

the reflector

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MRU students see significant changes to campus services in wake of pandemic

Noel Harper
News Editor



Charlton Pond at Mount Royal University. The fall 2020 semester will largely take place away from campus, meaning some services will be delivered much differently. Photo by Noel Harper

The COVID-19 pandemic isn't going anywhere soon, and neither are the changes being made to so many long-standing institutions as a result — including education. For post-secondary students, the fall 2020 semester will be like no other, as it will primarily be delivered remotely.

Mount Royal University confirmed plans to move classes to “alternative methods” on June 1, one month ahead of the June 30 deadline the institution gave itself to come to a final decision. Other local institutions, like the University of Calgary and Bow Valley College, communicated their decisions regarding the fall semester in May.

“It's safe to say that all of us would prefer face-to-face delivery of courses, as well as student supports and services,” MRU President Tim Rahilly said in an email. “We look forward to returning to in-person interactions with students ... when we safely

can.”

Since then, the university has been tasked with ensuring that campus services can be brought to students — despite many of them being away from the campus itself.

Calgary Transit's U-Pass — a reduced fare ticket for students at Calgary's five major universities to use while attending — has been cancelled for the fall and will be deferred to the winter 2020 semester. As a result, students will not be charged a U-Pass fee for the fall.

“Since we are being encouraged to stay at home and many of us will no longer be expected to travel to and from campus every day, we agreed that this is one way to help students save money,” the Students Association of Mount Royal University (SAMRU) said in a statement.

MRU initially announced there would be no cuts to student fees for the fall semester despite the necessity of remote learning. “We are aware of student concerns regarding fees

during a period when access to campus is limited,” read a statement from the university to LiveWire Calgary.

As an alternative to the U-Pass program, SAMRU said it has secured discounted transit tickets for credit students to use instead. Under the plan, a book of 10 tickets would cost \$21, a 40 per cent discount of Calgary Transit's regular price for 10 tickets, which is \$35.

“We hope this is yet another valuable service we can offer to make things a little easier,” a SAMRU statement read.

MRU's Recreation Centre is gradually reopening after closing due to the COVID-19 shutdown. As part of the provincial government's Stage 2 of economic relaunch, gyms and other indoor fitness facilities were permitted to open on June 12.

The centre staggered their opening to Sept. 8, and will be open to students only for the time being — any full or part-time credit student who pays the recreation and athletics fee will have access.

Other members of the public will be welcomed to use the facilities if the trial phase is successful.

“The experience will be different than what you may be accustomed to,” read an email from the university sent to students. On re-opening day, the facility's fitness centre, track lanes and triple gym will be open for use.

Squash and tennis courts, climbing wall and pool will remain closed, among other components of the centre. There will also be no changing rooms open for use, but day-use lockers will be available on a limited basis.

In February, MRU's board of directors approved a 10 per cent one-time increase to the recreation and athletics fee as a result of decreased university funding from the provincial government. “We understand some of this may be disappointing, but appreciate your patience,” MRU Recreation wrote in a Facebook posting.

During the remote fall 2020 semester, the health centre,

Cougars Campus Store and Wyckham House will be open on campus. Counselling and learning specialist services have moved online.

The services of the Riddell Library and Learning Centre can be accessed by students digitally, but the facility will be partially re-opening to students in the fall. “Please note that these are special accommodations for students who are required to be on campus and need a place to study or access to a computer,” a Twitter thread from the MRU Library account read in part.

Whenever students are on campus, they will be required to wear masks, which will be available at the West Gate security desk.

Enrolment for the fall 2020 semester has increased compared to the previous year — despite the remote nature of the coming semester, registration is up by 1.4 per cent. The preceding spring and summer semesters saw a registration increase of 30 per cent.

What Alberta's first pandemic-era fiscal update means for university students

Noel Harper
News Editor

Albertans received an update on the province's fiscal house last week, granting a glimpse into the impact of ongoing economic contraction and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Finance Minister Travis Toews delivered the first-quarter update in the legislature to the tune of a \$24.2 billion deficit — the largest in the province's history — and \$11.5 billion less in revenue.

This revenue has shifted dramatically beyond what Alberta is used to — in particular, what or who is providing a greater share of provincial funds.

Post-secondary tuition is one changing factor of Alberta's budget, with an increasing percentage of revenue coming from university costs over the last three fiscal years, according to data compiled

by the Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS).

Post-secondary students are now providing more for the province than its primary industry. In total, university tuition will account for \$1.35 billion of Alberta's revenue for 2020-2021. In contrast, money earned from oil and gas comes to just \$1.2 billion.

Revenue from corporate taxes and from Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis will also be greater than from oil and gas.

The 2020 Alberta budget resulted in a \$114 million decrease in funding to post-secondary education compared to the government's 2019 plans. This resulted in a seven per cent increase in domestic tuition being instated by Mount Royal University in February.

The increase is taking effect

during the current semester, the majority of which will take place away from campus due to COVID-19.

"The relative burden on students [in Alberta] has more than quintupled - and that doesn't even account for the 15% increase in tuition in the next two years," a Twitter thread from CAUS read in part.

"Increasingly, post-secondary education plays a critical role in transforming Alberta's economy and creating lasting solutions for society," wrote MRU President Tim Rahilly and Chancellor Dawn Farrell in the Calgary Herald.

Overall, the budget was relying on a significantly more positive economic outlook in February, including a deficit of only \$7.5 billion and the lack of a global pandemic.

Now, the province's deficit

has increased by nearly \$17 billion, and COVID-19 forced an economic shutdown that still has not fully been resolved.

This does not mean that government spending across the post-secondary sector has come to a halt. Throughout July and August, the Alberta government announced a total of 12 infrastructure projects at post-secondary institutions throughout the province including the University of Alberta, Lethbridge College and NAIT.

These projects totaled a cost of \$98 million as part of the province's economic recovery plan. The largest share of capital from this plan — \$1.5 billion — is going to the Keystone XL pipeline project.

The next financial update for Alberta will be heard in November, followed by the 2021 budget this February.

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Executive changes and new role mark MRU's academic future

Noel Harper
News Editor

Over the spring and summer, Mount Royal University made some changes to the executive branch, creating a new position and severing ties with its vice-president academic.

Since January, MRU had been searching for a candidate to fill the role of a chancellor for the institution. "This person will be able to broaden our network, deepen our connections and act as a sage advisor," the university said in a statement.

By July, Dawn Farrell was unanimously approved by the board of directors to serve as the university's first chancellor. Farrell, born in Calgary, is a veteran of the electricity industry throughout

Western Canada, working for BC Hydro and TransAlta before becoming president and CEO of the latter. She is also a former professor and board member at MRU.

While with the Calgary-based TransAlta, which claims to be "Canada's largest clean electricity provider," Farrell spearheaded efforts to reduce the economic footprint of its services, moving away from coal towards renewable energy.

The chancellor's four-year role is a ceremonial one that is not paid, and one that involves promoting the university on and off campus which Farrell will officially begin in November.

"When Mount Royal

described the chancellor position as one that uses connections to contribute to a strong future for Calgarians and Albertans, I was on board," said Farrell.

Recent updates to the Post-Secondary Learning Act allowed the university to appoint a chancellor for the first time, in an effort to make "MRU's governance structure [become] more like other Alberta universities," its statement on the role of chancellor read in part. MRU can now also grant honorary doctorates under changes to the act, which began this year.

On June 2, MRU announced that provost Dr. Lesley Brown would be parting ways with the university. A reason was

not given for the departure, but a statement from the university wished her well in future endeavors.

Dr. Elizabeth Evans, MRU's founding dean of the faculty of business and communications studies, was selected as interim provost and VP academic shortly after Brown's departure. Evans has been with the university since 2016.

In May of this year, MRU lost 40 positions, 17 of them vacant with 23 employees being let go, on top of 10 jobs that were cut in November of 2019. MRU President Tim Rahilly cited reduced post-secondary funding from the provincial government, made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic, for the losses.

Online methods of course delivery: A learning curve for all

Cassie Weiss
Features Editor

Everyone is a little bit sick of hearing the term “COVID-19.” With bated breath, students and faculty have waited, hoping for a glimpse into the not-too-distant future, desperately trying to predict what the word “future” even means. As schools across the province are returning to classes in the fall, Mount Royal University stands strong in the decision made to keep most students educated through online learning methods.

Although online classes were not the reality many students wanted to face, the decision to keep campus closed may not necessarily be a bad one. According to one faculty member, this new method to subject delivery is something to settle into, being inevitable at this point.

“[The switch to online classes] has forced us to look at how we were teaching,” stated Peter Choate, program coordinator of social work at MRU. “We’ve been spending a lot of time videoing...so that we have material. We are facing that it’s causing us to question if we have been teaching in the most effective way.”

Choate says it is a steep learning curve for many of MRU’s faculty. Not all of the professors employed by the university have experience teaching online, and it does become much harder to connect with the students when distance separates.

An important thing Choate explains is not just the difficulty in building a relationship with the professor through a computer screen, but also the difficulty in building those relationships with fellow students. For students not in their first

year at the university, these informal supports are already in place due to the colleagues made in previous years, but students entering for the first time do not get that luxury.

“Our role is to maximize our learning platform as much as we can,” says Choate. “Part of it is on faculty to create mechanisms to gain those relationships. We have to be intentional about that. Regardless of the learning environment, the key is to establish relationships.”

Discussing the ideas of online office hours, discussion rooms for students to participate in and online seminars, there are multiple ways of creating space for students to ask questions and decide how best to tackle the upcoming semester.

Unlike the rush to online last year, as COVID-19 forced closed campuses across the province with a month left in the school year, Choate states the preparation over the summer has led to a more developed approach when it comes to assignments and testing.

“It was uncertainty by the moment last year. The university would send out an email, and then the health officer would change the [information] and three hours later you would get a new email.

“The ground shifted by the day. We were making it up as we were moving along. Most of us would say we did the best we could do in a crisis. Right now, though, it does like we are going in prepared.”

Although he jokes about asking him again in a month if he feels the preparation was enough, Choate seems pretty confident in the ability

for students to roll with the punches and get things done, despite the new challenges that come with a shift to online learning.

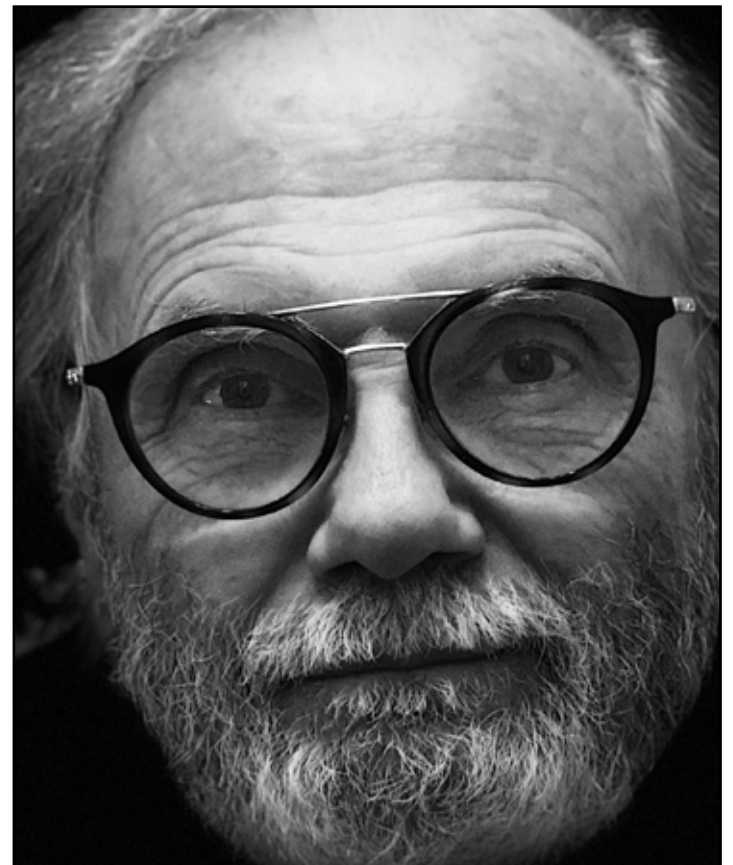
“We are working our way through some ethical issues that have both positive and negative stresses to them. There has been some discussion about the ethics of exams and academic integrity.

“Also, maybe there are things students don’t feel comfortable showing, but are now on camera. You are now invited into everyone’s space. Over the course of winter and spring, I was meeting people’s spouses, children, pets...”

Taking it from first-hand experience, Choate is not one to ignore when a furry friend pops up into the camera screen, but it still is a distraction that can get in the way. Add in the possibility of students not having access to high-end electronic availability, such as high-speed internet in more remote communities, and there can be quite a struggle in finding the most effective solution.

Even with these concerns, the enrolment rate at MRU has still increased, according to Choate. Not privy to the exact reasons why, the numbers seem to speak for themselves when it comes to the assurance students must feel returning to school in September.

With some programs making exceptions for students to be on campus, Choate states that MRU has done a fantastic job at analyzing what courses and classes need to be in person. And for everything else that does have to remain online, the Academic Development Centre has been putting out



Peter Choate, program coordinator of the social work department, is hopeful for the switch to online course work, even though that may pose more challenges to students. Photo courtesy of Peter Choate

a ton of material to aid best they can.

“No professor is going to say, ‘Hey, I got this down.’ If students think something isn’t working very well, and have creative ideas, start sharing these ideas. The vast majority of profs are learning and exploring this pedagogy as the students are.”

Choate wants the students to be co-creators of a pedagogy that works, and to utilize the abundance of academic and wellness resources that the university has to offer. Online access to the library, and the subject experts that come with each section of material, is one thing he stresses.

“It’s vital at this point to

make sure students are aware. Faculty has an obligation to make sure students know about those systems, and for the students to figure out how to use those resources available.”

Not as uncertain as the end of the last year, there is still a whole lot of unknown that comes with the upcoming semester, but Choate, along with many of his fellow colleagues, are here for the students to help transition in the smoothest way possible.

“The further behind you get, the harder it is to catch up. The motivation is in not isolating yourself. [This year] will be really hard if you become isolated.”

The benefits of becoming a back-to-school yogi

Kate Vincent

Contributor



Kate Vincent has been teaching yoga for approximately 10 years, and cannot stress enough how important the activity is for providing calm and relaxation during the stressful (and now uncertain) time of back to school.

Photo by Marissa McCann

As the sun begins to set earlier and the socially-distanced patio parties slow down, students are anticipating the unexpected. We have new professors to meet, course outlines pouring

in and schedule changes to navigate. This could pose the question: who on earth would suggest that students spend any of their valuable time on anything else but preparing for this semester? Especially

on something as indulgent as yoga?

In this age of Instagram yogis posting glamorous pictures adorned with an inspirational quote, it can be hard to imagine how contorting our bodies into these wild poses (and paying a pretty penny to do so) could benefit our ability to study, write or pay attention to online lectures. Yet, study after study shows the incredible ability yoga has — not only to make us physically strong, but to alter our internal states in a way that can change how we respond to external stress.

Recent research shows yoga decreases stress, anxiety and depression by regulating cortisol (big, mean stress hormone) and activating the parasympathetic nervous system (think the opposite of fight or flight). A regular yoga practice increases delta

and alpha activity in your brain and improves mental performance (another 10-page research essay? Bring it). Kids are able to pay attention and focus for longer periods of time and regulate their emotions more efficiently. So, why are so many students not doing it?

I started asking people who don't do yoga what their biggest hesitations were, and it all came down to time, money and a fear that they would be "bad" at yoga.

The word yoga is a Sanskrit word that means "to yoke" mind, body and spirit. That being said, to do anything with attention could be considered yoga, whether it is tying a shoelace, cooking a meal or taking 10 minutes of your day to sit and watch your breath.

As a fellow university student, I hear you on the money front, and yes, studio

classes tend to run on the pricey side. Fortunately, the amount of free yoga and meditation classes available online is almost overwhelming — simply by searching for it on Google or Youtube. A good resource is "Yoga with Adriene".

Lastly, I am pleased to tell you that there is no such thing as being "good" at yoga. It is a never ending, non-linear and completely unique person-to-person practice that some days might feel great and other days might feel more similar to a fish out of water. However, I assure you, even if you simply spend 10 minutes a day flopping around on the floor — doing your best to notice your breath and how you feel without any expectation or judgement — you will become a master yogi, a productive student and a pretty chill human being.

3 crucial tips to help ease yourself into the school year – pandemic style

Cassie Weiss

Features Editor

There is nothing quite like the ringing of a school bell, signaling the inevitable return back to the books and classrooms that come with the fading of summer. Of course, in university, we don't really have school bells, and with COVID-19 still controlling most of what we do, there isn't really a return to the classroom. But the stresses of the upcoming school year still remain. And if you are anything like me, they don't just remain. They gradually increase until I'm crying with a tub of ice cream, avoiding life and watching Netflix, because isn't that how most people manage their emotions?

Luckily, the return to university doesn't have to be

this huge encompassing thing that takes over your mind. It can be gradual, it can be exciting and it doesn't have to be full of stress and worry. There are a ton of methods that can be utilized to ease yourself back into the grind of assignments and due dates. And great news, I have a few crucial ones laid out here, in black and white, for your viewing pleasure.

1. Make a schedule

We have a school schedule for a reason, and to no surprise, we also have other things in life that we have to plan around school. I easily forget plans I've made and then panic when I've double or tripled booked myself

and have a major paper due at the same time. So, avoid the panic and just plan out your semester — write things in a daily planner or a calendar that is often in eyesight. Mapping out all my assignments, gym sessions, club meetings and work shifts leave me fully aware of when I do and do not have free time. It's easier to destress when you are in control of your time.

2. Make (and stick to) a routine

Following a routine is a great way to get yourself back into school mode. It will be hard, but stick to whatever works for you. Studies show that waking up at the same

time every day and going to bed at the same time every day ensures that your brain gets the proper amount of rest it needs and leaves you bright-eyed and bushy-tailed to take on whatever is thrown at you. Once you make that routine and commit to following it, the early mornings won't be so difficult to handle..

3. Don't forget about 'you' time

I know that is super easy to say and even harder to honour. But the thing is, if you spent all summer hanging out, it is going to be a complete shock to your system to jump back into school and just

completely take away all your extracurricular activities. Don't forget the things that calm you down — an hour-long dog walk, a short drive to the mountains or just reading a book in the fading summer light. If it relaxes you, it shouldn't be forgotten about.

Deciding to dedicate most of your time to your education is a very important thing for most of us, but in my opinion, school is nothing if you spend too much time stressed about it to enjoy the little things life has to offer. So, make a schedule, plan the rest of your life in the in-between, and dip your toes back into the semester while still squeezing as much out of summer as there is left.

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The Blue Jay Sessions spark excitement as live entertainment returns to Calgary

Mackenzie Mason

Arts Editor



Live music is finally back in Calgary, starting at Mikey's on 12th Avenue for the Blue Jay Sessions – a live event for country singers and songwriters to showcase their work and the stories behind it in an intimate setting. This year's lineup of Blue Jays consist of local artists from Mariya Stokes to Aaron Pollock. Photos courtesy of Dan Clapson

COVID-19 has put the world on hold, which puts Calgary's live music venues and restaurants in a tough spot. Dan Clapson, co-founder and creative director of Eat North, and Miraya Stokes and Devin Cooper, local country musicians, have all felt the effects COVID-19 has put on those in the entertainment industry.

But with a little social distancing and some plexiglass, live music is back at Mikey's on 12th Avenue with the Blue Jay Sessions — a live event for country singers and songwriters to showcase their work and the

stories behind it in an intimate setting.

In case you missed it, the COVID-19 pandemic is still alive and well, with Alberta accounting for the second highest rate of new cases, according to *Maclean's*.

As of the end of August, Alberta surpassed 13,300 COVID-19 cases, and while the province's overall numbers are going up slightly, Calgary has 214 fewer cases than the Edmonton zone, which has the most cases in the province.

The music and restaurant scene downtown were hit hard in March and April when

Canada implemented physical distancing orders, forcing many restaurants and venues to reduce hours, lay off staff or even close completely.

Event organizers have also had to cancel or postpone events until 2021. This is precisely what Clapson and Eat North have had to do.

“(Eat North) does a lot of events primarily in the late spring and summer into the early fall, so it was quite jarring for us work-wise,” Clapson said.

“We were in Saskatoon getting events set up for the Juno Awards, and that got cancelled while we were

there. You can sink a lot of money into an event before it happens so that wasn't ideal.”

But that didn't stop Clapson from giving artists a space to create and showcase their talent.

“When everything shut down, we immediately pivoted to a weekly virtual version of Blue Jay. We kept that format alive for the first three months of the pandemic, just giving musicians something to do and generating income for them,” he said.

“Even though it was of no profit to us, we still helped to stimulate the artist community with that. One of the most

interesting things coming out of the pandemic for us was realizing how we can utilize live stream software in interesting ways.”

With musicians relying heavily on the income they make touring and performing live, Cooper was concerned about supporting himself without the hundreds of shows he does a year.

“Basically all of my income and everything I did was based around live touring, and not being able to play live has definitely had an impact on that,” Cooper said.

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OUT'N ABOUT

Floating Boat Cinema

Catch an old classic or an exciting thriller with friends and family while keeping your distance from others – on a boat! Set sail with up to seven friends from Sept. 16 to 20 on the Glenmore Reservoir. The best part? The popcorn is free!

WildDogs Intl Screendance Festival

This festival is committed to creating a space for dance on film as an independent art form. From Sept. 12 to 13 at the Plaza Theatre or virtually, the festival features short films from dance, movement, image and video artists from around the world.

Rainbow Lion Pride

This Laugh and learn for \$10 a show at Dickens Pub from Sept. 3 to 6 and celebrate the LGBTQ+ community for Calgary's Pride Week! Fake Mustache, along with DeVery Productions, Cabaret Calgary and more have teamed up to create a lineup of shows for you to enjoy.

Storybook Theatre's Spring Awakening

Kick-off Storybook Theatre's 44th season with “Spring Awakening.” In a theatre or your own home between Aug. 28 to Sept. 5, enjoy the musical telling of a group of students in Germany as they navigate self-discovery in a “powerful celebration of youth and rebellion.”



Michael Daniels performs at the Oak Tree Tavern for last year’s holiday edition of the Blue Jay Sessions. Daniels is a country singer and songwriter who has worked with CCMA multi-award winning recording artist Gil Grand. Photos courtesy of Dan Clapson

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Despite the struggles, Cooper believes the pandemic has forced musicians to be creative and come up with different ways to find an income.

“I think it’s been a great

opportunity to look at other ways to create a sustainable business without having to 100 per cent rely on live touring, whether it’s doing streaming shows, putting out videos or continuing to release music.”

The latter is something that

has kept Cooper busy.

“(Quarantine) has given me a lot of time to work on new music, writing songs and recording,” he said.

“The past couple of years have been so busy on the road playing shows across Canada, so it’s actually been kind of

nice to have a break to get reorganized on the business side of things.”

After two years without releasing a single, Cooper kicked things off again three weeks ago by releasing the country song, “Last Time Last.”

Cooper wasn’t always a country boy though, despite growing up in Innisfail, Alta.

“I started playing guitar when I was seven and grew up playing rock and blues. I went to college in Calgary, and

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that's when I really started getting into country music," Cooper said.

When asked about how he got into music, Cooper said he was always playing country music — he just didn't realize it at the time.

"The music I played growing up was rock music with country lyrics, so when I started taking music a little more seriously, I realized that everything I was saying in my music was what was being said in country songs."

Contrary to Cooper, country music was always a big part of Stokes' life growing up.

"My parents owned the Stavely Hotel, which is the bar in my hometown, but I used to sit on the stairs outside of the bar room and watch all the bands come through town and once in a while they would let me sneak in and sing," Stokes said.

"I ended up picking up a guitar when I was about 14. I was singing my whole life, but 14 is when I really got into songwriting and guitar and the rest is history. I moved to (Calgary) when I was 18 to pursue a career in music, quit my job when I was 20 and I've been doing this ever since."

This was supposed to be the "biggest year yet" for her career as she was scheduled to release an album in the spring and go on a big promotional tour afterwards.

"Most of my shows and dates were cancelled which was tough, especially in the beginning, but things are starting to pick up now."

"It's still not the way that it was obviously, but it's just nice to connect with people at a safe social distance," she said, referencing her recent live performances at the King Eddy's Alberta Country Music Series happening every Saturday night.

Though all have faced their hurdles during COVID, they're ready to perform live again at Mikey's on 12th Avenue in early September with the Blue Jay Sessions.

"The Blue Jay Sessions started almost a year ago now, and features three or four musicians that sit in a circle," Clapson said.

"It's called 'a round' in the country music world, and they take turns telling stories and singing songs. Sometimes you could hear a pin drop in the room because people are so invested in the actual music experience."

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Alberta-born country singer, Paul Brant, makes a special appearance at last year's Blue Jay Sessions at the Oak Tree Tavern. Photos courtesy of Dan Clapson

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Alex Hughes (left), D'orjay The Singing Shaman (top right) and Aaron Pollock (bottom right) are all set to perform this year's Blue Jay Sessions on Sept. 2. Photos courtesy of Dan Clapson

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Not only are the Blue Jay Sessions a captivating experience for those who attend, but it's also a great experience for the musicians and songwriters.

"It's an opportunity for us to play a lot of songs that haven't seen the light of day yet, where we've written them but they're not released or they're not recorded, and (we) get to tell those stories behind the songs and how they are written," Cooper said.

"Not every song is recorded and made to go on radio, so sometimes (we get to play) the slower ballads," Cooper said in regards to the intimate, hear-a-pin-drop atmosphere that the songwriter rounds brings.

"The really cool thing about the Blue Jay Sessions is that when you come to watch them, you get a very different side of the musicians that are up there," Stokes added.

"A lot of (musicians) do big, fast-paced full band shows and it's all about energy and movement. But this one is really just about storytelling."

"It's very intimate and you

really get an inside look as to who the artists are, how the songs were written and that whole process," she said.

Though music lovers miss a tightly-packed, smaller venue like Oak Tree Tavern, the venue that housed the Blue Jay Sessions last year, safety has to come first at the moment.

Mikey's has had time to adjust to COVID restrictions and now that Calgary has made masks mandatory, Calgarians can feel safer going out for a night on the town and enjoy some long-awaited live entertainment.

"We will still have singers sitting on stage in a semicircle, spaced out of course, and for the storytelling portion of the event they will sit and talk into the mic, but when it is their turn to sing they will walk to the side of the stage to perform their song," Clapson said.

Tickets are being sold in advance for Sept. 2 to Sept. 4 by whole tables for you and your group, with proper social distancing measures put in place in the venue.

Don't forget your mask, and have a root'n toot'n evening!

**everything means nothing**

Blackbear
Interscope
Score: B-

The wounds are still fresh on Blackbear's fifth full-length album *everything means nothing*. Tackling relatable issues like heartbreak, loneliness, social media and illness, this rollercoaster of an album was bound for success — it caters a little something for everyone.

The internet has been a clear influence on Blackbear, opening up the album with the 2020 summer anthem "hot girl bummer," a play on words for the term "hot girl summer" coined by rapper Megan Thee Stallion.

While "hot girl bummer" is more of a satire track, the album quickly transitions into a much more despondent vibe

with "me & ur ghost." The song takes on the feelings you go through after a breakup and describes the empty hole in your life where that person was.

Written consecutively, "i feel bad", "i feel 2 much" and "i felt that" touches on Blackbear's chronic illness and the role it plays in his mental health.

But while Musto's vocal talent and the weight of his experiences are not in dispute, the songs themselves have little contrast from one another. The songs and their topics can get old and a sense of déjà vu overwhelms the listeners.

Everyone needs a

heartbreak record, though, and *everything means nothing* can be just that. Blackbear began the album cynical and heartbroken. And while the heartbreak resonates through the whole album, there is a sense of hope and closure in the final acoustic track, despite his uncertainty if he will ever "smile again."

Blackbear wanted this to be an album that people could dance to even at their lowest, and even if the songs melt together it's safe to say that Blackbear succeeded to bring one endless, sombre dance party.

- Mackenzie Mason



Brandi Sidoryk of Nice Horse (right), Jay Bowcott (top left) and Liz (bottom left) are all set to perform for this year's Blue Jay Sessions on Sept. 3 at 6:30 p.m. Matt Blais, Lyndsay Butler and Devin Cooper will follow for the second session that night. Photos courtesy of Dan Clapson

Imploding the Mirage

The Killers
Island Records
Score: A



After five chart-topping albums from The Killers, Brandon Flowers and the team have satisfied listeners as their sixth studio record, *Imploding the Mirage*, debuted at #1 on the U.S. album charts this summer.

The indie-rock, alternative LP takes off with the explosive track "My Own Soul's Warning," immediately taking you on an emotional and booming lyrical journey of trusting your gut.

With this being the band's first album since the departure of member Dave Keuning, who left the band following the release of their 2017 album, *Wonderful Wonderful*, bassist Mark Stoermer also took on

the role of playing guitar for The Killers. But, Stoermer did not go without help, with the band featuring former Fleetwood Mac guitarist, Lindsey Buckingham, on the electrifying single "Caution."

Something fans haven't seen before from The Killers is this kind of collaboration between artists, and that is in abundance on *Imploding the Mirage*, featuring talented artists like k.d. Lang on "Lightning Fields" and Weyes Blood on "My God."

At this point in his career with The Killers, Flowers has mastered the art of songwriting, reeling you into his fairytales of love and hope. Listening to a Killers album

truly feels like a spiritual journey of self-discovery and acceptance, with *Imploding the Mirage* tackling topics such as repentance and being true to yourself in such a transcendent way.

Even such, some critique the album for its lack of subtlety and contrast. But when you're talking about The Killers, subtlety isn't in the cards.

Screaming guitar riffs and vibrating synth mix perfectly with the ups and downs of Flowers' delicate yet thunderous voice to create what is and always will be known as "The Killers."

- Mackenzie Mason

Canada West postpones sports until 2021

Zach Worden

Sports Editor

With the sports world trying to figure out how to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic and return to play safely, Canada West has announced some significant changes to the 2020-21 season.

All 17 members of the conference unanimously voted to cancel all fall 2020 competitions. This means that no university football, soccer, rugby 15s or field hockey will be played. For two-term sports such as basketball, hockey and volleyball, the season will not start before Jan. 1, 2021. A decision will be made on the status of two-term sports seasons by Oct. 8.

For winter-specific sports such as wrestling, track and field, curling and

women's rugby 7s, the decision will be made at the same time as the decision for two-term sports.

The Canada West announcement coincided with the national decision made by U SPORTS, Ontario University Athletics (OUA) and Atlantic University Sport (AUS) to cancel fall competitions. Only one conference in U SPORTS — the Réseau du sport étudiant du Québec — has yet to announce any changes to their schedule in the hope of hosting fall competition.

"The challenging nature of [this] announcement can't be understated. As a former student-athlete and coach, I feel deeply for everyone who won't be able to experience the joys of university competition this fall," said Clint Hamilton, Canada West president and University of Victoria athletic director.

Although the decision for most Canada West sports was made in June, the conference postponed the decision for the golf, swimming and

cross country championships. The conference ultimately had to cancel the cross country championships, postpone the swimming championships until the winter semester but made the decision to move forward with golf championships.

UBC Okanagan will host the golf championships in Kelowna, B.C. They are scheduled for the Okanagan Golf Club on Oct. 2 to Oct. 4. Meanwhile, the swimming championships at the University of Calgary — previously scheduled for November 2020 — are being rescheduled for early 2021.

The Canada West press release stated, "With respect to the CW Cross Country Championships scheduled this fall, the COVID-19 Task Force felt that the necessary risk mitigations — reduction of team complement, altered start, creating defined passing areas, or hosting regional championships would too significantly impact the integrity of the championships."

COVID-19 has already impacted Canadian student-athletes, as both the 2020 Hockey and Volleyball U SPORTS National Championships were cancelled. Since then, a COVID-19 task force has been created by Canada West with members representing each province, along with medical professionals.

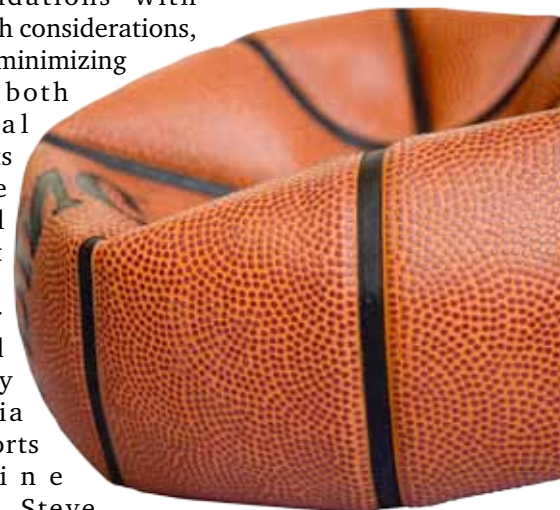
"The Task Force undertook significant discussion and research to inform our

recommendations with public health considerations, specifically minimizing risk for both individual participants and the general public, at the core of our work," said University of Victoria varsity sports medicine physician Steve Martin.

Canada West members will have the option to return to train, which will give teams the chance to get back together as a team and practice in preparation for the return to play.

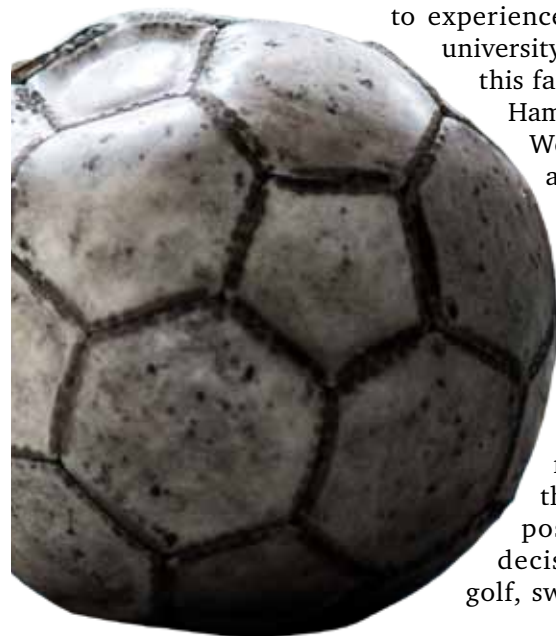
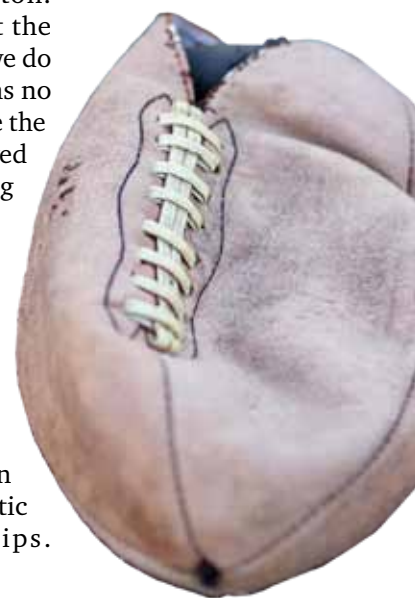
"While cancellation isn't the outcome anyone associated with university sport wanted, I'm confident in the fact that this difficult decision is in the best interests of our student-athletes," said Hamilton. "Health and safety is at the forefront of everything we do and simply put there was no way to adequately ensure the safety of everyone involved in university sport during competition this fall."

For athletes whose championships have been cancelled, there will be no charge for a year of eligibility. In addition to maintaining their athletic status, students will remain eligible to receive athletic financial scholarships.



Athletic Financial Awards (AFAs) have also been adjusted to maintain all current regulations for eligibility and AFAs for first-time entry and transfer students.

With Canada West and U SPORTS working to see sports return in 2021, sports fans are hoping for improvements when it comes to COVID-19 response so student-athletes can return to what they love.



University sport is set to look a lot different in Canada for this upcoming school year due to COVID-19. Athletes have either had their sports cancelled or are waiting for there to be an update to let them play... in 2021.

Photos courtesy of Unsplash

#S

3, Canada West medals won by MRU sports teams, including volleyball and soccer, in 2019-20.

2-1, the final score of the MRU women's hockey team's win at the 2020 U SPORTS National Championship.

8-0, the Phoenix Suns record in the seeding games of the NBA's Orlando "bubble."

7, innings pitched by Calgarian, Mike Soroka in the playoffs for the Atlanta Braves in 2019.

Canada's Sports Hall of Fame closed until the end of the year

Zach Worden

Sports Editor

With many museums and stores across Calgary reopening their doors after being forced to shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Canada's Sports Hall of Fame made the decision to temporarily close until the end of 2020.

"Though our physical museum is closed, Canada's Sports Hall of Fame is committed to the integrity of our programming," says Canada's Sports Hall of Fame. "We will continue to operate our online and outreach education programs as well as our community traveling exhibits when restrictions are lifted and it is safe to do so."

The Hall of Fame is located at Winsport's Canada Olympic Park (COP) and provides sports fans with a place to celebrate athletes across Canada.

The Hall opened in 2011 on the west side of COP. It's a state-of-the-art building that includes 12 interactive galleries, a 125-seat theatre and an education and resource room for visiting schools.

The Hall of Fame is currently home to 673 inductees who are proudly referred to as,

"Sport and Spirit Champions that go beyond the win to champion good in their communities while inspiring Canadians to achieve their best in sport and life."

In the 12 galleries, visitors have the chance to learn and interact with different exhibits, ranging from a "Women in Sport" exhibition to a "Media Room Gallery" exhibition, featuring interactive broadcast booths.

With exhibitions for visitors of all shapes and sizes, the Hall is one of Calgary's hidden gems when it comes to an entertaining day out for the family.

According to Canada's Sports Hall of Fame, "The most popular exhibit is always the hockey gallery... Tourists who visit from out of the country love to see parts of Canada's most popular sport."

Aside from the interactive exhibits that draw the most interest, the Hall of Fame says that some of the other main activities include: "Curriculum-aligned education programs, including in-house programs, national outreach programs and special events, including 'Who's in



Canada's Sports Hall of Fame includes 12 interactive galleries, a 125-seat theatre and an education and resource room for visiting schools. This hockey exhibit is a visitor favourite. Photo by Zach Worden

the Hall Wednesdays, Annual Induction Festival and Charity Gala.

"Who's in the Hall Wednesdays" is hosted on the first Wednesday of every month, and offers free admission after 5 p.m. to any sports fans who want to listen to a panel of sports speakers, get a chance for a photo with the Olympic torch and participate in a scavenger hunt.

Not only does the Hall of Fame offer educational programs at their facility, but they also have a program called "Beyond the Win" where Hall of Famers visit a school and teach students about their stories of overcoming obstacles. They also introduce them to the tools that made them successful.

The Hall of Fame is continually growing, as each year, a selection committee inducts a new class who will be preserved in Canadian Sports lore forever in Calgary.

Last year, the organization launched the Order of Sport Award, which is described as "Canada's highest sporting

honour [recognizing] the Inductees' continuing role in building Canada through sport and the impact they have on their communities."

The new crop of 2020 Hall of Famers will have their induction ceremony postponed to 2021 when they will hopefully all be able to come together to celebrate their accomplishments. The festival will include a ceremony honouring the Inductees with the Order of Sport Award.

The selection committee will follow guidelines set out by the Hall of Fame's Board of Governors to choose which nominated sports contributors will join the extensive list of sports heroes.

In 2019, a class of eight Canadian athletes was inducted during an October celebration in Toronto.

One of those inductees was Doug Mitchell. The Calgary native was enshrined for his contributions to Canadian sport as a player in the Canadian Football League (CFL), the commissioner of the CFL, a member of Hockey Canada and a leader with

multiple charity organizations.

Upon his induction, Mitchell said: "Sport has been the foundation of my life and [my] family. Most importantly, it taught me how to be a team player, to give others the credit due to them, and to share success with others."

Mitchell continued to talk about how sport can lead to one's success.

"If you want to succeed in life, in marriage, or in business, learn how to be a team player and eliminate those self-serving, selfish words: 'me,' 'thee' and 'I' and replace them with the very simple two-letter word, 'we.'"

For every new inductee, Canada's Sports Hall of Fame has new paths to share and stories to tell — and with a new induction class each year, the Hall keeps growing and adding to the history of Canadian sport held inside.

Despite their doors remaining closed, the Hall of Fame will look to continue making an impact in the Calgary community throughout 2020 through their national outreach programs and special events.



One of the many interactive exhibits at Canada's Sports Hall of Fame. This exhibit is in the Mary Simpson Ride Gallery. Photo by Zach Worden