states. As of Feb. 23, the total number of casualties exceeded 70, including security forces, suspected cartel members and even civilians. Additionally, the military and National Guard have confirmed many arrests of suspected cartel members in connection with the violence and chaos.

To many across the globe, the news that an influential cartel kingpin had been killed was shocking, as were the cartel's violent responses.

"When events like this happen, it makes you think that Mexico is not getting

safer. It is a beautiful country, but corruption and cartels are getting way too big," Figueroa said, expressing that violence has reshaped his view of the country's future.

What does this mean for Mexico? The death of such a prominent criminal figure like El Mencho has created uncertainty over cartel leadership, raising questions about who would take control of the CJNG. Al Jazeera reports that analysts warn of a potential power vacuum or fragmentation within the cartel, which could lead to further instability rather than immediate peace. Mexico has been fighting the cartel in the weeks following his death, deploying thousands more troops to Jalisco in an attempt to stabilize the situation. The Federal Government of Mexico has framed the whole operation as a major blow to organized crime; however, some past cartel operations in Mexico have led to short-term spikes in violence.

"It is just an ongoing cycle," Figueroa said. "This is not a new chapter. Unless the Mexican government actually starts going after criminals and treating them like what they are, this is not going anywhere."

Venezuelan student perspectives

Venezuelan students offer their thoughts regarding recent developments in their country

DOMENICA RANDICH STAFF WRITER

In Venezuela, there are what the citizens call “presos políticos” (political prisoners). This term refers to those Venezuelans who speak out against their government and are taken to prisons or torture centres. Some of the interviewees’ family members and friends are at risk of being captured if they reveal their identities. For this reason, pseudonyms have been used in this article.

How was the President of the United States able to intervene in Venezuelan territory without outraging most citizens? In this Latin American country, there has been an ongoing conflict between the government and its citizens, and The Omega has not only documented key landmarks but also contacted four Venezuelans living in Kamloops to share their thoughts on the situation.

On Jan. 3, United States forces crossed into Venezuela with the stated goal of capturing President Nicolás Maduro. They struck strategic targets in Caracas, the capital, and the operation ended with Maduro’s capture.

“I’m scared for the people that are still in Venezuela, because even though Maduro is out, it is only the surface of a whole iceberg; a regime...” said Sofia, a student who had to immigrate with her family when the protests became inhumane.

Exceeding Saudi Arabia’s oil reserves, Venezuela has relied on its petroleum to sustain its economy for a long time. When global oil prices declined in the 1980s, the country faced an ongoing economic crisis. Subsequent

presidents sought to undo this reliance, and in 1989, former President Carlos Andrés Pérez raised the country’s market prices.

Three years later, a military group – with Hugo Chávez among them – attempted a coup d’état. Though he and the officers were sent to prison, Venezuelans did not forget Chávez because he spoke for them. This is how, after being released in 1994 and studying politics alongside former Cuban President Fidel Castro, he was elected president of Venezuela in 1999.

Pedro, another interviewee who worked in the petroleum industry, remembered Chávez’s actions.

“As time passed, the parliamentary elections were due, and Chávez’s party won,” he says. “Later, they chose the Supreme Court of Justice and won, too ... Then the oil strike happened in 2002; he took advantage and fired 80 per cent of the people working in Petróleos de Venezuela, PDVSA [Petroleum of Venezuela] because they joined the oil strike.”

From then on, his plans for what he called the Bolivarian Revolution resulted in public debt, corruption, expropriations of the public and private companies, censored press and more.

After Chávez’s death in 2013, oil prices declined again under his pupil’s command. That pupil’s name is Nicolás Maduro. Given that Venezuela’s economy did not allow for more petroleum extraction, the government printed more money.

Contrary to international opinions, the four interviewees agreed that their focus is not on the petroleum

President Trump takes, because the government has been selling it to China, Russia and other countries for relatively low prices.

Both Sofia and Pedro expressed that Venezuela’s history must be known to understand why it is not significant who comes for their aid, “Internationally, it is always alarming when one country attacks another and kidnaps its leader... But if you come here and see our history, you’ll get why a Venezuelan would say, ‘Take him, it doesn’t matter.’”

Around 2015, protests, which Venezuelans called *guarimbas*, began in earnest and intensified with time. According to the interviewees, this was the worst time for Venezuela because people were silenced and killed by the government and its military forces.

“A moment comes when the call for protests tires you. The dead were dead, and the police who killed them weren’t put in jail ... This happened in 2017, 2018, when Venezuelans emigrated massively,” Pedro said.

Years later, the presidential election took place in 2024. Edmundo González and María Corina Machado ran against Maduro with the support of the countries they visited on a diplomatic tour. Carlos, another interviewee, recalls that most Venezuelans were celebrating in the streets even before the announcement had been made, while Maduro talked about the possibility of a bloodbath. The opposition party lost.

Many issues unfolded from the presidential election through the end of

2025, but one event proved unexpected—María Corina was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. In a symbolic and very public show of appreciation, Corina shared it with President Donald Trump, much to the chagrin of the Norwegian Nobel Committee and the Norwegian Nobel Institute.

Though many view the relationship between Edmundo’s party and the United States government as unexpected, the Americans had been speaking up about Venezuela before Barack Obama took office. But a turning point came in 2014 to 2016, when Congress approved and extended a law that allowed targeted sanctions on Venezuelan officials. Obama’s 2015 executive order put those sanctions into effect, focusing on human rights and democracy, a move later followed by his successor, President Joe Biden. Trump also cited the same themes, but his approach hit harder through financial restrictions.

As for the future of Venezuela, most described the situation as a cancer that has to be removed entirely to finally get the liberty they’ve been fighting for.

Even though it will take time, some of them hope to go back.

“Five years from now, I think things will change. Five to 10 years for it to be realistic ... I mean, there is nothing like your home,” said Juan, who came to study in Canada in hopes of a better future.

Those who had to leave are now thinking of the possibilities they did not have before: studying, working and living without fear of being abducted.



How to cram for that exam

If final exams stress you TF out, these tips could work for you

ROBERT MCALASTER/THE OMEGA

OLIVIA DEAN ARTS AND CULTURE EDITOR

For many, the impending arrival of final exams can seem daunting. Whether you've just entered university or are eager to graduate, there is always room for more learning, and you may be surprised to discover that acing tests is easier than expected. Backed by research from scholars in motivation psychology, the best way to study is through inward reflection and mindset change.

Researchers suggest that the key to successful learning is not limited to simple repetition but rather engaging with information from a place of curiosity. This tip may elicit eye rolls, but one of the most effective study methods is to depart from memorization and rather ask, "Could I explain this as my professor would?"

According to researchers in cognitive science, retrieval practice is a useful method for replacing active recall with the retrieval of test material from long-term memory. This method employs active engagement in understanding information,

extending much further than colour-coordinated notes or letting your eyes glaze over a screen for a third reread.

Now, how does one adopt retrieval practice into studying for an exam? We're glad you asked. It may seem fairly intuitive, but the brain organizes bits of information into what cognitive researchers call a schema, which can be thought of like a mind map. As you consider the relationships and associations between each item, you'll begin to understand how the ideas all work together. The trick with retrieval practice is to ask yourself questions or clarify main points as you continue, which strengthens the cognitive pathways necessary in order to retrieve information for the test.

Equally important is how you approach your own ability to succeed, which is lovingly referred to as a locus of control. Students with an internal locus of control believe their performance is shaped by their own actions. On the other hand, those who adopt an external locus of

control see outcomes as unavoidable or as a matter of luck and environmental circumstances. Here's the first quiz: what locus of control is associated with strong academic performance? If you said an internal locus of control, then you are absolutely correct.

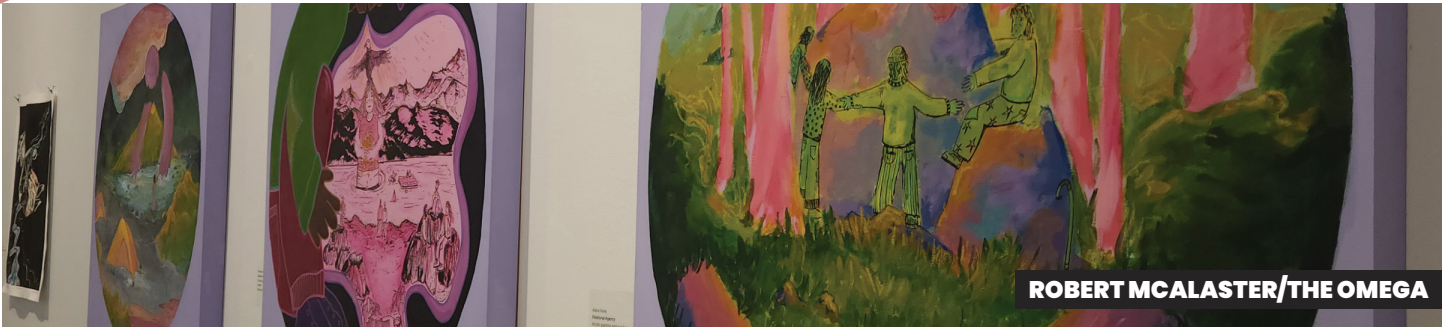
Here's even better news: you can shift your locus of control. Instead of waiting to absorb information, take accountability for your own learning. Students who adopt an internal locus of control are known to be more conscientious, willing to accept and implement feedback and to seek out opportunities to master information rather than just regurgitate it.

A great way to begin is by reaching out to professors. Whether through email or by showing up to office hours, professors are not as terrifying as they appear while lecturing. In actuality, most of them are keen to talk to students about how they can improve, and visiting office hours is a great way to have one-on-one help while forming

professional connections with leading researchers.

Motivation is not something that simply appears. It is built through action. As you begin to test yourself, make connections and take initiative, studying becomes less about forcing information in and more about drawing knowledge out. Curiosity plays a central role in this process. When you shift from trying to get through material to trying to understand it, studying becomes more meaningful and suddenly going to lecture becomes fun. Asking why something works or how it connects to another idea can transform the experience from passive review into active learning and will surely maximize your university experience.

As the end of the winter semester and the beginning of final exams inch ever closer, utilizing the techniques in this article could make the difference between just barely passing your courses or passing so comfortably that you become the envy of your cohort.



Artist and TRU student Alana Noire recently had their works showcased in an exhibition at the TRU Art Gallery.

(Re)awakening with Norie and friends

BILLIE GLADUE STAFF WRITER

TRU's art gallery's current exhibition, (Re)awakening Our Own Stories by Alana Norie, honours the connection between the land and 2-spirit, queer and trans youth through art-based storytelling.

The project started as research for their Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies program. After receiving a grant from UREAP, an undergraduate research apprenticeship program, Norie approached the project from a community-based perspective. The project started as an academic inquiry into research themes.

The themes investigated relational agency and how non-hierarchical leadership relates to our relationships with other beings, where queer storytelling is an act of joy and resistance and seeing land as a cocreator rather than a backdrop. The art in the exhibition was created as an extension of the stories told throughout the research process, to communicate the findings from their 80-page thesis.

"I think a lot of research is really inaccessible, especially when it's outside of your discipline. For me, going in with the values of community-based research and art-based research [there was a question of] how can this research serve the community, but also for the people outside of it, how can they access it in a really tangible way? I think art is a really visual and accessible medium for people to access academic research," Norie said. "I think more than ever, we need to engage in research that goes beyond Western ways of knowing, and really rigid ways of knowing and binary ways of knowing. If I've been taught anything, there are so many avenues to do that, but art is a really solid one."

As a part of the research, from June to Sept. 2025, Norie conducted interviews with 12 participants who have been involved with camping organizations and programs that support queer, trans and 2-spirit youth. These included CampOUT!, Camp Huckleberry, Qmunity Camp NWT, Out on the Land and Camp Kin. The interviews with counsellors, facilitators, mentors and former campers showed the important relationship between 2SQT+ people and the land. At age 18, Norie attended UBC CampOUT!, which they discussed at the exhibition's opening.

"When I started to brainstorm what would be the beginning of a two-year research project, I knew one thing really genuinely. I knew that the magic that I witnessed at land-based camps and offerings for 2-spirit, queer and trans youth was one of the most transformative things I'd ever experienced," Norie said. "The experiences that I had there as a youth and as a leader are indescribable. They're the ones that make you see a bright future... They're the ones that make you realize that there is such profound joy in the world."

Norie has since become a mentor and co-facilitator for the CampOUT! Program. Numerous pieces in the exhibition recall backpacking trips Norie has led for trans and queer youth. A watercolour comic strip tells the story of a five-day backpacking trip. One of the panels depicts a camper swimming for the first time in years, being in a space where they can feel safe and at ease with their identity. Norie noticed this freedom during their first experience with the program.

"I remember at that time being a recently out trans youth, and going

to this space where people could just exist in their bodies," Norie said. "The land is a space where diversity is abundant. No two ferns are the same. No two barnacles are the same. Nature itself is not binary. I think that allows queer youth to see themselves in a way that urban societies don't necessarily represent."

The exhibition used a wide range of mediums, including paint, textiles and photography, helping each piece be uniquely rooted in storytelling.

"The research and the art is expansive and meant to meet people where they're at, and I think multiple mediums [do] that. It allows stories to be told in different ways, but also for people to access those stories in different ways. We all go into the gallery and gravitate towards something, and that is a really individual experience," Norie said.

Through this exhibition, Norie not only expresses themselves, but also provides a platform and invites others to do the same. The deeply collaborative process is reflected throughout the exhibition, with other artists' work and writing being displayed alongside Norie's. One wall in the gallery prompts attendees to think of a future they hope to see, write that dream on a sticky note and place it on the wall.

"I think the nature of those programs and how they collaborate with the land was inherent and always existing, so I think to make art about that requires collaboration," Norie said. "I also think that my own voice could not even begin to capture the magic of what happens in those spaces. I feel that it was a gift that I was given from all these people, to have their voices in there, to have their art in there, because I don't think I could tell the story otherwise."

Beyond politics

Saira Bano from the department of philosophy, history and politics is the subject of our April Professor spotlight

ELLEN KAZEMBE STAFF WRITER



CHARLES RANKIN/THE OMEGA

In academia, it's easy to get lost in awards, titles and research papers, but the professors who leave a lasting impact are the ones who let their personality shine through.

Saira Bano is an Assistant Political Science Professor at TRU, who specializes in international relations, specifically South Asia, China–U.S. relations, Middle Eastern politics, Asian politics, human rights and global security.

Bano's curiosity extends beyond the classroom into how the world operates at a structural level. During a research fellowship in Washington, D.C., she was struck by the close relationship between academia and policymaking. Seeing how scholars move between universities and government roles gave her a deeper appreciation for how research can directly shape real-world decisions.

While her research examines some of the world's most complex political issues, outside the classroom she enjoys much simpler things: nature, books and travel.

When Bano isn't teaching or researching, she prefers spending her time outdoors. Hiking and kayaking are among her favourite activities, particularly during the summer. Her love for the outdoors has also shaped some of her favourite travel destinations, including Banff, Jasper and Alaska.

"Waterfalls are my favourite," she said.

Travel is another passion. One cultural experience that stood out to her was a recent visit to Sri Lanka, where she enjoyed exploring local traditions, food and music. One dish she especially loved was hoppers, a bowl-shaped fermented rice pancake often served with egg.

"It looks beautiful and it's really delicious," she said.

Another destination still on Bano's bucket list is Hawaii, a trip she had planned before the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I want to experience the music, the dancing and the beaches," she said.

Outside of travel and nature, she is also an avid reader. While she reads widely in politics and international relations, her favourite novel is Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

"What I love about the book is the idea that power comes with responsibility," Bano said. "The creator makes something but doesn't take responsibility for it, and that creates consequences."

Some of the political works that continue to inspire her include Thucydides' *The Peloponnesian War*, Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* and Kautilya's *Arthashastra*.

"These books were written centuries ago, but they are still relevant today," she said.

When it comes to grading papers, however, she admits she sometimes needs a little comfort food.

"Chocolate," she said with a laugh. "And ice cream."

When she wants to unwind, she enjoys watching television shows like *The Big Bang Theory*, especially for its humorous portrayal of academics.

"My favourite character is Sheldon," she said.

Music also depends on her mood. When she's feeling upbeat, she listens to artists like Ed Sheeran and Beyoncé, but on quieter days she prefers slower, more relaxing music.

In the classroom, she hopes students see her as approachable and empathetic.

She is also deeply reflective about personal growth. Looking back, Bano admits she once took things too seriously and placed unnecessary pressure on herself. Over time,

she has learned to adopt a more relaxed perspective, recognizing that not everything needs to be internalized or taken personally.

That mindset now informs how she connects with students. She understands that many are navigating academic pressure alongside work and personal responsibilities, and she encourages them to step back when needed. For her, success is not just about performance, but about maintaining balance and perspective.

Despite the pressures of university life, she encourages students to enjoy the experience.

"University is a very important time of your life," she said. "You are building friendships, perspectives and networks that will stay with you forever."

At her core, Bano values balance. Whether through nature, reading or simply stepping away from stress, she prioritizes a more grounded approach to life. It's a mindset she encourages in others, reminding students that while achievement matters, well-being and perspective matter just as much.

Her advice for students and for her younger self is simple: try not to stress over small things.

"Relax and don't take things personally," she said. "People are often dealing with their own challenges."

And above all, she reminds students to enjoy their time in university.

"You won't get this time back," she said.

The Omega's Professor Spotlight is a monthly series where we reintroduce you to some of the university's most popular faculty members. If you would like to nominate a professor, lecturer, or sessional instructor for their own Professor Spotlight, you're encouraged to email the Omega's Editor-in-Chief, Robert McAlaster, at editor@theomeganews.

If fashion were an Olympic sport

Canada has sported many iconic looks at the Olympic games; these are just a few that we believe are podium worthy

OLIVIA DEAN AND GRACE IFEKWE

Since the inaugural Winter Olympic Games in 1924, Canadian Olympians from across the nation have represented our country with sportsmanship, perseverance and above all, style. For decades, Olympic kits have featured emblematic colours, red and white of course, along with national symbols and partnerships with iconic brands. From nostalgic classics to modern statements, The Omega ranked some of Team Canada's most memorable looks over the years.

Bronze

Although uncommon, it is not unheard of for two athletes or teams to tie for medals at the Winter Olympics. In fact, it has actually happened 33 times. What is rarer, however, is a three-way tie, which has occurred only once at the 1968 games in Grenoble, France. Today, The Omega (unofficially) breaks that streak as we award the Bronze medal in Canadian Olympic Fashion to three iconic team designs.

Calgary 1988 Winter Olympic Games

If you're seeking eye-catching and unforgettable style, look no further than a design that paid homage to Western Canadian culture at the 1988 Winter Olympic Games in Calgary, Alta.

Team Canada athletes wore bold red coats accented with white fringe, paired with white cowboy hats that made a confident statement on

the world stage. Created by Calgary-based outerwear brand Sunice, the collection embraced regional identity in a way that felt celebratory and distinctly Canadian.

Nagano 1998 Winter Olympic Games

Simple and practical, this Olympic look still has our hearts. Nagano marked the first year Team Canada was sponsored by Roots, ushering in an era of cozy, athletic minimalism. The collection leaned into clean lines and wearable silhouettes, proving that sometimes understated really is unforgettable.

Lillehammer 1994 Winter Olympic Games

While perhaps not the most exceptional Olympic kit, Lillehammer earns an honourable mention and its place on the Bronze platform for creativity. Featuring bold red-and-gold elements, the collection channeled the iconic aesthetic of the Canadian Mounties. It was theatrical, patriotic and impossible to ignore. This look is placed in Bronze, with points deducted for theatricality over true Canadian patriotism. Though, then again, it is not as if viewers are expecting a beaver costume adorned with recycled maple syrup bottles... too far? The judges think not.

Silver

Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympic Games

Of course, we cannot discuss Canada's Olympic

fashion legacy without highlighting the most recent designs for the 2026 Olympic Games. Lululemon has offered a glimpse into the future of Team Canada style. The ensemble features a Convertible Quilted Wrap Vest layered over a waterproof shell jacket, with a nylon taffeta insulated shacket underneath.

Beyond functionality, the collection emphasizes inclusion, reinforcing Canada's identity as a multicultural nation through both design and messaging. If history tells us anything, it is that Olympic fashion is never just about clothing. It is about national identity, nostalgia and the statement we choose to make on the world stage.

PyeongChang 2018 Winter Olympic Games

Since we are already on the topic of nostalgia, another standout moment was the PyeongChang 2018 Winter Olympics collection. Recognized as one of the best-dressed teams that year, Team Canada's ensemble featured a hooded, water-resistant parka with bold black detailing. The design was paired with black and red beanies, striking red boots and of course, more red mittens. Cohesive, polished and unmistakably Canadian, it was a masterclass in modern winter styling.

Gold

Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Games

Team Canada, from the 2010 Vancouver, B.C.

Winter Olympic Games are the first of two to share the podium for the Gold medal in Canadian Olympic Fashion. For those of us old enough to remember the games, 2010 was a defining year of Canadian pride, with designs by Hudson's Bay that instantly became part of Olympic history. The now-legendary red mittens became the most sought-after souvenir of the Games, with over 3.5 million pairs sold. Athletes were also outfitted with a knitted lumberjack scarf that perfectly balanced heritage and winter practicality.

Sapporo 1972 Winter Olympic Games

At the 1972 Winter Olympics in Sapporo, Japan, Team Canada stepped onto the global stage wrapped in striking red wool parkas designed by Inuk artist Germaine Arnaktauyok. Handmade by a group of 12 seamstresses from Iqaluit, the coats featured white wolf-fur-trimmed hoods, caribou antler buttons and bold blue Inuit motifs. More than a uniform, this was a statement. At one of the world's most-watched sporting events, Canada chose to foreground Indigenous artistry and northern craftsmanship. The detailing was not decorative for its own sake. It was cultural storytelling stitched directly into Olympic history. Decades later, the look remains one of Canada's most recognizable and symbolically powerful Olympic ensembles, celebrated for centering Inuit design on an international stage.

Bitter-sweet season ending for WolfPack women

TRU WOLFPACK

Despite a disappointing result, the women's team made 'Pack history when they competed in the U Sports Women's Volleyball Championship last month

ALEXA LIPTAK SPORTS EDITOR

For the first time in program history, the WolfPack women's volleyball team earned a spot at the U Sport nationals, which were hosted by Trinity Western at the Langley Events Centre. The women pushed the second-seeded Sherbrooke Vert & Or to a hard-fought five-set game, but they fell 3-2.

Coming into the eight-seed tournament, the WolfPack were ranked seventh and faced the number-two seed, Sherbrooke. While the 'Pack prepared to start their game in Langley, back on campus, WolfPack fans filled The Den for the nationals watch party.

In the first set, Maria Dancheva powered in five kills halfway through, helping the team stay in the set. At 9-7, a kill and a block from Dancheva, followed by an ace from Keira Gent, gave TRU their first lead in the set. The team traded points from there until Vert & Or took the lead back at 19-17 and eventually won the set 20-25.

In the second, the teams traded points until the 'Pack took off on a 7-1 run to give themselves an 18-13 lead. The run featured two kills and a block by Dancheva. Tightening up

their defence, the 'Pack capitalized on multiple attacking opportunities, and with one final ace from Rida Erlalelitepe, they closed out the set 25-19.

With every point scored, cheers rang through The Den, and with one set under our belts, the energy shifted, as we were officially in the game.

The third set featured each team having its time to lead. However, in the last half of the set, it came down to a close race of who could get the winning points. Vert & Or was able to capitalize on some rallies at the end of the set and capture the third set 25-23.

The fourth set started off with Vert & Or taking a 3-0 lead. But the 'Pack wasn't going down without a fight. With the help of Hail Ward, Keira Gent, Dancheva and Erlalelitepe, who all recorded kills, the 'Pack bit back, turning the tables to earn a 10-8 lead. The women didn't let go of the lead until the score was 19-18, when Sherbrooke capitalized on a lull in the women's defence to go on a 3-0 run.

The game was on the line, and TRU had the set point at 24-23, but Vert & Or came back and fought off four points. It was during the match point battle

that the livestream in The Den froze. Whispers of "OMG" stood out among the stunned crowd. After a minute that felt like ages, the screen returned to show Gent score the match point, sending the teams to a fifth set and prompting the afternoon's loudest reaction from the TRU crowd.

The stress that filled the air in The Den was lifted, and cheers erupted. Heading into the fifth, all eyes fell on the TV, the crowd understanding that they could be watching history in the making for the 'Pack.

As the WolfPack started the fifth set, third-year middle Myah Cressy dominated the court, helping the team to an 8-2 run. Though the 'Pack had controlled the start, Sherbrooke flipped the momentum and fought back to take the lead 10-9. The teams tied up the set 13-13, and anxiety filled the air in The Den. Unfortunately, Sherbrooke took the next two points, securing the victory and sending them to the next round, while ending a very hard-fought season for the WolfPack.

Rida Erlalelitepe recorded a game-high 20 attacks for TRU, while middle Maria Dancheva added 14 to go along with six blocks

and a pair of service aces. Libby Meldrum also had a season high of 50 assists.

"This was one of those games where we were just trying to hang on longer than our opponents, because it wasn't smooth, but it was just trying to hold on until the end," Head Coach Chad Grimm said.

"Obviously, we ran out to a pretty good lead in the fifth and then maybe got caught thinking too much about what may be to come. That's the key lesson to take away from this match, is in those key moments, how do we manage our emotions, and how can we return to our baseline of skills and do what we have trained to do."

The team then went on to take the Atlantic Champion Saint Mary's Huskies in a consolation semifinal the next day; however, they lost 3-2.

Though the season has officially ended for the women, members of the team can hold their heads high knowing that, throughout the season, the WolfPack broke many program records, both as a team and by many players individually. As the best performing WolfPack athletics team, the girls not only made TRU proud but also the city of Kamloops.



WolfPack cheer score first-place finish

BILLIE GLADUE STAFF WRITER

The WolfPack cheer team soared to podium finishes at the BC Sport Cheer Provincial Championship on March 1. The All-Girl Advanced team took home first place while the Premier Small Co Ed team placed third.

During their first competition of the season, on Feb. 15, the 'Pack attended the Power Cheerleading Athletics National Collegiate Open. Both the Premier Small Co Ed and All-Girl Advanced teams took home silver medals in their divisions.

Stunting skills are categorized into seven levels, with each level allowing increasingly challenging skills. Since last year, the All-Girl team has moved from level three stunting to level four, making them an advanced team. A premier team competes at either level six or seven, the highest levels of difficulty. For example, in an advanced team dismount, if a flyer is flipping out of a skill, they must be attached to someone else, meaning they are holding their base's hand. A flyer on a premier team is allowed to flip without holding on to someone else. Each team must declare its

level before competing.

The members of each team are partly determined by tryouts at the beginning of each school year. As of this March, students attending TRU with athletic scholarships have already signed for the 2026-27 season. According to Tanisha Terry, captain of the All-Girl Advanced team, almost all of those athletes will compete on the premier team. The premier team has limited spots, so those who go to tryouts will be on the gameday and advanced teams. Terry says 87 per cent of her teammates this year are brand-new to the sport, and as captain, she can help the team build connections.

"It makes me feel like I can be the change that I want to see. Now you have that platform to reach out to the coaches and be that connection between the coaches and the mat," Terry said. "If I'm feeling that the team is maybe going emotionally downward, and that starts to affect our physical cheerleading, I can say to the coaches, 'Hey, I'm noticing this on the mat.'"

According to Lane Robinson, a third-year member of the Premier Co Ed Team, the camaraderie

among the team has been a key factor in their success.

"This year in particular, we are really driving as a team. There is not a single person on there that I wouldn't feel comfortable sitting down and having one-on-one conversations with," Robinson said. "We all really mesh well together this year, and I think that is having an effect on how we take the floor and how we encourage each other at practice. It's making a big difference."

Practices begin in September, months before their first competition in the winter semester. The first practices focus on skill-building and on seeing how well the group works together until they start planning their routines in October. Robinson says the routines are developed throughout the season after each competition.

"Think of it as a rough draft for a routine. Depending on whether or not groups are able to hit skills, we upgrade, or we do more difficult skills. Sometimes they stay the same, sometimes, based on feedback from the judges at a competition, they will change certain elements to better fit what the judges are

looking for," Robinson said.

Collegiate cheer competitions consider performance elements, such as crowd connection, alongside athletic performance. The judges look for teams that are absorbed in the entire routine, not just during the stunts. "They look at how well we engage with the audience. We have a chant section, and they're looking for us to engage with the crowd. Are we smiling? Do we have facials? Do we look like it's easy, or does it look like we're struggling through it?"

After their performance at provincials, the 'Pack is adjusting their routines so they can end strong at their final competition of the season.

"We have some upgrades that we're looking to do. Base groups have skills that we're looking for," Robinson said. "We're just going to add some more variety and work on the crispness of our routine, hitting strong and looking confident while we're doing it."

The WolfPack's third and final competition will be the Sea to Sky International Cheer and Dance Championship in April, 2026.

Runnin' with the 'Pack: cheer edition

The Omega talks flips, tricks and the future with Brooke Topolovec, captain of the WolfPack cheer team

ALEXA LIPTAK SPORTS EDITOR



Brooke Topolovec had never participated in cheerleading before joining the WolfPack team five years ago. After shifting from a gymnastics career to cheer, she became the team captain and now looks ahead to graduation. She spoke with The Omega about cheerleaders being misunderstood as athletes, and what her time with the 'Pack has been like.

ALQ: What drew you to the WolfPack cheerleading team?

BT: I think that living in Kamloops my whole life, I saw cheer, and they practiced in the same facility as I was doing gymnastics in. For gymnastics in Canada, there's not really any other option for university, so if I wanted to continue doing a sport in university, I would have to switch to something else, and cheer felt similar. I really liked the vibe of the team, so I thought it would be a good fit.

ALQ: What's it like to be a flyer (the person who is lifted into the air during stunts) and be thrown in the air multiple times during a routine?

BT: It's really a big adrenaline rush. You have to have a lot of trust and faith in your team that they're going to catch you no matter what. It's definitely very different from any other sport I've done; it's very unique. Having lots of faith in your teammate is really important. But it's cool and definitely a different feeling.

ALQ: Often cheerleaders kind of get overlooked as athletes. What do you have to say about that?

BT: That definitely does happen, it's especially the people [who] are not really educated in the sport that have that view and opinion. They see us as sideline cheerleaders [who] just cheer at games. Sometimes it's hard, because that is something that we do, we cheer at games and cheer on other sports, but that's a very small portion of what we do. I think that the average person, if they were to actually try cheer, would [find it] pretty difficult. If you actually try it, you would realize that it's a real sport.

ALQ: Most people don't realize how physically demanding cheerleading

is. What's one thing that they might not realize about cheerleading in general?

BT: I think that people don't realize that it's actually a really big contact sport. We're getting thrown around and stuff, but with that comes a lot of hits and injuries on your body. It's a lot of impact that you're taking on a daily basis. You get lots of bruises at the end of the day, so I think people don't normally think about that when they think cheer.

ALQ: How has your role of leadership evolved throughout the years that has turned you into the Captain of the team?

BT: I think it's changed from when I first joined the team. I had no cheer experience at all, and I was like a baby in my role. Now, like over the last few years, I've learned so much about cheer and understand what it means to be a cheerleader. Taking on this role has been interesting and has taught me a lot about leadership. It's been nice.

ALQ: What's one thing you're going to miss most

about being with the WolfPack cheerleaders?

BT: My teammates and coaches, mostly, they've been a really big rock in my life for the past five years. That's definitely going to be a different shift, and having something like no matter how stressful your day is, you go to cheer, and everything's just kind of left at the door and you have something different to focus on.

ALQ: How would you describe your overall time here with the WolfPack?

BT: I love it. I wouldn't change anything about it, I don't think. I'm really happy. I was on the fence about trying cheer and even going to TRU, but I'm so glad that I picked it.

ALQ: What are your plans after graduation? Does cheer have anything to do with them?

BT: I'm going to try out for one of the cheer teams in Vancouver, and then I'm also looking to get a job within the school district down there. Hopefully to be an elementary school teacher.

On the other side of the microphone

In the world of broadcast media, behind every great sportscaster is a great producer

ALEXA LIPTAK SPORTS EDITOR

When you're tuning into a hockey game, you don't often think about what happens beyond the play of the game. Think about when you listen to the game on the radio, you know the play-by-play broadcaster is there, but are they doing all the work?

Someone is behind the scenes, noting every sponsor mention, recording key moments and preparing clips before the next commercial break even begins. For radio operator and game producer LiFei Liu-Calver, those behind-the-scenes tasks are what keep a Kamloops Blazers broadcast running smoothly.

During a typical Blazers game, Liu-Calver works at the radio station while broadcaster Jon Keen provides the play-by-play from inside the arena. Liu-Calver is always in the station, no matter which arena across the league Keen might be at. Her role as the radio operator is more important than most people think. She keeps track of sponsor mentions, ensuring all the required spots are met. She also records the game in short segments and prepares highlights for intermission shows.

"It's kind of like a typical office job," she said. "But there's a board in front of

you and a lot more going on during a hockey game."

Liu-Calver gets to the station to start work an hour before the puck even drops. The first 30 minutes of the shift are spent preparing with Keen and either recording pre-game interviews with Keen and his guests or prepping what has already been recorded. Then the show goes live on the air for 30 minutes before the puck drops.

"He runs me down what we're doing for hockey talk, what needs to be played during the post-game or pre-game. Then he'll gimme some interviews. Usually, we start right off the bat, going out of commercials into the pre-game," Liu-Calver said.

Once the game begins, the pace picks up quickly. The entire broadcast is recorded in 90-second intervals, allowing her to quickly identify exciting moments from the game for later segments.

"If something exciting happens, you need to mark it down," Liu-Calver said. "Sometimes it gets confusing because a lot happens in a hockey game, and I'm only listening to it."

Between periods, those recordings are sorted, and one becomes the "Play of the Period," a highlight replay that

airs during intermission; it is chosen by either Keen or Liu-Calver. If the Blazers have a goal, that takes precedence over any other exciting moment of the game.

Liu-Calver only gets about two minutes to speak with Keen after intermissions; at this time, she has to quickly locate the clip, edit it and prepare it for air.

Once the game ends, the work doesn't stop. First, the post-game show begins, during which Keen goes through the game summary and stars of the game, and breaks down the biggest moments from the matchup.

After that, he interviews one of the assistant coaches or someone from the other team for the "After the Buzzer" segment of the show. Once that all wraps up, Liu-Calver will edit, save and archive all the files from the night, delete extra recordings and head home.

Liu-Calver said broadcasting wasn't always the plan; originally, she was a psychology major, but after participating in a Global Skills Opportunity program (GSOP) that took her abroad during her university studies, her interests shifted.

While studying at a private school in Spain in 2022 with the GSOP,

Liu-Calver took some classes outside her major.

"I did like radio cinematography, game design, that kind of stuff. And I remember being really invested in sound and radio production. At that time, I think I kind of knew what I wanted to do," Liu-Calver said.

As soon as she got home, she applied for her current position with RadioNL and has been there ever since. At the station, she is currently the only woman working as the radio operator for sports games.

"I was 18 at the time," she said. "So at first I was a little intimidated."

But over time, she said the experience has helped her grow more confident in the field.

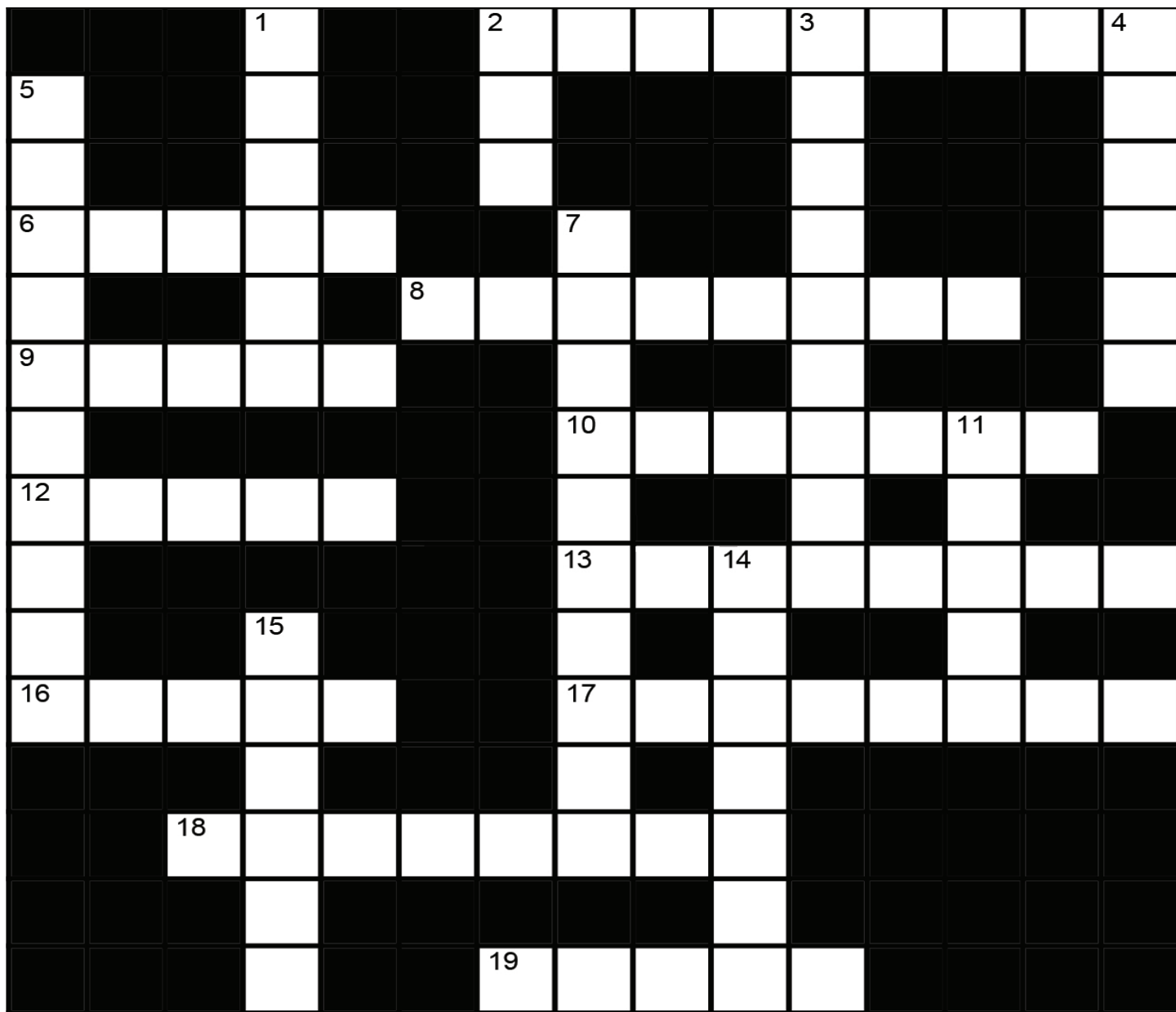
"The behind-the-scenes can be a lot of fun," Liu-Calver said. "You get to make connections and be part of something people don't always notice."

When you listen to your next hockey game, try to think of everything that's happening beyond the broadcaster calling the game. There are so many moving parts that keep everything running, and without them, the game would never reach our ears.



LIFE LIU-CALVER/SUBMITTED

— CROSSWORD —



Across

- 2 There are free classes to learn this local language (9)
- 6 Science building's namesake (5)
- 8 The tastiest of the arts (8)
- 9 Seen on stop signs (5)
- 10 Before it was called Thompson Rivers University, it included this regional name (7)
- 12 Namesake of the building that houses the library (5)
- 13 One of these was held in March over concerns about service cuts (8)
- 16 TRU's newest building, energy related (acronym) (5)
- 17 Our teams bear this name (8)
- 18 TRU's business school was named after this Sandman Hotel Group magnate (8)
- 19 Your health plan, bus pass and other services come from this campus organization (5)

Down

- 1 A president with just one name (6)
- 2 The shortest name used for the students' union building (3)
- 3 The second component of TRU's northernmost academic building (9)
- 4 This canine rusts atop a building in the campus commons (6)
- 5 This women's team recently made history by heading to the U Sport nationals (10)
- 7 Where the board of governors meets (10)
- 11 Where the books used to live (5)
- 14 Name of new campus store (7)
- 15 Governance body that oversees education policies (6)

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