

# the reflector

FREE

March 4, 2021

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**Realizing what truly  
matters through  
a pandemic  
(Pg. 9)**





# SAMRU executives chosen in online-only election campaign

**Noel Harper, Tristan Oram**

News Editor, Staff Writer

Two familiar faces and two new members will make up the Student Association of Mount Royal University's (SAMRU) Representation Executive Council (REC) for the 2021-22 academic year.

Students voted in a more eclectic mix of educational experience to the council, compared to its current iteration, composed entirely of students of Mount Royal's Policy Studies program. Beyond the two incumbents in this program, one new representative arrived from Education, while the other is studying Communications.

Eleven candidates ran for the council's four positions, and each race was contested, meaning at least two students were vying for the role. In addition to the challenges faced by a prospective council candidate in any other year, these candidates needed to present their vision to students without meeting them face-to-face or campaigning on campus due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In lieu of an all-candidate forum, interviews were recorded with each student and posted to YouTube. SAMRU also ran 'Ask Me Anything' (AMA) sessions for each position through its Discord server, inviting the Mount Royal community to message the candidates with questions.

As of Feb. 26 at 5:30 p.m., when the "unofficial" results were reported by SAMRU, 1,432 votes had been cast over the week-long election period, representing 11.6 per cent of a possible 12,308 student voters.

Spirit River Striped Wolf will serve his second term as REC president during the coming year. He says that he has dedicated the past five years of his life to advocacy for Indigenous youth, an experience that lends itself to advocating on behalf of students to the university and to governments.

"SAMRU has lacked

Indigenous representation, and I am really proud of my demographic background and how it helps me to see a different perspective of the student experience right off the bat," Striped Wolf said during the Discord AMA for the President position.

Striped Wolf pushed to advocate directly to the Alberta government, rather than the university's board of directors, on the issue of increasing tuition. He also hopes to see in-person classes return by the upcoming fall semester, which he says rests with the university and Alberta Health Services prioritizing on-campus learning in a safe manner.

Yasmin Ahmed will be serving as VP Academic. The Bachelor of Communications student has highlighted important issues such as improving and advocating for students' mental health during online learning, as well as increasing minority representation throughout the university and permanently extending course withdrawal dates.

"I believe that currently, we do not have a sufficient amount of time to recognize our possible success in the course," Ahmed wrote in a Feb. 24 email.

"Students should be able to have more time to decide something that will follow them for the rest of their educational career," she said, also discussing her desire to offer students a credit course per semester that won't affect their GPA.

Ahmed also talked about increasing engagement with the student body by holding focus groups with clubs on campus. "I believe that to see improvement in MRU academia, there needs to be a constant flow of communication between the council, administration and the student body," she wrote.

Rachel Timmermans will once again serve as VP External — having been elected to REC



**The four winners of the Representation Executive Council election pose for a virtual photo after learning of the results during a Google meet. Clockwise from top left: Spirit River Striped Wolf, President; Rachel Timmermans, VP External; Yasmin Ahmed, VP Academic; Joseph Nguyen, VP Student Affairs. Photo courtesy of Students Association of Mount Royal University**

for the first time after joining post-election in 2020. She was hired to fill the vacant position during the fall 2020 semester, after unsuccessfully running for president during the previous election.

On Discord, Timmermans discussed her work with the recently formed Calgary Student Alliance on such issues as affordable use of transit in the absence of the UPass, and the needs of students and young people within the City of Calgary Guidebook for Greater Communities. She also wants to continue advocating for a fair outcome from the province's Alberta 2030 report, learning about building relationships with elected officials while on the job previously.

Joseph Nguyen, a second-year Bachelor of Education student, will be SAMRU's next VP of Student Affairs. Nguyen talked about his experience on multiple committees, including his work as Events Chair for MRU's Education and Undergraduate Society, which he says involves discussing

strategies to better the lives of MRU's education students.

"My student experiences in the MRU Education program have given me the vision to identify the everyday challenges that students face and to create practical solutions for these issues," Nguyen wrote on Discord.

Nguyen wants to increase co-op internship and employment opportunities for students by "advocating for all levels of government to increase funding programs such as the Canada Summer Jobs Program, Summer Temporary Employment Program, and the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy." Nguyen also hopes to promote and support current mental health programs to all students through SAMRU emails and social media.

## President

Spirit River Striped Wolf (elected)  
Votes: 793  
Daniel Caine  
Votes: 469

## Vice-President Academic

Yasmin Ahmed (elected)  
Votes: 696  
Kristiana Tosku  
Votes: 547

## Vice-President External

Rachel Timmermans (elected)  
Votes: 533  
Alireza Rezvani  
Votes: 409  
David Higham  
Votes: 293

## Vice-President Student Affairs

Joseph Nguyen (elected)  
Votes: 480  
Tala Abu Hayyaneh  
Votes: 389  
Polina Pashchuk  
Votes: 243  
Dustin Hertel  
Votes: 228

# Alberta's 2021 budget cuts advanced education, funds MRU capital project

**Noel Harper**

News Editor



**The Bella Concert Hall and MRU Conservatory under construction in 2015. The Alberta government's latest budget allocates funding for Mount Royal to repurpose existing facilities throughout the university, as one of a handful of upcoming post-secondary capital projects. Photo courtesy of Mount Royal University**

Budget 2021 presented Alberta's United Conservative government with a number of difficult challenges. Last year around this time, the party doubled down on its initial campaign promise to balance the province's books by 2022, now only one year off. However, its latest fiscal plan — the first to be tabled in the era of COVID-19 — pushed that idea to the sidelines.

With Alberta facing much different circumstances from its last budget, presented just weeks before the pandemic was declared, the province has recorded a deficit of \$18.2 billion, adding to a total projected debt of \$116 billion by the following year. Health care will see \$23 billion in spending for the pandemic budget, with \$1.25 billion set aside in COVID-19-specific funds. There will be no new taxes, and existing taxes will not be hiked.

Many sectors awaited this year's budget with baited breath, particularly post-secondary education, based on how the field has been treated by the government in previous fiscal updates with tuition caps removed and less funding made available for institutions.

"Over the last number of weeks, Albertans have become more vocal in their opposition to the budget

cuts already imposed. Their concerns and their message have been clear that cuts to post-secondary are hurting the students, the faculty and the sector, and are putting the future of this province at risk," reads a letter by opposition education critic David Eggen to Demetrios Nicolaides, Alberta's minister of advanced education, ahead of the budget.

The advanced education ministry ended up with a 1.4 per cent funding cut, resulting in \$72 million less for the coming year. It is one of few ministries that will experience such a decrease, along with justice and the treasury board respectively. Post-secondary operation funding will be reduced by 5.4 per cent.

"We think the government has missed a big opportunity to invest in a diversified economy and a more educated workforce, which would have built a better future for Alberta at a time when tens of thousands of people need to go back to school to get an education, to make sure that they can get jobs and take part in the economy of tomorrow," says Rowan Ley, chair of the Council of Alberta University Students.

Post-secondaries will experience the start of a

performance-based funding model in the upcoming academic year, negotiations for which will begin shortly.

Ley says the model will be "extremely challenging for our institutions to implement. It's going to distract from other priorities and it's going to result in lower quality of education for students," adding that the current era is "not the time to bring it up."

The budget did not introduce further tuition increases in addition to the seven per cent yearly increase laid out in 2020, and tuition

will not be deregulated. Tuition revenue dropped from the previous fiscal year by \$91 million, despite the aforementioned hikes, but a 4.4 per cent increase is projected by 2023-24.

Mount Royal University was singled out in the budget's capital plan. It will receive \$50 million for its "Repurposing Existing Facilities" project, which will upgrade existing campus spaces to increase future capacity and functionality. The university will receive this funding over three years.

Ley believes that without the COVID-19 pandemic, the budget's impact on post-secondary education would not be very different.

"Alberta already has a significant deficit regardless of COVID, and this lines up broadly with the reduction plans that the government already had before COVID. The cut that we see today is slightly larger than what we anticipated last year, but the margin is actually not huge — so, the difference is significant, but not outrageous."



**Alberta Finance Minister Travis Toews delivers remarks to the press about the province's 2021 budget, flanked by a backdrop featuring a common slogan of the government throughout the pandemic era, 'Protecting Lives and Livelihoods.' Budget 2021 leaves the province with an \$18.2 billion deficit and no timeline to balance Alberta's books. Photo courtesy of Government of Alberta**



# MRU report aims to attract young talent to Calgary

**Noel Harper**

News Editor



Teams of Mount Royal University students working with the CityXLab recently looked into Calgary's ongoing exodus of young talent, comparing the city to others throughout North America and making specific recommendations to improve its reputation. Photo courtesy of Flickr

Calgary is experiencing an exodus of young adults who are no longer staying in the city to develop their personal or professional lives. Statistics Canada reveals that over a recent ten-year period, the city went from fifth to 29th for its population of those aged 20-24, out of 35 metropolitan areas in Canada.

Seeing this trend unfold, Mount Royal University's CityXLab — an educational hub formed by the Institute for Community Prosperity — has teamed up with Calgary Economic Development and the Canada West Foundation to attempt an answer at a seemingly simple question: Why Calgary?

"[Four] teams first explored whether this is actually a problem. Anecdotally, we hear stories of young people leaving Calgary for school or work — but the problem is complex and the data is inconclusive," wrote David Finch, director of CityXLab, introducing the project in the Calgary Herald.

Perplexed by genuine concerns of young talent retention in a city ranked the most liveable in North America, and fifth in the world, by the Economic Intelligence Unit, CityXLab's first discussion paper on the question focuses on finding

evidence of this trend. They aim to identify young adults' perceptions of Calgary on key factors, and ask how the city can keep attracting young people.

"Choosing a city is rarely spontaneous, rather it is part of a longer-term decision-making process rooted in values that evolved over a lifetime," the paper reads.

"Our analysis suggests that young Calgarians face three primary 'moments of truths' in deciding where to live: the first is high school graduation; the second is graduation from post-secondary; and the third is as a young professional."

The report goes on to describe choosing a city to live in as "purchasing" a place by investing in key community factors and laying down their roots. These factors include proximity to relations, cost of living, recreation, arts and entertainment, education and climate.

Throughout CityXLab's deep dive, Calgary is compared to similar cities throughout North America, including Hamilton, Regina, Denver and Cleveland. Each case study offers takeaways for Calgary, from actioning bragging rights to investing in a reputation that stands out.

Three actions are recommended by the Why

Calgary paper: appointing a Chief Talent Officer, closing the gap between Calgary's reputation and its reality and closing the data gap tracking young talent mobility.

To the second point, gaps are represented by anecdotes and reputations that are seen as unfair, such as Calgary putting the economy ahead of the environment, not embracing diversity or simply being regarded as "dull."

"Closing these reputation and reality gaps starts with defining a cohesive and consistent identity and narrative for Calgary that clearly conveys our assets and competitive advantages. Establishing and communicating a unified message could help shape a shared purpose for a city, its organizations and citizens," reads the report.

The paper concludes that young Calgarians have been impacted by a combination of high student debt and the city's unemployment rate, migrating to cities in which they see themselves and their futures better reflected.

"The implications of this reframes Calgary not only for young Calgarians, but also to emerge as a magnet for the world's best and brightest. If we succeed, the answer to Why Calgary? becomes self-fulfilling."

## MRU FILES

Noel Harper

### Tuition and fees rise for second straight year

Due to provincial funding cuts, another seven per cent average increase to domestic tuition was approved, as expected, by Mount Royal's board of directors. These increases range from 5.9 to 10 per cent depending on program demand.

International tuition will increase by 2.4 per cent. Many student fees, and costs associated with work experience and co-op education, will also go up in the 2021-22 academic year.

### Mount Royal student chosen as Daughters of the Vote delegate

Olga Barceló, a public relations student and former SAMRU governor, is one of 338 female and gender-diverse delegates who will participate in the program, advocating for more women to be elected to office in Canada.

Barceló will represent the riding of Calgary Rocky-Ridge, in a virtual parliament simulation that will include a session of the House of Commons. The event will take place on March 8 — International Women's Day.

### MRU's Jay Unsworth eyes council seat in October

The university's director of business services — a role he has held since 2019 — is running in Calgary's Ward 13 against, among other candidates, long-time incumbent Diane Colley-Urquhart.

Unsworth's campaign will focus on the promises of accountability, accessibility and affordability.

## THE REFLECTOR

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## Write a love letter to support sexual violence survivors

Cassie Weiss

Features Editor

On the anniversary of her assault in 2012, Tania Ikeda wrote, and posted on social media, a love letter to her past self. The letter was full of love and support and signed with the phrase, “This is my survivor love letter.” The letter pulled at heart strings of survivors and allies, inspiring those with their own stories to write their own survivor love letters.

Three years ago, Mount Royal University (MRU) and the Student Association of Mount Royal University (SAMRU) encouraged students and faculty to do the same. With the collection of letters starting on Valentine’s Day every year, the school showcases the love letters throughout the month of May – Sexual Violence Awareness Month.

“While the world has shifted considerably in the past five years, attitudes and beliefs that blame survivors for dating, domestic and/or sexual violence (DDSV) and minimize, excuse and justify the behaviours of people who perpetrate this violence continue to be rampant,” said Cari Ionson, the Sexual Violence Response and Awareness Coordinator of the university.

“We continue to see social messaging throughout society that is more comfortable in judging a survivor’s actions around the abuse, over placing responsibility for the harm on the person who caused it.”

Ionson comments that survivors often get questioned about their clothing choices, alcohol consumption, or prior sexual behaviours. According to her, all these messages combine to create a significant amount of stigma around DDSV, which in turn silences survivors.

The letters can be written in any medium, but Ionson says it is not how the letters are presented, but how it inevitably impacts the people

reading them.

“Through writing messages of support to survivors, this campaign seeks to counteract [all of the] negative messaging. The rates of DDSV continue to be incredibly high. Unfortunately, many MRU community members have also had DDSV perpetrated against them by someone else,” Ionson adds.

She says that the community showing their support reinforces the notion that survivors aren’t alone, and that they are deserving of support and the harm done was not their fault.

“For survivors who are perhaps writing themselves a love letter, it is also a celebration of self-love and a buffer against the pervasive harmful messaging. It also says to anyone who has caused harm or might cause harm, that this community stands against violence and abusive behaviours will not be tolerated.”

With examples from the past few years ranging from drawn pictures, photographs, poems and formal letters, Ionson is excited to see what is submitted this year.

When the initiative was originally introduced at MRU, there was a table visible on Main Street, where students could write a letter on the spot. With COVID-19 keeping us away from campus, there is even more need for love and support – both given and received – in every way possible.

The letters can be submitted through a form at [www.mru.ca/survivorloveletter](http://www.mru.ca/survivorloveletter), and examples can be seen in the same place. Once the letters are received, they are reviewed by a student-led organizing committee, as well as by members of the SAMRU and MRU faculty.

People can also request a physical letter writing package – mailed to them filled with craft and collage supplies to



**#survivorloveletters is an initiative created by Tani Ikeda, a survivor and activist who wrote to herself on the anniversary of her assault. Students and faculty are encouraged to write letters to survivors, all of which will be displayed during Sexual Violence Awareness Month, which takes place in May. Photo courtesy of Cari Ionson.**

help get the creative juices going.

Ionson says that it is important to know that these letters don’t have to be shared – that it is perfectly okay for survivors, or anyone, to write a letter without submitting it. Letters can be submitted with a name, or anonymously. Clubs, departments and faculties can also submit a letter collectively.

“There are many different roles students, staff and faculty can play when it comes to

DDSV. We can all listen and empathize with each other. We can convey belief when someone discloses DDSV.”

There are also many actions people can take when it comes to familiarizing themselves with the topic of DDSV, including various workshops available at MRU and SAMRU and many resources that help direct people to the supports and services needed.

A faculty toolkit is also available on the [mymru.ca](http://mymru.ca) website that provides more

resources geared directly for use in class.

If anyone is looking for more information on DDSV prevention, or is looking for someone to talk to, resources are available online at [mtroyal.ca/sexualviolence](http://mtroyal.ca/sexualviolence).

There is always hope, and these letters show exactly that.

As an anonymous letter sender signed #survivorloveletter had said, “You are not alone, and we believe you. Your story matters.”



# Photo Essay: Playing high in the sky

*A creative display of innovation that is the YYC High Park*

**Cassie Weiss**

Features Editor

“There’s a park here?” says the passenger of a vehicle in disbelief as the car starts winding its way up the levels of a parkade located across from Craft Beer Market, at 340 10 Ave SW.

To the surprise and joy of those who make it to the top

of the Centre City Parkade, a park sits high among the buildings of downtown Calgary. Filled with cute sayings, bright coloured flooring and picnic tables and some bright shining lights, High Park was opened as a pilot project in 2020.

The park sits quietly on a Saturday morning, fresh snow covering the rooftop space. Although no music was playing at the time, High Park was created with live music, performance, and outdoor programming in mind. The parkade itself

is also covered in brightly painted murals.

It’s a unique place to escape the rushing traffic and busy lives of those living in central downtown. Those who collaborate on the project are always looking for new ways to expand and express the

individuality of the outdoor space.

The park is open 7:00 AM - 11:00 PM daily. For more information or to take a survey to help inform about the next phase of the project, visit [beltlineyyc.ca/highparkyyc](https://beltlineyyc.ca/highparkyyc).



Photos By Cassie Weiss



# Opinion: I'm in an abusive relationship with Facebook

**Ed Ghost**

Staff Writer



There are a million reasons why Facebook should not be a part of our daily routine, yet so many of us find us returning again and again. Here are a few reasons as to why Ed Ghost feels they are in an abusive relationship with the social media platform. Photo by Ed Ghost

On Feb. 4, 2004, some random guy named Mark Zuckerberg launched “The Facebook” — a small social media platform created with the intent to connect Harvard students with one another. There were also unconfirmed internet rumblings that Facebook was originally a creepy ploy for Zuckerberg to have girls from his school sign up so that he could use it as his own personal dating pool.

Fast forward to Sept. 26, 2006, Zuckerberg had ditched Harvard, moved to California and had started running his social media dynasty full time. Now anyone over 13 years of age could get themselves an account — though the website really only took off in 2007, which is the year that I joined.

In 2007, I was an edgy

high school graduate who didn't really see much value in having a social media account. But I still succumbed when I realized that everyone I knew no longer used MSN Messenger, but relied on texts and posting on each other's Facebook “walls” as the new main form of communication.

Gone were the days of memorizing addresses and phone numbers, I had to get hip to be with the times. Back then, the internet was the Wild West, and pretty rudimentary. YouTube videos had only existed for two years at this point, and everyone carried an actual camera when they wanted to take photos. Back then, cellphone pictures had the same quality as a photo taken by a potato.

Facebook initially was okay, I guess.

It didn't have the HTML or music embedding customization that Myspace did, and it wasn't filled with people who matched my demographic like Nexopia, but more people seemed to be using Facebook exclusively. To this day, Facebook is the only social media website that every generation of my family has, and knows how to use — and it's free, so that's a good thing, right?

There's a saying that goes, “if you're not being sold something, then you're the one being sold,” and Facebook is no different. Facebook might even be the best at gathering and selling your information these days next to Google.

They even go so far as to require a “real” name. I resisted it for years until they

locked me out of my account and demanded that I show them a government-issued piece of ID to prove my name on there was real — which I photoshopped, by the way, Sucker-berg.

In August of 2012, a study came out saying that there are an estimated 83 million fake accounts on Facebook. This revelation alone made Facebook's share price drop below \$20 because it became harder to keep track of people without legitimate information.

It's no secret that the money Facebook makes is by advertising. Whether it's customized to you and your interests, or if it's one of those bizarre ads we all get from Wish from time to time. The dollar bills come from attracting and working with

advertisers.

That being said, being hounded with advertisements is a tale as old as media itself — magazines, radios and television have been doing it for decades.

## So why am I mad at Facebook?

It seems like they are just playing the same corporate game that everyone else does, right? We all need to make money.

Facebook grinds my gears. The first thing that drew my ire was the “female nipple” rule. No lady nipples, ever.

Trying to feed your baby and maybe bring some awareness about

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breastfeeding? Get the heck off the platform, and cop a 30-day ban for good measure.

Do you want to post Titian's 1534 painting the "Venus of Urbino?" Don't you dare — it'll be removed.

Facebook has a very strong opinion on "graphic nudity," and any depiction of lady nipples, be it for art or for science is unacceptable. They have recently said that under certain context, nipples are acceptable, but seem to be having trouble keeping up with that promise.

So why, for 14 years now, have I been able to post any image of a penis on the platform without fear? With the exception of an actual person's genitals, I have posted art, memes, sex toys, and visual jokes of the male genitalia for almost half of my life. I have been banned from Facebook more times than I can count, but it's never been because I've posted a "peen."

On the same topic of nipples, Facebook offers no less than 58 different gender customizations. There is no shortage of identifiers to make us queer folk feel seen — so, why aren't we treated

as our gender?

Facebook seems to only use a binary formula to hand out bans. If you're a pre-op trans man or a non-binary individual who feels comfortable being topless but Facebook decides you fit the cis-female narrative in appearance, you'll be flagged. This is regardless of the presence of your gender marker — seems pretty performative to me.

Facebook is meant to be addictive. They even have a whole team who monitors how long you go on their website, and how to keep you on it for as long as possible. The longer you stay on the platform at a time, the easier it is to know your habits and your interests. They want you to consume, consume and consume.

Facebook is fake-news central. Anyone can say anything and claim it's a fact with almost no repercussions, and it goes way further than your 83-year-old aunt with the whacky opinions. Facebook's lack of accountability has created horrendous human rights violations, including genocide and other death-related incidents.

We're all just guinea pigs in Facebook-land. In 2012, Facebook sparked outrage when it was revealed that it was doing psychological experiments on its users without consent. Facebook removed either all positive or all negative posts from users' news feeds to see how it would affect their moods.

Speaking of moods, using Facebook also leads to higher rates of depression in people. Most people see only what others want them to see. As a result, they feel like they're not good enough, or happy enough or successful enough compared to their peers—though to be fair this isn't just a Facebook thing.

I can sincerely write a novel of all the unsavoury things Facebook has done, but this article can only fit so much.

### **So why don't I just leave Facebook?**

No one is forcing me to stay. Oh, I've tried to leave! I've tried. But like I said before, I've been on Facebook for over half my life now. Most of my teenage years and all of my time as an adult thus far has been documented on the

platform.

There is no better digital memorial than social media.

I can go back to conversations I've had with loved ones that happened decades ago and re-read them. Every photo I've ever taken since I was 18 is stored on Facebook. And, more importantly, the words and lives of some of the people that I love who have passed away, are through Facebook. I can even connect with others who also miss them through Facebook.

I hate to admit it, but there are some people in my life that I would have nothing to remember them by, if it were not for their profiles.

My mother, father, cousins and other family members are all on Facebook. It's the only place where every one of them has an account. Neither of my parents are on any other form of social media, and the convenience of being able to catch up with them and see what they find interesting enough to post and share with the world is just too good.

Facebook allows me to talk for free with people I know around the world. If I were to text my friend Jack in the UK,

it would cost one of us money for every text we sent.

Facebook also gives you the creepy, but also comforting, ability to check up on people you like without being forced into a conversation to catch up. I know it's bad, but sometimes you don't have the mental spoons or time to reach out. Being able to see posts is a great way to keep up-to-date, press a like button to show that you care, and go on with your day.

There's no other platform like it.

Facebook has a little bit of everything. You can video chat, text, share pictures, find pages and groups with specific interests, catch up on the news and more. It's right there in your pocket or on your computer, whenever you want it.

It's like an abusive relationship.

The highs are high, and the lows have dire consequences, but until we collectively as a society decide to move on to the next "big thing", Facebook is here to stay. It has us all in its clutches and there isn't much we can do about it as individuals if we want to stay up to date with the rest of society, and it sucks.



@samrubuzz

samru.ca

2021

## **Student Governor Elections**

*The Student Governing Board of SAMRU, consists of 14 elected and appointed positions. As the fiduciary trustee for SAMRU, the Student Governing Board is responsible for determining SAMRU's strategic goals and priorities and making decisions regarding its resources and policies.*

Fill Out a  
Nomination  
Form Online



### **Nomination Period:**

February 15<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am  
to March 8<sup>th</sup> at 4:30pm

Visit [samru.ca/elections](https://samru.ca/elections)



## Lost and Found

*How the pandemic took – and gave – me everything*

**Mackenzie Mason**

Arts Editor



A ticket to Justin Bieber at Madison Square Garden, a ticket to 5 Seconds of Summer in Toronto and a VIP pass to Shawn Mendes' 2015 tour lie on top of a dozen concert wristbands with concert confetti on top. Photo by Mackenzie Mason

Loss — it's something that everyone has experienced plenty of since the pandemic began. However, many including myself have found something much more meaningful in its void.

It's been a tough year, and in times when I'm struggling mentally, my emotional outlets have always been travelling, shows and concerts. All of which have been cancelled

and postponed until further notice.

Let me go back a little. Concerts have been my happy place ever since I can remember. There's something so magical about a jam-packed arena filled with strangers, all bonding over a beautiful set of lyrics, a drumbeat you feel coursing through your veins or a guitar riff that makes your soul ascend a little.

At this point, I don't know how many concerts I've been to, or how many of my favourite artists I've had the privilege to meet. All I know is that music has always been there for me, through the hard times and through the good.

I am lucky enough to have the most loving and supportive parents that would take me around the continent if it meant seeing

my favourite artists live. I've gone to Toronto, Las Vegas and even New York for concerts and they are memories that I will cherish for my entire lifetime.

I've waited in queues at 6 am for concerts that don't even start until 9 pm — and while that sounds like an awful time, especially in Calgary's brutally cold Februaries, nothing beats the feeling of meeting people,

having conversations and making deep connections with complete strangers that feel just as you do towards a band and their music.

Travelling is, or was, another one of my deep passions.

In 2020, I was supposed to travel throughout Asia. I was supposed to go to India with

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## OUT'N ABOUT

### Locked Zoo: Penguin Pursuit

You've heard of escape rooms, but the Calgary Zoo is now introducing an escape zoo! Fans of puzzles and penguins should attend Locked Zoo: Penguin Pursuit at the Calgary Zoo on March 6.

### Disco Magic Drag Show

The first-ever Disco Magic Drag Show is Canada's only balcony drag show experience at the Delta Calgary South. Party with your cohort in private VIP balcony suites and disco beats on March 6.

### Brain Health Art Auction

The Branch Out Neurological Foundation, a local non-profit focused on neurological disorder research, is taking its annual "Your Brain on Art" fundraiser online. The event features a keynote with Dr. Tracy Thomson, an online art auction and a live-painting event on March 11.

### Curling rocks as art

Until March 16, Calgary's newest art exhibition features curling rocks as unique canvases. Sixteen artists have transformed rocks around downtown into colourful pieces of art to mark Calgary being a hub city for curling events with Curling Canada.



**Continued from Pg . 9**

Mount Royal University for a month to visit an ashram and make a documentary on how the climate crisis and the lack of waste management in the country has affected these children's lives.

Afterwards, I was going to pursue my own travels through Thailand, Cambodia and Laos and I had an extended layover in Japan on my way home booked.

But in the middle of March, three weeks before I was supposed to leave, the first few cases of COVID-19 began to pop-up in Canada. A week later, the pandemic cancelled everything.

This prompted my two-week trip to Hawaii in July with my family and my

boyfriend to be cancelled, as well as my week-long trip to Vancouver in August to reunite with my best friend and see Harry Styles front row — no matter how long we had to wait outside the venue.

Then the Calgary Stampede was cancelled.

Country Thunder was cancelled two weeks later.

Within three months, the virus ripped and pried from my hands everything that I thought would bring me complete and utter joy.

The beginning of the pandemic was incalculable and unyielding. I didn't know what to do, and I didn't know how to help myself stay positive when I had nothing to look forward to.

I felt stuck.

I began to realize how much I took for granted before the pandemic. I suddenly found myself regretting all the times I declined an invite to a party in place of sitting in my bed and doing nothing — something I have done way too much of since the start of the pandemic.

But during the time I've spent alone or with my family, I don't think I'm the only one who found a more profound sense of peace and gratitude for those we have in our lives.

As the saying goes, in the absence of someone or something, the heart grows fonder (or something like that).

In all the time spent physically apart from

my friends, I found my relationships becoming more meaningful and intentional.

Before the pandemic, I had friendships where no effort was being made to actually see each other. Once lockdowns were in full swing, though, we were actively checking in with each other and scheduling video chat dates to ease our sense of isolation.

My grandfather was getting very sick months before the pandemic came. He had been diagnosed with cancer in 2019, but his health began to decline right before the pandemic was about to isolate us all.

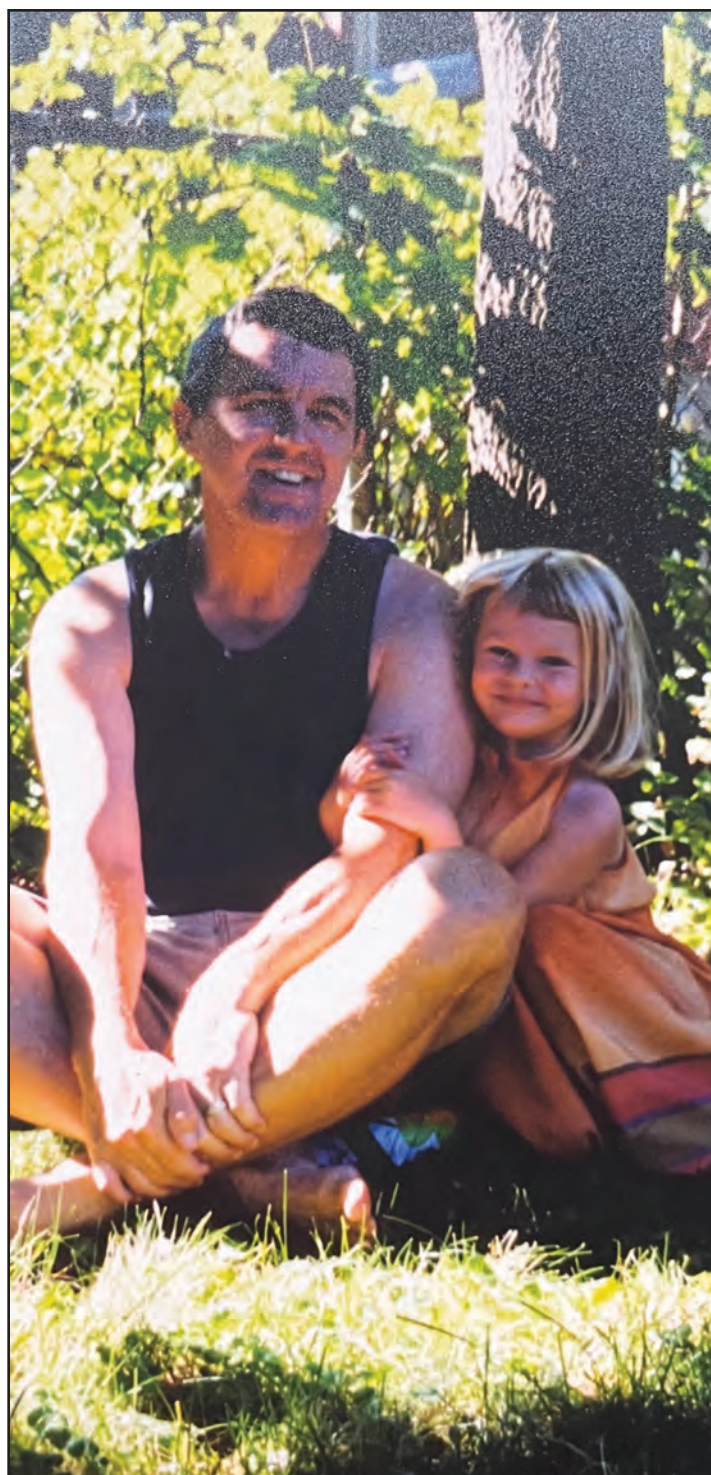
My family was very fortunate to be able to get my grandparents moved into our basement suite a week before

the government enforced full isolation.

Though my grandpa's state slowly deteriorated as the months went by, my family got to spend a Christmas season full of love and gratitude for our situation and all the time together we were given. He passed away peacefully two weeks later.

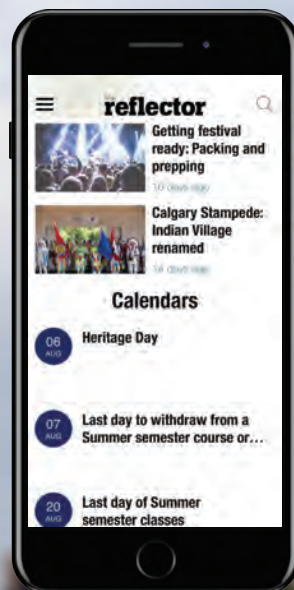
Though it's hard in the moment to understand why things happen the way they do, I'm a strong believer that everything happens for a reason.

Without the pandemic cancelling what I thought was everything I had to look forward to, I was graced with the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to invest in those closest to me and realize what truly matters — love.

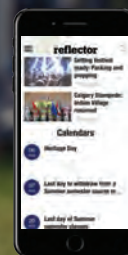


A young Mackenzie and her late grandfather, Dennis Young, sit under a tree in his Ottawa yard basking in the sun. Photo courtesy of Mackenzie Mason

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# Spirituality crafts you can make to start your spiritual journey

**Mikaela Delos Santos**

Web Editor



Oracle decks are a tool of self-reflection to add to your magical and spiritual practice, or just to use for fun. Photo courtesy of Pexels

Although health restrictions are slowly easing for many Albertans and Canadians, there is no denying that being cooped up in our homes for almost a year has taken a toll on many different aspects in our lives. Many of us have tried to make the most out of a tough situation, but when there is nothing to do and nowhere to go, we are left alone with ourselves.

Personally, the pandemic has given me the opportunity to embark on a spiritual journey — and while going to my local metaphysical store is one of my favourite activities, I found that creating my own spiritual objects is a fun way to spend my time and bring me closer to my spirituality.

If you're thinking about starting your spiritual journey as well, here are some easy crafts that won't hurt your wallet!

## DIY oracle cards

If you are a Tarot reader or are intrigued by the art, oracle cards are a great way to add more insight to your tarot readings. As a university

student, some oracle decks that you can find in book stores can be a little too hefty for a student's budget. With your own oracle cards, you are able to save money and feel even more connected to your readings.

All you need are index cards or cardstock, and a marker or a printer!

Cut up your cardstock in a size that's comfortable for you to shuffle as a stack and then simply write the messages you want to have for your oracles — like affirmations or messages from your spirit guides. It can be anything you want it to be, it is your own personal deck, after all! If you want your cards to look more professional, feel free to create a printable version of your oracles and simply cut them out into size.

## DIY incense holder

This is a craft from the blog *Chrissy Makes a Mess*.

Incense sticks are great to burn when meditating,

*Continues on Pg. 12*



Incense is a great way to clear negative energy and to deepen your concentration while meditating. Photo courtesy of Daily Mail



**Continued from Pg. 11**

praying or just for general reflection. They come in many different fragrances and can be even used for aromatherapy. Although if you don't have an incense holder or aren't careful, you just might end up burning holes on your countertops, just like what happened with TikTok user Orim Bright.

Here's what you need:

–A bowl or a little dish (you can find cheap ones from the dollar store, a thrift shop or one that's already in your home)

–Strong crafting adhesive (Gorilla glue or E6000)

–15-20 mm beads with holes large enough to fit incense sticks (can be found at your local craft store)

–Bead caps (optional but can be found at your local crafting stores as well)

This craft is pretty straightforward — simply

glue the bead onto your bowl or dish in the middle and let it dry! Glue a bead cap onto your bead if you would like to add a cute touch to your incense holder. Make sure that you don't unintentionally glue the hole of the bead if you add the cap. If you do so, no problem! Just quickly clean it out with a toothpick.

**DIY rune stones**

If you are not familiar with rune stones, they are pebbles or wood chips that have runic characters engraved or written on them. The art of working with rune stones is called runic casting, and just like tarot cards, they are read via the symbols on each stone or chip. Each character has a meaning and originated from early Germanic language characters.

While every rune set is beautiful, some of them can get expensive, especially if

you are a university student exploring your spirituality on a budget. In fact, traditionally, rune sets are made by their user.

To make your own rune sets, all you need are flat glass pebbles, a permanent marker and a gloss varnish — all of which are available at your local craft or dollar store.

All you need to do is write your runic characters (usually 24) onto your glass pebble and coat it with a gloss varnish to avoid the marker from getting rubbed off. And that's it, simple and affordable!

While these crafts are a great way to start embarking on your spiritual journey, always keep in mind that not all kinds of spiritual practices will align or speak to you. Find what you feel comfortable in and don't be afraid to explore them — this is your adventure after all.



Rune stones use ancient Germanic or Nordic inscriptions to help guide you through problems or issues and help show you what is likely to happen. Photo courtesy of Pixabay

**Cool Dry Place**

Katy Kirby

Keeled Scales

**Score: B -**

Hailing from Texas, Katy Kirby's debut album is bound to raise some heads. *Cool Dry Place* comes from a place of intimacy, like speaking to a friend about a love you never really got over. Kirby's soothing voice is reminiscent of a wholesome hometown feeling from the girl next door. But her innocent voice belies a gift for meticulous lyric crafting. In "Portals", she sings, "I can see through time in on a clear day / tastes like black grape and chlorine" and later on, "You're a hand punched through a pane of glass / To get the handle on the other side".

Lyrics like these reflect the mood and feel of the album as we follow Kirby navigating her relationships with others

and the world. The record is purposefully simplistic as to not overwhelm the listeners but guide them through an acoustic journey of introspection. *Cool Dry Place* reaches its crescendo at the latter part of the album on the song bearing the name of the album, marking the end of a rhythmic journey. "Fireman" feels like a mini-epilogue of sorts that wraps up the album neatly, like a goodbye gift to the audience's ears. The rest of the album is remarkably consistent, as Kirby maintains an air of wonder and gentleness while delivering contemplative lyrics.

- Keoputhy Bunny

**Satin Playground**

Dacey

Dacey

**Score: A**



Dacey's latest EP, *Satin Playground* will have you melting into your couch as you bathe in sunbeams on a Saturday afternoon. If you're constantly looking to update your playlist, this Vancouver-based band will not disappoint with their lo-fi beats, groovy guitar riffs and vocals that move effortlessly from one track to the next.

Dacey wastes no time when introducing new listeners to the album with the first track, "Sidewalks", which sets the tone for the rest of the album. Followed by "I'll be there", this track has all the swing that highlights the skills of talented guitarist, Waterfall Eyes.

A story of unreciprocated love, infidelity, and a tumultuous relationship is

unloaded throughout the album but is mainly revealed during "Night Calls" as the lead singer, Dacey Andrada, sings, "Would I change your mind if I said her love for you is all in your head." During the last track of this album, "Broccoli's Keeper", Andrada has unregretfully freed herself from the chains of a toxic relationship and is now enjoying herself at home with "Puffy Ms. Reefer."

*Satin Playground* is a solid album that is breaking genre thresholds. If you're a dedicated fan of R&B/soul looking for something similar yet different, I highly recommend this album.

- Hermie Ocenar



## The consistently inconsistent Calgary Flames

Gage Smith  
Staff Writer



The Calgary Flames celebrate after a goal against the Vancouver Canucks. Photo courtesy of NHL.com

In the movie *The Dark Knight Rises*, our hero Bruce Wayne (spoiler alert: Batman) gets obliterated in a one-on-one fight with Bane, his nemesis. Bane really hates Bruce, and after being in the perfect position to kill him, Bane instead chooses to torture him. He doesn't do this with machines or by breaking bones, he instead ships Batman off to a massive underground prison in the

Middle East to live out the rest of his days.

The prison isn't anything mind-blowing, just a typical barred-cell prison for the most part. The catch is that it has an open ceiling with very high walls that are possible to climb, but it's so difficult that only one prisoner in the long history of the prison has managed to escape.

It doesn't sound that bad, right? However, the prison is

referred to as "Hell on Earth." Bane called it "torture of the soul." The key ingredient is hope. The thought that one day, you just might be able to make the climb. But you can't, it's almost impossible. You're stuck in a perpetual state of crushing disappointment, but never to the point where you can comfortably resign yourself to this life forever.

You might be thinking

this is a bit of a dramatic comparison for what's been a mediocre NHL season in YYC, and you'd be right. But my point is that the Flames keep giving Calgary hope that they've turned a corner or figured something out, only to come falling down the walls of the prison and right back to reality. It would be easier to cheer for an egregious team. At least we'd have no expectations going

into every game, and instead be able to laugh off losses and get super excited about wins, but we stay stuck in the vicious cycle built by our own expectations.

On Feb. 6th, things were looking up for Calgary. They had just beaten their arch-rival, the Edmonton Oilers, in

**Continues on Pg. 15**

# #S

**1278**, points for Sidney Crosby through his first 1000 career games.

**17**, all-star appearances for Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James.

**14**, games scheduled for the Canadian Elite Basketball League regular season

**9**, seasons spent with the Houston Texans for now free-agent defensive lineman J.J. Watt.



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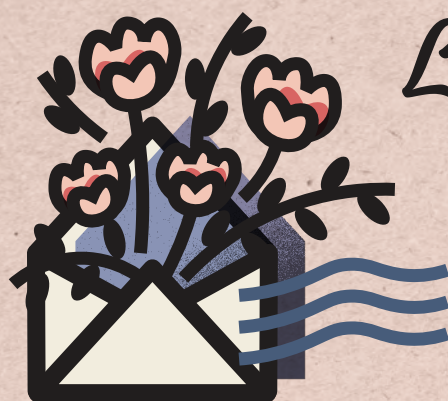
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## Love Letters To Survivors

#SurvivorLoveLetter is a global movement for survivors of sexual assault and their allies to publicly celebrate their lives. Help us show our love and support to survivors by submitting your letters, art, poems, or songs for us to share in May (Sexual Assault Awareness Month).

Submissions can be sent to:  
[mru.ca/survivorloveletter](https://mru.ca/survivorloveletter)

Submissions can be done anonymously to the preference of the artist.



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**Continued from Pg. 13**

a hotly contested game with a 6-4 final score. Calgary would go 3-2 in contests against Vancouver and Winnipeg before facing Edmonton again. They entered the rematch a few days later in high spirits but were edged out in a 2-1 grind. The next game was nothing short of an embarrassment. The final score was Edmonton 7, Calgary 1. The Flames goalie, Jacob Markstrom, had been

on a roll until that game, but he was pulled from the net after allowing five goals in two periods. The rest of the team took responsibility for the loss, though, not blaming him for the collapse.

So, coming off of a devastating loss, the Flames could obviously expect to be further embarrassed in their next two games against the Toronto Maple Leafs, the best team in Canada at the time, right?

Wrong. Second string

goalie David Rittich (affectionately known as Big Save Dave) shut out the offensive firepower of the Leafs, and Calgary took a 3-0 win on goals from Sean Monahan, Matthew Tkachuk, and Sam Bennett. The next game against the Leafs was a slow, grind-it-out defensive game, and Calgary had the first goal of the game with only a few minutes left. The Leafs managed to storm back and steal it in overtime, 2-1.

They lost, but Calgary had

just split a pair of games with Canada's best team and played well overall. So, they could be confident about their next matchup with one of Canada's worst teams, right?

Wrong. They took a 6-1 beating from the Ottawa Senators.

The inconsistency is driving fans crazy. If you want proof, take a look at any social media post by the Flames, especially on Instagram. Comments sections are

plagued with fans pleading for Head Coach Geoff Ward to be fired or a major roster shakeup to happen immediately. While sports fans are famous for knee-jerk reactions, can anyone really blame them? They've been tantalized by flashes of brilliance only to get smacked with reality every other night.

Love or hate the Calgary Flames, you can always count on them to be consistently inconsistent.

# Junior Hockey returning to play across Alberta

**George Potter**

Staff Writer



The Olds Grizzlys and Calgary Canucks in an exhibition game on Oct. 14 2020. Photo by George Potter

With the Alberta government rolling out plans to slowly return to normal across the province as COVID-19 cases drop, junior hockey players and leagues are implementing plans of their own to safely return to the ice.

## Alberta Junior Hockey League (AJHL)

Provincial guidelines forced the AJHL to shut down their return to play in December, but with those guidelines starting to loosen, the league announced on Feb. 19 that the AJHL had been granted approval to return to play. Unfortunately, Canmore Eagles fans won't get to see their team compete

in 2021. The team announced they would opt out of the remaining season on Feb. 21.

"We have worked tirelessly through several options not only within the town of Canmore but also exploring possible solutions to work with other communities. Regrettably, we have not been able to arrive at a workable solution," the AJHL said on their website.

The Canmore Eagles faced COVID-19 concerns at the beginning of the 2020-21 season when head coach Andrew Milne was suspended and fined for not adhering to the rules set out by the AJHL. This caused multiple players to contract COVID-19, affecting the league's original return to play.

The Lloydminster Bobcats were cause for more disappointment within the AJHL. The team was denied participation in the 2021 return to play due to public health restrictions in Saskatchewan.

"We have created multiple proposals to try and make it work, exploring and exhausting every avenue. We even looked at options with a very steep price tag, but it just was not enough," said Bobcats General Manager and Head Coach Nigel Dube.

After the league shut down in December, Olds Grizzlys forward Malik Kaddoura was motivated to help young players that would age out of the league without a full final season. The Chestermere, Alta.

native created a petition for Hockey Canada to grant an extension for these players. Despite the petition receiving significant support, Hockey Canada announced they will not grant an extension for ageing out players.

## Western Hockey League (WHL)

After setting an original target date of Jan. 8, the league has had to work around different provincial and state guidelines to arrange their return to play.

The East Division, which includes teams from Saskatchewan and Manitoba, will start their return to play on March 12, where Regina will operate as a "hub-city" for a 24-game schedule.

The Central Division, which features five Alberta teams, started on Feb. 26 with the Red Deer Rebels facing off with the Medicine Hat Tigers and the Lethbridge Hurricanes playing against the Edmonton Oil Kings.

The U.S. Division features teams in Oregon and Washington State. The puck will drop for the American teams on March 18.

The fourth WHL division, featuring teams from British Columbia, is still waiting for approval to return to play. B.C.'s Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry has stated, "Nothing will change in this period of time, but I want to work with the Western Hockey League so we can have a spring season."



# Who has the coolest name? The definitive nickname rankings in the Canada West conference

**Zach Worden**

Sports Editor

With university sports in Canada on hold until (hopefully) the fall of 2021, athletics programs across the country have had to find a way to get by until their eventual return to play. One program took the opportunity to change its nickname. McGill University announced in April 2019 it would change the name of its men's varsity sports teams. In November, they announced the new name would be the Redbirds.

This doesn't dramatically change anything for any other teams across the country, but without any action going on right now, what better time to rank the 17 nicknames in the Canada West conference and see who comes out on top?

## 1. UBC Thunderbirds

Have you ever heard of a thunderbird? Us neither. The folks over at the University of British Columbia decided to combine a classic nickname — some type of bird — with the intimidation factor drawn from thunder. This earns them the top spot in our rankings.

## 2. Alberta Golden Bears/Pandas

Bonus points to the University of Alberta for having nicknames for both

their men's and women's sports teams. Both Golden Bears and Pandas would have fared well in the rankings individually, but together they make a powerful combo, coming in at number two.

## 3. Calgary Dinos

What's more intimidating than a Dino? The University of Calgary appeals to Alberta's claim to fame in Drumheller with their mascot — creating a unique name that you won't find a lot of sports teams repping across the world.

## 4. Saskatchewan Huskies

One of two Huskies in U SPORTS, the University of Saskatchewan earns the number four spot in the rankings. Everyone loves dogs and if you're going to name a sports team after a specific breed, you can't miss by going with Huskies.

## 5. MacEwan Griffins

Maybe a bit of a sleeper pick at number five; MacEwan University uses a classic nickname for their athletics program and it works. A Griffin combines the attributes of an eagle and a lion, and that in itself can intimidate those with the strongest of wills.



Calvin the Cougar at the annual Crowchild Classic hockey game. Photo courtesy of mtroyal.ca

## 6. Mount Royal Cougars and Regina Cougars

Does the fact that two universities use the same nickname help or hurt the Cougars' case? Hard to say, but obviously the name resonates with two campuses in the conference. So, despite making for a confusing broadcast when Mount Royal University and the University of Regina face off, Cougars come in at number six in the rankings.

## 7. TRU WolfPack

The WolfPack from Thompson Rivers University are ranked number seven because of the feeling of togetherness that the idea of a pack brings. One wolf on its own is scary enough; imagine facing a whole pack.

## 8. Victoria Vikes

I wish they were the Vikings, but Vikes is a unique name that fits well with the University of Victoria. The Vikes also have one of the longest track records in the whole conference, so they are deservedly in the top eight.

## 9. UNBC Timberwolves

Timberwolves may be a little overused in sports but the nickname from the University of Northern British Columbia

comes in at number nine because of the intimidation factor. For me, Timberwolves is the nickname I'd want to match up with the least in any sport out of the remaining names.

## 10. UBCO Heat

The Heat capitalize on being located in one of the warmest cities in Canada with their nickname. When student-athletes are deciding where to play, they imagine getting to play in the heat. This makes the name a good selling point for the University of British Columbia Okanagan.

## 11. UFV Cascades

The University of Fraser Valley drew inspiration from the surrounding landscape when naming their sports teams. The Cascades come in at number 11 with a unique name, but not so unique that I'd want to play for a team called the Cascades.

## 12. Lethbridge Pronghorns

Another unique nickname that doesn't quite fit the 'cool' category of some of the earlier names on the list. I can't decide if the University of Lethbridge going by the "Horns" makes this name better or not.

## 13. TWU Spartans

Spartans from Trinity Western University comes in at

number 13 because it's a fairly common name, which doesn't generate a lot of excitement one way or the other.

## 14. Brandon Bobcats

The Bobcats from Brandon University are essentially small cougars, so this nickname had to fall down in the ranking. As Brandon is known as 'The Wheat City', I wish they had played a bit more with the city's tie to agriculture.

## 15. Manitoba Bisons

The Bisons from the University of Manitoba come in at 15 for a couple of reasons. It bugs me that they go by the "Bisons" when the plural of the animal bison doesn't have an "s" at the end. Also, I couldn't imagine wanting to refer to yourself as a Bison when someone asked who you play for.

## 16. Winnipeg Wesmen

Upon a Google search, you can find out that Wesmen is a combination of Wesley College and Manitoba College, which came together to form the University of Winnipeg. If you knew that, props to you, but Wesmen earns the 16th and final spot in our rankings thanks to the nickname's overall ambiguity.



Rex the Dinosaur visits Drumheller. Photo courtesy of drumhelleronline.com