

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 24 Issue 16 2016-04-22

Meeting the Minds

Dr. Maiga Chang, Part II

Meeting the Minds - Double Feature!

Dr. Angie Abdou

Council Connection

Out with the old,
in with the new!

Plus:

Scholarship Scheduling

The Study Dude

and much more!



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



**We love to hear from you! Send your questions and
comments to voice@voicemagazine.org, and please
indicate if we may publish your letter.**

EDITORIAL

Karl Low

Gotta have Faith



This week, we have the council connection report that looked at the meeting where the changes to AUSU Bylaws were approved, as well as changes to the Referendums and Plebiscites policy. AUSU members now have no binding powers over the organization or AUSU Council, with the exception of being able to choose Council during elections—elections that are run according to the Bylaws that are controlled by AUSU Council. It sometimes feels like I'm the only one who sees the danger here. Even though this Council assuredly has only the best of intentions, can it be said that the next one will? Or the one after that? Eventually we are going to get a Council that has serious issues. It happened with the last Council that was down to only five members at one point. It has happened to previous councils in AUSU's history, and, at some point in the future, it will happen again. That's just the nature of trying to productively group together nine people who the only thing they may have in common is wanting to be on AUSU Council.

For most groups, there are other controls they need to worry about. AU's governing Council needs to worry about the constant scrutiny from the staff and faculty of AU, and needs to maintain working relationships with them. The government needs to worry about opposition members and media reporting on them. Other student organizations need to worry about their students, as well as media attention, as the grouping of their students on campus makes it easy to generate attention to an issue, as well as providing a group of people that is sizeable enough to attract media attention when they act *en masse*. They also have larger student councils making it harder for a few bad seeds to take over.

But AUSU has none of those controls. It does not need to maintain any sort of working relationship with students. There is no opposition party to bring problems to light, and our student body is so diverse and spread out that our ability to attract significant media attention to the issues of a student council is non-existent. All we have is our ability to vote, and the faith that, of the people we elect, more will be willing to stand for the students than themselves. Perhaps that's a reasonable faith to have. But my fear is that it only needs to be wrong once. Then, a simple change to the bylaws to delay elections for another two, or five, or ten years is all a Council would need to do to give themselves easy money at students' expense. I have to admit; it almost makes it tempting to run next time.

However, until then, I guess we'll just have hold on to that faith. It's all we've got.

In the meantime, this issue of *The Voice Magazine* brings you two Meeting the Minds columns. Students sent in a couple interviews with professors this week, and I thought, what's the harm in running both? After all, not every student is in every course, so with two interviews, we're more likely to be talking to a professor that you know. Here's where you can find out some extra information about them or their tips to go further in what you do. Plus, we have a look at AUSU's upcoming awards deadline, filling you in on what you need to know, and the Study Dude is providing more advice on putting together your thesis. Not to mention our usual bunch of reviews, advice, news, and humour all set up for your weekly hit of procrastination material. Enjoy the read!

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

MEETING THE MINDS

INTERVIEWS with AU's EDUCATORS



Dr. Angie Abdou is an assistant professor in the English department, specializing in creative writing. Dr. Abdou's own creative writing has won awards and media recognition.

Please fill us in on the range of course you have taught or designed at Athabasca.

Dr. Abdou: I am in charge of the writing courses, primarily. I do all the creative writing, which includes Introduction to Creative Nonfiction, Introduction to Fiction, Speculative Fiction, and Advanced Fiction. I also do one academic writing course, which is intermediate composition. Those are the courses I design and coordinate, but I also work with students who have manuscripts, and I mentor them in independent study courses, 491 and 492.

Are those courses just nonfiction manuscripts?

Dr. Abdou: I have a mix. I have some fiction and some nonfiction.

What are some of your most memorable awards, positions, or acclamations?

Dr. Abdou: One of the most memorable things that has happened in my writing career was being a finalist for Canada Reads in 2011. I got coverage on CBC for quite an extended period of time, and my novel was defended by the celebrity Georges Laraque, which was wonderful—very exciting.

That was fun, but also really wonderful, the same year, my novel was chosen for a MacEwan Book Award in Edmonton. That university picks one book every year, and honours the book by teaching it across the disciplines and having the writer come visit the campus for a whole week. The students put on plays and art displays in response to the book. The writer is invited to do public lectures and workshops and all kinds of things. It was really exciting to have that kind of attention devoted to my work.

What were some of your childhood passions?

Dr. Abdou: Mostly swimming. I was a competitive swimmer. Anyone who swims competitively knows that takes up a lot of time: four hours a day in the swimming pool.

In a way, it set the ground for being a writer. For one thing, while I swam back and forth, my imagination was always working. For another thing, swimming taught me a lot of the skills required for being a writer such as discipline, work ethic, and goal setting.

If you could instantly learn one thing in its entirety, what would that one thing be?

Dr. Abdou: To play the guitar and sing. Can I count that as one?

I love attention. I love being on stage and having everyone listen to me. As a writer, you get that once every three or four years when your books come out. But, if I could sing, I would never write another book. [laughs]

What is your greatest purpose in life?

Dr. Abdou: Teaching, probably. Teaching is where I feel I do the most good. I have students come back to me years later and tell me that I helped shape the direction of their life, so that's a wonderful feeling.

What is your favourite hobby?

Dr. Abdou: Mountain biking. I love it.

Tell us about one of the most memorable things that has ever happened.

Dr. Abdou: I have so many highlights around writing. One was getting an email from Alex Baumann, the Olympic swimmer after he read my swimming novel *The Bone Cage*. That was very exciting.

It's funny. When you say *the most memorable thing that ever happened to me*, I think ... maybe I don't like to live in the past. I like to always be going forward. I don't dwell on those memories. Though I know wonderful things have happened to me, I have dig to bring them to mind.

I have things that I do every year that are always memorable. For example, every year I go to the Vancouver Writers Festival, which is just a fantastic festival, and I interview writers on stage, and I interviewed Patrick Dewitt, Roxanne Gay, Steven Heighton, Miranda Hill, Trevor Cole ... so many really wonderful and accomplished writers. That's exciting every year.

It's my Christmas. I look forward to it always.

Who is the one most influential person in your life?

Dr. Abdou: Oh boy! [Laughs] Right now, my children. My children are the most influential people in my life. They influence my energy and my day-to-day existence and my powers of concentration, but they also have incredible imaginations that inspire me. Children have a way of looking at the world which isn't predetermined, and we lose that. That's what writers need: they need to see the world without all the filters we develop as we age. Children do that automatically. Everyday my kids say things that surprise me and that remind me of the value of imagination and unfiltered observations.

As an instructor in online education, what are some of the challenges as well as some of the highlights of teaching online?

Dr. Abdou: The one thing I miss is the energy of a classroom, how a teacher can really connect with the students, partly through eye contact and other visual cues. But I have found ways to develop those relationships in the online environment, so what I do in online is I take on more of a personal mentorship role. I work at developing personal relationships with each of my aspiring writers, and I become invested in their success, and they become comfortable with emailing me with their various questions, or talking on the phone, or skypeing. I work to make up for that missing classroom energy by fostering the one-on-one relationships.

How do you aim to stimulate student motivation in online learning environments?

Dr. Abdou: I'm lucky. In creative writing, students are already motivated. Nobody would take a creative writing course unless they were really passionate about it. The students come to me keen and full of energy, really grateful for someone who is willing to help them.

In that way, creative writing is one of the subjects that works best online.

What is your approach to providing feedback for students to help them with their learning objectives?

Dr. Abdou: I feel that in creative writing the students' objective is to write the best possible manuscript they can with the ultimate goal of getting published. I work with them almost the way my editors work with me. I might even say that, at points, rather than treating it as a student–teacher relationship, I treat it as a collegial relationship, and I work with students as an editor helping to develop their work.

Sometimes the student–teacher relationship might sound hierarchical, like adult to child, whereas I take it as an adult relationship and a professional relationship. Students respond well to my confidence in their work and my confidence in them. And, of course, typically AU students *are* older than other undergraduate students, so the approach makes good sense.

What do you purport to be the role of technology and multimedia in online environments? How do they aid or complicate online learning?

Dr. Abdou: Again with creative writing it is simpler than that: it comes down to the words on the page. We don't need a whole bunch of different technologies. That being said, I am aware that students learn in different ways, so if I find a really good video on writing or a really good audio file, I try to see what might spark interest, and I do implement a variety of technologies, which might be helpful. In the end, with creative writing, it comes back to the word on the page.

What is your particular philosophy on student evaluation?

Dr. Abdou: My philosophy of student evaluation is that it's another form of feedback. I don't get really hung up on the numbers of the grade. It's a way of saying to students: Your work is here right now and here's is where it needs to go. An A+ to me is reserved for works that I think are of publishable quality, or at least getting very close. An A+ is a grade that not all students will get to immediately, but it's where they are all aiming. My students do tend to have aspirations of being published.

So, I use student evaluation not with some kind of obsession about grades, but as another way to give feedback to help them along to their ultimate goal of publication.

Women of Interest

Dr. Jennie Smillie Robertson was born February 10, 1878 in Hensall, Ontario, and died in 1981 in Toronto, Ontario. She was Canada's first female surgeon. Dr. Smillie began her career as a teacher until she could save enough money to attend Kingston's Ontario Medical School. When she graduated in 1909, she had to do her residency in Philadelphia—no hospital in Toronto would accept her. Two years later, she returned to Canada and was the first female to perform surgery. Dr. Smillie did not marry until the age of 70 and lived to the age of 103. In 2013 a new parkette in Hensall is being named in her honour.

Here is a [video](#) of the residents of Hensall Ontario discussing why they believe Dr. Jennie Smillie Robertson should be the female face on new Canadian currency.

Additional information on Dr. Jennie Smillie Robertson is available at the following websites:

<http://www.southwesternontario.ca/news-story/5986836-parkette-to-honour-canada-s-first-female-surgeon/>

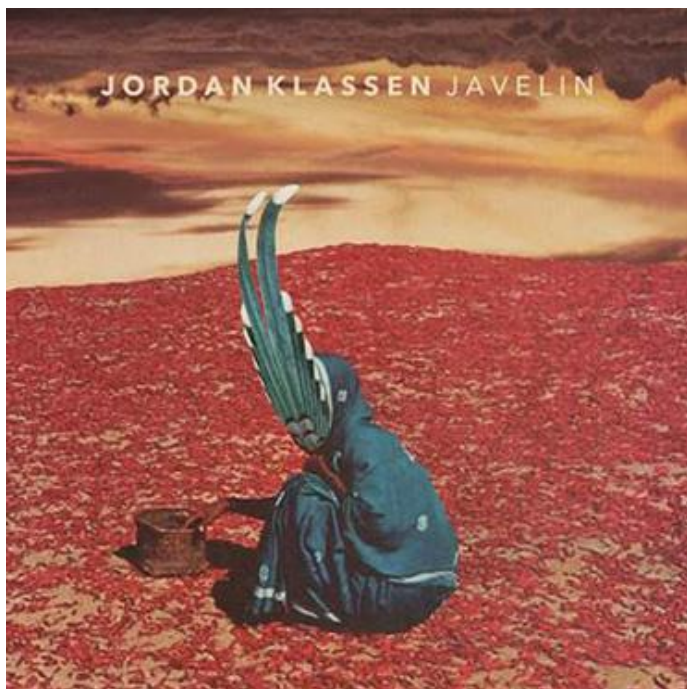
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jennie_Smillie_Robertson

compiled by Barb Godin

Music Review

Jordan Klassen

Samantha Stevens



Musician: Jordan Klassen

Album: *Javelin*

I firmly believe that music is one of the best medicines. Music is always there when you need it, a band-aid for a hurt soul, a warm blanket for a wounded heart. Through music, people share experiences, emotions, and thoughts when words fail. And music like that created by Jordan Klassen is music of the best kind, music that transcends the spoken word; his sound is uplifting, healing, inspiring, and simply beautiful.

Javelin is B.C. songwriter Jordan Klassen's second album, and I was instantly wowed by the amazing and complex melodies on it. Jordan's music is described as New Age Folk, one of the most unusual genre descriptions I think I have ever come across. However, I was overwhelmingly impressed by the variety of sounds,

melodies, and tones that I was met with when I listened to *Javelin*. The closest that I could come to describing is sound is by comparing it to that of Beck, Radiohead, and Coldplay in that the composition is unique and the execution is unlike anything else out there today.

While creating *Javelin*, Jordan drew from his experiences battling depression and the emotional upheaval he faced during his mother's battle with breast cancer (she is now in remission)

(<http://www.jordanklassen.com/about/>). However, there is also an underlying feeling of hope in each and every note on this album, which is one of features I enjoy most.

My favourite track is "No Salesman." The song begins rather plainly, beautifully complex, but nothing that makes it stand out from the rest of the album. However, after a brief intro, the song finally takes off and my patience was rewarded by the most heart-wrenching bass playing that I have ever heard. The higher vocals, string accompaniment, and layer upon layer of sound elevated this song from merely a "ooo I like" to a "my heart has been lifted and my soul is now overflowing with this melody." Even after having the song on repeat for about an hour, my eyes still fill with tears because of the beauty of this song.

There is just so much to say about each song on *Javelin*. However, so that you can enjoy Jordan's music for yourself and explore each track to your heart's content, I'll just share some of my favourite highlights. "Glory B" opens the album with feelings of optimism, and there seems to be a sense of spiritualism infused in each note. The piano intro in "We Got Married" is entrancing and the lightheartedness of the song feels like a childhood dream. "St. Fraser" is marked by its African beat which crescendos to include classical string accompaniment. "Light in the Evening" features familiar electronic effects used in a new way to bring to mind golden sunsets on a tropical beach.

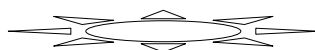
I really feel that Jordan's *Javelin* needs to be experienced to be fully appreciated and understood. And while I can see myself playing his music in the background while I read and study, I highly recommend giving *Javelin* your undivided attention at least once. For those interested in seeing him live, Jordan will be playing at the

Commonwealth Stage in Calgary on June 2nd. He also has many dates and venues booked across Canada this summer. Check out his [webpage](#) to see if Jordan is playing near you.

of a dance feel to it, but I still found that the beat made me want to move along with it. The guitar is also more dominant in this song, with an amazing solo part way through the track. There is also a harmony between the music and the singing that strikes me as being strangely beautiful.

All in all, I really enjoyed Operators debut album *Blue Wave*. The tracks are a perfect fit for any activity where you may need a bit of energy, and I can easily picture myself listening to this album while studying.

Samantha currently uses her skills as a writer to promote independent musicians and raise awareness and support for many global, environmental, and humanitarian issues. Check out her website and blog at: <http://sstevenswriter.wix.com/writer>



Canadian Education News

Scott Jacobsen



International students in Moncton encouraged to stay in Canada.

Moncton, New Brunswick wants [international students to stay](#) following graduation. The City of Moncton hosted a job fair to introduce [international students to local employers](#).

They offered 200 job opportunities for post-graduate employment, co-op work placements and summer employment, as well as opportunities in banking, education and insurance.

One attendee from the Democratic Republic of the Congo at the University of Moncton, Christian Kalnde, said, "You have an affection to the country." he said. "Some international students want to stay here—but it's just jobs, you can justify when you want to stay here."

Simon Fraser University reports better career prospects with co-op placements

[The report by the British Columbia university Simon Fraser University](#) "found that co-op work placements provide many benefits to university students—even after graduation." It studied graduates between 2000 and 2013.

Based on the research, those that finished their [co-op](#) had higher *median* wages compared to the others. Furthermore, graduates with co-ops are more likely to have jobs relevant to their education.

President of SFU, Andrew Petter, said that the co-op placements assists students find suitable jobs, even soon enough to alter their educational path.

Work to ease international students' paths to permanent residence being done

John McCallum, Canadian Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship wants to ease the pathway to [permanent residency for international students](#). This status would be for after graduation from a Canadian post-secondary institution.

McCallum said, "They know something about the country, so they should be first on our list of people who we court to come to Canada." He will be working with colleagues, in the provinces and territories, to better international students' Express Entry system.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen is an AUSU Councillor. He works with various organizations, and runs In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal, and In-Sight Publishing.



Sailing Schedule for AUSU Scholarships

Barbara Lehtiniemi



Have you applied for an AUSU scholarship yet? The deadline for the current award period is May 1, only days away. Don't let these ships sail without you!

AUSU holds two scholarship periods each year, during which students can apply for five award types. Additionally, AUSU accepts applications year-round for three types of bursaries.

Full information on each award, including application requirements, can be found on the [Scholarship, Awards & Bursaries](#) page of AUSU's website. Below is a quick overview of each.

Here's a look at what's up for grabs May 1st:

Academic Achievement Scholarships (two awards of \$1000 each available). Awarded to applicants with the highest GPA over the last 30 credits. You're not competing against all other undergrad students, just those who bother to apply. Applying is easy—fill out basic information on the online form, and attach a copy of your AU transcript preview. Applicants must have completed a minimum of 30 AU credits. You may receive this award only once.

Balanced Student Awards (two awards of \$1000 each available). Recognizes students who juggle their AU studies with other commitments, such as work or family. Application requirements include a short essay (maximum 500 words), a copy of your AU transcript preview, and at least two letters of reference. Applicants must have completed a minimum of 12 AU credits and have a GPA of at least 2.00. You may receive this award only once.

Returning Student Awards (two awards of \$1000 each available). Recognizes the challenges faced by students returning to post-secondary education after some time away, or who are beginning their studies later in life. Application requirements include a short essay (maximum 500 words) and a copy of your AU transcript preview. Applicants must have completed a minimum of 12 AU credits and have a GPA of at least 2.00. You may receive this award only once.

Student Service Awards (two awards of \$1000 each available). Recognizes students who volunteer their time in their community or to AU or AUSU. Application requirements include a short essay (no maximum word limit), a copy of your AU transcript preview, and—if you are nominating yourself—at least one reference letter from a volunteer supervisor. Applicants must have completed a minimum of 12 AU credits and have a GPA of at least 2.00. You may receive this award only once.

General Bursaries (five bursaries of \$1000 available). Assistance for students demonstrating financial need and/or facing "exceptional life circumstances." Application requirements include detailed financial information, a copy of your previous year's income tax assessment notice, and a copy of your AU transcript preview. Applicants must have completed a minimum of 12 AU credits and have a GPA of at least 2.00. You may receive this bursary only once in a 12-month period.

Applications are accepted year-round for the following three bursaries:

Computer Bursaries (eight awards annually; value varies). Assists students demonstrating financial need who need a computer for their course work. Recipients of this award receive a computer purchased by AUSU, with a maximum value of \$900. Application requirements include detailed financial information, a copy of your previous year's income tax assessment notice, and a copy of your AU transcript preview. Applicants must have completed a minimum of 12 AU credits and have a GPA of at least 2.00. You may receive this award only once.

Emergency Bursaries (up to \$700 maximum per student per year; limited to annual fund of \$4600). Assists students demonstrating financial need with course extension and supplemental exam fees necessitated by "unforeseen circumstances." Application requirements include detailed financial information, a copy of your previous year's income tax assessment notice, and a copy of your AU transcript preview. Applicants must have completed a minimum of 12 AU credits and have a GPA of at least 2.00. You may apply for this award more than once, but may not receive more than \$700 per fiscal year.

Travel Bursaries (up to \$1000 each; limited to annual fund of \$4000). Assists students demonstrating financial need with travel related to their AU studies, including travel to AU convocation. AUSU will make and pay for travel arrangements for recipients of this bursary. Application requirements include detailed financial information, a copy of your previous year's income tax assessment notice, a copy of your AU transcript preview, and documents demonstrating need for travel. Applicants must have completed a minimum of 12 AU credits and have a GPA of at least 2.00. You may receive this bursary only once in a 12-month period.

Completing a scholarship application takes time and preparation, and that's exactly why it's worth it. Because so few students bother to apply, your chances of success are greater. Only eight students applied for the two Student Service Awards last November, for example. The award with the highest number of applications was the Academic Achievement Award with 62 applications, which are still good odds.

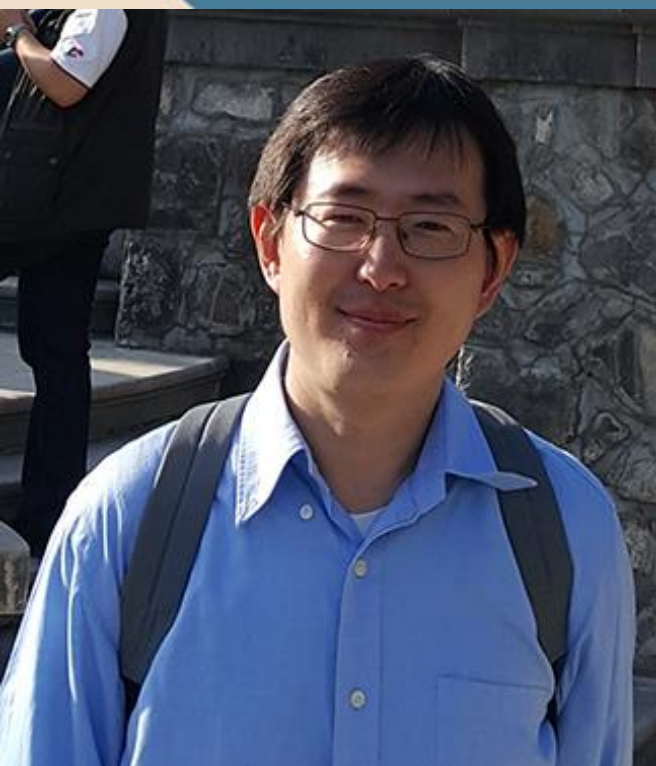
For tips on completing AUSU's online award application form, check out this Voice article from October 16, 2015, "[AUSU's New Online Awards Applications](#)."

With only days left before the May 1 deadline, you'd better get to work on your application before the AUSU scholarships sail without you.

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

MEETING THE MINDS

INTERVIEWS with AU's EDUCATORS



Dr. Maiga Chang is an associate professor in AU's School of Information and Computing Sciences and is the New Initiative Chair on executive board of the IEEE Technical Committee of Learning Technology. His research interests include mobile learning and ubiquitous learning, museum e-learning, game-based learning, educational robots, learning behaviour analysis, data mining, intelligent agent technology, computational intelligence in e-learning, and mobile healthcare. He recently took some time to be interviewed for The Voice Magazine, and this is the second part of that three-part interview.

How do your research interests integrate into development of courses?

I have one research direction, which is to make computers, not smarter, but to be capable of having emotions and recognizing users' emotions. Researchers in the United States have done some research that is pertinent. They have tried to develop a computer an assistant. It is quite good. You can ask any question about the course, and the computer can answer you. They also developed another computer, a virtual person. He or she does not

know anything. But anytime you have a question, he or she will show his or her emotion. You say, "This part is so difficult. How will I learn?" He or she will say, "Oh, you can definitely find an answer on your own. Why not take a look at your textbook once again?" You say, "I think I figured this out." He or she says, "Oh my god, I am so glad to see that." So, it is quite intelligent, but it actually doesn't know anything.

The researchers want the students to feel that they are interacting with a teaching assistant and never tell them that in fact it is a computer they are interacting with. At the end, the researchers ask the students, "Tell us the name of the smartest teaching assistant you think" The students say the one that has emotion. This is important. This is why we have this kind of research. We have to make sure the computer has emotion. Also, they need to identify your emotion. From your typing, from your voice, from your facial expression, this kind of research I created a course. It is Affective Computing. If you take that course, at the end of the course, you should be able to develop computer guy with emotion detection, function, or has its own emotion.

Also, as you know, my research topic includes mobile application, personal service, location-based service. So, I created a course called Mobile Computing, and another called Mobile Game Development. Based on my research, I've created these kind of courses. So, students get some ideas, or get engaged, saying, "Oh! Now, I have a computer, which has emotion. Can I do more?" They will head off into another level of research to start working on.

What are the benefits of teaching at AU compared to traditional universities?

There are differences. They are different from traditional university and AU because we are almost purely online as a university. We teach students with a lot of help from technology. So, in that case, I would say that teaching at AU that we are the *pioneers* of teaching students with technology, artificial intelligence applications, learning analytics – everything. I would say that this kind of teaching and learning should be the future. As you know, some people start to work on full time jobs after K-12 and some of them go to university for another four years, which means they only learn in traditional classroom or in traditional setting for 12 to 16, maybe 18 years.

How long will you live? How long will you need to learn? You will need to learn for your whole life. When you graduate from high school and university, you cannot go back to university unless you want to quit a job when you want to learn once again. You will need another way of doing life-long learning.

AU gives us the opportunity to create a kind of smart learning environment. So if we can use our research results to make a smarter learning environment, then we can provide students with more personalized learning experiences, which can make them learn more efficient, and learn the things that they really need and want to see on their own way and own pace. That is another good thing for students, I would say, teaching at AU.

What do you think are the strengths of learning at AU?

This is the future. Like the students right now in high school and in primary school, you can ask them. They are trying to use mobile devices to learn. Also, as you know, they will post something on their Facebook or their blog. That is the future. As a parent, around 50% of students at AU have family, even children. When they learn at AU, they are adapting to the future of learning, and, in that case, when their child or children have a question. In my upbringing, I could not ask questions of my parents about using Facebook, but right now, you can, because people use Facebook. Now when you're taking an AU course, you are sometimes asked to make a video, put it on YouTube, and then you can teach your children, your child.

One more thing is very important. It is self-regulated learning skill. It is very important for everyone because it helps you efficiently learn, or digest, or plan your goal. When you learn with AU, you will learn that kind of skills. You can teach your child and children, and other family members.

You worked in the Machine Intelligence Research Labs. What did this position involve in terms of tasks and research topics?

The lab, actually, is a kind of Special Interest Group (SIG) organization. It is free for any researchers that have shared research interests to join. In this lab, researchers can share their research results. They can share the research and relevant opportunities they heard, and they can work with others if they have a kind of project and they are looking for collaborators.

What is the general process of research that is important for undergraduate students to know?

The process starts with an idea. You will have an idea through seeing something, from newspaper, television or even a movie. Have you seen the television series called *Person of Interest*? It involves a lot of artificial intelligence, voice recognition, text mining, and data analytics themes. Then, you survey some relevant literature, which makes you more comfortable with your idea, because if you can see research that was done by others, research identical to your idea, then you do not need to do it. When you read the literature, you will have more confidence in being able to do it. Then, you need to find a specific goal for your idea. So, what do you want to do with your research?

When I supervise students, I ask them to think big, but, at the end, when they start doing research they start focusing on the specific idea of that research. When you have a goal, you need to break it down into specific objectives. For instance, if I have a goal, say, I want to have world peace. But to achieve that, I need to break it into three or four objectives such that when I finish each objective, I will be closer to my goal. When all of the objectives have been finished, or achieved at the end, then I should have reached my goal. For any objective, we probably have some kind of issues, or some sort of "problems" needing to be solved. So, for example, I want to create a virtual person that can learn from reading a book. In order to do that, I need to solve some issues. For instance, how does the computer store the text or the image when it read a book? If I can solve all of the issues, then the objective can be accomplished. Of course, once you identify the issues, you need to do more in-depth literature review or surveys. Because sometimes you will see people have solved this particular research issue, but not very well or with limitations, and you can improve this. Or perhaps, you can mix three or four methodologies for better solutions to your issues. You need to do more in-depth or comprehensive surveys after you have identified the issues and possible solutions.

The most important part is, once you finish all of the objective, you need your goal to be evaluated. You cannot simply say, "Okay, I am done! I think this is good!" However, when you do the pilot, when you ask people to really use the system, you will probably find a lot of problems. People will say, "No, this is not user-friendly. It is not understanding me correctly." In that case, you need to evaluate your research outcome such like a system, a tool, or a framework and workflow. When you analyze your system or research results, you need to use appropriate measure. For instance, we have quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. You need to evaluate your system in different ways. For example, if you are doing a searching program, like Google search engine, then you can try to evaluate your system by using the performance. How much time it needs to find something? How accurate is the search result or results? Also, you can do that from a qualitative way. That is basically the process of research. A very difficult one. (Laughs)

For undergraduate students hoping to become engaged in research at AU and beyond, what resources are available through AU for undergraduate students?

AU Library. They provide free access to most of the academic papers and data. If you want to do the research, and you want to engage in the research, you can access all of the academic research work in the world without any problems. Also, in my case, some will come to me and say he or she wants to do research. And I coincidentally have some research projects I'm thinking about. So, I hire them to be the research assistant. And they can do or take part in the research project. A couple even published papers—undergraduates—published papers on whatever they did in the conference. I think these resources are what they are looking for.

We have a role called an advisor in the School of Information and Computing Sciences. You can approach an advisor and tell them you want to do some research, and ask what kind of courses you should take or which professors you should contact. When you get the contact, you can talk to the professor. For example, some students ask me. I tell them, "Okay, you should take these three courses. In the final project course, you can do a research project based on what you learn in these three or four courses." Those are the resources available for undergraduate students.

What about graduate students?

Graduate students can access more. We have a graduate student research fund, which can support graduate students during their research, and they can disseminate in their research in conferences. Also, if you are living in Alberta, you can apply for Profiling Alberta's Graduate Students fund for attending a conference. If you are not living in Alberta, on the other hand, you can apply for Graduate Level Student Travel Awards. They are

similar. One more thing, good thing, for MScIS students is that they can apply for Alberta Innovates – Technology Futures (AI-TF) Graduate Student Scholarships, which is \$5,000 per year for two years during their thesis research.

Our family of graduate studies. They always hold a lot of online seminars that teach you how to write a paper, how to prepare your research agenda, how to make your research presentation, and so on. So, this additional resource, which can be accessed by graduate students.

How can undergraduate students improve their research and the resources available for their research?

Talking to a professor or advisor is an important part of this, so you can identify the resources needed to access before you start working on the research idea or topic you are interested in. For example, if you tell me, "I want to do this kind of research." Then I will let you know what kind of courses you might want to take, and then look at these two books, and then, of course, I will talk to you to try and elaborate the research a little bit more because a lot of undergraduate students, their research ideas are more practical, which means they look at something and want to do that. And yes, that can be done, but that is not, really, research but kind of duplicating research. So, in that case, we need to try to figure out what part of your idea can be more research-oriented. That is what they can do: talk to and listen to the advice of the professor and advisor. That is most important.

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A native British Columbian, Scott Douglas Jacobsen is an AU undergrad and AUSU Councillor-elect. He researches and runs In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal, and In-Sight Publishing.

Student Sizzle AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

AthaU Facebook Group

Kelly is taking her first e-text course and seeks advice on e-readers. Julie seeks feedback on PSYC courses 400, 470, and 476. Ian wonders if AU students can access U of Calgary's library.

Other posts include PLAR, plagiarism software, assignment grading, and courses ENGL 308, HSRV 201, MUSI 267, and ORGB 386.

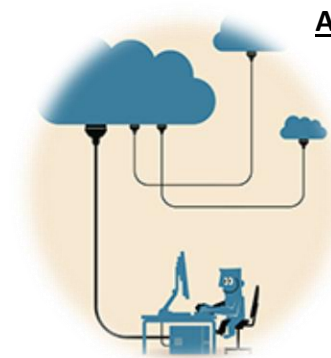
Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "Plenty of [#StudentAward](#) deadlines are approaching. Apply today: <http://goo.gl/MbWq2Y> [#award](#)."

@AthabascaUSU (AUSU) tweets: "You can now get CUSTOMIZED [@AthabascaU](#) clothes - wear your name proudly with the AU logo! <http://bit.ly/1LM0KBI>."

Youtube

[7 Tips to Beat Exam Anxiety](#) by [AsapTHOUGHT](#).



Coffee, Tea, and Booze

Deanna Roney



A cliché which follows writers is that they are hopelessly addicted to coffee, and when they get the jitters (which takes a lot) they move onto the watered down version of caffeine intake, tea. Then, charged full of caffeine, the only way they can settle their mind is to counter these effects with, you guessed it, wine.

This cliché is emphasized by a quote which circles its way around social media, usually promoted by writers who perpetuate the (possibly realistic) image. The quote being of course, Ernest Hemmingway's "write drunk, edit sober." Except this quote cannot be traced back to Hemmingway. And, somewhere along the way, there was an article where his family states that Hemmingway did not drink, and would not have said this. So are all writers then justifying their unhealthy intake of coffee, tea, and wine (or other libations) on this great writer, a writer who did not partake in this environment? Except for maybe the caffeine part.

Having read Hemmingway, I can understand where the quote came from, and would easily believe he had said it, if not solely based on his characters in *The Sun Also Rises*. I should possibly note that as I sit here writing this, there is a steaming cup of

coffee beside me. And, it is possible that several came before it, and also entirely likely that tea will follow this one as my stomach protests the acidic coffee overload.

Where did the cliché come from, then, if not Hemmingway? Was it perhaps started by another writer, a lover of Hemmingway, who needed justification of their own unhealthy habits? I mean, of course, aside from tea (I still like to think tea is an entirely healthy addiction). Writers are notoriously introverted, living inside their minds, creating worlds, tackling world-issues, highlighting societal issues in a discrete and entertaining way. Writers are storytellers, knowledge sharers, this is a practice that can become daunting. Often there is backlash about what is being written. Whether writing fiction or non-fiction, the writer is not safe from scrutiny.

It takes a great deal of concentration, guts, and a dash of ambivalence. Writing, whether fiction or non, reveals a part of the mind of the writer. They are showing an intimate part of themselves to the world to be judged, belittled, or praised. To successfully do this, writers stimulate their mind with coffee, waking up the parts which are still sluggish and hiding in the darkest depths. The coffee urges these feelings to come forth with a force and spill onto the pages. The coffee helps to remove the filter which may otherwise censor the information. However, the human stomach is not meant to withstand the amount of coffee which the writer requires in a day (at least not my stomach) and thus, once the coffee has taken off the edge the tea comes to maintain the progression without causing permanent stomach ulcers.

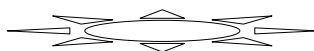
By the end of the writing day the writer has poured themselves onto the pages. They have searched their mind for appropriate information and researched to ensure the information is accurate and has not been changed by their caffeine charged mind. Now, even if the writer is still writing, the time comes for wine. To help settle the

nerves which are tingling with energy and making it difficult to type (or think). The wine (or other drink of choice) helps to settle the mind, it too removes censors possibly even more effectively than coffee or tea, and allows the writer to sink into their work and put the information they gathered during the coffee and tea phase into a readable, sympathetic, relatable piece of work.

At the end of the day, while it may not seem plausible outsiders, the writer is exhausted. Back and neck ache with pain from staying stationary in a chair. Their mind is foggy from the variety of stimulus which they have injected into their body. And they are spent.

Whoever said "write drunk, edit sober" means to write without inhibitions, to write without censorship; but to edit without mercy. It just so happens that for writers this often means applying an unhealthy amount and variety of stimuli to the writing practice. Writing is an incredibly emotionally draining exercise, and sometimes the mind wishes to preserve itself by presenting the writer with writer's block. The best way to remove it? Write anyway.

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



Study Tips from a Semi-Anonymous Friend

Write and Do Right

There is nothing more that The Study Dude wants for you than to start your paper with punch—journalistic style.

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 explores Creswell's book *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Creswell shows you how to state your problems and take advantage of deficiencies— in the

research, that is.

Leads: Figured Out The Formula for Intros

To me and my fellow students the communications professors harped, "Use a compelling quote, a startling fact, an interesting question, or an amusing anecdote to start your paper." This request would cause me to groan. You see, I thought a multisyllabic word marked academic merit. Whoa was me!

Dr. Helen Sword, author of *Stylish Academic Writing*, and Steven Pinker, author of *The Sense of Style*, argue that clear, lively writing marks academic style. Sword began a movement advocating for clear academic writing. In fact, Sword read over fifty books on writing nonfiction before coming to her conclusion. Bestselling author, Steven Pinker, in awe of Sword, followed suit.

My guess is that Sword found much inspiration for her movement from books on journalistic writing. In fact, as I sift through books on journalism, I see parallels between journalistic style and Sword's guidelines for clear writing.

When it comes to writing your paper, let the opening sentence, or the lead, as journalists call it, sparkle. Academic author Creswell gives similar advice:

- Your first sentence(s) should pique reader curiosity and interest.
- Read the first sentences of magazine articles for inspiration on how to write your own first lines.
- You can begin your paper with a question, or with a reference to an incident concerning one of your research participants, or with a point-of-view from the literature.
- In your opening, start with a splash that hints toward your research problem.
- Don't start with a quotation.
- Do consider using a statistic to shock, amuse, or engage your reader.

Model Your Intro on Deficiency? The Deficiency Model

When does deficiency work in your favour? When you make the deficient better.

My first supervisor liked to make me squirm with her highbrow know-how. When she reviewed my thesis introduction, she asked, with a sly smile, if I used the deficiency model. She didn't explain what a deficiency model was. No. Not her. She just liked to probe and watch me squirm.

Well, now I know what the deficiency model is—and it isn't a slight.

Creswell outlines the role of each paragraph in a deficiency model for an introduction:

- You can use the deficiency model for either quantitative or qualitative or mixed methods research introductions.
- The deficiency model involves five sections, each of which can be represented with its own paragraph: (1) introduce research problem, (2) literature overview, (3) literature deficiencies, (4) significance, and (5) purpose.
- The first paragraph (section) introduces the research problem. Make sure you reveal the difficulties faced by your research participants or organizations that you aim to help solve.
- The second paragraph (section) talks about literature that discusses your research problem. Speak about the literature in clusters. Save the individual article discussions for your literature review section.
- The third paragraph (section) talks about the deficiencies of the literature that address your problem. These questions can pinpoint deficiencies: Were there only a few studies involving your particular research participants? Did the other studies omit the voice of a marginalized group that you aim to include? Do you think one topic has significance for your research problem, but no one thought to include it? Do you want to test a theory because of a gut-feeling that the theory might not be valid in a certain circumstance? Does the theory talk about Canadian national organizations, and you want to talk about Berlin national organizations? Somewhere you'll be able to find a gap in the literature.
- The fourth paragraph (section) talks about what your study offers its audiences: the significance.
- The fifth paragraph (section) talks about the purpose of your research. In other words, say something like, "This study attempts to discover..." and finish the sentence. Be sure to include an indicator of who your research participants are, where you plan on conducting the research, and what things you plan on studying about your participants. It's as simple as that.

We've Got Problems? The Lit Addresses Them

In my thesis intro I needed to talk about the literature. And in my literature review, I needed to talk about the literature. But I wasn't supposed to duplicate any material. So, what's a baffled student to do? Talk about the literature in *clusters* in the intro and talk about *individual* studies in the lit review, says Creswell. Why didn't anyone tell me that?

And when you have a research problem or question or hypothesis, let the literature address it. But, like a computer hacker, you want to find a loophole—the gap—that you can fill.

When I did my thesis, I found little research that focused on what I intended to do: study Suncor's environmental Web communications. But that didn't mean that no case studies of environmental Web communications for *a number of* energy firms existed, or more generally, that didn't mean that no case studies of environmental Web communication for *any* firm existed, or even more generally, that didn't mean that no case studies of environmental communications of *any kind* existed. See? In other words, when you can't find any supporting literature, go more general to find research that addresses your problem.

Unfortunately, my thesis research didn't have a central research problem or question—at least not one I can repeat in human language. In my research, I had a ton of sub-questions, but not a central problem. My research problem did probe, however, whether Suncor was green-washing, but I didn't find any literature that explained the term green-washing in any concrete, measurable way. Surely, a good central problem needs more detail than that.

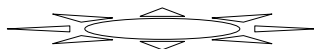
For your introduction, Creswell shows you how to include studies that highlight your central problem and how to uncover the deficiencies in those studies:

- For your introduction, first, map out the literature you plan to use and cluster the similar pieces according to topic. Comment on these clusters of literature as one entity. That way, you don't duplicate your writing in both the intro and literature review.
- Your intro literature clusters should show why your research is important and how your research is unique.
- Don't just redo a study. Add to it. Make it your own. Vary it up. Add a new variable that you think is significant. Change a variable. Change the participant or organization demographics. Represent someone marginalized not previously represented. Change the location of the research. You can do so much to make your study unique—and fill that gap.
- For your literature overview, use academic articles that takes up some sort of method: a method where data is collected and analyzed in the paper. Articles with methods qualify as primary research—the best kind for your papers.
- If you can't find a lot of literature on your topic, go more general. For instance, if you want to study the impact of Catholicism on people with depression and you can't find any literature, then try to find literature on the impact of religion on people with depression, or the impact of Catholicism on people in general.
- When you talk about the grouping of literature in your introduction, include a group citation at the paragraph end or put an individual article quote at the paragraph end. This way, you emphasize the cluster and de-emphasize the individual lit pieces.
- The quotes you should use to show the literature's deficiencies include these: "'what remains to be explored,' 'little empirical research,' and 'very few studies'" (p. 106). What number of studies relates to 'very few'? You and your supervisor be the judge and your thesis committee the jury.

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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In Conversation ..with Gideon's Army

Wanda Waterman



Gideon's Army is a New York based rock band notable for inspired southern-rock style of music and lyrics. In 2014 the band's founder, Robert Bray, who is the singer/song-writer/guitarist, wrote all the lyrics and music for their first album, Burn For the Living, as well as for their second album, King of the League, released January 2016. Recently Bray took the time to answer Wanda Waterman's questions about their musical odyssey.

Describe your musical background. What role did music play in your childhood?

You absorb everything that's around you, whether you're conscious of it or not at the time. The music my parents were playing, the music I was hearing from the television and from the movies, were all a big part of my early musical experience.

I played around on a piano when I was really young because my grandmother had one in her apartment. My uncle, a piano major in college, gave me a few lessons, and I began to play some simple tunes and some simplified arrangements of well-known classical pieces. I picked up an instrument for the first time with consistency in the second grade. I played Violin from the second to the fifth grade in the school and then the town orchestra. We played classical pieces from the great composers.

I picked up the guitar for the first time when I was 12. It's now my primary instrument and one of the great loves of my life.

What's the story behind the lyrics on "Desperate Hearts?"

I grew up middle class in a wealthy town, literally on the other side of railroad tracks that separated the wealthy part from the not-so-wealthy part. It gave me a complex. I've struggled financially my entire post-college life and it's been the source of a tremendous amount of pain and hardship. The song is a lament, a prayer, and a reconciliation. I'm desperate for the day when that will all be in the past.

Your music is infused with emotion, both powerful and tender. How do you make that happen?

Powerful emotion is built up over the years through courage, vulnerability, and acts of kindness and generosity. Expressing your joy and affection for others is one of the most generous things you can do. And it takes courage to admit you were hurt or that you messed up and were wrong and to accept fault. You also build the powerful emotion muscle when you take risks and step out of your comfort zone. Musical skill allows you to release it, but emotion is built into musical skill and is inseparable from its development.

What are your rehearsals like?

It really was love at first note. Playing with these guys is a time, man. It's sublime. If there's ever something I don't think is right for a particular song, I'll usually direct by referencing specific musicians and songs. You know, this feel on this song. I'm a fanatic music fan with an interest in all genres, and so are they. It takes a millisecond before we're all on the same page.

Has anything funny or bizarre ever happened to you while in the recording studio or on the stage?

An artist friend of mine was sketching and drawing while we were recording "Burn for the Living" when the producer's nephew walked in to observe the recording session. He's also an immensely talented musician and we wanted his feedback. My friend the artist and the producer's nephew start talking and you can tell right away they have chemistry, there's mutual interest there. She kept coming back to our sessions and so did he and before long they were involved in a full blown love affair. Once they started dating we never saw them again except for a time or two when they were nice enough to bring us food. That artist has done the album art on both of our albums. She's brilliant.

What's it like to make southern-style rock in a city like New York? Does the city help or hinder the muse?

It hurts. For all of the city's positives, its advantages, and there are many, I much prefer bucolic, rural, and country settings. You can throw beach life in there too. I grew up in the suburbs of New Jersey, where baseball was my primary pursuit. It's a game played at a "southern" pace. I followed it down to Florida where I spent two and a half years post high school.

I'm tremendously influenced by, and a fan of, the blues, country music, rockabilly, rock'n roll, and southern rock. I love those sounds and aesthetics. It's a big part of my make-up, just like my life growing up and living in New Jersey and New York are. There are aspects of both that I need in my life and can't live without. I haven't been able to satisfy that need yet, and that struggle is all over my music and songwriting.

If your band's life were a movie, what kinds of scenes would make you laugh? Or cry?

Parting ways with our original lead guitar player was sad, but that story has a happy ending. Our touring has been laugh-inducing, what with the massive traffic jams, bus delays, less than idyllic motels, and the logistics of moving all of that equipment from point A to point B without a sizable tour bus or even a van. The laughs come because you're with people who are committed to making it work and to putting on good shows for people. You make the best of it, and you're there for each other.

Wanda also writes the blog [The Mindful Bard: The Care and Feeding of the Creative Self](#).



Council Connection

Karl Low

Being a distance council comes with some unique challenges, and some of those were apparent at the April 14th, AUSU council meeting. This was a very busy meeting as it had councillors from both the previous, out-going council, as well as the five new councillors-elect, who took over near the end of the meeting. The first portion of the meeting brought concerns about whether the meeting would be able to be completed, as someone's line was creating a significant echo, making speaking nearly impossible.

Fortunately, AUSU's teleconference system can easily mute lines, and the councillors and councillors-elect all agreed to simply mute their lines when they were not actively speaking, allowing the meeting to proceed. Minutes and agendas were approved, with the exception of the minutes from the new Council's executive election, which the old Council suggested they not approve, since they were not present, and instead those be tabled until following the official change-over.

A review of the action items noted that the conference about user design for students with accessibility issues was filmed and put on television, but that the portion was very short. AUSU will be receiving a link to provide students access to what was broadcast. It was also noted that the Executive Compensation report was now complete and could be removed from the Action Items timeline.

AUSU ratified email votes that took place to approve the changes to the Technology and Infrastructure policy, as well as the vote that defeated the proposed changes to AUSU's position on co-op programs and job placements. The change that was defeated was primarily the removal of a line about AUSU having been contacted by potential employers indicating a demand for the service, with it being noted that no such contact had been received in the past year.

Council followed up with some discussion on its internal discipline and meeting attendance policies. No changes to these policies were proposed at the meeting, as it was just a discussion period. It was noted that with regard to the council discipline policy, there was room for clarification within the policy about how complaints are handled, what documents need to be provided and to whom. It was also noted that the meeting attendance policy seemed overly strict at this point, in part due to the increased number of meetings that AUSU is doing, particularly with respect to ad hoc committees that are formed, work intensely for a short period of time, and then are dissolved.

Council then moved into the reports section of the meeting, and President Wasylyshyn announced what she learned from a finance meeting with AU and the Minister of Advanced Education.

1. The Alberta government announced 10.4 billion dollar deficit budget, of which 2.4 billion will be going to advanced education, which is a slight increase from previous years.
2. Of that, 494 million has been set aside to fund capital projects at post-secondary institutions, none of which will be going to Athabasca University.
3. Tuition will remain frozen for another year.

4. The operating grants to post-secondary education have been slightly increased, but this increase will not be enough to solve AU's current financial difficulties.
5. Overall, President Wasylyshyn called it a positive budget for post-secondary education, but was concerned that there was no special funding allotted for Athabasca University.

AUSU's VP Finance, Brandon Simmons suggested that in his conversations with the government, he felt that the Minister of Advanced Education did not feel that AU was in as dire a financial situation as has been portrayed, and the ministry did not feel it was time to step in to provide additional funding for AU.

It was also noted by president Wasylyshyn, that the media reports about AU's IT department being moved to St. Albert were overblown, as the IT department had been situated in Edmonton and grew beyond the capacity of the office there, so simply moved to a different office in Edmonton on St. Albert trail, and suggested that the unions used this change to gain some publicity for themselves.

The Vice President External report noted that AU was wanting to dictate some terms and scripts for Ceridian, the organization that provides the Student Lifeline, and that AU's Learning Support Services were specifically concerned that there be some way to "bridge the gap" between the offerings of Student Lifeline and AU's own supports. It was noted that AU has contacted Ceridian directly to set up meetings about these concerns, but the exec felt that it would not be at all appropriate for AU to be attempting to deal with the service that AUSU is paying for without AUSU being present.

With the Vice President Financial's report, it was noted that his hours over a one month period did not average out to the minimum, but also that taken over a two month period, when a significant amount of travel time and extra work with CASA was involved, that average was still higher than the minimum required. Some difficulties with the hours tracking policy were discussed, as there currently is no way for it to account for highly varying work intensity. A suggestion was made that perhaps the system be moved to one of banked hours, but it was noted that a banked hours system will probably mean that AUSU loses out on some hours worked from the executives.

Discussion was minimal on the other reports, with the exception of the awards report, where it was noted with approval by outgoing councillor Pierre Plamandon that the awards committee decided to support former members who were seeking travel bursaries to convocation.

Then came what I thought would be the star of the show, the second reading of the proposed changes to the bylaws. However, discussion on this was actually extremely brief, with President Wasylyshyn pointing out that to leave the bylaws in a state that could be seen as not in line with the post-secondary learning act would leave the organization's decisions open to be challenged, and councillor Philip Kirkbride indicating that his view had changed from the previous reading, when he voted against it. The changes passed unanimously.

Two last items of business remained for the old council. The first was the change to the referendums, plebiscites and petitions policy that, like the bylaws, and for the same reasons, removed the ability for the

members to pass any changes to AUSU that were binding on the organization, leaving that ability only to the elected Council. However, the amendments also changed the number of students required to submit a petition to a flat 50. This is lower than was required before, as the previous "1% of the undergraduate full load equivalent (FLE) student population of AU" would work out to around 83 students for the 2014-2015 year.

The second? An in-camera session to deal in private with motions arising from the councillor meeting attendance policy. Motions against councillor Philip Kirkbride and out-going councillor Pierre Plamandon to remove them from council were both defeated.

With that, the Council officially changed over, the 2012-2014 council was officially dissolved and the newly acclaimed council took office, with their first order of business being to recite the oath of AUSU council. Although all councillors-elect provide a signed copy of the oath to AUSU before taking office, this tradition is a fun one of the group, with everybody speaking the oath aloud over the phone, creating almost a party like atmosphere as the group gets started.

Following that, the minutes that had been previously tabled were now approved, the new executive confirmed and the council started the business of forming the standing committees.

The new voting members of the AUSU finance committee consist of:

VPFA Kim Newsome – Chair

President Shawna Wasylyshyn

Julian Tetrenko

Josh Cross

Scott Jacobsen, and

Andrew Grey

The new voting members of the AUSU Awards committee consist of:

Josh Cross – Chair

President Shawna Wasylyshyn

Dixie Tolver

VPFA Kim Newsome

Scott Jacobsen

The new voting members of the AUSU Member Engagement and Communication Committee consist of:

VPEX Brandon Simmons, Chair

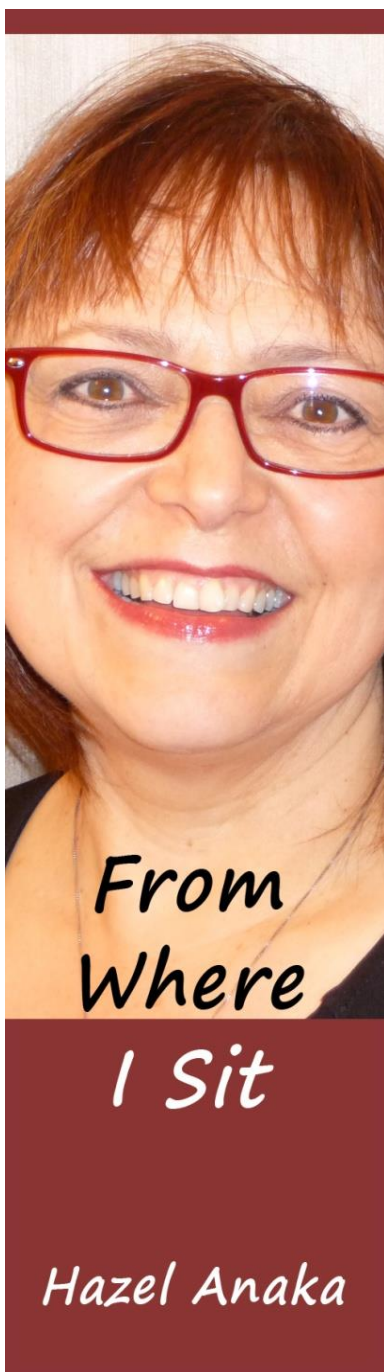
President Shawna Wasylyshyn,

Philip Kirkbride

VPFA Kim Newsome

Executive Director Sarah Cornett

The new council then spent several minutes organizing possible meeting times and dates before adjourning for the evening. A busy night, but congratulations to the new group, and welcome to AUSU Council!



What We Eat

What we eat is a complicated matter. On any given day it's likely determined by some stew consisting of money, time, and effort. Because the ingredients are interconnected it's impossible to see where one begins and the other ends.

Money may determine if we eat out or prepare something at home. It will affect whether we get our protein from filet mignon or sardines. It may steer our decision to plant a garden or subscribe to a weekly food box delivery service.

Time and effort are the other side of the money coin. Planting that garden or preparing meals all take time and sweat equity. If you are a wannabe-chef or love the feel of soil in your hands time spent handling food will be a joy not a dreaded chore.

Once you know what you can and will do the next big thing is choosing what to consume. Will it be organic produce or yellow-dyed factory food? Will it be poached eggs on toast or an Egg McMuffin to start the day? Would your grandmother recognize what you're eating? Are your meals worthy of MasterChef Canada? Their own Instagram account?

Trying to interpret the research about what is best is a losing battle. Ultimately, many of us just want to know if the food we're eating is making us sick or adding years to our lives. I used to believe the hype from Dr. Oz and others about the latest, greatest, new miracle food, but a visit to a naturopath helped me articulate what I already knew from having a daughter with life-threatening food allergies. Fact: no food is inherently good or bad. The only thing that matters is how it affects Hazel or Hilary or you. Salmon is touted as miracle food. Unless, of course, you're allergic to fish and die when you eat it.

The big new health threat is inflammation. Characterized by swelling and pain, it causes or exacerbates 'itis' conditions: arthritis, gastritis, colitis, dermatitis, nephritis, neuritis, and cystitis. Inflammation plays a role in heart disease, cancer, obesity, dementia, migraines, Alzheimer's disease, and virtually all autoimmune diseases. Throw in asthma, diabetes, psoriasis, other skin disorders, and irritable bowel syndrome. The cost to the health care system and us is huge.

My new naturopath suggested we do a simple finger prick blood test to determine if I have any IgG (delayed reaction) sensitivity to a panel of 120 foods. Now my days will be consumed with figuring out how to live with elevated results for goat's milk, egg whites, corn, brewer's yeast, Brazil nuts, red kidney beans, and barley. I'm only beginning to understand the implications. The advice has been to concentrate on substitutions and how much better I'll feel, not the deprivation. Detecting and eliminating some of these items is simple and straightforward. Others are hidden in most processed foods. Others, like eggs and yogurt, are 'healthy' choices. Purging the pantry, reading labels, and finding new recipes from the 'caveman' diet are my new hobby. Like I said, what we eat is complicated from where I sit.

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



Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

Dependants In Need

Dear Barb:

Hi, I am a single mother who is working toward my degree at AU, but it is slow going since I can't afford to take more than one course at a time. My daughter is five years old and we have been living alone since her father left three years ago. Back then we went to the animal shelter and found a young dog that had been abused and neglected, and, with a lot of love, Shelby has turned into a sweet and gentle dog. The other day Shelby was jumping up on the bed the other day and tore a ligament in her leg. We rushed her to the vet and the bad news is that it will cost approximately \$5,000 to fix her leg. I can't afford to pay for this and I don't want to put her down, but I might have to. Right now we are just keeping her quiet and crated until we can decide what to do. My daughter and I are heartbroken. I don't know what to do. Do you have any suggestions? Heartbroken in BC.

Dear Heartbroken:

I can definitely identify with your situation as I have two dogs and a cat and I love them like family. I suspect Shelby filled a void in both of your lives after your daughter's father left, and has become an important family member. It is unfair that you would have to make a decision to put down a young healthy dog for financial reasons. I did some research and there is help out there! The Farley Foundation subsidizes pet bills for individuals who meet their criteria. It sounds like you might qualify, but I can't say for sure. There is also an organization that will finance pet bills. They offer low monthly payments and competitive interest rates. You would have to go

to their website to see if your veterinarian is a member.

Have you discussed your situation with your vet? They may negotiate the cost, it's worth a try. Also talk to your veterinarian about other options, remember they went into this profession because they are animal lovers. Take care and thanks for writing in.

Dear Barb:

My life is so hectic I feel like I'm spinning in circles. My wife left me and our two daughters six months ago. She met some other guy and is head over heels in love with him. Our daughters are eight and ten and their mother rarely sees them or helps out with driving them to activities etc. I have a successful career but it is very demanding. I'm trying to keep up with the household chores plus the cooking and cleaning, but I'm finding I hardly have any time to just spend with my girls. Do you have any suggestions? Steven

Hey Steven:

Sorry that this had to happen to your family but with a little outside help you can work through it. You say you have a successful career and then my suggestion would be to hire someone to help out with the household chores. It doesn't make you any less of a dad if you accept help. It's important for you to be able to hang out with your girls. They particularly need their dad right now since their mother is mostly absent. Hire a cleaning service to come in once or twice a week and do laundry and cleaning. You can even get them to make a few casserole dishes to put in the freezer for when you need a quick meal. Also you need to spend time unwinding with friends, so have a night every week or two where you go out and do something you enjoy. Hope this helps. Thanks Steven.

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.

CHAZZ BRAVADO: THE BRAZIL QUESTION



Hey, Brazil, what's your problem?
Dilma Rousseff is a HERO!
Spending other people's money
to enhance one's personal
popularity is Chazztastic!

Which begs the question:
Will broadcasting the fact that I
have a Panama account make me
more popular with the chicky-poops,
or less?



Because if it'll win me some extra
hickies, I know a broker who's
itching to help me "invest"
Grandma's retirement fund!



WRITTEN BY: WANDA WATERMAN



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We Want to Hear From You!

With the start of a brand new council term we want to continue to improve our communications with our members.

Everyone communicates differently, and AUSU members are different than other students, often juggling many roles and responsibilities. So we want to know what you want to hear about, and how best to reach you. Help us understand how we can be a truly valued resource for you.

Please send your suggestions to Brandon Simmons, our VP External and Student Affairs, at vpex@ausu.org or feel free to call or text him at (780) 668-2952.

Keep watching for surveys, social media posts, and contests geared towards improving communication too!



Student Awards & Bursaries

Don't forget – the Deadline is May 1, 2016!

Find our more or apply online [here](#).

IMPORTANT DATES

- **April 29:** May course extension deadline
- **April 30:** Deadline to apply for 2016 Convocation
- **May 6:** Deadline to complete coursework for Convo'16
- **May 10:** AUSU Council Meeting (4:30pm MDT)
- **May 10:** Deadline to register in a course starting Jun 1
- **May 13:** June degree requirements deadline
- **May 31:** June course extension deadline

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