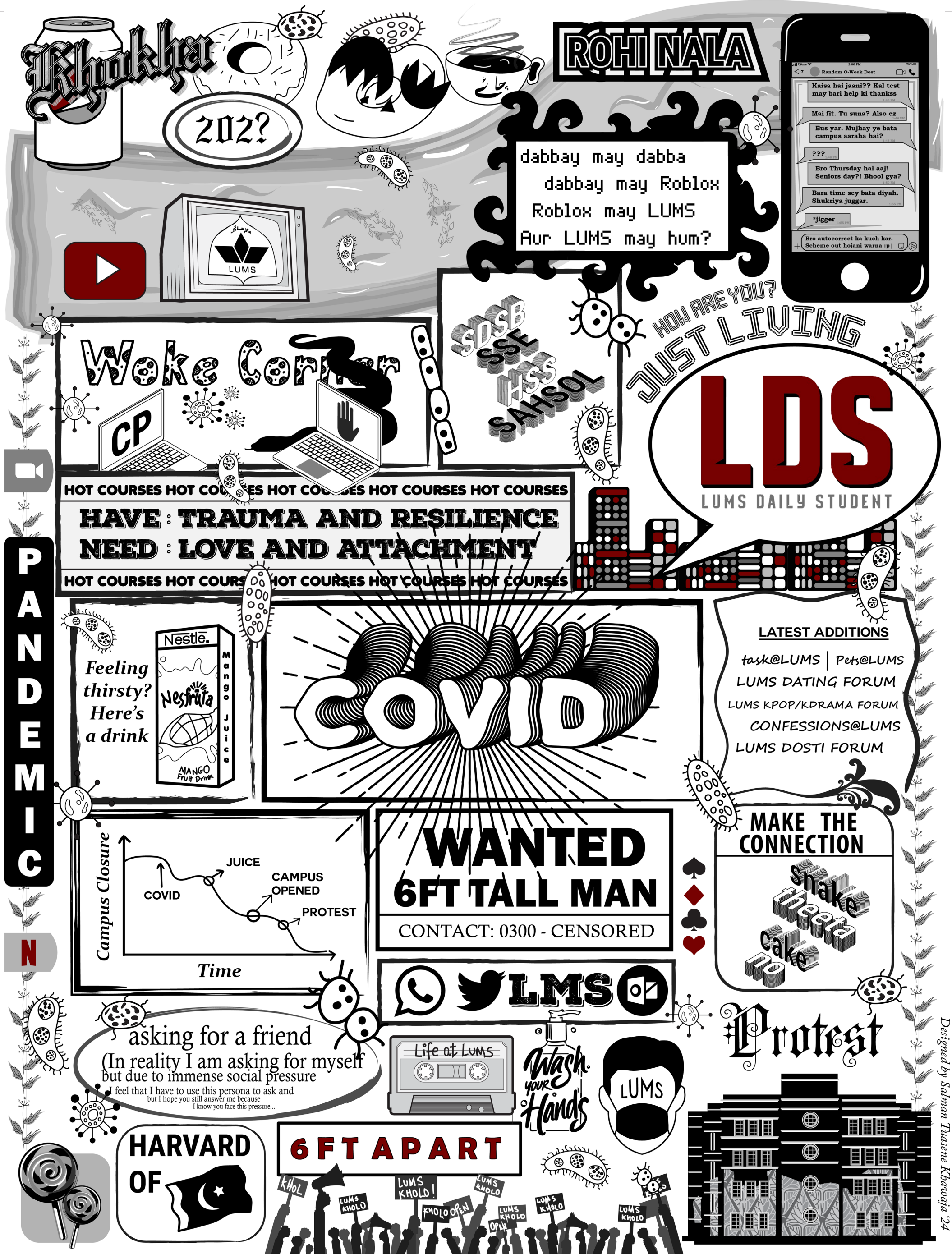


THE LUMS POST

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Issue VII



SPORTS AND TRAVEL

Pedalling, Patriarchy, and Pandemics

by Munema Zabid '24

As the world continues to turn on its axis, the pandemic and the patriarchy are two constants barely loosening their grip on women's lives. Like baking bread or making TikToks, cycling was a popular quarantine past-time: many were inspired to learn from scratch or sit astride their long-forgotten bicycles collecting dust in the garage.

But while the women of LUMS took up cycling as a hobby for fitness or socialisation, the restrictions they faced show how this seemingly normal activity can be inherently radical.

Saleema Aurangzeb '20's neighborhood gatekeeper habitually calls his daughter back home at 4 PM every day, a detail she noticed on her excursions near her home. "I think it's a great eye-opener," she says, "since it helps me focus on nature and to get to know people around me, who we mostly overlook." In addition to escaping the loneliness of lockdown, Aurangzeb '24 mentions how it also distracted her from every day worries.

Therapeutic is the word Ushna Saeed '24 uses to

describe the activity. She adds, "Cycling with others (while following SOPs) helps you make new friends with similar interests and broaden your exposure."

Both these women unanimously prefer cycling in groups over solo, and this isn't just a personal preference. "There is a huge difference in the behaviour of people on the roads when I am cycling alone and when I am cycling with my father or a group," Saeed '24 says. The mistreatment these women face can range from stares and catcalls to endangering their physical safety: she explains how some male drivers make it a point to drive too close by or intentionally block her way.



Ushna Saeed '24

It was a typical day for a young Lahori woman riding her bicycle when she was harassed and injured by a group of men, and this gave rise to the Girls on Bikes rallies with which FemSoc collaborated.

Zeenat Mazhar '20, who started cycling at age four or five, sums up the problem: "People still haven't gotten used to the fact that it's okay for a woman to cycle." "It's about mindsets and accepting the fact that it's okay," Mazhar '20 says, "but insisted on doing it at Mazhar's home. When she asked her why she couldn't cycle in her own neighbourhood, she said she wasn't comfortable doing so. (cont. page 4)

"No one has normalised it here even though we have access to social media and the Internet." "Women cycling is an act of social rebellion because it threatens the idea that a woman should not be out of the house for enjoyment, that that's

dangerous," Professor Nida Kirmani states. The sense of ownership that firmly places them within the 'char dewari' (four walls) is the same one that tracks their movements in public. "If you start cycling," says Mazhar '20, "people would just leave everything that they're doing at the moment to stare at you."

This external pressure was enough to put Saeed '24 and Mazhar '20 off cycling for a few years until they picked it up again during quarantine. The latter says, "Otherwise, I would've never stopped cycling, I know that. I loved it."

However, these women have still carved out their own safe spaces where they can pursue their passion. Mazhar '20 distinguishes between locations that make it easier, particularly the newer, better-developed housing societies in her locality. She says one of her friends was interested in cycling, but insisted on doing it at Mazhar's home. When she asked her why she couldn't cycle in her own neighbourhood, she said she wasn't comfortable doing so. (cont. page 4)

Designed by Salman Tasneem Khroajia '24

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FEATURES

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Zoom, Mute, and Study: How Study Groups Help Students Stay Afloat During a Global Pandemic

by Maryam Narejo '24

At this very moment, I am clicking away on my laptop while being on camera with three of my college friends who have their own assignments to complete. Usually, the idea of sitting in front of a screen for a few hours and communicating with strangers isn't very appealing. However, with Zoom being essential to students' lives over the lockdown, many have developed a bittersweet relationship with the app.

Handling one semester without any on-campus facilities was difficult enough. With the spring semester being partially online, LUMS students have been finding new ways to regain motivation and focus to bring back some form of the college experience to their room's isolation. One way is to organise silent Zoom group studies to create a library-like environment where students can learn and socialise.

Afia Zahoor '23, a sophomore from the Mush-taq Ahmad Gurmani School of Humanities and Social Sciences (MGSHSS) says, "We realised that if Zoom is the medium used for classes, it should be the medium used for studying together as well."

When asked about having to study online in quarantine, Ibrahim Janjua '24, an MGSHSS freshman, answered, "You're already separated from the interactive experience of in-person classes, so you have to do a little extra to find a nice balance. The online studying environment was far from ideal, and with me, I knew I had to do something different to make it work."

Some would find the activity of turning on their cameras, muting their mic, and studying in silence strange. If they needed a quiet corner to study, they could find one. However, the predominant draw of these studies isn't the tranquility but rather the relaxed and informal ambience of typing away at your laptop and then switching to the Zoom app and seeing everyone's head bowed, deep in thought, and continuing your task.

Fatima Abbas Adenwalla '24, an MGSHSS Freshman, says, "I'm very used to the library setting, and I practically lived in the library pre-COVID. It's like an unspoken bond there; we see people studying, we sort of do it together, and we make friends. Because of COVID, it couldn't

happen, but I still wanted the same motivation, so I started study sessions with some people from 9 AM-1 PM, then took a break and started at 4 or 5 PM again."

Ibrahim mentions his study routine, saying, "I did meetings with different individuals/groups and the regularity and exact nature would vary. However, each meeting would have breaks - water breaks or watching a video together, or just talking."

When students have to complete assignments with an ongoing global pandemic, the stress inevitably builds up. Suddenly the simple task of staying focused can seem almost impossible.

Shajee Khalid '23, an MGSHSS sophomore, says, "I tend to zone out or start watching Netflix if I'm staring at a screen for too long. Others being present tends to remind me I'm part of the real world." Having friends around to hold you accountable for being distracted proves to be immensely helpful. Zahoor mentioned, "I used to study in groups back when the semester wasn't online, and when the semester went online, it was harder to focus and motivate myself to study. Having a study partner or partners is great since they keep you accountable."

Not only do these sessions help to keep your focus, but they can be a pleasant source of task management to get checks off of your to-do lists. When asked about the productivity of such Zoom calls, Zahoor says, "In our anthropology study group we would have goals. For instance, finish a session or anthropologist by a set period of time." Not only is it easier to finish tasks, but you learn a thing or two from your peers along the way. She said, "We would teach each other in my anthropology study group, and that would help us a lot. If one of us couldn't get a concept, someone else would explain it."

If organised on a large scale, these Zoom group activities can empower students to build a strong community, motivate each other, and make friends along the way. These silent meetings could help students thrive during this global pandemic and beyond.

Disproportionate Workload Exhausts Female Students

by Aiza Nadeem '24

Just as Amna Riaz '23 would be in a crucial part of her lecture, her mother would beckon from the other room "beta, mez par bartan rakhdou." When guests visit the house, being asked to help out is routine for Riaz, and an ongoing class would not change that. Like so many other women students, Riaz feels compelled to help out, be it to lessen the burden on other family members or purely because it feels like a natural duty. This constant intrusion of chores is at the detriment of Riaz's learning.

The gendered division of chores has always remained a prominent concern for women. Under the multiple stresses of an online semester, however, the issue is exacerbated. University is a haven where so many students can leave their homes for a while and immerse themselves in the bubble that it provides. This is particularly conducive for helping raise student's productivity levels. Like much else, the Pandemic has deprived students (or at least those still off-campus) of this privilege.

Sameen Ahmed '23, is the eldest child in her family. She describes how she has to drive her little sister to school twice a week, which means she has no choice but to sleep early. "This may seem like a trivial concern to anyone else, but it hinders me from staying up late to study." On days where Sameen feels productive, her impending household duties mean most of her energy is invested in helping out.

Aside from helping out with household chores, women students must also bear the brunt of other familial obligations when at home. Aden Zahoor '22 describes to *The Post* how this expectation's pressure adds to an online semester's burden. Her younger siblings all attend online classes, too, and under the virtue of being the eldest, she has to help them with their studies and any struggles they face with technology. She adds, "I have to make sure they behave and attend all their classes and also babysit them if guests are over at our house."

Saba Rehman '21 details her experience with taking classes at home. On a typical day, Rahman is required to help in the preparation of dinner at night. Given her extended presence at home, she is expected to make breakfast for her siblings and

help with other tasks. "I sit in the dining room to take my classes which means I am in everyone's line of sight. Thus, I am frequently interrupted when I am in the middle of a class or a quiz for a chore." Rehman reiterates if she were on campus, she would have the liberty of being away for most of the day so she could give her classes the focus they demand.

All students have felt a lack of regard for online classes. However, the deeper issue at play here is how specifically women students' time and energy are not respected. When women are at home, they are regarded as expendable labor for various household chores. The onus of helping out and serving their families is placed on them. Their education is no longer given the precedence that it deserves. The cramming and multi-tasking which women students subsequently have to do take an enormous toll on their mental and physical health.

Of course, the experiences of students are not a monolith. Some students do not have to participate in chores and do find peace at home to study. However, even if it is a concern for the significant portion who have spoken out, it is certainly worth acknowledging. Perhaps, it should even be a consideration when allocating hostel accommodation.

Riaz is on campus for the spring semester, and she tells *The Post* how that is different for her.

"I feel more independent; I can go out. I know guys feel that way too, but that liberty is extended to them at home too. It is not to girls. I can barely walk down my street." Public spaces are highly gendered, Riaz acknowledges, which is why LUMS, for her, feels like a small bubble where one can have autonomy and independence for a little while.

With no concrete reopening plan that accommodates all students, the online semester's problems appear to be ours for a while still. The gendered divisions of chores are one of many manifestations of a system that deprives women of the same access to time, leisure, and education. As the first anniversary of our confinement to our homes nears, reflecting on the uncomfortable truths it brings along with it becomes necessary.

To Freeze or Not to Freeze?

by Khadija Faruqi '24

Scrolling through the many posts on LDF is always an interesting insight on what the current thoughts and feelings of the LUMS community are - at the beginning of 2021, the one question that appeared to be weighing on many students' minds was whether they should freeze their Spring semester. Although freezing a semester would result in possibly graduating later than they originally intended, it appeared as though a significant number of students felt this consequence was worth it due to the unique opportunities presented by a semester off.

A common reason in most of those interviewed by *The Post* for freezing their semesters relates to how these students feel that due to learning being online, the steep fees that LUMS' charges are unjustifiable. According to Afaq Dar Khan '22, "An online semester is completely unfair, they are charging so much money when getting similar courses online is much cheaper [outside of university]."

Although the Vice Chancellor explained the high fees by saying, "While others have cut back on salaries, our response was to support everyone during difficult times, including those who are most vulnerable such as janitorial staff." Despite the university's explanation, some students still felt a frozen semester seemed like the more financially wise option.

Students also felt that because of remote learning, freezing the semester would not have any social consequences either since they could not meet with friends either way. Affan Naushahi '24 said, "There was no freshman experience to begin with, so I'm not missing out on anything." Other students echoed similar sentiments as Naushahi, with some even suggesting that graduating late and studying an extra semester would be more financially viable and socially gratifying since it would likely be an on-campus semester. Muhammad Ans '24 said, "There are no major repercussions. I didn't feel like wasting my time and money. Even if my academic planning doesn't result in me graduating on time, even graduating late would be worth it because at least I would be on campus at that time."

For many students, however, the decision to freeze the semester was not merely an exercise in avoiding online learning but an opportunity to expand their horizons and gain practical knowledge outside of the university's confines. Whether it provides them with a break from the rigamarole of being a university student or a chance to pursue projects they would not otherwise have the time for, a frozen semester is a unique occasion for experimentation. Humble Abdullah '22, who

froze the semester of Fall 2020 and used the time off to work in his father's business, said about his experience, "I learned a lot...you get a break from the academic routine while also trying new things you normally wouldn't have time for."

Due to LUMS' policies concerning academic hiatuses, the students who choose to freeze their semesters are required to submit an academic plan to the Registrar's Office (RO) before they are permitted to take time off. Naushahi '24 revealed details of this academic plan and said, "The RO (Registrar's Office) sends you excel sheets in which you're supposed to fill out how you're going to make up for the frozen semester. In my case I told them I would take a summer semester and 18 credit hours in another semester." As a result, most of those who undertake semester freezing are acutely aware of the hard work and possible consequences their frozen semester may have.

The most worrying problem faced by freezing students is the possibility of having to graduate later than the rest of their batchmates. While first-year students and sophomores can sidestep such issues by taking summer semesters, it is not as straightforward for juniors and seniors to make up for missed credit hours. Speaking about the issues he faced, Khan '22 revealed, "A possible problem with graduating late is that I will probably miss out on the special career opportunities and recruitment drives which are geared towards seniors since I will [technically] not be eligible for them."

Another consequence faced by those who choose to freeze a semester is adjusting to the academic cycle after their time off. As a result of their sabbatical from formal education, students may find it challenging to once more impose the discipline and academic rigour required of being a full-time university student. Abdullah '22 said, "It has been difficult for me to adjust back into the routine of quizzes and lectures."

The decision to freeze a semester and possibly set back one's academic progress by a significant amount of time is not one that can be taken lightly. Most of the students who went through with freezing their semesters did so with the intention of spending that free time by engaging in activities which would develop their mental, emotional and professional capabilities. Speaking from his experience after freezing Fall 2020, Khan '22 cautioned students who may potentially wish to freeze future semesters and said, "Don't freeze your semester unless you're driven and want to learn a new skill. It's not a light decision so you really need to think it through and freeze it only if you have an objective in mind with regards to how you will spend that time."

Hostel Life During Fall

by Ibrahim Subail Arif '24 and Ahmad Cheema '24

While the majority of students were confined to their homes for online learning, some got the opportunity to live on campus during the fall semester. Their experience was vastly different from the usual campus life at LUMS.

"When I checked in for the hostel and received the booklet for SOPs, I got overwhelmed by the gravity of the situation," says Burhan Tariq '24, a Phase-1 hostelite. He recalls how the campus experience was greatly restricted initially but eased as time went by.

Initially, students were not allowed to leave the campus at all and had to maintain SOPs in a rigorous manner, contrasting with how they are being followed during the ongoing semester. Maira Hassan '22, a Phase-2 hostelite, recalls that the Pepsi Dining Center (PDC) staff would not offer any services if a student was not wearing a mask and would personally remind students at *Khokha* to follow the guidelines. Given the infection curve was at its apex during those times, students grew accustomed to the new normal and were obliged to follow the latest safety regulations.

This strictness had first-year hostelites like Tariq facing extreme difficulty in socialising, primarily during the first twenty-odd days of the semester, which were spent in quarantine. After that, facilities like the Sports Complex became available so students could meet together and play. Senior year students played a significant role in helping first-years socialise: Tariq mentions a welcome party the seniors organised for the first-years' introduction into the university.

By Phase 3, leaving the campus was also allowed, and more students were checked into accommodation at the campus. Most facilities with limited timings (closing as early as 6 in the evening) were negotiated on and adjusted to have facilities close at midnight.

Fall hostelites feel that the primary problem was the price 'hike' introduced by the PDC mid-semester. "This increase was made so ridiculous because ordering from FoodPanda was cheaper than food from PDC," Tariq claimed. Since the hike, the pricing has remained the same. Unfortunately, we were unable to get a comment from the PDC administration regarding this issue.

Hassan reports that most areas on the campus did not have adequate lighting during the nighttime curfew. While primary school buildings would be lit up, avenues connecting those buildings would be left in complete darkness, creating a safety concern. Muhammad Farid Khawaja, Facilities and Engineering Team Leader, says that although the campus was in 'energy-saving mode' during the initial lockdown when Phase 1 hostelites checked in, lighting on campus returned to normal. "If there was any blackout on campus during that time period, it was not a part of our policy but an electrical breakdown which we do not have much control over," Farid added. Hassan also reports a lack of wardens in the female hostels, something that still seems to be a lingering problem during the spring semester.

There are still apprehensions about the campus going back to this scenario if the pandemic situation worsens once more. However, the whole student body hopes that this gradual opening of the campus continues, under the assumption that SOPs are appropriately followed, and pandemic cases do not propagate much. Both Tariq and Hassan find the spring semester to be a significantly different experience compared to the last semester. With most restaurants opened and limited day scholar access instated, it is only a matter of time till campus life comes back to what it looked like before the pandemic.

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ARTS & CULTURE

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Music Preferences in LUMS: A Survey Report on the Listening and Streaming Choices of LUMS Students

by Musa Ali Chaudhry '24

Late last year, I posted a link on the LUMS Discussion Forum to a questionnaire gauging music preferences of the average LUMS student. The survey contained questions pertaining to the respondent's choice of streaming software, favorite genres and styles, and what they felt affected their music taste the most.

Just a disclaimer: the survey had a respectable sample size (n=122), but admittedly, it is not quite representative of the actual LUMS population. For starters, students that are not particularly interested in music were less likely to have responded. Secondly, 35.2% of respondents were freshmen, 30.3% were sophomores, 18.9% were juniors, and merely 9.8% were seniors — not a very accurate cross-section.

Still, the results of the survey were interesting, to say the least. For the more quantitative results, I have taken the liberty to compile an infographic and present the collected data in a more appealing manner. Take a look at it below.

Aside from the data presented, there were also quite a few interesting findings and correlations to be drawn.

It seems that the music preferences of LUMS students are in line with Dr. Robert Cialdini's famous psychological principle of social proofs — the idea that people's behaviors are largely affected by their social surroundings. As such, answers to a question on the survey about mediums affecting music taste showed a significant preference towards social mediums that include not only peer groups, but also online social plat-

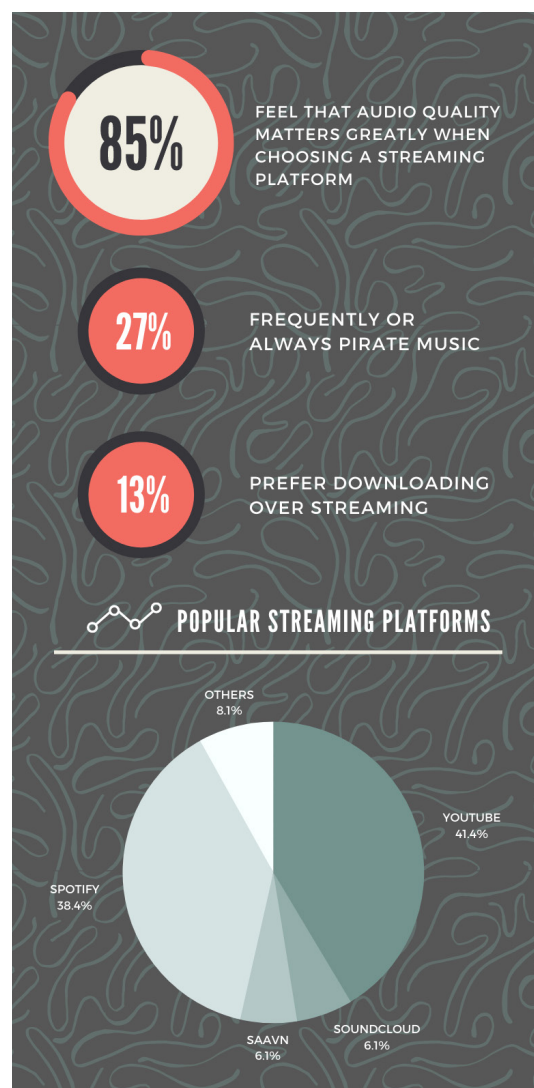
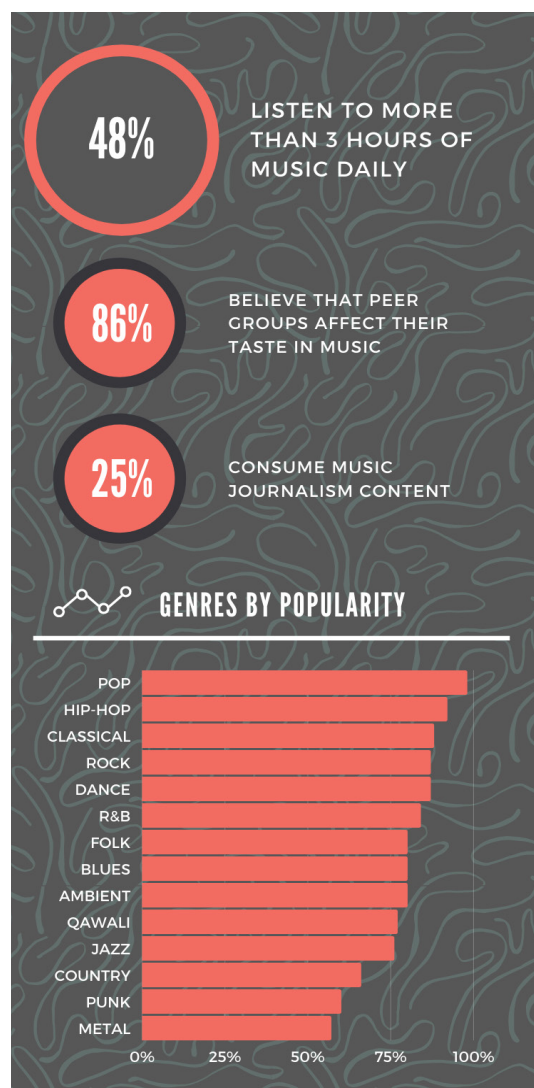
forms; 93% of respondents felt YouTube affected their music taste and 75% felt that Twitter and other social media platforms affected their music taste. In contrast, this percentage was significantly lower for music review platforms (17%), blogs (25%), and music charts (49%) — mediums that are more individualistic than social.

On a lighter — and less academic — note, it appears that the artists and music styles that LUMS students enjoy are highly varied. On a qualitative question asking about respondents' favorite artists, many gave very interesting answers that ranged from K-pop (BTS) to classical piano music (Ludovico Einaudi) to hardcore hip-hop (Kendrick Lamar) to Eastern traditional (Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan).

I thoroughly enjoyed reading through the answers to this question. Most respondents gave a passionate multi-paragraph answer detailing their favorite artists and what they love most about them ("Bayaan... fusing subcontinental music with rock... experimental... well-composed"), but some expressed their love for an act in just a few words ("OMG I LOVE TAME IMPALA!!!!").

In conclusion, it appears that a significant portion of the LUMS population avidly enjoys a wide variety of music, generally prefer to stream, and are very much affected by the taste of their peers and social groups.

PS: to the person who listed King Gizzard, Kendrick Lamar, and Slowthai as their favorite artists, can we be friends?



FEATURE

Sitting Under the Stars: Female Student Residents Share their Experiences of Mobility

by Munema Zabid '24

It is the dead of night, and the sky appears as a seemingly endless expanse of darkness, scattered with an array of tiny sparkles. From the F-2 rooftop, you can hear the low murmur of indie music. If you look closely, there is a group of girls huddled together (armed with a supply of blankets and snacks), seeking a moment of refuge by gazing at the distant sky.

For many women, the LUMS hostels are their only shot at the freedom of mobility and decision-making independence they aren't allowed in their own homes.

"University was always like this idea we had from a young age, right?" says Raniyah Omar '24. A first-year from Karachi, she looked forward to hostel life, but the pandemic marred her plans. "It seems like so much fun. You can go for a walk at night, sit in the cricket ground with your friends and watch the sunrise, or do anything you want."

Mahnour Lali '23, who stayed in the hostels in her first year, supports this view. "LUMS does this really good thing with the hostels where there's no curfew," she says. "I have spent nights outside where I'm out alone in the cricket ground at 2 AM or 3 AM, or with friends, and I feel very safe."

But the benefits of hostel life go much further than just leisure. "There's this realisation of being an individual that comes with being away from home," says Lali '23. "Being a woman and also the

youngest in the house, it's like I was expected to do more stuff inside the house rather than stuff outside the house." Using a credit card and managing her expenses were skills she only learned after making the red-brick dormitories her home.

"These life skills are very important because they help you, and others around you, see that you're capable of handling yourself as an individual," she says. "Being raised in a patriarchal society, you're made to believe that there's so much that you cannot do, that you cannot handle freedom, that you shouldn't be allowed to be free because you wouldn't be able to survive."

These concerns are what Fatima Abbas '24 is currently facing. Prevented from going to university in Canada, she sought an escape in LUMS, but was then forbidden from staying in the hostels. As a result, she says, "I don't think I can function independently. It's a scary idea since I've never had to think of it. That's why LUMS hostels would've been so fun, to navigate my independence on my own terms."

Lali '23 adds, "The girls who never get the chance to develop these things continue to believe that they would not be able to do them. They might not even get the chance to learn because they think there will be someone else to do this for them, and almost always, that someone else ends up being a man."

How Faizan Ahmad Traded his Seat for Stories in the Lahore Metro Bus

by Amna Mazhar '21

Lahore by Metro is a compilation of intimate portraits and stories captured entirely on a smartphone by Lahore-based photographer and storyteller Faizan Ahmad. The photobook brings us stories of ordinary passengers against the backdrop of the Metro Bus. The project deconstructs Lahore's urban landscape's makeup and introduces us to the very people who give it life.

What began as a series of uncharted conversations between strangers is now an impressive collection of over a hundred stories from 27 bus stations across the city. Inspired by Humans of New York, Ahmad headed out each day for five years and recorded his conversations with fellow passengers on the Lahore Metro Bus. He soon discovered extraordinary accounts of bravery, resilience, and compassion that he resolved to share with the world.

Ahmad, currently based in Lahore, is a proud member of the LUMS community. He worked as a Research Assistant on campus before turning to photojournalism full-time. Ahmad now writes for several local and international newspapers. He recently launched his photobook, Lahore by Metro, on the crowd-funding platform Kickstarter.

Ahmad grew up in Basirpur, a small town in Punjab, and only moved to Lahore to pursue higher education in 2013. At the time, he lived in his brother's office, which was occupied during the day—pushing him to take frequent trips in an attempt to explore the city. The Metro Bus proved to be an efficient and affordable way to travel. He would often strike up a conversation with fellow passengers during the long bus ride to and from college. "At times, I would become so engrossed in their stories that I would end up missing my station," Ahmad said. He soon realised that the passengers in the Metro Bus were not just Lahoris as he had expected but people from all over the country. Most passengers he met were either working-class migrants or first-time visitors in the big city, and each one of them carried with them a story worth telling.

seat to passengers he would later pick up a conversation with. "Many times, I broke the ice by



carrying their luggage for them." Ahmad believes, "Lahoris are known for how talkative they can be. After just a bit of small talk, they would open up to me with an honesty that surprised me at times. The fact that I was fluent in Punjabi helped break down the ice tremendously. They viewed me as just a student living in a big city for the first time." Ahmad credits this comfort for himself and his subjects to using a mobile phone to take photos instead of a large professional camera in the restricted space of a bus.

The result was a collection of rich and deeply touching stories. "These stories might not be worthy of primetime television, but they are equally meaningful. They serve as a beautiful reminder that we as a people face similar challenges and foster similar dreams." Ahmad reminded us. "The story the media tells about Pakistan and its common people has been largely overtaken by political, religious, and capitalistic discourse for the past two decades. The average person is represented by numbers, not by the stories they live every day," Ahmad added. "It was important to me that as we mapped the city, we did not forget about the people who are its backbone in that they make up a major chunk of its backbone." The passengers on the metro bus are mostly laborers and migrants who have traveled to Lahore to find work. Their stories are easily made invisible under the guise of being ordinary. Ahmad wished to portray an



At the same time, Ahmad began to frequent the art section in public libraries. There he would read through shelf after shelf of photobooks and taught himself the craft of street photography. It is a practice he continues today to build up his skillset.

"I was deeply moved after each conversation, and I wanted to remember it. The stories had such a lasting impact on me that I started recording them. I wanted to photograph them too, but at the time, I could not afford a camera, and I only had a cheap android phone, so I started practicing my photography on my cell phone," Ahmad told *The Post*.

The diversity of people Ahmad discovered around the Metro Bus ecosystem took him by surprise. "I realised certain groups of people dominate the crowds at certain locations. I always found a congregation of students around certain bus stations beside the MAO college. Similarly, near the Datta Sahib station, I never failed to run into elderly passengers who were devotees on their way to pay their respects at the Sufi shrine. It was there that I photographed an elderly couple. I found that to be the most endearing of my photographs: every two minutes, the wife would lean over to her husband and ask, "Thak ta nai gy ho? Datta sahib any wala hai."

Naturally, not every person he interviewed was comfortable with sharing their story publicly or even with being photographed. As the photographer, Ahmad felt it was his responsibility to make his subjects feel at ease in his presence. He did so by introducing himself or often offering his

image of Lahore that was youthful and energetic but, most importantly, inclusive—that welcomed anyone as long as they had a story to tell.

Ahmad also shared some of his favorite stories with *The Post*. One of the most memorable pieces in the book includes the story of a rickshaw driver who fell in love in his mid-forties. He would secretly exchange letters with a woman he later discovered was Christian by faith. It seemed impossible for them to be together, but they struggled on and found a way to be together. They now live the life of their dreams in Lahore.

The book also shares the extraordinary story of a man who met his father for the first time at the age of fifty-two. His father had left Pakistan to find work when he was only a few months old. He was proud that in all his time abroad, his father never married again, "He didn't start another family while living very far from us for many decades. We have always been his only family", he told Ahmad.

"The stories that stand out to me the most are those of families and people coming together," Ahmad said. And that is exactly what Lahore by Metro offers. As we flip through the book, we become acquainted with more than just face—mere subjects to a photographer. These portraits also carry the voice of the people photographed. They speak to us from beyond the page, and we, too, wait along with Ahmad, listening for the hydraulic hiss of the bus's double doors, wondering who waits for us on the other side.

Reader's Editor

In keeping with the internationally recognized practice of journalism, *The Post* has its own internal ombudsman — *The Post Reader*. The idea is to attend to our readers' complaints and respond to them professionally. PRE is the investigative authority, to which all complaints are referred, and it is PRE who takes notice of any alleged violations of *The Post's* code of ethics. Email: postreaderseditor@outlook.com

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Sitting Under the Stars (cont.)

Years of living with these restrictions has a lasting impact on these women's personalities. Zara* '23 mentions that the process of getting permission to go out was incredibly arduous and unfulfilling. "I just realised it's so much better to not go out," she says, "I don't like how this has turned me into a person who hardly leaves her room."

"In LUMS, I came across a different side of me that I didn't know existed. I was much more outgoing," she adds.

Maliha* '23, too, was looking forward to hostel access to become more extroverted, something she is discouraged from at home. "Everyone either babies me too much, or when there's a chance, there's a lot of bitter feelings involved from stricter members of the family."

These restrictions also extend to her professional ambitions since she cannot pursue music as a career or stay back in the evenings to attend the Music Society's events. Having to fight to be who she wants and being threatened by her family takes a toll on her mental health.

"I keep thinking of all these opportunities of growth that were taken from me because of this fear ingrained in me," she says. "I was always in this mixture of feelings where I felt indebted to my family and at the same time, feared how they could also stop me from living any time they feel like I'm getting out of their control."

But familial constraints aren't the only reason LUMS is a safe space. Omar '24 also points out the communal feeling of greater acceptance. "If you wanted to leave your house at 2 AM to watch the stars, your mom would be like, 'Are you insane?' But [on campus], not only would you be able to walk out of your hostel and do that, there would probably be other people doing the same," she reasons.

"We're all in this 'bubble' together, and we're all experiencing our individual freedoms and independence together."

**These names have been changed for the sake of anonymity.*

SPORTS & TRAVEL

LUMS Cricket Team Conquers Multan

by Salman Tuasene Kharwaja '24

On January 10, the LUMS Cricket Team (LCT) embarked on an unofficial tour to Multan.

With the recent relaxation of social distancing laws, LCT had begun training. It was after a few practice matches that the captains felt the need to go on a tour. "This was done so that the new players could gel in with the team," said Huzaifa Nasir '21, captain of the cricket team.

The trip would be the first trip LCT would make to this vicinity to play a two-match series against Al-Insaaf Cricket Academy, one of the most renowned cricket clubs in Multan.

Gathering the team was another feat. "LUMS and the Sports Wellness and Recreation (SWR) have been very clear in discouraging such activities," said Rojeh Sheikh '22. In SWR's official statement to The Post, they said, "Outdoor and limited indoor activities are allowed as per SOPs provided by the LUMS COVID Committee. Any planned activity or competitions will again have to be pre-approved by the COVID committee and given the current situation, it is unlikely at this stage."

With precaution at the forefront, the captain explained all the SOPs the team would follow on this trip. This led to 14 players who ensured they would abide by all the guidelines set by the captain to ensure safety and wellbeing of everyone involved. This team consisted of players gathered from all over Pakistan, including Lahore, Karachi, Quetta and Islamabad. The team also consisted of first-year students who had recently joined the team and wished to make their mark.

The opportunity that LCT received was akin to a blessing. *The Post* was informed that other LUMS teams, such as the girls football team, had last met in October 2020. Sports, like cricket, which, according to the players, do not require much physical interaction are much easier to play while practising social distancing.

COVID had dawned upon Pakistan in March 2020. Therefore, this match was LCT's first one as a team in 9 months. The added thought of Al-Insaaf Cricket Academy having home advantage was unnerving.

Ultimately, though, the match worked out in LCT's favour. The team achieved a score of 214 in 30 overs due to a partnership of 100+ runs between Naimatullah Idreesi '24 and Vice-Captain Omer Abdullah '21. LCT bowled out the opposition under 150, thanks to brilliant spells by fast bowlers Jameel Khan '22 and Abdus Samad '22, winning by a staggering 70 runs.

LCT vs Al-Insaaf Cricket Academy played the second match on January 13. "It was one of the coldest days of this winter," said Haider Sheikh '21. LCT decided to bowl first and fielded 30 overs in 7°C with heavy winds flowing to and fro. "LCT bowled exceptionally well under tough conditions, bowling out the opposition at a mere 135," said Sheikh '21.

LCT effortlessly chased the target with five overs to spare. Muhammad Shujee '22 played a brilliant unbeaten knock to bring the team home.

LCT bagged the trophy with a 2-0 series win, the first of the season. Captain Huzaifa Nasir '21 and VC Omer Abdullah '21 were lauded for their brilliant leadership skills and for ensuring that their team had followed all SOPs during travel. LCT had praise for Al-Insaaf Cricket Academy; "They were good hosts, were friendly and made sure fair play and spirit of the game was maintained," said Idreesi '24.

The Post reached out to other sports teams at LUMS and found out some of them, such as the Volleyball Team, were having activities/matches unofficially as well.

"I think as long as they are following the SOPs, it's fine. We should try to go back to normal as much as possible," said Mir Nausherwan Shahid '23. Our normal might have changed, but it seems that those affected are trying their best to adapt. While in Multan, LCT stayed at the Grand Hotel. The team was careful in ensuring social distancing, going as far as allocating two players per room.

Cricket was not the only thing that had conquered LCT's mind. Given the opportunity, the team went on a day trip to the Damdama of Multan. LCT also spent their time enjoying the cuisine of Multan. "From Shah Jahan grill to Laal Haweli, we visited and enjoyed every place," said Muhammad bin Qasim Shamsi '24. The team also enjoyed a more relaxed tape ball cricket they held where among playing, healthy banter and team bonding took place.

"While we were staying, I thought maybe the seniors wouldn't be very friendly, and there would be a barrier between us, but each day, I learnt something from each one of them," said Idreesi '24.

It seems that for LCT, nothing was going to get in the way of their sportsman spirit. LCT took a risk, and in the end, they managed to win and bring back a trophy.



The LUMS Cricket Team (LCT)

Send your Letters to the Editor at:

dailystudent@lums.edu.pk
21020101@lums.edu.pk (Maira Asaad, Editor-in-Chief)

Letters may be edited for purposes of clarity and space and should carry the writer's roll number and city.

FEATURE

Finding Alternative Spaces for Friendship and Love in the Pandemic

by Aiza Nadeem '24

Sharing the same dorm with someone, riding the same elevator, sitting on the same library table, or simply sharing the same physical space with someone is no longer and has not been a reality for most people in the pandemic. This has meant that online communication modes and connecting with people have thrived over more 'organic' means of linking with people. Recent Facebook groups for LUMS students and alumni have strived to do exactly that.

The LUMS Dating Forum became the project of Muhammad Usama '20 after posts he made for a friend wanting to go on a blind date received considerable traction on LDF. Encouraged by the response, Usama and a group of friends started the Dating Forum as a joke initially, and it has grown to encompass nearly 3000 members today. Speaking of how the pandemic influenced the group's popularity, Usama told *The Post*, "LUMS students do not like limited social interaction, so the group was bound to be well-received." The group's popularity blossoms in lucrative times such as Valentine's Day when blind date posts rocket and people become somewhat more conscious of a need for romantic relationships.

However, romantic ties are not all that these Facebook groups have to offer. When she realised her best friend would be alone on campus for the spring semester, Wardah Noor '23 observed the need for space online for people who wanted to form platonic relationships. Aply, the LUMS Dosti forum was created as a safe space where people who felt the same way could connect with others.

The group has helped students find friendships in an otherwise lonely time and led to other small

communities forming. Maryam Jabeen '24 describes how the group helped her, a first-year, find friends. First-years like Jabeen have had limited, if any, on-person social interaction to ground them in LUMS. The group provides them an avenue to find people with whom they identify.

For those in search of more serious commitment, The Rishta Forum is the perfect space. The venture of Hamna Azam '21, the group was established during the beginning of the lockdown in March 2020. Azam became invested in creating a forum when she noticed many of her friends being ushered into accepting matches that were not entirely happy. "At the beginning, most people, even my friends, mocked me for it calling me a 'Rishta aunty,' but the group helped people find matches." With over 4000 members, LUMS Rishta Forum boasts twelve successful matches. When the interview was conducted, Azam was preparing to attend the wedding of yet another member.

The success of these groups raises questions about what exactly counts as an 'organic' connection today. According to Noor, "As long as the pandemic is a reality for us, these groups remain the primary source for forming connections." With only a portion of the student body on campus, limited day scholar access (and a ban on most dating apps), these forums provide a unique way to bond with people to fill the bottomless void of social interaction the pandemic has left us.

**The name has been changed at the request of the student.*

Regulation or Censorship?

by Zainaab Basil '24

The last two semesters have, undoubtedly, harboured an increasingly tumultuous relationship between the student-body and the administration. With confusing government directives, conflicting official statements, and the holy grail-esque 'infection curve', these two parties have been at odds consistently, each insisting that the other has failed them.

One of the lower points in this relationship came during the beginning of Spring 2021, with the sudden announcement that all hostelites would not be accommodated, even after they had been assigned room numbers, packed their bags, and booked their flights, following a change in the percentage of population allowed back by the HEC. The backlash to this change was prominent; a portion of the student body immediately mobilized to protest. Following one such show of protest during a town hall held on Sunday, 21st January, an email was sent out to the LUMS Community from the Provost's office, containing what can be described as an effort to address the growing tensions and anger expressed by the student body. The email began with a reiteration of the pandemic's severity, and description of the measures they had taken to address students' concerns, including the creation of a 'Special Requests Committee.' It then went on to address students' conduct in the digital sphere. "However, some students are anonymously spreading lies by taking comments from discussions out of context and a narrative of blame is being circulated on social media," the email read, followed by, "we draw your attention to the Student Code of Conduct that highlights integrity, pluralism, and academic freedom... These standards encompass the responsible use of social media and students will be held accountable for defamatory statements about the institution and its members as well as acts of online harassment and cyber-bullying."

While it remains understandable that the administration's intention with this email was to prevent further escalation, along with preemptively addressing the possibility of unverified, exaggerated claims inflicting reputational damage, the way these directives were phrased remains dubious. Instead of providing some much-needed clarity, it only gave rise to additional questions. What exactly is 'a defamatory statement'? Is the categorization of these reliant on legal notions, or is it entirely up to subjective interpretation? More-

over, does this mean LUMS will now be policing student's private social media accounts, which are meant to provide avenues for unfiltered expression? Will this eventually lead to an environment where our students will also be penalized for creating memes, such as those from another local institution several years ago? By virtue of being a student at an institution, one can derive that there may be a particular affinity and loyalty towards it. However, the question about whether this can or should be enforced remains. Understandably, conversations within official channels must be regulated, and it is unfortunate that some stakeholders, from both sides of the aisle, seemed to have stepped beyond the confines of respectfulness. However, extending these rules to unofficial spaces, such as the LUMS Discussion Forum Facebook group, which is entirely student-run, or even more divorced groups, may lead to further backlash and deterioration of an already precarious situation.

Currently, the position seems to have stagnated. Day Scholars regained access, albeit limited. A large amount of the hostelite population was also housed. However, the prominent surge in cases meant that this access was also, eventually, revoked. This time around, there were no significant protests, given that the threat was clear to the entire community and the government directives authorizing these changes were largely publicized. Regardless, however, it seems as though the dynamics within the LUMS community have been permanently altered. It is perhaps imperative that with this shift to a digital realm, LUMS creates policies that clearly define the parameters of its ability to regulate online content, whilst also ensuring that it continues to provide this rare safe space of free expression to its students which is what has always set LUMS apart.

Finally, it must also be noted that the very reason this conflict stemmed was due to the need for the entire community to fulfil the social obligation to prioritize health and safety over all else. This is crucial today as well. The statistics are, once again, set on a dangerous trajectory. While grievances do remain — and must be addressed eventually — the current effort must be directed towards the health crisis at hand. It is imperative that everyone follow SOPs, practice social distancing and get vaccinated as soon as possible.

Peddalling, Patriarchy, and Pandemics (cont.)

Saeed '24, on the other hand, attributes her continued persistence to the two cycling clubs she is a part of, as well as her friends who are willing to ride with her. She frequents Jinnah Garden, and mentioned an upcoming visit to the Lahore Fort with her group.

with other female cyclists helps Saeed '24 build courage and bond with them. "It's a beautiful little community that cyclists have formed in Lahore," she says.

Cycling groups provide not only physical safety but also emotional support. They plan routes that are safe for women, and sharing her experience

Although deeply-rooted mindsets may take a while to change, women are still free to safely engage in their small rebellions while doing what they love, one bicycle ride at a time.