

"I have to do well in school"

"Nice to meet you!"

"Ok!"



GOALS

- Branch out of international friend circle
- Engage with variety of students
- Better understand Canada's culture
- Get over culture shock
- Do well in school

PAIN POINTS

- New country, many things are different
- Isolation by not just campus (satellite -main) divide but also local and international student divide
- Language barrier
- Cultural barrier
- Resources can be hard to obtain
- Transportation
- Living out of a suitcase/ not much for 8 months at a time

NEEDS

- Better resources for international students provided by student associations and the university
- Opportunities to connect/ network with other GBDA students and other faculties (inclusive events)
- More chances for exploration of Canada so she can better understand the country as she spends the years studying here
- Accessible health and mental health support
- Language support

BACKGROUND

Irene is an international student from Japan, and she decided to complete her studies at university of waterloo. She will rarely go home due to the fact that she requires a plane to reach home so when she comes for school, she stays for the full 8 months. Since she has to stay in town so long away from home, she sometimes feels lonely and stuck in the same routine. Luckily, she has friends to accompany her, but mainly other international students because they are in the same boat. She is scared to branch out because she feels she can't relate on the same level with other local students and therefore only engages in conversation when necessary (i.e. group projects). She is involved in a few clubs on main campus in the best way she can contribute. When it comes to speaking with professors, it is usually in person right after classes or over email and calling. She tries her best to communicate well but there are hurdles she faces because English is not her first language.

Being an international student, she faces culture shock often and it may come and go for a while as she gets used to Canada. In addition, she feels immense pressure to do well in school because she pays higher tuition than the average local student. In many ways more than one, she feels disconnected culturally being in a new country to study and although she lives in Waterloo, which is where main campus is she can't help but feel a divide between local and international students. As much as she wants to have a job on the side, she avoids it due to legal governmental permits and the possibility of it interfering with her studies. When it comes to going to Stratford, she carools whenever she has classes.

INTERNATIONAL IRENE

AGE: 20

OCCUPATION: GBDA Student

WATERLOO, ONTARIO

MAIN ISSUE: Community in Stratford

TOPIC: Connection with Main University of Waterloo campus

BAR OF ISOLATION



MOTIVATION TO GET INVOLVED



LEVEL OF BARRIERS HINDERING INVOLVEMENT



“I’m so tired and bored”

“I’m hungry”

“It’s quiet but I have good people around”

“Why am I here”



GOALS

- Aspires to do well in university (Hopes being in Stratford can help her focus)
- Wants to narrow down a path within Global Business and Digital Arts
- Build a decent network
- Make her time in Stratford more worthwhile
- Maintain a good work-life balance

PAIN POINTS

- lack of connection to anyone outside of GBDA
- even people who she is connected to, the relationships are difficult to maintain due to physical distance
- isolation can mess with her personal mental health
- lack of incentive to do anything due to lack of events and/or motivation from the quiet surroundings
- limited resources

NEEDS

- opportunities to connect with others
- motivation / drive
- methods of better connection with other faculties aside from pre-existing ones (i.e. Hackathons)

BACKGROUND

Stacy is originally from Mississauga and chose Global Business and Digital Arts at University of Waterloo as her post-secondary program of choice. First year she was in Waterloo and majority of her classes were on Main Campus, which allowed her to get used to the crowds and variety of events/ things to get involved in. Currently, she is in second year, and 80% of her classes are in Stratford. Being the homebody that she is, she decided to move to Stratford just to make life easier by avoiding commuting. She would have friends around the town so she would not be too lonely, however, despite having friends, the town can feel isolating and be a bit of a contrast to the life she was used to back home.

Life as a university student can feel like all there is to do is school, but she wants to grow outside of the Stratford Campus and the GBDA community. However, after leaving main campus behind she feels like she misses out on a lot of opportunities and the shuttles to main campus are at odd times or impractical. She also does not enjoy travelling too much just for every little thing she wishes to get involved in. Despite this feeling, she tries to be involved in some clubs entirely via the internet as she cannot physically be there. She can feel stuck to her circle of exclusive GBDA Stratford-living friends and wishes to branch out. Not that she does not appreciate them greatly, but she would also love to expand her network. In terms of personal health, she tries to eat as well as she possibly can but many affordable food options in the city are quite far and not a friendly walking distance. She also does not have access to Health Services, has limited mental health support and other benefits that Main Campus students have access to, which can make her feel further cut off from the average University of Waterloo student.

STRATFORD STACY

AGE: 20

OCCUPATION: GBDA Student, Freelancer

STRATFORD, ONTARIO

MAIN ISSUE: Community in Stratford

TOPIC: Connection with Main University of Waterloo campus

BAR OF ISOLATION



MOTIVATION TO GET INVOLVED



LEVEL OF BARRIERS HINDERING INVOLVEMENT



“Is there anything to do in Stratford?”

“What’s GBDA? Well...”

“Time to Drive back”



GOALS

- expand network outside of his current one that majority is just GBDA students
- feeling motivated to get out and
- school-life-work balance

PAIN POINTS

- lack of connection to others outside of GBDA
- motivation can be drained due to long days of commuting back and forth for classes
- program isolation (program is new therefore is not well known)
- lot of money spent on gas

NEEDS

- events that could showcase GBDA students better
- opportunities to allow personal growth and expansion of networks
- better resources (specifically geared towards arts students)
- feeling of connection between Stratford satellite and main campus

BACKGROUND

Winston is currently a 3rd year Global Business and Digital Arts Student. He is originally from the Greater Toronto Area. He commutes to the Stratford Campus via carpool for all his classes and lives in Waterloo, ON. He works part-time at a bubble tea franchise near his rental apartment and tries to get involved in various clubs on main campus. Despite being involved in what he can, it can feel draining at times because when he goes to Stratford Campus it usually is a full or half day which takes a lot of energy out of him. Timing of club/ event meetings on main campus can be an issue as well due to conflicts in timing. And funny enough, most people are not aware of what Global Business and Digital Arts is and he is often questioned what exactly it is he does or can do. This is also due in part to the newness of the program and it not being as established as other programs.

Waterloo, though not as big as where he is originally from, there is a lot to see and do in contrast to Stratford. The nightlife is usually busy, and if no events are happening on campus, there are many options externally from the University. However, at times it can feel as though he can get distracted by the many options and puts school as a secondary priority. In many cases, he is also stuck in a circle of GBDA friends and although he tries to expand outside the GBDA circle it can feel difficult due to the nature of his classes and often brief connections with others on main campus. Luckily though, he does have access to a lot of resources that mirror the average university of waterloo resources and feels more connected because of it.

WATERLOO WINSTON

AGE: 21

OCCUPATION: GBDA Student,
Part-Time Barista

WATERLOO, ONTARIO

MAIN ISSUE: Community in Stratford
 TOPIC: Connection with Main
 University of Waterloo campus

BAR OF ISOLATION



MOTIVATION TO GET INVOLVED



LEVEL OF BARRIERS HINDERING INVOLVEMENT

