

# HUMBER ET CETERA<sup>o</sup>

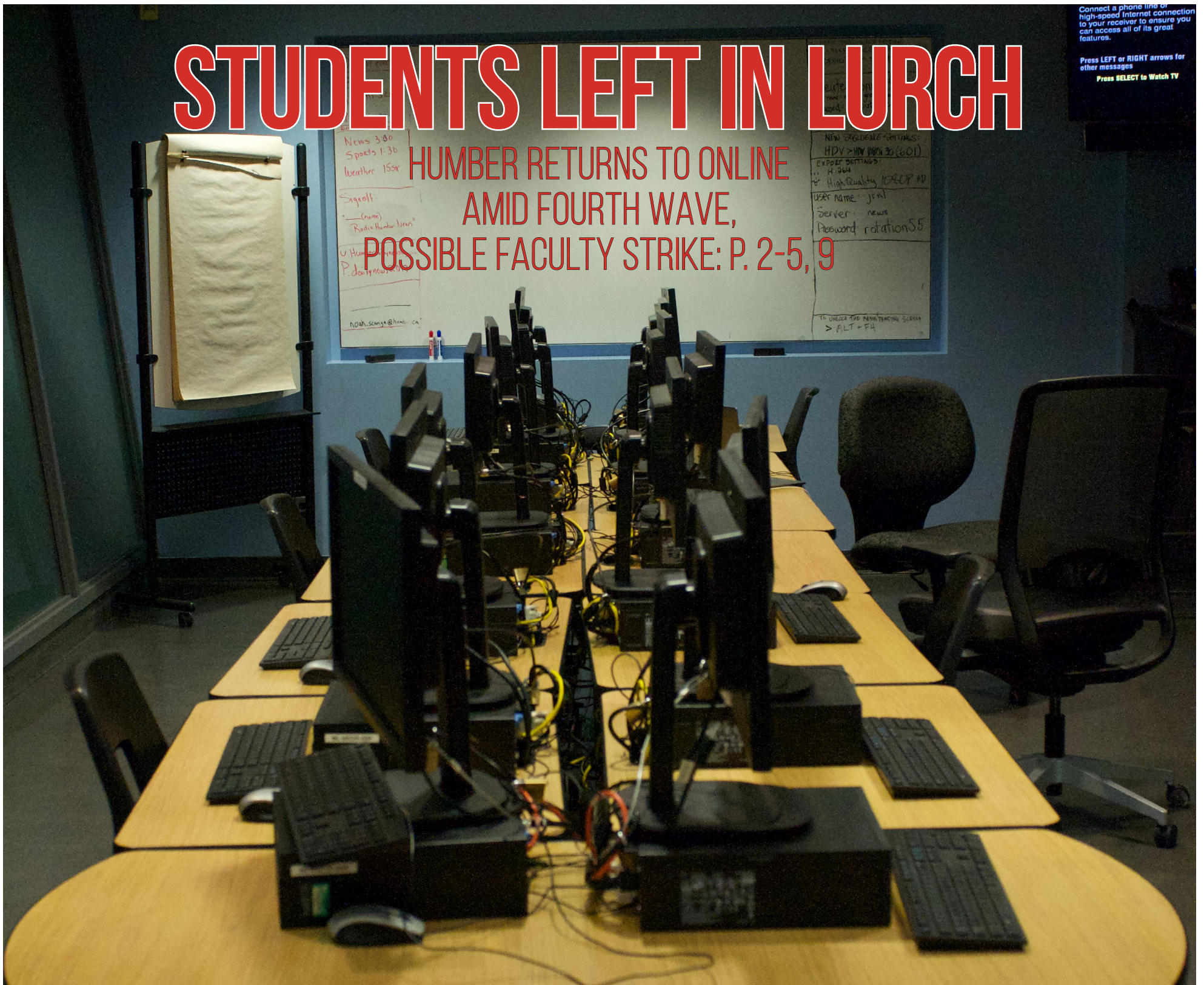
Humber's Student Newspaper

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## STUDENTS LEFT IN LURCH

HUMBER RETURNS TO ONLINE  
AMID FOURTH WAVE,  
POSSIBLE FACULTY STRIKE: P. 2-5, 9



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CONSIDERS  
VACCINE FOR  
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**BOXING  
RETURNS  
WITH A  
PUNCH  
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# Ontario offers micro-credential programs

**Humber among colleges to offer 250 programs that award micro-credentials with enrolment**



ELI RIDDER

MPP Christine Horgarth (centre) and Minister Jill Dunlop (centre-right) listens to Humber College student David Van Amelsvoort (right) speak about the robotics program. She was at Humber's Lakeshore campus Wednesday to announce more than 200 new micro-credential courses.

**Eli Ridder**  
News Editor

Ontario's post-secondary education minister announced hundreds of new condensed college accreditations designed to top up job skills or ease a career transition from Humber College's Lakeshore campus on Wednesday.

"Our government continues to prioritize quick, flexible training opportunities that will prepare Ontarians for the in-demand jobs of today and tomorrow," Minister Jill Dunlop said flanked by Humber students.

The government is backing the development of 250 programs that award micro-credentials, with enrolment available as of 2022. The new programs are the result of the government's recent \$15 million investment in rapid training.

"These micro-credentials will be developed in collaboration with industry to respond to regional labour market needs and will strengthen partnerships between postsecondary institutions, training providers

and employers," Dunlop said.

Two of the new credits will be mental health micro-credentials offered at Humber, the minister said.

Staff and students of Humber's robotics program that were present to showcase some of their work told Humber Et Cetera the micro-credentials were a positive addition to the education sector.

"Micro-credentials [are] essentially just a very compressed skill that we're trying to give to people and that's awesome," a third-year electromechanical engineering student Daneep Lahl said. "It's teaching a skill that'd be applicable to the workforce."

Humber's president echoed that sentiment in a press release.

"Micro-credentials help organizations recognize and integrate critical skill sets into their workforce," President Chris Whitaker said.

"The Micro-credentials Challenge Fund demonstrates the government of Ontario's commitment to helping individuals pursue their career goals and demonstrate their knowledge

and skills to employers," he said.

The College Student Alliance's general manager Jason Baryluk said the Ontario government should prioritize assisting students through their diploma programs ahead of micro-credentials.

Instead of focusing on transitory credits, Baryluk argued the province needs to increase the amount of grants they give out to students through the Ontario Student Assistance Program.

For Christine Hogarth, MPP for Etobicoke-Lakeshore, the riding Humber's Lakeshore campus is located in, the micro-credentials offer an opportunity to strengthen the local economy.

"We certainly hope that they choose Etobicoke-Lakeshore as their home, that they can get trained here or they can upgrade their skills," Hogarth said.

"They can utilize this beautiful Humber campus to create jobs right here in the riding," she said.

The announcement comes ahead of an upcoming election next June when the Progressive Conservatives will try to hold onto power in Queen's Park. In

a poll reported by 338Canada on Nov. 24, voters seemed ready to hand Premier Doug Ford a minority government with 34.7 per cent of the vote, and 30.5 per cent to the Liberals and 26 per cent to the NDP. The margin of error varied between 3.2 and 3.8 per cent.

The government's treatment of post-secondary students had triggered protests and caused backlash as they cut funding for student loans and slashed spending for the education sector.

The Student Choice Initiative was one of the programs introduced by the Ford government that critics said threatened facets of student life on campus by forcing some optional tuition fees.

The SCI was struck down by Ontario's divisional court and called "unlawful." Attempts to appeal the decision were unsuccessful.

Minister Dunlop told Humber Et Cetera the government is not pursuing any alternative routes to bring back the SCI "at this time".

ETC •

Humber Et Cetera is the Humber College journalism program laboratory newspaper. It is created by second and third year journalism students. Et Cetera serves to inform the Humber community and give its readers well rounded coverage on the things that matter to them.

**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**

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**ONLINE EDITOR**

Cassandra McCalla

**FACULTY ADVISER**

Rob Lamberti

**TECHNICAL ADVISER**

Marlee Greig

**FRONT PAGE PHOTO**

Staff

@humberetc  
etc.humber@gmail.com  
humbernews.ca

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205 Humber College Blvd., Etobicoke, ON, M9W 5L7



# Students dreaming of longer winter break

**Alex Muzychko**  
Reporter

As the fall semester ends, Humber College students are excited about the winter break, but many wish it was longer.

"Winter break doesn't help put school off of my mind because I'm already thinking about the stress I'm going to face next semester," June Roselio, a second-year Community and Justice Services student said. She also works to support herself during the school year.

"I'm excited for the winter break, but I wish students were allowed more time to mentally prepare themselves for the second semester," Roselio said. "Those three weeks really just end up feeling like three days."

Winter break begins Dec. 17 and school resumes Jan. 10.

With the new Omicron variant sending COVID-19 numbers soaring as the semester ends, one stressor rolls into another for post-secondary students.

Hannah Heard, an Interior Decorating student, said she had to shelve a great part of her personal life to focus on school during the past four months and was lucky to get six hours of sleep a night.

"Three weeks is simply not enough time to make up for what I missed," Heard said.

"I wake up early and go to class. I'm expected to get a bunch of work done for the next day, stay up late to finishing those assignments, just to repeat the process the next day," she said.

A study by The Public Health Agency of Canada found seven out of 10 college students get less than the recommended seven to eight hours of sleep.

Indeed, young adults aged 20 to 30 report the highest rate of mood and anxiety disorder, all linked to poor sleeping habits.

Anna Savchenko, a student in the Paralegal Studies program, is in her final year and found the past semester very difficult.

"This semester has been the toughest by far," Savchenko said. "It has definitely affected my mental health, and I just want it to be over. I look forward to the break a lot, don't get me wrong."

"But with work and also a lot of family obligations I have due to the holidays, I'm not going to get any more than a week to myself," she said.

Post-secondary institutes are allowed to give students five weeks off during the school year, three at winter break and one each for reading week in the fall and winter semesters.



ALEX MUZYCHKO

Some Humber College students say an extended winter break is needed after balancing in-person studies, remote learning and COVID.

A few Ontario universities — including Western and Waterloo — have extended their winter breaks. Colleges, however, have stuck to their schedule.

While their break may not

be extended, Humber students will experience at-home classes for at least the first two weeks of the winter 2022 semester because of the quick spread of the COVID-19 variant Omicron.

## High tuition puts pressure on international students

**Barbara Patrocino**  
Reporter

When Vansh Juneja decided to study in Canada, he already knew about the high cost. However, he did not expect his mental health would be also paying a high price.

The Humber College's Computer Systems student was not deceived by any exchange or consulting agency. His decision to study abroad was influenced by the prospect of taking permanent residency. He was always aware of the financial challenges he would face abroad.

"I knew from the beginning that I would pay way more than a domestic student," Juneja said.

The limit of working for only 20 hours a week, combined with the high price of his monthly tuition, which reaches \$17,000 a year, began to weigh differently on his mental health. He has been one of many international students who have found themselves struggling with mental health issues after landing in Canada.

A report from the office of the Auditor General of Ontario in December showed

that the province's colleges have been increasingly depending on international student fees for financial stability. While internationals account for 30 per cent of total college enrolment, they pay 68 per cent of tuition revenues.

The education system has been a pressure-cooker for international students between work, the need to maintain academic excellence and financial difficulties.

Juneja said job opportunities available to the international students on arrival are geared towards manual services, not interests and aptitudes, which also negatively impacted his mental health.

"The other day, my coworker was complaining about a specific task of our job, saying that she hated it, and I could only think that I hated the job itself, all of it," Juneja said.

For Sajah Deep, a computer systems student at Humber College, having to pay three to five times the price paid by a domestic student to access the same education is a heavy burden.

"Especially when we stop to consider the exchange rate of our currency for the dollar, it's absurd," she said.



BARBARA PATROCINIO

International students, including Sajah Deep (left), Pratima Rattam (middle), and Vansh Juneja (right), come from around the globe to study at Humber College's North campus.

Deep, 19, said she found it difficult to balance college with household responsibilities and the need to work to earn some income.

"We definitely can not live only with the money we make working 20 hours a week, but we need the jobs to at least have some (income)," Deep said. "It's hard, especially when we have to cope with the kind of job that is often physically debilitating."

The Auditor General's report also said there has been little monitoring of third-party agencies contracted to attract international students around the world to

Ontario.

While most can be trusted, the report pointed out that seven per cent of them promote the experience differently, promising a 100-per-cent chance of success in obtaining permanent residency.

Immigration Consultant Camila Ferreira said certain agencies act in bad faith.

"Unfortunately, a lot of 'professionals' sell programs in any way, focusing only on profit," Ferreira said. "I really enjoy showing them the raw reality, because it's not as easy and simple as a lot of people make it out to be."

**"I KNEW FROM THE BEGINNING THAT I WOULD PAY WAY MORE THAN A DOMESTIC STUDENT"**

**Vansh Juneja**  
International student





ELI RIDDER

Humber College student's petition for online classes after COVID-19 Omicron variant cases increase by the thousands which is slowly forcing provincial restrictions back into place.

# Schools adapt as COVID-19 cases increase

**Ever-changing COVID-19 situation in Ontario has forced students to continuously adapt their ability to learn and overcome challenges**

**Jesse Glazer**

*News Reporter*

Students at Queen's University, in Kingston, Ont., received an email Sunday night, announcing changes to exam delivery methods.

"With the rising cases of COVID-19 within our student population, and in consultation with KFL&A Public Health, Queen's University is discontinuing in-person exams in Kingston effective immediately," an email to students said.

The Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox and Addington Public Health office report that the region's status is red and 190 new cases were reported in Kingston.

Maya Daien, a third-year kinesiology student at Queen's, was annoyed at the stress it caused her, only for it to be moved and put online.

"If the announcement didn't come out the night before my exam, I would've been less

stressed. But for them to not be in person is definitely still a relief," Daien said.

Originally, students were told they were required to write exams in person or defer them to January 2022. However, cases in Kingston have climbed dramatically recently.

Daien couldn't understand why Queen's continued to push back, despite pleas from students and increasing case numbers on campus.

"My sister, who's in first year, where it was really going around, told me my friends are having to go to their exams knowing that they potentially were exposed, but what are our options," she said.

"They didn't even make it easy to do the right thing," Daien said.

"It felt like when COVID was actually an issue, they were radio silent. When it's a problem, [they're] not doing anything," Daien said.

The student body galvanized to push back.

A petition, which garnered

more than 6,500 signatures, urged the school to reverse course delivery amid growing concerns of COVID-19 cases — due to the worrisome Omicron variant — and move exams online.

Then, on Sunday, Dec. 11, an email sent to students said, "all remaining in-person exams scheduled for the remainder of the examination period to Dec. 22, will be changed to an alternative delivery format wherever possible."

A similar petition at Humber College that called for more hybrid classes for the Winter 2022 semester found some success after the administration cut down on in-person classes.

Cities across Ontario continue to see rising COVID-19 case numbers including Toronto which reported 498 new cases on Wednesday.

Colleges and universities in the province are continuing to monitor the evolving COVID-19 situation, especially as Omicron

continues to grow in its dominance.

The University of Toronto told Humber Et Cetera it continues to follow public health advice and provincial regulations.

"As we have since the pandemic began, we are consulting with public health experts and will adjust our plans as needed," U of T said in a statement.

Alissa Da Silva, 19, who attends the U of T for humanities, said the move is understandable, but also slightly concerning.

"What concerns me about the cancellation of my exams is how easily courses can take a drastic turn," she said. "As the University has outlined, exams cannot be rescheduled or moved online, which means we will be evaluated on whatever work we submitted previously."

"With the rising risk of the Omicron variant, I understand that in-person sessions must be halted for public safety and security," she said.

"I believe that the University of

Toronto should ask students for their Ucheck status more often, especially when entering lecture halls or otherwise crowded areas."

The school announced on Wednesday that effective yesterday, in-person exams would be moved online and most in-person learning would be delayed until Jan. 31, to help curb the spread of COVID-19.

Derek Stockley, associate vice-president of academics at Humber College, echoed those sentiments, but added that Humber is proud of the resiliency and adaptability of its students, faculty and administration and is prepared for what the future brings.

"All of our staff, from faculty inside the classroom to everyone who supports our community outside of it, has shown their ability to change to what new challenges the pandemic presents," Stockley said in a statement.

*With files from Nicholas Seles*



# Tensions remain high over faculty bargaining

Eli Ridder  
News Editor

Tensions are high between Ontario colleges and the faculty union amid stalled collective agreement negotiations headed into the holiday break.

January is shaping up to be a potentially chaotic first month of the winter semester for students across the province.

Monday saw the 24 publicly-funded colleges impose “terms and conditions” on its faculty union members, a legal tool that allows the College Employer Council to make any change they wish to faculty contracts.

The council’s set of imposed contract changes included the maximum annual wage increase of one per cent, medical cannabis coverage, an unexplained update to the counsellor class description and changes to partial-load faculty requirements.

While the changes have been acknowledged as largely positive for faculty, union leadership compared the imposed terms to a “pizza party” to placate unrest.

The council, or CEC, confirmed to Humber Et Cetera on Friday morning it has no plans to change any further terms and conditions beyond those imposed on Monday, despite

union fears new terms would evolve week-by-week.

In response, empowered by a strike mandate vote that received 59 per cent support last week, the college academic wing of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union triggered its own counter-mechanism known as “work-to-rule.”

Faculty will start this initial stage of job action as of Saturday, meaning students will not be affected until they return on Jan. 4 after the holiday break.

It could later escalate to a strike, though union leaders insist they want to avoid that option.

“The biggest fear about a possible teachers’ strike is the delay in my professional plans,” third-year Humber commerce student Dinzando Vando-Bartolomeu said of the possibility.

“I am a mature student, and every year counts towards completing the degree furthering my career,” he said.

Humber’s Local 562 union president Miloš Vasić told Humber Et Cetera the entire bargaining process can come to an end quickly if the college presidents instruct the employer council to come back to the bargaining table.

“None of this brinkmanship is necessary,” Vasić said. “It can be



CANADIAN PRESS/COLE BURSTON

Striking faculty stand on the picket line outside of Humber College in Toronto on Oct. 16, 2017, affecting more than 500,000 students. The faculty union and the colleges have reached a stalemate in their negotiations.

over very quickly.”

In response, the council said in a statement to the Humber Et Cetera that it’s “been clear about the items we cannot agree to as well as the areas that still show room for common ground.”

“We urge the CAAT-A bargaining team to remove the demands they know the Colleges cannot ever agree to and rejoin us at the table to conclude the collective agreement,” it said in

an email message.

The College Employer Council and OPSEU’s CAAT-A negotiators were last at the bargaining table on Nov. 19 before conciliation failed.

It’s not only the turmoil of faculty bargaining that awaits students come the new year.

Humber joined many of its Greater Toronto Area counterparts on Thursday when it announced that in-person classes would be moved 100 per cent

online until Jan. 23 due to the growing threat of the COVID-19 variant known as Omicron.

Ontario reported 3,124 new cases on Dec. 17, including 759 in Toronto, with a seven-day average of 1,914.

A message sent to staff seen by Humber Et Cetera revealed that the college will “review this direction monthly, beginning in January, to advise the plans for February and every month thereafter.”

## IGNITE discusses faculty strike, student presidency, winter term

Ashima Agnihotri  
News Reporter

Alex Sein, an IGNITE director, is just as worried as any other Humber College student about a possible student strike, student advocacy and the Winter 2022 term.

“We’re all students. We’re worried about the strike as well, and IGNITE has always worked to support students,” Sein said. “We’ll deal with the issue as it comes along.”

In preparation, Humber has already created a Student Strike Relief Fund. It was created in 2017 to assist students with unexpected or incremental expenses as a result of the strike. The fund has more than \$90,000 to support students.

To further help students with financial difficulties, IGNITE has

reduced its fees to pre-pandemic costs. The students can now opt out of the fees for social events and opportunities as well.

“Moving forward, we are looking to offer more financial support for international students through bursaries,” said Gabi Rana, IGNITE director at the University of Guelph-Humber.

The board is also planning to create more part-time jobs on campus to help students balance their work and school schedules more easily, Rana said.

Sein said IGNITE added more than \$200,000 in student support and scholarship funds.

“We’ve talked to students, and their concerns regarding the services we offer, and of course financial aid, are their biggest concern,” Sein said.

Student advocacy has been

discussed many times at IGNITE board meetings, and just like previous times, the majority of voters have opted against having a student-president or vice-president represent the board.

“As a governance, we narrowed down major points that we feel the students are the most worried about,” Sein said. “The topics are either regarding the delivery of the Winter 2022 term or finances, and we seek to prioritize those first.”

The idea of a student president has been brought up in previous years, but it is always rejected.

“We have established democratically through the voting process on our board governance committee that there is no institutional memory,” Sein said. “The discussion about the presidency is not important at

the moment. We’ll see how next year’s board decides.”

On Thursday, Humber announced all classes and labs for the next term will be held online for the first two weeks of the Winter 2022 semester. The decision was based on a rapid rise in COVID-19 cases in Ontario.

The province recorded 3,124 new cases on Friday, with 759 in Toronto, 209 in Peel Region and 215 in York Region

“I want to recognize that this has been a challenging year and we remain committed to supporting a great start to the Winter term for all students,” said Chris Whitaker, Humber’s CEO and President.

The province ordered 50 per cent capacity to venues that can hold 1,000 or more people. Ontario Chief Medical Officer Dr.

Kieran Moore indicated there may be additional health and safety measures implemented in the next week for Ontario.

“If there is a reason to further alter our current course, we will respond, adapt and communicate with you [students],” Whitaker said.

The finance and audit committee has agreed to use IGNITE board members’ feedback on student investment priorities to create a proposed operating budget for review and approval.

“IGNITE is looking to address student issues and proposals to life on campus,” said Maksym Botte, North campus IGNITE director. “The board discussed opportunities for the advancement of services that IGNITE offers, on-and-off-campus, to be included in next year’s budget.”





KAI PILGER/UNSPLASH

Humber College student Jay Lanthier said working in the gig industry is a quick and easy way to earn money.

## Proposed rules for Ontario gig workers detrimental, experts say

**Eric Reid**

*News Reporter*

Ontario released a list of recommendations in its Future of Work Report this week that would change the game for the gig economy. If approved, the province says it would give workers more rights and improved job security.

But Gig Workers United, Local 10-4 said its recommendations call for the creation of a third category of worker that will not have full employee rights and won't be able to legally unionize.

Currently, gig or app-based workers in Ontario, face a lack of benefits, no minimum wage guarantee, and confusing contracts when they sign up for the job that should provide extra income for students and others.

The list of 21 recommendations include workers being recognized as dependent contractors which would make them eligible for basic employment rights. Workers in this category would also be provided clear and simple contracts.

But Jan Simpson, national president of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, who is supporting Gig Workers United, said the report is detrimental to gig workers.

"All workers should feel threatened by this report and its recommendations," she said. "These recommendations will result in the gigification of more work."

Simpson said the recommendations are not raising the bar for gig workers but rather lowering the bar for everyone.

"We need to make sure workers' right are protected and expanded, not taken away," she said.

Catherine Connell, a human resources and management professor at McMaster University and is an expert on temporary agency workers, contractors, and temporary foreign workers, said she would like to see these workers classified as employees.

Misclassifying them for so long has left gig workers with little job security and rights.

"What I do hope is that it spurs companies to classify workers correctly, and makes people feel more comfortable performing the work," said Connell, who holds a Canada Research Chair in organizational behaviour, and is a member Emeritus of the College of New Scholars of the Royal Society of Canada.

Many students and young people are attracted to app-based work and other gig jobs because it can offer a strong balance between classes and being able to earn extra cash on the side, she said.

"Students are attracted to entry-level positions, as the opportunities often offer flexible working schedules and the ability to move around for work, almost making your own schedule," Connell said.

Over the past decade, the gig sector had an increase of 5.5 per cent of total workers over the age of 15.

A 2019 Statistics Canada study found by 2016 in Toronto, one in 10 workers have been involved

in the gig economy for at least part of their income.

At the beginning of the pandemic, many turned to food delivery or driving app jobs as a way to make up for some income that was lost.

Jay Lanthier, a Humber College student in the personal support worker program, started working in the gig economy during the second lockdown.

She works as many hours as she can after class for companies such as Uber Eats and Instacart.

"Work at the time was slow, and once you get through the start process it is a really fast and easy way to earn extra money before or after classes and on my own time," Lanthier said.

"From hearing the recommendations, it sounds like they are trying to do the right thing for us," Lanthier said as she recalled reading the long contract when she applied for her position.

Contracts that are sent to workers when they begin are often very long and written in difficult wording. The recommendation for a clear, easy-to-understand contract would make these initial contracts less intimidating and clear what people are signing up for.

New legislation would be required for the recommendations to be put into place.

Ontario Labour Minister Monte McNaughton said he would take all of them into consideration with plans to take further action to protect and support digital platform workers.

## Toronto transforms hotels into temporary shelters for homeless

**Carter Roy**

*News Reporter*

Toronto initiated a transformation of hotels into shelters as a COVID-19 response.

"There are about 2,600 people living in shelter hotels right now in Toronto," said Melanie Smith, the community engagement supervisor for Dixon Hall, a housing service looking to end poverty.

Smith said Dixon Hall signed a leasing agreement with Bond Place Hotel in the Yonge and Dundas Streets area, for shelter services. Dixon Hall also has other hotel shelters across the city.

Bond Place signed the lease document in August 2020 and it would be available until Dec. 21, 2021. Smith and her team expect the hotel to extend the term up to April 2022.

"We wouldn't want the lease to end in the middle of winter, being unsafe to be on the streets in such cold weather," Smith said.

One of the hardest things about running the leased hotel, Smith said, is keeping staff.

"We have a lot of contract staff that we would have to negotiate with to make sure they can extend their contracts with us," she said.

Because of the need for physical distancing in homeless shelters as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Toronto leased hotels across the city to provide temporary emergency shelter support.

The hotels include Bond Place, The Roehampton Hotel at Mount Pleasant Road and Eglinton Avenue, and the Novotel Hotel on The Esplanade, to provide emergency shelter.

These locations were chosen in neighbourhoods across Toronto so that people can stay within their communities. Toronto said it picks locations that follow city by-laws, supports Toronto's housing charter and is close to community services and transit for residents.

Anyone could register by

doing an intake session over the phone with Dixon Hall. There are no age or gender limits.

"All locations are staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and provide wrap-around support for clients," the official release on the City of Toronto website said.

Shelter sites include meals, laundry, mental and physical health support, counsellors, and case managers to make permanent housing plans.

Patrick Normand works in the area of Bond Hotel.

"Its transition from hotel to shelter is important, especially now, with winter ahead," he said. "No one deserves to sleep on the streets."

Normand also understands the struggles those staying in a shelter may be facing.

"A lot of us have faced hard financial times," Normand said. "I have, and I would think that's why some people end up needing shelter. Especially being in an expensive city like Toronto."

The use of city-funded shelter services is on the rise. Nearly half of shelter residents have been homeless for six months or more in past year, according to a release on the Bond Hotel transformation.

More than 235,000 people in Canada experience homelessness within a year, according to Statistics Canada.

Aby Kwatra lives near Bond Place Hotel on Dundas Street East, and says the city's initiative has not changed the look of his neighbourhood.

"Of course there is homelessness in the area," Kwatra said. "There always was, but I don't see the hotel bringing more homelessness than there already was."

Kwatra said the city's leasing of hotel facilities is a great thing, especially now as the holidays near.

"If the city didn't do this, they would be on the street suffering. Now they can at least bring in Christmas with a roof over their head," Kwatra said.



# Humber moves online for start of winter semester

**Nicholas Seles**  
Arts Editor

Humber College, alongside other post-secondary institutions in Ontario, are changing their delivery methods for the winter 2022 semester.

The update comes as the province sees an increase in daily COVID-19 cases with the spread of the Omicron variant.

“As we have throughout the pandemic, Humber continues to follow government and Public Health guidelines and directives and respond when there are increases in COVID-19 cases,” Humber College said in a statement issued Thursday.

“Due to the growing dominance of the Omicron variant and recent guidance from Ontario’s Chief Medical Officer of Health, we have decided to move courses and labs online for the first two weeks of the term to provide the Humber community with time to receive their COVID-19 booster shots,” the school announced.

For the winter 2022 semester, all classes and labs will be held online for the first two weeks back, between Jan. 10 and 23, following the Christmas break.

In-person learning is scheduled to begin the week of Jan. 24 with the college limiting on-campus presence to only employees who are required to be on-site.

Dec. 16 saw the highest daily COVID-19 case count since May with 2,421 confirmed cases, with a seven-day average of 1,676, and it appears the province is set to tackle another wave just as the Christmas holidays begin.

Ontario’s Science Advisory Table released new data indicating the Omicron variant would become the dominant strain of new COVID-19 cases in the province this week and is doubling “every three days.”

The effective reproductive (RT) number for the Omicron variant in Ontario is currently at 4.29, meaning every 100 new cases of Omicron will go on to generate 429 secondary infections. What makes this new variant so alarming is all the other variants of the virus combined to have an RT value of 1.27.

Premier Doug Ford announced on Dec. 15 that free rapid tests would be available at pop-up sites and select LCBO locations throughout the province as part of a “holiday blitz.” Ford said



HUMBER COLLEGE

Classrooms at Humber College and other post-secondary schools will look like this for at least the first two weeks of January 2022 as in-person learning gets delayed because of rising numbers of COVID-19 cases.

qualifying Ontario residents who are 18 years old or older will be able to book their third booster vaccine as of Monday, Dec. 20.

Provincial modelling on Dec. 16 showed daily cases could reach

between 5,000 and 10,000 people as of early January 2022 provided the province cannot handle a rapid rollout of booster doses.

Humber and other post-secondary schools have not yet

made it clear if booster doses will become mandatory for another eventual return to in-person learning.

*With files from Jesse Glazer*

## Calming fears and addressing the suspicions of anti-vaxxers

**Karl Lewis**  
News Reporter

Elijah Santos, 23, said his girlfriend ended their three-year-long relationship because he got vaccinated.

“She said I’m unclean and that I am now a sheep,” Santos said.

Santos, a videographer, was a part of an active anti-vaccination campaign on TikTok, following popular anti-vax and anti-mask protester Chris Sky, who continues to spread fear about vaccines as well as the efficacy of vaccines.

“We were both anti-vax until I got an opportunity to record for a Grammy Billboards conversation in the U.S., and I had to take the vaccines,” Santos said. “This was what caused the break-up.”

Ontario is opening bookings for all Ontarians 18 and older on Monday, Dec. 20, as the Omicron variant sends COVID-19 cases soaring. There were 3,124 new cases reported on Friday.

Medical practitioners and scientists continue to provide information about the benefits of vaccination and warn people of the dangers of being unvaccinated.



ERIN LEBLANC

Taking the vaccine has divided people. Doctors remind people of the benefits of vaccines.

For many, social media is their source of information on the pandemic. Platforms are a growing ecosystem of misinformation and conspiracies.

“Just recently, Nicki Minaj said her cousin’s friend in Trinidad took the vaccine, and he can not please his woman,” said Toronto hairstylist Jodien Right. The claim was debunked by Trinidad and Tobago health minister Terrence Deyalsingh.

Nevertheless, fears circulate among the anti-vaccine group about the impact of vaccines on sexual function and fertility.

Erin Mandel, the Health Promotion Specialist at the Toronto Public Health, said “there is no reason for people to believe that COVID-19 vaccines would cause infertility.”

Other anti-vaxxers are suspicious about the speed with which the vaccines

were developed.

“So why was the vaccine created so quickly?” asked Stef Anderson, a barber in Brampton.

Mandel said an “all hands on deck” approach was made to combat the virus due to its widespread. Hence, fast production.

“The vaccines were rigorously tested before approval and were able to be produced so quickly because vaccine developers shared data that they had been working with for many years,” she said.

Most posts question the vaccines’ efficacy.

“The efficacy can change as the virus mutates as different strains become dominant in the community,” Mandel said. “But to date, the mRNA vaccines (Pfizer and Moderna) continue to be very effective against all strains, especially after one receives a booster dose.”

Mandel urged people to take all precautionary measures although they are vaccinated.

“Vaccination can prevent infection, but most importantly, vaccination prevents severe symptoms that may require hospitalization and result in deaths.”



## EDITORIAL

# 'Tis the season for holiday shopping and pink tax

While people are preparing their wallets for a bunch of holiday shopping this year, there is still the elephant in the room: the pink tax.

The pink tax is a financial phenomenon where products labelled as women's products cost more than men's products, regardless of whether they are of equal or greater quality from each other.

According to a Listening Money Matters article on the pink tax, women on average are paying about 42 to 43 per cent more on their products than their male peers.

It doesn't even matter if it's a woman or just someone using women's products. If an individual is using them, then they're paying extra.

Some products that commonly fall under the pink tax are hair care products, deodorants and antiperspirants, shaving creams and lotions, as well as soaps and body washes.

And of course, the most common product of them all is razor blades.

According to a Parsehub article about personal care products in Canada, women would have to pay \$8.63 for razors blades while men would only need to pay \$5.30 for those same razors.

Though it seems the only reason that Gillette Venus's blades are more expensive than their normal disposable razors or even their "men's" razors, for example, is because of their smooth strip glides, guaranteeing a smoother shave.

There also is of course the concern of feminine hygiene products falling under the "tampon tax."

The tampon tax is a sub-category of the pink tax where feminine hygiene products are costing extra, like other "women's products."

This of course is completely unfair for women here, since there is no male equivalent. The federal government removed the GST on feminine hygiene products in 2015, 11 years after Kenya, the first country to eliminate taxing the products.

Ontario, however, continues to apply a seven per cent sales tax.

The Office of Women's Health in Canada explains the woman's menstrual cycle usually lasts for 28 days, but this doesn't always apply to all women. They also make it clear that women need to change their pads, tampons, diva cups, or whatever they use, every few hours.

So, why exactly are women paying so much money, including a tax, for a product that's basically a necessity to them, like food or water? The tampon tax is gender-based discrimination.

There even was an online petition made to protest this tax called "No Tax on Tampons." Today, organizations like Free the Tampons have many members, looking to fight for this cause.

So, does the pink tax still have a negative impact on how people — especially women — are spending money on the products they need? Or, even yet, why not just let women use men's products

instead, because they're cheaper?

Well, those are not easy questions to answer.

In a 2018 article from the Canadian Labour Institute, a few women make the argument that some women still might like the fragrances and aesthetic that can be attained from "women's products". Other than that, it limits a woman's options in what she likes and wants in her products.

So then, what now?

Well, another organization called Girl-TalkHQ helps to test the acceptance of this gender-price discrimination for so-called women's products. We definitely need more organizations like this, in order to fight for the freedom of women and others in financial struggles, because of the pink tax.

But there is still a long way to go for everyone to be able to get all of the products they need and want, without worrying about paying extra just cause the products are coloured pink.

## OPINION

## Education is important, but the institution I attend shouldn't matter



**Erin LeBlanc**  
Editor-In-Chief

I can still hear my high school biochemistry teacher's response when I told him I applied for community college out of high school.

"Why wouldn't you go to university? I thought you'd do something better ... like science."

I loved the food science aspect of biochemistry and I always knew that I couldn't pursue something that I didn't love. So I applied for a Pastry Arts certificate, excited to start in the culinary industry.

But my excitement was not met by my peers and teachers. My family always support what I do, but my peers often made

jokes about my decision, and distant family members and teachers asked why I wouldn't go to university.

In high school, students are often pushed towards paths that may not be best for them. It is difficult to explore the breadth of job opportunities when there are a very limited number of courses to choose from.

Maths, sciences, and literature are pushed rather than classes that encourage trades and college diplomas, such as arts, shop class and life skills. At 17-years-old or younger, students are expected to know what they are going to do with the rest of their lives and that may lead students to make decisions on programs and careers that aren't right for them.

Deciding to attend university under pressure is an expensive decision. Universities often cost over \$10,000 just for one year. If students realize they don't like the course after a year or two, it's difficult to move on when so much time and money have been spent on the subject already.

That is why college is the way to go for students who don't

quite know where they are headed. A year will cost closer to \$5,000, and courses are shorter. There are many opportunities for bursaries that can cover a large part of tuition.

When I went into the Pastry Arts course at my local community college, I received a full-ride scholarship for one year. After the year I realized I didn't want to be in that industry anymore, but I learned practical skills through hands-on experience and didn't waste too much money in the process, and I had time to move on to something new.

With smaller class sizes in colleges, one-on-one instruction from professors happens daily. Both of my college experiences had class sizes of under 20. Though some universities in Canada have smaller class sizes, universities such as McMaster, Western and Queen's have classes nearing 1,000.

There is this unsaid expectation that teens and young adults must experience university life before going into adulthood. Frat life, parties and drinking are glamorized in the media as an essential part of growing up. I felt like I

was missing out on these activities that are seen as integral to the young adult experience. But this enforcement of partying and drugs can lead to harmful results.

"The university environment has a significant role in shaping student behaviours, and as such, the campus context needs to be altered so that it does not support a heavy drinking culture," said a report by the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness.

In my experience on college campuses, drinking and partying were not as intertwined with daily life. With fewer students living on campus, parties were easier to contain and were kept under control. I found myself more focused on my studies than my friends who attended university, whose difficult course loads and courses they didn't like led them to increase their amount of partying and drugs to cope.

Colleges also have amazing opportunities for on-the-job learning. Programs often have internship credits, which are useful in building a network and learning important industry skills. Some nursing programs in university don't have practical experi-

ence until the third year, whereas many college nursing diplomas begin practical study in year one. Many students who take advantage of work placement opportunities are offered a job immediately after graduation.

And this happened to me. Through my community college course, I ended up working at the best restaurant in Canada in 2019, under award-winning pastry chef Celeste Mah. Through my work placement, I landed a full-time position as an assistant pastry chef, making friendships and networking connections to last a lifetime.

My time at Humber College landed me an internship at the Toronto Star, one of the largest newspapers in Canada. I had a part-time paid position for a year, giving me valuable insight into the industry I didn't learn in school, and connecting me with so many talented new and senior journalists.

I would be nowhere if not for my experience in college. I would recommend college over university to anyone who is unsure of their career path, or who just wants to try something new.



## OPINION

## CEC, union must avoid labour disruption for students' sake



Eli Ridder  
News Editor

the help they needed to launch their careers.

To kick off 2019, Ford and company unveiled the Student Choice Initiative that shook student institutions to their cores across the province, killing student union jobs, support centres and even assailing student newspapers.

As if three years of post-secondary student harassment wasn't enough, the global pandemic threw education into a hurricane of reinvention that left a trail of destroyed courses, half-decent quality in learning and a horrible status of student mental health.

And now, in January, we could have a strike because the College Employer Council isn't coming to the table and finding a solution to what could be another year of disruption for students.

While the faculty could be considered partly at fault, it's really on the council to come back to the table after leaving conciliation. The CEC is also putting pressure on faculty through

**W**e've been through too much already. A record five-week faculty strike in fall 2017 brought a halt to classes at all 24 public colleges across Ontario, disrupting and, in some cases, ending academic studies.

The slashes to the Ontario Student Assistance Program a year later by the newly-elected Progressive Conservative government under Premier Doug Ford cut off deserving students from



HUMBER NEWS FILE PHOTO

Ontario's college faculty last went on strike in the fall of 2017. The threat of another strike looms for next year.

imposing terms and conditions — deciding what their contracts are without approval.

Now, in-person classes are delayed until at least the week of Jan. 24 — yet another disruption to student life as a wave of Omicron looms on the horizon.

It's time for students to get a break from the chaos that has plagued them for the last three-and-a-half years, and especially,

this semester.

I'm calling on the College Employer Council and OPSEU to return to the table and get it done for students. It's time to put the politics, the headlines and, when it comes to the CEC, the grandstanding aside.

What faculty are asking for is to be paid for the extra hours they put in all the time out of care for their students. They aren't asking

for more money, instead its about equity and being fair.

Its time the CEC stop playing games with the lives of students and faculty and find solutions at the bargaining table in an equitable and efficient matter.

Resolving these negotiations and absolving students of at least one worry for next semester would be the greatest Christmas present we could ask for.

## TALES FROM HUMBER

## Communication breakdown makes chaotic semester worse



Joshua Drakes  
News Reporter

Very likely, the stresses caused by the pandemic will continue for a considerable time.

The end of this semester's exam period has been one the most stressful in my life. It seems as though everything was due on the same day, and included so much that could have been spread out more in the second half.

Many of these changes have been brought on without much input from students or professors, and were top-down from the administration.

In previous stories, I covered angles of this era of confusion, with both students and professors saying the increasingly corporate stance of the college has led to a disconnect between those that work and study here.

Communication has been a big problem.

To me, the language the school uses to communicate isn't meant for students. The announcement that in-person classes were

COVID-19's "new normal" led to a very strange year.

Through the fall semester, Humber College saw many changes, from reduced services and students in the building to hybrid learning options for students and the rise of a new student advocate in Students United. And all over mere four months.

Students had to adapt to the new workflow and balance an altered lifestyle with school.



JOSHUA DRAKES

The central intersection of the college at North campus is outside the Bookstore. It resembled rush hour on a highway before COVID-19.

being reduced to 65 from 80 percent is written as if aimed at a shareholders' meeting.

While it sounds great, it doesn't provide any tangible information of what classes were changed and how.

I don't believe this is intentional or done out of malice or lack of care. IGNITE, as any student union would, would be the

middleman between the college and its students. They would be responsible to interpreting these messages. But they haven't done that enough.

There are times when I'm not sure what's happening on campus because there is no form of direct communication besides short emails. Uncertainty hangs like a thunder cloud over the college.

The announcement to return to in-person classes met strong opposition, leading to the creation of Students United, a new student union group, which predicted the choice would be reversed in some way due to rising COVID-19 cases and greatly impact long-distance students that had to move.

This has already begun to come true, with the college announcing the first two weeks of the winter semester will be online, just a day before students go on break.

There needs to be a better method of communication between the school and the students who are already buckling under the weight of studies and a pandemic that has uprooted all aspects of life.

We aren't asking for much, just a method to know what any changes really mean.

If it would lower my stress level, it would surely do the same for other students.



# Safety, cost are primary reasons for low theatre attendance

Jesse Glazer  
Arts Reporter

Cost, safety concerns, and the underwhelming value of the theatrical experience are three factors contributing to a hesitancy in returning to theatres, a new report indicates.

The report, *Exhibition at a Crossroads* by three cultural and entertainment research firms, The Quorum, Cultique, and Fanthropology, polled more than 2,500 pre-pandemic theatre-goers and found they were worried and underwhelmed.

“Three driving factors have kept former theatre-goers from returning: concerns over safety, price sensitivity, and the feeling that going to the theatre doesn’t provide a great experience,” the report released last month said.

Jessica Bay, a postdoctoral candidate at York University in communication and cultural studies, said theatres getting creative in the experiences they offer is a tangible goal to increase the value of the overall experience.

“We’re at the point where we need gimmicks to get people in the theatre,” she said.

“You could do a special event where people cosplay as what-



CINEPLEX ENTERTAINMENT

Many people remain hesitant to return to movie theatres as they did pre-pandemic, citing safety, cost and the overall value in the experience, according to a recent report by The Quorum, Cultique and Fanthropology.

ever ... and there’s a competition or something. And then it’s an experiential activity. It gets people there,” Bay said.

She said she understands the frustrations surrounding cost. Bay said there are multiple reports that show cost sensitivity is linked to the accessibility and cost of streaming.

“Why would I come back when I can see the movie, fairly quickly, for basically the same price at home?” Bay asked. “Especially when the [COVID-19] numbers are going up again and the variant is bad.”

Cineplex’s third-quarter

earnings report said pricing is monitored to ensure “it offers a reasonably priced experience compared to other entertainment alternatives.”

Cineplex’s website lists a ticket at \$17.95 for general admission, standard for those 14 to 64 years of age. That doesn’t consider premium formats like UltraAVX, D-Box or IMAX.

As a way of combatting cost, Cineplex launched “CineClub,” a subscription service for \$9.99 a month giving customers one general admission ticket a month that doesn’t expire.

But to see a film in a “premium

format” will require viewers to pay “an additional fee that is no more than the difference between the general admission ticket price and the cost of the premium price,” Cineplex’s website said.

Safety in a theatre is another concern, considering Ontario lifted capacity restrictions in theatres and no longer takes social distancing into account when booking seats.

Bay said she understands those concerns.

“I think one of the things they [should] do is to bring back seating restrictions, so when you

book your ticket, you have [this] whole section booked around you,” Bay said.

That change was imposed Wednesday by the province, limiting venues that can hold 1,000 or more people to 50 per cent.

Cineplex told Humber’s *Et Cetera* it’s clear to them through their third-quarter reports and prospective fourth-quarter numbers, that theatres are back and so is Cineplex.

“We have welcomed over 14 million guests to our theatres [since reopening] and we’re starting to see box office numbers increase and approach pre-pandemic levels,” said Melissa Pressacco, director of communications at Cineplex.

“It’s clear the global film industry is poised for a big return as restrictions continue to ease and content supply is strong,” she said.

Cineplex said CineClub has been an overwhelming success, both in their eyes and for consumers.

“The program has received an overwhelmingly positive response from our guests and has exceeded our expectations and internal benchmarks, as membership numbers continue to grow,” Pressacco said.

## OPINION

# Lack of rehearsal spaces leaves my band and I anxious



Christian Collington  
Editor-in-Chief

Receiving a note from the Rehearsal Factory to vacate by the end of the week left my bandmates in BLUSCALE and I fretting about where we can meet up and practice.

Rehearsal Factory first closed its Front Street location near Sherbourne Street in Toronto.

The company also closed another facility at Richmond and Bathurst Streets. And it looks like other locations are for sale as well.

With those two Rehearsal Factory buildings closing, only three are remaining open for now – one in Hamilton, one in Etobicoke and one on Geary Avenue in Toronto.

However, the Geary location is the focus of rumours that it’s been purchased by a church.

Knowing the space was bought by C3 Church Toronto, a controversial hipster church, was absolutely gutting. I haven’t a clue what a church would want with the space but what’s done is done.

When I finished a song at Rehearsal Factory, it was the most incredibly rewarding thing.

Up until that point, I most likely spent more than eight hours in the studio, so it was treacherous

and arduous. It was like living with a crossword puzzle for which you have seven missing squares, and you can’t for the life of you figure out what they are, and you can’t cheat and google for the answer.

The Front Street location was the place where I met my bandmates and formed our multi-genre band. The atmosphere of the space was integral to our bond when we first started which has grown over the years. We had a perfect session when we were able to finish writing a song and record it all in one day.

A wave of elation enveloped us when we knew a song was good, especially when it was good. It often came at the tail end of weeks or months of torture.

When the COVID-19 pandemic started, my band and I decided to just make our music from home.

We had the technology to make it work. Although Zoom was tough some days, we made it work.

We even met up at one of my bandmate’s garage to play. Even though it wasn’t the Rehearsal Factory, it was what we had to settle with. We shifted between online meetups and garage meetups.

A great thing that Rehearsal Factory has going for it is its monthly rentals. Not only can you rent equipment, but you can rent rooms to keep your instruments and gear. I took advantage of it so I didn’t have to constantly lug it around. A lot of musicians took advantage of that.

Ultimately, the Rehearsal Factory is a private company. Even if the less-than-30-days notice given to their tenants, like me, is inconvenient, it’s well within their rights to sell their buildings.

But the fact that one chain controls so much of the city’s available music space is a problem. These closings and sales have brought the urgency of the issue into focus.

As a musician, I was always told that Toronto is the place to be and that it has the largest imprint on the country’s music industry. The city should be a haven for musicians. But every year it gets harder.

I just wish I had the chance to play with my band one last time at the Rehearsal Factory. It would’ve been nice to jam at the place where we got our start.

But Toronto’s song is becoming all too familiar: losing access to affordable spaces which doesn’t make it easier for bands to practice and record. It’s become a city with a lot of property, but not a whole lot to do.





LUIS BARRON/EYEPIX GROUP/ABACAPRESS.COM

Migrants take a rest during their stay at Casa del Peregrino San Juan Diego, in Mexico city, Mexico before continue their journey heading to the United States border on Dec. 12, 2021.

# Nations must deal with ‘unprecedented’ displacement in Central America, UN says

**Santiago Arias Orozco**  
News Reporter

Diego Lemus, hoping to flee from what he called an “unbearable life” in Honduras, trekked through three countries and was determined not to stop until reaching Mexican ground.

“There are no opportunities left in Comayagua, and day by day, the problems just get bigger, without any solutions anywhere,” Lemus told Humber Et Cetera in a telephone interview.

Carrying only what fit inside his backpack, Lemus made his way out of Honduras after joining an immigrant caravan in late September. Three weeks and almost 2,000 kilometres of dense jungle later, Lemus and the other 12 immigrants that walked by his side arrived in Acapulco.

“We all left for different reasons, but what we had in common were our hopes to start a new, better life,” Lemus said.

The number of immigrants has increased over the past five years in Central America, said Filippo Grandi, the United Nations High Commissioner for

Refugees (UNHCR).

Around 580,000 immigrants from El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala have sought asylum and refuge after running away from growing gang violence aggravated by the socio-economic instability these countries have faced after the pandemic.

The UNHCR said thousands of families in Central America must decide to either flee or die.

Releasing new immigration policies to assess the growing immigration flow, Mexico, Costa Rica, and Panama have regularized the stay of thousands of immigrants this year. Lemus is one of them.

“I am one of the lucky ones, Mexico gave me the opportunity for a second chance, and I can stay here as long as I obey the rules,” he said.

Mexican’s immigration efforts were deemed by Grandi as an example of generosity and genuine effort in counteracting Latin America’s immigration crisis.

After a 10-day fact-finding mission through Central America, Grandi said the unprecedented displacement in the region

requires new mechanisms to be put in place.

The UNCHR highlighted the importance of prioritizing the stabilization of Central American countries as the core action to assess this crisis.

“Instead of erecting walls to contain people, we need to stabilize those on the move by creating the necessary conditions so that they don’t need to leave,” Grandi said. “And those who



COURTESY OF UNITED NATION  
Filippo Grandi, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

need to leave, find what they need closer to home.”

For Prof. Vivian Ramírez, this proposed solution is neither sensible to the issue nor practical for solving it.

“The socio-political problems that are making people immigrate are rooted into these countries’ history,” she said. “The fact that they are not expected to change swiftly is part of why people decide to get out.”

Ramírez, international relations and politics professor at Universidad de las Americas in Mexico City, said this immigration influx could be traced to the economic instability caused by crime and political corruption. The Cold War and the U.S. interventionist foreign policies were also among the causes of such strife.

She said the U.S. only aided military overthrows in the region by providing funding, guns and military training to governments and armed groups fighting communist movements that spiked in the region after the Second World War.

“Policy goals spread terror and war across the countries,

and its consequences are still visible today,” Ramírez said.

With American help, some Central American countries became militarized states, creating the conditions for government violence, political repression and corruption, problems that today influence immigration movements northbound the region.

“It’s going to take decades, if not more, for these issues to be part of this country’s past, and in the meantime, immigration is going to continue as well,” Ramírez said.

She agreed with Grandi about stopping repressive measures, such as massive deportation. However, she said that the UNCHR’s purposed solution has to work as a long-term target, an ideal goal.

“If governments and organizations want to help, they have to start by talking less and doing more of what they have promised,” Ramírez said. “Just by saying we need to do better, it doesn’t mean things are getting better, and it applies for Latin America.”



# Toronto Zoo animals to be vaccinated against COVID-19 virus

**Antonio Clarke**  
News Reporter

The plan for Toronto Zoo animals to be vaccinated against COVID-19 was considered the moment Pfizer-BioNtech launched its rollout.

“Many animals are COVID-sensitive, meaning that the virus can replicate. Some animals might just develop a sniffle, while others could die from it,” said Amy Naylor, a Toronto Zoo media coordinator.

Even though the zoo is home to more than 5,000 animals of various species, Naylor also said that not every animal will be vaccinated — only those most vulnerable to the virus.

The Toronto Zoo is one of many animal habitats in Canada that decided to vaccinate animals, while several in the U.S. have started the process already.

Animals were constantly exposed to humans as the zoo re-opened and the threat of catching COVID has increased, especially among species already at risk of extinction.

Dr. Scott Wesse, a veterinarian who is an expert in zoonoses, the study of diseases transmissible between animals and people, said the vaccine humans received might differ from the animal version.



ANTONIO CLARKE

Toronto Zoo plans to vaccinate animals against COVID-19. The threat of at-risk species catching COVID has increased since the zoo's reopening.

“The main [vaccine] is made by Zoetis. These are different vaccines than the ones used in humans,” Wesse said.

Zoetis, formerly a sub-division of Pfizer Inc. and is now an independent firm, focuses on producing medicines and vaccines for pets and livestock.

Wesse said the vaccine for

animals isn't as well-studied as the one for humans. This could mean it might not be as potent, but still useful in decreasing the effects and spread of the virus.

Above all, the priority of this plan is to strike a balance between protecting the animals and allowing the zoo to remain open to visitors after the chal-

lenges it was presented with through multiple lockdowns in the last two years.

Caroline Schultz, executive director of Ontario Nature, said the facts regarding species at risk for COVID-19 are “shocking.”

“The facts are staggering. The number of species at risk in Ontario has grown by 22 per

cent since 2009,” Schultz said.

As of now, the Toronto Zoo is still waiting on the go-ahead from the government for approval to use the vaccine on the animals. Minor tests are being conducted on certain species.

In the meantime, when visiting the Toronto Zoo, mask-up to protect the animals, smile, and wave.

# Clothing bargains source of environmental damage

**Samantha Little**  
News Reporter

Students are buying new clothes as colder weather approaches to freshen up their wardrobes.

Balancing rising food prices, tuition and rent are difficult so many students cut costs on clothing by buying from the fast-fashion industry.

“I like to buy fast-fashion brands because you can get trendy clothes quickly for cheap,” said Celeste Foesenek, a student in Humber College fashion and beauty program.

But popular fast-fashion brands such as Shein, Romwe and Fashion Nova aren't made to last and the environmental costs of low-quality garments are significant.

A study by Clean Clothes Campaign, a global network based in Amsterdam and is dedicated to improving working conditions and empowering workers in the global garment and sportswear

industries, found 100 billion garments are made every year, and three out of five fast-fashion clothing items end up being thrown away after only a few uses.

Rather than recycling unsold stock, fast-fashion industries burn or discard products not sold, and much of that ends up in landfills.

The materials being used by these industries are non-biodegradable and processed with chemicals that can take up to 200-plus years to decompose in the landfill, according to research provided by Pittsburgh recycling company Road Runner.

Moreover, many fashion retailers do not reuse water from their production facilities. Instead, they use what is called an “open loop cycle.” As a result, all the waste from the production facilities goes straight to the environment, polluting water and land.

“Fast fashion depletes our water resources, emits high amounts of carbon,

and is a big contributor to pollution entering our ocean, lakes and waterways,” environmentalist Danielle Teixeira with Bush Heritage Australia told Humber Et Cetera.

“This is a problem because it has detrimental impacts on marine life and the environment,” Teixeira said.

UN Environment reported fast fashion is also responsible for eight per cent of carbon emissions from the overproduction of materials used in fast fashion.

“The industry is the second-biggest consumer of water, generating around 20 per cent of the world's wastewater and releasing half a million tons of synthetic microfibres into the ocean annually,” the UN said.

“The average consumer buys 60 per cent more pieces of clothing than 15 years ago. Each item is only kept for half as long.”

There are other downsides to fast fashion. Its production facilities are typ-

ically located in developing countries where workers put in exhausting hours for poor wages.

Fashion Checker statistics show 93 per cent of brands surveyed by the Fashion Checker aren't paying workers a living wage.

Workers in fast-fashion industries often endure poor ventilation and exposure to toxic substances. There are frequent accidents, fires and injuries in such environments.

“One of the reasons why I don't support fast fashion is I don't support child labour, which is one of the side effects of globalization,” University of Guelph-Humber psychology student Alina Korovina said.

“There are so many ethical and ecological reasons why thrifting is my main source of clothing,” Korovina said, including buying used clothes prevents clothes from going to the landfill, and helps reduce the number of new clothes being produced and sold.





NATHAN ABRAHA

Super Middleweight and four-time national champion Mohamed Zawadi (white gloves) was going strong until a first-round injury to his hand took its toll. Adrian Duenas Cota of Mexico fought with precision and fury, and in the end having his hand lifted as the winner, improving his record to 4-0, Zawadi now looks towards his next match with a record of 2-1.

# Going 12 rounds with Canadian boxing

**Nathan Abraha**  
News Reporter

Nick Fantauzzi was 15 when he started watching Rocky movies and hitting his little brother's punching bag. Today he's the top-ranked light-heavyweight in Canada.

"I grew up in Maple, there were no boxing gyms around and my parents wouldn't let me go to Toronto to box," Fantauzzi said. "So when I was 19 a boxing gym opened up in Vaughan. That's where I got my start."

He currently holds a record of 10-0 with five knock outs, a record moulded out of countless sacrifices, both professional and personal.

"I went through over 10 years of being with amateurs. I had multiple injuries, I went pro at 31," Fantauzzi said. "I'm very driven. I don't let things get in the way, but I gave a lot to be a professional boxer."

Canadian boxing's popularity first began to rise in the 1890s with legends such as George Dixon winning the bantamweight title, becoming the first Black athlete to win a world championship in any sport.

Fighters of the past such as Montreal's

hero Arturo Gatti, the giant heavyweight with cement hands, Lennox Lewis and George Chuvalo, the only man to go 15 rounds with Muhammad Ali, battled to their places in the sport's history. Fantauzzi hopes to be among them one day.

"You know, who would want to get hit for a living? Who wants to take punches? People look at the sacrifices, the blood, the guts of the sport, and they say, 'You know what, it's admirable because not everyone could do it,'" he said.

Fantauzzi recalls the first time he walked into the gym, the stares of the regulars who saw another kid in over his head, that all changed with one motion.

"I told them I've been training myself for a few years and they're kind of like, 'oh, yeah, whatever, right,' thinking I was another punk kid," he said. "But then I hit the bag a couple times and they changed their tune."

Lee Baxter, owner of Lee Baxter Promotions, held his first event at Rebel nightclub on Polson Street last Sunday.

It's been five years since Baxter began his promotions, two of those years taken away because of COVID-19. Baxter went back to working construction to keep up and mapped out a plan for a return.

Sunday was the first event in Ontario for the promotion, the first step.

"I was satisfied with the outcome, I wouldn't say happy," Baxter said. "In terms of meeting my standards, there is a lot of room for improvements."

"The thing that makes Canadian boxing different is multi-culturalism," he said. "We got stars from all over the world here that all take pride in being Canadian."

Baxter sees a mixture of exposure and consistency as the key to growth.

"We had 4,000 people a show before COVID. It's progress but its not success yet," he said. "When we hit 15,000 people a show then I'll say we're succeeding."

In 1986, Kelly Korkola was inducted into the Canadian Boxing Hall of Fame at 14, just a year after he began competitive boxing. His journey with the sport began in a way familiar to many fighters who find salvation between the ropes.

"My self-esteem was low and I was bullied a lot in the neighborhood, I felt like I really needed something," Korkola said, who volunteered at Mentoring Junior Kids Organization.

Although Korkola regrets never turning pro or going for the Olympics, he now



NATHAN ABRAHA

Kelly Korkola, former amateur boxer who was inducted into the Canadian boxing hall of fame at the age of 14, now gives back to youth as a trainer at Kingsway Boxing Club.

spends his time as a youth coach at Kingsway Boxing Club where the love for the sport never stops.

"I'll be boxing the rest of my life, even at 90 or 100."