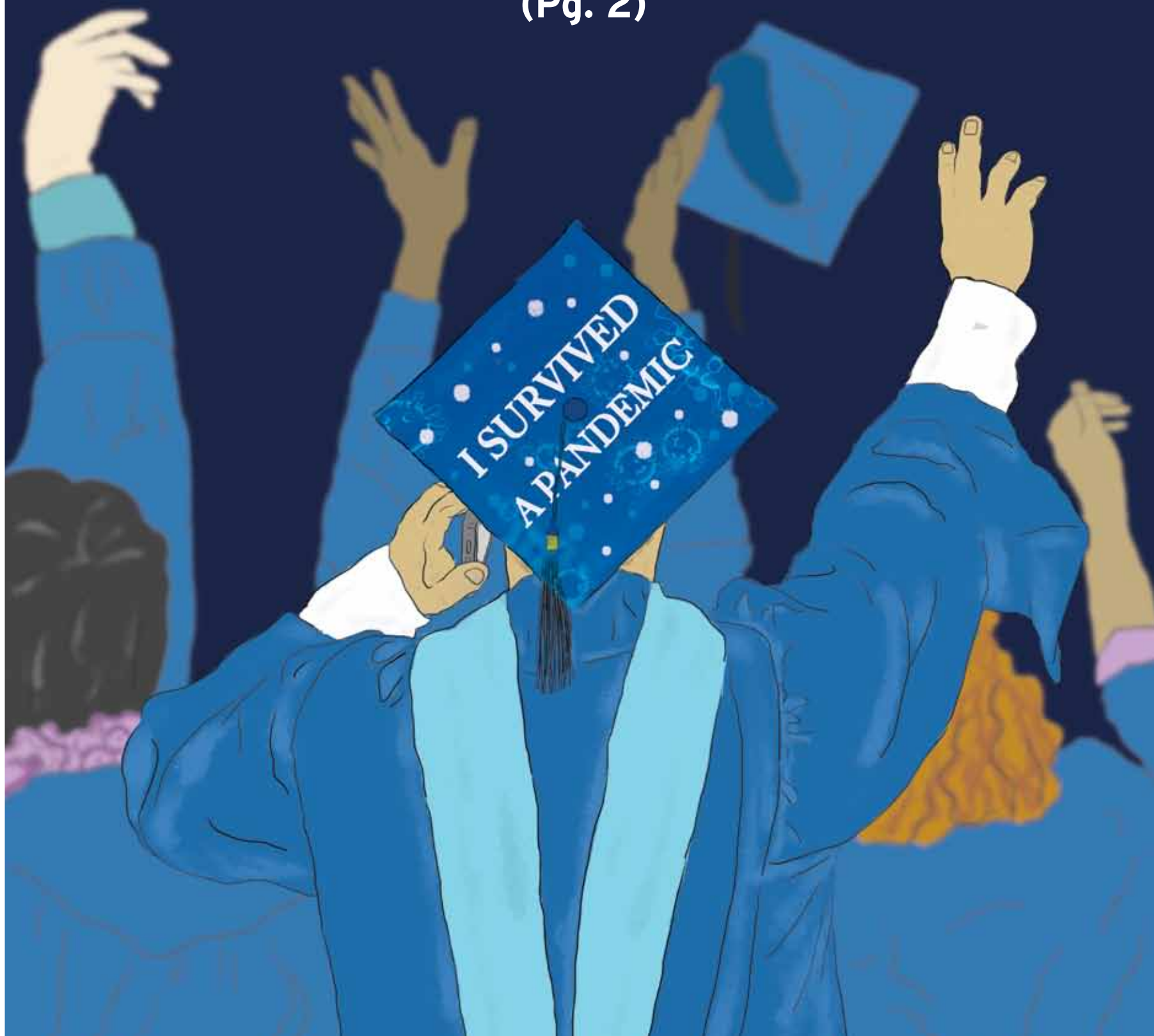


# MRU postpones spring convocation due to COVID-19

(Pg. 2)



# MRU postpones spring convocation due to COVID-19 pandemic

**Christian Kindrachuk**  
Staff Writer



**MRU students who were set to convocate in the spring were told their ceremony is being pushed back to the fall with more updates to come. Photo courtesy of Unsplash; Photo illustration by Riggs Zyrille Vergara**

Graduating students looking to convocate in June will have to wait — MRU has postponed this year's spring convocation until fall due to COVID-19.

While the decision to postpone convocation is to prevent the spread of COVID-19, it can still be disheartening for students set to convocate, like Axel Cuellar, a fourth year psychology degree major, who figured this would eventually happen, but was still disappointed.

"I was upset because you work for years to walk that stage and have that moment

of appreciation. Those 15 minutes of you walking on stage and showing that, 'Yes this is what it's all worth.' [And it's] being taken away," says Cuellar.

Phil Warsaba, MRU's Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President, says that MRU understands the magnitude of the achievement that comes with graduating, and it is something to celebrate.

"We know these are really big accomplishments for our graduates. We understand that our graduates need to be recognized and they need to

be celebrated. Right now our priority is simply to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and to keep everyone safe and healthy," Warsaba explains.

With approximately 2,000 students set to graduate at the end of the 2019-20 academic year, and 1,250 students who were expected to participate in convocation prior to postponement, students will have to wait to find out what is next.

"We haven't provided a specific date because there are a variety of options that we would like to look at. It may

mean tacking on additional ceremonies onto the one ceremony that we typically hold in the fall," says Warsaba. "Or it may mean that we offer separate ceremonies outside of November — possibly earlier than that."

Cuellar claims that MRU is not on par with the kind of communication that other universities and other institutions have, pointing to the fact that MRU was one of the last schools to transition to online classes.

"I just think Mount Royal University is not a college anymore and they need to be on top of things better. It seems like U of C are always one step ahead of us," says Cuellar. "If MRU wants to be taken seriously as a university, they need to step up their communication skills."

It was not until March 24 that students received an email regarding convocation.

"I heard about the postponement from my professor. I didn't even hear it from an official MRU person," says Cuellar. "I think someone read a tweet from MRU Recreation Centre and then another one of my friends heard it from Reddit."

MRU has put up a FAQ on their website for convocation in an effort to try and inform students on recent changes. Decisions still have yet to be made on the next steps in regards to convocation, but the convocation committee on campus is hopeful.

"We're sincerely hoping that students are going to come back and celebrate their achievements with us when we have the convocation committee that consists of representatives from

across the institution," says Warsaba. "That committee will reconvene when it is possible to do so under some more normal circumstances."

Warsaba points out that he is planning to start early spring or after final exams. Cuellar is not certain if he will be around in the fall for convocation due to grad school commitments on the other side of the country.

"I won't be here for the convocation in the fall. That's also why I'm sad because if I was going to be here, then I wouldn't be too mad, but at the same time, it is what it is," says Cuellar.

SAMRU is a member of the convocation committee. Kainat Javed, the Vice-President for student affairs, notes that this decision was made for the students. However, he also understands this decision is a hard one for students to process.

"Some students, who I personally have heard from, have told me they understand the decision, but if we do have students who reach out to us, we'll be sure to let them know that this decision is in light of the current situation that we're in," says Javed. "And really, we're again, putting everyone's safety above everything else."

Warsaba knows that this is disappointing for students, but says they are doing this to comply with direction from the province to prevent any further spread of COVID-19.

"We know that this is a really important event, and we're going to do whatever we can to make sure that students will be able to celebrate appropriately as soon as it's safe to do so," says Warsaba.

# COVID-19 motivates student-led initiatives, volunteering to aid fight

**Noel Harper**

Staff Writer



**Students in Alberta have been stepping up to support fellow students and community members through petitions, emails and volunteerism. Graphic by Nathan Woolridge; Vectors courtesy of Freepik**

The COVID-19 pandemic has required post-secondary students throughout Calgary to quickly adjust to an entirely new system of learning, in the middle of an ongoing semester. Despite this drastic change to their education, some are taking this initiative a step further by looking out for others, ensuring their peers are represented and even joining the effort against the virus.

MRU's recent decision to amend the Grades & Examination Policy in light of COVID-19 will allow students to end courses with a letter grade, as per usual, or choose a new pass or fail option for their transcripts, according to an email from the Provost's Office.

"These options will allow you the flexibility to select which outcome best suits your needs and it recognizes the tremendous impact that

this pandemic has had on students," the email said.

After the University of Calgary and the University of Alberta enacted similar changes to their grading policy for the winter 2020 semester, students at MRU began taking action to convince the university to take similar action. A change.org petition on the matter was signed over 4,100 times.

"It's under unfortunate circumstances that I am forced to create this petition. I would like to formally say that the way that MRU staff and faculty have been responding to the COVID-19 pandemic is less than ideal. The way online "classes" have been executed is absolutely sickening," wrote petition organizer Sean Bryant in his call to action.

A letter written by MRU student Ina Hadziefendic was directed to MRU President

Tim Rahilly and SAMRU VP-Academic Nathan Lawley.

"The changes students are requesting are to have finals be delivered in a less stressful method such as a take-home reflective essay, and to additionally be able to have the choice of which course student would like to take their final letter grade in, or alternatively a pass or fail," reads the letter in part.

Another petition, started by student Rosie Jones, asks for faculty to be considered in all of this, as well. The notion of allowing professors to change weighting of assignments and extend marking timelines has been endorsed by just over 100 people as of this writing.

Certain MRU programs have been put into difficult positions regarding practicums and other hands-on work. According to the university's COVID-19 Q&A,

"those who may be exposed to presumptive cases of COVID-19, such as nursing students, are not to be working on these cases or in situations where they are exposed to these cases."

While nursing students cannot complete any more on-site clinical experiences due to the pandemic, members of MRU's Student Nursing Society have started volunteer initiatives through social media.

The Facebook group "YYC COVID-19 Mental Health Promotion," created by society President Shani Markus, has amassed 267 members. Its purpose is to serve as a resource for information, mental health assistance and connection to others during times of self-isolation.

Another group, "COVID-19 MRU Community Volunteers," was started

by nursing students Julia Gerritsen and Caroline Grippo, and aims to connect community members who are willing to volunteer with those who need assistance.

"We have not been called forth thus far by AHS to help on-sites, but I foresee this being a possibility in the future," Markus said in an email.

One way that health students in Calgary, and throughout Alberta, are aiding the healthcare system is by helping with contact-tracing. This is a method of following the potential spread of COVID-19 from those who contract the virus, reaching out to everyone they may have contact with and ensuring that tests are given to those who are most at risk.

"It's a fantastic opportunity for medical or nursing students to be doing that from an epidemiological understanding of disease and how disease can be transmitted rapidly in the population," University of Calgary provost Dru Marshall told CBC.

Students at U of C's Cumming School of Medicine started a volunteer group to pair health care workers with student volunteers to help them with aspects of daily life, such as child care or pet care. The program was recently expanded to include students from MRU and SAIT.

"While we are unable to help in a clinical capacity, we want to do our part, and offer our time and support to those on the front-line in health care," U of C medical student Brielle Cram said to the campus press.

SAMRU continues to offer emergency food hampers, financial assistance and other student services, as the campus keeps Wyckham House open.

# MRU students adjust to university life at home

**Daniel Gonzalez**

Contributor



**In the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, MRU suspended in-person classes and moved to online delivery for the remainder of the Winter 2020 semester. Photo courtesy of Unsplash**

With the COVID-19 pandemic hitting Calgary, all classes at MRU have switched to online deliveries where students are wrapping up their semesters from home. Despite the seeming ease of learning from home, there are some who believe this is causing more problems rather than solutions.

On March 15, MRU formally announced that all classes would be switching to online delivery. In wake of this announcement, many students are discussing the effectiveness of online lectures.

Josh Vetter, a first year student in an undeclared bachelor of arts, thinks that the online transition has been affecting his learning and work ethic in a negative way.

With four courses that all take place online, Vetter is having a hard time adjusting to learning off campus.

"I'm really unmotivated to do any of it. I don't know how

the exams are going to work online," says Vetter.

Although Vetter feels uncertain about taking classes online, he believes that the faculty at Mount Royal are doing their best to "try and keep classes going."

"MRU is doing a really good job, but it's difficult to go from regular classes to online classes in the middle of the semester like this," says Vetter. "They did the best they could. They didn't really have enough time and some teachers did a lot better than others."

One measure that Vetter agrees with is the addition of the pass/fail credit system the university announced on March 26.

"I think with the pass/fail credit system, at least people have the flexibility to choose. If they are being impacted really badly by COVID-19, at least their GPA won't suffer from it."

Another student,

Christopher Fang, is in his third year of sociology. All four of his classes are online and he does not agree with online class delivery.

"I don't like it all," says Fang. "I would rather be in school actually learning something rather than at home doing my school work."

Like Vetter and many other students, Fang believes that it is difficult to learn from home because "there's too many distractions."

One way Fang has overcome this problem is by working on assignments on campus, although a majority of the services are limited or closed.

"I go there for maybe like two to three hours. I just do my work and I leave," says Fang. "It's a better place to focus."

While he can no longer learn in a classroom, Fang thinks that all of his professors are doing their best to ensure that students

finish their classes this semester.

A major aspect Fang believes the school should consider is the delivery of final exams in classes.

"I feel like final exams should be optional," says Fang. "Profs should work in a way that just gets rid of exams and transfers marks into stuff you're already doing."

Vetter and Fang continue to attend their online lectures and work on their assignments from home or on campus. Mount Royal has not announced the cancellation of classes and has notified students about supplementing final grades with the new pass/fail credit system.

"Everyone signed up to be in a lecture is in a class right?" says Fang. "That's what everyone expected, but now we're doing online [classes], which is not as good."

## THE REFLECTOR

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## 5 ways to reduce your waste (and save your money)

**Mackenzie Mason**

Staff Writer

While we've all been focused on a certain global crisis (COVID-19), there's another global crisis that has been ignored for decades — the waste problem.

Waste is produced faster than it can be managed nowadays. Since plastic doesn't decompose, it has made its way into the oceans from our rivers and streams and is creating major problems for not only sea life, but also land animals and ourselves.

It's easy to feel helpless, especially as young adults, but there's many ways students can help the planet — and their bank accounts — by reducing their waste.

Here are five ways students can reduce their waste while saving money:

### Bring a reusable water bottle

This is an easy swap from disposable to single-use water bottles that I think most of us put into action in our daily lives, but if you don't this is a great place to start. There's so many different water bottles you can choose from to fit your lifestyle — hard plastic, metal, silicone collapsible water bottles, filtered water bottles, etc.

Not only would bringing a reusable water bottle to school save the environment, but it would also save you money and us students need all the help we can get. Let's say you bought two water bottles a day, five days a week at school for \$2. It doesn't seem like a lot in the moment, but in just a hundred days that's over 500 water bottles and just over \$1,000.

So grab that reusable water bottle and you could go on a nice weekend trip to the mountains, or eat some good

food or just put it towards your student loan debt... whatever you want.

### Bring a reusable coffee cup/mug

Us university students LOVE our coffee, and if you're anything like me you're stopping at Tim's at least once a school day. Over time, those single-use coffee cups add up and you're making a big contribution to the waste problem. But don't worry, there are easy solutions!

First, the easiest and cheapest way to reduce your waste would be to bring your own coffee or tea to school from home. You use the coffee you already paid for in your own travel mug that you already had.

Sometimes, this just doesn't hit the same and that's understandable. Thankfully, Tim's and Starbucks sell a medium/grande sized reusable coffee cup that looks the same as its disposable cups for around \$2-3 and will put your drink you ordered in that cup when you buy it. Then you have your cup for next time!

### Pack your own lunch

Wyckham House — like losing a sock in the dryer — is where we lose our money. But it doesn't have to be this way. Packing your own lunch is not only better for your bank account, but it's better for your health and the planet's health!

By packing your own lunch, you can make conscious decisions of how you're fueling your body for the day and the best way to pass that test is to feed your body properly. Eating a balanced meal will give you the brain-food you need during a long day of classes.



Canary Goods supplies all your refill and zero-waste needs like reusable cotton rounds and soap bars, as pictured here. Photo by Mackenzie Mason

Bringing your own lunch also saves you from spending \$10 on a meal that won't give your brain the nutrients it needs to succeed and it also saves the planet from another disposable, single-use container that will most likely be on the planet longer than you will. It's a win-win-win!

### Bring your own cutlery

Bringing your own cutlery means you're always prepared, whether you brought your own lunch or not. I ordered a few sets of cutlery for \$18 online that came with a metal fork, spoon, knife, two straws and a straw cleaner.

I carry one with me wherever I go so I can always skip out on the small stuff like plastic straws and plastic forks. Though most of the time the plastic cutlery is complimentary, you can feel good that you saved the planet of another single-use plastic item.

### Replace your items

If you feel passionate about reducing your waste, it's easy to feel intimidated and give up before you even start. But take a deep breath because everyone has to start somewhere and if you already do some of these tips then you're further along than most people!

The easiest way to get started is to replace the items you've run out of with zero-waste alternatives.

Think about your bathroom. Running out of shampoo or conditioner? Consider swapping to shampoo and conditioner bars. They usually last longer than a bottle of shampoo, making it more worth your money! Out of toothpaste? Consider toothpaste tablets or powder. If you need a new toothbrush, bamboo alternatives are available that can be composted after it's life. Makeup wipes add up very quickly and take a while to decompose. Switching to

reusable cotton rounds or a microfiber round is better for your face and the environment.

For groceries, bringing your own bags is a great first step. Then, consider buying in the bulk sections and filling up your own containers, rather than using their disposable bags. You can also purchase reusable produce bags, and take it one step further by trying to buy "naked" produce (unpackaged, unprepped produce).

This way, you can slowly introduce yourself to a new lifestyle instead of switching all at once and getting overwhelmed and ultimately giving up. Calgary is home to a few refilleries and zero-waste markets such as Canary Goods, The Apothecary and Nudemarket as well as options such as Bulk Barn and Lush that can help you make the switch to zero-waste.

We are the leaders of the future, but we can make little decisions today to reduce our waste and promise ourselves a better future.

# How technology is connecting us with others while in self-isolation

**Jill Meagher**

Staff Writer

COVID-19 has shut down the world.

As schools, businesses, restaurants, sporting events and certain health facilities have closed, people have returned home to quarantine with their families, being warned that any and all group activities are extremely frowned upon and gatherings of 15 or more people are not permitted in Alberta. So, how can we stay connected with those we love while being apart?

If there is any bright side to the timing of this virus, it is that it's happening in the 21st century. Technology is at its peak and currently is the only safe way to communicate. Social media has become its own form of communication as billions of people go online daily to stream and connect with others.

Outlets such as Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat and TikTok were already common before the pandemic, but have become even more popular as the world flocks online to get news, entertainment and physical activity. Even trainers have made easy-at-home workouts and challenges that can be done without gym equipment to help people stay in shape while gyms have been closed down.

But maybe most importantly, as our world continues to rapidly change, social media continues to be one of our only avenues to connect with others when we can't physically.

Kyle Engle has been quarantined in his home for the past week as he had just returned from Mexico. He knows more than anyone the impact that these outlets have while stuck at home.

"Social media gives me a sense of normalcy during these challenging times by helping us stay connected with one another when we can't be physically," says

Engle. "I'm able to stay in touch with friends and family through online conversations and stay up to date on current events. In a sense we are substituting physical touch with a virtual touch. It's keeping us all sane."

Celebrities have even taken this time to bring awareness to COVID-19 and the many charities that have been put in place. Long awaited concerts, to fans' disappointment, have been cancelled, but Instagram features like live streaming have allowed artists to perform quarantine concerts and connect with fans around the world.

Similarly, the virus brought all schools to an abrupt stop. Whether you were in middle school, highschool or post-secondary, there was not much time to say goodbye to friends. Graduation and other year-end activities have been postponed and, for graduates, that's a heartbreaking pill to swallow.

Thankfully, apps like House Party, Skype and Facetime have allowed for a sense of normalcy. Although it's nothing like being in a dorm room or hanging out on campus, they offer face-to-face contact with the ones you miss most.

The biggest challenge for students and educators, though, is the task of finishing off the school year. As teachers transition to online classes, students are tuning in via Zoom and Google Hangout meetings. Professors can still teach and assign work, as well as see who is still showing up for weekly lectures.

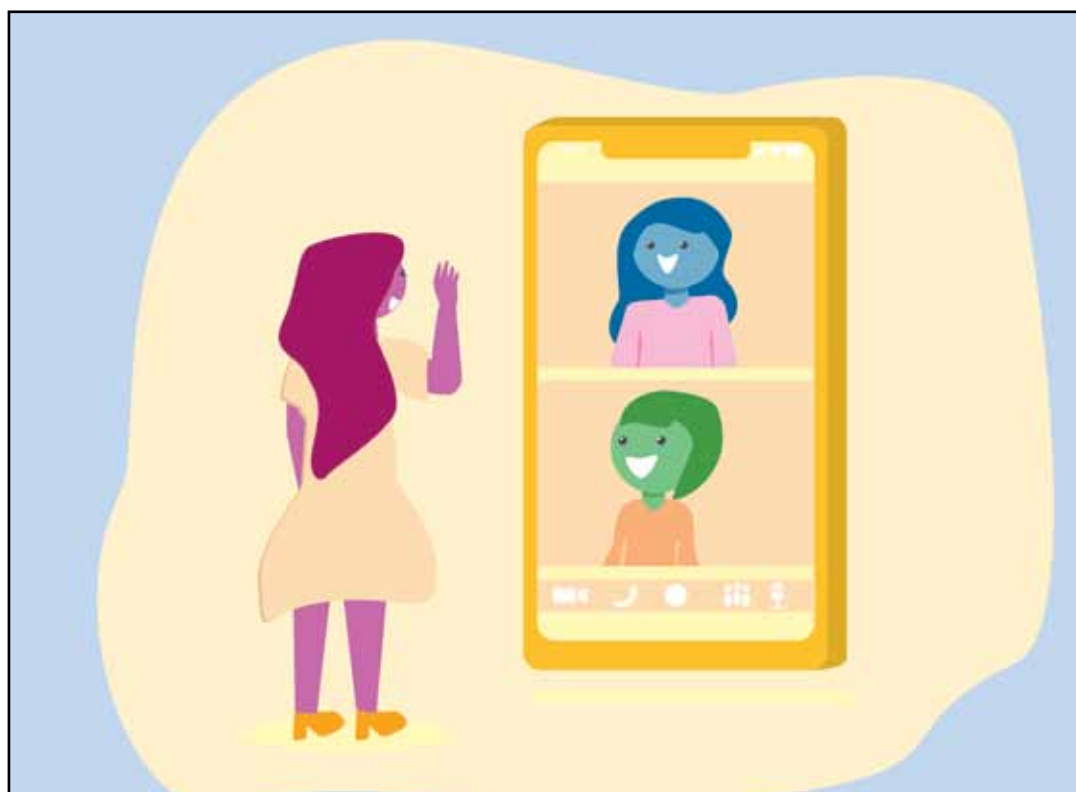
Kassidy Marshall is a full time student at the Canadian Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine. For someone who can't afford to fall off her strict five-year schedule, she's beginning to feel the pressure of online courses, but still believes they

are better than nothing.

"It has helped substantially, because without having courses posted online or having no way to have online meetings or classes, everyone

would have to figure out what to do on their own or fall drastically behind. It would make learning and asking questions almost impossible."

With all that is going on it's important to remember to stay home, be safe and that communication is possible without physically being around others.



**While practicing social distancing, it's easy to feel disconnected from loved ones. But there are many apps and online platforms to help us stay in touch. Graphic by Riggs Zyrille Vergara**



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# In love and isolation

*How couples are navigating the COVID-19 pandemic*

**Cassie Weiss**

Staff Writer



As society navigates COVID-19, many couples are choosing to spend time apart to show their affection and keep each other safe. Photo courtesy of Pexels; Photo illustration by Riggs Zyrille Vergara

It's quarantine season, and if you're anything like me, you're going just a bit crazy.

Sadly, this has become our new reality — cooped up inside, lacking motivation to finish assignments, missing our friends and our freedom. Unfortunately this is something we just have to adjust to.

Luckily, technology has come to save the day — but is technology enough? Oh, to be single during the apocalypse. I miss my friends, of course, but I've gone days, weeks, months, without seeing them. But what about that special significant other? The one that you see all the time, who is now quarantined away from you.

The song lyrics, "Kiss me through the phone," have never been more applicable. But luckily being separated from your boo doesn't mean you never have to see them again. Every situation is different and everybody has a different idea when it comes to the term "social distancing."

One Calgary couple is doing the best they can with what they have.

Allister and Gabby have been dating for just under a year. They met at the greenhouse where they both worked, and they have been inseparable ever since. So of course, it came as a shock when the entire world began shouting about the importance of isolation.

"I think the social distancing has been harder on Gabby than it has been for me," stated Allister in a virtual interview (because, you know, social distancing). "She needs to be outdoors."

Despite not living together, the two still see each other two or three times a week.

"We are both taking this pretty seriously. We know that if one of us gets sick, we

are aware that person will be quarantined for 14 days," says Allister, who has always been more introverted than his partner.

"We usually stay inside, watch movies or do some hobby painting. Sometimes we go outside for a walk, but we do make sure we keep our distance from others," he explains.

For most couples who don't already live together, not seeing each other is the best course of action. Although you may trust your partner to do their due-diligence to try and prevent themselves from getting sick, you can't trust others who they may have come into contact with over the course of a day.

For the days when they don't see each other, Allister says that "texting and Messenger make it really easy to keep in touch, always. Nothing has really changed in the way we communicate with each other. We just call each other a bit more these days."

As for the other relationships in your life, like your friends, Allister points out that there are some positives.

"I have some really great friends that I've met online. If anything, we almost hang out more now during quarantine than we did before."

It's hard to be stuck inside, for extroverts and introverts alike, but we have to remember that it is temporary.

The important piece is to rely on the technology we have always looked down upon. Take up screen time, use data — your friends, your boo, they'll appreciate seeing your face or hearing your voice. We all have to do what keeps us sane and take everything just one simple day at a time. Stay safe out there.

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# How art has evolved in the digital age

**Ayra Fouad**  
 Staff Writer



**An artist doesn't need a pen and paper when they have a tablet that can do the processing for them. Photo courtesy of Pexels; Graphic by Riggs Zyrille Vergara**

Artwork has always been an important part of humanity. A piece can provoke anger, happiness, love or even, in some cases, extreme despair. The more an artist can tap into a person's senses, the stronger a connection — whether that be to the artist, or to someone that can relate to the piece in the same way as the person who shared it.

The thing about art is that it is always changing. New mediums are created constantly — especially with the rise of technology. An artist doesn't need a pen and paper when they have a tablet that can do the processing for them.

"Software is so much more accessible than it used to be," states Matt Johnson, a graphic designer who works closely with the film and electronic industries in Calgary. "There are a ton of great apps for phones to create digital art pieces in seconds, that would have taken a lot of know-how only a couple of years ago."

Johnson isn't wrong when he states that access to the creation of digital art just keeps getting easier, regardless of the form an artist hopes to create.

"Video, audio, interactive; it's all at your fingertips now."

It's not hard to remember a

time when a trip to the local art supply store was in order. Although having a physical copy of a created piece is special, it made it harder for some artists to gain exposure.

An oil painting on canvas would need to be displayed in some form for that artist to receive feedback — whereas now, all it takes is the piece to be uploaded online. This isn't necessarily a good or a bad thing, it just means that with the increasing use of technology, the market becomes slightly more saturated.

"I remember seeking out cool art on [the website]

Deviant Art when I was in high school," says Johnson. "Now, I don't even know if that site exists. As an artist using the internet, I see art all the time. It's definitely not all good, but I appreciate that it is so prevalent."

Much like the proliferation of digital photography, everyone and their dog can be a digital artist — sometimes for better, sometimes for worse.

"Pull up Instagram and take a look at some of the filters available. They create some pretty impressive interactive art. It's easier than ever to create digital art and social media has become the go-to

way to share it," says Johnson.

The rise of social media, much like the rise of technology, has given people access to a form of communication and exposure that has never been available before. People do have to be careful, though, regardless of the passion and talent put into their work.

"It's very easy to get caught up in the likes, comments and follows game and lose sight of why you started making art in the first place. Same with any piece of software — make it work for you, and if it becomes a negative thing in your life, stop using it."

## OUT'N ABOUT

### Family Paint Party

Unleash your inner artist at a Virtual Family Paint Party on April 4. You'll all go from a blank canvas to a masterpiece of your own, with plenty of laughs along the way. Follow the ONLINE demonstration and paint whatever you want!

### Work-Stop Workshops

Join Workshop Studios from home on April 4 for their new livestream hand building class. Over the course of five two-hour sessions, shared live via Zoom, they will guide you through the basic skills of hand building.

### Calgary Digital Library

The Calgary Public Library may be temporarily closed due to COVID-19, but that doesn't mean your library card needs to sit dormant. The Library has you covered with its extensive digital library.

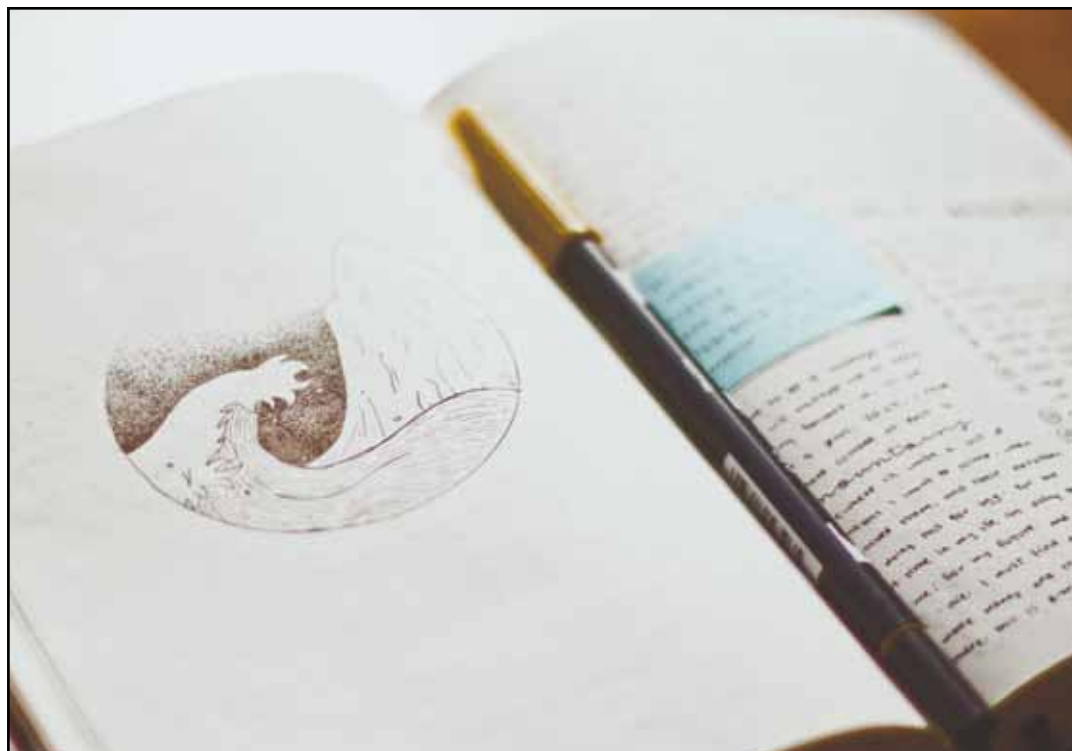
### Online Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra Concert

The Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra is making the social distancing a little bit easier thanks to its collection of previously live-streamed concerts on its YouTube page.

# The power of journaling

**Ayra Fouad**

Staff Writer



The secret formula to success may be as simple as a pen and one of the many notebooks piling up on your bookshelf that you bought on a whim at Chapters. Photo courtesy of Unsplash

For ages, society has been looking for the secret to success. Some say it's waking up at ungodly hours, others say it's meditation. The fact of the matter is, not all of us have time to do all — or any — of those things.


If you're anything like me, you'll probably wait until the very last minute to get out of bed, and the closest thing to meditation that you do on a daily basis is scrolling mindlessly through Instagram before falling asleep. So for those of us on a time crunch — and unwilling to set yet another, earlier alarm on our phones — is there anything we can be doing to be more successful?

To uncover this secret, we simply have to connect the dots between the biggest

and best minds of the world. Frida Kahlo, Leonardo DaVinci, Oprah. What do these people have in common? Journaling.

But don't think that you need to start your day writing, "Dear diary." Kahlo had an art journal, while DaVinci's journals are world renowned for all of his many philosophical and scientific discoveries littering the pages. Although we don't quite know what Oprah's journals look like, I think we can safely assume it's probably different from Kahlo and DaVinci's. The secret formula to success may be as simple as a pen and one of the many notebooks piling up on your bookshelf


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The Students' Association of MRU

# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2020



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**March 25 / 12:30 PM - 1:30 PM**

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**Continued from Pg. 10**

that you bought on a whim at Chapters.

What I'm trying to say is that if you are sitting at home, frantically searching for a way to raise your chances of success, it might be as easy as writing about

your feelings. Draw a picture, make a list of all the things you're grateful for or draft a list of supplies for the zombie apocalypse. Journaling is basically a personal therapy session, except you don't actually have to be face to face with anyone. You can do it in any kind of attire, from

any location, at any time and it's virtually free.

Many people I've talked to about journaling either make fun of me for having a "diary" or tell me about how they've been meaning to start for so long, and now don't know where to begin. Here's the deal — it's not

a diary. It's an expressive medium meant for self reflection. And secondly, it's probably one of the easiest and most fulfilling things to do.

Write (or paint or draw or whatever you prefer) like no one will read it. It could be as simple as reflecting on

your day or as complex as deciphering the meaning of life. Let's face it — you're the only one ever reading it, and even then, you're probably not actually going to read it. Unless you get famous, of course. Which, if you journal, you obviously will. No pressure!

# How to cultivate your inner artist during quarantine

**Mackenzie Mason**

Staff Writer



During this time, it can be easy to feel unmotivated, but a great way to shake it off is to get some creative juices flowing. Photo courtesy of Unsplash; photo illustration by Riggs Zyrille Vergara

It's no secret that COVID-19 has forced us all into an unfamiliar reality of self-isolating and social distancing. It's been hard on everyone, but my strongest condolences go out to the creative extroverts who are stuck at home, quickly losing their creative spark.

During this time, it can be easy to feel unmotivated, but a great way to shake it off is to get some creative juices

flowing. Art isn't just for kids and you don't have to be insanely talented to create it. You just have to want to have fun and be open to the process.

Here are five things anyone can do to reignite their creative spark and, as a bonus, calm some of that pent up stress!

## Paint or draw

The most obvious answer

is to create something visual. Painting or drawing is the best way to do that. Whether you're Bob Ross, or your artistic abilities peak at stick figures, picking up a pen or brush will stimulate your eyes and your mind.

Painting by numbers is the easiest way to pretend you're the next Van Gogh, with a cheat sheet! It's just as fun as making your own painting without the 45 minutes of

contemplating what to paint. And it might just turn out better than making your own.

But if you're artistically inclined, picking up a pen and doodling might be the best way to get in the groove again.

For a fun challenge, choose a song and draw how it makes you feel or what it makes you think of. Make it a competition by doing it with your roommates or your

family and voting on the best or most accurate one.

## Dance

TikTok is all the rage right now, with dance combinations going viral every day. And while this story is supposed to get you off your phone, TikTok might just be the best way to get you

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moving. Try the latest dance craze, upload your attempt and tag your friends to make it a challenge.

If TikTok isn't your thing, no worries. Listen to your favourite songs and try to make your own dance to it — the point is to get up and get moving. If putting in your headphones and dancing around your room sounds more like your style then do it. Get up, have fun and let loose!

**Take photos**

Photography is just as versatile as drawing and dancing — there's so much you can do with it, that's the beauty of art! Go on a walk around your neighbourhood and take pictures either with a camera or phone. Trees and wildlife make interesting subjects for a landscape photo.

If you've gone on a walk with another person (that you're isolating with), taking photos of them can

be artistic as well. Take account of your angles and lighting and remember the rule of thirds when it comes to photography: if you had a 3x3 grid making nine boxes on your image, the subjects should be intersecting between, or on those lines.

And don't underestimate a selfie! While selfies have become the new norm, try spicing yours up with an interesting angle or prop such as string lights or using a reflection of yourself in the photo as well.

**Write poems**

This has been a stressful time for many, and sometimes writing down how you feel can help when you're worked up. That is pretty much the definition of poetry. While reading poetry with a cozy blanket and a cup of tea is nice, writing your own is even better.

Start with one sentence and see where your mind takes you! Nothing is off limits. Google some types of poetry like a haiku or a

sonnet and try them out. Get creative — you can't write a poem wrong.

**Make some music**

This is my favorite way to make art and get creative. Music is so versatile. If you're anything like me, you've fallen in love with playing an instrument but haven't picked it up in years. Well folks — now is the time. Pick up an old instrument or maybe try a new one and look up some YouTube tutorials of your favourite songs!

Better yet, make your own. Grab one of the poems you wrote, add a melody and some treble with a guitar and you're the next Ed Sheeran. Another fun way to pass the time is to choose a song and grab your roommates or family and make a music video. Go all out and grab props, do some costume changes and maybe draw some backgrounds.

Stay safe, stay inside, wash your hands and have fun getting creative!



Stay safe, stay inside, wash your hands and have fun getting creative! Photo courtesy of Unsplash

**After Hours**

*The Weeknd*  
Republic Records  
**Score: A+**

Quarantine and The Weeknd's newest album, *After Hours*, is the new Netflix and chill. Let the sweet vocals of Abel Tesfaye wrap you up like a warm blanket and escape reality for 56 minutes. After the release of his single, 'Blinding Lights,' I had nothing but high hopes for this album and I was not disappointed. The Weeknd shows remorse for his failed relationships with the help of

a synthesizer, 80's disco funk and a whole lot of neon lights. The best part of this whole album is it enables your own cinematic experience. The next time you find yourself driving down an empty road at an ungodly hour, every track on this album will make you the star of your very own movie.

- Hermie Ocenar

**Circles**

*Mac Miller*  
Arista Records  
**Score: B-**

This is Mac Miller's best album — it's a shame he's not here to share it with the world himself. Through optimistic beats and chopped loops, *Circles* is emotional to say the least, touching on themes of anxiety, addiction and pain. Knowing this album was released posthumously, I was a little apprehensive when I first hit the play button. But as soon as the first note of *Circles* hummed in my headphones, and I was greeted with Miller's

comforting vocals, I knew I had nothing to worry about. Different from his previous album, *Swimming*, which was released in 2018, Miller experiments with jazz, lo-fi beats and intimate lyrics that exemplify his talents as an artist. This album is a beautiful and incredibly sad farewell from Mac Miller, but his music will forever live on.

- Hermie Ocenar

# MRU Cougars year in review: A hat-trick of silverware

*Relive MRU's three Canada West medals*

**Dan Khavkin**  
Sports Editor



Mount Royal's second bronze medal and third medal overall on home court after beating TRU WolfPack 3-1. Photo by Dan Khavkin

We're all missing sports. We're desperately watching any classic game shown on TV. We're all Youtubing and rewatching highlights to boost our morale with good memories.

But enough about COVID-19 and the hardships it brings to our life. Mount Royal, as a school, enjoyed its greatest varsity season since joining the university ranks back in 2012.

The men's hockey team

continues to reach new totals by earning its most amount of wins and points with an 18-6-2 record. Cougar hockey even shipped off two players who went pro right after their season ended. Women's basketball reached five win seasons for the first time since 2012 under new head coach Robyn Fleckenstein. And did we all forget that MRU hauled in a total of three medals?

Let's relive all three of

Mount Royal's legendary seasons that easily raised the bar for future varsity seasons for Cougar Athletics.

## Men's soccer

The boys in blue representing MRU kicked-off the school year in epic fashion this past fall. Coach Ryan Gyaki's footy squad became the first Mount Royal team to... well, you'll see.

However, first they had to

go through a lot. This year's men's soccer team became the first Cougars club to win their division after MRU finished their regular season with a 9-4-1 record.

The Cougars used home field to their full advantage when they held an undefeated record at Cougar Stadium Field, boasting a 6-0-1 record allowing for more history to be made.

MRU booked its fifth

consecutive trip to the Canada West playoffs but this time, the Cougars men's soccer squad enjoyed the privilege of hosting its first-ever playoff game when they hosted the Thompson Rivers WolfPack.

The Cougars, carried by the greatest supporter showing in campus history, advanced to the Canada West semi-finals

**Continues on Pg. 14**

# #S

**475,** foot home run in May 2015 by Giancarlo Stanton – longest home run hit at Dodgers Stadium over the last 10 years.

**3,** consecutive game 7 wins for the Toronto Raptors after losing their first two

**5,** different cancelations for the heavily anticipated Khabib-Fregusoin fight that dates back to April 2015

**3,** Canada West medals for Cougars Athletics

### Continued from Pg. 13

with a 2-1 win. A spot for the Canada West finals along with a berth to the USPORTS nationals was on the line.

In their way was the dreaded Calgary Dinos.

There was no better way to settle the score after t-wrecking them to open the 2019 campaign 5-0 before dropping the return match 1-0 in the last game of the season.

Unfortunately, the Cougars had their run to nationals fall short when inner-city rival Calgary Dinos ousted them 2-1 in the final-four contest, but they still had the chance to make school history.

They did just that when they defeated the Saskatchewan Huskies 3-1 in the Canada West bronze medal match to claim Mount Royal University's first-ever medal at the university level since transitioning to USPORTS in 2012.

MRU's dirty gold was complimented by a collection of individual accolades. Coach Gyaki was named Canada West coach of the year while rookie Dane Domic was recognized as both Canada West and USPORTS rookie of the year after his brilliant debut campaign.

Domic tallied six goals and eight assists in his first 13 games as a Cougar and finished second in conference scoring.

Teammate Moe El-Gandour, eventual draft pick of the Cavalry FC, was named to the Canada West first-team all-star group after tallying 11 points in 13 games that went along with a team-leading seven goals. Centre-back and senior Travis MacPhee was also named a first-team all-star. Domic and defender Daniel Harrison were both named to the second-team, while rookies Tom Ruetten and Miguel Da Rocha were named to the Canada West all-rookie team.

### Women's volleyball

Enjoying one of Mount Royal's two runs at the national title, the Cougars women's volleyball fell victim to the cancelations in sports caused by COVID-19.

However, as tough as the heartbreak was for the proud MRU women's volleyball players and staff, there is still history to celebrate and

athletes to recognize.

Move over men's soccer because this year's MRU women's volleyball squad also created school history by becoming the Cougars second team to medal in Canada West.

The Cougars enjoyed the now, second most regular season in school history after finishing second in Canada West with a 21-3 record.

MRU's dominant regular season saw them get recognized at the national level early on by cracking the USPORTS top 10 very early on during the first week of November, getting ranked sixth, holding a 5-0 record.

From November on, the Cougars climbed up the national rankings sitting inside the top five and even peaked at No.4.

The Cougars qualified for playoffs for the fifth year in a row and sixth out of their eight years overall after boasting a 21-3 record. Just like the men's soccer squad, a hard-fought and dominating regular season rewarded the Cougars with their first-ever Canada West home playoff series.

The hunt for nationals was on. MRU hosted the 13-time Canada West and 12-time national champion UBC Thunderbirds inside the friendly confines of Kenyon Court where the Cougars clipped the T-Birds while going the distance to win the quarter-final series 2-1.

Advancing to the conference semi-finals presented the opportunity to clinch not only a spot in the conference finals, but also a trip to the USPORTS national playoffs.

MRU however, dropped their final-four contest to powerhouse Alberta Pandas in another three-game marathon. Their post-season however, wasn't over.

The Cougars enjoyed the ultimate privilege of hosting the Thompson River WolfPack inside the Mount Royal campus for the Canada West bronze medal match and took full advantage of playing in front of a bouncing Kenyon Court.

MRU dominated the WolfPack with a 3-1 win to secure the school's second bronze medal of the year and second medal overall.

The Cougars were slated to start the USPORTS nationals in Calgary but the outbreak of the coronavirus halted

any hopes of a Mount Royal national title.

### Women's hockey

They weren't quite the gold standard but they were pretty darn close to it.

The Cougars women's hockey team fought and clawed its way to Mount Royal's historic silver medal at the Canada West level this past season.

Despite a rocky 12-14-2-0 regular season record, the Cougars claimed fourth-place in Canada West heading into their fourth consecutive playoff appearance and fourth overall.

MRU hosted Regina in an all-Cougars contest where Mount Royal swept Regina 2-0 in a best-of-three Canada West quarter-finals. MRU blanked Regina during the series with

1-0 and 2-0 wins respectively.

Next up was yet another shot at school history... In their way? The Calgary Dinos.

Once again a Crowchild Classic semi-finals series between two inner-city rivals was to determine a spot in not only the Canada West finals series, but also a berth to qualify one Calgary team to the USPORTS national final.

This time, it was the Cougars who one upped their rival when they t-Wrecked the Dinos emotionally by ripping their hearts out with a game-three, double overtime victory on Dino home-ice.

The Cougars women's hockey team became the first MRU team to advance to the Canada West finals. Already with a spot in nationals secured, one more task was at hand... the conference banner.

However, the Alberta Pandas had other ideas and set out to defend their Canada West title and did just that when they swept Mount Royal 2-0 in a best-of-three series.

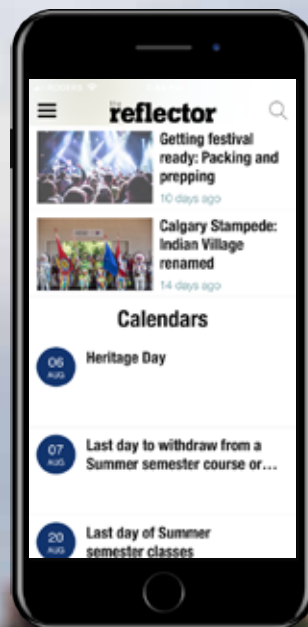
MRU scored just one goal during the finals as they dropped a harsh 5-1 contest before getting shutout 2-0 in game two.

Their season however would still go on, but what could've been a legendary march to nationals fell short.

Mount Royal took a short flight east to PEI to begin their hunt for a national title and started on a high when they upset the No. 3 ranked Toronto Varsity Blues in the USPORTS quarter-finals 2-1.

However, the playoffs were canceled shortly after and what could've been... we'll never know.

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# Canada at its best in 2019: A year in review

**Zach Worden**

Staff Writer

With the sports world now frozen across the world due to COVID-19, there's no better time than now to look back at the best of 2019 from our Canadian teams and athletes.

Despite a lack of success on the ice for Canadians in 2019, athletes across a handful of other sports picked up the slack. From basketball to tennis, we saw many firsts and records broken in our country.

Hopefully, we can get our athletes back on the field, ice or court soon. But for now, here are the top four moments of Canadian sports in 2019.

## Bianca Andreescu makes Canadian tennis history

To kick things off, we'll start with the tennis superstar who became the highest-ranked Canadian ever in the Women's Tennis Association in 2019 at number four. Not only did Andreescu win the Canadian Open at 18 years old, but she did it by beating the undisputable greatest player of all-time, Serena Williams.

Winning on home soil wasn't the end of Andreescu's stellar 2019. She followed up her Canadian Open victory, by beating Williams once again in the US Open claiming the Grand Slam title. In her run to the championship, she captivated the country and became the headliner for all Canadian sports.

The Thornhill, Ont., native was named the Lou Marsh Trophy winner, as the top Canadian athlete in 2019. Andreescu was both the first Canadian to ever win a Grand Slam singles title and the first teenager to do so since 2006.

## Soroka one of baseball's best

After getting his first taste of big-league action in 2018, Calgarian Mike Soroka stormed onto the scene in 2019. As a 21-year old, Soroka



**18-year-old Bianca Andreescu made history when the Canadian tennis star beat Serena Williams in the US Open Final. Photo courtesy of Getty**

not only held his own on the mound but dominated against the best competition in the world. In 29 starts for the Atlanta Braves, he went 13-4, finished with a 2.68 ERA (fifth in the MLB), and struck out 142 hitters in just under 175 innings pitched.

For all his work in 2019, Soroka was named an MLB all-star. At the midsummer's classic in Cleveland, he pitched a scoreless sixth inning, retiring all three hitters he faced.

Unfortunately for Soroka and the Braves, the team fell in the National League Division Series to the St. Louis Cardinals in five games. The Braves turned to their rookie ace in game three and he came through with a win. In his playoff debut, Soroka threw seven innings and only gave up one run on two hits.

At the year-end MLB awards, Soroka finished second in National League rookie of the year voting, and sixth in votes for the Cy Young award. After his outstanding 2019, he did receive the Tip

O'Neill Award as the top Canadian baseball player.

## Raptors win first Canadian title in 26 years

"CANADA, THE NBA TITLE IS YOURS!" Words that had never been said before came from Matt Devlin as the Toronto Raptors secured the first NBA Championship in Canadian history.

In a thrilling run to the NBA finals, led by finals MVP Kawhi Leonard, the Raptors turned what is usually a hockey country into a basketball country. With fans coast to coast gathering to form their own version of Toronto's "Jurassic Park" the Raptors took down the Golden State Warriors dynasty in six games.

En route to the finals, the Raptors took down the Orlando Magic in five games, the Philadelphia 76ers in seven, and the Milwaukee Bucks in six.

In the series against the 76ers, Leonard hit "the shot."

A replay that has been shown thousands of times now, a four bouncer at the buzzer. The Raptors won the series on Leonard's heroic buzzer-beating shot in game seven. The dramatics of the shot put the team into the conference finals, where they lost the first two games to the Bucks before winning the next four to advance to the finals.

Between the dramatics of the ending of the 76ers series and the comeback from the dead to beat the Bucks, the Raptors captured the imagination of Canadians near and far on their way to Canada's first "big four" sports title since 1993.

## Henderson becomes winningest Canadian ever

Brooke Henderson has been on the LPGA Tour since 2015. Since then all she has done is win. Her first career tour win came at the Cambia Portland Classic in 2015, as she became

the first Canadian to win on the LPGA tour since 2001.

Over the next three years, Henderson picked up six more LPGA victories. All while becoming only the third Canadian to win multiple LPGA events in the same season, the first Canadian since 1973 to win the Canadian Women's Open and was awarded the Canadian Press Female Athlete of the Year in 2015, 2017 and 2018.

She entered 2019 just one tour victory away from tying Sandra Post, Mike Weir and George Knudson for the most victories by a Canadian on LPGA or PGA tours.

It didn't take her long to tie the record as in April she won the Lotte Championship in Hawaii for the second straight year.

She followed that up by breaking the record at the Meijer LPGA Classic in June. Her second victory at the event helped her secure the title of most victorious Canadian golf player ever, all at the age of 22.

# COVID-19: Your sports guide

**Dan Khavkin**

Sports Editor

Being a sports fan sucks right now. Every passing day we hope to hear good news about the retreat of COVID-19, but it seems that we'll be waiting a while.

Most seem to do their part in self-isolating and maintaining excellent hygiene... as sports fans, we can only hope that the health of society restores itself along with our beloved hobbies of watching and playing sports.

We'll overcome this. We have to... for the sake of sports. Here are some ways to satisfy your daily sports cravings during this difficult time.

## Buy or watch old sports video games

Depending on how old you are and what of your childhood you have left, you might have access to your very first video game console.

Why not take advantage of your boredom by reliving some of your childhood and teenage memories by inserting a disc or cartridge into your first (or current) console and rewind time 4, 5 or even 10 years and enjoy playing what probably is a better video game than what you paid \$80 today!

Do you remember owning NFL Blitz? NHL 3v3 Arcade? Backyard Sports? If you're even past that time, why not fire up Mike Tyson's Punch-out or NHL 94?

Other classics include NHL 2K5, NFL 2K5, NBA 2K11, Tony Hawk Pro Skate 3, NBA Jam... you name it!

Don't have these games? Go on Youtube! Enjoy through another perspective what sports entertainment used to look like and relive some of your childhood memories!

## Stream ESPN or TSN online

If you need a daily sports craving you might need to either hope your TV package has sports channels or buy a subscription to ESPN or TSN! If these channels are not your cup of tea, then screw it! Sportsnet or Fox Sports, who cares! Any one of these conglomerates are fighting one another one way or another to capture your eyes to rewatch a classic play, game or series.

Sportsnet began to run games of the legendary 2004 Calgary Flames run to the Stanley Cup finals!

ESPN is releasing "The Last Dance" series about Michael Jordan earlier than expected so if you don't want to pay, then just find a way! Sports are still to be found in your local TV package, you just got to look for it!

Whatever you missed on TV will for sure be online.

## Watch old highlights or listen to podcasts

Speaking of which, go online! Youtube is an unofficial archive of countless playoff series and dramatic sports moments throughout history.

Educate yourself! Watch old sports news segments and pick up on topics you might've missed out on.

Catch up on all your Stephen A. Smith rants and funny moments. Youtube Shannon Sharpe highlights, and no, not his NFL hall of fame mixtapes but his acts on TV while debating sports!

Watch old hockey, basketball, WHATEVER highlights as far back as only three years ago or decades to see the difference in the game you love!

You may have not been alive or too young to remember either seeing Michael Jordan, Kobe, Gretzky or any elite athletes before and after them! Why not do what athletes do and watch some game film?

Youtube and, well, the internet, have a plethora of snippets of podcasts you can start to watch and listen to!

Are you a soccer fan? Why not relive different olympic games and moments? There are endless amounts of World Cup, Euro and Champions League content to consume! Watch your player develop before your eyes while watching their highlights. The world is yours!

Support local media online while you can. Ever heard of the *Red Mile Podcast*? HIGHLY recommend. Catch up on *Spittin' Chiclets* or the *Pat McAfee Show*! You have so many options.

## Follow sports pages and fan-pages online

If you don't have Instagram or Twitter, there's no better time to get addicted now.

Want to forget about real life? Forget your political interests and any other distraction and


start following sports outlets and fan pages ASAP.

If you are a university student, why not relive your school's season or watch historic moments. You can go on a binge on anything you want. Pick up a new league like the XFL. Follow their content for a quick smile for your day. Youtube marble racing if you want!

No need to drive the point that life sucks without sports.

Watching any sort of highlight from any sport or getting reminded that "On this day..." that you fondly remember or glad you forgot, are daily reminders that sports do still exist!

It's up to you to not forget about them.



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