

# THE VOICE

## MAGAZINE

Vol 11 Issue 38  
September 17, 2003

### Conventional U vs DE

Ever wondered what you are missing?

### Sports Solutions for AU

Does DE mean you can't compete?

### Donating my body to science

Exploring the other side of research

### *The first ever Voice writing contest!*

Win scholarship dollars and become a  
published writer! Details inside...

NEW COLUMN: THE NET NERD'S GUIDE

Plus: Canadian FedWatch!, Flicks & Folios,  
Dear Sandra, and news, announcements and  
opportunities from your university and beyond.

# THE VOICE

Sep 17, 2003

Volume 11, Issue 38

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**We love to hear from you! Send your letters to [voice@ausu.org](mailto:voice@ausu.org), and please indicate if we may publish your letter in the Voice.**

To the editor:

A couple of things regarding the article on federal student loans ([Fedwatch, September 10, 2003 - v11 i37](#)). First off, who do we contact to complain? How about some e-mail addresses, telephone numbers, etc.? Rally us, just don't stand there and wring your hands.

Secondly, I work for one of the Four Big Banks as a lender and investment specialist and it has been my experience of both federal and provincial loans that a fair number (the majority?) of students view these loans as "free money." Some students get loans knowing full well they plan on going bankrupt once school is done so they can avoid repaying the loans. I have even had a student tell me its not fair that student loans cannot be included in a bankruptcy! I was pleased to hear that because whoever spends the money, needs to held responsible for its repayment. In addition, bankrupt, unpaid, delinquent, or "settled" accounts prevent a person from qualifying for loans of any sort, including vehicle and mortgages loans. The government was making these loans to help people go to school not so people could go to school for free.

In addition, to protesting as students we need to be looking for ways to earn a living, alternative financing for our education, and most of all fiscal responsibility. I am not a financial planner but I am willing to help those looking for financial counselling the benefit of my experience including directing them to reputable credit counseling services.

Regards,  
Lance

***Here's your rally call! Everybody, read Fedwatch! from September 3, 2003, v11 i36 for a call to arms and links to find your local government contacts so that you can take action. Make a pest of yourself :)***

***Also, I have a query... do readers feel that mature students view student loans differently from younger students?***

## THE VOICE

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**THE VOICE ONLINE:  
[WWW.AUSU.ORG/VOICE](http://WWW.AUSU.ORG/VOICE)**

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# EDITORIAL PAGES

## THIS WEEK

**NEW COLUMN:** Check out the Net Nerds internet picks.

**CONVENTIONAL VIS-À-VIS DISTANCE EDUCATION** - Wayne Benedict gives us his unique perspective on the two types of university study. If you have ever wondered what you are missing by going to AU, read Wayne's article and see traditional university through the eyes of an adult student accustomed to distance study.

**SPORTS SOLUTIONS FOR AU STUDENTS** - Most of us take it for granted that attending AU means we won't have access to sports or athletic facilities, but you can always search our opportunities in your area, and round out your studies. Shannon Maguire has tips and links to get you started.

**DONATING MY BODY TO SCIENCE** - Debbie Jabbour joins a research project as a test-subject and explores the other side of scientific study.

## UPDATE TO INVISIBLE WOMEN

Last week, Stacey Steel talked about the plight of the Aboriginal woman in Canada in 'Invisible Women.' The following link is an update on the case of the 12-year-old Native girl who was sexually assaulted by three Caucasian men in Saskatchewan. One of them men in question was given a 2 year conditional sentence. Comments from the judge are included in the article:

[http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/1062871751657\\_40//](http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/1062871751657_40//)

## You never know what's coming...

First, I'd like to apologize to anyone I have not responded to in the last few days. I'll get to you, I promise. Sometimes life blindsides you, and it takes a while to catch up. Bear with me...

On Friday morning I heard the news that actor John Ritter had died. I was not a particularly big fan - I haven't watched his new show. I sat through a few minutes once, but found the obnoxious teenaged characters more infuriating than endearing, so I turned to something else. Of course I watched plenty of *Three's Company* growing up. Who didn't?

I was shocked to hear the details of his death. From my understanding he was a perfectly healthy man in the prime of his life who succumbed suddenly to an undetectable weakness in his heart that had, perhaps, been lurking for years. He might have died sooner - or he might have lived to be a very old man. No one knows what set it off.

When I hear a story like this, I can't help but think about how fragile life is. I thought about his wife, and how she would have had no idea when he left the house that morning, that her husband would be dead in a few hours. Death is hard, no matter how it comes, but when people are sick you get prepared for the end. When it comes with no warning, it shakes you to the core. You start to wonder who might go next, and life suddenly seems very unfair.

Little did I know when I was thinking about John Ritter's untimely death that the very next day I would know firsthand just how unpredictable and unfair life is.

Let me start by saying that my husband and I are cat people. Some people hate cats. Some seem to hate animals in general. I don't get that, and it disturbs me to meet these types.

We love our cats more than anything in our lives. My first cat was with me for fourteen years, and when he had to be put down from kidney disease, it pulled the rug out from under me. To cope, I immediately bought a new kitten - a starved, tiny little ragamuffin from a disreputable shop in our neighbourhood [now closed] who had been brought in from a farm at only 4 weeks of age. When we walked in the store, she climbed up on my husband's shoulder and would not get down. We had to take her, she left us no choice.



The pet store fed the infant kittens nothing but cheap, dry food, and cautioned me to do the same [to prevent diarrhoea. What idiots!]. As a result, my kitten had serious bowel trouble - she would shudder and strain and cry out in her litter box, and bleed quite heavily from her bottom. The vet said not much could be done but to give her lots of moist food, so we did, and in about 8 weeks it was all cleared up, though she had a slightly funny looking bum. Now I wonder how much damage was done to her insides from this totally unsuitable diet. Tiny Cleo also had severe ear mites, worms, and some sort of skin fungus that looked like elephant skin [it only cropped up a couple of days after we got her and we could not bear to give her up. Anyway, we found out later that this store routinely drowned kittens who did not sell.]. Her fur was so thin she was almost bald on her belly, and she was far too small for her 7 weeks. The vet washed her down, squirted sticky stuff in her ears, down her throat and up her bottom, and took a bit of the fungus for tests, leaving that tiny little leg in a thick blue cast-like bandage. It cost quite a bit too.

She was the saddest sight you could imagine, but all of the treatments worked and she got well and she grew strong and healthy with the lushest, softest coat of any cat I've known. All her life she carried her tail curled high over her back, almost touching her head, like a Husky dog. She was more loving than any cat I've known too. Nothing pleased her more than to make us happy, and her favourite place was on my husband's lap, where she would sit for hours as he worked. She was trained to use her scratching post on command [which came in real handy when training our next kitten, and it never failed to impress visitors] and all I had to do was to glance at that post or tap it with my finger, to make her come running to scratch madly while looking over her shoulder at me to see if I was pleased with her. Nothing made her happier than pleasing us. She'd purr if you said she was a good girl. She could be bitchy to me at times though, as she was very jealous about my husband spending time with another girl.

I used to say that Cleo had no bones - just fur and stuffing. When you would pick her up she was light and soft and silky, without any hard edges. She would go totally soft in our arms, and trusted us completely. I could drop down onto my haunches and pretend to drop her and she would not even stiffen. She loved to be held, and would stand on her hind legs and reach up with her paws to be lifted up under the arms like a toddler. I could not go down to the kitchen for a cup of coffee without her running in to be picked up.



People who do not have pets never get it, but our little Cleo was our treasure and our little girl. We don't want children, but she made us into a family. Our second cat, Lurch, is beautiful, but he's not a people cat. Cleo loved us [especially my husband] so much that the whole house felt warm and alive. She was always in the room with one of us, and we never ate a meal without her nearby. It's easy to get used to being so adored.

I wish I could tell you what happened, but I don't know. On Saturday at about 7:00 pm she was frisky and happy - only four years old and so healthy. We gave her some of her favourite canned food and she was excited and ate with gusto.

An hour later, she threw up - hard. But we didn't think too much of it. Cat's do that. Another hour later my husband found her, in deep shock, on the concrete floor of the basement. Her sides were heaving and she was unable to stand. She tried, but her hind end buckled. Her feet were cold as ice, and she threw up again, but didn't move out of it. We knew it was very, very bad, and rushed her to the emergency vet. We could not comprehend what could make an animal so sick so fast. She nearly died before we could get her there. Thirty minutes later we were finalizing plans to have her put down. The vet thinks it might have been a heart defect, or an internal rupture [I think it might have had to do with her early bowel problems, though it never caused her any trouble in her adult life].

It's been just over a day as I write this, and I still don't understand how something can be so healthy one minute, and in shock and dying an hour or so later, but John Ritter proves that it can happen to people too. We were willing to pay any cost to have her healed. That was not the issue. When Ritter died, the news stations were all asking, "What could have been done to save him?" We get so accustomed to thinking that doctors can fix most anything, but sometimes they just shake their heads and tell you "it's just one of those things."

So my message is that once in a while we need a reminder that life is too short, you can't count on anything, nothing lasts forever, and some things can never be replaced. I won't suggest that you all go out and live each day like it's your last. That's not practical, and it's too akin to mania. But do sit down once in a while and re-evaluate your life and ask - am I on track? Am I doing enough to further my goals? Take a look at what you do in your free time too. I know *Canadian Idol* and *The Bachelor* are 'must see TV', but when you are on your deathbed, do you want to do the calculation and figure out that you spent nine years of your life watching TV? Many people do. Check the link if you don't believe me. What could you do with an extra nine years! Hell, you really could earn a doctorate in your spare time! I bet no one will be on their deathbed thinking, "I'm glad I watched all ten seasons of *Survivor*."



Most importantly, ask this: if I lost everything tomorrow, what would I miss the most? Whatever that is, take a few minutes to appreciate it. Think, too, about the urge to buy more, to have more things, and to overwork yourself to secure your future. Your life is now. If it's not fun and exciting, change it. Buy a book on the practice of Zen. It's not as namby pamby as you might think. I'll sum it up for you: most people spend most, if not all of their lives thinking about the past or the future. But life only

happens now. Living in any other time is futile. Zen also teaches that we are almost never fully aware of what we are doing, which is why it's so easy to regret how we spent our time later on.

I'm not the guru type, it's true. I spend far too much time watching bad horror flicks and B-movies (I'm all excited that it's almost October and the movie channels are bringing out all the good nasty stuff), I listen to music that makes my neighbours cringe, and yes, I've been known to waste an entire afternoon slaughtering hapless avatars in internet kill games. I also a-spiritual. But the philosophy of Zen makes sense to me, so I'm at least I'm trying to ask myself if I'm enjoying what I do, rather than just sitting there killing time.

I may be preaching to the converted here. After all, anyone who has the conviction, self-discipline and stamina to work toward a degree by distance education - or for that matter, anyone who takes a DE course - is someone who has goals, and is willing to take the hard road to attain those goals. Some of you might feel that you are behind everyone, for going to school so late or because you are progressing slowly. Look at it this way, you are already ten steps ahead of all those people who constantly talk about how they want to go back to school one day, but never do. For that, take a pat on the back and work with that momentum. At the risk of sounding like Red Green: we're all in this together...

There. I'm off the pulpit. You may return to your normal, pleasurable Voice reading...

**Tamra Ross Low**  
**Editor in Chief**

**AUSU NEEDS AN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR!:** See the posting for the Executive Director job in the News section of this issue.

### **VOICE WRITING CONTEST NEEDS NON-FICTION ENTRIES**

The response so far to the first Voice writing contest has been wonderful. Most of our entries, however, are in the fiction category! This is unexpected since the fiction category was added at the last minute and was not even part of the original contest plan.

I'm sure that the non-fiction entries are lagging behind because it takes time to formulate a reply to an essay question, but if you are interested in a shot at the \$300 in scholarship money, then trying out for the non-fiction category is a good bet!

C'mon, how hard can it be? Just tell me, in 1500 words or less, what you would do as President of AU? I know we have a lot of readers with strong opinions on this subject, so let's start hearing them!

### **FICTION WANTED**

The Voice fiction feature has become popular, but submissions have been slow. Send us your best fiction today, and it might become our next feature.

### **ATTENTION BUDDING WRITERS**

The Voice needs some new Voices! We know you have plenty to say, so why not get paid for it. Send us a writing sample or article for submission and you might be published in an upcoming issue. It's fun, it's easy, and it pays. Contact [voice@ausu.org](mailto:voice@ausu.org) for more details.



## THE FIRST VOICE MAGAZINE WRITING CONTEST!

\$600 in scholarships to be awarded  
\$300 each in the fiction and non-fiction categories

**Write for The Voice and win money for your education.**

The Voice is launching its very first writing contest, with categories for both fiction, and non fiction.

**Non-Fiction:** In 1500 words or less, tell us what you would do if you were the President of Athabasca University. Feel free to use research or statistics in your article [with proper citations], or write a creative opinion piece. Don't just write a critique of AU - tell us what you would do to make a difference and to make distance education even better!

**Fiction:** Free form - write a 1500 word or less fiction submission in any genre or any format. Short stories, poetry, a scene from a play, even a comic. Be creative!

Please read the contest rules and regulations and submission guidelines very carefully to ensure you are not disqualified. Good luck!

### **Rules and Regulations:**

- Entrants must be students of Athabasca University. Student status will be confirmed with the AU registrar. Please ensure that the registrar has your current address and contact information.
- All non-fiction entries become the property of The Voice. Winning entries will be published in an upcoming Voice issue. The Voice reserves the right to print non-winning fiction entries at a rate of remuneration in accordance with current Voice freelance submission rates. The Voice may use information from non-fiction entries to create a composite article about what entrants would do as president of AU, or may use excerpts from these entries at any time. No remuneration will be provided for such use.
- All decisions regarding this contest and the selection of winners remain with the judging panel and are final and binding.
- AU, AUSU, and Voice staff or council members are not eligible for the contest.
- Entries will be judged by a panel to be selected by the Voice Editor, and this panel may include: AU students, AU tutors, and/or AUSU council members. The panel will include at least 3 members.
- The Voice Editor will collect articles and oversee the judging, but will not be a judge.
- Entries must be original works which have not been printed or published elsewhere, and must not be course assignment papers or derivatives of.
- Entries must not contain any information that would make the identity of the author evident to judges. To insure fairness, all entries will be forwarded to the judging panel with a reference number attached, but no personally identifying information will be forwarded. The Voice Editor will keep the identity of the authors private until the contest closes. The Voice editor will keep a record of the authors of submissions, and will be the sole owner of this list.
- Entries will not be edited for grammar, spelling, or content, although The Voice Editor may black out any personally identifying information contained within the submission. Otherwise, entries will be forwarded to the judging panel, as is.
- **The deadline for submissions in both categories will be October 15, 2003. The winner will be announced by November 10, 2003. The Voice reserves the right to extend either deadline if necessary.**
- One grand prize winner will be selected in both the fiction and non-fiction categories. If no entries are received in one of the categories, the prize money will be returned to the Voice scholarship budget. Prizes will be awarded in the form of a cheque, payable in Canadian funds.

- The Voice reserves the right to add additional, secondary prizes.
- The Voice is not responsible for lost emails. The Voice editor will confirm receipt of all entries by email. Follow up if you do not receive a reply.
- All entrants agree to allow their name and city to be printed, along with their submission, should it be selected as a winning entry. No further remuneration will be paid to the contest winner when their entry is printed.
- Entrants will be asked to sign a standard Release and Indemnity form; each prize winner agrees to release the Sponsor and its agents from any liability in connection with the prizes awarded in this contest.
- Any entrant found to be tampering with the contest results, or attempting to influence any of the judging members, or using any forums or other public communications media to advise others of which entry is theirs will be disqualified; or if The Voice editor determines, at her sole discretion, that any other form of tampering has been attempted, that entrant will be disqualified.
- Where applicable, this contest is subject to all federal, provincial and municipal laws. Contest void where prohibited by law.

## Submission Guidelines:

- Your submission must be an electronic file, sent as an attachment to email. Submissions sent as the body of an email will not be accepted. Contact [voice@ausu.org](mailto:voice@ausu.org) if you require instructions on how to attach a file to an email.
- Submissions should be in Microsoft Word format [.doc], rich text format [.rtf] or plain text format [.txt]. If you use a Word Processor other than Word or work on a Mac computer, you can save a file in one of these alternate formats using the 'save as' function and selecting the desired format on the save menu. Contact The Voice editor if you require assistance in formatting your submission.
- All entries must be under 1500 words, due to judging time constraints. Length will be determined by the Word Count feature in Microsoft Word. Your References and Citations section will not be included in the word count.
- Entries should not include unnecessary formatting such as drop caps, graphics [unless the graphic is integral to the work], or unusual fonts. Times New Roman or Arial 12 point font are preferred. Entries must be text - scans of hand written or typed documents will not be accepted.
- All entries forwarded to the judging panel will be converted to the same file format, font style and font size.
- Submit your entry as an email attachment. The email should include the following information: Your full name, your AU student ID number, an email address and telephone number where we may contact you, your home address, the title of your entry, and whether you are submitting a fiction or non-fiction entry. Make sure non-fiction entries are based on the topic question detailed above. Fiction entries can be on any topic you like. Do not include your contact information within your article - but be sure to include a title. Your contact information and article will be coded, and filed separately.
- Entries will be judged on the following criteria:
  - Non Fiction entries: will be judged on originality, creativity, the plausibility of your suggestions, and how well your support your suggestions with data or argument. You will also be judged on the presentation of your article, including professionalism, proper spelling, grammar and syntax, and readability.
  - Fiction entries: will be judged on creativity, entertainment value, and the originality or your writing style. Regardless of the genre you choose, you will be judged on the effectiveness of your piece, and your technical writing skills.



## AUSU STUDENT GIFT PACKS NOW AVAILABLE

AUSU students can now order their student gift packs, free courtesy of your students' union.

The packs are filled with AUSU logo items to help you study, relax, and learn more about AUSU.

Contact [ausu@ausu.org](mailto:ausu@ausu.org) to order your gift pack today!

# CONVENTIONAL VIS-À-VIS DISTANCE UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

Wayne E. Benedict



Until two weeks ago, all of my university-level education was garnered through Athabasca University's (AU) distance education. I am very accustomed to self-discipline with regard to studying and individualized learning. I often wondered, while taking a break from the books in my basement office, what it would be like to actually attend classes at a conventional university. I envisioned many aspects of an on-campus university education but understood that many, if not most, of my musings had to be no more than anticipatory socialization.

Many of my forethoughts about what in-class education would be like have been remarkably accurate—others have not. I have discovered that each type of university education has advantages and disadvantages.

There are marked fiduciary differences between AU and the University of Saskatchewan (USask), where I am presently a first-year law student. A full-time undergraduate course load at AU would run the in-province (Alberta) student \$4960 per year; the out-of-province student residing elsewhere in Canada, \$5660. These fees include student union fees but exclude invigilation costs and registration fees (if applicable). By comparison, my tuition and student fees for the 2003-04 academic year at USask runs me \$6514.71.

This is a significant difference in itself; however, the AU tuition includes course materials (books) and the AU student has the advantage of being able to write-off nearly the entire cost of their education from their taxes. Conversely, the tuition costs at USask do not include course materials and those costs cannot be written-off. The costs of my course materials for this year have come to \$858.04, bringing the total fees to \$7372.75 for this year, only a portion of which can be written-off. It should be noted that law *is* a professional program; however, an LLB is still regarded as an undergraduate degree.

Distance education (other than paced courses) is extremely flexible and allows the student free-reign as to assignment submissions *et al.* As long as the course is finished before the requisite contract date, the work can be completed entirely at the discretion of the student. Course extensions can be purchased if the student requires one (or two). Compare this to in-class study, which is rigidly paced and assignments/exams are strictly due at particular times/dates.

Getting set-up to study through AU is a leisurely process of surfing the university website, browsing through courses, choosing one, and ordering it. A couple of weeks later, the course materials arrive at the student's door via mail and the student can begin working on it. Such was what I was used to; but no more. During orientation last week, the students were cursorily shown how to access the USask bookstore website to find out which books were required for which courses. Then the mad dash began... Through throngs of disoriented fellow-students, I pushed my way along mazes of unfamiliar tunnels in my quest to find the illusive bookstore. When I finally found it, I was turned away in order that I store my backpack in a student-run bag-check. In order to do this, I had to wait in a long line of students.

Once my pack was stored, I returned to the bookstore only to find an even longer line-up waiting to get into the store. After faring that queue, I pushed my way through competing students and gathered half of the texts that I needed (the others were not in the store yet). Then I stationed myself at the end of the longest line yet—the one at the tills. After paying, I lined up to repatriate my packsack. I had to repeat this process no less than four times in order to get all of my required books; and I am lucky, as many of my fellow students have yet to acquire their

books, the store having sold out of them. That fact hasn't stopped the relentless pace of assigned readings from those books though, and lacking students must line up to borrow the single copy on reserve in the law library long enough to photocopy the pages of required reading.

Another issue that distance students need not contend with is parking. USask has a chronic shortage of parking for students, staff and faculty. The limited number of parking permits that are available are sold on a first come first serve basis through a system called U-STAR (an acronym standing for something like: university student telephone access registration...). Beginning at 10:30 pm September 10<sup>th</sup> the passes went on sale and two of the three parking lots were sold out in an hour and one minute. I never got through to anything but busy and fast-busy signals. Then the U-Star system crashed; presumably from the tens of thousands of people trying to call at the same time. The last parking lot went up for sale at 10:30 pm September 12<sup>th</sup> and this time I won the lottery by getting through and acquiring a spot. The only problem is that the lot has no plugs for block-heaters and my diesel Golf is unlikely to start without one in the depths of a Saskatchewan winter (CAA to the rescue...). Still, I am ecstatic at having secured a spot at all—some third year students have never been so lucky. For the luxury of an un-powered parking spot located 3/4 of a mile from the College of Law, I pay \$155.03 for the academic year. Does your kitchen table seem a little more convenient now?

These niggling annoyances aside, the distance student does miss out on numerous aspects of education that class-based students take for granted. The biggest two are doubtlessly student interaction, both socially and during class debates; and, face-to-face professor access. One of my biggest concerns about attending a university campus, after more than twenty years away from a classroom, was that I would not fit in socially and that my mind is geared exclusively toward individualized study—as opposed to group projects *et al.*

My fears, as most usually are, were baseless. I thoroughly enjoy the lectures and in-class debates and the law library has become my favourite place on campus. The law program is perfect for me because it entails a huge proportion of self-study in the form of out-of-class readings & writings—skills that I honed through AU distance education. There are few, if any, group projects in the law curriculum.

It should come as no surprise to those who follow my article and know that I relish education of every sort, that I find pleasure in both distance education and class-based study. While they each have their cons as well as pros, I will continue to enjoy each in their own unique ways and will endeavour to share my experiences with fellow students in each genre.

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Wayne E. Benedict has a varied career history and strong links to the Canadian labour movement. He is working part-time toward his Bachelor of Human Resources and Labour Relations at Athabasca University. He is a fulltime first-year student of the University of Saskatchewan College of Law. For a more detailed writer bio, see *The Voice* writers' feature page, at: <http://www.ausu.org/voice/authors/authorfull.php?ID=7>. If you would like to send article-feedback to Wayne, he can be reached at [wayneben@sasktel.net](mailto:wayneben@sasktel.net)

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C A U S  
Council of Alberta University Students  
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CAUS represents university students across Alberta. Visit the CAUS and the Tuition CAUSE websites to learn more about what CAUS is doing to keep Alberta tuitions affordable.

CAUS: <http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/caus/alpha/>  
Tuition Cause: <http://tc.su.ualberta.ca/>


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## SUDS CONFERENCE JULY, 2003

*Debbie Jabbour*


This article is the conclusion of a report on the Student Union Development Symposium, held in British Columbia on the campus of UBC. To read the first three reports, see *The Voice* [August 17](#), [September 3](#), and [September 10](#) issues.




The final day of the conference began with a session on *Communications Savvy: Keys to successful strategic communications*, given by IMPACS, the Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society. Unfortunately, by this point the utilitarian mattress at student residence had taken its toll on my back and I was in too much pain to attend the morning session. Fortunately the speaker provided a handout which gave a good description of what the session had included. Many suggestions were given on effective communication, including: defining success, knowing all the elements of your message, the importance of repetition, knowing your audience, and remembering that the messenger is as important as the message.




The first afternoon session took the topic of communication a step further. Although it was titled "crisis communication" it dealt with media manipulation techniques. Paul Patterson, Associate Director, UBC Public Affairs, used footage from an actual media news story he had been involved with to graphically demonstrate to us how the media manipulates viewers. It was a fascinating discussion, one that left me with a new "healthy" respect for the power of the media. As he broke the video down into its component parts, accompanied by several entertaining accounts of different news stories he had covered, I realized how every aspect of a news story can be manipulated to create a desired impression. The lesson for student union executives, of course, is to take extreme care when responding to events in the media. This is something many campus-based SU's have acknowledged by offering media training to all incoming SU executives. Paul summarized some important points to remember when dealing with the media:

- 
- You can generate free advertising through the media, but be careful not to lose credibility.
  - The media always covers a seasonal story, an anniversary, so use these opportunities.
  - Conflict stories are good. Reporters come for conflict. But also remember that if this becomes a crisis - defusing it will make them go away.
  - The media is interested in the student voice, so reacting to breaking news is good.
  - Don't wait for the media to come asking, send them a press release or call with a comment. But remember that this must be balanced, sometimes it is better not to respond.
  - The more you fight, the media will be there. If you agree, they go away.



The final session of the conference was entitled, "Future of PSE Panel Discussion", featuring James Kusie, National Director of CASA, Shirley Barg, and Ian Boyko. This session covered a lot of ground, accounting for some seven type-written pages of notes, which I will attempt to summarize briefly.



James began by stating the obvious - in four years most jobs will require a PSE degree. The social gap between those who can save for education and those who cannot is increasing. Tuition has increased more than 134% over 10 years. The government is unwilling to provide more funding if tuition is just going to increase. Students cite financial reasons as the biggest barrier to PSE

He asked questions about the Canada Student Loan Program (CSLP). What about parental contribution, given that 50% can't or don't contribute? Is it right to ask parents to liquidate assets to fund PSE for their children? Why are computers not considered an essential?

James pointed out that the demand for PSE is expected to increase 30% over the next ten years. We currently have 178 institutions in Canada, with most at their capacity. If these institutions are not funded to grow, what will happen? Higher entrance requirements and denied access as institutions are stretched to capacity. We need another major university in every province. In addition, we are facing the retirement of 20,000 professors during the ten year period, given that 33% of the current faculty is over 55. Greater emphasis is on the commercialization of research.

James concluded by stating that "education builds a nation," reinforcing the importance of students working together to maintain a united voice, particularly in this upcoming election year.

Shirley took the stage next, first asking the question, "distance education - boon or bane?" After noting that many students use DE courses as a convenient supplement to their campus studies, she asked for a show of hands of students who had taken a DE course - and about half had. She clarified the difference between online and distance delivery (something we had first learned when attending the Montreal conference was that many, including the Alberta government, still confuse the terms).

Shirley mentioned some of the problems of DE:

- the need to be motivated and self-disciplined
- heavy reading commitment
- don't have the advantage of non-verbal communication cues
- feelings of isolation
- not all courses translate well into distance delivery, and those developing the courses may not have adequate technological knowledge
- commodification of education can occur. Shirley pointed out that this is not exclusive to DE.
- Non-recognition of infrastructure costs when governments look at funding DE.

Shirley also mentioned that AU's administration is seeking SU support in their request to be removed from the tuition cap. She then stated that the ultimate question was, "does DE delivery reduce the quality of education?" If you are in a position with high quality one-on-one instruction with a tutor is this better than a learning hall filled with hundreds? She stated that distance education requires a much higher level of personal responsibility for one's work, that distance education is not easy but requires greater emphasis on written communication, critical thinking, and a greater investment in time.

To tie this into the point of the conference, Shirley then posed the question, "what do we need to do to ensure DE quality?" Among her suggestions:

- Push our universities (particularly campus-based) to employ professors that are comfortable and familiar with this form of educational delivery.
- Encourage critical evaluation, institutions need to train teachers in DE methods.
- Universities must provide tech support

- Develop and implement ways to involve students at a distance in order to overcome isolation. Shirley briefly mentioned some of the initiatives AUSU has made in this regard.

During the question period that followed, virtually all questions were directed at Shirley, with attendees seeking further information on what it is like to study at a distance and how problems can be overcome. I found it surprising that there was still such a lack of comprehension and so many misconceptions regarding distance education, and it highlighted the need for AU and AUSU to continue to work to raise our profile in the university community.

Ian Boyko (chair of the Canadian Federation of Students [CFS]) used his portion of the panel to send all of us out into three breakout groups to discuss hypothetical situations and speculations for the future. While an interesting exercise, I didn't find it contributed much to the overall value of the conference - we all mainly found ourselves summarizing the different issues facing PSE into a worse case scenario.

Ian then quickly listed many Millennium scholarship issues, stating that change is in the air for the student funding system. He emphasized the importance of student aid reforms, and the need to look beyond student loans to fund PSE. He tossed out various figures, such as 6 billion a year spent on student aid, and 20 billion annual PSE spending; stating that universities have more money than ever before so it's hard to argue for more government money. In his opinion, provinces are unlikely to see any transfer payments from the feds without extreme measures of accountability, and he added that we face the challenge of changing public priorities regarding PSE. One problem is that Canada is "number one in educational attainment" according to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) statistics. Ian notes, however, that this is on the back of colleges, and on Quebec's Cegep system, which is a technical add-on to high school. Pull these numbers out and university attainment lowers, placing Canada below the U.S. in numbers of university graduates.

Ian reiterated that more rich than poor go to university, then reviewed all the different problems with the current student loan program, including excessive student debt. He asked several key questions.

- What aspect of access most needs to be addressed in the current environment - having the opportunity to enroll in PSE or having the opportunity to complete one's PSE?
- What is the most important problem needing focus: low participation, unequal access or social capital deficits by income?
- What is need, and who has it?

In addressing the question of defining need, Ian went into detail describing the current need-based system as a formula based on "need = cost - resources." High need is dependent on both low resources and high costs. This means that a medical student in a high cost program has need; or a single parent, independent student or dependent who moves away from home has need. A single student living at home does not have need, according to this formula. The needs-based system therefore gives more assistance to:

- university instead of college
- high cost programs, i.e. doctors
- those who move away from home or become independent
- those who come from a low-income family
- those who don't work during the school year

To illustrate the problem with this formula, Ian used the "sample student" in BC, who lives at home with parents in a family of four. This student wants to attend UBC:

- tuition = \$4000 a year, books \$850
- parents earn \$55,000
- student earns \$3200 summer, \$3840 during school period.

For this student the assessed need is: \$3,101 loan. Gets no bursary or anything else.

If the same student made different choices, the situation is quite different. For example, attending a cheaper institution results in less money, whereas if they choose UBC law school, they will get a \$6400 loan. If they move out and attend the University of Victoria they will get more money for living costs, and if they move to another province they will get even more loan money. But the average student who wants to live at home and go to university "gets the shaft."

The system also rewards older students who are independent since the parental contribution is no longer required. Students who move away "get a bonus." Students who don't work get extra money, in effect penalizing those who work. The "average" student does not get a Millennium bursary.

Ian also spoke of another important funding issue, that of displacement. This occurs when different levels of government attempt to fund the same student. Federal grants, such as the Canada study grant, clash with grants provinces are already giving - meaning the money is displaced, yet students don't get more funding. The solution to this problem is that federal and provincial government levels need to communicate and choose different priorities, for example "feds support poor students while provinces support high cost students."

He listed the different types of student aid currently available, along with some of the drawbacks. Loans and debt remission are the most common, but they have problems of unmet need (along with the previously mentioned funding formula problems), and leave a student with mounting debt loads. Students also receive tuition transfer payments in the form of education and tuition tax credits. Ian noted that 6 billion a year is given to the Canada Child tax benefit which targets poor parents, and he commented that something of a similar nature may be on the table for students. He was most critical of the Canada Education Savings Grant and the RESP trust fund, which he calls "rich kid" funding. Ian's overview on funding contained far more questions than answers, leaving us with a realization of the enormity of the problem and the need for significant changes to the system as a whole.

When taking an overall look at the symposium, it was clearly built around two main topics: problems with student PSE funding and how to lobby the government about PSE issues. Having these issues detailed and repeated over the course of the four days was helpful in creating a sense of priorities in the minds of those attending, and in finding a common ground where students across Canada can unite their voice. For CAUS, the symposium was an excellent opportunity to raise the profile and credibility of our Alberta provincial lobby group, allowing further relationship building with other student unions. Like many of the other conferences I've attended this past year, SUDS also allowed us to raise awareness of the unique issues that face distance education students and our university, and to continue to work towards enhanced credibility as a distance university. At AU we may have different needs than students on campus, but we do share the responsibility as students, parents and taxpayers to work together with fellow students across Canada to address the issues of accessibility to post secondary education.

## References

SUDS 2003 (Student Union Development Symposium): <http://www.ams.ubc.ca/suds2003/>

Millennium Scholarship Foundation: <http://www.millenniumscholarships.ca/en/main.html>

CESG Canada Education Savings Grant Program: [http://www.hrdc.gc.ca/hrib/learnlit/cesg/013/001\\_e.shtml](http://www.hrdc.gc.ca/hrib/learnlit/cesg/013/001_e.shtml)

IMPACS (Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society): <http://www.impacs.ca/index.cfm>

Loan info: [www.canlearn.ca](http://www.canlearn.ca)

Canadian Federation of Students (CFS): [www.cfs-fcee.ca](http://www.cfs-fcee.ca) - <http://www.cfsontario.ca> - [www.cfs.bc.ca](http://www.cfs.bc.ca)

Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA): [www.casa.ca](http://www.casa.ca)

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD): <http://www.oecd.org/home/>

# SPORTS SOLUTIONS FOR ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

*Shannon Maguire*



September is here and University campuses all over Canada are coming alive again as the 2003-04 school year begins. This is also the time when students are trying out for Varsity sports teams, signing up for intramural sports leagues and joining the other athletic programs available in most Universities. Unfortunately, since Athabasca University is a distance education school with students spread across the entire country it is not possible to offer athletic programs to all of its students.

Does the lack of sports programs at Athabasca University mean that its students are out of luck when it comes to sports? Absolutely not, it simply means that we have to be more imaginative, and put a little more effort into finding alternate sources of sports programs. This is definitely a disadvantage to attending the University, but it should not stop you from participating in your favourite sports.

But why, you may ask, are sports important? As an avid sports player and an Athabasca University student I can point to several reasons why you should participate in a sport. First of all, sports are great stress relievers for students. Whenever I become stressed out from studying and working too much, I find that vigorous exercise reduces my tension and clears my head.

Second, sports leagues are a great way to get out of the house and meet people. This is especially important for students at a distance education University who are lacking the daily interaction with other students.

Finally, and probably most important, sports are great for your health. Reducing stress is good for your health, but sports can also help you maintain a healthy weight by burning fat. Oh, and did I forget to mention that sports are fun? Of course they are, everyone knows that.

So now that I have convinced you to join a sport right away, I am going to give you a little help doing it. If you are thinking about joining a sports team, there are numerous amateur leagues, ranging from recreational leagues for beginners to competitive leagues for more serious players, all across Canada. Don't think that age is a barrier to playing either because many sports now have old-timers leagues. I have listed websites for sports leagues across Canada at the end of this article.

On the other hand if you are more interested in weight lifting, aerobics, dancing, and martial arts, there are many private gyms that offer these types of programs. Your best approach to finding a program of this nature is to look in the yellow pages under gyms, fitness, dance, or martial arts. Of course leagues and private gyms can be very expensive, and everyone knows that students are not the wealthiest people. Don't despair if your budget is low. Local Community Centers often offer a wide variety of athletic programs, drop-in sports, and aerobics programs that are very inexpensive. Most drop-in sports that I have been to at these centers ranged from \$2.50 to \$4.00 a class. You can also purchase monthly passes that make it even cheaper.

Sports are a very important part of student life, but your exposure to sports does not have to occur at a University campus. Whether you are a seasoned player or an absolute beginner you should join a sport today. It will give you a physical and social experience that you will never forget.

## SPORTS LEAGUES ACROSS CANADA

### Canadian Sites

Hockey – Hockey Canada [www.hockeycanada.ca](http://www.hockeycanada.ca)

Football – Football Canada [www.footballcanada.com](http://www.footballcanada.com)

Rugby – Rugby Canada [www.rugbycanada.ca](http://www.rugbycanada.ca)

At any of the above sites, click on 'Links' for a list of provincial associations, and a list of leagues and contacts.

### Alberta

Basketball – Basketball Alberta [www.basketballalberta.ab.ca](http://www.basketballalberta.ab.ca) Click the “Athlete Pages” link, and then the “I Just Want to Play” link, and it will give you a list of leagues and contacts.

Soccer – Alberta Soccer Association [www.albertasoccer.com](http://www.albertasoccer.com) Click on “Soccer Links”, and then “Local Soccer” and it will give you a list of leagues and contacts.

Volleyball – Alberta Volleyball [www.albertavolleyball.com](http://www.albertavolleyball.com) Click on “Beach” or “Indoor”, and then on “Leagues”, and it will give you a list of leagues and contacts.

### British Columbia

Basketball – Basketball B.C. [www.basketball.bc.ca](http://www.basketball.bc.ca) Click on “Club Basketball” and a chart will appear on the right hand side of the screen. Click “Adult”, and it will give you a list of leagues and contacts.

Soccer – B.C. Soccer Association [www.bcsoccer.net](http://www.bcsoccer.net) Click on “BC Soccer”, and then “Senior Leagues” and it will give you a list of leagues and contacts.

Volleyball – Volleyball B.C. [www.volleyballbc.ca](http://www.volleyballbc.ca) Click on “Adult Programs”, and it will give you a list of leagues and contacts.

### Manitoba

Basketball – Basketball Manitoba [www.basketball.mb.ca](http://www.basketball.mb.ca) Click on “Programs”, and it will give you a list of leagues and contacts.

Soccer – Manitoba Soccer Association [www.manitobasoccer.ca](http://www.manitobasoccer.ca) Click on “League Contacts”, and it will give you a list of leagues and contacts.

Volleyball – Manitoba Volleyball Association [www.manitobavolleyball.com](http://www.manitobavolleyball.com)

### New Brunswick

Basketball – Basketball New Brunswick [www.basketball.nb.ca](http://www.basketball.nb.ca)

Soccer – New Brunswick Soccer Association [www.soccermb.org](http://www.soccermb.org) Click on “Directory”, and then “Provincial Contacts” and it will give you a list of leagues and contacts.

Volleyball – Volleyball New Brunswick [www.vnb.nb.ca](http://www.vnb.nb.ca) Click on “Programs”, and it will give you a list of leagues and contacts.

### Newfoundland and Labrador

Basketball – Newfoundland and Labrador Basketball Association [www.nlba.nf.ca](http://www.nlba.nf.ca) Click on “Basketball Links”, and it will give you a list of leagues and contacts.

Soccer – Newfoundland and Labrador Soccer Association [www.nlsa.net](http://www.nlsa.net) Click on “Leagues”, and it will give you a list of leagues and contacts.

Volleyball – Newfoundland and Labrador Volleyball Association [www.nlva.net](http://www.nlva.net) Click on “Leagues/Teams”, and it will give you a list of leagues and contacts.

### Nova Scotia

Basketball – Basketball Nova Scotia [www.basketball.ns.ca](http://www.basketball.ns.ca) Click on “Basketball Registration Link”, and it will give you a list of leagues and contacts.

Soccer – Nova Scotia Soccer Association [www.soccerns.ns.ca](http://www.soccerns.ns.ca) Click on “Leagues”, and it will give you a list of leagues and contacts.

Volleyball – Volleyball Nova Scotia [www.volleyballnovascotia.ca](http://www.volleyballnovascotia.ca) Click on “Leagues”, and it will give you a list of leagues and contacts.

### **North West Territories**

Basketball – Basketball N.W.T. [www.eteamz.com/bnwt](http://www.eteamz.com/bnwt)

Soccer – N.W.T. Soccer Association [www.nwtsa.ca](http://www.nwtsa.ca)

Volleyball – Volleyball N.W.T. [www.volleyballnwt.internorth.com](http://www.volleyballnwt.internorth.com) Click on “Links”, and it will give you a list of leagues and contacts.

### **Ontario**

Basketball – Basketball Ontario [www.basketball.on.ca](http://www.basketball.on.ca) Click on “Affiliated Clubs and Camps”, and then on “2003 Club Contacts”, and it will give you a list of leagues and contacts.

Soccer – Ontario Soccer Association [www.soccer.on.ca](http://www.soccer.on.ca) Click on “Leagues”, and then “Leagues in Ontario Information”, and it will give you a list of leagues and contacts.

Volleyball – Ontario Volleyball Association [www.ontariovolleyball.org](http://www.ontariovolleyball.org) Click on “Clubs and Competitions”, and it will give you a list of leagues and contacts.

### **Prince Edward Island**

All Sports – Sports P.E.I. [www.sportpei.pe.ca](http://www.sportpei.pe.ca) Click on “Member Sports”, and then on the sport you are interested in and it will give you contact information for that sport.

### **Quebec**

Basketball – Quebec Basketball Federation [www.basketball.qc.ca](http://www.basketball.qc.ca)

Soccer – Quebec Soccer Federation [www.federation-soccer.qc.ca](http://www.federation-soccer.qc.ca)

Volleyball – Volleyball Quebec [www.volleyball.qc.ca](http://www.volleyball.qc.ca)

### **Saskatchewan**

Basketball – Basketball Saskatchewan [www.basketballsask.com](http://www.basketballsask.com)

Soccer – Saskatchewan Soccer Association [www.sasksoccer.com](http://www.sasksoccer.com)

Volleyball – Saskatchewan Volleyball Association [www.saskvolleyball.ca](http://www.saskvolleyball.ca) Click on “Indoor Programs” or “Beach Volleyball”, and it will give you a list of leagues and contacts.

### **Yukon**

Basketball – Basketball Yukon [www.polarcom.com/~bballyk](http://www.polarcom.com/~bballyk)

Soccer – Yukon Soccer Association [www.yukonsoccer.yk.ca](http://www.yukonsoccer.yk.ca)

Volleyball – Volleyball Yukon [www.volleyballyukon.com](http://www.volleyballyukon.com)



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# THE NET NERD'S WEBSITE PROFILES

The first installment of a new column featuring the best of the net, with a student focus.



If you just can't get enough of books and studying check out: [www.schoolfinder.com](http://www.schoolfinder.com)

This website has tons of information on Canadian universities, colleges, and even high schools (over 700 schools). Schoolfinder.com also has information on financing, careers and tips for new students. This website is a thorough and comprehensive list of Canadian schools. For each university you can check out topics such as admissions, fees, financial aid, facilities, programs, and contacts all without visiting the university website (though there are links to the schools' websites as well).

You can also check out virtually every scholarship available in Canada, whether it is from a particular university or open to every student, and you can sign up for a free account which allows you to make and manage your own career, school and scholarship folders. As an added convenience, a Schoolfinder account also works on these other student service websites: [ScholarshipsCanada.com](http://ScholarshipsCanada.com), [StudyinCanada.com](http://StudyinCanada.com), [Books4exchange.com](http://Books4exchange.com) and [Myschool101.com](http://Myschool101.com). Schoolfinder.com is the starting ground for any student who wants to research a particular school. I use this website to find contact and website information for different universities across Canada.

**Neat stuff:** Check out the e-tours, which provide a short introduction to the university you're researching. The pictures and videos offer a more visual introduction to the university. It's basically the school's ad for the prospective student, but a good way to see what they have to offer.

**Not so neat stuff:** Most of the information and articles are geared toward the 18 year old student leaving home for the first time, so it might not apply to us distance learners.

**Rating:** \*\*\*\*\*/5 The wealth of information and the easy site navigation, makes this one a definite bookmark.

You're bored, and ready to give your textbooks to the neighbors dogs to use as a chewtoy? Check out: [www.thespark.com](http://www.thespark.com)

What can I say about theSpark.com? This website is a respite for those whose brains are addled with the constant barrage of finals, papers, and deadlines (nobody ever accused me of not being dramatic enough!). TheSpark.com is dedicated to sardonic (with a strong screwball factor) humour and (sometimes mean-spirited) fun. Some of the subject matter may not be for everyone, but I'm sure even my grandma would chuckle at some of the stuff.

Check out their "features" with headlines such as : *Heroic family dog drags problem child back into burning building* and *Poor Spelling Children Pay Dearly for "Letters to Satan"*. The "Science" section includes such experiments as *The Date My Sister Project* and *The Stinky Feet Project*. Take personality tests such as *The Unintelligence Test* and *The Bitch Test* (my sisters didn't believe my score would be so low), plus many other fun tests. A neat feature for the single or wish-to-be-single people out there is the *Pimpin' Cupid*. You list friends

and acquaintances you like and The Spark notifies you if you are on their list as well. Kind of like a fifth grade recess thing.

TheSpark.com is a fun, laid back way to take a break from studying and school. I find myself laughing out loud sometimes. And even after several repeat visits to this site, I have found new things each and every time.

**Neat Stuff:** *Spark Notes* are a takeoff of *Cliff Notes*. Create a free account to get free online and downloadable study guides on several university subjects.

Send a friend (or enemy) a Spark Card. E-greetings for many different occasions, some not for the easily offended.

**Not so neat stuff:** The amount of pop-ups is very annoying (I counted nine during a fifteen minute session). If you have young children (especially reading ones) you might find yourself doing some explaining you weren't prepared for.

**Rating:** \*\*\*\*1/2 / 5 If not for the persistent pop-up ads, this site would have merited a full five. Easy to navigate and lots of entertainment.



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go to [wwf.ca/marine](http://wwf.ca/marine)

Even the ones underwater. This giant kelp forest off the coast of B.C. is more diverse than a rainforest. Sadly, it's not protected from the harmful practices of industry. In fact, 99.99% of Canada's waters are unprotected. When will Canada start protecting our oceans? With your help, we'll get Ottawa to act now. Call 1.800.26.PANDA.





Last week Wayne Benedict wrote about some of the provincial quirks he noticed in moving from British Columbia and Saskatchewan. I responded, in my editorial, with some of Alberta's oddities. I asked readers to write in with some fun facts about their own locales, and a few of you did! Anyone who would still like to send in their own list should feel free to do so. Send to [voice@ausu.org](mailto:voice@ausu.org)

### What it is like living in Vancouver

- When on public transit during rush hour, no matter how close you are to other people (full body contact), do not make eye contact with anyone. Also, never talk on public transit or have your discman/walkman loud enough that anyone else can hear it (no matter how close they are to you).
- Never believe the sob stories homeless people tell you, those are for the tourists to fall for.
- Always face front when in an elevator, even if you are the only one in there.
- Stand on the right and walk on the left when on an escalator.
- Never give another driver The Bird, no matter how close they came to killing you with their horrible driving skills.
- Always appear impressed when someone tells you they frequently work 60+ hours a week.
- Never question someone's logic when they tell you they stay at a job they hate for the vacation time, and then tell you they haven't taken a vacation since they started there, ten years ago.
- It is ok to tell everyone you have a drinking problem, as long as you are laughing when you do it and then buy a round of drinks.
- It is prudent to secretly question the sexual orientation of every man you meet in certain areas of downtown and every woman you meet on Commercial Drive.
- Wearing heels while walking the sea wall around Stanley Park is rarely ok.
- Don't make eye contact with the celebrities you spot shopping on Robson, they prefer it that way. Collecting autographs is so passé.
- Never admit you don't like food from other countries or ethnicities.
- Drinking beer from large national breweries is for the suburbs; local microbreweries only.
- Paying \$10 to enter a bar or club is normal. Be suspicious when it is free to get in (there might be a reason).
- It is ok if you can't walk even a block in your high heels, as long as they match your outfit and are in style this season.
- It is also ok if your fake nails prohibit you from doing most ordinary things, like typing, dialling the phone, opening cans, picking up change or tying your shoes, as long as they are painted to match your handbag and lipstick.
- Cell phone rings that are a mechanical version of any theme song are great as long as they ring loudly, frequently and at inopportune times.
- Even though every street and avenue has a word name and no apparent system to it, and many change names for no apparent reason, don't use a map or ask for directions (driving around lost is not just for men anymore).
- The neighbourhood you live in can be held against you or taken as evidence of your good character.
- Never leave home without your umbrella AND sunglasses.

Submitted by Lindsay Jardine

## Alberta vs. Saskatchewan

- In Alberta speeding tickets are due 2 – 3 months after the speeding infraction, in Saskatchewan they are due in one month and they supply you with an envelope for mailing it.
- In Alberta roads are smooth, in Saskatchewan it's like going through an obstacle course trying to evade potholes that appear to sink deep into the earth's inner crust.
- In Alberta politicians speak out against gay and lesbian lifestyles in BC politicians march in gay and lesbian parades.

Submitted by Sandra Moore

## What it's like in Small Town Saskatchewan

- Is Saskatchewan the only place where hoodies are called "bunny hugs"?
- In Macklin, Saskatchewan (and surrounding areas) most of the people, even teens, speak in a German accent even though it was the great-great grandparents who immigrated
- Same town, the only place where at a high school dance, the kids requested polkas
- Yet again the same town. There is a giant sculpture of a horse ankle bone, representing the German-Russia game "bones" or bunnock (a game where different coloured horse ankle bones are tossed to knock down other horse ankle bones). They also have the world's only bunnock tournament.
- In Viscount, Saskatchewan they have a curling bonspiel, not so unusual, but they call it the Rock'N' Rye, where getting sloshed is the main event.
- Almost every small Sask. Town has a Slowpitch or Softball tournament where getting sloshed is the main event.
- " " " " " has rec hockey tournaments where getting sloshed is the main event.
- Farm kids routinely take time off school in Sept. for harvest. In fact, we don't use the words spring and fall.. its seeding and harvest.
- Most farm kids learn how to drive at around age 10, ( at least the ones I knew)
- Any town with a population larger than 5,000 is referred to as "the city"
- In Saskatchewan, gopher shooting is fun (PETA be damned!!)
- High school grads graffiti Grad '03 (or whatever year) and their names on abandoned buildings, highways, backs of road signs and just about everywhere. Check it out in Kerrobert, Saskatchewan.
- Small town bars have weird contests like "Party 'till you Pee" (you can win a t-shirt)
- A lot of drinking goes down in Saskatchewan.
- Farm kids think city kids are lazy
- City kids think farm kids dress bad.
- The Guess Who's greatest song is "Running Back to Saskatoon"
- We have Buffy St. Marie and Joni Mitchell
- The Riders are the greatest football team ever!

Submitted by Stacey Steele

Got something to add? Mail [voice@ausu.org](mailto:voice@ausu.org).



## AUSU THIS MONTH



### AUSU JOB POSTING

See the News section of this paper for the job posting for the position of AUSU Executive Director. This posting can also be found on the AUSU website at <http://www.ausu.org/jobposting/index.php>

### AUSU IN PERSON DISCUSSION GROUPS

AUSU in-person discussion groups in Calgary, Edmonton, and Medicine Hat would like to invite students to join them in casual, coffee shop get togethers to discuss life as an AU student.

Getting together physically with fellow AU students adds to your university experience. Other students will be able to understand and relate to the joys and frustrations of distance learning. It's also a way to stay abreast of information relating to AU and the Athabasca University Students' Union.

To take part in the **Calgary** group please contact JODY at [jwaddle@telusplanet.net](mailto:jwaddle@telusplanet.net).

To take part in the **Edmonton** areas discussion group, contact RYAN at [nicepilotdude@yahoo.ca](mailto:nicepilotdude@yahoo.ca).

To take part in the **Medicine Hat** group, contact STACEY at [jackenna96@telusplanet.net](mailto:jackenna96@telusplanet.net).

Anyone interested in starting up a group in your area (anywhere in Canada, from small towns to major centres) please contact SANDRA at [smoore@ausu.org](mailto:smoore@ausu.org).

### SURVEY ON AU's PROPOSED REMOVAL FROM THE TUITION CAP

*How do you feel about AU being removed from the tuition cap?*



Athabasca University, like other universities and colleges in the province, currently falls under Alberta's tuition fee policy that enforces a ceiling on allowable tuition increases. **AU has asked the Alberta government for exemption from the tuition fee policy.** If passed, tuition increases for undergraduate courses at AU will no longer be regulated by specific government controls.

To find out how students feel about this proposed change, AUSU has placed a short survey on the AUSU web site at: <http://www.ausu.org/tuitionsurvey/index.php>. More information can also be found on this page.

To learn more about this issue, students are encouraged to visit the AUSU discussion forums [accessible from the "Message Forums" link on the AUSU front page] and to browse the past several issues of The Voice.

Please take a minute to fill out this simple survey, to ensure that the students' union is representing you.

### CHAT WITH AUSU ONLINE

If you have a question for AUSU, or would like to get to know your council, drop by the chat-room [accessible through the 'Message Forums' option on the AUSU home page [www.ausu.org](http://www.ausu.org). You will need an AUSU web site account.] during one of our chat times and talk live with AUSU council members or your Voice editor. **All times are MST**

Mondays at

8:00 PM

Councillor Karl Low

**More chat times to be posted soon...**

## FEATURED TUTOR ON THE AUSU WEB SITE

**Kim Vaughan**  
*Psychology*

Kim Vaughan is a tutor in Psychology, currently teaching three courses: Child Development (Psychology 228), Developmental Psychology (Psychology 323), and Psychology and the Mass Media (Psychology 315). Kim has been with Athabasca since 2000...



Read more at: <http://www.ausu.org/tutor/index.php>

## NEEDED – VOLUNTEER MENTORS FOR NEW STUDENTS

Do you remember your first few months at AU? Do you remember all the questions you had and the confusions you encountered? Every month at AU there are close to 1500 new registrations and these new students will be in the same boat you were once in. How about helping these students out by offering to be an AUSU mentor? AUSU mentors are “experienced” AU students who are willing to provide a little guidance and support to new AU students. If you are interested in participating in this new venture of AUSU's or if you'd like more information please contact Sandra Moore at [smoore@ausu.org](mailto:smoore@ausu.org)



**Are you an artist?**

**AUSU supports  
the arts!**

AUSU is interested in purchasing original works of art from students for promotional purposes. These promotions may include: gifts from AUSU to graduates at convocation, tokens of appreciation for volunteers, special presentations, etc.

The works of art must:

- be created by an AU student
- have a value range \$0-\$500
- be accessible or easily transportable to Alberta

If you are an artist of any kind who creates a product you feel we would be able to use for such a purpose, contact:

Debbie Jabbour  
[[djabbour@ausu.org](mailto:djabbour@ausu.org)].

Supply a description of the object, a picture if you have it, and its market value.

# INSURANCE



## Group Rates for AUSU

Students - Employees - Alumni

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# THE VOICE FICTION FEATURE

## Poems by Bill Pollett

### *panels*

howling of doves  
singing of wolves  
crippling of senses  
thunder of hooves  
pounding the nails  
dropping the bombs  
pouring the wine  
singing the songs  
mapping the genes  
spreading the plagues  
passing of needles  
joyless parades  
bodies in basements  
dropping of hints  
government statements  
dream of the sphinx  
turning the channel  
turning the screw  
watching the panels  
decipher the news  
twilight of gods  
original sin  
sheep with two heads  
beating of wings  
reading of tea leaves  
interpreting signs  
the poison is buried  
deep in the mines  
growing of tumours

rattle of snakes  
spreading of rumours  
rattle of hate  
glowing of dials  
building of ships  
drugging our children  
cracking the whip  
something is wrong  
it has to be fixed  
we're building a bonfire  
we're burning a witch

### *bright red dress*

at museums and funerals  
i liked you best

when you smiled to yourself  
in your bright red dress

& set the Caravaggio  
at an uneven angle

with a perfect disrespect  
for history and death

The Voice buys fiction in all forms and genres. Contact [voice@ausu.org](mailto:voice@ausu.org) for more information. Or, you may wish to submit your fiction for the Voice Writing Contest. See this issue for details and submission guidelines.



## The Banger Sisters Film Review

By Laura Seymour

Take one dose of Goldie Hawn with a super-sized bust, add Susan Sarandon as an uptight mom and mix with a pile of people all questioning their potential and what do you get? This movie.

The film got all but panned on the TV write up so I was wary taking the time to watch it (especially since I just climbed into an intensive course recently). But I've seen so many good films that received crappy reviews that I gave the chick flick a chance. It's worth it. It's fun!

Goldie is a hoot as barmaid, Suzette, who is recently fired from her job and is all but broke. An Academy Award winner for *Cactus Flower*, Goldie makes us laugh as she decides to plop into her beaten down old car and drives to see her "sister," Lavinia, a.k.a. Vinnie. Long ago they were nicknamed the Banger Sisters for their groupie habits, but years have gone by and half of the duo is completely different. Goldie is still stuck in the '60s.

Academy Award winner Susan Sarandon pulls off the role as an uptight mom who gets goaded by Suzette into loosening up. Since Goldie just won't buzz off she's all but forced into it. Goldie remembers another woman...a buddy who loved rock 'n' roll just as much as she did. Now Vinnie's the wife of a lawyer who has designs on politics and she's forever wearing beige and pearls to make it work.



Vinnie's children, Hannah (Erika Christensen) and Ginger (Eva Amurri) bring Goldie and Susan back together when the girls laugh at the dinner table at the notion of mom ever being cool. It also loosens mom up and makes the kids look awfully tame even when Hannah is caught doing acid by Suzette and the youngest mouths off to everyone.

Suddenly mom's had enough and brings out the party get up – she does an amazing haircut in the bathroom that I wish I could pull off-- and goes off to party. True to type, after being asked to dance by a local hottie she goes into a long song and dance about why dancing with him is impossible! After a couple of drinks and dances they stumble home and Susan pulls out a secret stash she hasn't opened in twenty years...ahem! The Rock Cock Collection!! There's even a pretty good look at some supposedly famous ummmm members and laughs ensue as everyone suddenly pops down to the basement at just the wrong time. Mom isn't looking quite so homespun suddenly.

Now I have to mention that Academy Award winner Geoffrey Rush is in the film as well. As a knight on a white steed – well almost – he just happens to arrive on a dirty bus when Goldie is out of gas and has no cash on her. Since she's going to the same place, he offers to buy the gas if she'll drive him. Unfortunately he's not the best company in a car. He insists on telling her the "gruesome" story of two flies that sat on the back of his hand and did the fly mating thing! She is unable to take this uptight guy seriously. But when she finds out that

Geoffrey's character, Harry, plans to shoot his father for being so mean to him all his life, Suzette gets closer to him.

What happens is a glorious mess that keeps winding everyone back to Suzette. She is the key to the kids finding out about their mom's history – the one they knew nothing about! They are incredibly nosy about Mom's past suddenly.

The eldest, Hannah, is caught in the pool with her boyfriend doing the nasty while several empty beer bottles decorate the side of the pool. Mom has a conniption over all of this and Hannah can't get over her bad luck at having a perfect mom who never appears to do anything wrong.

The youngest wigs out at being hauled into the hospital when her sister gives her the keys to go out driving — without a license.

When mom loosens up, Harry gets lucky, and the eldest graduates school, life starts to straighten up. Except that suddenly Harry is missing and he has the gun! It turns into a lovely, but fun ending and should be enjoyed by those adult-enough to see the film. Make sure the kids are in bed—and asleep.

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*Laura Seymour first published herself, at age 8. She has since gone on to publish a cookbook for the medical condition Candida. She is working toward her B.A. (Psyc).*

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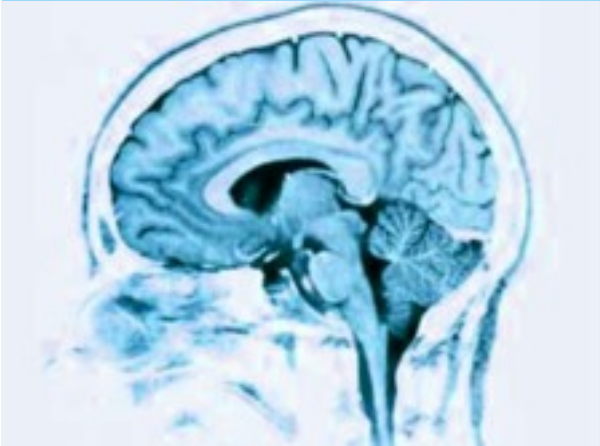
## WRITE FOR THE VOICE!

Contact The Voice editor at [voice@ausu.org](mailto:voice@ausu.org) for details on writing for The Voice. Provide a sample selection of writing and preferred genre.

## FROM MY PERSPECTIVE

# Donating my body to science

By Debbie Jabbour



Well, OK, I haven't really donated my body to science! But I've done the next best thing - I've loaned my brain to research. How did this come about?

Ever since I attended the undergraduate chemistry research conference last May, I've been looking for different research opportunities and ways students can get involved. On-campus psychology students are a rich source of research subjects and participants, but we at AU don't often get these kinds of opportunities. So when I saw an ad in *See*, our local entertainment magazine, I decided to check it out. The ad stated, "Brain neurobiology research program at U of A seeks

volunteers for research project," on the topic of PMS. I've had previous struggles with depression, and have often wondered whether any of these were linked to pre-menstrual syndrome, so I felt I might be a suitable candidate for this study.

The following week, I received a call from a summer student at the U of A who was helping coordinate the research. She asked me a few questions to determine if I fit the requirements, then set up an appointment to do a detailed telephone intake with me several days later. At the intake interview, she explained briefly what the research was about. The purpose of the study is to measure brain GABA (Gamma-aminobutyric acid) levels in premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD). It is based on previous research evidence that suggests a link between brain chemicals in the GABA system and the occurrence of emotional premenstrual symptoms. When I was working on my research project for biological psychology (Psyc402), I had initially investigated a link between GABA levels and stress, so this research topic was already somewhat familiar to me, increasing my desire to become involved.

The study consists of a control group with no PMDD symptoms, a group with PMDD symptoms and history of depression, and a group with PMDD symptoms and no history of depression. Participants are asked to keep a daily record that includes physical, mental and emotional state, and are required to note both ovulation and menstruation dates throughout the period of the study. Brain levels of GABA will then be measured by using an MRI machine. Hormone levels will also be measured through blood samples.

The principle researcher is Jean-Michel Le Melledo, M.D. Le Melledo has been awarded several Canadian Institute for Health Research grants for his projects. Another long-time research project he has been involved with is that of panic disorder, and he is currently looking at the relationship between female hormones and panic disorder. A link between anxiety and GABA levels is also part of that study, and the relationship between GABA and PMDD is a natural outgrowth of these previous investigations.

At the initial telephone intake, I was reassured that proper ethical and confidentiality procedures were being followed, and that I would have access to a copy of my information at the end of the study. Complete results will not likely be available for several years, due to the overall length of the study period. I was asked a lot of questions, some of them quite detailed and quite personal in nature. However, I understood that the goals of the study required this information, and that this level of detail was required to determine whether I was eligible to participate. The summer student explained that once the researchers had screened the telephone interviews, they would decide whether to include me in the next phase of the study. She asked me to call them when my next menstrual cycle began so that they could set up an appointment for the second interview.

When I told my daughters about getting involved in this project, they expressed surprise that researchers would have access to an MRI so easily, given the long waiting list for patients in Alberta wishing an MRI scan. One of them relayed to me a story she had heard about a horrible MRI accident. Although no metal objects are to be in the testing area, someone had left a metal oxygen tank in the MRI room. A six year old boy was in the MRI machine, and when the machine was turned on, the powerful electromagnet caused the tank to fly across the room, fracturing his skull and killing him. I recalled that during the telephone intake, I had been asked a lengthy series of questions about whether I had any metal implants or devices. Upon doing further research, I discovered that MRI's are considered very safe, but freak accidents have occurred when the machine has come into contact with metal. Items as small as paper clips or hairpins have caused serious damage, and patients have been injured by things such as tiny iron filings in their eyes that they were unaware of. After reading about some of these incidents, I began to wonder whether I wanted to place myself at risk for the sake of scientific research! Common sense tells me that risks are minimal, and that MRI's are used millions of times safely every year - but I could not help but worry.

The second interview was held at the University Hospital, with one of the researchers. She advised me that it would take a couple of hours, and gave me detailed instructions on how to find the brain neurobiology research office in the hospital. By the time I arrived for my interview, it was already almost 8 PM, and the neurobiology section of the hospital was dark and quiet. In spite of the instructions, I had a hard time finding the office, only encountering locked doors and dim corridors. Occasionally I'd run into another human being, but none of them seemed to know exactly where this research office was located. At the end of each darkened hallway I would encounter doors marked "authorized personnel only," or "danger" signs of some type.

With visions of flying oxygen tanks filling my head, I was getting a bit spooked and wondering whether this was legitimate or even worth my time, when I finally stumbled upon the right door number. It was locked. I turned to leave, when suddenly the door opened. It was Janette, the researcher. She advised that she had been looking for me and waiting, and then escorted me down another long dim corridor to her office.

At this interview, questions became even more detailed and personal, and Janette explained more about the study. She told me that many of the participants suffer extreme PMDD symptoms, to the extent that their lives are significantly hampered, and explained that at the end of the study participants would be offered a treatment option. After going through my information, she concluded that I didn't fit in the extreme group, but that once I had kept the diary for a month, we would have a better picture of where I did fit in. She reassured me that I could withdraw from the study at any time.

I was again asked a series of questions about potential pieces of metal on my person, along with questions about being uncomfortable in enclosed spaces. This question gave me pause, since I do have slight claustrophobia under certain circumstances, but I reassured her that I would be fine inside the MRI machine. She explained that the procedure is very safe, and that it would involve being inside the MRI scanner for about one hour on two occasions during the study. The actual technique used will be MRS, since rather than supplying a brain image like the MRI does, a line graph will be produced to indicate GABA levels. My involvement in the study itself would last for about six months. Janette also told me that although they must conduct initial screening interviews with at least a hundred women, they are likely only going to have about 25 women in each group, due to funding limitations.

At the end of the session, Janette gave me several monthly calendars and showed me the various ways I would note my daily emotional and mental state. She also gave me a package of ovulation test strips and explained how I was to test urine samples to determine ovulation date. As I left the hospital, I was feeling somewhat ambivalent. On the one hand, my involvement in the project would require time and effort, and I certainly don't need any more demands on my time. But on the other hand, it's a marvelous opportunity to actually see how a university research project is conducted firsthand - and I know I'll learn a great deal from the experience.

During the past few weeks the biggest challenge has been remembering to fill in the calendar every day, but its been quite enlightening to look at my daily pattern of emotional states. The calendar also allows for additional information to be added regarding external stress factors that may contribute to emotional changes, and I'm already noting a clear pattern between negative emotional states and incidents occurring within my family, among colleagues, and at work - so this is an excellent way to identify situations and people that I should avoid if I want to remain stress-free.

When I look at the sheer volume of information I'm generating for the research team, I have renewed respect for the amount of work and effort that goes into conducting a research study and interpreting the results. Even the urine testing process is an educational (although somewhat messy) procedure that enhances my admiration for what laboratory technicians do.

I also have increased respect for people who get involved as research subjects, who are willing to allow their bodies and brains to be prodded, poked, tested and investigated in the name of science. I won't know if I'm a suitable candidate to remain in the project until the first cycle has been completed, so I am not worrying yet about the MRI experience. I'm grateful, however, that I decided to get involved, since I've already had the opportunity to learn more about research - valuable knowledge which I hope to soon put to good use in research projects of my own.

### **Further Reading:**

Six year old killed during MRI:  
<http://www.mercola.com/2001/aug/15/mri.htm>

Can metal detectors cut MRI accidents?  
[http://wink.subportal.com/health/Health\\_Biz/Therapy\\_Procedures/MRI\\_Scans/501868.html](http://wink.subportal.com/health/Health_Biz/Therapy_Procedures/MRI_Scans/501868.html)

Fighting panic with female hormones  
[http://www.expressnews.ualberta.ca/expressnews/articles/news.cfm?p\\_ID=297&s=a](http://www.expressnews.ualberta.ca/expressnews/articles/news.cfm?p_ID=297&s=a)

Two profs tackle anxiety:  
[http://www.expressnews.ualberta.ca/expressnews/articles/news.cfm?p\\_ID=1621&s=a](http://www.expressnews.ualberta.ca/expressnews/articles/news.cfm?p_ID=1621&s=a)

It isn't all in your head/Female hormones and anxiety:  
<http://www.ahfmr.ab.ca/publications/newsletter/Fall01/fall.www/inside/head.feet.htm>

Cortical  $\gamma$ -Aminobutyric Acid (GABA) Levels across the menstrual cycle in healthy women and those with premenstrual dysphoric disorder:  
[http://www.courses.fas.harvard.edu/~psy1204/Readings2003-04-22/Menstrual\\_GABA\\_Mood.pdf](http://www.courses.fas.harvard.edu/~psy1204/Readings2003-04-22/Menstrual_GABA_Mood.pdf)

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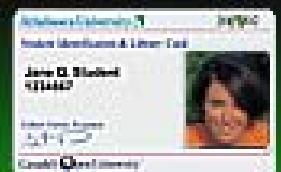
*Debbie is a native Edmontonian, and a single parent with four daughters. She has worked as a professional musician for most of her life, and has enjoyed a rich variety of life experiences - with many more to come! Debbie is working towards an eventual doctorate in psychology, and currently serves as the president of the Athabasca University Students Union.*

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# CANADIAN FED WATCH!

## NEWS ACROSS THE NATION...

*By Karl Low*



### A Good Investment for Who?

No doubt concerned by reports that most high-school students cite cost as the primary factor preventing them from attending post-secondary education, the Alberta Learning Minister, Dr. Lyle Oberg, has provided a press release to tell us all how wonderful an investment a post-secondary education is. The information is presented in a way to convince Albertans that post-secondary education is something that should be taken on by the individual, since it's the individual who receives such a great benefit from it.

And on first reading, this seems to make sense. At least, until you start to take in what the press release doesn't say.

To begin with, The Honourable Minister Oberg cites that the average tuition cost for an Alberta student is approximately \$4,487. He points out, honestly enough, that the national average is only \$4,025. However he then presents a series of tables showing that even though Alberta's tuition is only the fourth highest in the entire country, the wages for Alberta's educated people are the highest in the country. Even ignoring the issue that the fourth highest tuition should not be considered acceptable for a province that has had record surpluses year after year, or that this year is devoting more than **three billion** dollars to a sustainability fund which simply allows the government to make budgets based on unrealistic expectations of oil and gas prices, there still is the problem that tuition numbers don't tell the whole story.

A person who is enrolled full time in post-secondary education is not only spending almost \$4,500 per year in tuition, they are also most likely giving up the opportunity to work full-time. This amounts to a separate cost of almost 23,000 per year, using the Minister's own tables of what high-school graduates make in Alberta.

So now, instead of a 4 year degree being an investment of around \$20,000 dollars, we are looking at an investment of closer to \$110,000 in tuition and lost wages for your standard bachelors degree. Of course, compared to the wages that a graduate can earn, the investment is still a sound one as five years of working at the average wage for a bachelor's degree will pay the investment off.

Yet there is more to this story yet. What Dr. Oberg has failed to mention is that higher wages mean higher taxes, which mean more money to the government. Higher wages also mean a better socio-economic bracket, which Statistics Canada has repeatedly tied to better overall health. Since health care is the single highest expenditure of any provincial budget, making the population healthier costs the government less. Post-secondary graduates are also more likely to become entrepreneurs, and small businesses are said to be what drives any economy.

Of course, the reason Dr. Oberg does not want to point out that getting a post-secondary education will benefit the government almost as much as it benefits the individual is that then the ugly question can be raised of what the government is putting into it. Since 1986-87, the government's real contribution per student in constant dollars has not risen significantly. In that same time period, the student's contribution has more than doubled. Should the individual be forced to take on a continually increasing burden of something that benefits the government (and hence the populace as a whole) so much?

Perhaps by writing Minister Lyle Oberg yourself, he can explain to you why this is fair.

## Access for the Advantaged

Statistics Canada has released its Post Secondary Participation Survey which details typically how much it costs across Canada to attend post-secondary education. Unlike many surveys which only look at the tuition costs, this one includes such things as extra fees, capital expenses, and living expenses. The result shows that the median student, of which half his or her fellow students will pay more and half will pay less, is paying \$11,200 for an eight month course of studies. The maximum amount available for student loans is currently \$40,000, or \$4,800 less than a full degree will cost.

Now while student loans are intended to be supplemented by summer employment earnings, we have to return to the fact that \$11,200 is only the median number. Fully half of the students taking university will actually spend more than that on a yearly basis, and that this is only for the eight months of the education, and does not include the four months during summer at all.

More damning of our current educational funding, though no more surprising, is that post-secondary is simply more likely to happen among those families with money. Families that earn over \$80,000 per year are 83% likely to have a student go on to post-secondary education, while only 55% of students whose families earned \$55,000 per year or less can be expected to attend.

What happened to equal access to all? When family income can be such a major indicator of whether a post-secondary education will be pursued, doesn't this indicate a fault in the system?

Perhaps it's time the government started paying attention to its own statistics.

---

*A native Calgarian, Karl is perpetually nearing the completion of his Bachelor of Arts with a Major in Information Studies. He also works for the Computer Sciences Virtual Helpdesk for Athabasca University and plans to eventually go on to tutor and obtain his Master's Degree.*

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**Work for a  
living planet**

## Notice to AU Graduate Students and Those Considering Grad Studies at AU

Athabasca University Students' Union is in the process of establishing an AU Graduate Students' Association.

Here's a sampling of benefits of belonging to a grad students' association:

- Grad student representation on University Committees
- University and government advocacy and lobbying
- Affiliation with provincial and national graduate students' organizations.
- Assistance with university / student dispute resolution
- Information source
- Networking

### For more information contact:

Shirley Barg [sbarg@ausu.org], Vice-President  
Athabasca University Students' Union  
Call: 1-800-788-9041 ext 3413



Dear Sandra,

With West Nile prevalent in some areas of Canada right now, especially Alberta, I'm wondering why mosquitoes choose to bite some people and not others? Also, how do you know if you have the West Nile virus?

**Baffled in Brooks**

Dear Baffled,

Mosquitoes are not choosy "biters," they don't really have preferences as to whose blood they will suck, though it seems that men are more likely to be bitten (with no real scientific reasoning that I could find) as well as larger people (possibly because they produce more body heat and CO<sub>2</sub> output).

Some people have varying severities or allergic reactions to the bites. The time it takes for a reaction from the bite to appear is anywhere from 20 minutes in a 6-year old to 16 hours in an adult over 40 (probably because adults have more antibodies to a wider variety of antigens in the body). The reaction depends on whether you are allergic to mosquito saliva; it also depends on whether you have built up a tolerance to the saliva of the breed of mosquito that bit you. If you're wondering how I know all of this, I have first hand knowledge as mosquito bites on me swell up to a bright red mound on my skin that can be seen from a mile away leaving people wondering if I have some sort of weird disease on my legs and arms, while I've yet to see one visible bite on my husbands' skin.

Now as for knowing if you have West Nile Virus here's a few facts from Health Canada's website on to WNV:

- Symptoms will usually appear within 2 to 15 days and range in severity from person to person.
- In mild cases, there may be flu-like symptoms, including fever, headache and body aches. Some people may also develop a mild rash, or swollen lymph glands.
- Some individuals have weaker immune systems, and they are at greater risk of developing symptoms and health effects that are more serious, including meningitis and encephalitis, both of which are sometimes fatal. In such cases, symptoms may include the rapid onset of severe headache, high fever, stiff neck, nausea, difficulty swallowing, vomiting, drowsiness, confusion, loss of consciousness, lack of coordination, muscle weakness and paralysis. During 2002, several other symptoms of WN virus were identified including movement disorders, Parkinsonism, poliomyelitis-like syndrome and muscle degeneration.

If you are exhibiting WNV like symptoms talk with your doctor and a simple blood-test will confirm if you are harboring the virus. As for treatment, there are currently no vaccinations available for WNV or any particular method of treating it. Check out Health Canada's website for more information on the West Nile Virus.

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/westnile/index.html>

*Sandra*

**I WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! TELL ME YOUR TROUBLES. YOUR CONFIDENTIALITY IS ASSURED.**

*This column is for entertainment only. Sandra is not a professional counsellor, but is an AU student who would like to give personal advice about school and life to her peers. Please forward your questions to Sandra care of [smoore@ausu.org](mailto:smoore@ausu.org)*

# ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### JOB POSTING



The Athabasca University Students' Union (AUSU), is seeking a creative and self-motivated individual to fill the position of Executive Director. AUSU is a non-traditional students' organization representing approximately 26,000 distance education students from across Canada and internationally. The AUSU office is based in downtown Edmonton, and under the guidance of a nine-member elected Council, provides services at a distance to Athabasca University students including: advocacy, representation, communication, student clubs, and scholarships & bursaries.

Under the direction of the AUSU president, and working closely with the executive committee; the Executive Director will provide support to the AUSU Council team in achieving our vision. Working within established policies and guidelines, the Executive Director will oversee AUSU activities through liaison between staff, students, the university and AUSU Council. While primarily responsible for overall administration and management of the AUSU office and its services, the position encompasses a wide variety of duties, including (but not limited to): research, basic website maintenance, bookkeeping, external representation, preparation of reports and news releases, records maintenance, and policy development. The successful candidate will possess multiple and diverse skills, and will be willing to grow and develop this new position to best meet the needs and goals of our unique student organization.

The position will be of interest to highly motivated, enthusiastic individuals who are seeking a unique employment opportunity that will allow personal growth and skill development in all aspects of organizational management within a dynamic student service environment.

Executive Director position requirements include:

- An undergraduate degree in administration, arts, finance, or the equivalent.
- Excellent organizational, presentation, interpersonal, problem solving, and team building skills
- Basic accounting skills in a computerized environment
- Ability to understand and interpret legislation and policy
- Competency in research and Internet search tools
- Adaptable and flexible; an independent self-starter who is ready to learn and meet new challenges.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Accuracy and attention to detail
- Experience in providing leadership and coordination in a team environment
- Awareness of post secondary education issues
- Computer aptitude and proficiency in Windows, MS Office, and Internet-based computer environments.

Previous experience in board management in a post secondary educational environment or non-profit organization would be an asset. The position requires flexible work hours.

Starting salary is \$30,000 plus a benefit package.

Preference will be given to an Athabasca University student or alumnus.  
Athabasca University Students' Union is an equal opportunity employer.

For further information regarding this position, contact Debbie Jabbour, President, at 780-497-3413 or email [president@ausu.org](mailto:president@ausu.org)

Competition closes September 23, 2003. Letters of application, accompanied by resume and three references should be sent by mail, courier, or email to:

Debbie Jabbour, President  
Athabasca University Students' Union  
2<sup>nd</sup> Flr, North Tower  
10030 – 107 Street  
Edmonton AB T5J 3E4

Email as .doc attachments to [president@ausu.org](mailto:president@ausu.org).

# SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS

For scholarships available through the Athabasca University Students' Union, see the AUSU website at [www.ausu.org](http://www.ausu.org)



## Athabasca University Awards and Scholarship Information

The Office of the Registrar would like to advise students of pending deadlines for scholarships and awards:

**Award Name:** Alberta Blue Cross 50th Anniversary Scholarship

**Value:** \$375

**Program:** Bachelor of Nursing

**Basic Criteria:** Highest GPA in last two courses

**Application Deadline:** September 30

**Award Name:** Persons Case Scholarship

**Value:** \$1,000 to \$5,000

**Program:** All programs are eligible

**Basic Criteria:** Female; Full-time; Resident of Alberta

**Application Deadline:** September 30

**Award Name:** Bursary Program for Indigenous Students

**Value:** \$Varies

**Program:** School of Business programs

**Basic Criteria:** Students of Indigenous Heritage

**Application Deadline:** On-going, contact Paulette Windsor at 1-800-788-9042, ext. 6149

For more information on the specific criteria for these awards, please visit the AU website at:

<http://www.athabascau.ca/html/depts/registry/studawrd.htm>

Applications for these awards can be obtained by calling the Office of the Registrar at 1-780-675-6705 or by email at [awardsinfo@athabascau.ca](mailto:awardsinfo@athabascau.ca).

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## SATURN COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE AWARD PROGRAM

**Value:** \$1500

**DEADLINE: October 31, 2003**

**Administrator:** University of New Brunswick

**Notes:** Awarded to exceptional female students attending Canadian Universities. The four students whose submissions are judged to be the best will receive a \$1,500 scholarship.

### Contact Information:

Financial Services

8 Bailey Drive, P.O. Box 4400

Fredericton, New Brunswick E3B 5A3

Phone: 506-453-4624

Fax: 506-453-4572

Web Site: <http://www.unb.ca/>

E-mail: [finserv@unb.ca](mailto:finserv@unb.ca)



## CONFERENCE CONNECTIONS

Contributed By AU's *The Insider*

- **AU Learning Services Conference** - October 3 & 4, 2003 - Edmonton,

Crowne Plaza Chateau Lacombe. Details to follow.

## OTHER CONFERENCES

- **CAPDHHE [Canadian Association for the Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment in Higher Education]** - To be held in Calgary, October 29 - November 1, 2003.  
<http://www.capdhhe.org/conference2/index.htm>
- **Teaching In A Digital Age** - the impact of new communication technologies on teaching and pedagogy. L'Université de Montréal.  
<http://profetic.org:16080/coll2003/> [French only]

**Know of an educational conference that is not on this list? Contact [voice@ausu.org](mailto:voice@ausu.org) with the details and we'll list it in Conference Connections.**

## ATTENTION PSYCHOLOGY STUDENTS



Every Monday from 9:30 AM MST and Wednesday from 7 PM MST the Athabasca University Psychology Students' Society gets together to chat about issues pertaining to the world of psychology at AU.

To Join the chat, go to the AUPSS website, accessible through:

<http://www.ausu.org/clubs/index.php> [you must be logged in to AUSU] and select the discussion forum link, from there click on Psychology at the top written in blue and choose the General

Psychology Chat. NOTE: You need to be registered in a psychology course to access the AU psych discussions.

Hope to see you there!

**Sandra Moore**

**Athabasca University Psychology Students' Society**

Walter Gretzky, Stroke Survivor

I'm alive today  
because someone  
knew the signs  
of a stroke.

Do you?



### STROKE WARNING SIGNS

#### WEAKNESS

Sudden weakness, numbness  
or tingling in the face,  
arm or leg

#### TROUBLE SPEAKING

Sudden temporary  
loss of speech or trouble  
understanding speech

#### VISION PROBLEMS

Sudden loss of vision,  
particularly in one eye, or  
double vision

#### HEADACHE

Sudden severe  
and unusual headache

#### DIZZINESS

Sudden loss of balance,  
especially with any of the  
above signs

Call 911

or your medical  
emergency number  
immediately.



1-888-HSF-INFO  
(1-888-473-4636)  
[www.heartandstroke.ca](http://www.heartandstroke.ca)



## CLASSIFIEDS:

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AU students are eligible for free classifieds (maximum three per issue) as long as they are not representing a company or product.

Classified ads should be submitted to the editor at [voice@ausu.org](mailto:voice@ausu.org) with 'CLASSIFIED AD' listed in the subject title.

The Editor reserves the right to refuse any classified advertisement at her discretion. Thank-you.

Edmonton and Area AU students are holding their inaugural face-to-face get together and you're invited. It will be a casual social mixer and a way to connect with fellow students.

Meet other students in your program, make new friends, have a coffee, find study buddies and find out what's going on at AU and the SU.

If you would like to take part in the Edmonton and Area get together, contact RYAN for info at: [nicepilotdude@yahoo.ca](mailto:nicepilotdude@yahoo.ca)

## THE VOICE

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c/o Athabasca University Students' Union  
2nd Floor, 10030-107th Street, Edmonton, AB T5J 3E4  
800.788.9041 ext. 3413

**Editor In Chief** Tamra Ross Low

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**THE VOICE ONLINE: [WWW.AUSU.ORG/VOICE](http://WWW.AUSU.ORG/VOICE)**

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