

On The Record S2E4

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SPEAKERS

Sophia Roy, Uzair Shaikh, Andrew Yang, Chantal Wong, Georgina Parker, Ishita Manushrilohana, Tony Hillerhos, Aryaman Jina, Umer Hussein, Maya Abramson, Mohammad Alom

- G** Georgina Parker 00:02
Welcome back to the on the record podcast. In today's TMU Week In Review, we check in on how students are feeling at the halfway point in the semester. Do they feel comfortable being back on campus without COVID-19 restrictions, and are there concerns about getting sick as flu season approaches?
- A** Andrew Yang 00:17
Also this week we returned to the upper year sessions, talking to some experienced students about what they do outside of the classroom. This week, we're talking to Chantal Wong, the president of the Ted Rogers Student Society.
- M** Maya Abramson 00:29
I'm Maya Abramson.
- G** Georgina Parker 00:31
I'm Georgina Parker.
- A** Andrew Yang 00:32
And I'm Andrew Yang.
- M** Mava Abramson 00:33

Maya Abramson 00:35

And that's what's coming up on today's TMU's Weekend Review.

G

Georgina Parker 00:42

This semester, many students returned to fully in person classes for the first time since the pandemic began in March 2020. masks and vaccinations are no longer required, and there have been some reports of classes being interrupted because an instructor or student was sick.

M

Maya Abramson 00:58

In our own On The Record newsroom, we've had a few cases of students getting COVID. In some cases, newsroom activities have been rescheduled because of an exposure. We wanted to know if this is a common experience. We went around campus to ask students how they're feeling six weeks into the semester, as flu season approaches. Are they nervous? And overall, are they happy being back in person?

G

Georgina Parker 01:19

First, we spoke to Sofia Roy, a sport media student. She says she's thrilled to be back in person.

S

Sophia Roy 01:25

I honestly love it. I think last year was really tough. I think coming first year being on line for most of it was really hard to kind of focus and kind of get used to it being in a whole new kind of school environment because coming from high school. So I really really like it. I like you know, coming and studying places and hanging out with friends. I think it's a it's really good to be back. I move luckily, I haven't had a class canceled. I know of like my friends have had classes canceled. I know that that's been a that's been an issue. But I've luckily not been a part of any of those. Obviously, it's great to be back. But I think that even having an option or having profit center, or you know good about paying attention and knowing that, you know, if you're not feeling well, you're not going to come to class. I think that that will be really important to have. And I know some props are good about it. Some props, you know, aren't the greatest. But yeah, I've definitely had my fair share of worries that I've been getting sick. But I've been lucky enough to stay healthy. And I'm hoping that's for the rest of year.

G

Georgina Parker 02:28

Sophia says she has noticed a lot of sickness on campus since the start of the semester. So she wants to be cautious.

S

Sophia Roy 02:33

I think there is when we all got back I think there are just so many people that just got sick I don't even think it was COVID it was just like a cold. So I think with flu season coming up I think

don't even think it was COVID it was just like a cold. So I think with the season coming up I think it's really important that everyone you know stays sanitized and if they're sick don't come to class if you know if it's a mandatory you wear mask, you know, kind of just take precautions, but I think if we all kind of do our part I think that we can keep the school you know healthy.

M Maya Abramson 03:00

Ishita Manushrilohana is a first year psychology student who just came this semester from Pakistan and enjoys in person learning.

I Ishita Manushrilohana 03:07

I went through like online classes in Pakistan too, because I was studying there too. So yeah, it's good. Like being in person, it's better than online because you understand much better. And lectures are like, more understandable. And we can communicate with our teachers in person, we can ask questions, if we have an like in person, they they can explain us more like, in a better way.

M Maya Abramson 03:35

Ishita said she is not worried about getting sick and is happy to be doing class on campus.

I Ishita Manushrilohana 03:40

I was actually fine with it because I really like I really am a person like who needs who really need to get out of house because I can't stay at home at all. So like it's better to be in person than staying at home and taking online classes.

G Georgina Parker 03:59

first year business tech management student Uzair Shaikh says he struggled with online school during the pandemic and is happy to be here in person.

U Uzair Shaikh 04:07

During COVID It was kind of tough on me to being online, it was kind of harder for me to study at least and stay focused, you know, being in person I was like I got to connect with like a lot of people, you know, get help from them. So which made it kind of easier for me to like study for exams and midterms and all that

G Georgina Parker 04:24

Uzair says that due to staffing shortages, he is taking some of his classes asynchronously online

online,

U Uzair Shaikh 04:30

I actually have, like two classes online because of like, there's not like enough teachers to like, there's at least like 1800 students right now. So we're kind of like online and he's just like post his lectures. So we just like it's kind of like an asynchronous course. They don't get to connect with the teacher as much like it's kind of harder for me to like, you know, get some answers that I want. Because I'm too emo Domina it takes a while,

G Georgina Parker 04:52

Uzair is not worried about COVID or getting sick but says he takes some extra precautions.

U Uzair Shaikh 04:57

There aren't too many concerns about that interesting act. should be caution just like, you know, drinking tea and just I know washing hands regularly. So that's pretty much it. That's what I do.

M Maya Abramson 05:07

Mohammad Alom is an international economics and finance student from Bangladesh. But the start to his studies was delayed because he dislikes online school so much.

M Mohammad Alom 05:15

This will be my second year, but for two years, I was back home because of COVID. And yeah, it's my first time in campus, I actually dropped out of my classes because of COVID I didn't actually get canceled. I'm not an online person. So yeah, for two years, I didn't actually study I paid my different fees, but getting it on a single class and dropped out of

M Maya Abramson 05:38

them. Like many others, Mohammad is not very concerned about contracting COVID on campus.

M Mohammad Alom 05:43

I'm not really worried about getting sick. I'm not like even during COVID I didn't really care about COVID Like I just went with it you know.

—

M Maya Abramson 06:21

Mohammad is glad to him you returned to in person instruction this year, and he feels the school was ready.

M Mohammad Alom 06:27

I think it's necessary because like, for two years, I'm just wasting money. Like I think I need to like start classes in like in gloss you know. So I think it's necessary for me, I don't know about someone else. But I think all the classes should have been in person.

G Georgina Parker 06:41

Aryaman Jina was very excited to start his degree in business management in person this year.

A Aryaman Jina 06:46

I mean, it's really good. And it was like a dream because I'm an international student and they were visa delays. So I was a lot of stress. Now he's coming late. So even I arrived late. I missed the frosh week. I came on it in September. So it's like good. I actually did my last two years of school online. So this is good. You know, coming on campus, sitting in front of screen is too boring. So this is like good.

G Georgina Parker 07:06

Because he lives with family Aryaman is concerned about flu like illnesses going around on campus.

A Aryaman Jina 07:11

You know, I'm living with my relatives, so everyone had flu. So that was my one of consoles that everyone has for everyone is printing and all so I mean I was worried it was gonna get canceled but I think it's handling well. So

G Georgina Parker 07:22

Aryaman is glad things have not moved back online and says he is not too worried about missing class if he gets sick.

A Aryaman Jina 07:29

I mean, if I do get ill probably mail my professors I've seen you know the campus administration away friendly, you can mail them, they reply you. So I think if I have any concerns, I'll do let them know.

them know.

- M** Maya Abramson 07:39
Umer Hussein is in his second year and Tmu Engineering. He says the maskless campus is both exciting and scary.
- U** Umer Hussein 07:45
There's a lot of people here and like no one wears masks, but that's also cool because it feels like we live in a normal society. Now.
- M** Maya Abramson 07:53
Umer says he is concerned about flu season and was thinking of ways to protect himself.
- U** Umer Hussein 07:57
This is gonna sound kindof dumb, but I was thinking about bringing in a hazmat suit like when, like for flu season, but at the same time, I also think that'd be highly impractical. I mean, my friend also thinks is impractical. That's why he's laughing.
- G** Georgina Parker 08:11
Umer's friend is Tony Hillerhos also in second year engineering, Tony has had several classes canceled because of COVID.
- T** Tony Hillerhos 08:19
Yeah, I've had a few lectures now that have been canceled just because like the professor's gotten the flu or gone COVID. So it's sort of interrupted some weeks.
- G** Georgina Parker 08:29
Tony says these cancellations can be disruptive to the learning process, especially in a challenging program like engineering,
- T** Tony Hillerhos 08:35
I sort of get in the groove of learning every week. So having the disruptions then sort of I get back into like vacation time that I'm not as focused busy, my mind's not on it, they just sort of get delayed, and then they tell you to do still do the reading for it. But then they'll take it up

next week. And they'll they'll do it quicker. And so they won't fully cover it as well as they would do. Like the week that they fully do it. It's just like a little bit and then they have to keep moving on. So they still go to the next concepts. It's sort of hard because university and college goes super fast. And I don't feel that there's enough time for them. They do get sick, you have to still constantly keep learning.

G

Georgina Parker 09:23

Tony says they have recently began worrying more about getting sick as flu season approaches. They worry about the impact illness might have on their academic performance.

T

Tony Hillerhos 09:32

I was wanting to sort of de mask get rid of masks, but I sort of started wearing mine again because I'm worried about getting sick and then you know having to do assignments due and midterms that if I get sick, then I'm going to be behind and I'm not going to be feeling my best. Remember everything

M

Maya Abramson 09:52

the students we talked to are overwhelmingly in favor of being back in person. Many said they really did not like online school and being back is worth any potential. risk to their health. Still, some are concerned about what might happen as flu season approaches. And given that hazmat suits are impractical, we will have to wait and see how things go.

G

Georgina Parker 10:11

TMU's says flu shots will be available on campus soon, but has not yet provided dates for the clinics. More information can be found on the TMU's Student Wellbeing website.

A

Andrew Yang 10:26

Achieving the role of president and an on campus student organization isn't an easy feat. Going through registrations and applications to working your way up the ranks. It's quite the journey to making it to the top. Chantal Wong is the president of the Ted Rogers students society better known as TRSS. She sits down with us today to speak on her experience within the student group, and how students can get involved with extracurricular groups outside of the classroom. Chantal, welcome to the show. So to get started, could you give us a quick rundown of what you do as president of ttrss?

C

Chantal Wong 10:57

Sure. So as all the Ted Rogers Students Society is a student elected society that represents over I think this year is 12,600 students. That's basically all full time undergraduate business

students here. My job is a whole mishmash of things, I kind of just oversee a lot of the portfolio's that we do. So that includes a lot of the events, corporate relations, marketing, finance occasionally. And basically, I just advocate for the students and put on initiatives that benefit all of them.

A

Andrew Yang 11:28

How did you go about getting involved with TRSS? And even now, are you affiliated with any other student groups?

C

Chantal Wong 11:33

That is a very long explanation. I got involved with TRSS in my second year, and I started out as an events marketing coordinator. So that's kind of like an associate role. And we have, I think, 40, something of those this year, I did that role, I basically did the graphic design for all of our major events, so frosh graduation Gala, or the substitute of that that year. And then I moved into the vice president of events role last year, I ran our first ever hybrid orientation week, hopefully our last ever hybrid Orientation Week. And then I thought I was gonna leave, to be fully honest with you. Um, but I did not. And I became president instead. So that was kind of the growth succession plan. I'm not part of anything else. And part of that is because when you are an executive on the TRSS, team, you're actually not allowed to be on any other umbrella student group, because it's a conflict of interest. So right on.

A

Andrew Yang 12:30

So getting involved is something that's always said when giving advice to First here's entering university, where do you stand on the importance of getting involved with student groups such as trs s, and the big picture of the student experience,

C

Chantal Wong 12:42

I think it's huge in the student experience, I think one of the best things about this school in the first place is student life. And not only do you meet, you know, great people to network with and connect with, and you get lots of great experience, a lot of the things I've been able to do in terms of run events have been things I learned in the classroom, and that I've been able to actually execute and do as a person, which has been really, really cool. But on top of that, like the people that you meet, those become your best friends like 100%, my closest friends are the people that I either have worked with in the past or that I work with right now. So there's so many benefits not only to your professional and like academic career, but socially, that's your people.

A

Andrew Yang 13:24

So I can only assume that being President is a super time consuming and busy role. On top of that, how do you balance school on the side? Because after all, you are also student?

C Chantal Wong 13:33

Yes, there's a quote, I guess we'd like to say from our old Student Engagement Manager, which is student before student leader, because you can't be a leader without being a student, obviously, in this case, a lot of business students and myself will tell you it's it's really just a Google Calendar. It's time management. And there are times where I do look at my calendar, and it's all blue and yellow, which is basically all school and TRSS. And I think keeping track of the time that you're working on is really important because if there is no time for yourself or time for your friends, you're not only missing out on part of the student life experience, you're actually doing yourself a disservice because you are harming yourself in succeeding academically as well because you do need that balance. So it's really just time management and that's also why I was called VP send me a G Cal last year because I do need a G Cal for everything.

A Andrew Yang 14:23

While moving up the ranks of TRSS, what are a few important things that you've picked up from your peers and seniors?

C Chantal Wong 14:30

I think that you're never too good to do anything. I think a lot of times people might assume oh, like your President, you don't have to be you know, labeling stuff for the rental program. And I'm like, But why wouldn't like this is a program that I rent and if someone ever needs help in the office like it is expected. If you're in the office and someone needs help, you are there to help them. You're never you know, too good at your role to be able to help others. And if someone asks you for help, you should be able to supply that for them. You're never finished learning as a waiter. I'm certainly not done learning as leader, I'm learning from my team. And that's definitely one of the biggest things. And the other thing is, make sure to take breaks, check in on one another because being a student leader is hard. And it's a privilege and making sure that you are excelling at that. But also taking care of yourself is a key part of having that undergrad experience, I would say,

A Andrew Yang 15:20

for sure. So how do you think your experience within TRSS can help you in your future career?

C Chantal Wong 15:25

Oh, I think it has 100% helps me in my future career. I recently just did a co op placement at a consulting firm that had an amazing events position, it was phenomenal. I traveled to Montreal with them. And the reason I actually got hired is because I had planned something called a student leader appreciation night the year before. And both me and my future manager had used the same supplier and we were talking about using him and all of this. So because I had

actually executed things in terms of events and had experience in the industry. And I now have a lot of industry connections in terms of vendors and suppliers because I have done those things. And 100% translates to what I'm actually able to do as a job. And that has landed me a position thus far.

A Andrew Yang 16:12

So you've spent a significant amount of time with TRSS

C Chantal Wong 16:16

Yes.

A Andrew Yang 16:16

What initiatives have you been involved in that really mean the most to you? Or are really meaningful to you?

C Chantal Wong 16:22

Oh, that's a really tough question. Because there's a lot of past things that I'm proud of. And there's a lot of like future initiatives that my team is really aiming towards. I would say this year, one of the things I'm proudest of is I did something called a student group leadership conference. And it was very unconventional in the sense that I actually brought student leaders to a camp in northern Ontario. And part of my reasoning for that is because post COVID, there's a lot of things that in person events and in person interactions are completely different than virtual and them knowing that they have a community of like minded individuals that understand what it's like to manage a team to run marketing campaigns to do all of this was a huge deal for me to be able to share with them. Because I've been able to gain that network across Canada, I'm friends with lots of presidents across the country. And so I have a community support there. And I wanted to bring that back to TRSM. And a lot of the feedback I had gained was, you know, it was great to be able to connect on that level. Because sometimes you don't get to talk about things like how hard it is to manage a team, or how you help others with burnout, like those are not things that necessarily naturally will come to you. So that's one thing I'm really, really proud of, is being able to create connections for other people and make memories for those individuals. And the other I would say I'm really proud of my team this year is we're actively working towards getting a multifaith room in the Ted Rogers building. Because essentially, there's there's no permanent space, really on campus, and especially us being the largest faculty, we really feel the need that that room should exist in the first place.

A Andrew Yang 18:02

From the perspective of a student leader, how does it feel to return to campus and being in person? And how's the experience different from, you know, being in a student government online?

C

Chantal Wong 18:13

Oh, there's so many differences. Um, I would say the weirdest moment that I can compare would be this year, we ran our normal Orientation Week. And it was bizarre because it was like the last time we had done that I was in first year, I was the one who was, you know, getting cheered on by these crazy frosh leaders waving their flags and chanting all over the place. And we did the same event basically, this year. And instead of me being a frosty, so to speak, I was on the other side of things and organizing and running it. And I think for student leaders, there is sometimes a bit of a gap in terms of, we were just first years and now we're the ones who are organizing everything. And sometimes you're like, Whoa, like, I don't know how I got here, like what the heck happened, who gave me this much power type of thing. But I think recognizing even all the efforts we did virtually is are still efforts, and a lot of the things we did still had impact. And because of those events, and because of student groups, I had a community when we were all virtual, and I remember falling asleep on Discord with my team, because that's just how connected we were. So it's a big difference. And I would say the biggest learning curve has been you cannot hop from in person event to in person event to in person event like both physically and mentally. Whereas virtually that was something you could do because you wouldn't have to move and you know, you could just stay at home the whole time. So it's challenging in different ways.

A

Andrew Yang 19:41

And for students who plan on running for a position whether it's within TRSS, or any position in any student group. What advice do you have to give them in terms of running getting votes and anything related to that process?

C


Chantal Wong 19:54

I have gone through two election cycles at this point because I was elected into my role both yours, I would say, be nice to yourself. Because the campaign process is really hard. You're essentially selling yourself to individuals and marketing yourselves in terms of why are you a good person for this role? What makes you qualified and people will ask you questions, and it's a hard process. You are marketing, literally yourself, you are the product. And I would also say even if you lose, it's it's not the end of the world, I promise you it's not. There are bigger things in life than just Student Government as someone who is on a student government organization. For example, my vice president of events, she had lost her election last year for a different director position, and she came back this year as vice president events. So don't be discouraged because you didn't win a role. It's it doesn't speak to who you are, or your character it speaks to, you know, just the situation at hand. And if you are still passionate about student life and getting involved, you will definitely still find other ways.


A

Andrew Yang 21:02


Alright, so with that, that wraps up our conversation, I'm gonna give you a quick second to plug TRSS here. How can students get involved?

 Chantal Wong 21:09

Yeah, so first of all, follow us on Instagram at TRS society. We post a lot of resources on there, but also we have 30 Umbrella student groups. So if you really want to get involved, go out to those events go to the events that we host and getting your name out there and just meeting other individuals is 100% The best way to get involved especially if you're not in a student leader position just yet. Sure. Thanks for your time. Thanks so much.

 Georgina Parker 21:39

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

 Maya Abramson 21:44

I'm Maya Abramson.

 Georgina Parker 21:45

I'm Georgina Parker.

 Andrew Yang 21:46

And I am Andrew Yang. This has been TMU Week In Review. Thank you for listening