

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 24 Issue 39 2016-10-07

Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You!

Free Season at AUSU

Don't Miss Out

The Keys to Success

Determination, Persistence, Patience

Plus:

*Hug a Farmer
Audition for an A
and much more!*



CONTENTS

The Voice's interactive Table of Contents allows you to click a story title to jump to an article. Clicking the bottom right corner of any page returns you here. Some ads and graphics are also links.

Features

Minds We Meet 5

Articles

Editorial: *Changing the Program* 3
"Free" Season at AUSU 8
Chrysanthemum Wallpaper 9
Determination, Persistence, and Patience 13

Columns

The Creative Spark: *Audition for an A* 11
The Study Dude: *Genius Genes* 14
Music Review: *North Easter* 16
From Where I Sit: *Hug A Farmer* 18
Dear Barb: *Uncomfortable Circumstances* 19

News and Events

Student Sizzle..... 12
Women of Interest 17
AUSU Update 21

Graphic

The Doppelgänger Cure: *IX* 20

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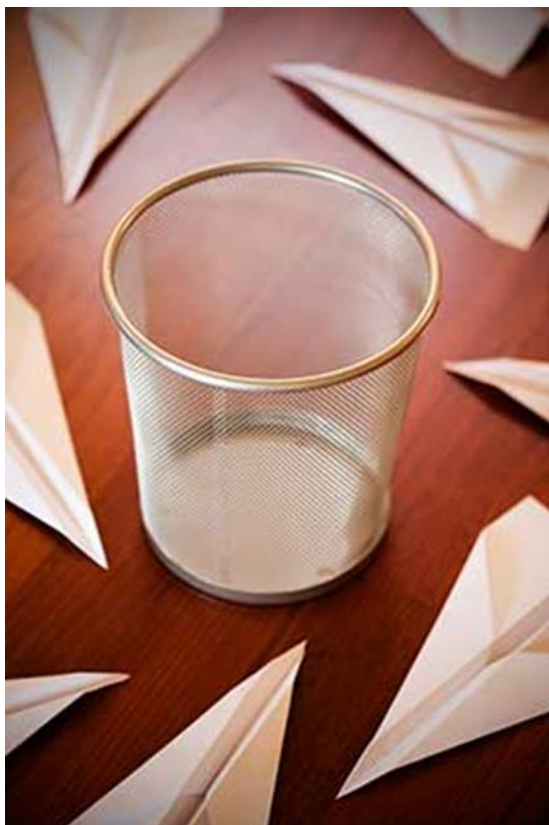
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



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

Hey! Did you know the Voice Magazine has a [Facebook page](#)?

No kidding! We also do the [twitter](#) thing once in a while if you're into that.

EDITORIAL**Changing the Program****Karl Low**

If you're in the unofficial AUSU Facebook group, you already know of the report that's on AlbertaPolitics.ca about how AUSU may take the university to court over the changes to nursing degrees that applied retroactively. But since you read *The Voice Magazine*, you already knew that was a possibility from our last Council Connection.

What's interesting about the report is that it links to AUSU's own report that gives the details about the situation. This report was only tabled in last night's Council meeting, but has been linked to on the AUSU website for some time through the executive blogs. If you haven't read it yet, you should, because as a student, even if you're not in the faculty of health disciplines, this could affect you.

How? Well, while AUSU claims in the report that "President MacKinnon stated several times during the [June 15th] GFC meeting that a policy referencing retroactive program changes is not necessary, because AU does not perform retroactive changes," it was recently noted on the unofficial FaceBook page that other retroactive changes are already happening, specifically within the Human Resources program.

The changes are much less onerous in this case, as rather than altering the required GPA it is essentially limited to replacing one or two required courses with another single course, and it is noted that the requirements for students currently in the program are established so as to let the student graduate with either the old or the new in most cases. Further, associate professor, Dr. Bob Barnetson specifically points out that, "We will happily address any unforeseen wrinkles by varying student's graduation requirements." What seems to be clear, however, is that now that the gates have opened, other faculties are going to start taking advantage of it.

And why not? After all, Athabasca University poses a number of unusual challenges, as students can be in a program, part time, for years, taking courses at any point within that time frame. This makes it difficult to adjust programs, especially in an environment where faculties have very limited resources. It's far more cost effective for the faculty to simply change the degree requirements than to hold old courses open for years for the few students who enrolled in a program many years ago and are proceeding slowly through their requirements, one course at a time.

Unfortunately, this works against the idea of an open university. If retroactive changes to degree programs become commonplace, the idea of lifelong learning, of taking courses when and as your schedule permits, starts to break down. As the risk for a retroactive change increases, so does the need to complete your degree within a short time-frame, or you risk being burdened with additional expenses and time required, or even the possibility of losing all the progress you've already made. With that, AU loses a key aspect of being an open university, and instead becomes merely a distance university.

I speak from my own experience here, as if graduating quickly had been a de facto requirement, I never would have. It took me a long time to sort out what my learning goals were, to raise the money, to be able to fit the

learning required for a university education in with the rest of my life. And, frankly, for me to mature enough to be able to complete the degree. Had I thought that, half-way through my degree, it might change at any point and I'd have to re-take sections of it I simply wouldn't have done it.

As an aside, it should be pointed out that when I spoke with Dr. Edwards (head of the Faculty of Health Disciplines) some time ago, she made a point of noting to me that the faculty was willing to work very hard with individual students who would be negatively affected by these changes, also being willing to adjust the graduation requirements somewhat, especially if there was a problem with the average grade threshold. And given that AUSU itself has said that all individual cases it has advocated for with the FHD have been a success for the student, this does seem to be the case.

It was also pointed out that the Faculty did not simply choose to do this on its own, as their ability to graduate nurses relies on the approval of the Nursing Education Approval Board and that body mandates a minimum pass percentage on the nursing exam. The nursing exam was changed by regulators in the College of Registered Nurses with little advance warning or consultation with the schools that were teaching the nurses, and all of the institutions have had to implement changes to their programs to deal with this as pass rates have dropped by 20% or more in any jurisdiction that's made the switch. While other universities, where courses are grouped into definable years, have the opportunity to simply adjust some of the final courses, AU's open registration system gives the faculty little ability to do this while making sure that all of the students cover the new material.

These are, obviously, important considerations, but AUSU makes the point that there may have been other ways, such as the creation of supplemental courses that graduating nurses are encouraged to take before a possible abortive attempt on the exam. The difficulty of this would be that such courses are obviously voluntary, and so do little to help the faculty maintain their pass rate if students decide to forego the expense. What the solution is, is not clear, as AU is, at least to some degree, having its hand forced by outside changes that could negatively affect the entire faculty. At the same time, given the number of student difficulties AUSU lists in their report, I have to think that AU should have gone further to come up with a better solution to the problem. We offer an entire graduate level program in distance education, for goodness sakes, so it seems to me that somebody should have been able to come up with a better solution than one that threatens the degrees of students who previously felt they were on their way to success. With the changes outlined in the recent AUSU Executive blog (specifically a delay in implementation for a year) there may be the opportunity to do this.

Meanwhile, in this week's issue of *The Voice Magazine*, we have a new installment of "Minds We Meet". We interview former by-election candidate, Sarah Blaney Lewis and find out a little bit more of what brings this Management student to AU. We also have a short look at some of the offerings from AUSU this month that you shouldn't miss your chance for. The Creative Spark! riffs from our look at personal branding to bring you some advice on how you can create a personal educational brand for yourself in your academic work. Make your brand one that stands out to the audience that matters most, your marker.

Plus we have a couple of articles that look at what leads to success, whether in life or academics, and Wanda Waterman explores the boundaries of good taste, and finds that they're circular.

Not to mention our regular selection of reviews, entertainment, and stories to pique the human interest in all of us.

Enjoy the read!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karl", is located in the bottom right corner of the page.

MINDS WE MEET



Sarah Blaney Lew never thought a university education would be possible until she started at AU in 2003. Currently in the Bachelor of Management degree program, she hopes to continue on to graduate studies, between baking, travelling with her family, and tending to community garden plots. Most recently, Sarah ran for one of the two seats available in the AUSU by-election, but ended up being in third place. She was able to free up some time one morning to speak to The Voice Magazine about her experience.

What brought you to AU?

It was one of those things where I was chatting with a friend of mine at work. He was a nurse. He knew a lot of people that had gone to Athabasca University to upgrade their diploma to degree. At the time, I was interested in pre-med. Athabasca was the only school I knew of that did science courses online. I looked into it and I was hooked.

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

Right now, I am vegging out with my kittens. Other than that, I have a couple of community garden plots downtown, which I have been working on this Summer. I like to bake but I don't have the time to do

too much lately. I like to read. I have some books hovering around the house to read when I get a chance.

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

Oh, my gosh, my greatest influence on my desire to learn. My dad went back to earn a college certificate at the age of 60. He took some night classes. He went a couple of times a week and got a college certificate. Back in the day, when he was my age, you graduate high school, get the job, and have the job for 40 years in the technical areas. He did most of his practical education in high school. You didn't need much post-secondary education at the time. My dad gave me that little push, and taught me that it's never too late. My kid brother went to university and that was a huge push. He is a bright apple and did university the traditional way. Moving out, going to school for 4 years, he gave me the kick that I needed to get this done.

So your dad had a life-long career before taking post-secondary, but as a student now, are you worried that that kind of existence may not be possible anymore?

Absolutely, absolutely, especially in healthcare, I am in secretarial administrative areas. In healthcare, you need to stay relevant. It is all the more important for you to have that post-secondary education. Nurses can't do that with the college education anymore. They have to go through and upgrade their education to the same par as the new grads, especially to get into management areas. Even for me, I am doing the bachelor of

management, so that I can run an office. Basically, an office is a business. It is even more imperative. My 10-year-old niece will have to get a Masters degree.

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

I dislike e-books. For example, I am on a computer all day, every day. The last thing I want to do is go home and have to read from a tablet for retention purposes. That said, I do have e-magazines. But not something I have to stare at for hours at a time for material that I need to retain, I can just surf them. I am an old school type of girl. I like to highlight my books. This was the first course where I needed an e-textbook. I was conflicted. I actually took the PDF and printed it out. I might try the e-book next time, but it's not helpful for flagging important information and referencing information back-and-forth.

I did like it before they got Moodle when they sent you your materials – I found it more conducive to learning remotely. You don't have to rely on technology to learn. I understand that that's the progressive way of learning, though, with the new technologies. But when I started, they sent the manual and books, and I felt comfortable and became acclimated to that.

Does this reflect other students' experiences based on your conversations with them?

I haven't interacted with students beyond the Facebook page. I do get the sense that they're frustrated that it was not offered as a choice. I think when you're in university that it is very challenging to begin with. There should not be an additional challenge to that. I prefer learning with paper books. Some of the newer students might like it with the electronic books wherever they go.

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

Never. My education is ultimately important to me. It is not something I'm willing to give up without serious consideration. I have worked on this for a long time now. It started off as a bucket list thing, but now, it's an essential security requirement for my work. It is not something I am willing to sacrifice.

What was your most memorable AU course?

Oh my goodness, I had a very, very good success with my anthropology course in linguistics, ANTH 354: Language & Society. I have always been interested in language and how we develop language, and how languages and dialects vary around the world. It was perhaps one of my most favourite courses, and I did well in it due to my aptitude. My least favourite course was definitely math, Math 100: Developmental Math. I couldn't wrap my brain around it. Probably, one of the influencing factors of me leaving pre-med in the first place.

What is most valuable thing in life to you?

My most valuable thing is definitely self-care. It is important to take the time to care for yourself. We are always spread very thin. We are always so focused on work and education. My favourite tangible things would be my fur kids. But as far as favourite thing would be my necessity for wellness and self-care, that is a very recent development. It's been in the last couple of years. You get so overextended, and it is important to take that time for yourself.

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

Time, it is definitely worth it. My biggest regret about AU, not AU itself, but the university experience itself. I went away to college in Toronto for 2 years, but it wasn't nearly as arduous as university! It was music school. It was not the same at all to going to university for 4 years. I would love to go and devote 4 years to my education and just be done with it. I work near Queen's University campus. I am always remarking on frosh, when they

come in, that I would love to be one of those university kids. They don't realize how lucky they are. When you're my age and working, putting yourself through school, it's a son of a bitch. It's really hard.

What's the single best thing AU could do to improve your student experience?

I think my student experience has been pretty amazing so far. I don't think there's much room for improvement. I have gotten insight into other people's experiences. I am getting a lot of insight into others' experience being on the boards and chatting with some of them. I think accountability is really important and something we need to adhere to with regards to the expected turnaround times for marking, conversation, especially now having gone to the school of business. They do it with the school call centre rather than a specific tutor for your class. With regard to that, I am losing some benefit of the experts in those fields and having to deal with the call center. That is important, to have that person who is completely and utterly expert in the subject you're studying at the moment. The ability to get feedback from them. The communication and accountability are important. We need to revisit those.

You mentioned being on the boards, as in social media? What perspective on AU and the undergraduate student body does that give you?

It is very hard. I think that interacting with students on Facebook gives me insight into other students' experiences. It tunes me more into some of their needs and experiences. My experience is completely different than other people's experience. I have had limited interaction with tutors. I haven't had any problems with deadlines or turnarounds. Other students might have had those problems. Having that communication is important to have insight into their experiences, it is not too difficult of an experience. I think interaction on any level for that insight are important in getting that insight to know where the problems are, to fix things.

What is the most important lesson in life?

A little existentialist this early in the morning! The main thing is to keep going, keep one foot in front of the other. We can learn from the past and from mistakes. We can't learn unless we keep moving forward.

E-texts or textbooks? Any particular reason(s)? Other than the aforementioned ones.

I like books. I like the visual of books. I like the tactility of real books. I like the smell of a real textbook. I like that no one else has touched that book. I think the e-texts detaches, from my experience, the tactility and the wonder of embracing a subject for the first time. I am a book person. I prefer books.

How do you find the tutors?

In my experience, I have never had any problems with tutors. I have had nothing but the best experience with the tutors. I have deserved the feedback I have gotten from my tutors. It is not anything that I would feel conflicted with or would challenge. I feel like I have earned either the kudos or reprimand from tutors in the past. I know it is not the same for everybody. I can't say enough about how much these guys work, how diligent and how expert they are. Their expertise astounds me. It is amazing we have all of these pioneers in the fields working for us.

Where has life taken you so far? (travels for pleasure, work, etc.)

Definitely, they've been travels for pleasure. I would like to do more travelling. I have traveled to Europe over the years. It has been 4 ½ years since I've been to Europe. I am getting cabin fever, the hankering to go again. The last few years have been a little unstable. I'm getting back into a good place with my health and stuff like that. I would love for that to be my next goal, which is to travel to Europe and enjoy what it has to offer. I do what I need to be doing at the time that I am doing it. It sounds hokey, probably, but I think that everything we have done has shaped us for where we are and how strongly we can handle what comes at us.

"Free" Season at AUSU

Barbara Lehtiniemi



AU undergrad students are swimming in opportunities for free stuff this fall. AUSU is poised to hand out thousands of dollars in scholarships and bursaries in a few weeks. Additionally, AUSU is running a contest for a free AU undergrad course, worth hundreds of dollars.

Let's begin with the easy stuff:

AUSU's #igo2AU Contest. The winner of this contest will receive a voucher for one free 3-credit AU undergrad course. Entering the contest is free and takes only a few minutes. To enter, complete one of the tasks listed on the contest [webpage](#). Choose from taking a photo of yourself using the AUSU Mobile App, completing an AUSU Course Evaluation, following AUSU on Twitter or LinkedIn, or one of several other tasks. For most tasks you'll need to

take a photo or screenshot of your completed task, as indicated in the task description, and e-mail your entry to contest@ausu.org, including your name and AU student ID number.

Students can enter up to five times by completing different tasks. After the contest ends November 30, 2016, AUSU will make a random draw from all eligible entries. The winner walks away with a free AU undergrad 3-credit course voucher. The voucher must be used by September 30, 2017.

The #igo2AU contest is easy to enter, and all entries—assuming they're properly completed—have an equal chance of winning.

Now for more of a challenge:

AUSU's Scholarship's, Awards, and Bursaries. If you're one of the successful applicants for an AUSU award this fall, you'll walk away with \$1000 (deposited directly to your bank account.) Applications for most awards require a bit of time to gather and compile information, so you'll need to get started soon. Applications—which are submitted online—must be received by AUSU by November 1.

Think your chances of winning an award or scholarship are small? Think again. You're not competing against all other AU undergrad students, just the ones who bothered to apply. AUSU typically only receives a handful of applications for each award—as few as 8 and as many as 75 in the last award cycle—so each applicant has a decent shot at winning. Bursaries, which require applicants to demonstrate financial need, receive even fewer applications.

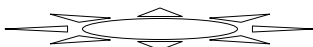
Available this fall are two Academic Achievement Scholarships worth \$1000 each; two Balanced Student Awards of \$1000 each; two Returning Student Awards of \$1000 each; three Student Service Awards of \$1000 each (one of which is a one-time award in honour of outgoing AU interim president Peter MacKinnon); as well as five AUSU

Bursaries of \$1000 each; and one Single Parent Bursary of \$1000. (AUSU has other bursaries available which students can apply for year-round; visit AUSU's awards [page](#) for details.)

Be sure to review each award's [application form](#) carefully to ensure you qualify and for details on what information is required for your application. Make sure your application is completed and submitted by November 1.

You've probably heard that money doesn't grow on trees. But this fall, AUSU is giving students the next best thing: multiple opportunities for free stuff. A small time investment can have a huge payout. Check out these opportunities and all AUSU has to offer at ausu.org.

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



Chrysanthemum Wallpaper



Wanda Waterman

In southwestern Nova Scotia in the eighties such wallpaper was a common relic of a bygone era. I like chrysanthemums; they're lovely, in their place. But massive chrysanthemums blazing from the walls of a small kitchen get old fast.

Unfortunately, my five-year-old adored them.

"Please, please don't tear down this wallpaper!" he pleaded.

He had reason for concern. He'd watched me pull up, in a fit of pique, the hellish orange shag carpet in the kitchen and the infernal blue shag carpet in the bathroom. I'd explained that shag carpets had no place on kitchen or bathroom floors, which needed to be scrubbed a lot.

He asked me what they were doing there, then. I told him that during the sixties, when our little house was built, many people had thought of shag carpeting as the epitome of posh, and so they'd made new houses with plywood floors and covered them with fuzzy rugs so they'd sell faster.

It was part of a decorating style that my friend's son referred to as "Early Hippy," characterised by artificial fibres, various grades of hard plastic, simple sleek designs, bright primaries, no natural materials (except maybe wood which if you found it had to be grainless), and no appearance of the organic except maybe daisies on china—or chrysanthemums on wallpaper.

Okay, so my boy got it about the rugs, but he drew the line at removing the wallpaper.

I hadn't thought I'd be living like this as an adult. During my teen years in Bear River, Nova Scotia I'd babysat in the rustic homes of American artists who'd bought old farmhouses *before* Early Hippy had taken hold and had simply spiffed up what was already there.

These homes had manifested an impeccable minimal taste which one might call "Middle Hippy:" rough stuccoed walls, exposed beams, hand-thrown pottery, original art on the walls, small woven rugs punctuating the spaces of old hardwood floors subtly stained and varnished, and the fragrance of fresh bread, coriander, and cinnamon sunken into everything.

Everything about it was a reaction to the mod shellacked interiors of Early Hippy, just as long, straight, part-in-the-middle hair had been a rebellion against the permed, dyed, and starched coiffures of the pre-Beatles days.

I'd loved this beautiful, natural simplicity and had always imagined myself living in these kinds of spaces when I left home.

But it was not to be. Those artists had come of age in a time of almost full employment, and housing had been cheap. I'd come of age in the Reagan era; this meant that my peers and I had to take what was handed to us, and this was kind of how the punk aesthetic— what I now call "Late Hippy"— came to evolve.

Many urban punks turned their Early Hippy lodgings into Late Hippy by papering walls with candy wrappers, using car seating for couches, and building beds from pallets and cement blocks. Cyndi Lauper's insistence that linoleum was the best floor covering because it was easy to clean and you didn't get splinters affirmed the reality of our lives.

It was a rebellion against what was perceived as the snobbery of Middle Hippy's natural look, which was now more than any of us could afford. We were now the heirs of Early Hippy, doomed to either stay with our parents or to live in seedy urban areas and work at awful jobs or subsist on welfare. In any event we were obliged to accept ghastly decor.

Including shiny vinyl chrysanthemum wallpaper.

Years later when I found myself looking for a place in Montreal I was delighted to find that even the cheap apartments had hardwood or ceramic floors and neutral-coloured walls. You could decorate such spaces with flowers, fine art, antiques, the latest trends, or a mix. Late Hippy was now a thing of the past and even Nova Scotian houses and apartments copied the simplicity trend.

I'm now shocked to find whole antique furniture stores devoted to Early Hippy. The cone shapes, the chrome, the smooth grainless wood, the formica, and the rest—the things I couldn't bear to look at in my parents home— were now *de rigeur* and selling for caviar prices.

And thanks to the popularity of the series *Trailer Park Boys*, orange chrysanthemum wallpaper is also making a comeback; it's the wallpaper you see in Ricky's father's kitchen.

My adult son is glad to see it again, if only on television.

There really is no accounting for taste.

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

The Creative Spark

Audition for an A

Marie Well



Would you wear a shirt that said, "I Eat Kraft"?

I wouldn't, but I would audition for a No-Name commercial.

Even more disturbing, I tapped into a book called *How to Audition for TV Commercials* by W. L. Jenkins to give you, yes, study ideas.

You see, the mission of *The Creative Spark!* is to tap into creative fields for original student tip-offs. And today's tips top-it-off: they give you the halo effect—a halo of brilliance.

How to get this halo? Make yourself a brand personality. Of the student sort.

Maybe you don't believe auditions for ad agencies can teach you how to nab an A+. I assure you, they can.

Maybe you can't accept that you've got an A+ student within you. I guarantee you do.

Maybe you want to remain authentic (anything but a brand). I'm not stopping you.

But first, don't lose yourself. Be 85% authentic; 15% your brand. Yes, you are a brand—of an academic kind.

It's time you molded your 15% student face into Einstein's mirror.

You can be the Magnum or Kraft or No-Name of academia: pick your brand.

So, what can commercial auditions teach you about student demands? Lenkins coughs up the ad stuff; I spit out student parallels. (Lenkins's ideas get boldfaced; mine just get bold.)

What's a brand? Jot down everything that comes to mind. That's a brand. Yes, even you, as a student, represent a brand. Your prof's a brand. Your course's a brand. So, what comes to mind about you, the student? Well, that's your student brand. And you can change it. Keep the 85% of you that you love and tweak the rest.

If the authentic product is spunky, shower spunkiness in every ad. Pick the most authentic traits about you. Make them defining traits you love. If your traits sound negative, reword them positively.

Frame them nicely? You see, you're not a reckless mess; you're a risk-taker. You're not uptight; you're meticulous. You don't procrastinate; you pontificate.

Even combine traits: playful, original, creative, border-line—that's the *Creative Spark!*

Or take what your enemies call you, and turn those insults into positives: go from "goof" to "comedian," or from "follower" to "team-player," or from "selfish" to "intra-personally smart."

Then, market your brand: the risk-taking-you does cutting-edge topics. The meticulous-you cites twenty-plus authors per error-free paper. The pontificating-you drums up breaking-new-ground.

Now market your stuff.

Know Your Audience's Bias. The audience of your paper is your prof. Yes, know the biases of your prof. Vet your thesis idea with your prof at the start. Bias your work along your prof's biases if you can stomach it.

Want billions of fans to buy your burger? Well, see those billions as your prof; see your grades as cash. Shamelessly appeal to your audience. And do market research. This is the 15% of your brand that you tweak to your prof. Your 85% authenticity remains.

(But if you want to defy your prof's views, get ammo: evidence, citations, stats, facts. And a brilliant idea.)

Get a great concept. You can find concepts on the back cover blurbs of DVDs and books. Your thesis statement is your concept. Make your thesis statement as exciting as the blurb on a DVD. Find that angle that takes your thesis from B-roll to blockbuster: an edge that reflects your brand.

As for final credits, if you audition for the No Name commercial, make it worthy of an Academy—I mean academic—award.

Student Sizzle AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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



AthaU Facebook Group

Alicia inquires how much time she should expect to devote weekly to each course. Komal seeks feedback on challenging a course. Jaime seeks student input on course MKTG 414 International Marketing and Exporting.

Other posts include PLAR, unreadable e-text pages, AUSU by-election results, and courses CRJS 360, EDUC 317, and GOVN 440.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "The future is now....a note from the new #AthaU President @NeilFassina: <https://goo.gl/GoGTL3>."

@AthabascaUBiz tweets: "#AthaUBiz students! Are you the next #CEOx1Day? You could be, find out more here: <https://goo.gl/tYy1xM> #Undergrad #CEO #YourFutureCareer."

@AthabascaUSU (AUSU) tweets: "Want quick access to AU services, resources & FAQ's? AUSU has an "AU Quick Link" page to help you get answers! <http://bit.ly/1r2DFn1>."

Determination, Persistence, and Patience

Deanna Roney



What are the keys to success? According to most motivational posters it is hard work that pays off. While this is true, I think there is more depth than this. Success is achieved by those who hold on no matter what, who fight for what they want, who work hard every day, don't lose sight of their goal, and are always learning. Success is found through determination, persistence, and patience. Patience is the hardest step in the process. Most people are willing to work hard for what they want, most are probably determined to get success in their chosen field. But,

patience, is the difference between getting there, and changing plans.

There is no such thing as an overnight success. There is such thing as someone who hasn't been heard of before becoming well-known seemingly overnight. But their success did not come as a whim. The success of these "overnighters" is built on a solid platform of months, years, decades of hard work in seclusion. Of not knowing whether their efforts would ever pay off but stubbornly sticking to their goal, keeping their dreams in sight, and believing that one day everything would pay off.

Someone's path to success may not look like others who achieved the same goal. But it doesn't make their path less meaningful—less work. One person may take a well trodden path, one believed proven, while another takes side trips, and constantly veers off the path. There is no right or wrong way, but there is a right and wrong way for an individual; your path is the one that feels natural to you, the one that makes you happy. There is a tendency in society to condemn those that veer off the path by those who remain firmly on it, and vice versa. It is unfortunate, but part of this is that person trying to justify their own choices in life. Trying to affirm to themselves that they're making the proper decision and are taking the path that will lead them to success. It would be much simpler if we could look at our own path, believe in it, and encourage the others who chose otherwise.

Believing in yourself is key to patience, determination, and success. Others can tell you they believe in you (and this is helpful) but if you don't believe in yourself then the belief of others will only sustain you for so long. The belief in yourself may waver from time to time, but the core has to be there and you need to be able to grasp onto it.

Behind every success there are failures, doubts, and struggles. Even in success there is the fear to recreate that success again, an unknown on the next step. Elizabeth Gilbert made a speech about this after her success with *Eat, Pray, Love*, she attained success seemingly overnight, but with that success those feelings of fear, uncertainty, and doubt didn't go away. This is part of the reason why you need to develop your determination, your belief in yourself, and persistence in what you want. Because, even with success, there will be struggles,

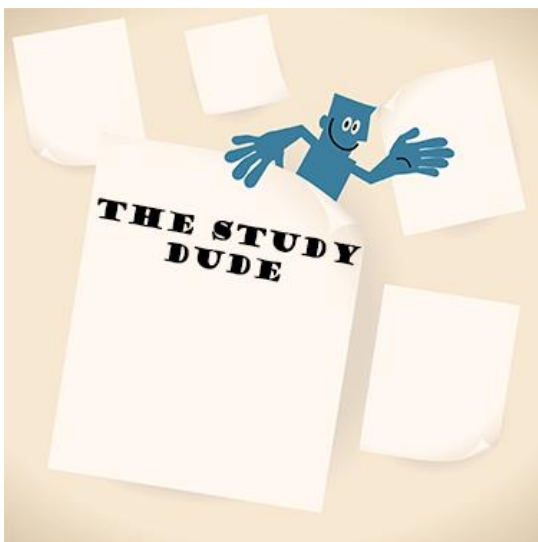
there will be imposter-syndrome, and while others may tell you they believe in you, you have to believe in yourself and you need to be patient with yourself.

Determination to achieve your goal, persistence in continuing to educate yourself, and patience with the process are they keys to success. Never give up, never stop working, and never stop believing. There will be roadblocks, hurdles, washouts, and obstacles you can't predict. All of these can be overcome if you are patient with yourself and allow yourself to adapt.

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Gilbert, Elizabeth: *Your elusive creative genius*. TED Talk. February 2009.

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



Study Tips from a Semi-Anonymous Friend

Genius Genes

There is nothing more that The Study Dude wants for you than to know that no gene for genius exists. You've got the same green-light for egg-headedness as Galileo.

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 tickles the backside of the book *The Straight-A Conspiracy: Your Secret Guide to Ending the Stress of School*. No-one is born a genius, but we've all got the grit to go Einstein. First, make your schoolwork automatic, and, second, don't multitask: two-step your way to brilliance resilience.

Do Math Like You Wolf Pizza: Automatically

Have you ever seen a ballerina and thought to yourself, "It looks so easy?"

Or have you ever seen a martial artist and thought, "I can do that!"

Well, without hours of work, you can't. Not until you make it automatic.

At university, when I solved math-problems, sometimes I'd baffle at why an answer was negative and not positive. I'd even ask myself dumb questions like "Does a positive times a positive sometimes equal a negative?" Duh!

So, I'd break the question down into its simplest terms, sometimes explaining concepts to myself as if I were five-years old. Hours passed. And suddenly, the simplest answer would dawn on me: aha!

And I had the highest grade in the class.

Even more embarrassing, a classmate told me he had the same dumb question. So, I gave him my solution—one fitted for a five-year-old. He got it! But, he mocked me, even ridiculed me: I could have brushed my teeth in his snorting froth. But, come exam time, he forgot my tip and flubbed up.

In sum, a seamless pirouette takes serious work.

Maats and O'Brien explain how to hone automaticity:

- The more you work at some task, the more "myelin" you get; more myelin means faster neural signals. Thick myelin helps you solve tasks faster than you can maul steak during a vegan diet blackout.
- The more you practice, the faster you get.
- One short song on the radio takes weeks of work and a lifetime of practice. Genius stems from diligence.
- Edison took an *existing* lightbulb and tried over ten-thousand filaments until he found a durable one. He then paid-off the press to paint him as the genius.
- Just because Ed's faster at electricity, doesn't mean you don't have the stuff. He just fondles more lightbulbs.
- If stuck, slow your pace and fix it. Look things up you get wrong right away. Correct before you move on. Pile up on extra resources, such as supplementary textbooks and solutions manuals.

Maniacs Multitask; You Focus

In grade nine, I watched the Smurfs while studying. Life was playful; school, fun. Grades higher than Rob Ford. They called me "brain"—to my secret delight.

But in grade eleven, the music raged so loudly the walls shook. And I fit in German lessons between all night *Axis and Allies* and *Dungeon and Dragons* games.

Life sucked; my grades tanked. And due to rushed grooming, an eyebrow disappeared.

But by university, the room hushed to the moan of a ventilator and scribbles of a pencil. My math grades popped to the top of the class. I was now *da dude ... da chit*.

What did it take to turn me around? Focus.

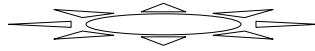
Hunter Maats and Katie O'Brien show you the A+ magic of focus:

- You can't multitask without your attention worsening for each task.
- Multitasking leads to stress.
- Our attention can only focus on one thing at a time.
- Multitasking doubles your errors while upping the time to finish your task.
- Like a computer briefly freezing while running three programs, your brain slows when multitasking.
- Focus on only one task at a time. Automatic tasks such as chewing gum, you can do. But anything that takes focus, single it out.
- Look up words you don't know.
- Break down problems into little pieces. Tackle each one.
- Edison dreamed lightbulbs. What dream's got your focus?

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.

References

Stone, Douglas, & Heen, Sheila. (2014). *Thanks for the Feedback*. NY: Penguin Books.



Music Review North Easton

Samantha Stevens



Musician: North Easton

Album: *One of the Lucky Ones*

Canadian music legend, North Easton, is gearing up for the release of his debut solo album, *One of the Lucky Ones*, on October 15th. For fans of Dave Matthews, Phil Collins, Counting Crows, and Cat Stevens, North's album should not be missed. Full of folk-rock and country sounds, North's music is progressive, lighthearted, and meaningful. However, his lyrics are down-to-earth, and his melodies soft and inspired.

Originally from Vancouver Island, this incredibly accomplished musician now lives in Rockland, Ontario. North is most known for his work with the bands Garrity and My Favourite Tragedy. His past work has been recognized with many awards including Indie Album of the year 2001 and the Song of the Year.com's 2013 Winner in the Country Category, "Stuck on the Stairs." North was also "a finalist in the 2015 International

Songwriting Competition" (<http://www.northeaston.ca>) for his song "Love Like That," which is on this album.

North has played with Great Big Sea, 54-40, I Mother Earth, and has performed on TV shows like Canada A.M., Breakfast Television, Rogers Daytime and The Mike Bullard Show. His track, "Texting Song", was also featured in Twentieth Century Fox's Animated Hit Series, American Dad. In addition to all of these accomplishments, North Easton is the owner of Rockland Music, a place where aspiring musicians can learn to write music, sing, or play the guitar or piano. And he is also the Regional Coordinator of the Songwriters Association of Canada, Ottawa Chapter (<http://www.rbtne.com>).

Three of the songs on *One of the Lucky Ones*, "Love Like That," "Live My Life," and "My Way Home", were co-written with well known Canadian singer/songwriter Rosanne Baker Thornley. The title track of the album "One Of The Lucky Ones" is inspired by Jonathan Pitre and Jeff Scott. About these people and the inspiration behind the track, North said "after meeting incredible people like Jonathan Pitre (the butterfly child) and Jeff Scott (quadriplegic and founder of the Live It Love It Foundation) and hearing them speak about life and how great it can be, well, if you listen to your heart, if you look at the road you are on, you will probably see that you are also one of the lucky ones" (<http://skylarentertainment.ca/newsroom/north-easton-cd/>).

"Change" is the single from *One of the Lucky Ones*, and was produced by Jay Lefebvre. "Change" is a song that marks the recent life changes that North made, especially in regard to the create of his debut album. The video

for the track is a detailed story and, at times, humorous. Shot in Ottawa and the Thousand Islands, North directed the video, along with Karim Ayari who also did the editing. Check out the video [here](#).

On the album, North also deviated from the typical guitar sound of the folk genre, adding other instruments to some songs to enhance their musical impact. The track "Life" features a live recording of a grand piano, and "One More For The Road" includes the violin and upright bass. This means that the album is full of songs that can be listened to from start to end or individually. However, by listening to the tracks consecutively, North's message and philosophy about life can be fully appreciated.

Fans of the folk genre will appreciate the laid-back guitar and steady earthy drum beats that flow throughout the album. For example, the track "Unstoppable" is an upbeat song with inspiring lyrics about personal strength and hard work. There is a twangy country feel to the song, especially in the lyrics, but for those who aren't fond of country music, "Unstoppable" still holds some charms.

Then there is the quirky "When the Night is Young." The tones are joyous and the feel of the track is one of apprehensive excitement, much like that of a new love. The beat is steady and fun, and listeners will probably find themselves clapping along and swaying to the infectious rhythm.

The final track that I'll mention is the lulling love ballad "Here Tonight." The song is slower than the others, romantic, and simply beautiful. The slowly crescendoing string accompaniment adds layers to this complex song, but it never overpowers North's soft vocals. The sporadic piano playing in the background adds another interesting layer that helps to end the song on a dramatic note, rather than the soft tones and melodies fading away after the final verse.

The album release party is scheduled for October 15th at Saint Brigids Centre for the Arts in Ottawa. Then on October 20th, North will begin his fall tour across Canada. Dates and locations can be found on his [website](#).

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

Women Of Interest

Ruth Handler was born November 4, 1916, in Denver, Colorado and passed away April 27, 2002. Handler was cofounder of the Mattel Toy Company. In 1959 she invented the one and only "Barbie" doll. This invention came as Handler observed her daughter playing with paper dolls. She wanted a more realistic doll for her daughter and other young girls that they could relate to. On a family trip to Europe, Handler saw a Lilli doll, which was an adult gag gift. She purchased the doll and reworked it, resulting in the creation of the first Barbie. Barbie was named after Ruth's daughter Barbara. In spite of the skepticism of Ruth's husband and the cofounder of Mattel, who said that parents would never buy their daughters a doll such as this, Ruth persevered. The Barbie doll was revealed at the New York Toy Fair. Toy critics, were shocked as they had never seen anything quite like the three dimension "Barbie" doll, breasts and all! The subsequent popularity of the doll proved all the doubters wrong and the "Barbie" doll continues to be the most popular doll in the world. In 1997 Ruth Handler was inducted into the Junior Achievement U.S. Business Hall of Fame.

Additional information on Ruth Handler is available at the following websites:

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

<http://www.women-inventors.com/Ruth-Handler.asp>

http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Ruth_Handler.aspx

<http://www.thebarbiecollection.com/collecting/barbie-fashion-icon>

compiled by Barb Godin



Hug a Farmer

Harvest 2016 is now officially a shit-show. A couple of weeks ago we got one and a half inches of rain. That in itself is not a good thing when the ideal condition for combining fields of grain is hot, dry weather. An extended run of several days of sunny, frost-free, dew-free weather allows farmers to run their equipment without breakdowns. It also ensures the grain is dry before it's stored away in grain bins or hauled to an elevator. If it is not dry, a stinky, mouldy mess and financial loss will result.

Then, cue the white stuff. Last weekend we got three and a half inches of snow. We still have about three hundred and fifty acres to harvest. The ten-day forecast doesn't look great. The temperature last year was in the mid twenties; now, that's great harvest weather. If crops remain standing or in swaths on the ground over winter, it may be catastrophic for some farmers. Not only does the quality, grade, and price drop---if anyone will buy it at all, but mouse droppings further contaminate it. However, the bills for fuel, crop inputs, loan payments, living expenses will still be due.

If like us, farmers have crop insurance, typically you're required to combine your devastated field so an adjuster can then measure your yield and pay a claim based on the shortfall and your coverage level. If we don't get a fall miracle and the crops remain un-harvested until spring, it will be April or May before a person can try combining. Insurance companies aren't known for their blinding speed.

That scenario also means the dropped straw needs to be baled and the bales hauled away. Many farmers also do at least some minimal cultivation to prepare for the next crop. If all this autumn work happens in spring, the 2017 planting will be delayed setting up potential problems for next fall. A Canadian growing season is only so long; Mother Nature isn't responsible if we don't do our part in good time.

Is this situation going to lead to more gambling, domestic abuse, bankruptcy, alcoholism? The sorts of lumpy social problems under the quilt called 'better times.' I think there is far more of this happening behind closed doors than any

of us know. It's easier to paper over the problems when the money is flowing in the oil industry, in the agricultural sector, when people are employed, and the economy is humming.

I just know, from life experience, that it's a lot easier to be hopeful and positive, to keep the faith when there aren't any serious challenges to our homeostasis and happy little lives. These are the times that challenge our resourcefulness, our mettle, our mental toughness. These are the times that separate the men from the boys, the women from the girls. This is also the time to hug a farmer, 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

Uncomfortable Circumstances

Dear Barb:

My girlfriend and I have been together two years. We get along great and have a lot of fun together. I thought I wanted to spend my life with her, but I'm having second thoughts. We're in our late twenties and, I get we both have a past, but I thought we'd discussed anything that would impact our relationship. Recently I discovered some disturbing details though. My girlfriend and her friend had a falling out and as a result the friend told me that my girlfriend had done adult movies in her past. I thought this friend was just angry and making it up, but I couldn't get it out of my head, until finally I asked my girlfriend about it. At first she tried to avoid answering, but eventually admitted that she had made a few back when she was in university because she needed the money. I was devastated! She said she didn't tell me because she was embarrassed and felt awful that she had done these movies and she didn't think I would find out. Now I have all these thoughts running through my head, like what if somebody I know, or in my family, see these movies, or maybe they already have? And I wonder what else she has done that she hasn't told me about. Don't you think this is a significant thing to keep secret from someone you have been in a relationship with for two years? I'm just not sure if I can move on from this. I would appreciate any input you can offer. Thanks, Eric.

Hey Eric:

It's an unfortunate situation. Often people do stupid things when they are young and don't realize the consequences could last a life time. Eric, you are the only one that can decide whether you can live with the fact that your girlfriend did these movies, and the possibility that someone you know may see them. Do you feel she is hiding other things from you? If you don't have trust you really can't have a successful relationship. But put yourself in her position and you can probably see why she wouldn't want to tell you about it, although I do think she should have. Honesty is always the best policy. Ultimately you have to do what you feel is right and what you can live with. Thanks for your letter Eric.

Dear Barb:

I have a small dog that I have been trying to board and she hates it. She won't eat while there and just pines away for me and my husband. This is really limiting our lifestyle and I don't know what to do. Fortunately, the dog sitter is really patient with her, but I worry about her all the time while I'm gone. I have only brought her there twice and I don't know whether I should try someone else, or just forget about the possibility of boarding her? Confused Carol.

Hi Carol:

Have you discussed this with your vet? She/he may be able to give you some medication that will relax your dog and relieve her anxiety while she gets to know the sitter and begins to feel comfortable there. Also I think you should continue to bring her for short visits, so she comes to realize that you are going to come back and not leave her there. Some dogs, like people, do not adjust readily to new situations, so give her time. Good luck Carol.

Follow Barb on Twitter @BarbGod

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.

Well . . . there's the dream of the giant darbuka.

I press my ear against it and hear sounds.

There's music. The loveliest music! With a little tiny voice in it.

I try so hard to hear what it says, but I can't.

And then there's the dream of the children who fall from a hole in the sky and land on a beach.

As soon as they hit earth they start building sandcastles and never look back up at the sky again.

And then there's the dream of the well descending into the earth and ending in white space . . .

What?!

I've heard enough! You're too far gone. I can't help you. Get out.

Did you think they'd leave your sick sense of humour out of my program?

Oh! Whew! Guess it's not so fun to be on the receiving end, haha—

MEERP!!!

ALL CREW TO THE MAIN DECK!

9

The Doppelgänger Cure, by Wanda Waterman



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.

Nursing Program Advocacy

For anyone who has not heard, AUSU has been working tirelessly over the past nine months to advocate on behalf of our members against the retroactive program changes that AU made to the Nursing program.

The advocacy efforts have been led by our AUSU President, Shawna Wasylyshyn, who has had numerous meetings about these changes with the AU President & VP's, the AU Board of Governors, Faculty of Health Disciplines Faculty Council, among others. AUSU also wrote letters to the Nursing Education Program Approval Board, the interim Chair of the AU Board of Governors and to AU's interim President, as well as submitted numerous requests for information under the FOIP act hoping to gain an understanding of what AU did to properly implement the changes they made, their motivation, and how many students were effected. AUSU also notified AU that our next step would be to implement a judicial review. This has been the biggest advocacy effort in recent AUSU history.

We are pleased to announce that we have made some progress! Although we are not done our work yet, the Faculty of Health Disciplines Faculty Council just passed two motions to address the concerns that have been raised, which is good news for Nursing students!

Read about this in our October Executive Blog [here](#)!



IMPORTANT DATES

- **Oct 15:** November degree requirements deadline
- **Oct 30:** November course extension deadline
- **Nov 3:** [AU Open House Webinar](#)
- **Nov 8:** [AUSU Council Meeting](#) (tentative)
- **Nov 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Dec 1](#)
- **Nov 15:** December degree requirements deadline
- **Nov 30:** December course extension deadline

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at
Athabasca University**



Fill out a Course Evaluation!

Have you completed an AU course in the past year?

If so, fill out an **AUSU Course Evaluation** online [here](#)!

These evaluations are different than the ones sent out by AU, as ours are available anytime, even after your course is complete. In addition, although your responses are confidential, you can view the course evaluation results as well. The more evaluations we receive, the more useful this information is to AU students!



CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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