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News

Delay habit deadly for students

STUDENTS HAVE A 60 PER CENT HIGHER PROCRASTINATION RATE THAN GENERAL PUBLIC

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You may not have it now, but within a few weeks, odds are it will infest the majority of you one by one, without any regard for the havoc it will wreak on your life. And we're not talking about STD's.

Procrastination. Around this campus, it's everywhere. "It is the bane of student life, and it has significant negative consequences for performance, well-being and even physical health," wrote Timothy A. Pychyl, a professor of psychology—and noted expert on procrastination—at Carleton University. Pychyl believes that students have a level of procrastination that is at least 60 per cent higher than the general public.

To Christie Goode, founder of homeworktree.com, the reasons for this are simple. "Long-term deadlines, [an] abundance of free time and extra-curricular activities produces a perfect environment for procrastination."

She compared this with high school students, noting that the percentage of secondary school students suffering from chronic procrastination is significantly lower as their lives are built on more consistent schedules.

The consequences of sustained procrastination are as evident to people like Goode and Pychyl as they are to any student juggling three midterms and a part-time job. "Higher stress, low self-esteem, depression, cheating and plagiarism," lists Goode, not to mention an increased consumption of alcohol, cigarettes, and caffeine use during final exams. Pychyl warns that what starts off as a bad university habit can turn into something more, estimating that "15 to 20 percent of adults report chronic procrastination."

Goode says that when we let our life degenerate into deadline to deadline, most think putting things off will help, but in the long run it doesn't. Goode offered up a familiar analogy, joking that putting the dishes off in the long run only results in a messy kitchen.

Third-year math and physics major Simon Foreman sticks to the KISS principle: Keep it Simple, Stupid. Foreman has succeeded by adopting a listless, small whiteboard placed above his bed, with a few key term dates written down. He noted that his method "helps you not be surprised by what comes up."

"Once you're behind, you're lost."

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