

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 24 Issue 11 2016-03-18

Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You

Course Hangover

What's Left When the Course is Done?

Between Two Houses

From Resources to Resourcefulness

Plus:

Council Connection

Course Exam

and much more!



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EDITORIAL

Kinship

Karl Low



First things first, congratulations need to be given to the new AUSU Council. It might seem like an acclamation is a sure thing but as this Maclean's [article](#) shows, running unopposed does not guarantee a win.

This week, we do a course exam on English 255, a course which is a required component for many degrees. If you haven't taken it already, Marie Well has interviewed the Course Coordinator, Aiden Dubbelboer, in a great interview that gets you the information you need to prepare for it.

Our feature article is an interview with Calgary student, Stephanie Wieler. Personally, I felt a bit of instant kinship when I found out that Stephanie, like me, is one of the few Calgarians born and raised in this city, and like me, has had people comment on it.

Also this week, Wanda Waterman has submitted a pictorial feature for Maghreb Voices, giving us a look at some of the sights in Carthage, Tunisia, sights that look far nicer than what I can see outside my window.

Along with that, and the reason why this week's Voice Magazine is so late getting out, is the Council Connection, where we look at the recently submitted reports of the Forensic Audit Committee and the Executive Compensation Review Committee. The titles of these committees hide the important work they've been doing in the aftermath of AUSU's 2015 Annual General Meeting. The take-away from these is that Council is now working on ensuring they have better policies and practices in place to serve students, including limiting AUSU from increasing the wages of their own executive.

Our cover this week is from Deanna Roney's look at what she calls a course hangover. While this sounds like something you might get if you study on St. Patrick's day, given the choice between one of these and the type of hangover I tend to get, I'd much rather get hers.

We also have an article from now AUSU Councillor Scott Jacobsen, where he looks at our transition to a knowledge economy and what it's going to require from our governments, AU, and you.

And of course we have our set of advice, reviews, humour, and articles that just exist to make you sit back and think for a moment. All in all, it's a solid issue of The Voice Magazine this week, so I hope you enjoy the read!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karl', with a stylized, flowing script.

MINDS WE MEET



Stephanie Wieler is an AU student from Calgary AB. She has completed her University Certificate in Human Resources and Labour Relations which she will be using to gain entry into the Bachelor of Professional Arts–Communications program.

The Voice Magazine recently interviewed Stephanie by e-mail, and here's what she had to say about school, exhaustion, and teleportation.

First of all, whereabouts do you live? And have you always lived there?

I was born and raised in Calgary, Alberta. A lot of people are surprised to hear that there are people living in Calgary who were born and raised here!

If you work, describe what you do.

Aside from being a fulltime mother to an almost 2 year old and a 6 year old by day, by night I work graveyard shifts as a contact center agent. In between, I somehow manage to

get school done from there.

Describe the path that led you to AU.

Prior to starting at AU, I had worked a few different administrative jobs. However, I found that although I do well in administrative roles, I wanted to do something more.

What do you do like to do when you're not studying?

When I am not studying, working, or watching my kids, I am binge watching Netflix or going to the gym!

Who in your life had the greatest influence on your desire to learn?

My mom has always been a hard worker raising three kids by herself. I think that she is the one who inspires me to want to learn and work hard to reach my goals.

What famous person, past or present, would you like to have lunch with, and why?

If I were to have lunch with a famous person it would be Jesus Christ. I'd have so many questions to ask!

Describe your experience with online learning. What do you like? Dislike?

I love the flexibility of online learning; I wouldn't be able to do it any other way. My one dislike is e-texts. I have a hard time staying focused if I am reading my textbook online—before I know it I am scrolling down my Facebook newsfeed.

Have you had a time when you wavered about your education?

There have been many times that I wavered about my education, especially because I am constantly so exhausted. However, I remind myself that everything will pay off in the end.

What was your most memorable AU course?

I think PSYC 305, Career Development Portfolio, was my most memorable course thus far. There were a lot of questions that this course asked that I had never thought to consider in my career path.

If you won \$20 million in a lottery, what would you do with it?

I would finish my degree, pay off my debts, go on a nice vacation, and buy my dream home!

What have you given up to go to AU that you regret the most? Was it worth it?

Free time! I have an extremely busy life with work, kids and my studies, and I find I don't have time for anything else. While it doesn't seem worth it at times, I know in the long run I will be glad that I did it.

If you were the new president of AU, what would be your first project?

I think I would get to know and build a relationship with the students. To be completely honest, I don't even know who the president of AU is...

If you could wake up tomorrow with a "superpower", which one would it be?

My super power would be teleportation so I can go anywhere! For instance, instead of studying at my desk, I'd just teleport myself and study on the beach!

What is your most prized possession?

My most prized "possession" would be my family!

Please tell us something that few people know about you.

I have an irrational fear of being the passenger in a car.

What is the most valuable lesson you have learned in life?

I think that the most valuable lesson I have in life is to never take the easy way out. Work hard and the results will follow.

What do you think about e-texts?

I find it harder to focus when I have to read chapters online. Also, I get kind of frustrated that I am paying for "textbooks" but am only getting e-texts for some courses.

How do you find communications with your course tutors?

I haven't had to reach out to tutors too often, but the times that I have I feel like they responded fairly quickly and were definitely helpful.

Where has life taken you so far?

Life has been very busy for me but I am lucky to have gotten to travel to Mexico twice, California once and in just a few short weeks, I will be reading books on the beach in the Dominican!

What (non-AU) book are you reading now?

I wish I had time to read books other than textbooks...or e-texts.

**A Spring in My Step****Barbara Lehtiniemi**

The first day of spring is still two days away, but I feel like it's already arrived. An unmistakable aura of spring hovers above the lingering snow, bringing with it a sense of renewal and optimism.

I took my first walk along our rural road this week. Walking is unsafe in winter when snowbanks hem in the narrow road, leaving barely enough room for two vehicles to pass without clipping mirrors. A few days of milder weather—meaning a degree or three above freezing—has pushed back the snow enough to invite walking.

The day looks like spring with brilliant sunshine streaming from blue skies, but it feels more akin to winter. There's a chill in the air and a wind strong enough to require leaning into. With a hat clamped firmly over my ears, warm gloves, and sturdy boots, I venture forth to experience the transition from winter to spring firsthand.

An indefinable spring scent swirls in the wind. The air doesn't smell like anything in particular—perhaps a faint, earthy aroma—but there is a freshness that is not detectable in the crisp, sterile scent of winter. It smells like something...alive.

Spring sounds abound. I can't identify every birdcall, but I can hear when the summer birds are back. More joyful songs and less nervous twittering. Even the year-round chickadees change their tune from winter's aggressive "chickadeedeedee" to spring's flirty "hey sweetie."

Along my walk, I notice the water in drainage ditches is rising, while the snowpack diminishes. Winter's collection of discarded coffee cups and beer cans emerge briefly from snowbanks, soon to be swallowed up in roadside grass. High above, tangled skeins of snow geese and orderly strands of Canada geese honk their way north.

Geese are one of the outstanding harbingers of spring. If geese can travel many thousands of kilometres during their migration, then anything seems possible. Spring brings a sense of renewal and instills purpose in my life. Motivation, which flagged as winter ground on, seems limitless again.

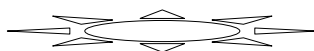
Now spring is here, I feel full of renewed energy and resolve. Even while the snow lingers, I'm planning—and looking forward to—outdoor chores and gardening. Indoors, those spring cleaning tasks I've been dragging my feet on for weeks suddenly seem possible—and urgent. I have a hankering to clean, de-clutter, and organize.

There's something about spring air that makes me want to work harder and dream bigger. I feel excited about my AU courses and optimistic about getting more done this year. Goals I've set somehow seem possible and challenges less daunting. Forget New Year's resolutions; we should make resolutions in the spring, when renewal is in the air and many things seem possible.

Right now, my spring resolution is to walk more. Every day I want to get out and see what's going on in the world—the real world, not the artificial one bound by my desk and computer. I want to fill my senses with the sights, sounds, and smells of the season. I want the energizing, mind-clearing kick that fresh air and exercise provide.

Is it spring fever? Who cares? If the sight of melting snow and a whiff of fresh air can put a spring in my step and energy in my cells, then I'm happy to succumb.

Barbara Lehtiniemi is a writer, photographer, and AU student. She lives on a windswept rural road in Eastern Ontario



Between Two Houses

Scott Jacobsen



The oil downturn and the future knowledge economy means our country has two houses – so to speak. One housing the resource-based sector of the economy. Another housing the human capital sector of the economy. I consider both houses' contents important. But, I argue, we need a balanced economic plan for the next 5, 10, and 25 years; a plan that leans toward intellectual capital over resources in the long-term. AU can be the road between those houses through education. However, infrastructure for that road, for education, takes time and planning.

Take, for instance, the international trend toward the knowledge economy, which seems to

show that national success in the future will require preparation and adaptation to the oncoming knowledge economy via education now (Tsaparis, 2014). Education is an investment in the nation's intellectual capital, which is the 'currency' of the knowledge economy. But education takes time. So the next economy's readiness, founded in education, will also take time.

And by time, I mean a decades-long progression of the relative weighting of the economy in favor of human capital over resources, beginning in the present. And AU, as Canada's largest online postsecondary institution, seems like one major place to help the country's transition into this economy of intellectual capital. The pressure of this is even more intense with the recent economic downturn in Alberta due to oil prices. Furthermore, Alberta's economic downturn is not isolated. For example, the resource or oil-based dip affected Manitoba as well as Newfoundland and Labrador too (Statistics Canada, 2016; Younglai, 2016).

Bear in mind that while it's bad, *it's not the worst time* for Alberta in its recent economic history. For instance, the current drop in Alberta's economy is less than the 2008/09 economic dip, and even a bit higher than the 1990 one (Babad, 2016). Furthermore, Alberta is not alone, because Ottawa has promised at least \$250 million in monetary assistance (Varcoe, 2016). Why does this matter? It means we don't need to panic, but we still need to prepare for the future economy.

Nationally, the economy is deeply interconnected. Big dips in the economic situation have provincial/territorial effects elsewhere in the economic system. So if 'all of the eggs are in one basket', such as resources, then dips or rises in the economy cascade across sectors embedded in it. In other words, Alberta is in an economic dip based on oil, which reduces the economic success of other parts of Canada.

And to buffer the country from these dips in the future, education is the key to a balanced economy. We need to be transitioning into education because education is the access point to quality knowledge and training for this new economy. AU, in part, can help Alberta, and Canada, rise into the future economy, the knowledge economy, in the long-term with greater reliance on resources in the short-term.

To conclude, our strength is resources rather than human capital now. Taken together, both houses mentioned at the outset, economies need to transition into cognitive work in the future because the next economy lies in knowledge and, therefore, education. AU resides at this juncture. That is, AU is the road between resources and cognitive capital. A transit system from here, resource heavy, to there, human capital heavy. What we need now is for governments, at all levels, to recognize this, and to realize that funding AU is not a cost, not a drain on their resources, but rather an investment. A way to provide education to those of us for who traditional education does not work.

But they won't realize until we make them. The road won't be built without us telling our MLAs that it needs to be done. And if we hope to make the trip between houses, from resources to resourcefulness, they need to know, and soon.

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A native British Columbian, Scott Douglas Jacobsen is an AU undergrad and AUSU Council Member. He researches in the Learning Analytics Research Group, Lifespan Cognition Psychology Lab, and IMAGE Psychology Lab, and with the UCI Ethics Center, and runs In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal, I and In-Sight Publishing.



English 255 – Introductory Composition

Adien Dubbelboer, an instructor in the English Centre for Humanities in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, is the Academic Coordinator for Effective Writing and the Course Coordinator for English 255, Introductory Composition. She was kind enough to set some time aside from her busy schedule to speak to The Voice Magazine about the course.

When was the last update of the course?

Adien: The course is currently in revision 7. It went into revision 7 in 2014, I think.

What was the process for getting the course made?

Adien: The course has been at AU for a long time, when I first started, students would sometimes send me handwritten work, which I would then mark and return. Eventually it's all gone online, of course. Since 2014, we are completely online, including the electronic textbook.

The course has not changed so much in its approach as it has changed in its format. The course that was initially created by David Brundage and Marian Allen, who is still a tutor, and has gone through various transitions over time. The first transition that I was involved with was revision 4. Revision 5 is where I started putting more and more things online. It initially went into Moodle as revision 6, which was the most dramatic change in the format and in the way we presented the information.

Revision 7 was just the addition of the electronic textbook.

As it's an e-text course, have you heard of any issues with the e-text that students might want to be prepared for?

Adien: Personally, I think that as long as the student is able to download the e-text to an iPad or a tablet, then the tablet starts to function like a book. It becomes a lot easier to flip through the e-textbook. If you have to do it online or on the computer, it's just simply more difficult because you can't quite treat it as a textbook. That would be my most important advice to students: put your hands on a cheap e-reader, and use that for your e-textbooks.

About how many students take this course, on average?

Adien: The average in the last two years? We are close to 2000 students a year. Together, with the accounting course, it's one of the biggest courses in the university.

What kind of learning style is it? For instance, is it very open ended or does it give fairly detailed instructions?

Adien: It tries to give very detailed instructions. Sometimes it's not detailed enough, apparently, because I get a lot of calls from students who are a little confused--especially about the discussion assignment.

Because we are trying to get students to think in an academic way about writing and to get them to write in a variety of rhetorical modes, different forms of essay writing, we are quite specific in how we explain what it is that we want from them.

It's always a bit difficult. It's almost like a vicious circle: you are asking students to improve their writing by reading, but, if they are not good readers to begin with, then the information doesn't necessarily come across the way it should. That's something I'm currently struggling with: how am I going to get to a point where I can improve that by using Internet and by using Moodle?

If this course isn't a requirement of their program, why should students take it as an elective?

Adien: That's an interesting question because it is mostly a required course by a variety of programs: Nursing students, a lot of psychology students, English students. For them, it is either this option or take another English course, but very many of them are asked to take English 255 as a core component early in their program to help them set up for success in their courses. However, there are students who say, "This is the last course I need to complete my degree," and you go, "Okay, so you are in year 4 of your program and doing your first year English writing course?" Hmm. Sometimes those are already accomplished writers, but sometimes you wonder how they managed without taking this course first.

That is probably the other big challenge in the course: there's such a variety of skill level that it's not always easy to accommodate every student the way you'd want to.

What part or concept in the course have they seen students have the most trouble with?

Adien: Figuring out what it means to rhetorically analyze a text. That really forces them to think about how someone else has "built" a text, so it really requires a high level of reading skill. And then you have to figure out how to write that all down. So, you get some of the best papers in the final paper of the course and some of the worst papers. It really demands that they think about both the reading and the writing.

What is rhetorical analysis?

Adien: (Laughs.) Now you've got me. In a rhetorical analysis, you are trying to analyze the rhetorical tricks the author uses. You are trying to figure out what the author does to persuade you, the reader, to believe, feel, see, understand what he or she is trying to persuade you of. It's a variety of textual elements that you would look at. Mostly within this course, because it's a beginner academic English course, we look at things like logos, pathos, ethos. What are the logical argumentation tricks the author uses to persuade you? What is their ethos? Ethos is how reliable the author is, how authoritative are they in the field they are discussing. And then there's pathos. What kind of emotional tricks are they pulling to persuade you?

What's a good way for students to deal with the more troublesome parts?

Adien: I'm always tempted to say, "Stay in touch with your tutor." There are fourteen of them on the course right now. But some of them have a very heavy workload and that makes it more difficult. If students have any trouble whatsoever getting in touch with their tutor, they should always just contact me. I am the fulltime staff member. (Laughs.) Technically, the others are not. I'm easily reached: they don't even have to know my name, which most people don't. They can just use the 255online@athabascau.ca link, which is in the materials at various points within the course, and that will always bring them to me.

Are the assignments fairly similar in the amount of work required, or are some of them much larger?

Adien: The first assignment is a diagnostic. It really asks the students to write a small introduction, first of themselves and then of their community or their environment. That gives the tutor an opportunity to get to know the student a little bit. It also functions as a way that says, "These are the areas of strength, and these are the areas of weakness." That's the first one. And it isn't weighted, so it doesn't cost the student anything in terms of marks. That is where we also sometimes have to say to students, "Look, you are not ready for this course. It is likely better for you to do English 177 or English 155 just to get you up to steam and up to par with what you need in this course."

It only gets harder after that. The second assignment they do is an online assignment that consists of three sessions, for which they have to post their own post, their introductory paragraphs. Then they have to summarize a debate that's ongoing in their own community. And, lastly, they have to analyze rhetorically a text from our textbook. And that's assignment two; it takes about six weeks in total, but during that time, they can be working on the other assignments because the third and sixth assignment reinforces what they do in assignment two. They have to repeat that, or do it at the same time with assignment three and six.

So, it's a bit of going back and forth in the textbook, and it's going back and forth in the course as well. Assignment three is a summary assignment: they write two summaries for that. For assignment four, they start doing research. It's their first research paper. And assignment four, that's where all the fun stuff with APA and MLA come into play. That's one of the things that students struggle with, but we try to help them through that. And then there's assignment five, the two last papers in the course are around 1500 to 2000 word essays. I think it's about four or five pages. Assignment five is an argumentative essay for which we have a lot different topics to choose from.

And the final one is another four or five page essay: rhetorical analysis of a text of their choosing, but we have limited the number of texts that they can choose from.

Is there a part of the course that you've heard students really enjoy? What is it?

Adien: It varies. At one point, I wanted to know how people were experiencing the online discussion groups, so I set up a tiny little survey in Moodle, and I invited students to respond to that after they completed the discussion group, and responses were quite mixed, to my surprise.

I thought there would be far more interest in more online stuff or more group stuff, but a lot of the responses were actually, "No, I'm taking this course through distance ed so I don't have to be talking to other students all the time." So, fair enough, that's a reasonable thing to say. At this point, we've made the online part mandatory, so they can't just willy nilly say, "No, I want to do an alternate," but there are circumstances in which we the alternate version of the online assignment is necessary, for example for incarcerated students, and you know, we have to make accommodations here and there, for people who cannot manage the time frames that we have set up for the assignment.

So, I think I've mostly heard that students enjoy the variety of topics, the variety of ways of writing essays. Overall, students do find it a reasonably challenging but doable course.

What is the exam like? Is it a couple of essays? Short answer questions? Multiple choice?

Adien: There's one exam. We do ask them to write a final exam. It's a three-hour exam, so it is quite long. They re-show us the skills they learned in the course.

They write one essay. Then they write a summary of an essay that we have given with the exam. They write a small analysis of that as well. That's all just about a paragraph long, and, although with the online exam, and it's online, too, the paragraphs seem to get shorter and shorter. I'll have to revisit that at some point exam.

They have to write an excerpt explanation. So, in the course, they read a number of texts, and from those texts, we selected twelve essays, the student knows the titles going into the exam. We found some interesting quotes for each of those titles, and they have to explain how that quote works within the text. That takes a bit of memorization for them.

What we're testing in the exam is the student's skills, and not so much knowledge.

Or what would you change to make the course even better if you could?

Adien: If I had money and time and everything--and the university had the same--I think what I would try to do more of is have more student-tutor interaction points that are sort of set but free. But also student-student interaction points that are always public.

So, that's what I'd like to see, but these things are not easily accomplished, especially in a course where you have such a variety of students, so many of them, and little time to spend with each student individually - except through our responses to their assignments.

Basically what I'd like is to make it a course for people who want to study in their own way: to have an individual learning path through the course, but you can set that up, so if you are someone who works better if you have regular contact with your tutor, then that should be possible--more so than it is now. If you are someone who learns best by cramming everything in the last two months of the course, then that should be possible, too. In each case, though, it works best if the instructor and the student both know this before the course actually starts.

So, I want to allow individual learning styles to be possible within the course, but that's not a super easy thing to accomplish, especially when you have so many students and so many styles *and* so many tutors.

What kind of personality type or talent is required to succeed at this course?

Adien: Right now, it requires somebody who is self-motivated. It can be difficult to have more than once a week contact with your tutor. But, for some students, that's necessary.

I would like to see it be made possible that students can also, say, text a particular number and get a more immediate response than from an email, but these are demands that we can't put on our instructors at this point. That's just because of our models. I'm sure you've heard that before, too.

How can students prepare for the course?

Adien: I would say that it depends on the type of student they are. One of the things a student can do is enroll a month in advance so that he or she has access to all the course material except the tutor, the assignment drop box, and the online discussion group, but then the student can feel his or her way into the course over a longer period of time and then start. So, if you are okay starting in June 1st, but if you sign up now, you pretty much get access now. you'd have a long runway to get started.



Study Tips from a Semi-Anonymous Friend

Academic Writing Stinks, Part II

There is nothing more that The Study Dude wants for you than to take twice as long writing your essays so that your essays read ten-times better.

Well, in these articles, as The Study Dude, I'll try to give you the study tips you need to help make your learning easier. I'll also give you straight and honest opinions and personal anecdotes—even the embarrassing ones that you wouldn't ever dare read about from any other study tip guru.

This week's Study Dude helps you write like the bestseller Steven Pinker. In Pinker's *Sense of Style* you learn how to write clearly and coherently. Once you master the tricks of clarity and coherence, your writing will improve as if you've written four hours daily for seven years.

What did I just read? Clear Writing

I discovered that clear writing is the recipe for good writing. In other words, I aim to remove ambiguous wording from my essays. Here is an example of an ambiguous sentence: *The boy fed his goldfish to his pet cat, who thereafter ran away from home.* In this sentence, we don't know for sure who ran away from home: the boy? the goldfish? the pet cat? Ambiguous!

Yes, clear writing is everything. Now that I know ambiguities muddle my writing, I watch for them—and sure enough, ambiguities appear in nearly everything I write. For instance, I rewrote that last sentence five times—and it's no Picasso. I rewrote the next sentence (the one prior to this one) three times before deleting most of it. Writing clearly is no easy task.

To help you write clearly, try saying your sentence out loud. Does the sentence flow from your tongue? Or do you have to reread the sentence just to catch the meaning? Regardless, make your sentences read like Edgar Allan Poe wrote them.

Yet, writing clearly isn't as pretty as writing poetry. Writing with clarity takes painstaking effort. When I first started writing the Study Dude, I could spin off an article in the matter of an hour. Not so these days. Now, one article takes four hours to write, one to edit, fourteen to research—and this is all you get.

Steven Pinker in his book *The Sense of Style* spells out the rules for writing clearly:

- Stay clear of ambiguities like the goldfish and cat confusion I presented above.
- Read your sentences out loud to see if the rhythm and pauses add to your overall clarity.
- Let your punctuation add clarity to your writing: insert relevant commas, colons, semicolons, dashes, and even italics. Commas shouldn't come between the subject and predicate. Nor should they come between verbs and verb complements.
- Although words like "that" and "who" muddle sentences, sometimes these words can also add clarity. The sentence "Fat people eat accumulates" can be clarified with the word "that": "Fat *that* people eat accumulates" (p. 122).

- Use parallel structure: "I think; therefore, I am."
- In a series of words separated by commas, put the longest item at the end: "The purpose of life is to smile, to love, and to drink chocolate protein."
- Start your sentence with previously given information and end with the new information: "Glass is made from *molten sand*. *Molten sand* can be made by..."
- Here's one reason why you should use the passive voice: Use the passive voice when doing so allows you to use "who" instead of "whom."
- Generally, prefer using "who" over "whom." The noun phrase "who" substitutes for the subject words, such as "he," in sentences. The noun phrase "whom" substitutes for the object words, such as "him," in sentences. By using "who," you keep your subject at the front. For instance, if you said, "I like the man who lent me a dollar," you add more clarity than if you said, "I like the man from whom I received a dollar."
- Verb counterparts include "give" and "receive"; "sold" and "bought"; "taught" and "learned." Choose the counterpart that allows you to keep your key subject at the beginning. Here is an example: "On Easter, Mrs. Brown brought crackers to class. Feeding crackers to her students while reading Exodus, she *taught* the biblical meaning of unleavened bread."

What's the point? Finding Coherence

A coherent passage reads more easily when the main idea is presented early. Pinker uses an example of a coherent passage written by an owner of a bird watcher's store. This particular passage follows the general formula of AAABA BBBB AAAA etc where each letter represents a sentence and the A or B represent each a unique subject of that sentence.

To be clear, in Pinker's example, the A represents a heron bird (or related similes) and the B represents winter (or related similes). So, each sentence in the passage starts with the subject—either a heron related word (the A) or a winter-related word (the B) although some of these sentences have a subordinate clause attached at the beginning, which we will ignore for now.

Whew! I hope my paragraphs on coherence are coherent.

To repeat, Pinker's particular example has a coherent pattern: AAABA BBBB AAAA (representing three paragraphs each with four sentences). Pinker seems to advocate that you use a similar pattern where the main subject is repeated at the beginning of most every sentence of each paragraph. You can even spice things up by having your subordinate clauses entertain a repeated pattern of their own.

But, is that reasoning too simplistic?

Joshua Schimel proposes a different pattern in his book, *Writing Science*. He advocates for a pattern where the sentence starts with the subject and ends with the object, but advises the next sentence start with the preceding sentence's object. So, the pattern of sentences for Schimel would look like, as a hypothetical example, ABCA where B and C are not only the subjects of the sentences they represent but also the objects of the sentences that precede them. (Schimel views the pattern of AAAA more like a list than a flowing argument.) Clear?

So, which pattern should you use? Perhaps we can go willy-nilly, and do what I advocate: assume that poetic rhyme holds a key to coherence. Why not write using the following rhyming schemes for subject placement: AAAA (as suggested by Pinker) or AABB or AXAA or AAXA (where X is any random subject) or ABBA or AXXA? A

could represent herons, B could represent winter, and X could represent, say, mating season. Each X subject could also be the object of the preceding sentence. Why not?

Now that I've sufficiently confused you on the topic of coherence, let's hear what Pinker has to say:

- Put your topic at the start of your writing.
- Keep the article's subject in the subject position of the topic sentence.
- Revise your topic sentence once you finished your first draft. People like to be clear up front on what you discuss.
- Place your context in front of your assertions. People like to know what's going on before you describe the action. Treat context as if you were writing the introductory scenes of a movie before the hero is plunged into some plight: in other words, in writing, as in films, context comes first.
- Connect ideas in sentences together. In other words, link the idea presented in one sentence to the idea presented in the next.
- Use outlines to cluster together related ideas in your essays. These clusters can help you form paragraphs and sections.
- Break big paragraphs into smaller ones to give the reader's eyes a rest.
- Also, use paragraph breaks between sentences when one sentence doesn't follow from the next.
- Don't repeat a name. Use a pronoun the second time the name appears, unless the name and pronoun sit far apart from one another.
- Don't wildly vary your words to reference a heron. In other words, to be extreme, don't call it a "fancy-free winged being" or a "long-necked flying goose." People might think the varied words mean different things.
- Instead, when you mention a thing a second time, use a more general reference. For instance, you can say "*Heron*s eat small mice. These *birds* will ravage even kittens." However, don't go from a general reference to a specific reference. For instance "The birds eat small mice. Herons will ravage even kittens" makes it unclear whether "birds" and "herons" refer to the same thing.
- Connect sentences with connectives, such as "and" or "nonetheless", but rely on other tactics, too, like using colons or parallel structure in order to avoid repetition. Don't use too many or too few connective words.
- Don't use more than one sentence connector in one sentence. Don't say "*However*, he appreciated the gesture, *although* he couldn't find the time to say thanks."
- And lastly, never leave your reader baffled. Explain things clearly. Coherence and clarity make your writing pieces digestible.

So, there's nothing to fear. The Study Dude is determined to make right for you all the wrongs I made in grad school—one A+ at a time.

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The Fit Student

Don't Worry, Be Happy

Marie Well

Have you ever heard of the serenity prayer? You ask for help from God "to accept the things [you] cannot change [and] courage to change the things [you] can change, and wisdom to know the difference." I often wondered about this prayer: it sounds sophisticated but doesn't give any practical advice or direction.

So, the prayer seemed like a nebulous cloud floating in the recesses of my brain. When the prayer came to the forefront of my mind, I would quickly respond, "Wha'?" Then it would disappear again.

So, what's missing in the serenity prayer? A way to operationalize it. After reading Gillian Butler and Tony Hope's book *Managing Your Mind: The Mental Fitness Guide* I began to understand how to make use of the serenity prayer and stop worrying. Although it embarrasses me a little to admit it, *The OCD Workbook* by Human

and Pedrick also contributed to my understanding of how to make the serenity prayer practical. Also, reading the book *True Resilience* by Gail Wagnild helped me to understand that truly resilient people—and they exist—don't give in to their worries. You can learn resilience, too. But, for now, I'll focus primarily on Butler and Hope's book. In later articles, I will cover the content of *True Resilience* and *The OCD Workbook*.

How I Overcame Worries and How You Can, Too

We don't have to be perfect.

That statement hits home for me these days. I never thought of myself as a perfectionist, but looking back on my life, I had a persistent habit of worrying about little details. Are my socks pulled up? Is my hair okay? Is my posture straight? All that fretting and worrying chipped away at my resilience and stifled my happiness.

I stopped worrying about little imperfections in my character or behavior. If I wonder if I look awkward, I think to myself, "I don't have to be perfect. So, don't worry." If I say something off-the-mark, I think to myself, "I don't have to be perfect. So, don't worry."

Butler and Hope in their book *Managing Your Mind: The Mental Fitness Guide* say not to worry when something is unimportant, when something is unresolved, or when something is unlikely to happen. Also, in the tradition of the serenity prayer, if you can't do anything about something, don't worry about it. Now, if I start to fret about some thought that springs into mind, I say to myself, "This won't matter five years from now, so trash the worry."

Also, in the *OCD Workbook* by Human and Pedrick, they say that if something is not happening right now, don't worry about it. So, I just think to myself, "Is this happening right now—at a time when I can deal with it head on?" If it's not happening right now, then I just don't engage it. Whew!

Something original I came up with began with reading a book that talked about how we only worry about past events because we fear future ramifications. So, I thought of worries about the past as worries about the future. With that in mind, go back to Human and Pedrick who say "It it's not happening right now, don't worry about

it." So, I let go of worries about the past as they are future projections, which aren't happening now. Another take on past worries comes from Gail Wagnild, author of *True Resilience*. She says resilient people look to their past, seek forgiveness, and *move on*.

All of the above strategies have been hugely beneficial in me overcoming anxiety. I have finally come to a stage where anxiety has almost come to a complete halt in my life, thanks to these authors—and thanks to *not worrying*.

How to Lessen Stress

We all benefit from tips on how to lessen stress.

During my first undergraduate degree, I forced myself to sit down and work for hours on end. I took breaks in between, but my high expectations of myself meant I never went to a movie, rarely took a whole day off, and never did any leisure reading.

I've come to learn that my productivity can reach new heights if I take breaks to do some leisure reading between stints of work. So, before I hunker down to a writing task, I take time to read an enjoyable book for twenty minutes. I then work for forty-five minutes straight--and repeat the cycle. This strategy eliminates the tension and stress that goes with shackling myself to a computer day and night. Because I'm more relaxed, my productivity has heightened.

While you can't do this at an office job, you can switch up your tasks; you can go gung-ho for an hour on high-intensity tasks and then do something enjoyable but relevant for twenty minutes. At my former job, my boss wouldn't let me add any enjoyable tasks to my workload, not even tasks that would boost my overall performance (such as learning programming skills or video editing software), so I did the 9 to 5 grind on tasks that sucked the life out of me—and wound up with severe anxiety.

Butler and Hope advise to take regular time out throughout the day for hobbies such as sports, cooking, and meeting with friends. I love to read non-fiction books in my spare time. I love to learn how to trade options in the market. But other things I hope to do more of include exercise and cooking. I'm a mad scientist in the kitchen, and my cooking space looks like a laboratory disaster when I'm through, but cooking brings me to life—and everything I cook is an original recipe. One day, I'd like to build a robot. Think about your passions and hobbies. Fit them into your daily grind as regularly as you can. When you are on your death bed, it's both your loved ones and your passions you didn't realize that you will miss the most.

So, there you have it: the serenity prayer operationalized: (1) don't worry about unimportant things (that won't matter in five years time), (2) don't worry about unresolved things, (3) don't worry about things that aren't happening now, (4) don't worry about the past or the future, and, of course, (5) don't worry about things you can no longer change. Now you know what it means to not worry, and I know now, too. I haven't had a panic attack in over a third of a year. (That means I need to go celebrate, as you should, too, for every milestone reached.) Having no more panic attacks is a long shot for someone who previously had them every three days. So, that's why you shouldn't worry and why you need to relax more. Now, go ahead and schedule lots of short breaks—treat yourself to hobbies, hot baths, fun reading, and anything else you are passionate about. But, before you build that robot during your down time, at least figure out what a circuit is.

Maghreb Voices

In the Footsteps of Dido, Hannibal, Augustus ...

In a world that's being so rapidly transformed by digital technology that you scarcely dare blink for fear of missing some colossal new breakthrough, it's easy to forget that whatever patch of earth we're standing on is millions of years old, or that being aware of the history of the human beings who occupied it can be the antidote for our cultural malaise.

Crash course in ancient history: The northern part of today's Tunisia was once the site of the ancient kingdom of Carthage, founded in 814 BC by the Phoenician Queen Dido (from Tyre, a city in what is now Lebanon), who marked off its boundaries, the Tunisians tell me, by making a long, unbroken string from the hide of one cow and instructing her men to run the string around the territory she wished to enclose.

Virgil features Queen Dido in his epic poem *The Aeneid*, in which Trojan leader Aeneas is shipwrecked on a beach near Carthage. He wins the love of the Queen and remains with her as her husband at Carthage until Jupiter sends a message to him that his true calling is to build a new Trojan city in Italy. And the rest is Roman history.

Wanda Waterman



Ancient Roman columns, probably the remains of a bath house, in Carthage, Tunisia, built between 146 and 698 AD



Ancient Roman builders made walls to last



Part of a Roman aqueduct



Carthageland, a theme park in Hammamet that pays tribute to the great Carthaginian general who invaded Italy—with an army that included elephants

Because of its wealth and strategic position on the Mediterranean, Carthage became such a powerful city that it rivalled both Syracuse and Rome for control of the Mediterranean region—and so was soon engaged in competing for expansion.

The Second Punic War, which began in 218 BC, allowed the brilliant Carthaginian military strategist Hannibal to successfully invade Italy with, among other things, a troupe of elephants, and wrest control of it from Rome for 15 years.

The Third Punic War reversed Hannibal's fortunes, and in 146 AD the Romans invaded Carthage, destroyed the city, and rebuilt it in their own image, establishing the city as a powerful Latin-speaking stronghold until 698, when it was destroyed once more, this time by the Muslim conquest.

Wanda also writes the blog *The Mindful Bard: The Care and Feeding of the Creative Self*.

Student Sizzle AU's Hot Social Media Topics

Following what's hot around AU's social media sites.

AthaU Facebook Group

Kevin wonders if there is a practice exam available for COMP 318. Manuela posts a link to free tax software. Megan seeks feedback on workload for courses EDUC 309 and 316. Stephen is looking for students to participate in an online survey about smartphone or tablet use by AU students.

Other posts include the AUSU election, degree dates, AU website issues, and courses CRJS 370, HRMT 322, IDRL 312, and PSYC 290.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "@AU_Press is Standing out in the world of scholarly #publishing via @UA_magazine: <http://goo.gl/rxM2Tm> #AthaU #education #onlineEd."

@AthabascaUSU (AUSU) tweets: "Planning to graduate at the 2016 convocation? Apply by Apr 30 & finish your degree by May 6! <http://bit.ly/1RmDMPS>."

Youtube

Short clip "AU Question" of MLA Colin Piquette (Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater) responding to a question about Athabasca University on March 9 in the Alberta Legislature.



Music Review Ben Caplan

Samantha Stevens



Musician: Ben Caplan

Album: *Birds With Broken Wings*

The diversity of Canadian musical talent always astounds me. Every genre of music features prominent Canadian artists. However, there are many Canadian musicians that transcend the confines of genres, creating music that is very different.

Halifax musician Ben Caplan can be counted among the genre-defying musicians with his unique sound. Released September last year, *Birds With Broken Wings* is Ben's second

album. New on the music scene, Ben has won Nova Scotia's 2012 Entertainer of the Year and the East Coast Music Award for Rising Star Recording of the Year for 2013 (<http://www.canadasmusicincubator.com/artist/ben-caplan/>).

Ben's sound is unusual, and each song on *Birds With Broken Wings* is different. With a piano, violin, upright bass, drums, raspy male vocals, and haunting female singing, the songs vary from old-world gypsy-influenced to melodies that remind of big band music. Although, at times, the tone is similar to Fable Cry and Gogol Bordello, there are also hints of The Dropkick Murphys, Crash Test Dummies, and Johnny Cash.

I was introduced to only a couple of singles, but I immediately sought out the rest of the album. Met with such a delightful assortment of tracks, I couldn't wait to listen to the album in its entirety over and over again.

Birds With Broken Wings opens dramatically with the title track. The influence of gypsy music is fun with the prominent violin and drums. I especially loved the dark lyrics and Ancient Grecian and Biblical allusions.

The third track, "Belly of the Worm", is beautiful, with country and folk tones, and the gospel music influence adds a heart-wrenching aspect to the song. The themes are more serious than the earlier tracks, but any sense of melancholy is dispelled by the wonderful music.

"Deliver Me" is another unusual song. The sixth track features elements of jazz, but with a gypsy and old world feel. I especially like the grainy sound effect, creating an effect similar to what you'd expect to hear on a vinyl album.

"Night Like Tonight" sounds almost out of place. It's like a love song from a long ago era. Nostalgic feelings flow from the melodies and the harmonization between Ben's vocals and the violin are incredible.

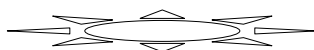
Then there is "Lover's Waltz" which again seems completely out of place on this album. The music has more of a pop rock feel, but the complex vocals create a song that is unlike any pop music that exists. Composed with just Ben's vocals and the piano, this song is simple, romantic, and gorgeous.

"Canary" is the final track on *Birds With Broken Wings* and it is purely instrumental. With elements of jazz and an Eastern European flare the imagery of a bird flitting around is uplifting and engaging.

All in all, I really loved this album. I couldn't pick a single favourite song, though, because they are so different and wonderful. I believe that Ben's latest album has to be listened to in order to be appreciated fully. Approach the album like an adventure, you never know what is coming next.

As well, if you like Ben's album and are interested in seeing him live, he is playing several venues across Canada this summer starting March 19th in Charlottetown, PEI.

Samantha Stevens is an aspiring writer who loves combining her love for literature with photography, painting, music, and all creative pursuits.



The Writer's Toolbox

Pronoun Shift



Christina M. Frey

As the academic year winds to a close, chances are you're hammering away on final papers, anxious to make your point in a way that's clear and concise. Pronoun shift hampers both those objectives, and it's a sneaky error that may have crept into your academic writing without you noticing at all.

Pronouns

As a brief refresher, pronouns are words that stand in for nouns—words like *we*, *you*, *I*, and so on. There are several classes of pronouns, but for the purposes of this article I'll focus on personal pronouns, particularly *one*, *you*, *we*, *they*, and *I*.

Shifty Pronouns

Pronoun shift occurs when one is writing to a certain audience, or about a certain situation, and then you shift the pronouns to cover other situations where we might not expect them to be an issue. Did you catch what I did there? Jumping from "one" to "you" to "we" in a single sentence is a particularly egregious example, but if you're reviewing it quickly, it might slip through unnoticed.

Pronoun shift is very common, even among experienced writers, and there are times, like in certain types of informal writing, where you may wish to mix pronouns to make a point. But allowing them to creep into your

formal or academic writing will take away from your assertions or analysis, or, at the very least, risk confusing the reader.

Example A: When one looks at the vastness of the prairie, at the boundless grassy fields, at the hazy edges of the blue dome overhead, and at the thin ribbon of road winding off into the horizon, you may feel overwhelmingly small.

In Example A above, the complexity of the sentence buries the pronoun shift, but it's there. To improve the sentence, you can rework it so that the pronouns are consistent:

Example A (using "one"): When one looks at the vastness of the prairie, at the boundless grassy fields, at the hazy edges of the blue dome overhead, and at the thin ribbon of road winding off into the horizon, one may feel overwhelmingly small.

Example A (using "you"): When you look at the vastness of the prairie, at the boundless grassy fields, at the hazy edges of the blue dome overhead, and at the thin ribbon of road winding off into the horizon, you may feel overwhelmingly small.

You can also rework the sentence to include just one pronoun:

Example A (reworked): Looking at the vastness of the prairie, at the boundless grassy fields, at the hazy edges of the blue dome overhead, and at the thin ribbon of road winding off into the horizon, one may feel overwhelmingly small.

The Singular They

Sometimes pronoun shift sneaks into your work when you're trying to find a gender-neutral singular personal pronoun. *One* is a choice, of course, but working with it can create awkward or stilted sentences. Ditto constructs like *he/she*, *s/he*, or alternating *he* and *she*—and they only account for binary genders.

One of the biggest recognized style changes in 2015 was a much wider general acceptance of the so-called singular *they*, or *they* used as a gender-neutral pronoun to cover third-person singular case. Know your audience, of course—there are still holdouts who refuse to accept this usage—but remember that in many cases, the singular *they* can be preferable to clunky workarounds.

Example B: A student may appeal to the academic dean if that student feels he/she has been subjected to grade deflation.

Example B (using the singular they): A student may appeal to the academic dean if that student feels they have been subjected to grade deflation.

Note here that it's important to watch for any risk of ambiguity between the singular and the plural *they*; if I'd rewritten Example B as "A student may appeal to the academic dean if they feel they have been subjected to grade deflation," it might have been unclear whether the initial "they" referred to just the student or to the student and the academic dean together. In the following sentence, though, there's no such issue:

Example C: A student may appeal the decision if that student feels he/she has been subjected to grade deflation.

Example C (using the singular they): A student may appeal the decision if they feel they have been subjected to grade deflation.

Pronoun shift may not seem like a big issue, but it can lessen the professionalism of your voice—especially in the world of formal or academic writing. When you're revising your term papers for the umpteenth time this spring, keep an eye out for shifty pronouns. Your reader—and your grader—will thank you.

Christina M. Frey is a book editor, literary coach, and lover of great writing. For more tips and techniques for your toolbox, follow her on Twitter (@turntopage2) or visit her [blog](#).

Click of the Wrist

Winter may not technically be over yet, and odds are we'll get a few more cold days sandwiched in among the bursts of warmer weather. But don't let that stop you from getting a head start on your spring cleaning! This week's links will inspire you to get busy cleaning indoors, even if a blizzard's howling outside.

Spring Into Cleaning

Sale Prep

Garage sale season may be a few months off yet, but that's no reason to wait to get your sale items sorted and priced. Plus, you'll free up space to deep clean later! Organized Home gives tips for determining what to sell and how much to sell it for.

Fridge Duty

You may prefer to do the dusting, vacuuming, and hardcore cleaning when you can throw the windows open, but the fridge can be taken care of anytime. These 15 tips from *mental_floss* should get your fridge from nasty to nice. (And bonus—if it's freezing outdoors, you might be able to set your perishables on the back deck while you work.)

Plan of Attack

Go in prepared when it's time for the deep clean! These checklists will help you plan what you want to tackle, and they include specific advice on what you'll need to thoroughly clean your house from top to bottom.





Yes

What is your default answer when an opportunity or invitation comes your way? Do you automatically say yes without determining whether that is the 'true in your gut' answer? Or does some survivalist instinct lead you to say no because that is safer, comfier, less demanding?

Most of us have never stopped to figure out our usual MO.

Clearly Shonda Rhimes is not most of us. For the uninitiated she is one of the most powerful woman in Hollywood, creator of *Grey's Anatomy*, *Private Practice*, and *Scandal*, and executive producer of *How to Get Away with Murder*. She owns Thursdays.

Is there anyone left who still believes that outward success automatically means inner happiness? Good. Because when, over Thanksgiving meal preparations in 2013, Shonda's eldest sister Delorse mutters that "You never say yes to anything" Shonda's life changes forever.

Those six words, or "the grenade" as Rhimes describes them, sit dormant for several weeks. They worm their way into her. She acknowledges their truth. She commits to saying Yes to everything (out of her comfort zone, crazy, out of character, goofy, everything!) for one year.

The first yes is when she's invited to give the commencement address at her alma mater Dartmouth College. For a shy, introverted, "Type A, obsessive, workaholic control freak" to speak to the ten thousand who would gather would have been unthinkable before she made the commitment.

In *"Year of Yes-How to Dance it Out, Stand in the Sun and Be Your Own Person"* Shonda demonstrates laugh out loud humour, outrageous honesty, and enviable courage as she tells us her story. And she is a storyteller extraordinaire. In nearly 300 pages she walks us through what yes has meant to her life. And how her life no longer looks or feels like it did when she was choosing the safe path of saying no.

No aspect of her life is untouched by this resolve. Getting over stage fright and delivering speeches or appearing on Jimmy Kimmel or acting on *The Mindy Project* is admirable. Saying yes when her daughters ask, 'wanna play?' raises the stakes. Losing one hundred twenty-seven pounds is heroic. Learning to accept a compliment with a thank you stops the disclaimers, the aw shucks, toe

digging in the carpet approach to downplaying our brilliance. She continues to say yes to people, to who she is, to difficult conversations, to ridding herself of toxic people.

The book and the experiment of 'yes' are remarkable in their scope. They leave no aspect of life unexamined, unchanged. It inspires me to be better, to do better, to check my own behaviour to see if I'm living as authentically and honestly as I can. Negative self-talk and self-deprecating humour are hurting me and holding me back. There are truths here I need to assimilate. I admire Shonda's courage; her *badassery* and swagger; her opinions on Athlete Talk, the joy of writing and working hard, and the futility of hashtags without real action. Watch for more yeses in my life, from where I sit.

Hazel Anaka's first novel is *Lucky Dog*. Visit her [website](#) for more information or follow her on Twitter @anakawrites.

Course Hangover

Deanna Roney



Often when I enjoy a good book at the end I am left with a book-hangover. I am left feeling satisfied at how incredible it was, and yet sad that it is over. The book-hangover can leave one feeling a sense of loss and uncertainty on how to continue. Often sitting for a moment with the book closed in hand and just starring -at nothing.

Today, I am suffering from a course-hangover. The challenge for this course was not in finding motivation to work on it, but in finding the willpower to pace myself. The joy at handing in assignments was followed with the knowledge that I was one step closer to being done. Except that, instead of that being a great feeling, it was a sense of impending loss. I have had courses leave me feeling sad that they were over, that I

would not be able to experience them again, but I was always happier than I was sad. This course, while I am proud of myself in its completion, I do not want it to be over yet. Pushing the send button for this last assignment was harder than any other, not because I questioned my work, but because I knew in pressing that button I would be sealing up that course. I am thrilled to get feedback, but heartbroken that it will be the last time. This is a course that has proved to me that this is what I need to pursue. Not because of any marks I received, but because of the joy I felt when working on it. Because every time I worked on it the hours would slip by unnoticed. I would try to take a break by my mind would be constantly working on it. When my mind grew weary and forced me to take a break I was left with a feeling of tired-satisfaction instead of just plain tired.

What course could I possibly be talking about? English 482: *Advanced Fiction*. For me it was a moment of clarity and purpose that made the course. The resources and feedback that allowed me to grow. It was the breadth of creative writing courses that sealed the deal for me to attend Athabasca University. And here I have found incredible tutors who have worked with me in such a way that I have seen my writing grow in ways I never expected. The methods of these courses have varied but the personal tutor contact has been the most rewarding.

When I started this journey I never expected to experience a course like this. I expected to take creative writing courses, but each and everyone of them has exceeded my expectations. Perhaps I am so sad to see this go because it is my final creative writing course to my degree. I felt similar to see English 387: *Speculative Fiction* end, but it felt more like closing a book in the middle of a series, knowing there was more to come in the next novel.

I think it is an incredible thing to experience a course-hangover. It reminds me that I am onto something good. That I have found something special. Just like a book-hangover emphasizes the completion of something amazing. There will always be another book, another chapter, and more book-hangovers to come. But sometimes, you just have to rejoice in the one you are feeling.

Deanna Roney is an AU student who loves adventure in life and literature

Council Connection

Karl Low



The meeting of March 10th, 2016 was largely uneventful. There were three major items of note, two reports by committees of AUSU, and the first vote on the changes to the bylaws of the organization.

This meeting saw the presentation of the Forensic Audit Committee, a committee that was established in response to a request at the last Annual General Meeting for a forensic audit to be undertaken to understand what was going on with the Athabasca University Student Union Finances, after some unusual entries had been noted by The Voice Magazine in [our report](#) "It's All About the Benjamins, Redux." As we learned at the [Annual General Meeting](#) that year, former President, Jason Nixon, took on the role, and the wages, of the former Executive

Director, despite there being no documentation to support this change in salary. As well, other concerns were brought forward about the executives raising their own compensation to far beyond that of other Student Unions, and of other overages in the budget that had not been approved.

So, nearly a year later, after having consulted with all of the people at the AGM, the Forensic Audit Committee has submitted its report. Their conclusions:

The committee determined that a forensic audit is not the right tool to answer the membership's questions. All AUSU financial information is available and is being audited, there is no evidence of actual missing funds, and no outstanding issues that should be addressed.

The issues presented were primarily due to:

- Gaps in both policy and processes,
- Concerns over a potential breach in confidentiality, and
- The executive being in uncharted territory without significant governance experience or assistance.

The issues are all currently being addressed by AUSU to a significant degree.

If you read the full detail in their report, which should be available on the AUSU website next week, the question of "Was it appropriate?" which was asked of each concern, is never directly answered. The responses are "The appropriateness is called into question by..", "It has been discovered that the information upon which the decision was made was either incorrect or misinterpreted", or "There are some larger expenditures that would have benefited from the transparency of a Council motion," but never a clear yes or no.

Throughout the report, recommendations are made that Council clean up the policies and establish better practices for the future including increasing transparency and communications with members, some 13 in all, but no recommendations address if there should be any consequences for those actions which had their appropriateness "called into question," were based on "misinterpreted" information, or "would have benefitted

from ... a Council motion". Now, perhaps at this stage there is nothing beneficial that could be done, but that was not spelled out in this report.

The report was accepted by Council, with some of the recommendations adopted immediately (as they are already being done, such as increased communication with members) and the rest with the reasonable amendment that the timeline for the recommendations be extended to the end of the current fiscal year rather than the end of the term, which is happening in only a few weeks.

The second major report that was submitted was from the Executive Compensation Review Committee. In short, this committee came to the conclusion that the large increase in the Executive wages set by Council were not justifiable given the financial situation of AUSU and when compared with the honorariums at other student unions in Alberta. It recommended the wages be reverted back to what they would have been without the increase in April of 2015. It also provided, among others, recommendations that any adjustments to wages should only be applied to a future Council, not the one making the decision, with the exception of reducing wages if the financial situation requires it, and that larger increases (over 10%) require a larger majority of Council to pass.

Council accepted this report and the recommendations within in their entirety.

The final item of note was the first reading of the changes to the Bylaws as proposed by Council. These passed 6/1, with Councillor Philip Kirkbride voting against. The second and final reading of the bylaws is to take place on April 14th at 4:30pm. Members with concerns or seeking more information about the changes are encouraged to go to the AUSU governance [forums](#)

Women Of Interest

Phyllis "Pat" Grosskurth, born March 16, 1924 in Toronto Ontario and died August 2, 2015. In 1965 Pat Grosskurth became the first female professor hired by University of Toronto. She was a literary biographer, whose work was often controversial and ground breaking, hired by the English Department. Her first biographical work, *John Addington Symonds: A Biography*, won the Governor General's award in 1964. She won a second Governor General's Award in 1986, for *Melanie Klein: Her World and Her Work*. In the year 2000 Phyllis Grosskurth was awarded the Order of Canada and, in 2002, the Order of Ontario. Phyllis was described by her daughter as the life of the party. She enjoyed hosting intellectual dinner parties and was asked to deliver lectures all over the world, including Brazil, Italy, Germany and France.

More interesting information can be found at the following websites:

<http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2015/08/09/biographer-phyllis-grosskurth-91-was-a-fiery-literary-force-obituary.html>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phyllis_Grosskurth

<http://famouscanadianwomen.com/famous%20firsts/Academics%20and%20Librarians.htm>

compiled by Barb Godin



Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

Adopted

Dear Barb:

I am in my early twenties and just found out I was adopted. I had a very happy childhood and felt loved by my parents, but since I never looked like anybody else in the family, I always felt different. In the back of my mind I wondered if I was adopted because I was so dark and both my parents are fair, but I just put it out of my mind. Despite my suspicions, I was shocked when my parents sat me down and told me. They felt it was best that I didn't know until I was old enough to deal with it. I can't say I agree with that. I think it would have been better if I knew and could grow up knowing the truth. This revelation just put my whole world into chaos! Also, when my parents told me I was adopted, they presented me with my birth parents names and contact information. Apparently they have kept in touch with them through the years, even sending pictures to them. My parents said it is up to me if I want to contact my biological parents and they said they would support whatever I decide to do. I am so confused I don't know what I should do. I feel that since my birth parents gave me away, why would I want to reconnect with them, on the other hand, I'm curious, and if I have siblings I would want to meet them. I love my adopted parents, but I am kind of angry that they held this information from me for all these years, especially since they were in contact with my biological parents. I just feel totally confused! Help, Sally.

Hi Sally:

Thank you for writing and sharing your story. I'm sure there are many people who have, and are, feeling what you are feeling. I completely understand your confusion; your whole world has been turned upside down. Some parents choose to tell their adopted children that they are adopted from a young age and others decide to wait, as your parents did. Your feelings of abandonment by your birth parents are normal, but you may want to find out why they chose to give you up for adoption. Because she kept in touch with your adoptive parents she obviously did not want to abandon you, and probably felt she was not capable of providing you with a good home and wanted to give you an opportunity to have a good life. Undoubtedly it is a difficult and painful process for a birth mother to go through. You don't really know the circumstances of your birth and surrender, but you will never know the truth unless you take a chance and meet your birth family. Perhaps you should join a support group in your area for adoptees that are reuniting with birth parents. Ask your doctor for information on support groups or check online for more information. Good luck Sally.

Email your questions to voice@voicemagazine.org. Some submissions may be edited for length or to protect confidentiality; your real name and location will never be printed. This column is for entertainment only. The author is not a professional counsellor and this column is not intended to take the place of professional advice.

ACE INHIBITOR

IN:

DID SHE ASK FOR YOUR HELP?

But did she actually ASK you to protect her, suh?

That's not the POINT, Farthingham! I came to her aid and she was utterly ungrateful!



Today's woman likes to protect herself. She doesn't want to go through life at the mercy of man's good will.



Great horned owls! You're right! She was brainwashed by a diabolically criminal mind!



Were you listening, suh?

Especially since, historically at least, masculine goodwill has come up a bit short.



Besides, I believe she was having rather a good time with a rather good friend and preferred not to be interrupted.



WRITTEN BY
WANDA
WATERMAN

Hold my calls, Farthingham! ACE INHIBITOR is headed back to Lovers' Lane to rescue a damsel in distress!



This space is provided free to AUSU: The Voice does not create this content. Contact services@ausu.org with questions or comments about this page.

IMPORTANT DATES

- **Mar 22:** Deadline for election appeals
- **Mar 31:** April course extension deadline
- **April 7:** AUSU Annual General Meeting
- **April 10:** Deadline to register in a course starting May 1
- **April 14:** Council Changeover Meeting & second reading of bylaw changes
- **April 15:** May degree requirements deadline

Election Results

The votes are in and we had a great turnout with over 1000 voters! The new council members elected in the 2016 AUSU General Election are as follows (*in alphabetical order*):

- **Josh Cross** (Ottawa, ON)
- **Andrew Gray** (Calgary, AB)
- **Scott Douglas Jacobson** (Fort Langley, BC)
- **Phillip Kirkbride** (Saint-Jean-Sur-Richelieu, QC)
- **Kim Newsome** (Barton, NS)
- **Brandon Simmons** (High River, AB)
- **Julian Teterenko** (Edmonton, AB)
- **Dixie Toliver** (Okotoks, AB)
- **Shawna Wasylyshyn** (St. Albert, AB)

You can access the complete election on our website [here](#), or you can view the certified results from the Simply Voting system through your confidential ballot.

The new council will hold an internal election for the three Executive positions (*President, VP Finance and Administration, and VP External and Student Affairs*) on March 31. The results will be announced on April 1, 2016.

Questions or Appeals

The appeals period runs from **March 16 to March 22, 2016**. Contact the Chief Returning Officer, Jacqueline Keena, at cro@ausu.org with any questions.

Annual General Meeting

AUSU's AGM is scheduled for Thursday, April 7 at 4:30pm MDT. This is the perfect opportunity to find out more about what is going on at AUSU, get the first look at AUSU's Annual Report, and 'meet' the new council!

All members are welcome, and there will also be Q&A periods during the meeting for members to ask questions.

The teleconference information will be circulated to all members prior to the meeting.

The following motions and reports will be presented:

Motion: BIRT the AUSU membership receives and accepts the financial statements presented in the annual report as audited by Kingston Ross Pasnak.

Motion: BIRT the AUSU membership appoints Kinston Ross Pasnak as the auditors for AUSU's financial records for the 2015-2016 fiscal year.

Presented Reports/Policies

- AUSU 2016 Annual Activity Report
- Forensic Audit Recommendation Committee Report
- Executive Compensation Review Committee Report
- Policy 3.04 Revisions

The Annual General Meeting Agenda is available on our website [here](#).



CLASSIFIEDS

Classifieds are free for AU students! Contact voice@voicemagazine.org for more information.

THE VOICE

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