

OCTOBER 2021

ENGWellness Undergraduate Newsletter



Produced by: the ENGWellness Ambassador

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Keep it going!

Already 1 month in! Well, time flies when you're having fun. At this point in the term, we've all gotten used to our classes, finished a few assignments and have a much better idea of what this term will end up looking like. We're approaching the midway point and maybe we're also starting to feel tired. The start of the term is new and exciting, especially now that many of the activities have been in-person, but now that some of the excitement has worn off, it's important to stay focused on your personal goals for the term. Remind yourself that the little setbacks and uncertainties of life don't have to define your success this term, and that you have much more time to bounce back.

Put things into perspective

School is difficult. Engineering is an especially challenging degree and, you're not alone if you feel overwhelmed. Remember that you came to University expecting to work hard and be challenged; you worked extremely hard in high school to get into a University program that would provide you with the career you wanted, and now you're here. You knew things would be difficult sometimes, and you expected to be challenged. So here you are, working hard at what you love, and actualizing the dreams you had when you chose to come here. Getting caught up in all the little difficulties that come with life, we often forget to put things into perspective. Sometimes you just need to remember that this is actually what you want -- that you signed up for this, and that some challenge and struggle is ok.

Get involved!

It isn't too late to join that club you always wanted, or pick up that sport you enjoy watching. The University of Waterloo has many things to offer, and they don't stop existing just because you waited a month or so to join them. So sign up for that yoga class, folks! They'd be happy to have you.



Academic success tips from an ECE student

By Sebastian Ouslis

[A little about me:](#)

I am a 3B Electrical Engineer. I like Finance, Fintech, and sports. So far I have had 4 co-ops, my first co-op was at a company named Cognitive Systems, they specialize in motion tracking using wifi. My next two co-ops were at BMO Toronto as a quantitative developer. My most recent co-op was at Actualize consulting which is a US consulting firm that specializes in setting up treasury infrastructure for companies.

[Personal Strategies for Success:](#)

I think my biggest personal strategy for success is to put a lot of effort into the things that matter most to me. I think a big part of engineering is that there will always be things to work on and improve but not everything is worth the time. A big principle that I believe in is the 80/20 rule. The 80/20 rule is the idea that 80% of the results in something come from 20% of the effort. This also means that, in order to get that additional 20% to get to 100% of the results, you'll need an additional 80% of the effort. Obviously this is an exaggeration, but generally it does not take all your effort to get to a point that you are happy with in an assignment or studying. Many people come into university with the misconception that they will keep the same marks they had in high school, but the faster you can get rid of this belief the better. A third of my first year ECE class either failed out or switched programs, and that's ok, but its important to understand the change in environment can make people sad or depressed about their marks since they have been conditioned to expect high 90s throughout highschool. DO NOT, and I repeat, DO NOT associate your value with the grades you get! In the grand scheme of your life, it won't matter what you got in the mid term of your first year calculus class. The most important thing I can suggest is to consider what you can do in the next 4-5 years that will really impact your life in the long term. Studying a little extra to improve from an 80% to a 90% generally isn't that, but building friendships, getting healthy, and exercising are all things that I consider helpful long term.

[Stress Relief:](#)

To relieve stress I like to play sports and spend time with friends. I think Waterloo gets a bad rep for not being a "party school" and a place where people think everyone studies all the time, but I think the prevalence of [intramurals](#) and sports clubs is proof of the opposite. There are hundreds of people playing in tons of different intramurals and [clubs](#), so there is definitely something available for everyone. In addition to sports, having a good group of good friends is super helpful for my success in Engineering. Apart from keeping me sane and happy, friends in similar programs can be very helpful for studying and working on projects together (just don't steal their code for anything, bad news bears). Last thing about stress relief is that having a [healthy relationship](#) can help to reduce stress as well. I find that I can relax easier with my girlfriend and being more relaxed helps me do better overall. Just remember that an unhealthy relationship can have opposite effects, so keep that in mind.

[What is success?](#)

Success is different for everyone, and that's fine. People should try harder to think about what they really want in life and then take the steps to get there. If you are in your program, and you realize that you want to make pizza for a living, then getting a job at Google probably won't look like success to you. Many people realize what they want in life, but they ignore it because of the pressure for them to continue on the path they are on. The earlier you start to work towards what you really want, the sooner you can enjoy what you are doing in life.

[A note on time management:](#)

I think time management has never been an issue for me. The issue for me stems from a lack of drive to do what I need to. Why do people play League of Legends so much when they should be working? Because its fun and they want to do it. If someone got the same enjoyment from doing calculus, there would never be a need for time management. If you are struggling with time management, try finding things you enjoy doing that will help you get your work done. This can be studying with your classmates, or working on a project with the coding language you need to learn.

[Midterms success tips:](#)

For Midterms, study early! The earlier you start to study, the easier it will be at mid term time. If you are feeling overwhelmed all term, I would suggest talking to some of your profs or academic advisors for help.

[Taking breaks:](#)

I don't think I could stay in this program without taking breaks. Breaks help me enjoy my life and the program I am in, if I did not take them I definitely would have dropped out by now.

Good luck with the term, everyone!

Success is a marathon, not a sprint.

A blog post from [ENGWellness Blogs](#).

We all start the term running fast. We stay on top of classes, hang out with friends, go to the gym, and minimize our procrastination. We feel excited for a new period in our life; being able to get a fresh start at our goals can be very motivating to work hard towards them. The first 2, maybe 3 weeks of the term are often the best because we can stick with all the ambitious goals we've set out for ourselves. We sprint -- and moving fast never felt so good. But slowly we begin to get tired: In order to stay on top of all these goals, we've maybe lost some sleep here and there, maybe we've over-ambitiously reduced our social media use, or maybe we haven't seen our friends and family as much as we're used to. All these little things start to pile up in the background, and slow us down. Much like a running race, starting out too fast hurts us in the long run; the lactic acid of life begins to build up, making it impossible for us to continue at the pace we started at. As we slow down and catch our breath, classes start to pick up and eventually we spend the rest of the term playing catchup.



So, what's the solution? I mean, you gave it all you had – you worked as hard as possible and it still didn't work. Why even try if your very best isn't good enough? Well, here's the thing: you didn't actually do your best. Sure, you worked really hard, but you didn't do the best you could; *working your hardest is not the same as doing your best*. This, I think, is a very common misconception among students. We often think that if you are constantly working as hard as possible that you're also automatically doing the best you can, and that that's what is needed for you to be successful. But the truth is, working as hard as you possibly can is probably not going to be your best. For the same reasons pointed out above, you will burn out quickly and end up playing catch up for the rest of the term. The successful among us treat the term as a marathon, pacing themselves as they go, not sprinting as fast they can to burnout within a month. Sure, there are a select few that, for their entire lives, school has been the main focus of their life. They eat, breathe, and sleep studying so coming to University they were used to this extreme schedule and continue to work that hard throughout the term. But for most of us, doing that amount of work is not only too difficult, but not even worth it.



Okay, so working hard is not the best one can do – so what is? Pacing yourself. Just like the runners in a marathon, you need to figure out a challenging but achievable studying schedule, where you can consistently put effort forth, and not burnout after a few weeks. Pacing yourself is about looking ahead, predicting what your schedule is going to be like, taking breaks, catching up on sleep, and managing your energy (spoiler for future blogs), as well as your time, to build the most effective term overall. Pacing yourself is about strategy, and its not as easy as you might think. For example, if you're at the library with your friends, who want to stay up until 2am working on an assignment, but you know you need to sleep and can finish it a lot faster tomorrow morning, what would you do? Chances are, you'd sprint along side your friends, not catch up on sleep, and slowly lose motivation and energy that you needed to last throughout the term. Pacing yourself is very difficult, but I assure you it is worth it.



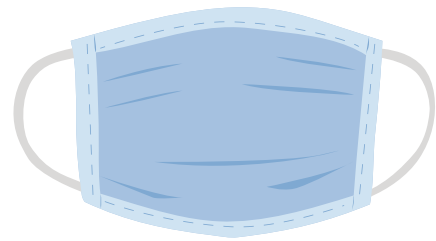
Why then would we want to over-work ourselves in pursuit of “success”, when there is a much better solution? I think for a lot of us, myself included, we liken success to a race; that there is one finish line that is the same for everyone, and it is an all out competition to see who gets there first. Although competition is good, school and life more broadly are not as simple as a running race. The point of my marathon versus sprint strategy was not for people to compare themselves to others trying to get to the finish line, it was so that people could *compare against alternate versions of themselves*. Namely, the version of oneself who wants to give everything they've got during 1/5th of the race, versus the version that paces themselves to get the best overall result over the entire race. We get too caught up in how much other people are working, and think that we need to do what they do in order to stay ahead. There will always be people who can work harder than you, and maybe that is working for them. But what works for them may be too much for you, and although you can keep up for some time, it will end up hurting you in the long run. Success is not about beating the other person, it's about beating yourself to find the best version of yourself. Afterall, isn't doing your best the best you can do?

What's happening around campus?

COVID-19

Testing Centre

The Health Services COVID-19 Testing Assessment Centre is open to University of Waterloo students, employees, postdocs and their family members who live in the same household. Testing is by appointment only. You can use [this form](#) to book an appointment.



Thrive Month

Thrive month is October 18 - November 12, 2021.



Thrive is a series of events focused on building positive mental health for University of Waterloo students, faculty and staff. Thrive is also a mindset that encourages you to flourish. We all have mental health, and we can each strengthen our mental health by learning about it, thinking about it, talking about it, and discovering new skills and resources to help us Thrive all year long. For more information about Thrive and Thrive Month, checkout [their website](#).

Mental Health Research Conference

The University of Waterloo will be hosting the annual Virtual Conference on Student Mental Health Research on Wednesday, November 10, 2021 as part of [Thrive Month](#), showcasing new and in-progress research being conducted by our faculty, staff and student colleagues.

The aim of the conference is to bring together members of the UWaterloo community to share knowledge, connect researchers, and promote mental wellness through presentations, posters, and interactive Q&A sessions. Topics broadly pertaining to student mental health were explored with an emphasis on the following key themes:

- Prevention of mental health issues and promotion of mental health-care strategies
- Suicide prevention
- Equity and wellness
- Harm reduction approaches to substance use
- Mental health impact of COVID-19

If interested, checkout their abstract submission [website](#)

Wellness Programs: Move Your Mind!



MOVE YOUR MIND!

A peer-to-peer program dedicated to leveraging physical activity to support our mental health

PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE:

- » Support in finding enjoyable ways to be more active
- » Support in identifying goals and tackling barriers
- » Accountability
- » Access to a Buddy matching program (optional)

INTERESTED IN BEING A VOLUNTEER BUDDY?

- » Buddies are paired with participants to join in activities, provide support, and help with motivation and accountability.

Check LEADS for volunteer postings or email: athcpwel@uwaterloo.ca

HOW TO JOIN:

- » Self refer at: www.gowarriorsgo.ca/MoveYourMind

Take Time to MOVE!

Sexual Violence Awareness and Response

The situation at The University of Western Ontario

During Western University's orientation week, 4 formal sexual assault allegations were made to the police, with several online complaints about mass drugging (around 30 young women) for the purposes of sexual assault in one of the residences. The students at Western planned a walkout with with 9,000 students to bring school's attention to this massive issue. A survey in 2018 with over 8000 Western University respondents found that 1 in 3 girls reported being sexually assaulted.

A Larger Issue

Between 15 and 25% of college- and university- aged women will experience some form of sexual assault during their academic careers. One in three women will experience one form of sexual assault in her lifetime. (Source)

Sexual violence is not just a problem, it's a growing cultural infection on university and college campuses, and needs to be combatted immediately.

Western's situation is a terrifying one, but given the facts and statistics, it isn't surprising. Realistically, what happened at Western could happen anywhere, including our own University of Waterloo. It's time more attention was brought to this subject around Canada, and on our campus here at UW.

More Stats...

According to a Federally administered survey reaching over 13,000 undergraduate students across Canada...

- 8 percent of women who experienced unwanted sexual behaviors spoke about what happened to someone associated with their school
- 6 percent of men who experienced unwanted sexual behaviors spoke about what happened with their school
- A majority (71%) of students at Canadian postsecondary schools witnessed or experienced unwanted sexualized behaviors in a postsecondary setting in 2019
- Most students chose not to intervene, seek help or take other action in at least one instance when they witnessed unwanted sexualized behaviours, including 91% of women and 92% of men who witnessed such behaviours.

Resources

Sexual Violence Prevention & Response Office

- The Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office (SVPRO) supports all members of the University of Waterloo campus community who have experienced, or been impacted, by sexual violence.

Sexual Assault Support Centre of Waterloo Region

- We listen, facilitate healing, and celebrate resiliency. Using an intersectional feminist approach, we work to transform systems which promote gender-based violence.

World Mental Health Day



World Mental Health Day: October 10th, 2021

World Mental Health Day occurs on October 10th to raise awareness around the globe about the existence of, as well as issues related to, mental health. For many of us, mental health is something we're already familiar with; being in a progressive Western society, mental health stigma has largely gone away and we can talk freely about such topics. However, many places around the world do not consider it to be a public health issue, or even recognize its existence. We often take for granted the wide variety of resources and social support provided to us for our mental health around our campus and communities, but many people worldwide who suffer from mental illness are not given nearly the same amount of opportunities. We as a culture and country have come a long way with regards to mental health stigma, but we still need to work hard to help our friends, family, coworkers, and fellow Canadians realize that awareness is only the start of solving the mental health crisis.

Alarming statistics have been showing that there is indeed a crisis on our hands: the World Health Organization reports that over 467 million people worldwide struggle with mental illness, an estimated 5% of adults suffer from depression, and suicide is the second leading cause of death between ages 15-29.

The world is suffering, and the University of Waterloo is no different. A 2019 comprehensive health survey given to UW students produced disheartening results: (all results have the caveat *within the 12 months prior to taking the survey*)

- 63.4% of respondents felt things were hopeless
- 73.8% felt very lonely
- 48.0% felt so depressed it was difficult to function
- 64.5% felt overwhelming anxiety
- 16.0% seriously considered suicide

Social Connectedness

Not only did COVID-19 bring with it dangers of physical health, the lockdowns also brought an epidemic of loneliness: being forced to stay home and meet with people only virtually greatly affects people's mental health. As we begin to move out of the pandemic, we must make an effort to combat the mental health problems that go along with lockdowns. And although it may be distressing, a time commitment, and something you may not be used to, one of the most effective ways to combat loneliness is to get out and get involved. Understanding the fact that just interacting with and getting to know people can make a huge difference in your mental well-being is an important first step to try and get better. Or maybe its not you specifically but you know of someone who you suspect may be struggling -- reach out to them. Just showing them that you care will make a big difference.

For most of us, the hardest part of getting involved is stepping out of our bubble and out into the world. Social anxiety is a massive problem, as it prevents us from going out and being socially connected. When we've been in our COVID bubble for so long, it is even more difficult to be social again. But getting out will improve our lives and help us move past the difficult times of the past year and a half.

If you feel you may be struggling with social anxiety, or have any mental health concerns, do not hesitate to reach out. The University of Waterloo has many resources (see page below)

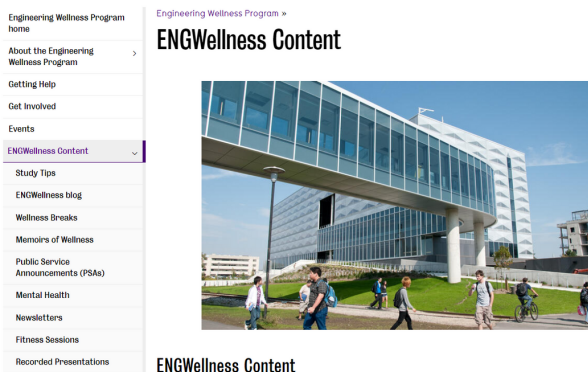
Mental Health Resources

The following mental health supports are available to you
Counselling Services - 519-888-4567 ext. 32655
Health Services - Student Medical Clinic - 519-888-4096
Empower Me – 1-833-628-5589

The following crisis supports are available to you as well
Crisis Services Canada: 1-833-531-2600 or text 45645
Good2Talk Helpline: 1-866-925-5454 or text GOOD2TALKON to 686868
Here 24/7 - 1-844-437-3247
UW Police - 519-888-4567 ext. 22222

ENGWellness Content

Check out our ENGWellness resources including mental health pages and PSAs. All resources as well as previous newsletters can be accessed under the ENGWellness Content section of our website.



Stay Connected

Be sure to follow us on social media to stay connected and updated.



@uwengwell



@uwENGwellness



@UwengW



ENGwellness uwaterloo

LEARN 'Course'

Get news and access to our content modules through our ENGWellness Learn 'course'! Students can enroll using the Self-Registration function within Learn.

WATERLOO LEARN

Calendar Pebble+ **Self Registration** UW Resources ▾ Course Request Help

Wellness Resources

Crisis Support

- [Here 24/7](#) - Offers addiction, mental health, and crisis services
- [Good2Talk](#) - Free, confidential support service which can connect you anonymously with a professional counsellor.
- [Empower Me](#) - This student-focused service provides you with "one-stop" access to counselling and campus wellness services. Integrates off-campus resources with already existing on-campus resources and can be accessed 24/7 (within N.A.) in a variety of languages. Gender and faith inclusive services are available.

Mental Health Resources

- [EngSoc's Guide on Accessing Mental Health Resources at UW](#) - A no-nonsense guide to the services and resources available at UW to ENG students.
- [Centre for Addiction and Mental Health \(CAMH\)](#) - Provides information on addiction and ways to identify if help is needed and how to access it.
- [Campus Wellness Online Workshops and Seminars](#) - Everything from managing emotions, to reducing stress, to improving sleep.
- [Mental Health Commission Resource Hub](#) - Information about mental health and wellness during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- [Campus Wellness Group Therapy and Workshops](#) - Group therapy can be beneficial by helping you find new perspectives on shared challenges, feel inclusion and relief knowing that others experience similar challenges, and allowing you to practice new skills in a supportive environment.
- [Canadian Mental Health Association \(CMHA\)](#) - Tips about managing your mental health during COVID-19.
- [Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction \(CCSA\)](#) - Offers free online resources, tools, apps, and information to support substance use issues by connecting with peers, support workers, social workers, and professionals for confidential chat services.

Academic Support

- [Student Success Office](#) - Compilation of learning and life skills resources.
- [OUSA COVID-19 Resources for Students](#) - Financial aid, learning tips, and other mental health initiatives.
- [Waterloo Assignment Planner](#) - Customizable planner for reports, essays, presentations, math assignments, and you name it!
- [Tutor Connect](#) - Connects people with student tutors

Contacts to book a one-on-one coaching session: (Limited in-person sessions available. Other sessions to be offered virtually.)

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