

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 24 Issue 47 2016-12-09

Mixed Messages

Questions in AU's Institutional Plan

COPPULating at the Library

An excuse for Social Intercourse

The Study Dude

Presenting the Mentor

Plus:

Step Aside for Self-Care

AU-Thentic Events

and much more!



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



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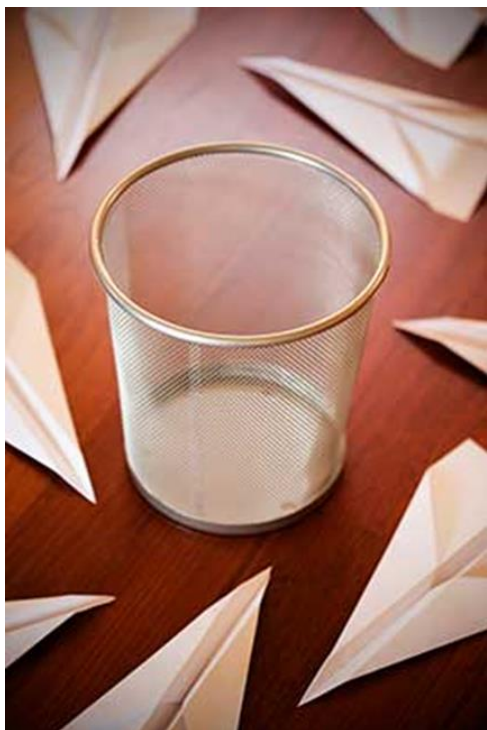
Hey! Did you know the Voice Magazine has a [Facebook page](#)?

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

EDITORIAL

Sustaining the Narrative

Karl Low



Athabasca University's Comprehensive Institutional Plan has been released, and *The Voice Magazine* has a look at it from the student's point of view, with Carla Knipe's feature article this week, "Mixed Messages."

As you can probably tell from the title, the plan is not all roses, as Athabasca University faces some significant challenges, including financial insolvency. Now, that sounds like a scary couple of words, but should it come to pass (which is not a certainty by any means, especially given the politics of that happening) it still does not mean that AU would immediately close up shop. Banks would probably continue to extend AU credit for some time even after financial insolvency, so tutors would get paid, courses would continue to be offered, etc, based simply on the idea that it is unlikely that the government will allow a university to fail completely.

However, there are several ideas in the report for how AU can get out of this situation, and there is still a government mandated third party review that Athabasca University has to undertake, which may come up with even more solutions.

Also in this issue, Barb Lehtiniemi loses her COPPUL virginity in the article "COPPULating at the Library." And while it makes for great click-bait, the article is also worth it because joining the COPPUL program is something that every student should at least consider, if for no other reason than to be able to take a tour of the nearest university's library. I've always found it a bit awe-inspiring when you're in the back stacks of a library looking at original manuscripts and books that existed before our country did. Plus, it certainly doesn't hurt to be able to casually drop to your tutor the lengths you were willing to go to for one small section of your bibliography.

And if you're feeling stressed this Christmas Season, Deanna Roney has one possible reason, and the solution, in her article "Step Aside for Self-Care." It probably won't make you stress free, but her advice, given how the world seems to be turning lately, might be able to take the edge off.

I'm also going to make special mention of The Study Dude this issue. More directed at graduate students and those getting ready for their thesis, it also contains some decent tips for business presentations, and a look into one of those times where we can learn from the failures of the Dude.

Plus, we have student looks at what's going on in the world of science, post-secondary education, AU social media, a new scholarship of the week, and what should be our last double-long AU-Thentic Events, so that you can find what special events AU is hosting near you or online. After the Christmas break, the pace of events tones down a bit. But speaking of Christmas, this is also a good time to point out that there are only two weeks left for *The Voice Magazine* this year. So, if you want to get your nominations in for the annual Best Of issue, now is the time to do it. Send your selections to karl@voicemagazine.org and be watching for our first issue in January to see what made the cut.

Enjoy the read!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karl'.

A Mixed Message AU's Comprehensive Institutional Plan

Carla Knipe



On November 25th, the Board of Governors at Athabasca University released its latest Comprehensive Institutional Plan (CIP). This document will guide the direction of the university for the next three years and clarifies its vision for long term sustainability. It outlines the strengths of AU but also provides a picture of the current and future challenges that it will need to overcome. Its release comes shortly after the appointment of new AU president Dr. Neil Fassina. Generally optimistic in tone, the report outlines some serious concerns and some possible solutions, but it remains to be seen what will come of it.

AU is unique among Canadian universities because it was the first institution in Canada to provide instruction solely by an open and distance format. AU strives to live up to its original mandate, which is to remove barriers to undergraduate and graduate education. In its model, it seeks to encompass students who are impeded from obtaining post-secondary education by disabilities, geographic location, or other obstacles. The report notes that AU has become a leader in reaching out to Canadian indigenous communities and takes pride in having a high quality of academic research as it embraces innovation and new ideas. The report also notes that AU is very responsive to adapting to a learning landscape that is evolving and changing quickly.

But despite these self-congratulatory pats on the back, a very real concern for the university's long term sustainability remains. The report cautions that AU is headed toward financial insolvency in the next three years if changes are not made. This is due to several interconnecting factors.

The report provides details of the 2016 budget which caused ripples of alarm through the AU community and beyond. It outlines what led up to the most recent troubled financial situation. "AU was prepared to submit a 2016-17 budget in accordance with the usual schedule before the end of fiscal 2015-16 but was asked by government not to do so because of circumstances prevailing at the time. At that time, AU projected a deficit budget of \$2.4 million and [Alberta's Advanced Education] Minister Schmidt was reflecting on his response to growing concern and controversy about AU's sustainability, documented in the report of the Presidential Task Force on Sustainability, submitted to the ministry on June 1, 2015. In his letter of March 22, 2016, the minister outlined his response and directed a third-party assisted review of the university's sustainability within the context of certain parameters outlined in that correspondence."

AU's largest strength, which is operating without a physical campus (although it has an operations headquarters based in the town of Athabasca as well as secondary offices in Calgary and Edmonton), also leaves it at a huge disadvantage compared to other post-secondary institutions.

The report notes that the largest expense for AU, in the absence of a bricks and mortar campus, comprises staff and faculty wages and benefits. AU's distance learning model and lack of campus means that it is unable to

raise revenue through ancillary means, such as renting out student housing during the off-season or hosting conferences and sports tournaments. The primary way that AU raises revenue is through student tuition and fees, but even this is constrained by external factors. AU's reliance on student tuition has increased from approximately 17% of its operating costs to 61% over the past 30 years. AU cannot, however, increase tuition and fees since they are regulated by the provincial government and have been frozen for two years.

A larger concern regarding AU's financial future, however, is that the current funding model for post-secondary education in Alberta only provides government funding for Alberta-based students. This affects AU more than other post-secondary institutions because the greatest proportion of its student body is based outside Alberta. The Alberta provincial government has not changed its policy to address the current inequitable funding framework. The report summarizes its situation in saying that "there are significant cost pressures for AU. In the 2017-18 and 2018-19 fiscal years, AU is projecting escalating deficits of \$6.8 million and \$9.1 million respectively." These numbers are alarming, and are mainly attributable to the Alberta Advanced Education Ministry's request that there be no job losses in the quest to balance AU's books, a condition which prohibits the implementation of strategic changes that would result in long-term sustainability.

To make a long story short, the report says that "given these constraints, AU will be financially insolvent by 2017-18."

This is a dire prediction, and while there is an underlying feeling within the report of "don't panic", reading this statement generates huge cause for alarm. So, what can Athabasca University do to make sure this prediction doesn't come true?

Financial insolvency is a last resort. The report outlines several recommendations and strategic plans to prevent this happening. One possible route through the budget muddle is to increase tuition, especially for out of province or graduate students. However, AU admits that it is hesitant to do this because of fears that students will simply choose to study elsewhere, especially now that several other Canadian universities are expanding their online-based course and program offerings that compete with AU. Another option is that it can choose to offer a greater variety of courses and programs, especially at the more profitable graduate level. Or, it can seek to forge new partnerships with both the private sector and government agencies to attract more learners. But AU is also calling on the Alberta government to fund the deficit and allow more time to explore the external sustainability review. The preferred option is for the Alberta government to modify the way it funds post-secondary education in the province, so that AU isn't penalized.

Despite these dire warnings, the report emphasizes optimism. It frequently uses terms like "growth" and "vision." It cites AU's successes such as the recent addition of the Business of Hockey Institute and revamping its Business and Management programs. The report also mentions the development of Master of Science in Environmental Science and the Doctor of Philosophy in Computing and Information Systems as a priority for the near future. AU asserts that it seeks to build on its reputation as a centre of research excellence and its history of innovative learning to take it into the future. However, this will not be an easy task when the general climate for post-secondary education is increasingly competitive, both in Canada and in Alberta. AU is the plucky underdog among post-secondary schools. It has weathered many bouts of economic hardship since it was created in 1970 and responded to changes in the post-secondary environment; evolving to serve a real need among its students and serving those who are what it calls "dispersed learners": those who are often unable to pursue their education by other means. AU emphasizes that it will continue to develop and renew partnerships with corporations, professional associations, and other entities that promote and facilitate access to learning.

The report asserts that AU's online learning platform, coupled with its flexible learning timetables, are well-suited to meeting to the needs of this adult learner population.

But this brings it all back to AU students. A major point of criticism toward the Board of Governors and AU Administration is that since the news emerged of AU's financial difficulties, there has been minimal forthright communication and consultation first with its current student body. This report was released quietly and if students did not know where to look, it is likely that they wouldn't even know it exists. Students of Athabasca University often hear about AU-related news through external news sites rather than an internal source. Several of these news reports have been critical of AU and have predicted that its demise was imminent. This report, while it has given students an insight into the issues of AU, does not give reassurance that their university is not threatened by closure. Students will end up feeling vulnerable rather than reassured, unless they are involved in having a say in what happens.

The Voice contacted the Alberta Education Ministry for a statement regarding this report, but as of press time, Minister Marlin Schmidt has not yet responded. The Voice also contacted AUSU and President Shawna Wasylyshyn, who gave following statement: "Overall, AUSU supported the plan. Like all AU stakeholders, we are concerned about AU sustainability. While AU's financial problems have yet to be solved, I was pleased to see that the CIP didn't propose cuts to student services or dramatic increases in fees for out-of-province tuition [that were] proposed in [an] attempt to reduce the deficit. I would rather see a financial picture laid out that shows what funding AU will need in order to continue to offer current programs and services to students; I believe that is what this CIP does. The big question remains - what will the Alberta Government do? We have received assurance and commitment from the Minister of Advanced Education but so far, there hasn't been any money behind it."

In the three year term that this capital plan encompasses, It will be up to Dr. Fassina, in conjunction with the Board of Governors, to decide what direction that AU will take. But they would be wise to keep in mind that if students are indeed at the heart of AU, because they provide the main revenue to keep it going—as this report recognizes—then the very least the administration can do is give students a bit more openness in reporting to them what is going on.

The full report can be found at <http://www.athabascau.ca/aboutau/documents/cip/2016-19.pdf> and if students have any questions or concerns, they are invited to contact AUSU.

Carla Knipe is completing her BA in English. She can be reached on Twitter @LunchBuster.



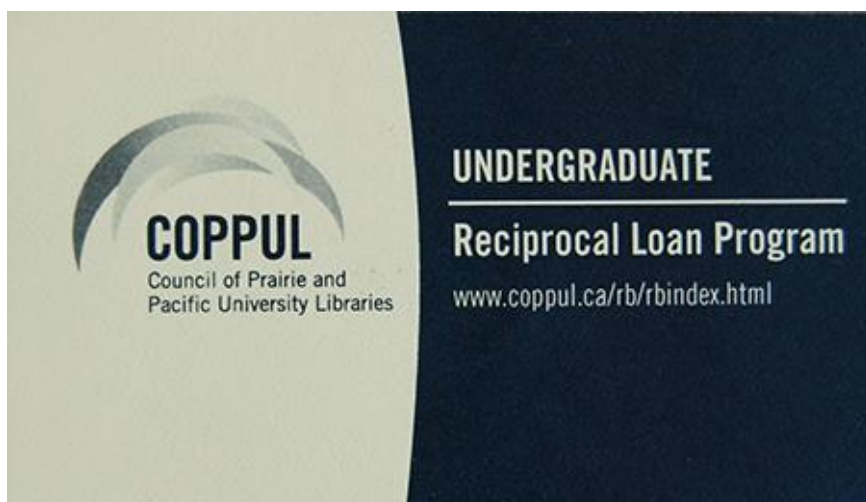
From the PSE News Desk

What's making the news in Post-Secondary Education.

Mindfulness 101. Universities across Canada are putting meditation and mindfulness on the curriculum. According to a recent Maclean's article, Universities are teaching meditation to help students control stress. Across Canada, university campuses are offering classes, drop-in sessions, and apps designed to help students reduce their stress levels. In the east, for example, the University of PEI offers an 8-week "mindfulness-based stress management course", while in the west, Simon Fraser University offers the Sonic Cradle, a sensory-reduced environment that students find so calming it's hard to get them to leave. AU students can check out mindfulness resources from AUSU's Student Lifeline service.

COPPULating at the Library

Barbara Lehtiniemi



There must be something about working with books that makes library staff happy. Every time I interact with anyone who works in a library—whether it's a public or an academic library—it's a pleasant experience.

I took my COPPUL card out for a test run recently. A COPPUL card is a reciprocal borrowing card that allows limited borrowing privileges at participating academic libraries. AU students can request a COPPUL card from the AU library,

then use it to borrow materials from participating university libraries across the country.

Getting my COPPUL card was easy. I sent an e-mail to the AU Library (library@athabascau.ca) and they mailed a card to me the same day. Along with the card, I received information on using the card and a list of participating Canadian universities.

There are at least half a dozen university campuses within a 150-kilometre radius of my home. I chose the closest, Carleton University. At over 100 kilometres away, it's still a hike to get there, but I'm familiar with the campus—a huge advantage. And, importantly, they had the book I wanted for a research project.

Armed with my COPPUL card and the call number of the book, I approached the Help Desk at Carleton's MacOdrum Library. I was expecting a bit of a hassle. What if they weren't familiar with COPPUL cards? Probably they don't see them every day, right?

No worries, the Help Desk person knew about COPPUL cards. But he didn't know how to process one. He looked it up in his manual, but it didn't explain what to do. No problem—he called another staff member over.

Now with two staff members on the job, they determined they would have to issue me a Carleton University library card. All they needed was my COPPUL card and my AU student ID. Okay, that's a problem. I've never applied for an AU student card. After explaining that many AU students don't have a student card because they are primarily distance students, the Carleton library staff said they would accept my driver's licence as photo ID to go along with the COPPUL card. I filled out a short form with my name, address, and contact information, and minutes later I had a Carleton University library card.

Since they were so helpful—it was a Help Desk, after all—I asked where I could find the book I wanted. After looking at the call number, they told me the book was on the fourth floor. Just then another library staff member walked by and offered to take me there herself.

Minutes later I was escorted directly to the book I came to borrow, and then escorted back to the Help Desk to check out the book. The whole process took less than fifteen minutes. Now that I have a Carleton U Library card, my next visit will be even quicker (and Carleton's MacOdrum Library is open 24 hours a day!)

While I usually can find the research materials I need at or through the AU Library, it's reassuring to know I have almost unlimited resources available to me through the COPPUL card. Getting it, and using it, turned out to be easy and effective, plus, it let me engage in social intercourse with some really pleasant people.

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



Step Aside for Self-Care

Deanna Roney



Social media today can be a toxic environment. Between the chaos in the United States, and the controversy over the recent events at UBC there is a slough of negativity. Within this, my writing took a step backwards. I made mistakes that I know better than to make, and I found myself silenced. These situations are important, and I don't intend to detract from that. But they can be overwhelming. They are both things that we should educate ourselves on and take a stand on if we feel able, but we also need to give ourselves permission to step away.

Negativity and fear can be overwhelming. It can cause us to question the work we are doing, and "if it really matters" in the larger scope of things. While we should never become an ostrich and stick our head in the sand for all time, it is okay to step away. It is okay to make our media feed positive, and it is okay to mute and unfollow someone who you admire but whose recent tweets may be stifling you.

We need to be able to practice self-care. If we are constantly bombarded by feeds that are attacking people for taking a stand—how will we take a stand when it is our time? I found myself overwhelmed by the mass of people talking about Trump and UBC. I generally use twitter to stay on top of the publishing world and to find community with writers. My routine in the morning is coffee and twitter, did I miss anything? A publishing announcement? A webinar that may interest me? A new agent in the field? But lately, instead of seeing that, what I saw was Trump, racism, sexism, and personal attacks. I saw attacks on writers I admire, and I lost heart. I found the discussions on UBC enlightening, and I tried to understand the perspectives from the side of those who wrote the infamous letter as well as those who felt attacked by it. And the many who showered people they once admired with hatred.

It is too easy on social media to bully and abuse others from the relative safety of "home", hidden behind the computer screen. These made me, subconsciously, second guess my own work. Is what I am writing important enough in today's world? Does it have a place within the chaos that is taking over? Each paragraph, each sentence, everything I wrote felt dry and forced.

But then something changed. I made a choice to change what I saw in the morning. I took the time to go through my feed and update my preferences. Some I have followed for years have been muted, possibly

temporarily. I have searched for other writers who encourage discussion over hate. Writers who are open to understanding the other side. These conversations are important, and these are the ones we can learn from. I also took the time to remove Trump as much as possible from my feed. There is a time to understand what is happening in the US but first thing in the morning is not it; not for me.

Since doing this, since making the conscious choice to make my feed what it was intended for. I have found my voice again. My words have flowed more easily. And while I may still wonder if my writing has a place in the world, this is a fear that all writers face. But this fear won't stop me, and it won't silence me.

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

Women of Interest

Mary Eileen Travis was born on March 16, 1931, in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, and died on December 21, 2005, in Rothsay, New Brunswick. In 1983 Travis became the first woman to head the Saint John Board of Trade. After receiving her Bachelor of Arts degree and her Library Science degree at McGill University, Travis received many awards. Her career began as head Librarian of the Children's department at Saint John's Free Public Library.

In 1969 she moved on to become a Regional Librarian where she remained until her retirement. Following the death of her husband in a plane crash Travis became a role model for single women. Some outstanding honors Travis received include Saint John's Woman of the Year in 1972 as well as recipient of the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal in 1977. Also, Travis assisted in establishing the Hestia House Women's Shelter. Ultimately in 2005 Mary Travis became a member of the Order of Canada.

Additional information about this notable woman can be found at the following websites:

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

http://hlwiki.slais.ubc.ca/index.php/Archivists_%26_Librarians_-_Officers_of_the_Order_of_Canada

compiled by Barb Godin

Student Sizzle AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

AthaU Facebook Group

Alysha expresses frustration at DVDs for ANTH 275 that skip over damaged parts. Miranda is taking her first 400-level course and wonders how different it will be from a 300-level course. Erica seeks input on how many courses to take at one time.

Other posts include program changes, volunteers to user-test AU course listing, application to graduate, and courses ANTH 272, CRJS 352, and IDRL 215.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "Please take notice of the upcoming #AthaU holiday closures. <http://ow.ly/H540306RQqJ>."

@AthabascaUSU (AUSU) tweets: "Find out all about our AUSU Executive's adventures in Ottawa for CASA Advocacy week! <http://bit.ly/2gQYC0E>."

Youtube

Student stress ramping up this time of year? Watch How to Deal with Student Burnout by Thomas Frank (aka College Info Geek.)



The Creative Spark

Everything is One

Marie Well



Did you ever playfully mimic someone?

Well, a crazed philosopher once said that when a person he loves dies, he becomes them. For a week. It sounds morbid, but divine.

So, how do you become someone? Look to Christian Bale: the ultimate chameleon. An actor who morphs into almost anyone. Through character acting, these actors discover themselves; they shock themselves; they horrify themselves. For your viewing pleasure. And the best actors post underpants shots of themselves on Yahoo – metaphorically speaking. In other words, the best actors bare their innermost scars and darkest layers, not their bellies.

And you can act out the inner workings of your subjects, too: in your essays. Turn boredom into A+ directing.

Why? Because in your writing if you feel something, your professor does, too. Even better, you will humanize every subject or object cited in your essay. (Yes, personify your objects.)

Judith Weston in her book *The Film Director's Intuition: Script Analysis and Rehearsal Techniques* pours the secrets of great acting (which I've bolded below). I add lemon twists to her cocktails to give you a student edge.

Chatterboxes that reveal themselves, entertain. Chatterboxes that don't, bore. Put yourself in every subject or author cited in your essay. Reveal a bit of your soul (but not in first person.) If you *imply* your deepest secrets, your essay excites — like an epic shush.

People identify with your work when you make it personal. Sprinkle your life's highlights in presentations. People will identify.

Also, sprinkle your personal views in essays. To do so, insert one-sentence paragraphs that sum-up your views (and that sum-up your argument). But, again, don't use first person.

Create characters from your own darker emotions. Call on your darker emotions to write something that shocks, scares, or embarrasses you. Add psycho to your essay.

And sometimes you disagree with a view in your essay. If you do, then call on your inner turmoil to add complexity to the conflict. But make sure your point pushes forward your thesis. Or tweak your thesis to capture the subtleties of your difference of opinion. But make sure to support your opinion. Without support, your opinion will seem weak.

And if you don't even agree with your own thesis, then make your life a metaphor.

Make your life a metaphor (for acting). When you write about a subject—even an object—make your life a metaphor for their views. If your subject ruthlessly ruled Russia, then imagine the time you tormented your kid brother. Empathize.

If an author you cite thinks universities suppress free speech, then imagine the time your teacher sent you home crying in a crop top. Make your life a metaphor.

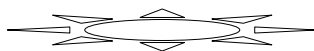
We may have more than one emotion to an event. Sometimes you feel ambivalence: conflicting emotions over your subject. You might feel pride over Putin's power, but also feel cowardly. Capture that ambivalence, but make sure at least one of the emotions advances your thesis. And call the duality "ambivalence" that is either reconcilable or irreconcilable. Your prof will scream, "A+!"

Listen to each actor. Don't make up your mind on your thesis statement until you've done the research. Identify with each authors' views—and then react. Sometimes you have tons of support for a certain view, but your gut disagrees. Then, either defend the minority view or conform with the majority. Either way, you're the star.

Never judge. Be curious about the life story instead. When citing authors, don't judge their views. Instead, peer at their research interests online. Shoot them an email and ask what sparked their interest in the topic. Peer at their LinkedIn profiles. You're not creepy; you're curious.

You'll expand your network, too. Want to work at McGill? Well—you made a contact.

Everything is one, isn't it? Become the subjects and objects you cite—and come closer to the divine. A paradox? I call it a Creative Spark.



Canadian Science News

Scott Jacobsen



Dinosaur Killing Asteroid Impact Crater Drilled Into

According to Science (AAAS), scientists have been drilling into the crater that was caused by an asteroid impact near the Yucatán Peninsula in Mexico, which killed the dinosaurs 66 million year ago.

It is called the Chicxulub crater and the scientists on the expedition published their results showing that "granite rocks from deep in the crust [were] placed "'out of order'" on top of sedimentary rocks."

Based on the expert analysis, it "validates the dynamic collapse theory of formation for Chicxulub's peak ring." Apparently, the crater is the only well-preserved one on Earth, but others exist in the solar system.

Scientist's have ire for Argentinian science budget

Nature reports that scientists are 'up in arms' over the recent cuts to the science budget within Argentina, where the core concern amounts to the potential for a brain drain from the country based on the lack of funding for the young scientists within the country.

Dora Barrancos, a gender issues researcher at National University of Quilmes in Buenos Aires, said, "Science in Argentina faces a critical situation...If young scientists do not have opportunities here, the brain drain is going to restart."

Argentinian President Mauricio Macri's government has made the proposition of a 32 billion pesos (CAD \$2.6 billion) reduction in the funding for science, which is a substantial amount of money, or "a fall of around 6% in real terms."

Newt Gingrich an unlikely potential saviour

Business Insider reports that Newt Gingrich, even amidst the recent surprise election of President-elect Donald Trump, might be a saviour for medical science and the practitioner and researchers thereof. Trump has not said much of medical research. He has made comments about the "terrible" National Institutes of Health in addition to 'flirting with anti-vaccine rhetoric', which Gingrich does not align with.

Gingrich, who is rumored to have a role in the new Trump administration, has long been a booster of medical research, as indicated by David Pugach, Vice President of Federal Relations at the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, who said, "Newt Gingrich has a strong track record on medical research. Knowing he is in the mix somewhere is certainly a positive."

Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: Flight Network Scholarship

Sponsored by: FlightNetwork.com

Deadline: December 31, 2016

Potential payout: \$1000

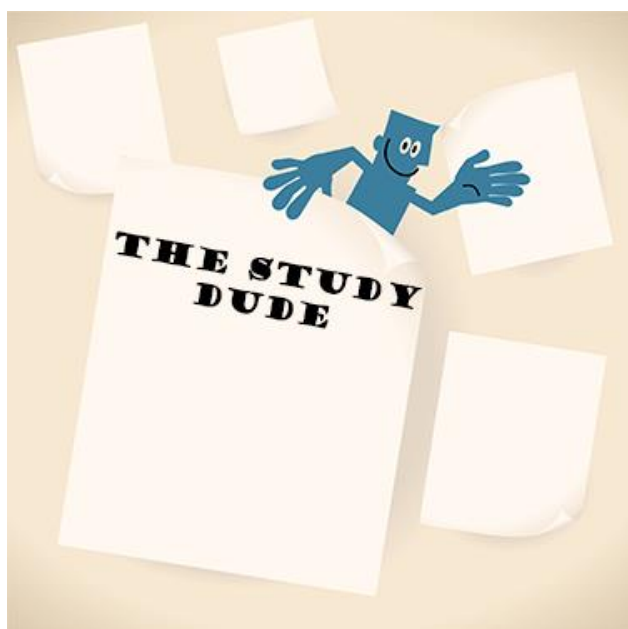
Eligibility restriction: Applicants must have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0.

What's required: A 500- to 1000-word essay about "a travel-related experience or topic" and a related photo.

Tips: Search the FlightNetwork [Blog page](#) for "scholarship" to find previous winning entries.

Where to get info: www.flightnetwork.com/pages/scholarship





Study Tips from a Semi-Anonymous Friend

Presenting the Mentor

There is nothing more that The Study Dude wants than for you to share your crazy ideas—but not with Mother.

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 looks at Peter J. Feibelman's book *A PhD Is Not Enough! A Guide to Survival in Science*. You need hero-mentors and top-notch presentation tools.

How to Sparkle with a PhD

We all need a mentor.

But, are you serious about a PhD and the tenure fantasy? Then, you need a mentor like you need blood.

I had two mentors: both of them professors. One, a lover of Mother Teresa. The other, Mother. Well, not really Mother. A kind of mother-in-law that disowns you and hunts you down.

Mother Teresa mentor acted as my supervisor, but her inexperience left me in limbo. This beloved mentor let me go because our progress was that of a Windows 10 upgrade—which no sane person wants.

The other mentor—Mother—loved and hated me. I loved and hated her, too. We fought. We competed. We performed psychological warfare on each other. But I dropped her (or she dropped me?) because our progress was that of a Windows 10 *automatic* upgrade—one you reboot, panicked, halfway through installation. A nightmare.

So, I stood alone in the MA program. My thesis sucked. The PhD dream faded. But, *one day*, I told myself, *I would rise again*. And choose a mentor wisely.

Peter J. Feibelman says without a mentor, tenure fades. On top of that, Feibelman shares more tricks on how to succeed beyond the PhD:

- You need “science survival skills” to make it through and beyond the PhD. A mentor is a requirement for most PhD students.
- After grad school, the clock starts ticking: sink or swim on your way to tenure. Fast.
- Present and publish your research. A must.
- No-one teaches you what research problems to choose. Unless you find a mentor, that is.
- Make sure your post-doc supervisor gives you assignments that you can reasonably finish in a short amount of time.

- In your field, read all the literature. Voraciously. Become an expert.
- Only collaborate with others when you both bring something unique. Doubled-up research jobs lead to jealousy.
- Choose a mentor who is not your supervisor or boss.
- Know the scientists you work with in the labs. Make connections.
- Avoid young thesis advisors. Jealousy may arise.
- Older advisors won't compete with you. Long in tooth, but not short in support.
- Make sure your supervisor can communicate with newbies, meet with you weekly, and teach you how to survive the PhD and beyond.

PhD Presentation? Ticket to Tenure

Did you ever know something so delicious, you couldn't wait to tell? (Gossip doesn't count.)

Well, did you ever think something so crazy you thought you could win a Nobel prize? I did. I went off a sedating medicine and the world grew magical—glorious. Every little movement of the world mystified me; I stumbled on what I later realized is called “motion parallax”: the trick of the eye where the streetlights seem to move faster than the distant mountains when you speed on by.

But I noticed so much more. I called my heightened awareness “The Garden of Eden.” And I ate from the *Tree of Knowledge*. So I spent every hard-earned penny of my scholarship on AV material: video cameras, still cameras, and audio devices; and I recorded tens of hours of crazy footage. Then I scheduled myself to present my findings—through multimedia—to the faculty. I invited the entire science department: one scientist plus five-or-so academics sat in the audience.

My time came to dazzle. But, at the get-go, the video projector stuttered. Thus, the crux of my argument—the video clips—went unwatched. Horrified, without even the words “Motion Parallax” to guide me, I stumbled on.

But the audience grew hostile. A professor shouted, “Mere trick photography.” Others barked, too, quizzing whether I had copyright permission to use the photos—my own photos. A flash on the screen lit up the room: the video projector started. Yet, the audience still resisted: *Did you get copyright permission for*

AU-thentic events

Upcoming AU Events

AUSU Council Meeting

Tuesday, December 13, 5:30 to 7:30pm MST
Telephone and online
Hosted by Athabasca University's Students' Union

<https://www.ausu.org/event/december-council-meeting-2/>

e-mail admin@ausu.org for meeting package and to register

BComm/CPA information session

Tuesday, December 13, 5:00 to 6:00 pm MST
Online

Hosted by Athabasca University's Faculty of Business

business.athabascau.ca/event-details/bcomm-cpa-information-session-3

register online at the above address

AU Faculty of Business Winnipeg Seasonal Cheer

Tuesday, December 13, 5:30 to 7:30pm CST
Alt Hotel Winnipeg, Violet Room, 310 Donald Street, Winnipeg, MB

In Person

Hosted by Athabasca University's Faculty of Business

business.athabascau.ca/event-details/au-faculty-of-business-winnipeg-seasonal-cheer-2

Register online at above address

AU Faculty of Business Calgary Seasonal Cheer

Tuesday, December 13, 5:30 to 7:30pm MST
Bank and Baron Pub, 125 8th Ave SW, Calgary, AB

In Person

Hosted by Athabasca University's Faculty of Business

business.athabascau.ca/event-details/au-faculty-of-business-calgary-seasonal-cheer-2

Register online at above address

the soundtrack? (I did.) And the scientist without background in motion parallax said science knew all that I revealed. You see, I'd lost my audience.

My great idea? Silenced. The moral? Learn how to work a projector. Better yet, learn the art of presentations.

Peter J. Feibelman shows you the craft:

- Get a theme for your presentation (like a thesis, but in language geared for a young teen).
- Say why your field rocks and what your field's biggest puzzles are.
- Give a historical sketch of your field.
- Reveal where your piece of the pie fits in the cake mould.
- Pretend your audience holds both know-it-alls and know-littles. Cater more to the know-littles.
- Leave the equations for your written thesis. Presentations get boring quick once you pull out an algorithm for cryptography or a T-Test for a multiple regression. (Yawning yet?) Avoid overly technical stuff. It's dull.
- Turn your presentation into a story. Add an inciting incident, a climax, and an ending.
- Show your excitement for your topic. If your topic bores you, why study it?
- Show confidence. Speak up.
- Fit in your best stuff before time runs out. Rehearse with timers.
- Don't bore with an outline of your speech. Feibelman asks, "Would you want an outline of a movie before the movie starts?" Nope. Add suspense.
- Don't list all your collaborators. Put them on a PowerPoint page, but don't read them aloud.
- Say what ignited your passion for the topic, or why researchers swarm to it, or why the public hungers for it. In other words, who cares for your topic and why?
- Avoid animations. Use lots of white space. Use large font.
- Feibelman says your presentation should use one cartoon, a couple of figures, and plain text. [I beg to differ. Most experts on presentations would argue for less text and more visuals. And put the omitted text in a handout at the very end.]

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

Feibelman, Peter J. *A PhD Is Not Enough! A Guide to Survival in Science*. New York: Basic Books. Jan. 11, 2011. Digital.

Even More Upcoming AU Events

AU Faculty of Business Edmonton Seasonal Cheer

Wednesday, December 14,
5:30 to 7:30pm MST

Royal Glenora Club, 11160 River Valley
Road, Edmonton, AB

In Person

Hosted by:

Athabasca University's Faculty of Business
business.athabascau.ca/event-details/au-faculty-of-business-edmonton-seasonal-cheer-2

Register online at above address

Executive MBA and the Business of Hockey Info Session

Thursday, December 15,
10:00 to 11:00 am MST

Online

Hosted by:

Athabasca University's Faculty of Business
business.athabascau.ca/event-details/executive-mba-business-hockey-info-session-10am-mst-online

Register online at above address

Academic Integrity at AU Webinar

Thursday, December 15,
6:00 to 7:00pm MST

Online, Adobe Connect

Hosted by:

AU Library & Scholarly Resources
library.athabascau.ca/orientations

Login to webinar at:

<https://athabascau.adobeconnect.com/library/>



*From
Where*

I Sit

Hazel Anaka

Not Funny

People are funny, and not always in a good way. Case in point: last night we used a gift certificate for Yuk Yuks that had been languishing in my wallet since last Christmas. Master of Ceremonies, David Dempsey, was funny. First act and obvious beginner, Ben Cannon, not so much. Headliner and Edmontonian Shawn Gramiak was hilarious. A night at a comedy club is great for what ails you. And that's not just my opinion. Researchers and human guinea pig, Norman Cousins, discovered that patients could remain pain-free for hours following prolonged laughter.

Less funny is dealing with tenants of your rental property. We had a couple move out of our half-duplex about a week ago. It was not left in great condition despite them having hired a cleaning lady and a carpet cleaner. Particularly vexing was the damage to the carpeting. In a very conspicuous spot in the living room was what appeared to be 'drips' that lifted the pigment. In one of the bedrooms were several green stains that covered a wide area. Throughout, there were mystery stains and stuff stuck to the rug.

The Landlord-Tenant Act obliges landlords to provide the tenant a statement about the damage deposit within ten days of getting the keys back. That notice then gives the landlord an extension (to thirty days) for returning all or part of the damage deposit. In addition, the most visible problems were laid out verbally when we did the move-out inspection with the husband. That extra twenty days gives the landlord time to gather quotes and/or get the remedial work done.

We need to protect our interests and our asset. During the course of their lease they paid the utility bills with partial payments, sporadically, or not at all. Of greatest concern to us was the one with our names on it because default would have meant the outstanding amount would be added to our taxes. Three or four times I had to call the wife and say they risked disconnection of service. Why anyone with a newborn and a pre-schooler would chance that is beyond me. We also know there will be a charge of \$150 plus for re-energizing the electrical which they 'limited' when they moved out, plus more cleaning fees.

When this family moved in about eighteen months ago, the unit was newly repainted top to bottom and the rugs and duplex were professionally cleaned. Within a month or so, we replaced the dishwasher, dryer, and washer. When the lease was renewed, we did a fifty-dollar per month rent reduction to reflect the local economic conditions. When they asked to break the lease because they wanted to buy a house, we agreed to release them of their obligations providing we were able to find a good tenant.

From the big things like ruining carpeting to the little things like eight missing or burnt light bulbs, this adds up: in dollars, time expended, and goodwill lost. None of that is funny, from where I sit.

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

Christmas Tradition Trade-in



Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

Dear Barb:

I have hosted Christmas at my house for the last twenty years and I really wish someone else would do it for a change. It is not only expensive but it is a lot of work. I have four adult children and two grandchildren. They all have homes of their own, except the youngest daughter. When I suggest someone else do Christmas dinner I always get the same response, "Mom we could never do it as well as you." As a result, I feel obligated. I know that I should be happy to have all my children together and I am, but it would be nice to get a break once in a while. Am I being ungrateful? Marilyn.

Hi Marilyn:

Every year around this time, I get letters similar to yours. No, you are not being ungrateful. Most adult children enjoy mom and dad doing all the Christmas fixings and it's very hard to get them to take over these responsibilities unless they are forced into it by circumstances beyond their control. I would recommend you gradually start to get them involved by assigning them a side dish to bring. You still prepare the main dish, whether that is turkey or whatever your traditional meal includes. This will take some of the burden off you and also get the kids involved. Maybe in a few years you can see if someone else will do the main dish and you can bring a side dish. Happy Holidays!!

Dear Barb:

Hi. I usually don't write to advice columns but I have a situation. I graduated from AU a couple of years ago. I have a fantastic job that I love and I'm making great money. Through the years my parents have always given me money for Christmas, because they knew that's what I needed. But I now make enough money to buy what I want and I don't feel a need to exchange gifts with my parents and sister. Anyway, my parents are both retired, so I think it would be better for them to spend the money on something they need. The problem is I don't know how to bring this up to them. Also, my younger sister is in university and I know she needs the money from my parents and I don't want her to feel obligated to do the same. Do you think I'm being rude by suggesting this and do you have any ideas on how I could approach this with my family, or should I just let it go and accept the money as usual? Thanks William.

Hi William:

This is a noble gesture and I think you should go with it, if that's how you feel. Tell your parents your wishes and if they insist that they want to give you something, then provide them the option of making a donation to a charity in your name. Your sister should not feel that she has to forfeit her gift. This is a personal decision on your part and really does not affect anyone else in the family. Make it clear that this is your choice. I'm assuming you and your sister do not exchange gifts, if you do, you may want to make it clear to her that you do not want to exchange gifts, or perhaps just a nominal gift, with her as well. Merry Christmas William.

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.

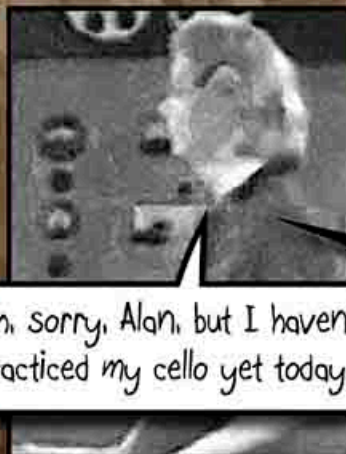
Hey, Emma, I picked the Doris Day Christmas Album for tonight!



Cello? Why you wanna waste your time with that?



Oh, sorry, Alan, but I haven't practiced my cello yet today.



Playing the cello makes me happy, Serena. Isn't that enough?

I thought vinyl made you happy.



It does, but—

She doesn't GET vinyl, Al. It's a Marginal thing.



Hey, Serena, why don't you come listen to Doris with me?



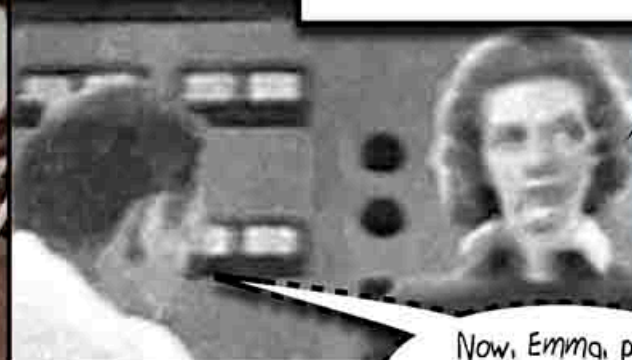
Sher, why not?

Emma can join us when she's done sawing away on the ol' catgut.



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Catgut! Ew! Why would she WANT to?



You wouldn't get it, Serena. It's a Central thing.

Now, Emma, pull in the claws . . .



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Don't Do it!

One of the hot topics at AU and across post-secondary institutions recently is plagiarism and cheating. Almost every AU committee agenda, or meeting with AU executive in the recent months has at least touched on this subject. The instances of plagiarism and cheating are growing. Students are being charged with academic misconduct more than ever, and are left facing serious consequences, including lengthy suspensions.

Sadly, many students do not even realize that what they are doing is cheating or plagiarism. There is a rise in the use of website such as Course Hero and Answer.com where students are uploading their work. This is against the University's policies, and can lead to severe Academic Misconduct charges.

Be informed – check out our December Executive Blog [here](#) to find out what to do and what not to do!

You can also check out AU's [Write Site](#) for more tips or assistance from a Write Site Coordinator, or AU's [Library Services](#) for assistance with appropriate citing of sources.



IMPORTANT DATES

- **Dec 13:** [AUSU Council Meeting](#)
- **Dec 15:** January degree requirements deadline
- **Dec 24:** January course extension deadline
- **Dec 25 – Jan 3:** Holiday Closure (AUSU and AU)
- **Jan 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Feb 1](#)
- **Jan 10:** [AUSU Council Meeting](#)
- **Jan 13:** February degree requirements deadline

Book your Exams Early!

The Athabasca University will be closed for the winter holiday from December 23, 2016 to January 2, 2017, inclusive. This includes the Calgary and Edmonton exam centers.

Students who submit exam requests prior to December 24 for courses with a contract end date of December 31 are allowed until January 15, 2017 to write their exams without being charged the "Late Exam fee". Any exam requests received after December 24 for courses with a December 31 end date will be processed as a Late Examination Request with a fee.

This additional time does not apply to other course work, which must be completed on or before the December 31 contract end date.

Make note, exams at the Calgary and Edmonton sites must still be requested 10 days in advance of your contract end date, so for courses with a December 31 end date, the exams must be requested by December 21.

For more information, contact AU or review the AU exam policy online [here](#).



CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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