

THE PHOENIX NEWS

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THE ONGOING POST-SECONDARY FUNDING CRISIS IN B.C. COULD MEAN FINANCIAL CATASTROPHE FOR STUDENTS

BY CHARLOTTE TAPPIN

To the average post-secondary student in Canada, rising tuition fees combined with high living costs are a burden like no other. Since caps on incoming international students to Canada have been imposed by the Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) office at the federal level, post-secondary education has been suffering across the country.

Originally, these caps sought to address the ongoing housing crisis within Canada by reducing the amount of temporary residents entering the country. The federal government has pointed fingers at international students for being a primary reason behind high costs of living, limited housing availability, and expensive groceries. However, the cap has resulted in a dramatic decrease in funding channelled towards post-



Photo courtesy of Jenelle Davies

secondary education, which is beginning to threaten the state of tuition fees for domestic and international students alike. This cap threatens post-secondary education funds because international students typically pay higher tuition fees, subsequently bridge funding gaps from the dwindling provincial grants.

British Columbia's post-secondary community has been especially struggling lately, as the province has a variety of ongoing issues to tackle alongside funding for these institutions. The overwhelmed healthcare system and housing market is not a new story to anyone; due to the severity of these

two issues, post-secondary funding is not the priority of the B.C. government. The current B.C. deficit is projected to be sitting around \$11 billion, which has pushed the provincial government into conducting a funding review, a process that has not been undergone since 2022.

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Courtroom Artists: Relics or Gems?

BY WENDELL ZYLSTRA

There was a far more obvious need for these drawings during times when photography did not exist or was too slow for the active courtroom setting. However, now that we have high speed cameras and even recording technology, you would think the need for sketching and painting would be obsolete. So what is it that makes courtroom art such a long-lasting tradition?

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Professors: The Original University Influencers

BY JUHI SARVAIYA

Ever wonder what your professors' lives are actually like? I spoke to two UBCO faculty members to find out what happens on the other side of the classroom.

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How Small Modular Reactors in Ontario May Change Canada's Energy Industry For Good

BY CONNOR BRAKE

As of February 2026, the Canadian bet on nuclear energy has turned into construction in Darlington, Ontario.

MODULAR REACTORS continued on page 7

Not Done Yet: The Trill Seekers Are Going to Semis

BY GABRIELA CHAN

Avid readers of The Phoenix should remember UBC Okanagan's a cappella club, The Beats. If you have read about them in our previous Opinions and Arts & Culture sections, you would be familiar with the ICCA, that is, the International Collegiate Championship of A Cappella, where The Beats have recently made history.

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Photos provided by Jake Young

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into. To now have something that I've worked on and led in terms of the production, and to be recognized on a more pro-

fessional level, means a lot to me."

TRILL SEEKERS continued on 3

WANT TO SEE YOUR WORK IN THE PRINT?



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India, Immigrants, & Operation Blue Star

BY AIDEN MALCOLM

For decades, Canada has served as home-away-from-home for many Indian people. While some Canadians may believe that this influx of Indian immigrants is a new phenomenon, it has old roots, mired in the sociopolitical landscape of India during the 20th century.

As early as 1904 the first Indian immigrants landed in Canada. They had heard of Canada from the travels of British Indian troops, who had passed through Canada on their way to attend the coronation of Edward VII.¹ Most of the immigrants were Sikhs, primarily from farming backgrounds. Their numbers did not grow fast: by 1951, there were only 2,148 South Asians in the country.²

This number expanded rapidly after the immigration reforms of the 1950s, and by 1961 there were 67,925 South Asians in Canada, a number that would grow much more rapidly as a result of the turbulent social and political climate of India in the 1980s.³

After India gained independence from British colonial rule in 1947, it was partitioned into two states: the “Dominion of India” and the “Dominion of Pakistan”. This separation was due to largely irreconcilable religious cleavages: India was majority Hindu, and Pakistan majority Muslim. Unrepresented by this split were the Sikhs, who represented a small but concentrated minority. Punjabi separatism quickly became a widely held desire within the province of Punjab within India. Political parties like Akali Dal championed Punjabi separatism, and figures like Tara Singh and V.S. Bratti helped develop the movement. Growing discontent caused



Photo courtesy of South Asian Canadian Digital Archive

militant groups to form, which occupied the Golden Temple — the holiest site in Sikhism — after the Anandpur Sahib Resolution was turned down by the Indian Government. It marked the start of the Punjabi insurgency in India.

On the 1st of June in 1984, fighting broke out when the army attacked scores of Sikh temples, including the Golden Temple, after negotiations broke down with Akali Dal. This was Operation Blue Star, and it would come to shape the face of Canadian immigration. Underestimating the arms of the militants, temples remained occupied until June 10, when bullets ran out.

After Operation Blue Star, Satwaj Singh and Beant Singh, the bodyguards of the then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, shot and killed her in an act of retribution for ordering the operation. Afterwards, anti-Sikh riots raged

across India, resulting in thousands of Sikh deaths across India.⁴

It was from this landscape that Sikhs fled to Canada. Many joined other Punjabis in B.C., congregating in cities like Surrey and Abbotsford. To this day, Punjabi roots run deep within the region and are easily noticeable, from Khalistani flags to Akali Dal signs.

Beside Sikhs, Hindus also make up a large population of immigrants to Canada. While perhaps not as dramatically motivated, Hindu immigration remains rationally motivated. To Hindus looking for better economic conditions, Canada represents a new frontier which promises better pay, schooling and working conditions. Although there are a myriad of countries that are closer than the over 14 hour flight between Vancouver and New Delhi that offer similar pay, schooling and working con-

Retrieved February 19, 2026, from <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/delhi/1984-anti-sikh-riots-40-years-on-major-highlights-and-where-cases-stand/>

ditions, Canada already has a large and prosperous Indian community, a significant advantage for newcomers to the country.

Moreover, Indian immigration has helped prop up Canada’s aging economy. Birth rates are at a record low, with a total fertility rate below 1.3 children per woman.⁵ The replacement rate, a rate at which the population of Canada does not increase or decrease, excluding factors like migration, is a rate of 2.1 children per woman. Immigration has given Canada a strong supply of healthy, young workers and buyers, who help keep money moving and the economy stronger than it would be.

Without new young workers, the burden of care for an increasingly older population would be handed to an ever-smaller group of young people. While this would not signal the imminent collapse of society as we know it, most likely Canadians would end up with a situation much like Japan’s: low growth and a relatively ancient population.

Ultimately, we should not treat our immigrants like they are merely some economic unit. These immigrants bring more than just economic benefits: their arrival has shaped our culture, and they are now a part of the fabric that makes Canada its own country. They are as much a part of Canadian society as any other, and are not going anywhere anytime soon. It is not some cultural war, or even a zero sum game, but the moving of people like any other, a phenomenon as old as Canada itself.

Fertility and baby names, 2024. Government of Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/250924/dq250924d-eng.htm>

1. Indians in Canada. (n.d.). Retrieved February 19, 2026, from <https://electriccanadian.com/history/india.htm>

2. Indians in Canada. <https://electriccanadian.com/history/india.htm>

3. Indians in Canada. <https://electriccanadian.com/history/india.htm>

4. 1984 anti-Sikh riots: 40 years on, major highlights and where cases stand. (2024, October 30). *The Tribune*.

5. Statistics Canada. (2025, September 24). *The Daily*—

The Ongoing Post-Secondary Funding Crisis in B.C. Could Mean Financial Catastrophe for Students

BY CHARLOTTE TAPPIN

To the average post-secondary student in Canada, rising tuition fees combined with high living costs are a burden like no other. Since caps on incoming international students to Canada have been imposed by the Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) office at the federal level, post-secondary education has been suffering across the country.

Originally, these caps sought to address the ongoing housing crisis within Canada by reducing the amount of temporary residents entering the country. The federal government has pointed fingers at international students for being a primary reason behind high costs of living, limited housing availability, and expensive groceries. However, the cap has resulted in a dramatic decrease in funding channelled towards post-secondary education, which is beginning to threaten the state of tuition fees for domestic and international students alike. This cap threatens post-secondary education funds because international students typically pay higher tuition fees, subsequently bridge funding gaps from the dwindling provincial grants.

British Columbia’s post-secondary community has been especially struggling lately, as the province has a variety of ongoing issues to tackle alongside funding for these institutions. The overwhelmed healthcare system and housing market is not a new story to anyone; due to the severity of these two issues, post-secondary funding is not the priority of the B.C. government. The current B.C. deficit is projected to be sitting around \$11 billion, which has pushed the provincial government into conducting a funding review, a process that has not been undergone since 2022.¹

This review is absolutely crucial for post-secondary students in B.C., because the current

tuition increase cap of 2% is in danger of being tossed to the side as the province is no longer ensuring it will be kept in effect after the funding review.

In order to advocate for students in this crucial time, various SUO executives have participated in lobbying efforts to ensure student voices from the Okanagan are heard. SUO Vice-President External, Olivia Lai, stressed that “[students] can only afford tuition because [they] rely on the 2% cap, which creates predictability.”

Lai is also concerned that lifting the cap is not the only issue present, and that separate institutions are at risk of being merged together. UBC Okanagan and Okanagan Col-

lege appear to be in good standing, but many post-secondary institutions in the Lower Mainland are at a big risk for consolidation. For Lai, this creates issues as students choose their schools and programs based on proximity, enjoyment, and specialty. To merge them would eliminate those incentives.

Administrators and faculty could also be combined and cut to eliminate costs, especially through ongoing concerns of administrative bloat as expressed by Minister Jessie Sunner and Premier David Eby. Lai thinks “consolidation is a short term solution, [but] in the long term they need to put in more funding.”

As of right now, this funding review is set to release sometime after March. Depending on the results, the province could be facing ex-

treme budget cuts. Lai noted that the focus is on improving healthcare, investing in technology, and promoting the trades. This will result in cuts to other programs within the B.C. post-secondary education sphere. Lai expressed that there is still a lot of importance in other education fields, such as the humanities, arts, and sciences; lack of investment in those fields could result in similar problems in the future.

Rural communities are also a huge area of focus for Lai, and there is a need for more investment in the Okanagan as it grows. Lack of funding could result in shortages in the crucial sectors of healthcare, technology, and trades. Access to post-secondary education is important for Lai as she highlights that “university should be a public good, not a luxury.”

In order to further advocate for students regarding this issue, Lai, alongside other SUO executive members, rallied with the BC Federation of Students (BCFS) to share their concerns regarding the chronic underfunding of post-secondary education. Lai recalled this protest as being successful, as the students were interviewed by Global News, which will give them a greater platform to emphasize the severity of the upcoming funding review. Student leaders came together to “show solidarity and unify their voices,” as Lai commented.

If students at UBC Okanagan wish to further support this cause, Lai encourages students to write to their MLAs, share concerns on social media, and talk with their community. On a conclusive note, she shared: “[this] feels like the government is pinning us against our own community. This needs to be a dinner table conversation — talk to your family, talk to people who don’t go to post-secondary — about the severity of the lack of funding to post-secondary.”



Photo courtesy of Jenelle Davies

1. “B.C.’s Economy Shows Resilience despite Global Trade Volatility.” *BC Gov News*, 27 Nov. 2025. news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2025FIN0041-001175

Not Done Yet: The Trill Seekers Are Going to Semis

BY GABRIELA CHAN

Avid readers of *The Phoenix* should remember UBC Okanagan's a cappella club, The Beats. If you have read about them in our previous Opinions and Arts & Culture sections, you would be familiar with the ICCA, that is, the International Collegiate Championship of A Cappella, where The Beats have recently made history.^{1,2}

On January 24, 2026, The Beats' intensive competitive team, The Trill Seekers (TS), placed second at the ICCA West Quarterfinal in Tacoma, Washington, USA. Later this year, they will be representing UBCO and competing at the semifinals alongside the top ten a cappella teams in the West Region.

Founded in 2018, The Trill Seekers has consistently striven to advance in the ICCA, but until this year, they had never progressed beyond the quarterfinals. Michael Adebisi and Angela Dela Santa, the co-musical directors of TS for the past three years, say that this milestone means "everything."

"It's validating," says Adebisi. "I love music, but I never felt like it was something that I could really put myself into. To now have something that I've worked on and led in terms of the production, and to be recognized on a more professional level, means a lot to me."

When I interviewed The Trill Seekers on February 2, 2026 to discuss their recent achievement, Sydney Curwen, the team's internal director, shared similar feelings of validation as Adebisi. A Soprano who has been in the team for four years and internal director for three, Curwen is proud to see people from other competing teams recognise TS's faces at this year's ICCA.

Curwen says, "In my first year, a lot of the other teams were just like, 'oh, it's The Trill Seekers, they're okay,' or 'pretty good for this year.' The three of us (Curwen, Adebisi, and Dela Santa) have worked incredibly hard to get this team to where we are now."

Dela Santa nodded and joked about how she tears up every night rewatching the video of them placing second:

"Semis or not, my biggest goal was always to get recognized for the work we've been doing. At semis, I hope we make them think, 'What's this little school from Kelowna? They're kind of good.'"

TS has evolved tremendously in the leadup to this milestone. Adebisi describes the team's sound as more "modern" now, meaning that it is closer to what you would hear in mainstream music as opposed to classical or gospel styles of a cappella. The co-musical directors have observed that most winning teams at the ICCA lean towards contemporary genres.

From researching past winning performances to making tough decisions about member line-ups each year, the trio of directors have revamped the way they run this team. At the same time, they want to ensure that the team members are enjoying their time in TS.

Overall, Curwen observes that their team dynamic has improved year after year.

"The three of us have worked out a lot of the kinks in leadership. We've figured out what works for people and what doesn't. So, we ourselves kind of have a new game plan. I think that because we're sure of ourselves, the team can be sure about what they're doing as well."

Leading a team of 16 is not easy, and while many schools have abundant resources to coach their a cappella teams, UBCO does not.

This "little school from Kelowna" has a small student population and no music program. No one that walks into The Beats' audition room is a music major or a professional singer, whereas that could be the case

for some of the other competing universities at the ICCA.

"We can't even book rooms to practice in," adds Adebisi. Most times, the club has to try their luck at finding an empty classroom to practice in — if you ever hear "doo-bee-doo-bee-doo" ascending up the scale from a classroom on a random Tuesday evening, chances are you have caught one of the club's teams warming up for practice.

Considering the lack of resources at UBCO, Adebisi describes placing at the ICCA as "something that has felt impossible for the school for so long." He and Dela Santa emphasize, however, that this has been a challenge, but not a hindrance.

They have been able to fill the gaps in resources thanks to many alumni. TS has received help from Brendan and Kayley Bourcier, the club's co-founders; Francois Vermeulen, a vocal coach and father of an alumnus; and past members of the team like former musical director, Jason van Zyl.

"Their journey is also our journey," says Dela Santa. She attributes her and Adebisi's confidence as leaders to van Zyl, who was a huge source of encouragement for the current co-musical directors to run for their positions in the first place. Over the past three years, van Zyl has stayed in contact, giving them notes and advice on leading the team.

These talented and committed students meet for a minimum of eight hours a week. However, with sectionals (additional practices in their individual voice parts), choreography sessions, and one-on-one training, those eight hours can add up to 12. In addition to interviewing the directors of TS, I also chatted with a few members to understand what that commitment looks like.

Gabriela Chan: What makes being in TS difficult?

Virgil Abou-Mechrek (Tenor, second year in TS): Definitely the time commitment. I think some of the busiest people I know are in this group, and it takes a lot of dedication. We can't be doing other things during practice or we're going to miss something because it's really, really fast paced.

Julia Otero (Mezzo-Soprano, first year in TS): There's that and the imposter syndrome. When I received the acceptance email from TS, I thought, 'Why the heck did they

pick me? These people are so amazing and talented.' In the beginning, I went through a learning curve and the frustration of having to pick things up at such a fast pace, but once I got into the groove of it and jumped that mental hurdle, I felt like something fell into place.

Chan: What makes being in TS easy?

Abou-Mechrek, Jon-Rae Clarke (VP Events, Baritone, second year in TS), and Merck Mendoza (Bass, second year in TS) revelled at the satisfaction of making progress together. Mendoza adds, "Succeeding in this team gives me confidence elsewhere. There's that hope for myself when I see that my hard work has paid off."

"A lack of existential dread," he calls it, to which the rest of the team laughed. Though a funny way of putting it, he is not wrong. A lot of joy comes from preparing a performance for an audience, hearing your team improve with each practice, and counting down to showday. It is that anticipation, knowing something good is coming, that encourages one to approach all areas of life with a little more faith and excitement.

It might have been that "lack of existential dread" that motivated Otero in school. Unexpectedly, since she joined TS, her grades skyrocketed. She explains, "For one, I have a creative outlet, but also, developing that dedication, consistency, and prioritization, which are so important in this team, actually helped me with my schoolwork."

Being in a team like TS requires you to be good at singing, but that is not enough. You must also develop time management and responsibility. These skills serve you outside of a cappella, which is why Otero encourages others to engage in extra-curricular activities. When it is something that you love doing or a community that supports you from start to finish, she believes that you are never too busy.

A like-minded team who spends lots of time together, TS has grown close over the past few years. While the combination of members changes annually, many have been in the group for over a year, so I asked them to share some memories from their time together.

Curwen: I think it was last year when we were sitting in a circle in this exact room, a few weeks ahead of the competition, and talking about what the setlist means to us.

People were sharing their personal stories, some of their trauma, and childhood memories. Some of us were crying pretty hard by the end of that.

"Every year, that's a really big moment where we realize that this is a safe space. Not just that, it is our personal safe space. You can be whoever you want, say whatever you want, do whatever you want, and you know you're not going to be judged for anything."

That personal safe space is the culmination of people's kindness in addition to an open environment created by Curwen and the co-musical directors. Although we were talking about memories, Abou-Mechrek answered with a name, Hidechiyo Higa (Vocal Percussion, second year in TS).

"Chiyo brings the energy that we need. He is always willing to shoot someone a message and ask how they're doing or, 'oh, do you want to come do this with me?' It's so refreshing and a huge reason why the team is the way that it is. I feel like we feed off of his kindness." To Abou-Mechrek's point, Mendoza responded, "Can Chiyo get his own page or something?"

Just a few minutes prior to TS placing at this year's West Quarterfinals, Adebisi and Dela Santa were prized Best Choreography; before they are able to wrap their heads around that — their first ever award as co-musical directors — the MC announces, "and second place goes to ... The Trill Seekers!"

Chan: How do you feel about participating in the ICCA semifinals for the first time in TS's and The Beats' history?

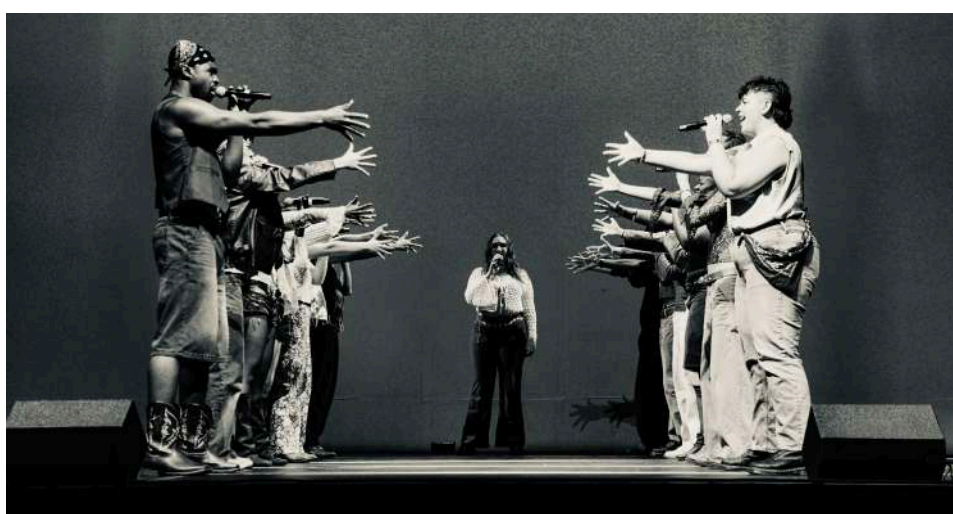
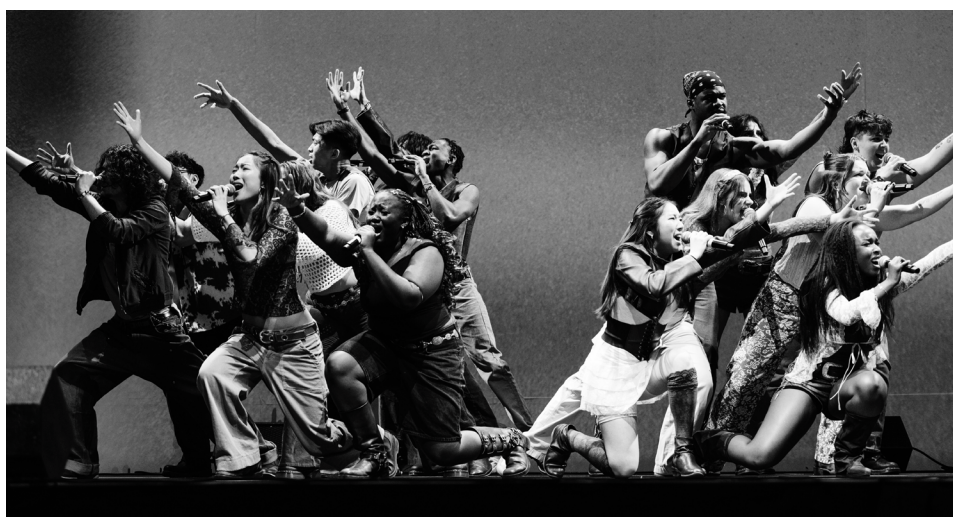
Curwen: It's nice to not be done yet. Usually, at this point of the year, we're getting ready for The Beats' spring show but there is not much else to do. This year, it's nice to know that there's more to work towards.

Now that The Trill Seekers are semisbound, Dela Santa's Google Calendar is all red — TS's team color. They are honing in 10–12 hours of practice per week, polishing up their choreography, and most importantly, raising funds to travel to the competition.

The 2026 ICCA West Semifinal is set to take place on March 21, 2026, in Redwood City, California, which is much farther from Kelowna than Tacoma, Washington. Since this is a first for The Beats, the club's funds are far from enough to cover the travel costs and "we pretty much have to fully fund ourselves," states Curwen.

The Trill Seekers has set up a GoFundMe and are currently accepting donations with the goal of raising \$15,000 CAD. In addition, they have a few fundraising events lined up for the next two months including a merchandise sale and performance at the Community Market on March 10, 2026.

To support TS and help them continue their story, scan the QR code below, spread the news with friends and family, and follow them on Instagram (@thetrillseekers) to stay updated on their journey. One way or another, Dela Santa is determined that they are going to get there. "We'll start walking tomorrow," says Curwen, but let's not make them walk to California.



Photos provided by Jake Young

1. Chan, G. (2025, April 6). UBCO's A Cappella Club, The Beats: The Insider Scoop. *The Phoenix News*. <https://www.thephoenixnews.com/posts/ubcos-a-cappella-club-the-beats-the-insider-scoop>
2. Amrani, A. (2024, February 5). The Beats: UBCO's Noteworthy A Cappella Club. *The Phoenix News*. <https://www.thephoenixnews.com/posts/the-beats-ubcos-noteworthy-a-cappella-club>

Are You Using the Library or Just Sitting In It?

BY JUHI SARVAIYA

You know that generic image of a library that you carry around in your head? Warm lighting, endless wooden shelves, and one strict librarian in spectacles and a knitted sweater, shooting you a look every time you talk. That picture is funny, but it is also outdated.

However entertaining and on brand it might seem in movies and television shows, libraries have never been about that. Especially university ones.

On campus, our library is not just a hushed room full of books and forced silence. It is a system — a place that has been redesigned around how students actually live now, exhausted, overstimulated, half-focused, and constantly juggling multiple things at once.

In my second year, I was in the library at 9 p.m., proofreading a final essay, when I realized my in-text citations were probably wrong. I went to the desk for the first time, and within ten minutes, a librarian walked me through the citation style and fixed what I was missing. I left with a clean reference list and, more importantly, actual confidence in what I was doing.

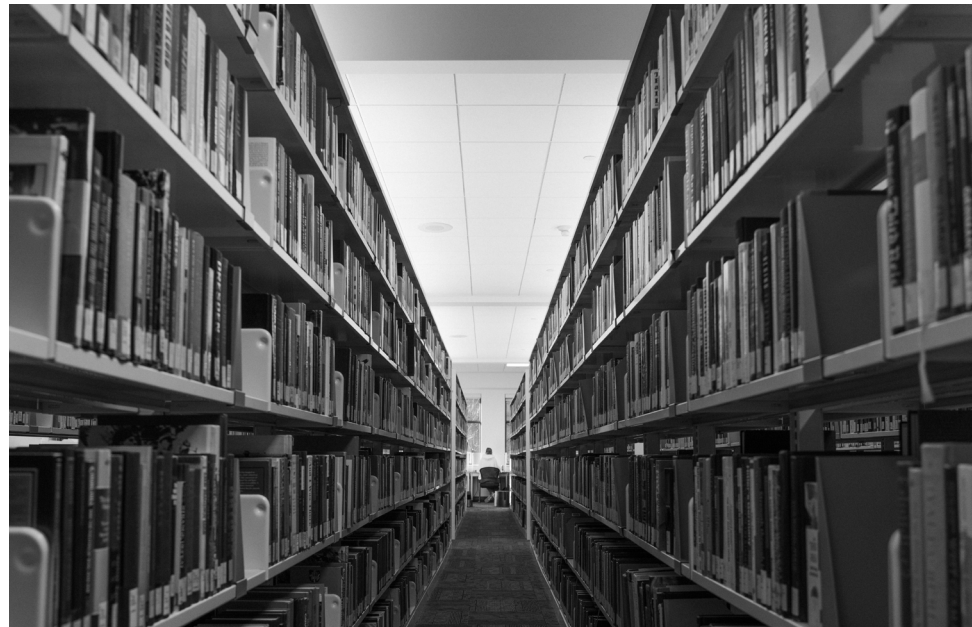
But it is interesting how most students are unaware of the many services the library offers, as well as the wide selection of books that adorn the shelves next to which you study, next to which you scroll aimlessly through your phone. Somehow, most of us still treat the library like it is only two things — a place to lock in during finals, or a place to meet your friends and convince yourselves that you will be locking in.

The librarian does not just point you to a shelf and disappear. They can help you with all the behind-the-scenes work and more. When I spoke to the library staff on campus, the one common theme was not “we have so many books”; it was “we fix problems students do not even realize the library can fix”, the kind you usually try to deal with alone, by panic-texting a friend or emailing a professor for help.

One of the key and perhaps most underused services is also the simplest: booking one-on-one appointments with a librarian. Talking with Marjorie Mitchell, Talia Greene, and Heather Berringer — significant pillars of the library — made it obvious how much these sessions can cover. You can get help with citations, research strategy, and course papers, but also the less obvious stuff students get stressed about, like copyright rules, where and how academic work gets published, and how to keep your research data organized so it does not turn into a digital mess.

They will walk you through the wild mess of research for essays and papers, provide tricks most people only pick up after years of writing papers the hard way, show you how to find sources more efficiently, how to use databases, and many other shortcuts. They help you move from “I have so much information” to “I have such a coherent argument”.

There is a reason this service feels almost too good to be true: it is. Students do not use it enough. Multiple staff members told me about the same phenomenon in different ways: students assume librarians are too busy, that their question is dumb, or that asking for help is somehow embarrassing.



Provided by Sabhya Arora

The irony is that working with students is the part that many librarians enjoy most. The question does not need to be impressive; it just needs to be honest.

Greene, our Open Education Librarian, made the same point from a different angle. “Students should take advantage of reference appointments with librarians, especially for research and citations,” she said. “There is a stereotype that librarians are stuffy, strict, and serious, and I hate it because it leads to ‘library anxiety’, as if the library is all rules and you cannot relax there.”

Mitchell, the copyright, scholarly communications, and research data management librarian, put a final nail in the stereotype. “Librarians are not the enforcers of silence,” she said. She loves the first-floor hum because the library designed spaces intentionally for different moods and different kinds of brains.

If you have ever spent hours Googling a topic and ended up falling down rabbit holes with half-truths and conflicting headlines, this is where the library comes in. The library helps you sort through the noise and focus on what is real. Sure, generative AI is everywhere now, and most of us lean on it for research and writing. But the library gives you something AI cannot: know-how.

AI can sound correct; it can sound polished. Although it might be the easiest, quickest, and most convenient way to get anything you need done, it does not always know what is true, and it does not always know when it is wrong.

This is where librarians feel almost underrated in 2026. When information is infinite and confidence is cheap, being able to tell the difference between “convincing” and “correct” becomes the real skill. When asked about generative AI versus librarians, Mitchell had a lot to share. “Librarians can find multiple sources to support your argument and provide confirmation that the info provided is absolutely correct. AI just provides plausible, convincing answers pulled from everywhere, whereas librarians provide answers from only a set of reliable, valid sources that are factual.” She explained. “Most importantly, librarians will tell you when you are wrong and help you find the correct thing. We can tell you when a source is sketchy, when your logic is not supported, when you may need more evidence.” The difference is simple. AI can give you a polished paragraph, but librarians

give you proof.

If there is one place the library quietly saves students from disaster, it is in the world of citations, especially for first-year students who do not have a strong grasp of different kinds of citations and are intimidated by essay-writing. Instead of looking up crash courses online or turning to ChatGPT, all you have to do is talk to a librarian.

It turns out that a lot of citation errors come from the same source: people do not know what they are looking at. A PDF looks like a PDF. A title looks like a title. But citations require specificity. When you are exhausted, it is easy to slap together a reference list that looks formal enough to pass, even if it is not technically correct. Librarians see these patterns all the time, which means they also know the fastest way to fix them.

The library simultaneously provides tools for success and shows you how to use them. If you are overwhelmed by sources, a subject librarian can help you find what matters and cut out the noise. If you are stuck in a database doomscroll, they can show you how to search smartly. If you are building a thesis or a big project, they can help you map out your research, so you are not reinventing the wheel every time. Most students learn these skills through trial and error. The library lets you skip the error.

Copyright is the other silent stressor, especially for students working on creative projects, posters, presentations, and long research papers. A lot of students assume copyright only matters in some official, legal sense, like something that happens to corporations and celebrities. But it shows up in student work constantly: using images in slides, quoting longer passages, uploading work publicly, building a portfolio, including figures in a paper, and submitting a thesis or dissertation. The library can advise on what is allowed, what is risky, and what you need to do to be safe.

But perhaps the most engaging part of the library is the pocket branch. In conversation with the library staff, I found out that there is a little corner in the back of the library where students can access public library books. All you have to do is get a public library card, and you can order any sort of book you want, be it romance, fantasy, fiction, or poetry.

This matters because the UBCO library collection is, understandably, aca-

demic-heavy. But students still want books that feel like a break. The pocket branch is a small, almost hidden way the library acknowledges that.

The staff notices what students are choosing when they do read for themselves. Berringer said romance has been huge. The library even built a display around so-called “romantasy,” because students were clearly drawn to it. She named the rise of YA, dark academia, and romantasy as the most desired books among UBCO’s student population, with a general surge around popular series.

Ironically, university is where you get assigned texts that require highlighters, tabs, and caffeine. Then you walk into the library for a “serious study session” and secretly want a book that lets you disappear for a few hours.

Greene’s own recommendations match that range. For pleasure reading through the campus library, she listed *The Goldfinch* by Donna Tartt, *Nickel Boys* by Colson Whitehead, and *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro. She also pointed out that graphic novels can be “a nice respite from schoolwork,” naming *Maus* by Art Spiegelman and *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi.

Below is a curated list by Berringer, our Learning and Curriculum Support Librarian. Her advice for students who cannot finish books anymore was to not force themselves.

- Knott, H. (2023). *Becoming a matriarch*. Knopf Canada.
- Mandel, E. S. J. (2014). *Station eleven*. Alfred A. Knopf.
- Marvel, K. (2025). *Human nature: Nine ways to feel about our changing planet*. Ecco, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers.
- Saint-Exupéry, A. de. (2000). *The little prince* (R. Howard, Trans.; 1st ed). Harcourt.
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- Le Guin, U. K. (1987). *The ones who walk away from omelas. The wind’s twelve quarters*. HarperCollins Publishers. <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ubc/detail.action?docID=29436920>
- Wallace, D.F. (2005). *This is water* by David Foster Wallace (full transcript and audio). <https://fs.blog/david-foster-wallace-this-is-water/>

“Try short stories, try something you can commit to without feeling trapped,” she suggested. “I’d definitely recommend *Peacocks of Instagram* by Deepa Rajagopalan as a short story pick!”

If even more reading is not the break you want, the library still has options that students do not take advantage of enough. Greene noted the library offers streaming platforms students can access, including Kanopy, Criterion on Demand, and Audio Cine Films. The library also lends out “fun collections”, including games and items you can borrow on short loans.

The library has something for everyone. So, ask yourself, are you using the library or just sitting in it?

Professors: The Original University Influencers

BY JUHI SARVAIYA

We all know what it is like to be a student at university. We share stories about exam seasons, last-minute projects, part-time jobs, and the challenges of balancing our lives around assignments and classes. But we rarely discuss the other half of that exchange. What is it like to be the person standing at the front of the room? What does it mean to build a career around teaching, mentoring, and basically guiding hundreds of students every year at a university?

To answer this question, I spoke with two professors whose careers have taken very different paths into academia – Professor Jan Cioe, who teaches courses in the discipline of psychology, and Professor David Geary, who teaches anthropology courses at UBC Okanagan. Their stories show a side of university life that students seldom get to see.

All professors have a first moment that sets them on their path. For Jan Cioe, it began with admiration for the professors he had met as a young student.

“I had some really good role models who were teachers,” he said.

Cioe remembers their presence, discipline, and their command over and love for the subject matter they teach. He explains that he had always wanted to teach, even before he knew what a career in academia would look like. As an undergraduate, he worked in the classroom as a teaching assistant, further strengthening his interest in a career in post-secondary education. Cioe’s work later brought him to Cambridge University for a Master’s degree in criminology, and eventually to UBC Okanagan via Okanagan College in 1990, long before the campus officially became part of the university in 2005. Over the years, he has taught Introduction to Psychology, Forensic Psychology, Human Sexuality, and Statistics.

David Geary’s trajectory began at Simon Fraser University, where an introductory anthropology course changed the way he views the world. During his undergrad, he had inspiring mentors who made him fall in love with the entire field of anthropology.

“I found a discipline that sparked curiosity, wonder, and the exploration of different ways of being and knowing in the world.”

After several years spent exploring different fields and working in tradeshow and exhibition management, he realised that something was missing. So, he returned to pursue graduate work, followed by research and a Ph.D. that focused on tourism, pilgrimage, and heritage. His fieldwork took him to India for the first time, which became a defining moment in his career. By 2013, he joined UBC Okanagan and began teaching courses on cultural anthropology, religion, heritage, and the politics of memory.

Despite their different disciplines and experiences, both professors describe teaching as something that comes naturally to them. In both their lives, the support of wonderful mentors paved the way for what was to become a great career in teaching.

In response to questions about why he teaches, Geary explains that for him, the motivation has always been about inspiring others. His professors had once opened up the world for him, and he wants to do the same for his students. He sees education as a transformative tool and believes that the most rewarding aspect of his job is building meaningful relationships with students and supporting their goals beyond the class-

room. He has remained in touch with former students, and he considers those ongoing connections to be one of the greatest privileges of his career.

“Teaching is a way to inspire others,” says Geary.

Cioe said the most rewarding thing about his work is engaging with students. He adds that teaching is not simply about lecturing but also about forming connections. For him, the most enjoyable work takes place during Directed Studies and Honours projects. He enjoys reading drafts, providing extensive feedback, and helping students turn their ideas into coherent, structured arguments. One student, he shares, went through seven separate drafts before the final version of their manuscript was ready. That process was demanding, but in ways that made him value the process deeply.

Many students think professors have easy schedules and free time. After all, it is just teaching a course. Cioe immediately challenges that — it is not as easy as it looks. He teaches three courses a year, one each term. He spends an average of fifty-five hours a week on course preparation, grading, meetings, administrative duties, and mentoring honours and directed studies students, among other tasks. He also serves as a senior academic advisor, which means he regularly meets with students who need guidance about their programs or their future plans. As rewarding as the job is, it looks lighter from the outside than it feels from the inside.

Geary expands on this point by noting that students often underestimate how much professors value their interactions with students. Since the pandemic, those interactions have become harder to build. He explains that:

“Teaching requires vulnerability. Professors have their own doubts and concerns, even if they do not express them openly.”

He believes that students would be surprised to learn how much their engagement matters to instructors. Geary wants students to feel seen, not as assignments or grades, but as individuals with their own perspectives and experiences.

We all know that the pandemic significantly changed the scope of education and learning in many ways. The university experience feels different from what it was a decade ago.

Cioe has observed a clear shift in how students approach academic work. He believes that many students struggle with foundational study habits. He said that some students attend university because it is expected of them, not because they are prepared for the work.

“The message ‘You can be anything’ can be misleading. It may cause students to equate academic difficulty with personal failure rather than recognising that people have different strengths and skill sets.”

He also highlights how the pandemic intensified many of these challenges, creating major gaps in motivation, engagement, and just basic study strategies.

Geary emphasizes his own concerns with the pandemic in a different way. He explains that the pandemic created new barriers between students and professors, disrupting the natural human relationship

in the classroom. Students became more hesitant to speak, more anxious to participate, and more reluctant to form connections. He sees this as a challenge, but not a defeat. Geary believes that teaching must evolve with the times, and he looks for innovative approaches to encourage attention and curiosity. Now, treats each class as an experiment, adjusting his methods to meet students where they are.

Teaching is an art as much as it is a profession, and both professors have their own methods of building engagement and connecting with students on a personal level.

Cioe uses a range of techniques, especially in his Human Sexuality course. He asks students to break into groups, discuss prompts, and share insights. He walks among them, listens, and sees what they can come up with, and carries around a bag of candy to reward participation and enthusiasm. In one instance, when a student refused candy, he began offering twenty-five cents instead, which eventually turned into a running joke in the class. Another technique he uses to motivate students comes after exams, where some of the best essays and answers get a chance to be read out loud to the class. On top of the class having an opportunity to learn from strong work, it gives the student reading their answer a confidence boost.

Geary takes a different but equally thoughtful approach. He tries to connect at a human level and believes that students respond best when they feel seen and heard, utilizing small group discussions, flexible assignment formats, and creative project options in his syllabi to help students take ownership of their learning. He encourages open-ended inquiry, especially in anthropology, where interpretation, culture, and imagination are central to the discipline. He says that every class teaches him something new about his students and about himself.

Both professors emphasise that teaching is not a one-directional interaction. Students also shape professors.

Cioe reflected on his experience teaching Human Sexuality since 1980. He has witnessed dramatic changes in how younger generations understand gender, sexuality, and identity. He explains that once-neutral language has taken on new meaning for students today, and he appreciates these shifts because they push him to remain informed and respectful. Cioe tells students that they have a responsibility to challenge him when he makes mistakes or uses outdated terminology. He says he values those conversations because they strengthen the learning environment for everyone.

Geary said that students give him hope. He admires the optimism and curiosity that students bring into the classroom, even in times of such global uncertainty. He believes that anthropology not only gives students the tools to understand systems of power and the impacts of colonialism, but also to imagine alternatives to the world they inherit. Students teach him, he says, about resilience, creativity, and the importance of staying open to transformation. When asked about any advice they have to offer, here is what they shared.

Cioe urges students to make direct contact with their professors and teaching assistants. He believes that personal relationships matter. Attending office hours changed his own academic life, and he hopes students will use these opportunities more often.

“Ask questions, seek help, and treat professors as approachable mentors rather than distant figures,” encourages Cioe.

Geary wants students to hold onto wonder. He believes that curiosity is vital to navigating university as well as the world beyond. Education is not just about knowledge, but about forming meaningful relationships and becoming conscientious to the world’s complexity.

“I want students to remain open to new ideas, to question structures, and to imagine better futures,” Geary shares.

Teaching at a university is a commitment to students, to learning, and to the ever-changing sphere of higher education. Professors carry the weight of academic preparation, mentorship, administration, and emotional support. They work within a changing landscape of attention, technology, and post-pandemic recovery. Yet both Cioe and Geary find meaning in their work because of the students who walk into their classrooms.

The university experience is shaped by both sides of the lecture hall. Professors transform students just as students transform professors. This dynamic is at the heart of what it means to teach and learn at UBC Okanagan.



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A Lesson in Movie Marketing: Orange Blimp, Cereal, Ping Pong Balls, and All

BY GABRIELA CHAN

A period film about ping pong does not immediately scream “box office success,” but *Marty Supreme* has managed to mold itself into independent film studio A24’s highest-grossing film to date, generating \$147 million USD globally.¹

Directed by Josh Safdie, co-produced by and starring Timothee Chalamet, *Marty Supreme* was released on Christmas Day of 2025. It is a sports-comedy drama about Marty Mauser, an obsessive table tennis player pursuing greatness in post-WWII New York. What did this film do to attract such success? Was it the orange blimp in the sky? The Wheaties cereal boxes featuring Chalamet? Or was it the Las Vegas Sphere being turned into a giant ping pong ball?

A24 is known for its low-budget but creative movie marketing campaigns. This studio does it differently than Hollywood. They created a Tinder profile for an AI robot to promote *Ex Machina* (2015), delivered creepy dolls to those who attended the midnight screening of the horror film, *Hereditary* (2018), and got the New York Stock Exchange to display bachelors’ personal traits — such as height, turn-ons, and income — on their live ticker to foreshadow the romantic comedy, *Materialists* (2025).²

A24’s marketing campaigns have famously catered to a young generation of viewers who are more likely to be captivated by innovative and interactive cultural phenomena than a simple movie trailer. Yet the campaign for *Marty Supreme* was on another level.

Forget the blimp, the cereal, and even the bright orange ball in the Vegas skyline. Watch Chalamet pitch the idea of painting the Eiffel Tower orange in a viral 18-minute “leaked” Zoom conference video.³

The absurdity of it all suggests that Chalamet is playing a persona, one that mirrors his film’s titular character. Marty Mauser

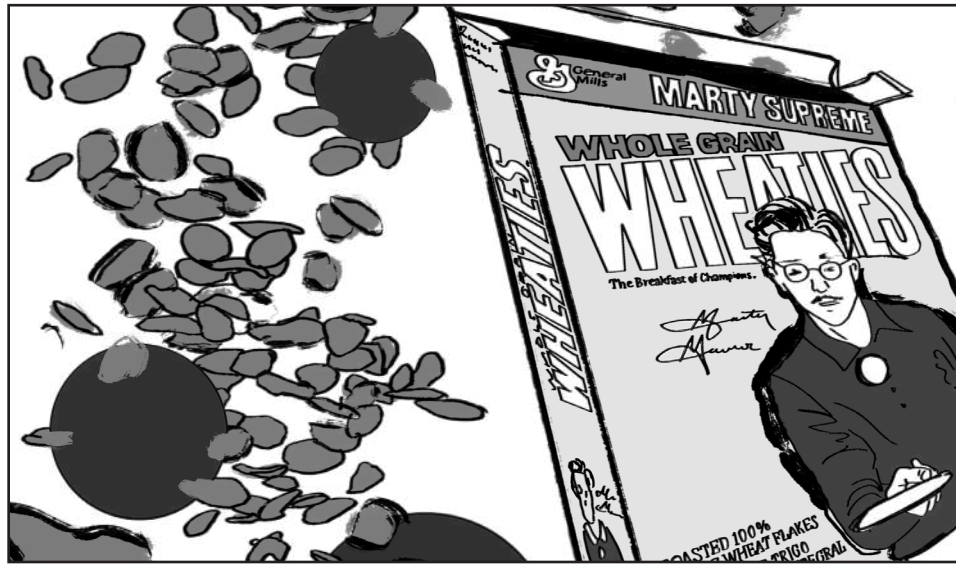


Illustration by Iso Maauad Rodriguez

is naively ambitious, obsessively career-oriented, and a little full of himself. At the same time, Chalamet *did* state that he was “in pursuit of greatness” during last year’s Actor Awards, and that was before the *Marty Supreme* marketing campaign.⁴

Chalamet’s commitment to acting is widely acknowledged and respected, but if this mock conference video sparked anything, it was confusion: what game is Chalamet playing? Was his “greatness” speech part of the act, and is this what acting and filmmaking has come to — a marketing gimmick?

These questions were in the air, and the confusion translated into buzz.

Seeing how well this film has sold, many people now say that the campaign was genius. Chaotic, but genius. It used fragmented happenings — upload a comedic video here, feature Chalamet rapping in EsDeeKid’s music video there, get celebrities to wear the brand jacket everywhere — to leave audiences constantly curious and generate visibility for

the film.⁵

In advertising, visibility is key, and today’s advertisements circulate in a fragmented fashion. It is no longer as straightforward as putting up movie posters in the subway station. If you want to market a film, social media is fertile ground, but this algorithm-driven market is also tricky to tap into.

Since algorithms are based on people’s viewing habits and demographics, “a film can overwhelm one corner of the Internet while remaining completely invisible to most of the general public,” says Trill Magazine writer Charity Maxson.⁶ In other words, it has become increasingly difficult for new films to get discovered by a wide range of audiences.

By playing into the fragmentary state of our digital culture, *Marty Supreme*’s unconventional marketing efforts seem to have worked, but was it necessary?

An invigorating score by Daniel Lopatin; a delicately paced story that keeps you at the edge of your seat and results in an

emotionally charged climax; scene compositions that dance beautifully on the borderline between being too messy and too ornamental — the movie was good. It was phenomenal, actually. *Marty Supreme* has received nine Oscar nominations.⁷

What is more, this comedy-drama boasts the involvement of various A-list creatives. Besides Chalamet, the film featured Gwyneth Paltrow, Fran Drescher, and Odessa A’zion. Director Josh Safdie, formerly part of the Safdie Brothers, had already made a name for himself with previous films like *Daddy Longlegs* (2009) and *Uncut Gems* (2019). It would have been no surprise to someone who loves movies that *Marty Supreme* was high-quality.

Considering the above, this film did not need an extensive marketing campaign to encourage cinephiles to watch it, yet here is the thing: even independent film companies such as A24 are targeting not just cinephiles, but everyone.

One is left to wonder how much of the *Marty Supreme* hype is due to the movie’s quality or its marketing campaign. That may well be a “chicken-or-the-egg” question. Regardless, this movie exemplifies how inseparable filmmaking and marketing have become.

Today, films are not only a form of art, but also a commodity.

It is tempting to react with nostalgia and reminisce at the “purer” times when artists made art for art’s sake, but as an artist you want your work to be seen, and that process is admittedly facilitated by marketing. Did a “purer” time ever exist before, or has the digital world simply made the connection between art and marketing more pronounced and the possibilities more supreme?

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Courtroom Artists: Relics or Gems?

BY WENDELL ZYLSTRA

There are many archaic traditions that trickle down into modern day happenings. This is often seen in governments and their institutions. The effects of these lingering traditions are often negative, leading to deeply rooted issues within social and legal institutions, norms, and practices. However, these traditions also lead to the very distinctive look of places like courtrooms, with judges in powdered wigs, gavels, Bible swearings, and the like. Another tradition that carries on today is the one of courtroom sketches and paintings.

There was a far more obvious need for these drawings during times when photography did not exist or was too slow for the active courtroom setting. However, now that we have high speed cameras and even recording technology, you would think the need for sketching and painting would be obsolete. So what is it that makes courtroom art such a long-lasting tradition? Is it just another stubborn form of monarchy pageantry, or does it really have use in the modern courtroom?

In October of 2024, I sat down with my parents to watch the news. It was then we saw reports of the Gisèle Pelicot trial in France. The report described the proceedings of the trial, including the fact that Mrs. Pelicot had been subjected to watching hours of footage of her own sexual assault perpetrated by the 51 men on trial. This was flooring news and began several social movements in France around the treatment of women and sex trafficking. What I found sort of bizarre, however, was that many of the photos used for the report were not photos at all, but watercolour paintings done by artists like Benoit Peyrucq and Valentin Pasquier.



Illustration by Iso Maauad Rodriguez

The biggest reason for these sketches taking priority over photos was simply because photography and media recording in the courtroom is prohibited without explicit consent from the parties recorded.¹ As such, there were not many media photos released of the trial at all.

The impact of what seems a small privacy law goes far beyond the courtroom. The movements that emerged in the wake of the Gisèle Pelicot trial criticized the defendants, many of whom were fathers and community members. Many of the signs used during protests used drawings of Pelicot as opposed to photos. Even the German *Vogue*, who had the story of the trial as their feature, used a drawing of Pelicot instead of a photo of her.

Sketches and photography are both art forms that can be used to create images which sway the hearts and minds of people everywhere and represent things far beyond the objects they depict. In a courtroom, the creativity of these art forms is not the central point of their inception. Documentation takes charge and a sort of journalistic neutrality is expected. This is far easier to accomplish with photography than with sketches. An artist may set out to achieve a documentation that is strictly neutral, but with drawing, this is almost impossible to do.

Jane Rosenberg is a successful courtroom sketch artist in America who has painted many famous individuals. Rosenberg describes her approach to her sketches in the same ‘journalistic’ way, but she puts emphasis

on the emotions of what is happening in the moment she captures.² This way of thinking ignores the idea that bias cannot come into play, and instead she suggests that these emotions are what really capture the trial. I believe that the emotions that come from her sketches and the sketches of any artist in a courtroom are what really allows the medium to remain relevant.

Photos capture what is there, an individual snapshot of the objects and people within view. Though an artist does produce a single image, they cannot freeze time in the way that a photo does, so instead they produce what is a cumulative picture of the emotions held in a room throughout the trial. The images of the ‘guilty’, the ‘innocent’, and those around them live far beyond their trials as portraits, not only of their character, but of the trial at large.

The use of courtroom sketches has a technical purpose of recording information beyond the scope of what photos and videos can capture. Though it has been discussed non stop by everyone and their mothers, artists putting pen to paper have become increasingly important in the current age of instant images. To sketch a person or setting captures an emotion far beyond the capabilities of photography or image generation. Sketches display something far broader in ideas to the public, who will watch to make sure that justice is truly carried out.

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How Small Modular Reactors in Ontario May Change Canada's Energy Industry For Good

BY CONNOR BRAKE

The future is currently taking shape in a deep, reinforced pit of nuclear grade concrete in Darlington, Ontario. Here, Canada's first small modular reactor (SMR) is becoming a permanent landmark.

An SMR is a type of advanced nuclear reactor with a capacity of up to 300 megawatts (MW) per unit — which is roughly one third the generating capacity of traditional nuclear reactors.¹ For years, SMRs have been viewed as important theoretical technologies within the energy industry. Canada has long been investing in SMR and other energy technologies to help its expanding energy demands since 2018, and both ends of Canada's political spectrum have shown support for SMRs.²

The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) has been facilitating SMR technologies through a pre-licensing process to help identify potential SMR solutions and their caveats. As of 2023 a total of nine potential models have been submitted to the CNSC for review: Terrestrial Energy's Integral Molten Salt Reactor; Ultra Safe Nuclear Corporation's MMR-5 and MMR-10 microreactors; ARC Nuclear's liquid sodium ARC-100; Moltex's stable salt reactor; LLC's pressurized light water SMR-160; U-Battery's high temperature gas U-Battery; GE Hitachi's boiling water reactor BWRX-300; X-energy's high temperature gas Xe-100; and Westinghouse's eVinci microreactor.

As of February 2026, driven by a budget of \$20.9 billion, the Canadian bet on nuclear energy has turned into construction.³ In Darlington, Ontario, a small city located approximately 75 kilometres east of Toronto, the first power plant utilizing a four SMR system is being built.

We understand the technology works based on the history of light water reactors (LWRs), which were first used by the US military in submarines and nautical warfare as a way of providing clean energy for long periods of time.⁴ The more recent development of functional SMR units comes from preexisting nuclear technologies, such as LWRs, and decades of failed models for military application.

The core question is no longer if the technology works. Today, the question facing Canada in its development of nuclear energy is whether or not it can build SMRs fast enough to cope with growing national electricity demand, which is projected to double or even triple by 2050.⁵ Canada is already the fourth largest consumer of electricity in the world, mainly driven by the variation in temperatures throughout the year and a population spread out between northern and southern border communities.⁶

Additionally, a large part of the Canadian industrial sector, specifically pulp and paper, gas extraction, as well as metallic and nonmetallic mineral production make up a significant portion of Canadian energy demand. With the added growth of technology sector industries, such as AI and EV supply chains, Canada needs cheaper alternatives to supplying energy.

The importance of SMR technology lies in four factors: its modularity, lower capital investment, safeguards, as well as its contribution to economic growth. These particular benefits potentially make them a better alternative to fossil fuels and large nuclear reactors. Specifically, SMRs are generally safer and cheaper compared to conventional nuclear reactors.

Unlike traditional nuclear reactors, which require a substantial amount of work at the construction site to build, an SMR is designed to be factory-fabricated and shipped via

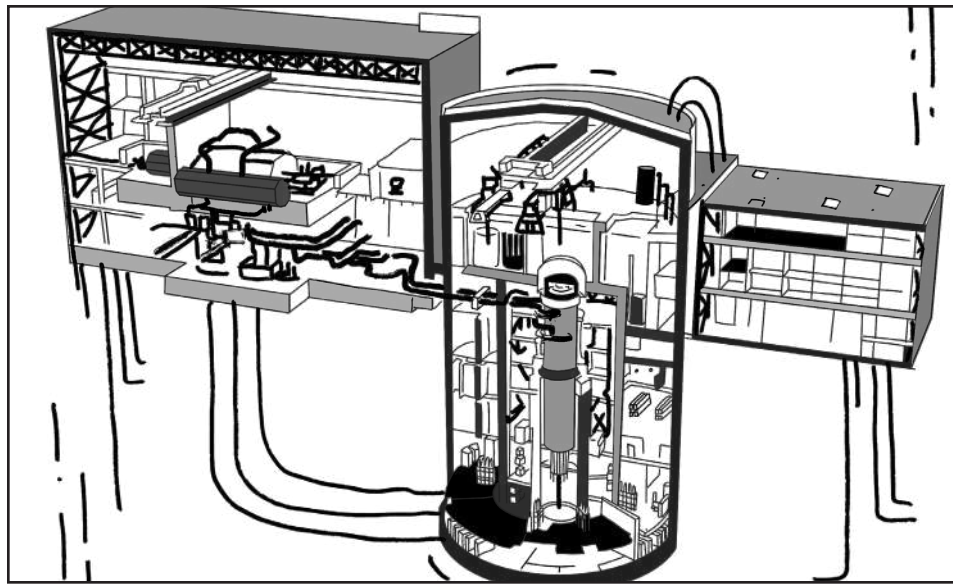


Illustration by Iso Maaud Rodriguez

rail or truck.⁷ Then, as energy demand grows, additional reactors can be delivered incrementally, avoiding the possibility of billion-dollar delays.

The added benefit of modularity is that communities in need of energy can more readily “attach” SMRs to an already existing power grid, rather than having to go through more tumultuous labour that can come with setting up other electricity generation methods.

SMRs also provide a lower capital investment due to the lower upfront cost of building a power plant.⁸ A typical 100MW SMR would require somewhere around \$1 billion USD (around \$1.4 billion CAD) in upfront costs, compared to roughly \$10 billion USD (around \$14 billion CAD) to build a 1000 MW reactor power plant. Generally, lower capital investments equate to lower risks, and create more opportunities for projects to be financed from a greater range of partners. This trait has allowed SMR technology to expand both domestically and internationally, particularly in the United States, where both private equity and government firms have invested greatly in developing SMR technology.

Additionally, SMR designs are generally simpler, often relying on more passive systems that run on lower powers and operating pressures.⁹ This means that no human or external power is required to shut down systems in the event of a failure. Because these systems rely on physical phenomena, nuclear accidents have a significantly lower risk of occurring compared to traditional reactor power plants, making them safer than some may assume.

Along with safety, SMRs can be designed to have long refueling cycles, some of which can reach 10 years or more. A longer refueling cycle is generally more beneficial for nuclear reactors because it implies a reduction in the frequency of maintenance outages, meaning more continuous electricity generation.^{10,11}

In Northern Canada, there is a particular interest in SMRs.¹² In Nunavut, the Yukon, and the Northwest Territories, it is much harder to build and maintain expensive power plants due to isolated geography, extreme winters, and a lack of resources. SMRs could provide a reliable solution and an alternative to the gasoline and diesel fuel methods already used.

This is generally seen as a benefit to northern communities as it enhances energy security for remote locations and makes them less reliant on maintenance from other towns, which could take much longer to repair.

A report was commissioned by the

Yukon Department of Energy, Mines, and Resources in 2023 to determine if SMRs could help meet the territory's 45% greenhouse gas reduction goal by 2030, as well as serve as a reliable source of energy.¹³ The report found that it was best to wait and see how the technology matures in other parts of Canada before the Yukon would invest in it as well. Ironically, the noted issue with SMRs for use up north was that they generated too much power. Only the smallest SMRs (also called microreactors) would better suit the needs of the North. These small reactors could be positioned as small power stations to the North, providing significantly less maintenance and free power to remote mining sites and villages.¹⁴

The “secret sauce” of Canada's SMR strategy is not found in a single technical breakthrough, but rather in a paradigm shift, as we move from treating nuclear power as a megaproject to a standardized industrial product. Canada has broken this cycle by implementing a fleet approach. By selecting the GE Hitachi BWRX-300 for use in both Ontario and Saskatchewan, the provinces have effectively created a shared assembly line. This domestic strategy creates a robust “closed-loop” economy, ensuring that every dollar invested in the nuclear lifecycle remains within the country's borders.

This industrial efficiency is mainly underpinned by a high level of regulatory and political team-work. The CNSC has evolved to use a joint-licensing framework that allows a single design approved for one plant to be fast-tracked for many other provinces and their respective plants. This regulatory decision has allowed Canada to better work with other countries.

Finally, with the use of a “Team Canada” supply chain, the country's natural resources have been better integrated with modern social standards.¹⁵ Crucially, the 2026 model has transitioned Indigenous communities from stakeholders to equity partners. This shift ensures that as SMRs are deployed more across Canada, they carry a social responsibility as well as an economic one. This combination of streamlined regulation and inclusivity has positioned Canada as a potential global leader in SMR technology.

The bet on SMRs is far from a guaranteed success. SMRs suffer from supply chain and fuel cycle issues.¹⁶ These reactors use High-Assay Low-Enriched Uranium (HALEU) fuel, which requires advanced manufacturing and new kinds of infrastructure.¹⁷ New or modified transport containers are required to move large quantities of HALEU demanding new, modified regulations to work.

It is critical that a supply chain of

HALEU can be established. This will require a very large capital investment that will require added support from governments until the commercial demand for HALEU increases.

Beyond fuel, a significant bottleneck has emerged in the need for talented workers. A 2026 study done by the Canadian Nuclear Association found that as the construction of new nuclear facilities increases, the nuclear sector faces a shortage of specialized nuclear-certified welders and pipefitters.¹⁸

To keep a shortage of skilled workers from occurring, the federal government recently expanded the Union Trading and Innovation Program with a \$75 million investment, specifically for the green energy trades.¹⁹ A vital part necessary to Canada's success now depends on whether it can train a new generation of specialists fast enough to prevent a rapid shortage of these workers from occurring.

Additionally, the public perception of nuclear energy is generally very pessimistic.²⁰ This has stemmed from past nuclear accidents, although the actual probability of such an accident occurring again is very low. However, the word “nuclear” still carries a heavy psychological weight.

Given that SMRs are an offshoot of traditional nuclear reactors, it is likely SMRs will face a somewhat different set of publicity challenges. This creates the need for SMRs to be developed collaboratively with the general public. By doing so, a high degree of transparency with the public may allow SMRs to be widely viewed as a different breed of nuclear technology.

Another persistent issue with the public perception of nuclear energy has been nuclear waste. Canada has continued to address this problem through an Integrated Waste Strategy.²¹ As radioactive waste is generated, the highest international practices are utilized to protect health, safety, security, and the environment.

Central and Eastern Europe have emerged as the most eager customers for Canadian nuclear expertise. They view Canada's progress as a potential blueprint for their own energy independence.²² Poland is planning to deploy its own fleet of the same SMRs currently under construction in Ontario, participating in the Canadian supply chain and bypassing the potential risks inherent with a novel energy solution. In early 2025, a \$40 million contract was signed for Ontario's Laurentis Energy Partners to support Poland's Preliminary Safety Analysis Report (PSAR).²³ This contract ensures that Canadian parts and services are essential to Poland's energy infrastructure for the next 60 years.

Estonia has followed suit, signing agreements with Canada as they look to replace their oil industry with SMRs. In late 2025, Estonian utility company Fermi Energia signed an agreement with Canada's Aecon to help work on SMR deployment.²⁴ Estonia is essentially tapping into Canada's own regulatory body and economy, allowing Estonia to fast track its own transition toward a cleaner energy grid while also contributing to the growth of the Canadian nuclear sector.

As of February 2026, Canada's SMR strategy has turned into real construction. If Canada can navigate the bottlenecks of fuel security, specialized labour, and public perception, it won't simply be creating its own net zero future. Rather, Canada will be exporting its expertise and designs creating global economic and environmental impacts.

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A Rational Basis Against Cultural Appropriation

BY AIDEN MALCOLM

For the past twenty years cultural appropriation has become taboo, and for good reason. What started as a crusade against insensitive costumes has spread and begun recognizing the pervasive forms of institutional cultural appropriation which were once commonplace. This crusade is rationalized on a basis of respect; and while it is an entirely satisfactory reason to stop cultural appropriation, many remain unconvinced. These people believe that cultural appropriation is a historical fact, part of a dialectical process where superior parts of cultures are adapted, and inferior parts are rejected.

This Darwinian approach refuses to acknowledge the significant changes that have occurred in the past couple of centuries, including the development of the scientific process, the increasingly lopsided nature of power relations, and the extractive power of colonialism. To these people I submit the following idea: alongside the pathos argument, there is a strong logos basis against cultural appropriation.

First, I will define what “cultural appropriation” is, so that it is clear what I am arguing against. Cultural appropriation is the act of using the practices, traditions, or customs of another cultural group without respect for or recognition of their origins. It is not telling you to stop interacting with or recognizing attributes that you believe are valuable in other cultures and adopting them in your own life. In fact, cultural appropriation theory simply calls for respectful interaction between cultures.



PC_Bro by PC_Bro Licensed under CC-BY-4.0

The logical argument against cultural appropriation finds its roots in the development of the scientific project, and the iterative form of knowledge which stems from it. In science, knowledge is created not only systematically, but directionally. That is, science does not move backward: short of a complete annihilation of our world, the information created and understanding generated would be difficult to squelch.

This is not because science has some special privileges to other systems of knowledge, but because it is structured differently. Ideas are rigorously documented and cited giving a traceable pedigree of knowledge. This means that scientists (generally) do not go backwards: today, they are not trying to

determine whether there is or is not a force which keeps us to the ground. Instead, they are building on the work of scientists like Newton and always moving forward.

This is not to say that science does not examine the same issue multiple times or draw the same conclusions from different experiments. Rather, science always asks different questions. Its ability to do this comes from the citation system. Citation is more than some arcane remnant of a time when information could not be found so easily, or the thing you put off when authoring an essay until the last possible second. It is a system for ensuring that questions are not repeated. While they may seem to be integral to the system, the formal attributes that characterize the

many annoyances citations present are simply a result of exacting standards within the scientific community. The foundations of the system, respect and recognition, remain feasibly applicable to knowledge outside the scientific system.

This is where cultural appropriation comes into play. Cultural appropriation is essentially the violation of the principles that the scientific community relies on to continue the scientific enterprise. Instead of articles about quantitative easing, this information is the significance and traditions of Indigenous head-dresses or Ta Moko tattoos. When people appropriate cultures they do not belong to, they rob the history, and therefore the pedigree, of these cultural practices.

While seemingly a limited problem, the impact is great. Instead of the continued progression of the scientific enterprise being at stake, it is the continued progression of all parts of our society affected by other cultures, which has long been the vast majority.

When these traditions are not respected and recognized, we all lose out. The lessons already learned by those who came before us must be absorbed once again, and we inevitably ask the same old question anew. While it will not stop societies from moving forward all on their own, cultural appropriation will certainly be a slowing factor. As Spanish philosopher George Santayana once said: “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it”.

Students to Decide Future of U-PASS as Referendum Begins Today

UBC Okanagan students are deciding this week on the future of one of campus’s most relied upon services as voting is open on the U-PASS referendum from March 3 to March 6. The outcome will determine whether the program continues beyond 2026 and how it adapts to future rises in transit costs.

At the centre of the vote is a proposal to increase the U-PASS fee by \$8 per semester starting in September 2026. With the existing UBC Okanagan subsidy applied, students currently pay \$63 per semester; that amount would rise to \$71 if the proposal is approved. Students are also being asked whether future

U-PASS fees should be linked to the Adult 30-Day Pass, less a minimum 11.25 per cent UBC subsidy. Supporters say this change would create long-term stability for the program and eliminate the need for repeated referendums each time transit fares change.

Advocates of a “Yes” vote argue the proposal is necessary to protect a program that offers exceptional value. The U-PASS provides unlimited access to Kelowna Regional Transit, delivering four months of transit for the price of one. For many students, it is the most affordable way to travel between campus, home, work, and essential services.

Supporters also warn that voting “No” could have serious consequences. Without approval, students risk losing access to the U-PASS altogether, potentially facing higher transit fares, reduced service on routes heavily used by students, and increased pressure on campus parking. Engagement materials for the referendum note that fewer transit riders could result in fuller parking lots and possible future parking fee increases.

The benefits of the U-PASS extend beyond students who ride the bus every day. Even those who typically drive can see advantages when more people choose transit, including less

road congestion and more available parking on campus. In a rapidly growing region like Kelowna, supporters say the program plays an important role in supporting sustainable transportation and managing parking demand.

Voting is taking place online through the UBC Simply Voting platform, making participation easy and accessible. Students are encouraged to review the full referendum question and background information in advance, available through the Students’ Union Okanagan website.

A Pseudo-Silent Film: *Nightshift* (1981)

BY WENDELL ZYLSTRA



Robina Rose’s *Nightshift* (1981) is a very quiet movie. It follows an unnamed protagonist, played by punk icon Jordan Mooney, as she works through her shift as a hotel clerk. The protagonist never speaks and a grand score never sweeps the stage; instead the sounds of ledger writing, pastry wrapping, and humming over the whirring of a vacuum cleaner takes precedence. We learn snippets about each guest, rockstars, business men, estranged daughters, and more, but the protagonist simply tends to her tasks and watches the time go by. Little pieces of plots from others come through, but the protagonist is never given any backstory of her own, a comment on the alienation of minimum wage work (especially as a woman). The movie has a dreamy, ASMR-like quality to it which plays out very much like an actual quiet night shift would. It is beautifully shot entirely in London’s Portobello Hotel, with the backdrop of night streaming through the windows along the orange velvet furniture. The pace of the movie is slow, but anyone who has worked a long shift will tell you that that is exactly what a shift feels like. If you have ever had such a shift, this movie may speak to you.

SNOWFLAKE

by Brendan James

Estimated Difficulty: 1/5

9				3			6
	3		8		7		4
				4			
	5		3		2		1
1		2				6	5
	6		1		4		2
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	1		4		3		9
8				7			3