

April 15, 2016

Dear Students and Colleagues:

As the 2015-16 academic year winds down, I want to extend my best wishes for success to all students as you prepare for and write your final exams.

It is, of course, an incredibly busy and stressful time, but also one that I hope you find exciting and filled with promise — especially for those of you who will be celebrating your graduation at Spring Convocation, June 14-17.

If you need help preparing for your exams, please remember that the **Student Development Centre** < <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca> > is home to a variety of services specially designed to meet the needs of undergraduate and graduate students.

And if you're worried about navigating the transition from being a student to life as a university graduate, the **Student Success Centre** < <http://success.uwo.ca> > offers a host of resources to help you with the next stage in your journey.

Another helpful resource that's available to our students and newly minted graduates is an initiative that's been underway since last November when Western became the first university in Canada to join **Ten Thousand Coffees** — a platform that connects students, recent graduates and professionals with others in their field or area of interest. In another first, Western also surpassed the site's membership metrics in a matter of months.

Thanks to the Western Alumni Association's strong interest in mentorship and fostering a meaningful way to connect alumni and students, the University partnered with Ten Thousand Coffees and created an exclusive Western hub where alumni and students could have meaningful conversations.

The response was extraordinary, with thousands of alumni and students coming together to have one-on-one chats over a coffee, in groups or online. The hub allows members to build their networks, share ideas and challenges, and recruit talent from the Western community.

While most organizations who sign up with Ten Thousand Coffees reach 2,000 to 3,000 members within three years of active promotion, **Western reached its ambitious target of attracting 3,000 members within three months**. This speaks to the power of the Western community and our global network of purple and proud alumni. This tremendous pride sets us apart from other universities time and again.

Students and alumni know that networking and making connections is as important as a strong resume and an intensive job search when launching their careers. That's why we are so grateful for the leadership shown by our Alumni Association in giving our students this opportunity to access mentors who share their Western Experience through this forum. In a job market where 85% of all jobs are not widely posted, these connections are more critical now than ever before.

The virtual aspect of Ten Thousand Coffees breaks geographical barriers, allowing members of the Western community to connect with alumni all over the world; a key attraction not only for today's globally-minded students, but for also for alumni looking to exchange ideas and address challenges with the next generation of leaders and fellow graduates. It is a win-win situation, with both alumni and students gaining knowledge and benefitting from their interactions.

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Joining Ten Thousand Coffees is free and always will be. Students sign-up with their email address while alumni, staff and faculty members can sign-up with their email address or through a LinkedIn account. From there, you simply create a profile and then you can browse a list of members to invite for a career or industry-related conversation, in-person or online. Of course, members are not obligated to respond to every request.

I encourage all Western students, faculty and staff to join and take part in this important initiative. You can learn more at: <https://www.tenthousandcoffees.com/vip/WesternU>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amit Chakma', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Amit Chakma
President & Vice-Chancellor