

Sir John A. Macdonald
 “We’ve Got You Covered.”



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 Canada Day	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Ms. Vokas’ Experience at MAC

Joseph Choi

Throughout this school year, students and staff alike encountered unprecedented challenges and demonstrated brilliant resiliency; it was a tremendous learning experience for all. Ms. Vokas, the principal of Sir John A. Macdonald Collegiate Institute, has kindly shared her perspective on this pandemic-riddled year.

When Ms. Vokas took her first step as the new principal into Macdonald, she emphasizes her nostalgic feelings as she returned to the school from which she graduated. She explains, "upon entering the school for the first time, I felt a bit of nostalgia having graduated as a student and now returning as the Principal." She also describes the warm reception she received from the staff and students—the same friendly welcome she had received as a student at Macdonald.

Ms. Vokas notes several personal experiences at Macdonald during this surreal school year. "The highlights of this year," she says, "included watching the students and staff work together to overcome the many challenges this pandemic has brought our way and walking the halls, popping into classes to say 'hello'." She continues to express complimentary remarks to staff and students, explaining that, "Our staff and students have done an amazing job continuing with virtual clubs and councils, and engaging us in some fun!" Yet, despite these great efforts of the staff and students, there have certainly been struggles along the way. "The low-lights, of course, were the constant pivoting from in-person to remote learning," she notes. She adds, "I miss having the students and staff in the building even if our interactions were limited."

Finally, Ms. Vokas concludes with a powerful sense of optimism and hope for the next school year and the years to follow. She shares the same sentiment as many students, as she says, "I believe my hope is everyone’s hope: some sense of normalcy, where we can interact with one another in-person and eventually without mitigating measures, such as masks." Ms. Vokas also feels encouraged by how unified everyone has been and how strongly Blackscots have wanted to be involved in student life. She concludes by stating that she “looks forward to working with everyone so that we can achieve our goals and ensure our students have a safe and positive educational experience at Mac."

Amid all the hardships this year, every individual at Macdonald rose to the challenge and persevered to the very end. To Ms. Vokas and the entire Macdonald Administration, thank you so much for your hard work and leadership.

Anticipating Next Year

Joseph Choi

Hey Blackscots! Pat yourselves on the back for your exceptional perseverance, resilience, and hard work this year. All of us have something we miss about in-person school, whether that be meeting friends at lunchtime or even simply walking home with a friend. But don't be too sad! Vaccination rates are increasing and COVID-19 cases are steadily declining. With this good news, many students and teachers express their hopes for the next school year.

Ms. Geary, a social sciences and humanities teacher, echoes the excitement many Blackscots have for the next school year. She hopes for a return to a more conventional classroom setting, such as teaching students face-to-face, engaging in conversations with students in-person, and more extra-curricular events in-person. She wishes to see more students in the hallway, hanging out at lockers with friends and joyously interacting with one another. She also hopes that she can convene with her colleagues and eat lunch together.

Arian Seddighpour, a Grade 11 student, hopes to engage and participate in more extracurricular activities in-person. He looks forward to his duties as a Mac Rep and Mac Pal and activities in the TED-Ed Club. He also wishes to partake in the Euclid math contest to increase his chances of admission to his dream university. Like Ms. Geary, Arian echoes her wishes of hanging out with his friends during lunchtime again: "I miss eating lunch in the cafeteria while blasting the same song on seven devices at the same time."

Sachit Duphare, a Grade 10 student, expresses some obstacles in learning this school year. "Going to Mac with very cautious safety measures has set a different environment in the school [and was something] that I did not necessarily like," he says. He also shares, "These precautions have prevented me from doing what I enjoy, like going to lunch with my friends or joining new clubs and councils." But, as the COVID-19 cases decrease, Sachit is hopeful that the next school year will look different; one during which he can join more clubs and regroup with his friends. He also wishes that the classroom will return to a traditional setting, where desks are not distanced from each other and classmates can converse. Sachit also anticipates to engage in science class, his favourite course.

John Choi, a Grade 9 student, expresses the disappointment of this school year, as he did not experience the first-year splendour of high school. He did not enjoy being confined behind a screen and learning through Zoom calls and Google Meets; he too misses the traditional classroom environment. But, like Sachit, he believes the school will return to partial normalcy as COVID-19 cases decline. As a freshman, he wishes to reconvene with his current friends and is excited to meet new people in-person. John wants to experience high school life to the fullest, whether that be going out for lunch, joining sports teams, doing the BEEP test, or enduring exam seasons!

As we look towards the next school year, many students and teachers are hopeful for a more normal school environment. A modified semester system has been confirmed by TDSB, perhaps for the 2021 - 2022 school year. The potential return of extracurricular activities, in-person lunches and classes, hanging out with friends, and many more typical high school experiences offers optimism and happiness to all Blackscots.

Let's hope for the best, Mac!



Comic Credits: Vivian Guo

Indigenous Awareness

National Indigenous History Month

Sachi Taploo

Every year, Canada commemorates National Indigenous History Month in June. During this month, we recognize the heritage of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in Canada.

You might be wondering, why is it important to have a National Indigenous History Month? Why is it imperative that we acknowledge the contributions of Indigenous peoples? Is learning the history of Indigenous peoples or land acknowledgement enough? What else can we do to celebrate this month? To answer these questions, I decided to ask my history teacher, Ms. Geary!

Why is it important to have a National Indigenous History Month?

It is important to have a National Indigenous History Month as the Indigenous peoples in Canada are diverse with many different traditions, cultures and lifestyles. The term encompasses the varied First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples and as Canadians, we need to become aware of the challenges and hardships these people have faced. In light of the recent discovery of the mass graves at the Kamloops Residential School, we as Canadians have a responsibility to educate ourselves about these tragedies, even though it may make us feel uncomfortable, to ensure that such horrors are never repeated.

Why is it imperative that we acknowledge the contributions of Indigenous peoples?

It is imperative that we acknowledge the contributions of Indigenous peoples as we need to celebrate their achievements, as we do other Canadians, and learn about how they have enriched the lives of all Canadians. Their history and culture are diverse and have given Canada a rich and distinct identity.

Is learning the history of Indigenous peoples or land acknowledgement enough? What else can we do to celebrate this month?

Learning the history of Indigenous peoples and the land acknowledgement is not enough. Here are a few simple things you can do to learn more: Google the name of the original caretakers of the territory that you live on. Read about their history and what current issues their communities face and how you can help. You can also contact your elected officials to ask them to take action or ask them what they are doing to make a change.



NATIONAL
INDIGENOUS
HISTORY
MONTH



 Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada / Relations Couronne-Autochtones et Affaires du Nord Canada

Canada 

Photo Credits:

<https://panow.com/2020/06/05/june-is-national-indigenous-history-month/>

#215children

Maliha Mahjaban

On May 27th, the unfortunate discovery of the remains of 215 children buried at a former residential school in Kamloops, British Columbia emerged as an international headline. It was revealed that these remains belonged to residential children, some as young as three years old. A specialist in ground-penetrating radar was hired to carry out the work in a culturally appropriate and respectful manner. This tragic chapter of mass cultural genocide and racial discrimination towards Indigenous communities continue to affect millions throughout the country today. Indigenous communities and people across Canada are trying to cope with this shocking discovery and mourn the lives lost.

With news of this discovery, I shared the despair felt by the nation, but also a solidified understanding of how this tragedy came to be. One of the books chosen for the Grade 10 English curriculum this year was a novel named *Indian Horse* by Richard Wagamese, which gave an insightful account of what the children in residential schools had to endure. In the novel, the nuns and priests who run St. Jerome's Indian Residential School prohibit children from practicing their culture and even speaking their language. They beat, punish, starve, and sexually assault the children to rule them through fear. For instance, a ten-year-old named Curtis White Fox has his mouth washed out for speaking Ojibway, resulting in his death by choking. A young girl named Katherine is locked up in the basement and beaten for days after trying to get help from her older sister, Rebecca, due to her fear of the school nuns. One night, Katherine dies, and soon after, Rebecca kills herself with a knife. That any practices and behaviour relating to the children's Indigenous culture are not at all tolerated is evidenced in a graveyard, known as the Indian Yard. The protagonist, Saul Indian Horse, describes the graveyard as, "Row on row of unmarked graves. Row on row of four- and five-foot indentations like a finger from Heaven had pressed them down." Even though this novel is fictional, it is very realistic in its depiction of how children's lives were shaped around this tragic experience and how their families were impacted as well. Thankfully, the English curriculum allowed me and my peers to learn and discuss residential schools and discrimination against Indigenous communities.

Moreover, throughout the book, readers like me witness multiple deaths and watch these children become tormented with oppressive abuse and trauma. Consequently, the horrifying discovery at the Kamloops Residential School came as yet another confirmation of Canada's dark past with the Indigenous community. Instead, I wondered: how many other remains of bodies are still out there and unaccounted for? What will the government do to take action for the reconciliation of the Indigenous communities across Canada? A student named Kenda Sinjab commented, "The fact that it's only just been discovered, and the thought that there's probably more out there is so horrible. The government needs to do more than just apologizing." Vigils were held across Canada to show respect. Candles were lit, flags were lowered, and pairs of shoes were left in different places by Canadians as a tribute. One student named Mckinley O'Brien shared, "My mother, my sister and I brought 18 pairs of shoes to Queen's Park in hopes that others would do the same to remember the 215 children who were found in Kamloops, B.C. We wanted to do something since nothing was being done."

As Canadians, we must advocate for the rights of First Nations peoples in Canada and fight for the recognition of truth and reconciliation. More actions need to be taken; this chapter of residential schools in Canadian history and the racial prejudice against Indigenous peoples are far from over as they are still affecting millions of people today.



Photo Credits: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-57325653>

ALS Awareness Month

Joseph Choi

Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, more commonly known as ALS, is a debilitating nervous system disease that damages nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord, ultimately resulting in a loss of muscle control. Approximately one thousand Canadians are diagnosed with this horrifying, fatal disease each year. Moreover, families, friends, neighbours, colleagues, and many more are indirectly affected by it. June is the official ALS Awareness Month when all Canadians come together in solidarity to remember victims of ALS and provide hope and strength to individuals and families impacted by it.

As Blackscots, we must approach this month with a high sense of mindfulness, awareness, and respect, as our fellow classmates, friends, teachers, or family members may suffer from ALS or other unspeakably painful diseases.

Each year, Canadians organize and participate in several events to spread awareness of ALS. One such event is the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge, a viral video challenge where participants record themselves pouring a bucket of ice water on their heads. While it is fun to nominate friends and family to pour a bucket of ice water on themselves on a hot day, it, more importantly, allows people to become aware of the effects of ALS and encourages them to donate money towards ALS cure research.

On June 20th, 2021, Canadians across Canada rallied together for a Virtual Walk to End ALS. The donations and funds raised from this event will play a vital role in providing hope and strength to those living with the disease and their impacted families.

On September 26th, 2021, there will be a cycling event called Revolution Ride taking place in Dundas, Ontario. Revolution Ride is a fundraising event that brings recreational, intermediate, and avid cyclists together to support those facing ALS today or those who have lost a loved one to this disease.

Blackscots, let's come together and do what we can to #EndALS!!!

For more information, visit:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/ALSCanada/>
<https://www.als.ca/get-involved/join-events/>

ALS Awareness

JUNE IS ALS AWARENESS MONTH

ALS Awareness Month

What is ALS?

Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) is a disease that paralyzes people over time. As of present, there is no known cure for ALS and few options for treatment.

ALS Facts

- ALS causes motor neurons to die, stopping communication between the brain and the body.
- 200,000+ people worldwide live with ALS.
- ALS can affect anyone. The most common type of this disease is sporadic ALS.
- 80% of those diagnosed with ALS die within three to five years.

Sources - Learn more about ALS

- www.mda.org/disease/amyotrophic-lateral-sclerosis
- www.als.ca
- www.als.org

Comic Credits: Nikki Guo

Pride Month

LOVE IS LOVE | 2SLGBTQ+

PRIDE MONTH

June is Pride Month!
Celebrate and stand in solidarity with the 2SLGBTQ+ Community this month and every month.

Check out Pride Toronto's event calendar to attend virtual festivities, workshops, and digital parades!

Learn more about Pride Month :

- www.pridetoronto.com
- www.arquives.ca



SPEAK OUT AGAINST HATE. FOSTER INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES.

Comic Credits: Ivy Guo



Photo Credits: <https://thepridechamber.org/come-out-with-pride/>

Pride Month Word Search

Alisa Yan

Pride Month Word Search

E	E	V	O	L	A	N	A	L	T	Y	A	C	Q
E	A	X	S	I	C	N	U	G	R	T	E	R	A
S	A	L	L	Y	C	O	R	B	A	I	C	C	N
R	A	A	Y	Q	E	I	N	T	N	S	N	E	O
M	T	A	S	U	P	S	S	Q	S	R	A	D	I
A	G	E	R	E	T	U	U	E	G	E	R	I	S
R	R	B	O	E	A	L	P	A	E	V	E	R	S
R	D	I	G	R	N	C	P	A	N	I	L	P	E
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G	I	D	E	N	T	I	T	Y	R	U	T	U	X
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L	A	X	O	E	Q	U	A	L	P	U	E	A	O
I	E	I	N	G	N	M	L	E	S	B	I	A	N

- GAY
- QUEER
- TRANSGENDER
- EXPRESSION
- SUPPORT
- EQUAL
- ALLY
- PRIDE
- LOVE
- TOLERANCE
- DIVERSITY
- BISEXUAL
- MARRIAGE
- LGBTQ
- LESBIAN
- ACCEPTANCE
- INCLUSION
- IDENTITY

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/2525801/>

Interviewing Graduating Blackscots

Marian Farra

We've finally made it! Congratulations to everyone on completing another year of school! For some of you, your first year of high school was completely unexpectedly; for others, your final year was the last thing you imagined. However, after countless nights studying, debates on timetable changes, and overthinking school, it has all finally come to an end. Although it was nothing like we anticipated, it is a year we will never forget. As most are heading back to in-person learning at Mac in the fall, others will be moving on to post-secondary. For my last article, I decided to interview my fellow graduates about their experience at Mac and their post-secondary plans!

Betty Guo is extremely excited to venture out on her own and learn more about the world around her. She plans on continuing her post-secondary studies at Queens University. She shares, "I'm definitely going to miss my friends at Mac! Most of my friends are all going to different places after high school and I'll miss them a lot. My favourite memories at Mac were definitely made during Music Council and having fun there."

If I could give my younger self some advice, it would be to have some more fun and create more memories to look back on fondly. I would advise Blackscots to try new things—the future is never set in stone so try to learn more about yourself during your high school career!"

Jennie Xu is heading into criminology at the University of Toronto. While she'll miss some old things, she is ecstatic for all the new things she'll get to do and all the people she'll meet. "I'm going to miss talking to my friends at lunch and ... in the halls the most. The highlights for me at Mac were all the volleyball practices after school and hanging out with my friends. The only advice I'd give is to not be afraid of doing things outside your comfort zone; it might seem scary but you'll thank yourself when you look back later on."

Devon Markham is looking forward to living on her own. She has decided on OCAD University for drawing and painting. She says about moving on from Mac, "I think I'll miss some of the people from Mac, but hopefully I can stay in contact with the people that matter the most. My favourite memory here is probably sitting on the bleachers eating lunch and people-watching with my friend, Eleni."

If I could give my freshman self some advice, it would be to not be afraid to talk to people! They're all just as weird and awkward as you. To the students, be nice to people. Seriously, all my favourite people from high school, no matter how well I knew them, were nice. Don't worry. Have fun, as it'll be over soon."

Jackie Yi is pursuing mechatronics engineering at the University of Waterloo. "I'm going to miss hanging out with my friends at lunch the most. My favourite memory is singing 'Revenge' at Coffee House. If I could give advice to my younger self it would be to look for extracurriculars to do. You'll definitely feel more productive. To the younger students, do extracurriculars, either in or outside of school. Also, try to make friends with people in older grades; they'll give you good advice."

These last four years have definitely flown by, and it's heartbreaking to say goodbye, but all good things come to an end. Many great memories have been made here at Mac, but it's time to make newer ones. I wish all graduating students good luck in their future endeavours. Thank you to all Blackscots who shared their experiences, and I can't wait to see your wonderful post-secondary journeys.

Summer Plans

Maliha Mahjabin

After a long school year in this pandemic, summer has finally arrived! Before we dive into some Mac students' exciting summer plans, this is a reminder that we must all take care to adhere to COVID precautions necessary for the safety of ourselves and those around us. This includes wearing a mask, using hand sanitizer, and abiding by social distancing guidelines. Students should also educate themselves on social gathering numbers and other restrictions implemented throughout summer.

Even though the circumstances have changed during COVID-19, students are trying to make the best of the current situation. Firstly, many students have mentioned they are taking summer school. One student named Yalda Ghoreyshi said, "I am taking Grade 11 chemistry to get ahead on school work and going outside as much as I can." Similarly, Mac News contributor Joseph Choi commented, "I am using this summer to prepare for university and return to work, which I had to leave because of COVID."

Furthermore, everyone is excited to meet up with friends and family as restrictions ease. Some students are thrilled to go to places such as malls, restaurants, and beaches, while others cannot wait to play sports with their teams again and go to summer camps for the first time in two years! Moreover, a few students will be spending their summer overseas with family, though they have mentioned how this summer is going to be a little different. A student named Georgia Kanarellis said, "When we come back to Canada, my family and I have to be quarantined in a hotel for two weeks and get tested negative for COVID before proceeding to go to our home." Despite the many changes impacting everyone's lives right now, it is amazing to see Blackscots taking safety precautions to make the most of their summer.

For students still unsure of their summer plans, check out <https://www.blogto.com> to stay updated on the places you can visit around Toronto!

Stay safe, and have a wonderful summer Blackscots!



Tobermory, Ontario (About 4 hours north of Toronto)
Photo Credits: Aaron Anu



Sudbury, Ontario (4 hours north of Toronto)
Photo Credits: Aaron Anu

CONGRATULATIONS!

**To the class of 2021,
this year has been
a strange
year but you
did it! You
finished
high school!**



**I wish you all the best
in your future endeavours!
Have a great summer!**



Comic Credits: Jenny Phung

PAGE 5 Extracurriculars

Councils at Mac

YiLin Luan

During the pandemic, finding opportunities to make new friends or connect with people who share your interests has been difficult. Fortunately, Mac has offered numerous councils, even online! Whether you'd like to raise awareness for the environment, promote health or more, Mac has the perfect councils for you. Here are some currently running councils with a short blurb to help you learn more about them and potentially plan which to participate in next year!

Mac News

Mac News is Mac's newspaper club. This club consists of writers, editors, photographers, layouters, and comic artists. Writers write monthly articles about recent news or school life, editors edit the articles, photographers support the articles with photographs, comic artists decorate the paper with drawings, and layouters plan the layout for the final presentation. Here's what Vivian Guo and Alisa Yan, the Senior Editors-In-Chief, have to say about Mac News:

"Mac News is a club filled with dedicated individuals that keep the Mac community updated on school activities and current events through monthly newspapers. Mac News has several content creation positions perfect for students looking to improve technical skills such as writing, drawing, and photography. If you prefer to work behind the scenes, editing or layouting would be a great fit. As well, Mac News is a great way for students to connect with like-minded individuals!"

----- Vivian Guo, Senior Editor-In-Chief

"I really enjoyed these past four years in Mac News! I first joined in Grade 9 as a comic artist and became an editor in Grade 10. It's harder to experience now that we're online, but I had a fun time attending meetings and reading new Mac News as much as the issues on paper. It's encouraging to see the hard work put in by everyone each month. As a general member in Grades 9 and 10, I learned to balance my time between schoolwork and club activities. As well, as an editor, I improved my understanding of when changes should be made to a piece of writing. Now, as an Editor-in-Chief, I learned how much more important it is to work efficiently and edit articles thoroughly before publishing."

Joining new clubs and councils can feel intimidating at first, but I know for certain that my time at Mac wouldn't have been anywhere near as fun had I not joined any!"

----- Alisa Yan, Senior Editor-In-Chief

MEAC

MEAC, which stands for Macdonald Environmental Action Council, has been operating at Mac for the past fifteen years. It is composed of Mac students who are passionate about promoting awareness of the environment. MEAC gathers weekly to discuss and take action in connection to current environmental issues. Here's what MEAC member Maliha Mahjabin has to say about being a part of MEAC:

"MEAC works toward making our school more aware of environmental issues and encourages students to take action locally while thinking globally. We learn about ecological issues impacting our environment, and we share and discuss our thoughts and ideas at our weekly meetings. We run recycling programs and also do events such as battery bake sales, honey lollipop sales, and more. If you're passionate or eager to learn about the environment and actions we can take towards helping our environment, then this is the club for you."

----- Maliha Mahjabin, MEAC member

Yearbook Council

Duties in Mac's Yearbook Council consist of planning our school's yearbook, along with the graphics and the captions. The 2020-2021 school year has been unusual, to say the least, yet Yearbook has managed to create a very special book to capture the precious moments of Mac students. Nancy Zou, Head of Copy, shares the activities and her experience as part of Yearbook Council:

"Yearbook is a committee of dedicated students who work to capture the past school year at Mac in one book. The committee is composed of photographers who capture memories through photos, layouters who express their creativity in backgrounds and layouts, and copy editors who control the textual elements and the language of the book! When I first joined Yearbook, I went in with the goal of expanding my social group and contributing to something that unifies Blackscots in our shared experience of the year. As such, I would recommend this committee to anyone in a similar situation as I was: uncertain, shy, and eager to escape this uncertainty and shyness. Plus, if you already enjoy or want to improve your photography, layout, or copy editing, then Yearbook is definitely looking for someone like you. If you're interested, look out for applications at the beginning of the school year!"

----- Nancy Zou, Head of Copy in Yearbook Council

These are only a handful of Mac's wonderful councils. Some other councils that are currently running include Mac In Action, Music Council, Athletic Council and more. I hope this article gave you insight into the various Mac councils so that you may decide which ones to join in the near future!

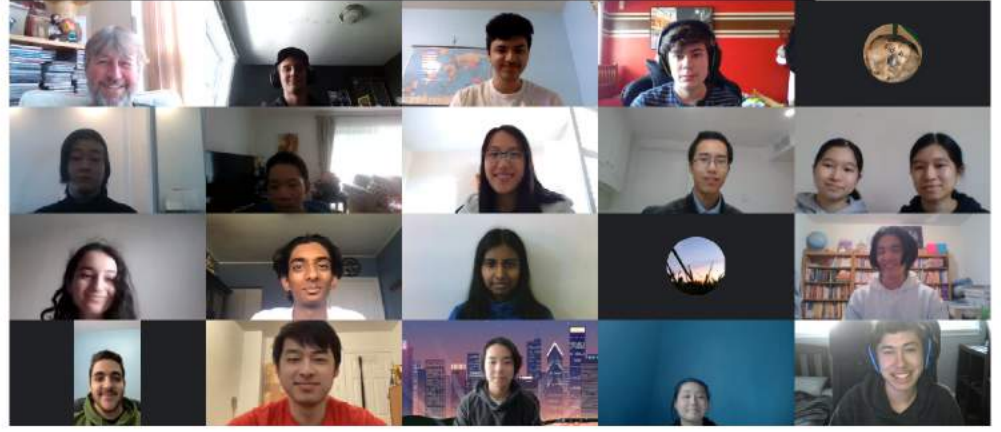


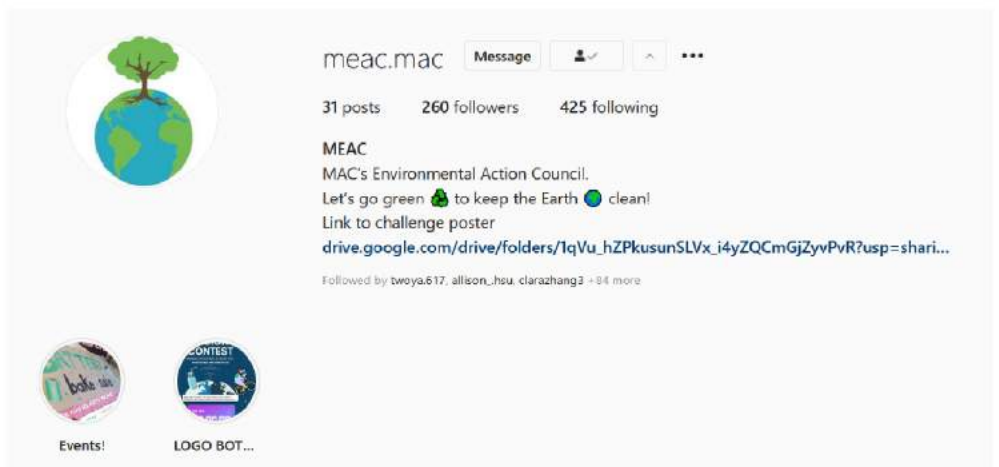
Photo Credits: Yearbook Council



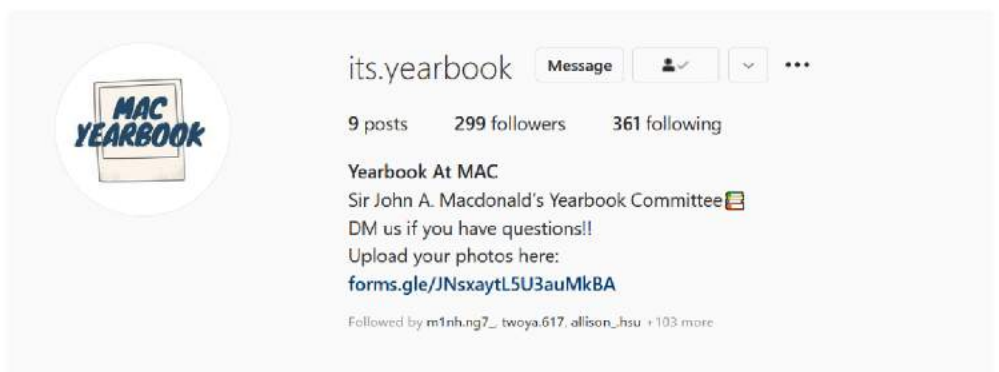
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Mac News Instagram Page



MEAC Instagram Page



Mac Yearbook Instagram Page