Freshman Read
2013
UIC
Dear New UIC Freshman:

Welcome to UIC!! We are delighted to present you with this book, The UIC Freshman Read 2013. This reader features stories, essays, research, poetry, art, and humor—all created by your fellow UIC students. Several of the pieces appeared in publications produced by the UIC Honors College: Red Shoes Review, The Ampersand, The Asterisk, UIC OneWorld, and the The Journal for Pre-Health Affiliated Students (JPHAS).

Regardless of where you are from or who you are, The UIC Freshman Read 2013 is one thing you’ll have in common with all of your classmates on the very first day of the semester. Take advantage of this opportunity. You’re probably reading this at orientation—or maybe just after. To get a head start on your college career, read this book. Then discuss it with your new friends at UIC!

Over the course of your first year at UIC, you’ll also have opportunities to discuss the book and meet the authors and artists whose works fill these pages. If you are living on campus, there will be events organized in your residence halls. Many of your writing instructors will use the book as well. Keep your eye on your email for more information, and get involved—make a special effort to attend events related to The UIC Freshman Read.

Nothing could be more exciting than starting college— enjoy every minute of it, and enjoy every bit of what UIC has to offer. Join a club, form a study group, take a class you never even dreamed of, and go meet every single one of your professors during their office hours. And if you’re a writer, know this: Each of the student publications from which these pieces were selected accepts student submissions. Submit something—who knows? Maybe your own writing will appear here next year, inspiring other students just like you!

Best wishes,

Bette L. Bottoms
Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs and Dean of the Honors College
Professor of Psychology

Susan Teggatz
Director of Housing
Acknowledgements

The texts and images in The UIC Freshman Read were selected in part from the following publications. These publications are sponsored by the UIC Honors College and produced by Honors College and other UIC undergraduate students. Students from all academic majors are welcome to submit work to these publications.

The Ampersand is the Honors College newsletter. Published three times each semester, the newsletter showcases news and events of interest to the Honors College community. For more information, visit the The Ampersand’s website at www.uic.edu/honors/life/ampersandhome.shtml.

Editor in Chief: Swathi Madugula
Assistant Editors: Maria Nakhasi and Sarah Lee
Advisors: Professor Mark Chiang and Professor Christian Messenger
Layout Editor: Avni Bavishi

Red Shoes Review is an undergraduate literary and arts magazine. Established more than 20 years ago, the magazine is published annually and aims to foster the artistic community on campus by showing that students from all different majors have the ability to create beautiful works of art and meaningful pieces of writing. For more information, email uic.redshoes@gmail.com.

Editors in Chief: Brian Glowienke and Brian Reese
Treasurer: Trupti Patel
Secretary: Daria Orlowska
Advisor: Brianna Noll
Layout Editor: Brian Kay

The Journal for Pre-Health Affiliated Students (JPHAS) is a scholarly journal that offers students considering careers in health-oriented professions a valuable, informative resource and a forum to express, present, and exchange ideas. For more information, contact jphas.journal@gmail.com.

Presidents: Anam Syed and Solomon Nittala
Editor in Chief: Daven Patel
Advisor: Professor Saul J. Weiner

UIC OneWorld magazine aims to make the UIC community aware of and involved in global affairs. Each issue features student research, global affairs, and personal anecdotes in addition to articles, poems, and photo essays. For more information, contact oneworld.uic@gmail.com.

President: Marco Martinez
Vice President: Sydney Mayer
Editors: Shani Chibber and Suzy Oskouie
Advisor: Professor Norma Moruzzi

The Asterisk is the Honors College’s source of all things satirical and humorous published twice a semester. From the university level to the world stage, The Asterisk pokes fun at it all. For more information, contact asterisk.uic@gmail.com or visit The Asterisk website at www.theasterisk.org.

Editors in Chief: Bryan Killian and Akshay Patel
Layout Officer: Garrett Padera
Secretary/Treasurer: Chyei Vinluan
Advisor: Jerry Lockwood

The Freshman Read Committee would like to thank the judges of the 2013 Essay and Art Contest: My First Year—Jane Darcovich, Laura Krughoff, Sarah Tracey, and Brooke Wonders.

The UIC Freshman Read Anthology Editorial Committee:
Tom Moss, Committee Chair, Director of Undergraduate Programs, Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs
Nick Ardinger, Assistant Director for Marketing and Assessment, Campus Housing
Mark Bennett, Assistant Director, First-Year Writing Program
Sara Hall, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Honors College and Associate Professor of Germanic Studies
Jenn Hawe, Editorial Advisor and Graduate Assistant, Honors College
Firouzeh Logan, Reference Librarian, University Library
Sarah Gardiner, Academic Advisor and Program Specialist, Honors College
Brittany Myers, Graduate Assistant, Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs
Priscilla Velarde, Assistant Director for Residence Life

Special thanks to Andrea DeWalt for the design of The UIC Freshman Read Anthology 2013.

The UIC Freshman Read Anthology 2013 is a partnership of the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs, the Honors College, and Campus Housing. Special thanks to the University Library and the First-Year Writing Program for guidance and support.

Additional advising and support for the Honors College publications provided by Dean Sara F. Hall, Advisor and Program Specialist Jill Huynh, and Graduate Assistant and Editorial Advisor Jenn Hawe
Of Heart and Mind | Julia Aydin
Contest Winner – Third Place

The Asterisk Exit Poll | Garrett Padera

Official Exit Poll

THE ASTERISK

Official Exit Poll

Please select your responses pursuant to your experience with this issue of THE ASTERISK.

PART 1: DEMOGRAPHICS

What type of student are you?

☐ A+
☐ A
☐ B–F
☐ “Grades are just a way for the man to label and confine us. dunce”

What’s your Capstone status?

☐ k Capstone?
☐ The thing they put on my grave when I die?
☐ I might have an idea of what I want to do.
☐ Planning for it already.
☐ In progress.
☐ Finished it.

PART 2: ISSUE QUALITY

Before reading this issue, were you planning on:

☐ Finishing homework
☐ Attending class
☐ Begging professor to reconsider exam date

If you were planning on...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finishing homework</th>
<th>Attending class</th>
<th>Begging professor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How did this issue affect your view of your homework?</td>
<td>How did this issue affect your view of the class?</td>
<td>How did this issue affect your view of the exam date?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ It’s only an elective.</td>
<td>☐ Eh, the lectures are online.</td>
<td>☐ I just really hate exams on Mondays.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ I like doing homework more on Saturdays, anyways.</td>
<td>☐ If I went, I’d just sleep anyway.</td>
<td>☐ Looks like I’ll have to miss my cat’s birthday after all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ I haven’t touched it for 2 weeks, what a few more days?</td>
<td>☐ The Asterisk owes me an A+: it’s your fault I skipped class to read this issue.</td>
<td>☐ I’m sure the professor will show mercy since I have 3 other exams that week.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please list any fortunate events that occurred as a result of you reading this issue.

☐ Met soulmate
☐ Found cure for cancer
☐ Won lottery
☐ Learned to read

PART 3: WEBSITE
If you have used The Asterisk’s website, please answer the following questions.

What is your level of technical expertise?

☐ (least) Used a self-checkout lane at the grocery store once.
☐ Knows the difference between a “twit” and a “tweet.”
☐ One time showed the professor how to launch YouTube in a packed lecture hall.
☐ Actually wrote the programming for NASA’s autonomous Mars rover, Curiosity.
☐ (most) Can successfully submit assignments via Blackboard

Complete the sentence in the most natural way:

www.theasterisk.com is The Asterisk’s ___________ on the web.

☐ Home
☐ Lair
☐ Presence
☐ Meth lab
Forgiveness

Samantha Fiorini

It was four months until I finally spoke to Raul again.

I heard from a friend of his that he had been going to school part time and had entered the game design program at a university in the Loop. It was a university that he could really pursue his dreams in making his own game one day. Things had been tense between him and I, and I didn’t want to leave things the way they were. After class, I headed to his apartment, in hopes he was home and we could finally talk.

As I walked up to his building I saw him walking out. It had been so long since I had seen him up close, and he was a lot taller than I remembered. His long, slender fingers were tapping his phone as he looked at the bright screen. The strap of his Legend of Zelda shoulder bag had been loosened to its maximum to let his bag fall to his hips. Somehow that was enough to make my heart race. All I had to do was talk to him like we used to, but suddenly my mind went blank. What did I sound like when I talked to him? I had no idea what to say. A blur of people hustled their way down the sidewalk, filling the space between us. What am I doing here anyway? I’m staring at a man who had his heart broken by me. Why would he want to see me again? Maybe I had come for closure, or maybe I had come to see if I had finally been forgiven. Or maybe, just maybe, I had finally realized how stupid I was and what I had lost.

A vibration from my pocket broke my train of thought.

I pulled out my phone and saw his name on my screen. When I looked up, I saw him standing in front of me, phone to his ear, smiling a familiar smile.

“Hey you,” he said, his eyes on mine, putting his phone back in his pocket.

I stood frozen. There was that familiar scent, the musky smell of cologne and aftershave that reminded me of our first date long ago. We had been lying on a grassy hill in Florida’s hot summer air. I had been lying on his solid, warm chest when he had asked me to be his girlfriend. I was ecstatic. That day we had unknowingly gotten ourselves into a four-year relationship. We were so happy then and things had been so easy.

“Uhhhh…hi! How are you?” That was all I could manage to say.

“I’ve been good! I’m glad I could finally see you again, it’s been so long.”

“I know…” I looked down at the grey, worn pavement. “I’ve missed you…” I blurted. His eyes went soft and he placed his soft hand on my head. At his touch, tears flooded my eyes. I had missed him so much, and I was so afraid that he hadn’t forgiven me and after today I wouldn’t see him ever again. Four months had been painful, but forever would be torture.

“I’m so sorry, for everything I have done. If I could take it all back, I would.” I whispered fighting back my tears. I felt Raul pull me into his chest and wrap his strong arms around me.

“I’ve forgiven you, silly. Now it’s time you forgive yourself.” He whispered softly into my ear. His embrace was warm and comforting.

He pulled away and smiled at me.

“I have to go to work, but I’ll text you when I’m out so we can get some coffee or something. Sound good?” I smiled up at him and nodded.

“That sounds great.”

We both turned and went our separate ways, him to work, and I back to UIC to get to my next class. I knew in my heart that we would see each other again and things would be better from here on out. Today I can finally set my guilt free, and forgive myself for the past. It was time to start looking forward to an amazing future.
Don’t Be a Red Leaf
Karina Romo

The river runs, and the river flows, and the red leaf knows that this is her race. She drifts, she rushes, she plays. But the current is too strong and the game is soon lost as she realizes that she has no control. Resisting the current is impossible for she is weak, and so she merely lets the current take her, fully knowing she has lost herself, fully aware that by the end of it she will no longer be the red leaf she once was. The journey will change her, break her, tear her to pieces because how can she emerge the same if her decisions were never her own? She didn’t win the race. And the game? It played her.

City Dreamers
Karina Romo
Contest Winner – Second Place

Slowly the city begins to recede, until it is just a mere speck in the distance, just a simple memory of grandness and beauty. It is surprising what one can find in the vast yet so confined spaces of Chicago: the worker who creates, the artist who imagines, the student who studies. If only I had known how much I would become attached to my city and my campus; it would become attached to my city and my campus; it

Untitled:
“Back when I was young…”
Chanel West
Contest Winner – First Place

I wish things could have turned out differently. I wish I was the warm body he would wake up to every morning instead of a different, nameless face. Rhonda, Linda, Nadine, Kiesha, Veronica, Emily. I stopped keeping track after his rendezvous with the triplets Erin, Ericka, and Iris. I don’t know what made me begin to care, let alone grow as jealous as I did, but I could not help it. Seeing him hug and kiss the skin of sin made my blood boil. Their hips gyrating against his core, the bass of drums creating that hypnotic rhythm that entranced him as I loomed in the distance nursing a watered-down drink; a faithful wife-type gone unnoticed among the hands of lust. Dressed in plain clothing contrasted against the bareness of silk, red fingernails would softly nip at the nape of his neck in temptation as feather-like kisses followed in good measure. It made my skin crawl; I was turning into a callous green-eyed bitch. I didn’t know I developed strong, intense feelings for him until recently.

We tried the dating thing once or twice but it never panned out very well because either we were both too young and not ready for a serious, committed relationship, or it was due to his infidelity issues. Harold had an addiction to women. As much as he loved and worshiped me, he loved the feel, caress, warmth, and attention from women much more. There were days when I was the happiest: roses scattered across the bed sheets while smooth jazz echoed throughout our rented home. Vanilla scented candles, strawberries dipped in chocolate, two flutes of champagne lay gracefully along the riser of the California king bed. He would plan these special evenings on the days when he would hurt me the most. I would find a text from a woman here or a bra and panty that belonged to another there, leaving him to coddle me with a lie and pretend I was the one delusional. Those days I would storm out of our shared apartment and take a long drive to clear my mind, crying to the soft melodies of Adele’s “Set Fire to the Rain” or Christina Aguilera’s “You Lost Me.” Those evenings I would come home from a day filled with shedding useless tears to Harold’s demonstration of affection. We would nurse the strawberries down with the glasses of champagne before he would lay me gently against the rose-kissed sheets. Tender kisses would trail down my neck, towards the valley of my breasts, to the hills of my thighs. His featherlike touches would make the faceless women in my head grow mute as he became my one and only—even if it were for one evening.

The following mornings I would find him missing, a single rose resting atop the pillow beside me where he once nestled peacefully. I always knew he went off to another woman’s home to snuggle beside her in her bed. I would call relentlessly for the decency of an answer, but to no avail. I even begged a couple of times, though it never changed anything. One evening I simply had enough. I found him stained with love marks that did not belong to me and told him I could not go through with it any longer. Before he could say a single word, I grabbed my purse and headed to my parents’ home on the other side of town. I stayed there for a few days before returning home to find a half-empty house. I heard that you settled down, found a man, that you’re married now. I heard that your dreams came true. I guess he gave you things I could not give to you. I wish nothing but the best for you.

If I knew then what I know now, I would have kept my heart sealed away under my blanket of madness. I was naïve, unfamiliar with the territory of love and emotions for another. I was so young when I first fell in love that I never truly had a chance to come down from my high in the clouds and take a good look at reality. Growing up as a young girl, you are taught by the Disney fairytale that love is sweet and everlasting, painless and kind. Infidelity, lies, and tearful nights of blaming yourself and doubting your self-worth were not what I was taught through the works of Cinderella or
Snow White.

If I knew then what I knew now, I would have taken off my blinders, allowing myself to finally see his true nature instead of the side I desperately wanted to see. Envisioning him lying next to numerous naked women as I waited for some sort of acknowledgement was not what I had prepared myself for. I loved him…I still love him. Steven makes me happy…

I am content. If I knew then what I know now, I would have done things differently, kept my guard up a little longer, my emotions coiled a bit stronger, held on to my innocence a bit harder. Giving your womanhood to a man that simply dismisses you afterwards brings a pain something serious that I am not completely sure I have dealt with as of yet. It has been years since our split, and not a day goes by where I don’t dwell on the past, hoping that this alternate universe I feel I was forced into is a simple dream or time lapse in reality. But now, it’s ever so real. I have a son, a husband, and a life that I dreamed of since I was a young girl. But I am not happy…I wish I knew that then so I could be somewhere else now.

On evenings when Steven and our son lie asleep or I have a peaceful moment to myself, I put on my music player and quietly hum along, quoting Harold’s letter.

Nevermind, I’ll find someone like you…
Welcome back! As hard as it is to believe, we are already a few weeks into our second semester of college. No longer are we the lost or confused freshmen of just half a school year ago, adjusting to the new lifestyle of college. In fact, just one year ago at this time, we were likely still playing the waiting game on bated breath as the college letters came in one by one. In those coming months, we slowly shaped the decision that eventually brought each of us here, to the Honors College at UIC, today.

Can you imagine the incredible changes we have all undergone in so short a time? The new relationships you have formed and your own personal transformation into a member of the Honors College have all transpired in roughly six months—and there is still more to come. We have settled into our second semester classes now, including our new Honors core courses. With the vast variety of subjects that they cover this semester— including our new Honors core courses. With the vast variety of subjects that they cover this semester—from diversity and German literature to symmetry and music—hopefully you have found a class that will widen your intellectual perspectives and teach you important because you are exchanging a day of your life for it.”

See you around campus!
A Fellow Freshman
Sarah Lee, Biology

Studying Abroad by the Numbers
Michelle Skinner
from The Ampersand

We’ve all sat through a study abroad presentation, either during freshman orientation or a freshman seminar. As the study abroad adviser discussed expanding horizons by pushing boundaries, I always thought that it wouldn’t apply to me. Seriously, how hard could it be to move from one first-world country to another, and how different would it actually be?

This was my thinking until I actually moved to another country as a part of a study abroad program, the Berlin European Studies program at Freie Universität Berlin. While I’ve been here, I’ve had to embrace the unknown and thrive in an environment surprisingly far from my comfort zone as a university student in Chicago. Obviously, those are just a ton of study abroad buzzwords. So hopefully by sharing some of the numbers, I can better illustrate the uniqueness of the study abroad experience.

2: Number of days it took to resolve my allergy issue to my host family’s cats
4: Time in hours between calling the doctor’s office and arriving after ensures the professor marks you tardy
3, 4, 6, 25: Respectively, the number of skirts, coats, shoes, pairs of pants, and blouses I brought with me (yes, I have worn every pair of those shoes)
3: Number of visits to Starbucks
15: Number of minutes you should arrive early to class; arriving after ensures the professor marks you tardy
7: Cost in euros of a week's worth of lunch supplies from Aldi
10: Length in minutes of a luxurious shower
28: Number of rides on buses, S-bahn, and U-bahn to navigate around Berlin
12: Number of days I've been in Berlin
4.50: Average cost in euros of a beer in Berlin bars
50: Price in euros of a doctor’s visit in Berlin
5: Number of times I’ve missed the bus that would change my 30-minute walk into a 12-minute bus ride
5: Number of spiders I have killed
18: Temperature (in degrees Celcius) that German homes are kept at to save energy
10: Length in minutes of a luxurious shower
18: Temperature (in degrees Celcius) that German homes are kept at to save energy
15: Number of minutes you should arrive early to class; arriving after ensures the professor marks you tardy
4: Number of spiders I have killed
18: Temperature (in degrees Celcius) that German homes are kept at to save energy
15: Number of minutes you should arrive early to class; arriving after ensures the professor marks you tardy

What the words and numbers fail to capture is the challenge of moving to another country, or the self-satisfaction generated from mastering one of the innumerable cultural differences between home and here. Sending mail to the US is a triumph, successfully filling a prescription becomes a moment of jubilee, and making it from point A to point B by transferring three times from bus to S-bahn to U-bahn transforms into a victory of massive proportions.

A Singing Bird
Humaa Siddiqi
from Red Shoes Review

Odd. That is what I figured my name was growing up. Humaa. See? Pretty odd.

I remember the second grade very well. It was the year when I started to feel ashamed of my name. Back in 2002, Lou Bega's “Mambo Number 5” was the most overplayed song. Unfortunately, it was my childhood. At a friend's birthday party, they played the song for all the kids to dance to. Almost every girl had their name in the song. They would all holler and raise their arms when their names came up, and I would just stand there—awkwardly swaying my hips left to right with my arms pinned to my sides.

Why wasn’t my name mentioned? Why didn’t he say, “A little bit of Humaa by my side?” I should have known my name would never have been featured in a pop song. Of all the beautiful names out there, it wasn’t likely one would pick an ugly two syllable Arabic name.

And so, ever since that day, the song has been a constant reminder of a name I wish I didn’t have.
It's WH0-MA— like puma, but with an 'H' instead...
If I had a dime for every time I said that to help someone pronounce my name, I would be a millionaire. Maybe even a billionaire.
I didn't always hate my name, but as I got older it was the constant mispronunciation, people mistaking me for a boy, and confused looks on my teachers' faces as they read aloud the class list for attendance that made me realize how strange of a name I really had.
My name was not pretty. It wasn't girly or delicate like Summer, Michelle, or Kelly. It sounded like an old, stumpy, fat man wearing a stained wife-beater, chomping on chocolate long johns. At least, that's how I felt about it.

Never once has someone told me I had a pretty name. It was always my sisters who got those compliments I so desperately wanted. Najla and Safa...what were my parents thinking when they named me? Had they used up all the pretty names for my sisters and couldn't think of one for me?

"We planned on naming you Jasmine," my dad said one summer day when I was eight years old. "But the second I saw you after your mummy gave birth...you didn't look like a Jasmine, but a Humaa."

I remember scrunching my eyes up at him in expression. "Your name means singing bird." A small frown crept onto his face as he watched my horrified response. "But the new president is Emily Vasquez!"

"And the new president is Emily Vasquez!" I snapped, feeling all the blood drain from my face. Great, my name sounded lame and its definition was lame too! I had certified proof now. He sighed impatiently. "It doesn't literally mean you sing, you dope!"

My eleven-year-old self shrugged, not knowing if what he was saying was supposed to comfort me. "What does it really mean, then?"

My brother explained, "It's a bird which lives in a quiet area, and whenever it flies to the city it fills people with joy. A bird of paradise—a singing bird."

That caught me off guard. "Really?"

He nodded. "Does that sound ugly to you?"

No, it doesn't. Not at all. It was very...pretty. Most meanings behind names were usually the typical wisdom or beauty, but I had a little story behind my name.

It was at that moment when I realized that I had been wrong. So completely wrong. It was at that moment in the crowded little smoothie shop that I realized it didn't matter if my name wasn't girly. It was unique. It was unique. It was a name I could be proud of and would be proud of for the years to come.

And for that, I'm grateful. Grateful that my parents hadn't named me Jasmine after all or that my name wasn't mentioned in that '90s song from my childhood. I would never try to conceal my name again. I made a promise.

"A small Razzmatazz for Sally!" The cashier behind the counter held my drink out, waiting for me. I took in a deep breath as I made three long strides toward her. "It's Humaa, actually," I said as I reached for the smoothie, not feeling the least bit ashamed.

"I don't even sing!" I snapped, feeling all the blood drain from my face.

"That will be $3.25," a cashier would say. "May I get your name, please?"

"Sarah," I would reply. Or Sophia, Rachel, Fatima, Vanessa, etc.

For that split second, I had a pretty name, a name worth telling people without cringing or using my Humaa-the-Puma reference. To me, it was something small I could always look forward to. It was a time when someone might say I had a pretty name, even if it was mine only for that moment.

"Why did you tell the cashier your name was Sally?"

I sighed as I stuffed change into my wallet, shooting a nervous glance at my brother as we waited in line for our Jamba Juice.

"I don't want to confuse them."

The downward 'V' creasing his forehead became more pronounced as he stared down at me. "Confuse them with what?"

How long does it take to make a smoothie?

I thought.

"I never use my real name..." I replied weakly. "It's too embarrassing."

My eyes shot to the ground, trying to avoid his stare as best I could. I saw his eyebrows rise as he nodded. It seemed as though he understood that it was more than just me using a different name for my order. He knew I wasn't just bored or trying to be funny — it was more than that.

At times like this, I knew my brother could see right through me. He always did.

"Hmm," he murmured. "Do you even know what your name means?"

My head shot up as I peered sideways at him and tried not to look too eager. "What?"

"Your name means singing bird. A small frown crept onto his face as he watched my horrified expression.

If I knew then what I know now...

Emily Vasquez

And the new president is Emily Vasquez!

I heard my name and I felt a myriad of feelings—excitement, happiness, and a streak of terror at the thought of being president of an organization.

I had only been a member for six months, but I was elected by the thirteen members to run UIC's chapter of Gamma Phi Omega International Sorority. From the six months I had been a member, I realized that being a part of a sorority entailed far more that the stereotypes built in television and media.

I had never thought I would join a sorority for fear of experiencing all of the frightening situations portrayed in movies and television. Instead what I found was a genuine sisterhood of women who shared similar ambitions and goals as me.

I was impressed by their dedication to coordinate events and arduously work to raise funds and awareness for various causes. It was not all about parties and drinking, but instead was a well-oiled machine, and I thought, "How do they make it look so easy?"

Once I was a member, I faced the reality that the Week of Events I idolized so much was in fact an event planned a year in advance! I was exhausted at the thought of planning an event from beginning to end—from brainstorming to break-down. "How will I manage without a mental breakdown?"

At first, I cried. I shed a lonely tear because I didn't know where to start. And then, I thought of my sister's tale of UIC "back in the day" which still makes me laugh. She had been a member for...
Still makes me laugh. She had been a member for ten years and loved to relate the story of when there were no cell phones and no e-mail.

“Did you know there were payphones in the library?” she’d say.

“Nooooo! A payphone?” we’d reply in amusement.

“Yes, imagine having to use a payphone to find a sister or coordinate an event!” she’d reply in a serious tone.

We’d laugh about it, but I always thought we took technology for granted today. I had every available outlet to find out what I needed. So, I asked a lot of questions. I coordinated a few small events—an information session here, a bowling event there.

What I learned in these six months was how to organize, delegate, and create an event that I believed in and successfully convinced my sisters to believe in as well. I was not distracted by a large turnout at that time because most of the events I created did not bring in more than two guests. I may have lacked in marketing then, but I was slowly gaining the confidence to speak up when I was not satisfied by the commitment of others.

Along the way I did have many unforgettable (nothing short of amazing) moments as well—from getting to wear my prom dress again at our annual Mr. GPhiO pageant to walking to cure lupus and diabetes—moments I know would not have been possible without my sisters.

All these thoughts rushed through my mind as I awaited the results of the election. In my nervous state, I was unsure of what was to come, but I had to accept the responsibility that would be put in front of me. Would I deliver the same amount of dedication and heart as before? I had decided then that my commitment would not falter and I was capable of far more than I previously credited myself for.

And suddenly, in the midst of my anxiety, our president walked up to the table and announced the results I had anxiously awaited for the past six months.

If I Knew Then What I Know Now
Christian Davis
Contest Winner – First Place

The worst mistake a freshman in college can make is to select the wrong major. It’s like picking who you’re going to marry before you meet them, and you end up losing interest, in spite of your original romanticized feelings. When I was a freshman, I elected music composition as my major, but the rigid theory drained the soul from my lifelong passion for songwriting. I ended up wasting a lot of money and time until I eventually switched to English with a concentration in rhetoric at the end of my sophomore year. You can’t even fathom how drastically your mind will evolve throughout college, and this notion has several repercussions: not only will your interests change, but as you get older you will learn new things about yourself, and thus, you will be more capable of making the decision regarding your major and the career paths that it leads to.

More vital than that previous point is something I tell my younger brothers who are about to enter college. That is, “Don’t decide later in your college career that you want to be a good student.” Freshman year is notorious for being the year of grade point average catastrophe. It’s like how a phoenix must burn before it can rise from its own ashes—except your GPA isn’t as riveting as much as it is merely a number that all of your prospective future employers will look at, and judge you upon—as if they can see directly into the core of your work ethic and intelligence.

Needless to say, my own grades are emblematic of this exact situation, and the recovery from lighting myself on fire freshman year has been cumbersome. That is to say, in light of receiving straight As sophomore, junior, and so far, senior year, the GPA climb from my freshman debauchery is static and uneventful. And let me tell you, it is a mountain of a climb simply because the more classes you take, the less impact your good grades will make. If you waste time with the wrong major and get more Cs than the word cataclysmic and/or perform like Tajikistan in the 2012 Summer Olympics, then you will have effectively shot yourself in both feet. Of course, you can still crawl in this situation, but your graduation gown is going to be filthy by the time you are standing at commencement. Remember that getting exceptional grades in college opens doors (scholarships, employment opportunities, study abroad, etc.) that are filtered by GPA requirements. The higher your GPA is the more doors will be unlocked for you to walk through.

This brings me to my last point regarding the of resume. A truly meritorious resume takes years of morsel accumulation. As a freshman you will scavenge your memory for anything you consider noteworthy, and in lieu of the abysmal nothingness that is there, you will exaggerate your ability to run a cash register to a shameful extreme. But one gorgeous day, you will go to UIC Career Services, and you will chuckle proudly as you look back on all you have accomplished in four years at UIC: Internships, publications, volunteer work, Honors College, an outstanding academic record, Dean’s List, leadership positions… The list will be endless, which is why you will have to go to Career Services so they can help you fit it all into one page. Make the most of your experience here at UIC. When it’s over, you will look back on it like a yesterday that you cannot relive.

The Freshman Overload
Sharmeen Razvi
Contest Winner – Second Place

Taking classes, attending lectures, being alive in them, and then somewhat enjoying and learning a thing or two should be the goal of an entering freshmen wishing to acquire higher education. But what most of the experimenting, oops, I mean entering freshmen don’t realize is that college, unlike high school, isn’t about how many classes you can cram into your day but rather how well you do in the few you have each semester. Not realizing how dangerous such cramming would be for me in the future, my first semester of college I also indulged in what I like to call the “credit rush” and the “freshman overload.” But now that am in my second semester with fewer courses and a bit more experience, I wish I only knew then what I know now about the life of a UIC pre-health student facing the credit rush and the freshman overload.

The credit rush is that special tingling sensation that is experienced when someone sits down to choose classes. It’s an even greater level when done for the first time at freshman orientation. Credit rush is what screams FRESHMAN to the advisors, as it tempts the students to make the very reasonable decision to take classes in sociology, political science, and writing all in one semester along with the required math and science classes. It is the first euphoria of the academic experience and what leads into the freshman overload.

Freshman overload is a sweet little term I came up with to describe my first semester as a pre-health student at UIC. I am a biology major
and pre-med student. I’m interested in minoring in psychology, and in taking pretty much every random course that makes me happy so that I can present myself, at least on my transcript, as a well-rounded individual. Being a pre-med student, I already have to take every class possible to be a desirable candidate for med school, so the only logical path would be to cram all my electives into my first semester because that is what impresses the medical school admissions committee, right? Wrong! In the highly competitive world of medicine today, medical school acceptance is no longer solely based on a student’s frontal and temporal lobe prowess over biology books memorized and regurgitated on the MCAT. Instead, medical schools look at a mosaic of the student’s personality and undergraduate experience.

From a breadth of courses to research and internships, from extracurricular activities to work and volunteer commitments, pre-health students are now required to be super-humans! Now, while all these experiences are good to have as an aspiring physician, the trick is not to fall prey to the pressures of the course overload, as that will only lead to stress and frustration, resulting in a horrible undergraduate experience.

Sure, we all will come across those peers boasting in the back of some anthropology classroom about how their aunt owns a medical school in the Caribbean that creates doctors in just four years, and we’ll want to double check with our advisors just to make sure we are not doing anything wrong by taking our time to learn the pre-med material well. But rest assured, we won’t be the ones with the shortcut medical degrees and a lifetime of legal troubles because we came back from our Caribbean pilgrimage and killed our patients, all because we rushed.

Although rushing is a highly dangerous track for a student of any concentration, it is far more of a fatal flaw for a medical student, as being a doctor is all about time management. Students become so engrossed in taking so many classes that they lose all sense of balance in their lives and fail to realize that balance is one of the key characteristics medical schools desire in a future doctor. A doctor with a balanced life knows how to divide his time among work, family, and friends while still managing time for improving his skills through new research. Medical schools search for strong candidates who know how to manage their time and grades wisely. Of course everyone at some point will fall into the trap of taking the maximum credit hours and rushing through the vital preliminary courses, but doing so will not only make life miserable, it will also strip you of any fun you can expect to have in your decade-long journey as a medical student.

Being a pre-health student has changed my life and way of thinking. It has taught me how to manage my time wisely and made me realize that rushing isn’t the answer to everything. I’ve learned to balance my academics and not overload and strain myself at the very start of my medical marathon. I plan to make my undergraduate experience as relaxed as I possibly can and become the best doctor I can ever be. My advice to you is to go out and relax, enjoy your undergraduate experience, and prepare yourself for the wonderful future ahead of you.
I Can Only Hope and Wish Pitifully
Ann Chin

There was always a wish.
A wish that I would see him.
A wish that I could meet him.
A wish that he’ll come in my dreams.
A wish that he’ll bless me with his embrace.
Sadly none of it has come true.
My dad has always been a forbidden topic.
I must have gathered a dozen stories about him.
He was a gentleman.
He was very intelligent.
He would sacrifice himself for kin.
I started to be proud of him.
In all my journal entries there he would be.
He would pop up again and again.
I started to treat the journals as him.
I could talk for hours write for hours all for him.
He, who left me so abruptly, before I knew who he was,
He was a gambler,
He was stubborn,
But he had a good heart.
He had a temper that everyone feared at times.
He treasured me when I was born.
However, I don’t have a trace of memory about it.
He was a gambler,
He treasured me when I was born.
However, I don’t have a trace of memory about it.
He was a gambler,
I do not blame him for leaving me.
I have a selfish wish.
It is written at the end of every journal entry.
I wish to see him in the flesh.
I wish to be walking down the street,
And I would brush shoulders with him.
There would be a sudden jolt of realization;
We may turn and look back at each other.
I would then hope he would remember me.
Even though he was no longer my father, yet
I wish he still had the memories of his past life.
He would come running.
My heart would pound like thunder.
I would burst into tears of joy.
That is only a fantasied reality though.
I know he won’t come back.
As much as he must have wanted.

Useless graduation speeches of ends and beginnings
Nada Abdelrahim
Contest Winner – Third Place

made you think that all you know now
is all there is to learning,
but don’t forget to notice
how the road keeps going.
Raising your head
you’ve already learned something.
And yes, you’ll
one day realize
where you currently stand is not some
end or beginning,
but the same stream of consciousness
that will go on persisting.

My Happy Ending
Gabriella Brizuela

I wanted to be that girl in a 1980s movie.
The one that got what she wanted in 98 minutes.
I wanted to live in the stillness of childhood problems.
Uplifting music conquering every ocean
attempting to drown me.
A grand gesture at my door.
The rush of someone bursting through my door
every time I quit.
Someone to chase after me.
I wanted flawless words on command.
The honor of being the protagonist.
To be someone’s first pick.
I yearned to be transformed into a beautiful swan.
To be extraordinary.
Everything molded into an evident shape.
The one who is saved from an evil stepmother.
Whimsical adventures at every corner.
Ignored friend in tow.
Someone to notice my wounds.
I wanted a safe haven.
I needed a memory left untainted.
I wanted all of my misfortunes paid off that night.
The one who got the guy and the college.
I wanted to live off the silver screen.

Thankfully, I got you
And then I was.
There are forces and laws beyond our understanding. We couldn’t possibly overcome that power. I would rather write out a story and give my father and me a happy ending there. My pen is the driving force of all my love for him. He is the reason why I picked up my pen. To tell a story of a daughter and her father in separate worlds. I want to tell a tale that will echo The pain of losing a father. There are many times I think that I haven’t lost him. I hoped selfishly that he was still alive, Yet I knew he wasn’t and that death certificates didn’t lie. Still I hoped that he was alive somewhere in a corner of this world. He would be breathing and happy. He would have his own family, Yet I am not in that family. I hoped that the coffin that held him Was empty. My love may never reach him. My emotions may never be heard by him. My emotions may never be felt by him. My cries and tears dissolve before they are seen by him. But then what can reach him? Every year I stand before my father’s grave, Every year I write a letter to burn to him. Every year I allow my fingers to run over the engraved name on his headstone. Every year I talk to him before his grave. I was unable to place a white rose On his grave at the funeral. That is my biggest regret in this lifetime. I wish to place a red rose on his grave one day. I want to let him know my love for him. A love that surpasses any other. I long to hear his voice that I would die to hear it just once.

I long to hear him scold at me. I long to brush shoulders with him. I long to find the familiar sense of a father again. I long to share my thoughts and hear his criticism. My writing exists for him. It strives on the love for him. I disregard how others see my father. He isn’t perfect but I love him. He is a mysterious and foggy person in my memory, But I will use my pen to create a new life for him.

Repentance
Sarah Lee
Contest Winner – First Place

I beg forgiveness, little victim mine:
Before your death, I want your soul to know
I killed you, not by chance, but by design.

Your way was straight, your purpose divine,
but the purpose was severed by a blow
I beg forgiveness, little victim mine.

While you walked your clear and steady line,
I watched with the hunger of a crow
I killed you, not by chance, but by design.

I broke the shell and cut the reaching vine;
I quenched the sun and dammed the river’s flow
I beg forgiveness, little victim mine.

Your twitching end conveys an evil sign:
The waltz misses a beat, starts to slow
I killed you, not by chance, but by design.

For such a guilt there is no anodyne.
As your departing soul begins to flow,
I beg forgiveness, little victim mine:
I killed you, not by chance, but by design.

Mr. Magpie
Brian Kay
from Red Shoes Review

To the thief who has lifted these words of mine:
no amount of gold in this world will illuminate a crown shrouded by your black mask. For I see you,

Mr. Magpie,
as a collector of gold dust. The fine nest you’ve made
has been built from the ephemeral glittering gown
covering my vault. Oh thief who has lifted these words of mine,

I believe you’d take a babe’s first whine if you could! But the choked screams would come down and breathe away your nest of gold to reveal you, Mr. Magpie,
as you try to hide an ugly beak showered in daylight.

Pilfered memories—precious gold flakes—are found with you, King of Thieves and Lifter of Words,
yet I only need to reach out to pluck the feather of the albatross circling your thieves’ den. An omen found to see that you, Mr. Magpie,
are still as black as night! One would have to be blind to not see you as the contrasting golden memories drowns your black visage. Poor thief who has nothing but the litter of my mind, I see you, Mr. Magpie, I see you just fine.
Tissue Scaffolding: The Possibilities of Custom Organ Replacement

Avni Bavishi
from JPHAS

Last summer, The Amazing Spiderman hit movie theaters with a memorable villain. The Lizard, the product of a genetic experiment gone wrong, had an extraordinary power: if the Lizard’s limbs were cut off, they were simply regrown. What if that which is common in such reptiles could be done to humans in a laboratory setting? A cancerous windpipe could be replaced by a newly cultured windpipe, or a failing organ could be similarly restituted, restoring function to its owner. It may seem like a distant dream, but this is not just the stuff of superhero movies; it’s very possible with recent leaps and bounds in tissue engineering.

The current procedure for most tracheal implants involves using a donated windpipe from a cadaver. The original cells are washed from the structure for three days, leaving behind an intricate structure of proteins and fibers, known as the extracellular matrix (ECM). The ECM is then seeded with the patient’s own cells, eliminating the risk that foreign tissue will be rejected. However, this method is less than ideal. Donated organs are rare, making waiting lists for tracheal implants long. Another problem is that the implant may not be a perfect-fitting size, leading to further complications.

This problem led many to search for a way to mimic the ECM in a laboratory setting. The first “bioartificial” organ was implanted in 2010, in a patient with a cancerous tumor in his windpipe. Dr. Paolo Macchiarini, a Swedish surgeon, created a tissue-engineered scaffold made of a type of plastic called polyethylene terephthalate (PET). The scaffold was then seeded with stem cells from the patient’s own bone marrow. The cells were soaked into the scaffold with the use of a bioreactor made by Harvard Bioscience, and the entire structure was implanted.

One miraculous result of the procedure is that cells were able to grow and produce cartilage independently. “After two or three days […] you can realistically call it tissue,” said David Green, the president of Harvard Bioscience [4]. The stem cells were forced to differentiate into tracheal cells using transcription factors, which determine which genes are expressed. As the original stem cells died, chemicals were released, recruiting more stem cells from the body to the site of the implant. In this way, the body was able to serve as its own bioreactor. In the future, Macchiarini hopes that scaffolds can be implanted without cells, as drugs can stimulate the body to send cells growing tissue.

Such tissue engineering has many possible applications. At Wake Forest in North Carolina, bladders have been produced and implanted successfully. Dr. Anthony Atala, head of regenerative medicine at Wake Forest, has also made functioning urethras, heart patches, and blood vessels from scratch. Dr. Atala hopes that someday, patients no longer have to wait “for someone to die so they can live” [7]. The future is promising; the oldest of the bladders he implanted has been in use for twelve years.

A similar process was also used for a veteran who had lost part of his upper leg. A layer of ECM from a pig urinary bladder was used, and as the matrix degraded naturally, stem cells were recruited and turned into muscle cells. Today, the sergeant can walk and run almost with full function. By “work[ing] with nature rather than fight[ing] nature” – as Dr. Stephen Badylak said – the possibilities are endless [2].
There are hopes that a similar process could be used for cartilage repair in worn-out joints. Moreover, there is a possibility that it could save some premature babies from a life of intravenous feeding by increasing the intestinal length.

While the abilities of this process may have large benefits, there exist many obstacles as well. An obvious one is that of cost: each implant typically costs approximately a half-million dollars to complete. Scientists are working on moving past this barrier by exploring more cost-effective options. As the technology becomes more available, they hope that costs will continue to fall, similar to the fallen costs of genomic sequencing. Also, while the technology is promising, it is not yet known whether any long-term problems will exist.

As most of the successful organs that have been grown so far have been hollow or tubular, it is acknowledged that there is still a long time to wait before complex organs, such as the heart or lung, can be grown from scratch. Progress has been made as donor-matched arteries have been successfully used to bypass clots using a similar method. As research continues, it is hoped that, as Dr. Atala said, “A salamander can grow back its leg. Why can’t a human do the same?” [7].

Works Cited

Should Certain Vaccinations Be Required in the United States?

Stacey Jaimes
from JPHAS

The topic of vaccination is highly controversial. Objections are raised about the way vaccines are produced and tested, and their safety is questioned. Some people claim to have experienced adverse side effects and have even filed complaints with the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program. However, as Dr. Offit and Dr. Bell, authors of “Vaccines: What You Should Know,” state, “vaccines have prevented more disease and death than any other preventative program in history.” Not only will a vaccinated person usually not obtain the disease specific to the vaccine, but also the infection cannot be spread to others [2]. The question at hand is whether vaccination should be required. Statistically, the benefits of vaccination outweigh the risks, so why is an underlying fear of vaccines present?

Vaccines were created based on the idea that viruses and bacteria could be weakened and exposed to the human body in order to make “memory cells” that can defeat the disease if the body were reintroduced to the same virus or bacteria. For example, the vaccine for whooping cough is made from proteins found on the cell wall of the pathogen, while the Hepatitis B vaccine consists of proteins stripped from the whole virus.

“The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases explain, ‘Vaccines…trick the body into thinking an infection has occurred.’ Once this happens, whether or not the pathogen actually caused the actual sickness, the person is protected against re-infection because the immune system, in a sense, knows how to fight the pathogen.” This was the concept used to produce vaccines for 27 different diseases, 11 of which are recommended for children between birth and 6 years old [1]. Vaccines have transformed the world by taking control of diseases that once claimed many lives. “In the United States and other developed countries, widespread vaccination has controlled many infectious diseases, including polio, measles, diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), rubella (German measles), mumps, and tetanus. These diseases were common in the past but are no longer a threat to public health, thanks to vaccine research and development” [1]. Despite this achievement, “the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 4.1 million people, the majority of them children, die each year from vaccine-preventable diseases” [1]. At the heart of the issue is that vaccination is not very accessible in developing countries. In the United States, “all 50 states require vaccinations for children entering public schools even though no mandatory federal vaccination laws exist. All 50 states issue medical exemptions, 48 states (excluding Mississippi and West Virginia) permit religious exemptions.” According to a 2003 report by researchers at the Pediatric Academic Society, childhood vaccinations in the US prevent about 10.5 million cases of infectious illness and 33,000 deaths per year [4]. In the US there are annually about two cases of diphtheria, five of birth defects from rubella, and no cases of polio [2]. Thus, the result of vaccination in the United States cannot be unappreciated.

The patient is the most vulnerable person in the making of health policies. It is difficult not to be concerned when news is spread about side effects of a particular vaccine. This was the case in 1998 when Dr. Andrew Wakefield claimed that the MMR vaccine was associated with autism.
The MMR vaccine was associated with autism. It is important to be concerned when news is spread about side effects of a particular vaccine. This was the case to be concerned when news was spread that the MMR vaccine was associated with autism.

In the United States, “all 50 states have vaccination programs that have shown that the immunological commons must be carefully tended, with subsidies for vaccines when called for, legal protection from lawsuits for firms that are doing their honest best to create safe vaccines, and the bottom-line assurance that those who are accidentally damaged by vaccination will be compensated” [3].

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airlines, railroads, telephone services, and water companies (The Corporation). Regarding the former condition, the IMF claims that infrastructural building does not help bolster a country’s economy.

Abiding by these loan conditions, all of the aforementioned industries were sold to private corporations for a fraction of their capital worth, for an instantaneous, but nonetheless isolated, reimbursement. As a result, the continuous income from these industries goes into the pockets of corporations like Bechtel, instead of circling back to the government. In 2001, Ghana was in a similar predicament to Bolivia, and the World Bank approved a $110 million structural adjustment loan, under the condition that the government increase water tariffs by 95% to increase operating costs (Grusky). In the face of widespread unemployment, and while people who do work make less than $1US a day, the price of a bucket of water had been raised to 800 cedis, which translates to 12% of a person’s income (Grusky). It is also imperative to note that a fatal correlation exists between the inaccessibility of water and the pervasion of diseases—such was the case in South Africa where a cholera epidemic was paralleled by the privatization of the water supply by Suez Lyonnaise des Eaux in Johannesburg. Essentially, the citizens of South Africa could not afford the privatized water and turned to the polluted rivers in sheer desperation.

Of course, affluent countries are fully aware of the benefits that having clean and affordable water has for public health and the economy, which is why they use their high representation in multilateral institutions like the IMF to provide their own governments with water and sanitation subsidies, while simultaneously denying developing countries the same advantage.


South Africa’s Sanitation Crisis

Hari Sreedhar

from UIC OneWorld

For those of us who have grown up and lived our entire lives with adequate and abundant access to toilets, it is very difficult to fathom the difficulties and dangers of living without them. Our waste concerns tend to be whether the nearest toilet is dirty, not if there is a toilet available. We worry about whether there is a toilet we can get to within the next five minutes, but not if we’ll have a safe, permanent toilet to use day after day. Regrettably, not everybody is so lucky.

The term “sanitation” refers to the protection of health by preventing contact with human waste, whether by means of a flush toilet or a simple bucket latrine. Many parts of the world, including South Africa, have serious problems with sanitation. The consequences of poor human waste management on public health and well-being demand serious consideration of this global issue.

However, these problems regarding inadequate sanitation are often overlooked, as better known issues like AIDS, racial tensions, and violence are given more attention. But for those living with poor sanitation, or without sanitation at all, the consequences are as real as those of better-publicized problems and are just as deadly.

A poorly built toilet facility is a breeding ground for disease. Latrines that fail to adequately contain and dispose of human waste are dangerous to users, as flies that can enter and exit the latrine’s holding pit can transmit pathogens from one individual’s feces to other members of a community. These excreta-related illnesses can be devastating. For example, the bacterial disease trachoma is responsible for over 6 million cases of preventable blindness worldwide (Montgomery and Menachem 19).

In addition to causing the direct spread of disease between latrine users, the absence of proper facilities can result in human waste contaminating drinking water sources, spreading deadly parasitic infections like intestinal helminthes and schistosomiasis (Montgomery and Menachem 18). The consequences of these illnesses can include a negative impact on nutrition, blood loss through parasites as well as through urine, and various organ dysfunctions (“Infectious Diseases Related to Travel”; “Schistosomiasis (Bilharzia) Control and Prevention”). But even greater danger lies in waterborne diarrheal diseases, which not only kill millions of people worldwide, but also have long-term effects of malnutrition and reduced cognitive development in children (Montgomery and Menachem 19).

South Africa is often considered one of the most developed African nations; yet, millions of people in the country live with inadequate sanitation. According to a March 2012 report on the status of sanitation in the country, 11% of South Africa’s 12.7 million households are without any sanitation facilities at all, and 26% have facilities that have deteriorated to the point of inadequacy (“The Quality of Sanitation in South Africa”).

In addition to this lack of safe options for human waste disposal, many South Africans are also at risk because of the poor state of wastewater treatment facilities. For communities served by water-borne sewage systems, these treatment plants are necessary for safe management of wastewater, and to ensure that it does not get into drinking water sources. A 2011 survey of 826 of South Africa’s wastewater...
treatment works found that 143 of these plants were at high risk of failure, and 90% did not comply with standards (“The Quality of Sanitation in South Africa”). These figures foreshadow more risks for South Africa in the future.

Unfortunately, for the people of South Africa, it will prove difficult for the government to address these concerns. According to the report, about 50 billion South African rand (over $6 billion in USD) would be necessary to deliver adequate sanitation (by building safe latrines, and maintaining infrastructure) to all South Africans by 2014 (“The Quality of Sanitation in South Africa”). In the words of Stevens Mokgalapa, Democratic Alliance Shadow Minister of Human Settlements, “it will take a miracle to reach this target” (Styan).

It takes much work, not miracles, to solve such massive problems that threaten the well-being of millions of people in South Africa. If the South African government is unable to handle this crisis on its own, external support and funding must make up for it. Programs to finance the building of sustainable sanitation infrastructure in South African settlements can help. So can education about the risks of inadequate sanitation. But all of these initiatives require global awareness.

Sanitation is a problem on the scale of disease epidemics and outbreaks of violence in other parts of the world; however, we rarely hear about this concern despite its grave implications. Until the sanitation crisis in South Africa and the greater part of the world is as seriously considered and carefully addressed as other problems, this threat to public health will continue plaguing our world.

A “bucket latrine” in South Africa; this is an example of inadequate and dangerous sanitation (Source: Rose George)

Works Cited


**Art**

Garrett Padera is a senior at UIC who will be graduating this semester with a computer science degree. He loves solving problems using technology and has worked for Google and Microsoft as an intern. He will be riding his motorcycle to Seattle this summer to start a career with Microsoft. Eventually, he plans to launch the next great tech startup company and use his technology skills to influence people worldwide.

Noor Abdelrahim is a third-year graphic design and photography double major. When she is not working with typefaces or taking pictures, she finds comfort in watching a good classic film or filming and editing her own creations. Noor also loves everything vintage and likes to collect unique journals. She strives to break stereotypes and to one day inspire others to do the same. The model featured in her piece, “Phases of Stone” is her beloved sister, Nada Abdelrahim.

Carrie Allen is finishing her third year as a photography major at UIC. She loves making videos, watercolor painting, clothing design, playing piano, and traveling.

Hareem Siddiqi is a junior at UIC majoring in biological sciences and Spanish. She is the current Co-Editor-in-Chief of UIC’s Red Shoes Review.

Sergio A. Villasenor is finishing his second year as an industrial design major. After a heavy history of doodling and critical thinking, he decided on taking on an illustrative role in the in the Honors College satirical paper, The Asterisk. He is certainly well known among a small crowd for his full length documentary, The Final Countdown, and two printed T-shirts seen out in the public. On nights where he does sleep, Sergio enjoys practicing lucid dreaming. He often daydreams of leaving capitalist society and living off the land to enjoy a life of Hakuna Matata.

Julia Ayse Aydin is a biology major and Spanish minor at UIC. She often incorporates naturalist styles into her artwork because of her love of wildlife. Her idols are John James Audubon and Eminem. Her other hobbies include rapping, writing music, and running.

Sarah Lee is a freshman in the GPPA Medicine program at UIC. She is a biochemistry and English major, but she has also studied and loved the Russian language ever since she studied abroad in Volgograd and Kazan. In her free time, she enjoys playing piano, jogging with rock music, watching movies at the theater, and drinking Persian tea. One day, Sarah hopes to travel Eurasia “to seek a Great Perhaps.”

Michelle Skinner is a senior at UIC studying English with a concentration in American literature. Upon her return from Berlin and graduation in May 2013, Michelle will continue her studies this fall in the doctoral program for English language and literature at the University of Chicago.

Humaa Siddiqi, a freshman studying political science, currently writes for the UIC News and minors in English. Aside from her love of writing, she plans to pursue a career in law as a human rights attorney. Humaa also hopes to study abroad in the near future…if her parents allow her. And that is a big “if.”

Emily Vasquez is a senior pursuing a degree in communication and a minor in sociology. Her interests include blogging, watching movies, volunteering, and trying new food. She is currently a blogger for UIC Red Shoes Review.

Michelle Skinner is a senior at UIC studying English with a concentration in American literature. Upon her return from Berlin and graduation in May 2013, Michelle will continue her studies this fall in the doctoral program for English language and literature at the University of Chicago.

**Fiction**

Samantha Fiorini is a sophomore at UIC studying communication and English. She enjoys reading, writing, and playing an array of video games. In the future she aspires to work for a game company like Blizzard and publish her own book and/or video game.

Karina Romo is a freshman at UIC. She loves the summer in the city, as well as sunsets, Lucky Charms, nice views, people who make her laugh, sunny days, Instagramming, having breakfast for dinner, and writing her thoughts on train rides. She is proud and happy to be a neuroscience major.

Chanel West is a senior at the University of Illinois at Chicago with an undergraduate concentration of political science. Since beginning to write at the age of eight, Chanel has written countless short stories and novels as not only a hobby but a passion for literature. She enjoys romance novels and a nice quiet evening of reading at home. One day she hopes to become mayor of Chicago.

Emily Vasquez is a senior pursuing a degree in communication and a minor in sociology. Her interests include blogging, watching movies, volunteering, and trying new food. She is currently a blogger for UIC Red Shoes Review.

Christian Davis is senior at UIC studying English with a concentration in media, culture, and rhetorical studies. Along with being a writer of fiction and poetry, Christian is also a seasoned string instrumentalist, playing classical guitar, mandolin, bass, and he fiddles around on the violin here and there. He loves composing music and one day hopes to share his music with more people than his mom and girlfriend. Christian is a member of the UIC Honors College and is also an editor for the Red Shoes Review.

**Nonfiction**

Humaa Siddiqi, a freshman studying political science, currently writes for the UIC News and minors in English. Aside from her love of writing, she plans to pursue a career in law as a human rights attorney. Humaa also hopes to study abroad in the near future…if her parents allow her. And that is a big “if.”

Emily Vasquez is a senior pursuing a degree in communication and a minor in sociology. Her interests include blogging, watching movies, volunteering, and trying new food. She is currently a blogger for UIC Red Shoes Review.

Sharmeen Razvi is a first-year premed student working toward majoring in biology and psychology. She hails from Chicago and attended a private school for her entire elementary through high school education (Schaumburg Christian School). Although she is a science-addicted nerd with a streak of quick-wit and sarcasm, she discovered her talent and love for writing after her first-year writing course instructor at UIC complimented her for being a good writer! When not writing her crazy long chemistry lab reports, she loves to catch up on her sleep and stuff her face with Lindor Truffles!
Poetry

**Nada Abdelrahim** is a junior bioengineering major. She enjoys speaking her mind to anyone who will listen, reading, and playing with fashion. She wishes to one day become a mad scientist.

**Gabriela Brizuela** is a sophomore at UIC. She is studying psychology and gender studies. One day, she hopes to start her own non-profit organization. She credits her high school creative writing course for inspiring her to pursue poetry.

**Ann Chin** transferred to UIC as a sophomore this spring. She is majoring in English with a concentration in creative writing. She enjoys curling up with a good novel any day. She started writing around the age of seven. She loves journaling and collecting fountain pens. Ann loves doodling in her sketchbook or on scrap paper even though her drawing sucks. She has bins and bins of notebooks with finished or incomplete stories and poems. Music is the driving force behind her writing. She couldn’t imagine a day without music. Ann loves gardening, hiking, traveling, and watching television.

**Sam Mahafzah** is a freshman at UIC studying psychology and premed with hopes of one day becoming a forensic psychiatrist. He enjoys music above all things in life and secretly wishes he could own a record label one day. He also dreams of changing the world, but can’t think of a way how just yet.

**Brian Kay** is a sophomore at UIC studying English. A “crazy dumbsaint of the mind,” he inflicts upon his writing, in all its amateur glory, the inner imagination of the human mind. Or so he thinks.

Research

**Avni Bavishi** is a freshman studying biological sciences and chemistry. She enjoys reading, playing badminton, and watching movies with friends. She writes for the *Ampersand* as well as *JPHAS*, two of her favorite organizations on campus. Avni plans on entering the medical field after graduation.

**Stacey Jaimes** studies chemistry at UIC and aspires to become a physician.

**Hari Sreedhar** is currently studying bioengineering at UIC. Although it has nothing to do with his major, he likes writing and learning new languages.