

On The Record S3E2

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SPEAKERS

Raktim Mitra, Andrew Yang, Georgina Parker, Jevior Riley, Maya Abramson, Amkhe Cao, Saloni Patel, Rabia Arif, Josh Kim

- M** Maya Abramson 00:02
Welcome to the second episode of The on the record podcast for this semester. Today's TMU's Week in Review is focusing on an unfortunate aspect of the return to campus, which is the return to commuting.
- A** Andrew Yang 00:14
Also coming up later, we begin the upper year sessions where upper year students share their experiences in their respective industries, and some tips and words on how you can start your journey in working in the field you've always wanted.
- M** Maya Abramson 00:25
I'm Maya Abramson.
- G** Georgina Parker 00:27
I'm Georgina Parker.
- A** Andrew Yang 00:28
I'm Andrew Yang.
- G** Georgina Parker 00:29
And that's what's coming up on today's TMU Week in Review.

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M

Maya Abramson 00:40

For the majority of TMU students a return to campus means a return to commuting. A 2019 study led by a TMU Professor found that 77% of TMU's students take public transit to campus, which is the highest percentage of any university in Ontario. TMU students who take local and regional transit like the TTC and the GO train system spend an average of 67 minutes getting to campus each day. To learn more, we sat down with the professor who led this transit study. Raktim Mitra is a director and associate professor in the TMU School of Urban and Regional Planning. He is also co director of TransForm research lab. So in fall 2019, before the pandemic, you lead, a large study of student transportation and the study was called StudentMoveTO. What did that study tell us about student transportation in the GTHA?

R

Raktim Mitra 01:29

Well, we learned a lot about how university and college students travel in their everyday life, not just to their schools, but students have a life beyond their schools as well. So we were interested in understanding how everyday mobility of young adults, and in this case, university and college students looked like. So the survey and analysis following that provided us with insights into their everyday life, basically.

M

Maya Abramson 02:03

And from that study, you looked specifically at different schools. How did you find that TMU students compared to other schools in terms of what their commute was like?

R

Raktim Mitra 02:13

Yeah, I mean, TMU, as you know, it is a commuter school. And what we found is that the majority of our students actually live with their family or parents. And as a result, they have very long commutes, unlike many other schools in this region. We also found that TMU has the highest proportion of students who rely on our regional transit system, the GO Train system, to commute to school more than any other GTA schools that we study. So the patterns are somewhat different, although we see some similarities with other large schools.

M

Maya Abramson 03:04

So that was what you saw in 2019. And then in 2020, the pandemic hit what was public transportation like in Toronto at the height of COVID?

R

Raktim Mitra 03:13

Look, I mean, there are studies that have shown that as much as 80% of GTHA residents who used transit before pandemic stopped using them during during the pandemic. So certainly, the

used transit before pandemic stopped using them during during the pandemic. So certainly, the public transit was hard hit by the pandemic. And we know the reasons where, we were asked to stay two meters away from each other. So public transit naturally, was not the most desirable mode of transportation. But now as people are going back to work, our students are coming back to schools. We can see public transit users usage going up, slowly but surely.

M

Maya Abramson 04:04

And when you released the findings of your study, there was a call for changes to transportation infrastructure in order to ensure that everyone's safety would be looked after as campus activities come back. What kind of changes were you hoping might be implemented?

R

Raktim Mitra 04:19

You know, pandemics like this are major disruptions. That gives us an opportunity to rethink the way we plan our transit systems and other aspects of our urban systems. We saw a lot of bike lanes rolling out during the pandemic, for example, post pandemic, those could be a great way to make shorter trips for our students. For TMU, for example, many of our students live downtown with good bicycle transportation network, they can actually use this network, and now to commute to school safely, avoiding crowds in the transit systems. So I think there is an opportunity to rethink as we, you know, continue to see our economy coming back to pre pandemic levels, there's an opportunity for us to rethink how the future of GTHA's transportation would look like. And in my opinion, this future transportation system should be a multi modal system, where the major destinations such as TMU campus are connected by various different ways of transportation, such as good sidewalks, good bicycle network, good transit, and so on and so forth.

M

Maya Abramson 05:56

Over the pandemic, public transit ridership fell dramatically. Now as life becomes more normal, people are getting back on transit. This includes TMU students, the vast majority of whom take public transit to campus. We caught up with some TMU students to get their perspective on commuting. Many are frustrated with commute times and transit delays, and some said that they liked not having to commute when they were learning online last year. First, we spoke to Saloni Patel in second year biomedical science.

S

Saloni Patel 06:25

Like in my first year, it was totally online. But in the winter semester, I had to commute from North York. And it was pretty much not good. I used to like the TTC. But it was not that student friendly because of the delays. And somewhat, they kept on doing delays in the timing. And I used to reach late in my labs, like around 30 minutes. And yeah, it was awful.

M

Maya Abramson 06:56

Saloni has recently moved closer to campus and is much happier about her route to school in

the morning.

S

Saloni Patel 07:01

If I got lab from nine to 12, I just wake up at 8:30. And I just reach in like within five minutes. I'm just five minutes walking distance away from the campus, so it's really good for me.

M

Maya Abramson 07:14

Next, we talked to Amkhe Cao, another student in biomedical science.

A

Amkhe Cao 07:19

So I commute here, I usually take the 165 or the 36 to the Finch West Station or Wilson Station and then take the subway here to Dundas. So in terms of I like it or not, no, it sucks. Sometimes there's some crazy people on the subway and since there's a lot of traffic and the construction going on, I usually takes like an hour on the bus. I'm not really sure what they can do better. Because you know, I'm not really one who plans this stuff, but I think we can definitely add some sort of new routes or something or perhaps add more security so that the delays on subways don't happen too frequently.

M

Maya Abramson 07:54

Rabia Arif, a second year science student, says the lack of commute was easier last year, but she doesn't always mind it.

R


Rabia Arif 08:00

So I commute from Mississauga, like the square one area. So I usually just end up taking the GO train up until Union and then I just take the subway from Union to Dundas station. Yeah, um, it's fine. Honestly, like it was hard to get used to at first like, and also like, because if you have specific if you have like eight or nine AMs, it just got so crowded like there was just one time literally last week I didn't get to see like to get the whole 40 minutes on the train no seat at all, but gotta do what you got to do. I don't think I have an option. So basically, my strategy this year has been just getting done with commuting in the morning. Even if I have class at four. I try to come at like 9am just get it done with I. Yeah, I don't honestly, like I don't mind it like I'm neutral about it. But I guess obviously it was easier in the first year.


M

Maya Abramson 08:44

Jevior Riley is in his third year of the Bachelor of Science and Nursing program. He commutes from the border of Pickering.

 Jevior Riley 08:50


Commuting here is ridiculous. I was at the George Brown facility before it wasn't too too bad. And granted like this is only about I guess two kilometers from George Brown. But to take the bus from Union to here is ridiculous. It's too much construction roads are closed for like two years now. I don't understand why roads have been closed for two years now. Construction, I feel like has been happening for at least four years. And they're slowing down the line or slowing down the buses. And then we'll get to class late. And then if you do go the route, the driving is too expensive. It's just way too expensive. So we just got to take our loss, regardless of what we're going to take in.

 Maya Abramson 09:26


Jevior says he was nervous to return to campus this year because of how much he dislikes his commute.

 09:30

I hate it. I loved online school. Like coming here I actually had anxiety coming here just because I knew I had to take the transit come here. So it did make it a little bit difficult, especially my first two weeks starting school. So it kind of gave me a little bit of I would say it held me back a little bit. I didn't want to come in. I didn't want to come at all, but I have to do it have to get my degree.

 Maya Abramson 09:47

We talked to Raktim Mitra about people returning to transit and student experiences with delays and construction. StatsCan reported that in June, Canadian public transit ridership was up to over two 60% of pre pandemic levels in urban areas. So it seems like you were saying that ridership is increasing, but quite slowly. Do you think that we know that the pandemic has turned some people away from public transit. Do you think that that is for good or that people will continue to come back?

 Raktim Mitra 10:17

Well, pandemic has certainly turned some people away from transit. Now, as we are coming back to work and school, there is an opportunity for us to consider other options now as well. So some people who... or some students who were using public transit previously, might take advantage of the improved and safer bike lanes that exist closer to the campus now, and might switch to bicycles, for example. So that's what I'm referring to, when we have safer and more improved options, then it creates an opportunity for some people to consider these other options. Simply put, if there are more choices, more people will take those choices and reducing pressure on our already overcrowded public transportation systems post pandemic.

 Mava Ahramson 11:22

Maya Abramson 11:22

And what do you think the city can do to incentivize people to go for those other options?

R

Raktim Mitra 11:28

Well, the best thing that the city can do is to, you know, provide these options, you know, we know that improved pedestrian infrastructure and improved bicycle networks are always politically contested. Now, during the pandemic, we saw some changes in the ways these projects are implemented. Many kilometres of bike lanes, for example, were implemented very fast. So our hope is that post pandemic, we would see some changes in the ways as these policies are made and debated across you know, decision makers, miners and engineers, and we hope to see more of these options. But at the same time, when we look at public transportation in itself, the pandemic offers an opportunity to collect data and study where we have a captive audience for public transit, while transit ridership went down generally, there are areas within the city or within the region, where many people continue to use transit, meaning that those people are dependent on transit, for the lack of other options presented to them. So now we have an opportunity to review those data, review those ridership data and prioritize our transit services accordingly. So that better transit service is provided in places where people need the most.

M

Maya Abramson 13:29

And in terms of people who are dependent on the TTC, I find that students often report delays or long wait times or inconvenient routes. Do you think issues like these are inevitable for public transit in a big city? Or are there planning issues within the TTC that could be rectified?

R

Raktim Mitra 13:45

I don't think this is an issue that is specific to TTC. You know, Toronto is a large city and our public transportation is overcrowded. So when a system is running close to its capacity or over capacity, small interactions or disruptions can have a ripple effect, which is what we used to see prior to the pandemic, one bus would break down and that kind of would have a ripple effect on the service. Now, in the short term, we would likely see less of that because our public transit is running less than its capacity. But again, I mean, this creates an opportunity for us where as transit ridership slowly goes up again, TTC and other planning agencies can pay more attention to where these pain points are. And, you know, plan services accordingly.

A

Andrew Yang 15:02

Lights Camera Action. Welcome back to the on the record podcast. On this week's edition of Upper Year Sessions, we spoke to Josh Kim. Josh is a third year sport media student at Toronto metropolitan university. Along with finishing his degree, Josh works as a freelance photographer, journalist and producer. He's the host of get your head in the game, a podcast focused on the relationship between sports and mental health. Josh, happy to have you. Welcome to the show.

J Josh Kim 15:27

Thank you guys for having me. Really, really happy to be here.

A Andrew Yang 15:30

So we're gonna start off by asking a few questions about your career and where it all started. So could you tell us where your passion for photography began? And what was the spark that I guess started everything?

J Josh Kim 15:42

Yeah, I guess I it wasn't really much of a spark, it was kind of more of just a gradual process where it was a gradual realization over, you know, a couple of months, and that those months turned into years. And back in high school, I really just noticed that we didn't really have anybody doing any creative content work at all in our high school, and I kind of wanted to just be different from all my friends. I think that's like, the biggest thing, when I always think back to kind of what my origin story is, is like, being different is something I hold really highly just personally. And, and honestly, when I look back, and at my days in high school, I think, you know, I think back to all the kids that were trying to do business and science and math and all that stuff. And I kind of realized that stuff wasn't for me. And partly, it wasn't for me, because I wasn't passionate about it. But also I just wanted to be different than everybody else. So when I found that opening, and that niche, I guess you could say, I mean, I kind of took it and ran with it. And because we had no one doing it in our high school, I, it that role kind of fell onto me right out of the gate. So I had a lot of a lot of room to work with and grow and improve myself. So yeah, definitely started in high school. And it was really all about being different than everybody.

G Georgina Parker 16:49

So beginners in photography sometimes can get like worried or caught up on trying to figure out what the proper equipment or gear to use is. Do you have a stance on like, whether you feel that the gear is really important, the types of things that you feel are really necessary, when you're producing the content that you do.

J Josh Kim 17:08

This might be a hot take, but I'm gonna say gear does not matter at all. Some people think it does. And I think in some capacity, it might because obviously, you're not going to shoot Raptors media day with like, you know, a power shot from Canon or something like that. But like, at the end of the day, I don't think it matters very much, especially when you're starting out, I think a lot of people you're... to your point a lot of people can get caught up in, in gear and the cost and, and what you should get, and when. Everybody kind of goes at their own pace. And a lot of it has to do with the situation you're put in, if you're just starting out and nobody else in your family knows a thing about photography, obviously, it's going to take you a bit longer to to accumulate the gear that you need to get to that next level. But then you have

the people that enter and want to be passionate about photography, and just digital content in general. And then past family members have gear lying around. That is exactly what my situation was a lot of like, half the stuff I'm currently using was generously donated to me by family members. So I think for me, I look at that and be like, it really just depends on on the situation that people are put in, obviously, some situations are more favorable than others. But really, I was totally fine using, you know, older equipment, and I still am technically speaking by today's industry standards, my equipment's way older than then let's just say you know, other professionals would be, but I see nothing wrong with that. Because if you can still create the results and curate the content that that your audience is looking for. And most importantly, the content that you're happy with and the clients that you work with are happy with. And nobody's really gonna question what equipment you use is at the end of the day, it's always it's always going to be about what you put on social media and and how it looks in a frame.

A

Andrew Yang 18:43

So speaking of social media, I think it's pretty fair to say that you have quite some eyes on your content. And, you know, we've seen that you've been to some pretty amazing events and games during your time as a photographer. What's your advice on networking your way into, you know, being invited to shoot these events and games?

J

Josh Kim 19:01

Networking is, is a really complicated topic. In my opinion, I think a lot of people try and simplify it, when it's something that isn't really that simple. I'm going to be honest, at times, it can be very simple. It's really as simple as saying hi to someone and introducing yourself and telling them your aspirations and what you want to do in the industry. But also part of it is patience. Part of it is you know, waiting for them to answer. Part of them is... part of it is being professional and learning how to be professional. Part of it is reaching out at the right time and reaching out with the right words and the right questions that you asked. So I guess the the overall tip that I would have, or tips I guess you could say for networking is just you have to just be approachable. A lot of times people get really shy and nervous around new people, especially people that they look up to in the industry, in an industry where you're trying to succeed and trying to get to the next level. You really have to treat the people that you look up to like a colleague, and a lot of the time for me is when I meet new people, I never really think they're above me. I always really think there's automatically some mutual respect there by default. Whether it's someone that I know, whether it's someone that I know mutually who like I follow on Twitter or something. But a lot of the people that I've come to know, in networks and stuff are at other events and in games and whatnot. And there when you're just in your element, you really just have to be approachable. And you can't automatically assume there's some talent gap just because they've been doing it longer if they've been doing way cooler things than you, when you start thinking like that you kind of missed the point of networking. In general, the net point of networking, in general, at least to me, is helping them and in turn, they help you, or you just getting to know someone on a personal level. And that leads to something further down the road. But a lot of the time people get caught up in in how many followers they have or who they've spoken to in their career. And when you think about their accomplishments like that takes away from the overall point. You're not trying to get to know them to in order to necessarily do or become what they are. You're trying to get to know them first as a person, and then whatever comes next comes next.

G

Georgina Parker 20:55

So as a student and a working photographer, how do you find it balancing between work and school?

J

Josh Kim 21:02

I think there isn't really a golden answer to that. Like, I definitely don't have one. If someone else has one, like, please reach out to me and tell me, I think the first thing I will say is finding out what works for you. Because everybody's balance and workload and their capabilities when work gets tough and when school gets stressful, everybody's capabilities and mentality when that comes is very different. I think for me, the biggest thing I've kind of realized is that as long as I have some semblance of social interaction in my life, and I can still confidently say that the end of each month or each week or whatever threshold you want to set for yourself at the end of that if you can confidently say that you've done things that you thoroughly enjoy outside of work, that means hanging out with friends, going out for food, going out for drinks, going to sports games, and just taking nights to yourself where you kind of just watch movies or play something and just relax. If you can confidently say that at the end of each threshold session, wherever, wherever that may fall, I think that's good balance right there. For me, it's been a back and forth battle, because some some days, you enter a week and you're like, Oh, this is looking like a super chill week for me. And you look at your calendar, and there's nothing booked. And then by the end of the Monday, you're like holy crap, this is going to be one of the craziest weeks of my life. And a lot of the time I find myself doing that. Because at the at the end of each Monday, I find that stuff is just piling on left, right and center, because you never really know when someone can email you or text you about something. So the balance, the question of balance is really hard for me. And that's that's been one of the biggest challenges I think I've had in my career is finding that balance. And for me, what works is just unplugging for nights. And I know that can be hard in itself on all your career is on social media. But that's kind of what I've been doing in the past couple of days to just kind of get away from things and still seeing your friends is really helpful, of course.

A

Andrew Yang 22:47

So as photographers, I'm going to find some common ground here, I guess it's pretty safe to say we're always looking for the shot. But I also think it's pretty important to focus on the moment that we've lived and, you know, been through, would you say that there has been a defining moment in your career, whether it was good or bad that, I guess changes, changed your perspective on something, or just helped you to no pun intended look through a different lens.

J

Josh Kim 23:13

I like I like that pun. In terms of a defining moment, I don't think there's been a defining moment, I think it's been a collection of defining moments. Off the top of my head, you know, my... the job that I hold now is was a pretty defining moment, because that was a about a two year long process about all that coming together. Like just getting into TSN. And getting to bar

down and getting to work in digital content for a massive network in Canada was always one of my biggest goals in life. And it... the opportunity arose before the pandemic hit and I was really looking forward to it, it just never ended up happening right then and there because of the pandemic. So now, having all that come full circle, two plus years later was definitely, I'd say one of the more defining moments in my career, but I'm gonna be honest with you, I think almost every game that I go to, or every sporting event that I go to is a defining moment in my career because you never know what you're gonna see. And you never know who you're gonna meet, and you never know what your end up... you're going to end up capturing. So obviously, there are some highlights that I can throw in there like Hockey Canada events, Raptors Media Day was obviously a big one, and the Women's Basketball nationals from from Kingston last year. All those moments are truly defining. And honestly, I'll never really get tired of them because, like they'll I know they'll just keep end up happening and you can always look forward to the next defining moments. So I think that you raise a good point about kind of appreciating the the spotlight that you're in and you know, that's been a similar to balance has been a challenge to do that sometimes when you're when you're so engulfed in the emotion of the moment and everything that's going on. But I honestly think that once you look forward to each event that you go to I think that's that's enough in acknowledging the moment itself.

G

Georgina Parker 24:52

This might be a bit of a deeper question. What is your why, so why do you do what you do?

J

Josh Kim 24:59

Wow. A good question. And I don't think anyone's ever asked me that question. Um, I think part of the why comes back to me just wanting to be different and putting a good body of work out there, it really is as simple as that, like, that's definitely part of it, I am. When I like when I am at home late at night, I can always confidently say that the body of work that I have out there on social media that people are interacting with is always a body of work that I'm going to be proud of. So that's definitely why I do it. To create, to be creative, and to create a body of work that I will be proud of, personally, I think the second why has to do more with doing good in just in the sports community in general. I mean, as a, I was a former athlete... still play, I guess, but I don't, I wouldn't call myself an athlete necessarily. But out there, I know, athletes are trying to make it in whatever sport, whatever industry, whatever lane they want to call it. And with that, I think with content, especially in creative content, particularly, you have a certain role to play in that in elevating what, whatever athlete, you're working with whatever team you're working with, whatever organization you're working with. So knowing that I can do that, and I'm helping a bunch of other people succeed in their own life and their own career. Also definitely part of it. So the personal aspect, I'd say, I It's a body, like I can create a body of work that I'm proud of, I can, you know, hang up some nice photos in my house. That's another reason probably mixed in there. And, and then the second aspect of that is, is probably a little more broad in the sense that I get to help a lot of people along the way and, and just the reactions that people give me when when I capture like a... like whenever a parent comes out to me and says that's a really good photo you took of my kid I just I think I know, though they're gonna cherish that moment for the rest of their lives. And there's something about that, that that is that is definitely appealing to me. I've had that happen. Fortunately, I've had that happen on more than one

occasion where were parents approached me when I'm working they always seem to interrupt and, and tapped me on the shoulder, but the smile and the look they have on their faces are always is always something I will look forward to in my career.

G

Georgina Parker 27:02

So for any first years listening, what can you tell them in terms of jump starting their careers in content creation,

J

Josh Kim 27:10

The first thing I will say is get busy and get busy now. I don't think I'd be where I am today, if I didn't kick started my career at TMU by asking the athletic department to work for them, even before school started. So when I first I got my acceptance letter into sport media I think in May of the summer and and literally a week later, I had a job with with athletics because I emailed well in advance and I emailed as soon as I got my acceptance letter. And I'm not saying you need to be obsessive like me and just go crazy right out of the gate. You can, it's definitely rewarding. But I will say that there's been a lot of students that I know and a lot of my friends that maybe aren't getting as busy and then they're also kind of the same people that ask me what is the key to success. So the key to success is getting involved and it's getting involved as soon as you step foot in the door. If anyone's listening to this that needs any help and wants to find success, especially in the sports industry, feel free to shoot me an email at j19kim@ryerson.ca or shoot me a message on Instagram at [joshkimphoto](#) and I'd be happy to help out. You know I say that a lot. But really, message me if you have any questions and I will definitely do my best to get back to you.

A

Andrew Yang 28:24

Josh, thank you for your time. And for our listeners at home. You can find Josh at [joshkimphoto](#) on Instagram.

M

Maya Abramson 28:33

And that's it for this week. We'll see you in two weeks for a new episode. For on the record, I'm Maya Abramson.

G

Georgina Parker 28:39

I'm Georgina Parker

A

Andrew Yang 28:40

And I am Andrew Yang.



Georgina Parker 28:41

This has been TMU Week in Review. Thank you for listening