

THE IRON WARRIOR

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MEET THE TEAM

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Letter From the Editor: Wisdom from Unexpected Places

Jeremy Bijoux, 2B Chemical

HEEEELLOOOOOOOOOO WORLD!
Whether you're back from co-op, grinding classes for another four months or just started your next chapter at the University of Waterloo, it's great to have you reading our first Fall 2026 issue! I am Jeremy, the Editor-in-Chief (EIC) for this term, and this is my second time as EIC after Winter 2026 (W26). I am starting my 3rd year of Chem Eng... and from what I've heard, the fun (which some of my classmates might instead qualify as pain) is about to ramp up.

For the first years reading this issue, a special welcome to you! We are the Iron Warrior, the Engineering student newspaper! We publish 3-4 issues every term, featuring articles or short stories from our amazing writing team; sudokus, crosswords and comics from our distractions team; quotes from our (beloved or despised) Engineering professors; and our infamous Iron Inquisition, where we ask students on campus some interesting questions. You can find our issues on stands across campus (mainly the Eng buildings, DC and DP), or on our website iwarrior.uwaterloo.ca. We will meet weekly in **DWE 3520A** (our main office) and/or online on our Discord channel on **Mondays at 6:30pm**; follow our Instagram account

@theironwarrior_uw for our Linktree as well as updates on our meeting dates, contests and article releases throughout the term! We will also be at some club fairs (definitely the Engineering one on September 11th 2-5pm, and hopefully the WUSA one as well, but I can't confirm this at the time of writing this article, so PLEASE CHECK OUR INSTAGRAM)! Come check out our booth to greet some of our members and learn more about us (as well as receive some cool swag)!

Your time here at UW will be filled with new people, amazing adventures and difficult (sometimes seemingly impossible) challenges, but my biggest hope is that you'll have fun through it all. For a while now, I've been wanting to share some wisdom I've been accumulating from my two years here,

so I'm going to share some quotes from some of my favourite media and how they have defined the way I approach schoolwork, co-op and my social life since starting university. I don't expect you to follow my advice to the letter (even I don't follow all of my advice), but I hope some of these tips may be useful to you!

"Never put off until tomorrow what can be done today." - Master Wu, LEGO Ninjago: Masters of Spinjitzu

We'll start right off the bat with the biggest piece of advice I have for any university student, especially first-years. As a student who went through first year, as well as a former First-Year Engineering Tutor who worked closely with first years, one of the biggest sources of stress I've noticed is waiting until the last minute to start assignments. The biggest favour you can do for yourself, right as you start university, is to get in the habit of starting assignments the day they come out, and to do a little bit of the assignment each day until the due date. In particular, I like to complete as much of the assignment as possible (usually the whole assignment) in one sitting the day it comes out, then spend the rest of the time until the due date checking my work with my friends and getting clarifications from professors.

As you'll see **VERY** quickly as classes start, assignments questions can seem vague or like they lack details, which is why it is **VERY IMPORTANT** to reach out to your professors early to get things cleared up. I can't tell you the sheer number of times in W26 I asked professors to clarify what they meant with some of their questions, or point out a mistake in the problem statement; by far the most notorious was a Physical Chemistry 1 question where the molar mass of an ideal gas was **6.5 kg/mol** (if you know your chemistry, you'll agree this is completely outrageous!!!), which I got fixed for my cohort (it was supposed to be 6.5 kg/kmol, which makes a lot more sense for an ideal gas).

Furthermore, if you were the type of student in high school who did fine starting assignments at the last minute (like I did), **do not** expect it to work here;

assignments in university (especially Waterloo Eng) are not meant to be done within the last day or last hours before the due date. I've seen people cheat or rush assignments to get them done on time, and the results weren't great, so PLEASE, give yourself time to complete your assignments to the best of your ability. One thing I do that helps me a lot is to have a calendar of the whole term, which during the first week of classes I fill out with ALL the deadlines (assignments, projects and exam dates, though you won't get the date for your Finals until early October).

Of course, this advice doesn't just apply to schoolwork: it also applies to studying for exams (you absolutely, **DO NOT**, want to study for an exam the day before; make a study plan of at least 2-3 days before the exam and follow it as best you can; for Reading Week and Hell Week especially, plan out what you'll study and when for the whole weeks), and it especially applies to co-op applications. You **DO NOT** want to wait until the last minute to start applying for jobs (as someone who did that in Cycle 1 in 1A, I can tell you it didn't end well). Start working on your resume today, check out and familiarize yourself with WaterlooWorks, and take time each day to apply to some jobs. I especially beg you not to wait until the last minute because quite a number of jobs require cover letters, and those can take quite some time to write and perfect.



The greatest Wu wisdom for any University student. Photo Credits: Reddit.

(Fun fact: this advice directly contradicts one of the 10 Commandments in the O-Week Orientation Book!)

"Fear is the mind-killer." - Frank Herbert, Dune

Along with one of my favourite Lego Ninjago quotes: "Fear? Fear is not a word where I come from!", from Fritz Donnegan/Cliff Gordon, "Fear is the mind-killer" is one of my go-to quotes whenever I need to remind myself that fear only holds me back from my true potential.

The first few weeks of 1A are all about meeting new people, whether during O-Week events, or in residence, or anywhere on campus, and it's okay to be nervous! Be yourself, be courageous by talking to new people and trying new things, and eventually you'll find other people who share your interests. Making friends in uni is very important not just for surviving classes, but to find a community who will support you throughout this tough chapter of your life, and to have fun with.

When it comes to exams, especially your first midterms and finals, you will sooner or later be hit with a sense of dread. The most important thing for an exam, whether or not you're ready, is to stay calm and believe in yourself. All you can do is give it your all; "Lose yourself!" (Eminem). To maximise your chances of remembering the things you need, you need a clear mind, which is not easy when you're completely stressed out. Take a few deep breaths, encourage yourself, and start writing/typing with the intention of doing your best. You've worked too hard and fought too hard to give up now!

One other thing: **do not be afraid of making mistakes.** As you've probably heard multiple times before, mistakes are part of the learning process. Despite being someone who absolutely despises messing up, I can't stress enough that I wouldn't have become one of my cohort's top academic weapons if it wasn't for all the mistakes I made while solving assignments, or wouldn't have gotten better at lab work if it wasn't for the sheer number of samples or lab equipment I've accidentally ruined. Once you make a mistake, do not start out by crashing out for 5 minutes (like I sometimes do). Acknowledge the mistake, identify its

root cause, and figure out something you can do to prevent it from happening again. ("The only real mistake is the one from which we learn nothing." - Henry Ford). And while you can't take back some mistakes, like those done on exams, there might be a chance you can make up for them (for example through bonus assignments or bonus points on the next exam!)

[After losing a battle] "I'm just preparing for victory!" - Bel Daizora, Beyblade Burst QuadDrive

Everybody has a "loss" at some point, but as Bel Daizora and Rocky Balboa agree ("It ain't about how hard you hit, it's about how you can get hit and keep moving forward, how much you can take and keep moving forward."), getting back up and trying again after a failure matters just as much as any success. Continuing the last point, failing an exam or making a mistake on an assignment or at work isn't the end of the world; it's a step towards growth and learning. Last term, I made more mistakes than ever before in a co-op job, and though every mistake made me feel like I was under a curse, rather than lament, I chose to analyze each mistake, figuring out how they happened and how I could prevent them from repeating. Learning from your mistakes and not letting them bring you down isn't just a vital university skill; it's a vital life skill. Whenever you're feeling down from something not going your way, just remember to keep your head up, smile, and affirm to yourself and the world that this is just the first step towards your next Evolution. Learn from your mistake to prepare for your next challenge.

Ever since starting university, I've also heard and seen stories of people who failed some courses or the term. But again, it's not the end of the world! You can try again the next term, or the year after, or switch programs; the University has options and resources for you to keep going despite major setbacks, most of which will be introduced in your seminar course (which contrary to popular opinion, I highly recommend attending: it's better to know about on-campus resources early than to find out about them too late).

On another note, preparing for victory also requires knowing where to find

effective help. My go-to recommendations are professors, TAs and First-Year Engineering Tutors (E2 1786) for questions on school work, course content, or exam prep; your classmates/friends for anything; and the Engineering Undergrad Office (E2 1772) for many different types of services including academic help and wellness support (or for asking where to find certain services).

"Everybody lies." - Gregory House, House MD

In a series of motivational and wise quotes, I chose to include a more cynical one to reflect how I've felt about people this past year. I watched and re-watched House MD throughout first and second year, which eventually led to House's worldview rubbing off on mine. Though it's taken me a while to get out of his initial black-or-white lens of the world, House's iconic quote is absolutely a reality of the world we live in: people (accidentally or intentionally) lie, make mistakes, give wrong information, and it can sometimes lead to bad decisions and mistakes that we come to regret or be mad about.

However, just because everybody is sooner or later going to lie about something or make a mistake, doesn't mean no one can be trusted (House himself admits one time that "everybody doesn't always lie"). My current interpretation of this line is to take some things you learn with a grain of salt; to question every thing that seems off to you, no matter how silly the question may seem (but don't over-scrutinize everything, otherwise you'll lose your sanity). In W26, I found a lot of mistakes in problem statements that I pointed out to my professors (which they gladly fixed, though in some cases it might take a while for a professor to realise their mistake); that attention to detail benefitted my entire class, as some of those problems would've made the assignments impossible. I'm not saying to question absolutely everything you learn or hear, but to never hesitate to ask questions if you're unsure about something. If you're not the type to ask questions, like I was in first year, a piece of advice from one of my 1A profs is to ask one of the people who usually ask questions in class to ask your question for you! Most of the time, you find out you're not the only one asking yourself that question!

Another good point to come out of this quote is to find people you trust. You're not going to find someone who's absolutely perfect and never messes up, but at least you can count on them to be right most of the time. **AI should not always be trusted.** As someone who tried to rely on AI to check their answers for some assignments in 1A, I can tell you that more than 50% of the time, AI was wrong, or hyping up my wrong answer. (See my ChatGPT Can't Save You article from Fall 2025 Issue 1; though in hindsight, I realise that AI's accuracy depends on the type of question it needs to solve. Still, it isn't worth the risk of Policy 71 violations.)

"You don't get stronger by accepting how everyone else does things. You get stronger by finding your own path. That's how champions are made." - Free de la Hoya, Beyblade Burst Evolution

Beyblade is my all-time favourite show, but I actually don't remember this quote; it showed up while I was doing some quick research (LOL!). Luckily, I think it brings up a very good point: not everyone's path will be the same. Everyone will have different experiences with the same classes and everyone will go through different co-ops; it's the series of things that happen to you and what you do about them that contribute to your growth as a future professional.

Explore and expand your hobbies and interests while you're in university; it's the best time to do it! University is partly about finding yourself and what you want; you don't have to do the same things everybody else does at the same time they do it, even if it seems like you do. Right when I entered university, I knew I wanted to do things differently from my high school hermit life, but I quickly realised a lot of the things that we're recommended didn't seem that interesting to me. Rather than following everyone else into design teams or building projects, I took my time exploring what I liked: writing and acting. Despite barely doing any technical projects in first-year, I still managed to get 2 very fun co-ops (though not completely

technical), and it's in second year that I decided to focus more on my resume by participating in undergraduate research (URA) and trying (and failing) to join a design team (that's a loooooong story). Despite a lack of technical experience compared to my classmates, my non-technical experiences definitely contributed to landing quite a few interviews last winter and a good co-op in the field I might want to work in. **Take risks and do what you think works best for you!**

"Enjoy this World" - Cyberspace 3-6, Sonic Frontiers

The most recent message to live in my head rent-free, "Enjoy this World" can be interpreted in quite a number of ways, some arguably quite sinister if you think about it for too long. The key takeaway of these 3 words (and the whole Cyberspace 3-6 track) is to enjoy the moment, and there are quite a few things to enjoy here on campus and in Waterloo. There are plays, talent shows, concerts and residence events throughout the term to chill out, take a break and meet new people; a campus full of buildings to explore; PAC, CIF and intramurals for physical activity; and a lovely plaza full of wonderful food places to try out (I personally recommend Campus Pizza and iPotato). Waterloo itself, while not as entertaining as Toronto, still has some nice places to visit, like Uptown and the Farmers' Market (especially the latter during summer). For those of you who prefer the other parts of the GTA, there are buses that you can take to go to Toronto or other cities (just make sure to be back in time for your exams or classes!). There are also a lot of ways to get involved on campus, whether joining a club, a design team or a society! You're gonna be spending the next 4-5 years of your life going from school, to co-op, to school, to co-op, to school, to co-op... enjoy it while it lasts! You don't get a redo of those exact experiences.

Conclusion

Unfortunately, there were a lot of quotes I wanted to include, but we don't have the space for a 3000-word article for this issue, and this article is already 2800 words.

Still, I hope you had fun reading this article! Enjoy the rest of this newspaper/magazine, your Fall term, and be on the lookout for our next issues!



THE IRON WARRIOR

Fall 2026

Weekly meetings **Mondays at 6:30pm,**
DWE 3520A, starting September 14th!

Come if you're interested in:

- Writing
- Art
- Editing
- Photography
- Social Media Creation
- Making Puzzles/Comics

Join our Discord for updates!
(Link in our bio)

Welcome to “Cartoon Chaos”!

Incoming first years – welcome to the University of Waterloo Engineering faculty! You are the class of 2031, an interesting graduating year number, which can only mean you’ve got great things in store at Waterloo!

To kick it all off, get ready for a whacky, colourful and animated time at Engineering Orientation’s Cartoon Chaos. Whether you’ll be on Team Lightning McQueen, Sonic or Alvin and the Chipmunks, we’re so excited to see you at the start of September. Throughout Engineering Orientation, you’ll have the opportunity to meet other first-year students, get advice from upper-year students in your program and participate in a ton of fun activities, all meant to get you ready to join the UW Engineering Community. We are so happy to have you here!

In just a couple of weeks, you’ll be on campus earning your yellow hard hat, competing for colour team points and exploring what first-year has to offer. Engineering Orientation will be on Tuesday September 8th, right before classes start on Wednesday, but the fun won’t stop there! The Engineering Society’s Beginning of Term party is where the Engineering champions are crowned. Plus, this year it might come with more award presentations, some new musical special guests and their entourage... Be there or be square! There are plenty more surprises in store, and you can make the most of your time by checking your calendar on Portal, which includes event descriptions for everything you can participate in!

With all the excitement of orientation, it can be hard to believe that classes and co-op are just around the corner as well. It can be very overwhelming to start this new chapter and transition into University, but the upper-year volunteers at orientation are all here to help you along the way. This is a time of big change, but also incredible opportunities! Be kind to yourselves and remember that no one expects you to have it all figured out. Through Engineering Orientation, we’ll kick off the start of your fantastical University experience (hopefully minus the slapstick gags)...

See you at the beginning of September!

SuperHuges Remi and Nathan

Message from HEADCOM!



Listen up, Frosh!

You have a lot to learn and a short time to do it in, so pay attention. I am your HEADCOM. I control EdCom and Eng Orientation. Make no mistake about it - you have one job this week: IMPRESS EDCOM. I cannot stress this enough to you.

EDCOM is the Education Committee. We are a special group of senior students, hand-picked by the Dean of Engineering from the top 2% of each discipline. We are the best and the brightest Waterloo has to offer, meaning we are the best and the brightest, period. We also participate actively in the Engineering Society, WEEF, and in the many student teams you will learn about on Friday. We are everywhere. We do everything. We know everything. We are the authority on everything in Waterloo Engineering. We are not easily impressed, and we are always watching.

We are the ones that will award you your hard hat when you earn it, meaning we are the ones who decide whether or not you are a plumber; a true Waterloo Engineering student. You will need to show your CREATIVITY, RESILIENCY, and DETERMINATION. Once you have your hard hats, we will be there to watch your ENGINuity during Junkyard Wars. At the end of the week, we’ll decide the winning team based on everything you have accomplished.

Good luck, Frosh.
We’ll be watching...

The Heartbeat of Global Weather: Decoding El Niño, La Niña, and Our Changing Climate

Aadi Umrani, 4A Biomedical

Have you ever noticed how weather forecasts seem to be getting weirder every passing year? You might have found yourself shivering on a strangely cold mid-summer day, or stepping outside in January to find unnaturally mild, autumn-like warmth that makes you question what season it actually is. Maybe you have watched the news in disbelief as one region suffers through months of scorching, endless drought while another continent thousands of miles away gets inundated by relentless torrential rains and severe flooding. While it is easy to write off these bizarre seasonal shifts as mere bad luck or chaotic weather, there is a massive planetary heat engine operating behind the scenes that governs these global swings. That engine is the El Niño–Southern Oscillation, widely known as ENSO, and its alternating phases, El Niño and La Niña, are the primary drivers behind the world's most dramatic weather anomalies.

At its core, the Earth's climate system relies on a continuous balance between the ocean and the atmosphere, with the ocean storing huge amounts of solar energy and releasing it into the air over time. This is due to water being worse at absorbing and radiating heat than land. Nowhere is this dynamic more powerful than across the vast expanse of the tropical Pacific Ocean. Under normal, non-El Niño conditions, strong trade winds blow consistently from east to west along the equator due to the Earth's rotation. These winds act like a gigantic broom, pushing warm surface waters off the South American coast toward the western Pacific basin near Indonesia and northern Australia. As warm surface water accumulates in the west, cold and nutrient-rich deep ocean water rises to replace it off the South American coast near Peru and Ecuador. This process is known as coastal upwelling. This contrast creates a sharp ocean surface temperature gradient across the Pacific, which in turn drives a closed loop of atmospheric circulation called the Walker Circulation, where warm air rises over the western Pacific Ocean warm pool, travels east high in the atmosphere, and sinks over the cool waters of the eastern Pacific (Wang, 2018).

The entire system stays locked in place through an atmospheric-oceanic feedback loop known as the Bjerknes feedback mechanism. This principle shows that the ocean and atmosphere are locked in a

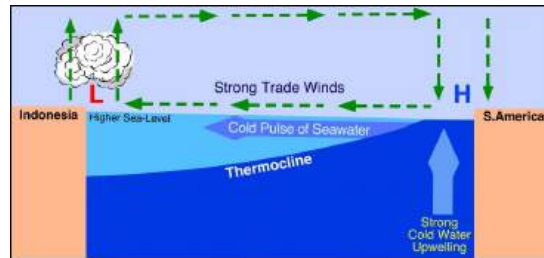


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perpetual dance where changes in sea surface temperatures modify wind patterns, which then feed back into ocean temperature changes (Wang, 2018). When trade winds push warm surface water west, the atmospheric temperature contrast between the warm west and cool east sharpens, which causes the trade winds to blow even harder. This tightly coupled physical feedback keeps the global climate engine stable until subtle physical nudges push the system into one of two extreme states: El Niño or La Niña.

When the atmospheric equilibrium breaks down, the Pacific swings into an El Niño phase. During El Niño, the equatorial trade winds weaken or even reverse to blow from west to east. Without strong winds to hold the warm water pool over Indonesia, a massive pulse of warm water surges back eastward across the Pacific Ocean toward South America. As this warm water spreads across thousands of miles, coastal upwelling off South America is suppressed. The thermocline, that is the boundary separating warm surface waters from cold deep ocean water, deepens dramatically in the east, and the center of tropical storm activity shifts into the central and eastern Pacific Ocean (Wang, 2018). This shift is not uniform across every occurrence, and climate scientists have identified distinct "flavors" of ENSO diversity, distinguishing canonical Eastern Pacific events from Central Pacific "El Niño Modoki" events, each triggering unique global atmospheric reactions (Capotondi et al., 2015).



Photo Credits: <https://live-production.wcms.abc-cdn.net.au/cba2140454f0d1a786a6ad450cee7ec6?src>

On the opposite side of the spectrum lies La Niña, the cold counterpart of the oscillation. During a La Niña phase, normal trade winds blow with unusual

intensity. These exaggerated easterly trade winds pile an extra-deep layer of warm ocean water into the western Pacific, while pulling immense volumes of freezing, nutrient-dense deep water up along the coast of South America. The eastern tropical Pacific experiences sea surface temperatures well below historical averages, steepening the thermocline and shifting heavy tropical rainfall even further west over Australia, Indonesia, and Southeast Asia (Wang, 2018).

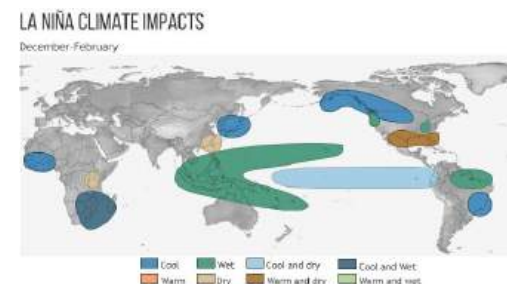


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You might wonder how sea surface temperature changes in the middle of the equatorial Pacific can directly influence rainfall in Europe, snowstorms in North America, or droughts in Southern Africa. The answer lies in planetary-scale wave patterns called atmospheric teleconnections (Power & Delage, 2018). When tropical thunderstorm activity shifts position across the Pacific Ocean, it injects vast amounts of latent heat into the upper atmosphere. This sudden relocation of atmospheric heating places massive obstacles in the path of planetary airflow, and bends and alters the high-altitude jet streams that guide weather systems around the world.

Because jet streams determine where winter storm tracks travel, where cold arctic air drops southward, and where warm tropical air builds up, bending these air rivers generates cascading weather anomalies across continents. During an El Niño winter, for example, the Pacific jet stream stretches out and moves further south, bringing heavy rainfall, landslips, and storms across the southern United States while causing warmer, milder conditions across northern regions. Across the globe in Southeast Asia and Australia, the departure of tropical rainstorms triggers severe heatwaves, agricultural failure, and devastating bushfire seasons (Power & Delage, 2018). Conversely, when La Niña takes over, the jet stream shifts northward, bringing colder and wetter winters to the Pacific Northwest and northern United States, while

exposing the southern United States and parts of South America to lingering droughts and crop loss (Power & Delage, 2018).

These oceanic and atmospheric shifts ripple deep into global ecosystems and human society. When El Niño shuts down coastal upwelling off South America, marine food webs collapse within weeks. Without cold, nutrient-dense waters rising to the surface, phytoplankton populations plummet, leading to starving anchovy populations, crashing fisheries, and widespread marine ecosystem distress (Holbrook et al., 2020). On land, agricultural regions dependent on reliable seasonal monsoons face unpredictable shifts. Major grain-producing areas encounter sudden drought or unseasonable flooding, disrupting global supply chains, triggering sharp food price inflation, and creating widespread economic insecurity (Holbrook et al., 2020).

Understanding ENSO becomes even more urgent when viewed through the lens of modern climate change. You have likely noticed that our recent weather does not just feel different from year to year. It feels warmer overall, punctuated by unnerving extremes like record-breaking winter heatwaves or sudden summer cold snaps. As human activities emit greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, the top layers of the world’s oceans absorb the vast majority of that excess heat. This upper-ocean warming increases ocean thermal stratification, making surface temperatures far more sensitive to changing trade winds (Cai et al., 2021).

Recent scientific modeling indicates that global warming is amplifying the frequency and intensity of extreme El Niño and La Niña events (Cai et al., 2021). Because baseline ocean temperatures are now significantly higher than they were a century ago, even a mild El Niño phase can push tropical ocean waters past the temperature thresholds needed to trigger violent atmospheric storms. This background ocean warming creates the strange weather experiences we see today: winter warm spells where snow vanishes overnight, prolonged summer rain and cold spells caused by stalled jet streams, and rapid transitions from severe drought to sudden deluge. Climate projections indicate that as global temperatures continue to rise, atmospheric teleconnections will intensify and shift eastward, making seasonal weather swings faster, harder to predict, and far more disruptive to communities worldwide (Cai et al., 2021).

Ultimately, the weather anomalies you observe in your daily life are not isolated incidents. The unexpected heatwave in midwinter, the unseasonable chill during a summer month, or the sudden intense

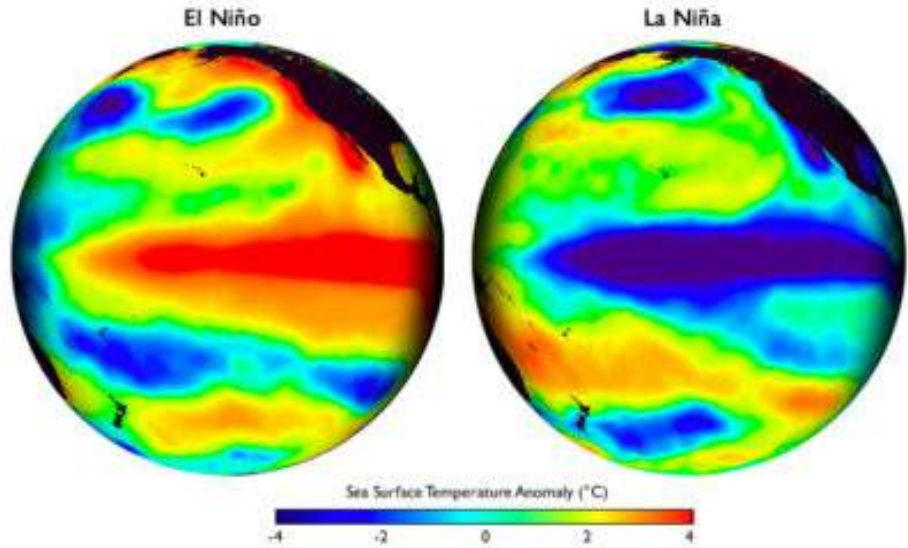


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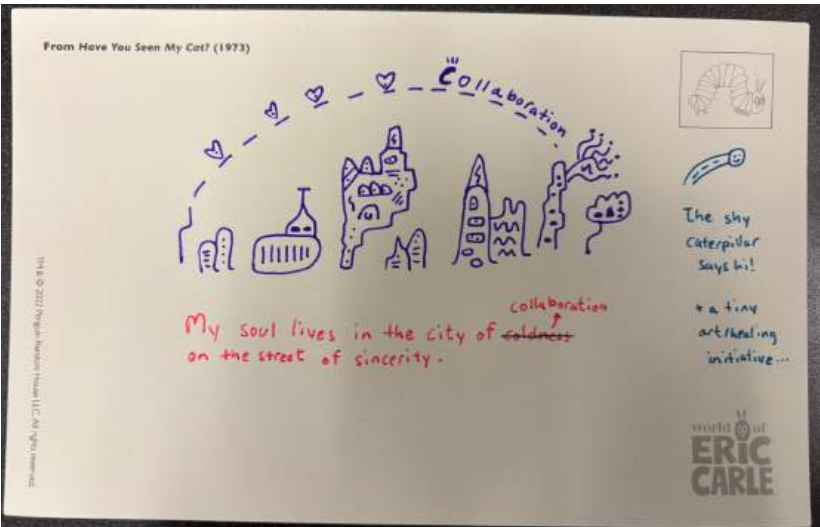
storm season are all linked back to the continuous ocean-atmosphere dance taking place in the tropical Pacific Ocean. As human-driven climate change continues to heat our oceans and alter fundamental atmospheric baselines, decoding the physics of El Niño and La Niña becomes essential for anticipating, adapting to, and surviving the increasingly unpredictable climatic conditions of our modern world.

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SUDOKU
#2026-14



Time Management Tips I Actually Find Helpful in Waterloo Engineering

ChronicTidsoptimist, 3B Software

The 3-3-3 Technique:

Each day, plan to...

- Spend at least 3 hours working on a major project. On school term, I treat my evening study block (usually working on the assignment due soonest) as my big task. Labs are also big tasks. On work terms, I block "work" off as one big task in my personal calendar. If you have some control over your schedule at work, you can often nest another 3-3-3 inside of it.
- Complete 3 "medium" tasks/events. These usually take about 30-120 minutes, and include things like meetings, lectures, interviews, going to the gym, meal prep, etc. When needed, you can combine 2-3 medium tasks into a second big task.
- Complete 3 "small" tasks that will make your life go smoother. These usually take less than 10 minutes and include things like taking out the garbage, responding to an email, cutting your nails, booking an appointment, etc.

As someone who constantly underestimates how long things will take, I find this framework really helps me set realistic expectations for how much I can do in one day. Framing the small tasks as "life-smootheners" and prioritizing just a few of them daily helps me stay on top of housekeeping, self-care, and administrative tasks.

Write it down

Keep a to-do list. It doesn't matter what app you use or if you prefer pencil and paper, but make sure you have it with you throughout the day. Whenever you think of a task you need to do, write it down. That way, you don't forget about it, and you will stop worrying about forgetting it. This is called cognitive offloading, and it frees up your attention for deep focus on the task at hand. (The Art of Stress-Free Productivity: David Allen at TEDxClairemontColleges, https://youtu.be/CHxhjDPKfBY?si=hy06e_ht4bS1pZLM)

Getting things done is all about the things you don't do

Whenever you choose to do something, you are choosing not to spend that time on anything else. This is known as opportunity cost. In life, and especially in Waterloo

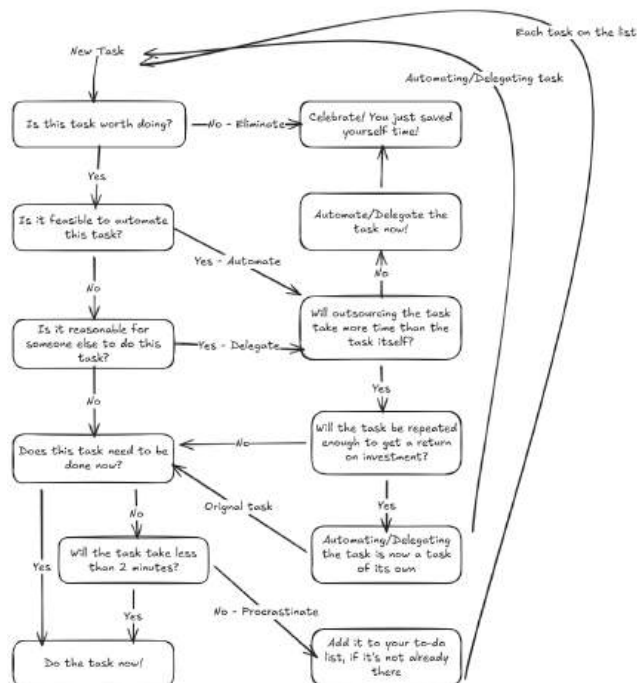
Engineering, you need to prioritize. The most productive people are those that recognize which tasks are not worth doing, so they can focus on the ones that are. (The Art of Stress-Free Productivity: David Allen at TEDxClairemontColleges, https://youtu.be/CHxhjDPKfBY?si=hy06e_ht4bS1pZLM)

Treat Your Time as an Investment

Everyone knows the old adage "time is money," but few people invest their time in the same way they do money. The key idea here is to invest your time in things that will save you time in the long run. Meal prep is a great example. Suppose it takes me 20 minutes to grate cheese, chop onions, peppers, and ham, and whisk eggs to make one omelet. Now, fried eggs don't reheat very well, so I'm not going to cook a bunch of omelets ahead of time, but if it takes me 40 minutes to do enough prep for 5 omelets on Sunday, then I've paid off my investment in two days, and saved myself a whole hour between Wednesday and Friday! (How To Multiply Your Time | Rory Vaden | TEDxDouglasville, <https://youtu.be/y2X7c9TUQJ8?si=XEMH34B3vc65mPM4>)

The funnel: Eliminate, Automate, Delegate, and Procrastinate

This diagram builds upon the work of Rory Vaden, explained in his 2015 TED Talk "How to Multiply Your Time." I would highly recommend watching it to learn more. (<https://youtu.be/y2X7c9TUQJ8?si=XEMH34B3vc65mPM4> for those reading online)



Time budgeting - Set limits

Building upon the "time is money" mindset, it is important to budget your time. More important things usually deserve more time than less important ones. Each week, especially during exams, figure out how many hours you have available for studying. Give yourself a realistic buffer for sleep, food, going to class, travel time, etc. Then do some math about how much time each assignment is worth:

$$t_A = t_{\text{tot}} \times \frac{w_A}{w_{\text{tot}}}$$

Where t_A is the time budget of assignment A

t_{tot} is your total time budget,

w_A is the weight of assignment A,

and w_{tot} is the total weight of all your assessments for the week.

As you progress through the semester, you will learn which assignments take more time than they should and which ones take less time than they should. You can adjust your time budget accordingly.

When you sit down to work on the assignment, set a smaller time budget for each question, and set a timer for halfway through that time budget. If you're stuck by the time the timer sounds, ask your peers or TAs for help, so you can use the rest of your time budget for that question efficiently. If you expend the whole budget for that question or assignment, it's probably time to move on, even if it isn't finished.

Call it done at 75%

Now, this one might be controversial. My personal academic goal is to maintain an average above 75 without failing a class or burning myself out. I am also someone who generally performs well on exams, as long as I study enough. If you have higher grade expectations, or if you have really bad test anxiety, this might not be super helpful for you. I encourage you to read on anyway, consider my advice, and take it or leave it as you see fit for your own life.

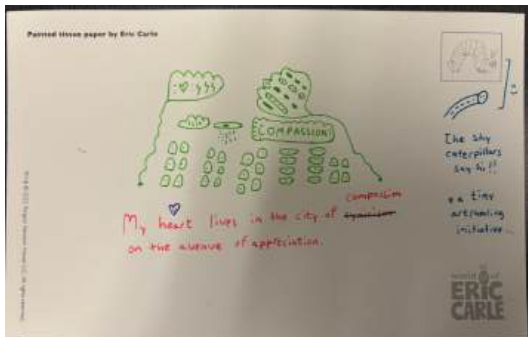
When I started university, I knew it was normal for your grades to drop. However, I thought that I would still do all the homework and assignments to the very best of my ability, and lose marks for genuine gaps in my understanding. I was prepared to accept that and learn from each of those mistakes, but I soon realized my expectations weren't quite

right. This depends on the workload and complexity of your courses, but I can only speak from my personal experience as a Software Engineering student. I found that I could usually tell when I was wrong, but not be sure what the right answer was. Worse was when I couldn't even come up with a wrong answer! Even when I wasn't exactly stuck, I found that it took me a long time to think through the assignments and complete them. This has cost me many hours of sleep over the years, and even when I start assignment A early, it takes me so long that I have to scramble to complete assignment B anyway. Then you get stuck in an endless cycle of starting late and finishing at the last minute.

What I have found extremely helpful is calling it done at 75%. Most instructors will tell you how much each question is worth on an assignment. When I have a lot due in one week, I choose which parts to do based on the point value, my confidence in the topic, and which ones I think I will learn the most from. When I have at least 75% of the points, I stop and move on to the next assignment. If time permits (being on-schedule with my other assignments), then I circle back to finish the first assignment and re-submit it. The way I see it, it's better to get 75% in two assignments than to get 100% in one and 50% on the other.

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SUDOKU
#2026-15



Various Flora and Fauna on Campus

Ashbala Bhatti, 1T Chemical

Various Flora and Fauna on Campus



Painted Lady



Eastern Cottontail



Common Milkweed



Creeping Thistle



Canada Goose



Striped Skunk



Red-winged Blackbird



Virginia Ctenucha Moth



Wild Carrot



Red Maple Tree

THE

IRON WARRIOR

OWeek Photo Contest



Send us your best OWeek photos for a chance to be featured in the next issue!!



(2025 winning photos!)

Eng Prof Quotes!

Did your prof say something funny? Share it with us for a chance to have their quote featured in the next issue!



To submit, use this QR code or go on our website
<https://iwarrior.uwaterloo.ca/>

How to Submit:

Email to **theironwarrior@gmail.com**

or DM us **@theironwarrior_UW**

Deadline: September 20th, 2026

THE IRON INQUISITION

“What advice would you give first years?”



“Try everything once before deciding it’s not for you. It’s a lot harder to make close friends and get involved after first year. Say yes to every opportunity, try what even remotely piques your interest, and give people a chance. You’ll never regret the time spent trying, even if it doesn’t work out.

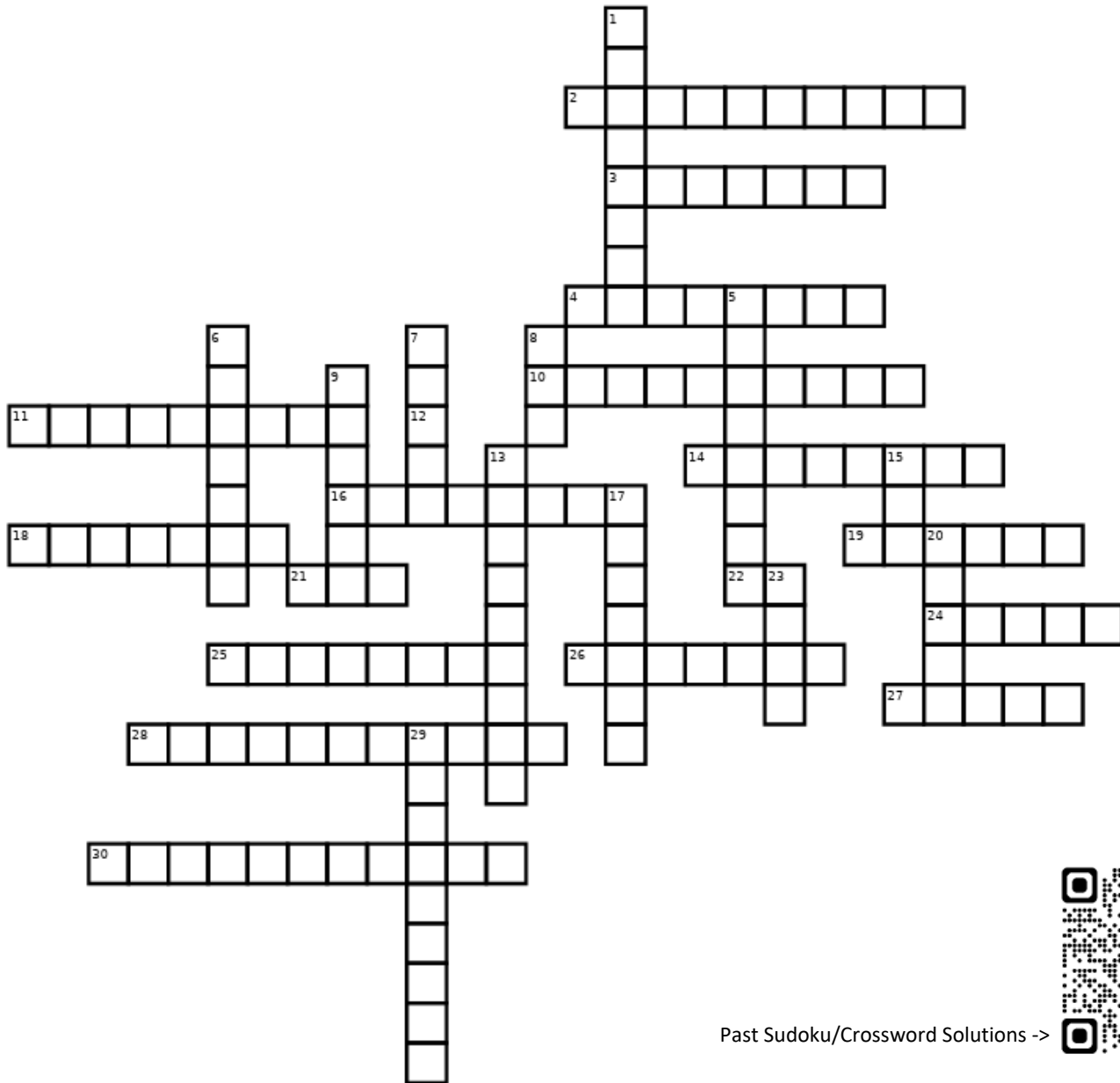
LAUREN, 3N SYDE



“Get comfortable with the toilets on campus you’re going to be there a lot first year.”

AIDAN, 3B TRON

F26I1 Crossword



Past Sudoku/Crossword Solutions ->



Across

1. The road bordering the north side of the main campus
5. The circular road surrounding much of the main campus
6. 24/7 student help desk
7. The online system used to enroll in classes and view grades
8. The athletics complex where students work out and play intramural sports
9. The online gateway to many university services
13. The faculty member responsible for teaching and research
15. The light rail transit system connecting campus with Kitchener
17. A popular destination for studying before exams
20. The unofficial campus resident that students learn to avoid
23. The work experience program that alternates with academic terms
29. On-campus housing for many first-year students

Down

2. Campus currency commonly used to purchase food
3. A test given to students halfway through the semester
4. The University known for its co-op program and black-and-gold colours
10. Coursework submitted for marks throughout the term
11. The university's official social media handle and common online name
12. One of the Engineering buildings known for its modern design
14. The symbolic ring worn by many Canadian Engineering graduates
16. A smaller class focused on solving problems or reviewing concepts
18. The neighbouring university located just across the street
19. The student society representing Engineering students
21. The campus hub for student services, clubs, and study spaces
22. The campus building home to computer science and mathematics student
24. The week welcoming new students at the beginning of fall
25. The document outlining course expectations and grading
26. The student society serving the Faculty of Mathematics
27. The platform where students access course materials and assignments
28. The university mascot known for wearing yellow sunglasses
30. The ceremony celebrating the completion of a degree