

FOSSA

NO. 19



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What Is Black History Month

This month serves as a time to recognize and honor the **history**, **achievements**, and **contributions** of Black people that have shaped Canada and the world. Celebrating Black History Month is important because it raises awareness of the struggles against racism and inequality, highlights Black excellence, and inspires action toward **equity**, **inclusion**, and a **more fair society**.

THE WEIGHT OF BELONGING: BEING BLACK IN SCIENCE AND HEALTH

EDII

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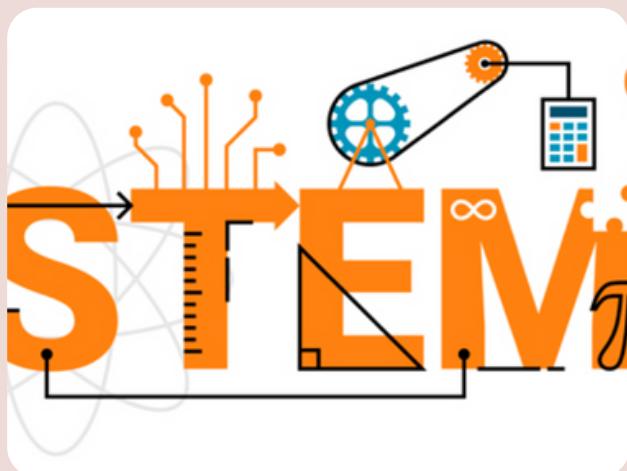


These experiences are situated within broader inequities that continue to affect those who look like me, inequities rooted in a history where Black people were denied autonomy, dignity, and basic rights, and where equality in Canada was not constitutionally affirmed until 1982, with segregated schools remaining open until 1983 (Department of Justice Canada, 2025). These structural legacies remain evident today, particularly in healthcare, where Black women experience disproportionately high rates of maternal morbidity and mortality due not to biological difference but to systemic racism, medical bias, and the persistent dismissal of Black voices, harms reinforced by the continued lack of Black representation among healthcare providers, researchers, and decision-makers. When those designing research, delivering care, and shaping policy do not reflect the communities most affected, socioeconomic barriers are compounded, and disparities in disease prevalence, diagnosis, and treatment are allowed to persist.

"You can be anything you put your mind to" was something instilled in me from a young age, and eventually, I decided that I would become a metaphoric superhero, using science and healthcare to help people and make a difference. What I did not yet understand was why that vision felt so disconnected from individuals who looked like me, or why so few Black faces occupied the spaces I dreamed of one day entering. As I grew older, that absence became clearer, and the belief I was raised with began to be tested as differences became increasingly hypervisible in academic and scientific environments.



Being a Black student in science and health spaces often carries an unspoken pressure to perform, represent, and endure, while simultaneously having to justify one's presence. It is being aware that walking into a room can invite assumptions before a single word is spoken, that competence may be questioned more readily, and that mistakes can feel less permissible. This constant awareness creates an added layer of emotional and intellectual labour, where excellence is not only expected, but required to counter perceptions that should never exist in the first place. This is precisely why representation in STEM and healthcare is essential: when Black perspectives are absent, research, care, and innovation fail to reflect the realities of entire communities. My aim is not to prove that I belong, but to contribute meaningfully, to claim space, and to participate in reshaping systems that have historically excluded us.



FEBRUARY 10-12TH
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Pot

Painting

February 3rd | 7-9pm
Science Atrium

Fall Challenge

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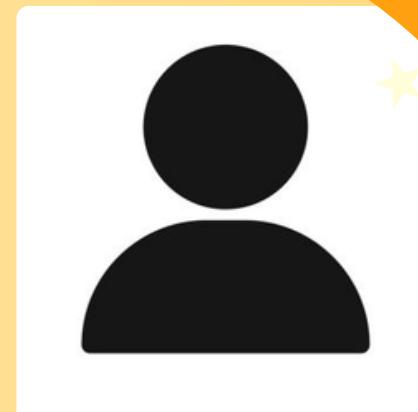
Congratulations!



AYLA KILIC



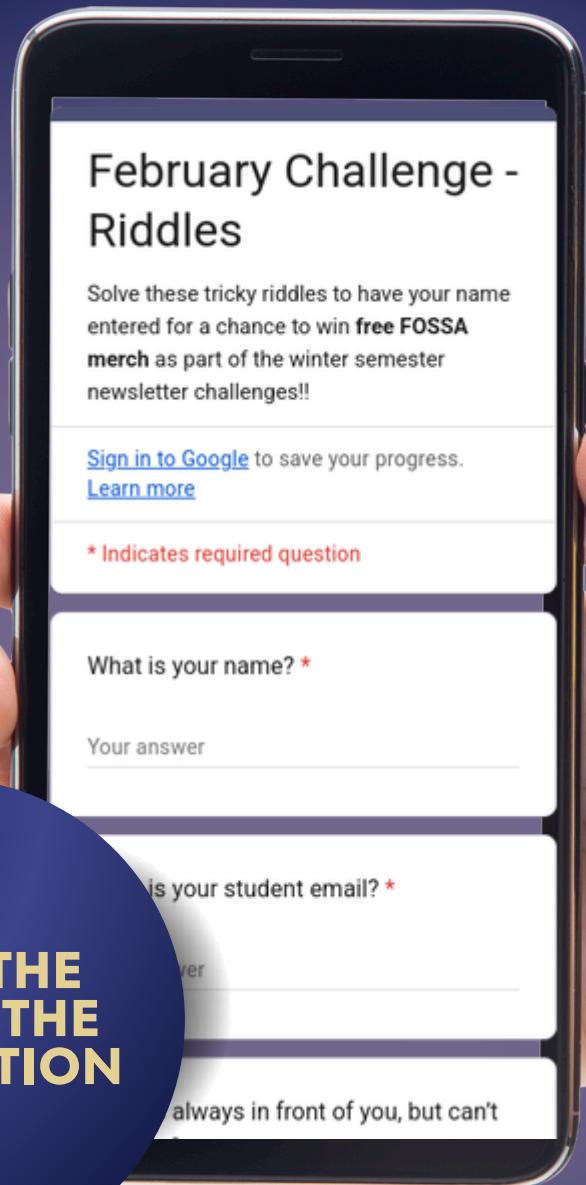
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ALYNA GANGJI

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February Challenge



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RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

ARSH VERMA

4TH YEAR | HEALTH SCIENCE



Summary of Research:

This past spring term, I had the privilege to work with Dr. Travers and Dr. Dewitte-Ore as a directed study student. Our project involved designing a graduate-level course for the Master's Health Sciences program at Wilfrid Laurier University. The outcome was a new course titled HE601B – Interdisciplinary Approaches to Health Sciences, designed to teach students to critically evaluate and address complex health issues through an interdisciplinary lens. The end goal was to generate a comprehensive draft syllabus and create a set of learning tools that would help graduate students develop their interdisciplinary reasoning, complemented by analytical, collaborative, and research skills.

Each week, three student researchers, including myself, were assigned to locate and summarize three scholarly articles relevant to a given topic. Then, other students on the research team synthesized the literature into accessible, teachable content. This included weekly lecture slides, assessment tools (e.g., iClicker questions), and supplementary resources such as group participation activities or curated educational videos (e.g. TED Talks).

I was also tasked to come up with new ways to assess graduate-level students, refraining from standard methods of testing such as weekly quizzes and more toward oral-based participation activities. Hence, this directed studies project required me to develop skills in distilling complex information into digestible teaching material and forging content that encouraged deep learning within a collaborative, immersive setting.

CLUB SPOTLIGHT



LAURIER KINESIOLOGY KOUNCIL

Kin Kouncil is a dedicated group of students who aim and continuously look for new ways to expand, learn, and grow within our tight knit community. Through networking and academic events we strive to bring the best experiences possible to Kinesiology and like-minded students. Promoting the development of relationships between not only peers in the classroom, but students in all years, as well as assisting to strengthen the student-staff relationships through a variety of events, Kin Kouncil aims to be the guiding hand in all of our members' successes.



NATIONAL
ORGAN DONOR DAY

FEBRUARY 14, 2026

