

# THE VOICE

## MAGAZINE

Vol 24 Issue 49 2016-12-23

### **The Nursing Changes**

The Full Story

### **A Special Christmas Memory**

Our Christmas Tear-Jerker

### **Smell the Sugar Cookies**

Handling the Holidays

*Plus:*

*Reduce, Re-Use, Re-Gift  
The Slow Brain Movement  
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

The Nursing Changes..... 4

## Articles

Editorial: *That's a Wrap!* ..... 3  
A Special Christmas Memory..... 7  
Reduce, Reuse, and Re-Gift..... 8  
Stop and Smell the Sugar Cookies..... 10  
Slow Brain Campaign for 2017 ..... 13

## Columns

The Creative Spark: *Pit Bull with a Perm* ..... 11  
The Study Dude: *Thesis Down the Rabbit Hole* ..... 16  
Council Connection: *Nov 23 & Dec 13, 2016*..... 18  
From Where I Sit: *Good Riddance 2016* ..... 20  
Dear Barb: *You Dog, You* ..... 21

## News and Events

From the PSE Newsdesk..... 9  
Scholarship of the Week..... 12  
Student Sizzle..... 15  
AU-Thentic Events ..... 17  
AUSU Update..... 23

## Graphic

The Doppelgänger Cure: *XVIII* ..... 22

***The Voice  
Magazine***[www.voicemagazine.org](http://www.voicemagazine.org)

500 Energy Square  
10109 – 106 ST NW  
Edmonton AB  
T5J 3L7

800.788.9041 ext. 2905

Email  
[voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org)

**Publisher**

AU Students' Union

**Editor-In-Chief**

Sarah Cornett

**Managing Editor**

Karl Low

**Regular Contributors**

Hazel Anaka  
Barb Godin  
Scott Jacobsen  
Barbara Lehtiniemi  
Carla Knipe  
Deanna Roney  
Wanda Waterman

Views and articles presented  
here are those of the  
contributors and do not  
represent the views of AUSU  
Student Council

*The Voice* is published  
every Friday in HTML and  
PDF format.

For weekly email  
reminders as each issue is  
posted, fill out the  
subscription form [here](#).

*The Voice* does not share  
its subscriber list with  
anyone. Even I don't look  
at it. It's all on auto.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



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

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

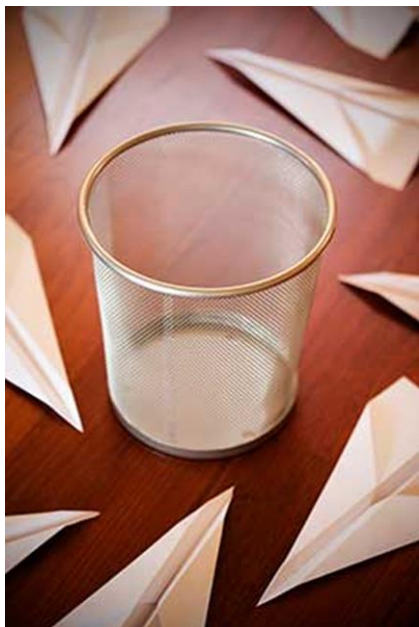
No kidding! We also do the [twitter](#) thing once in a while if you're into that.



## EDITORIAL

### That's a Wrap!

Karl Low



So here we are, we've made it through 2016, with a few bumps and shakes along the way.

It's been a heck of a year, hasn't it? Terrorist attacks have been increasingly frequently reported, and the newest trend of using vehicles against the so-called "soft targets" is disturbing simply because there's not much that can be done to regulate against it – it's not as if we can start banning large vehicles. Then there was the US election that lasted for the entire year. Regardless of who won, the campaign itself cast a pall over the year, causing divisions between friends and family, and making many of wonder how so many people could be so blind, which, ironically, applied to supporters on both sides. Then there've been the reports about the effects of climate change, with temperatures in the arctic being some 20 degrees above normal over some winter months, and stories about the Antarctic ice-shelf calving. And that doesn't even get into the list of people who died, musicians and athletes of renown. Syria, the Ukraine, the Russian Olympic Team, Ryan Lochte, the rise of fake news and our awareness of just how easily manipulated we are, Canada's economic woes, the massive fire in Fort McMurray, it seems the list of things that we'd just rather hadn't happened is fairly large this

year.

Still, we got through it. And despite how there seems to be a prevailing mood of anxiety about the coming year, at least among the people and news stories that I've seen, most of us are also proceeding forward with our lives. So perhaps it's just time to take stock of what we have and where we really are to realize that there are many reasons to be merry this season.

This brings us to this week's issue of *The Voice Magazine*. Next week, we take a Christmas break, so this issue will have to tide you over all the way into the New Year. Fortunately, we're ending the year on a high note, so far as I'm concerned. Our feature article to close out the year has Carla Knipe going for an in depth look at what all the hullabaloo is about the changes to the nursing program. I've mentioned this briefly in a previous editorial, and AUSU Council is all over it, so Carla took it upon herself to dig even further to try to get all the details and lay them out for us in her article, "The Nursing Changes." Read that and you'll know what's going on, and why you should care.

And what's Christmas without a poignant tear jerker to help keep our own troubles in perspective? Barb Godin steps up to the plate with her article "A Special Christmas Memory."

Also, it's common to get at least one gift over Christmas that just doesn't work. Everybody has them, and while you can't fault the thought behind it, the implementation can still be trouble. To help figure out what to do with those gifts that we really don't want, aside from just packing them away, and at the same time help us save money this season, Barb Lehtiniemi has stepped forward with her article, "Reduce, Re-Use, and Re-gift"

Plus, we finish out the year with a report on the last AUSU Council meeting of the year. Find out what service has been cancelled and won't be renewed, and just which student lost the ability to run for Student Council during the last Council meeting.

And that doesn't even get into our articles on handling the demands of the season and a new way of life for 2017, or our news, reviews, advice, entertainment, or articles to help you get those top grades that you've been looking for. Our "Best of" Issue will be out January 6th so until then, have a merry holiday season, and enjoy the read!

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

## The Nursing Changes

Carla Knipe



### Are the recent nursing program changes causing huge headache for students?

Angry, disillusioned, and upset are just some of the words that some of Athabasca University's nursing students have used to describe their reactions to recent changes to AU's nursing program. While the changes are, according to AU, part of the process to streamline and improve programs and services to students, these changes have led to an outcry because of the way they've been applied.

The changes began in January, 2016, when the Faculty of Health Disciplines (FHD) Faculty Council approved revisions to the Bachelor of Nursing (BN) programs. These included adding requisite courses, shifting the required GPA upward, changing the residency requirement, and the addition of a statement that students receiving two failing grades in one or more nursing courses will be automatically withdrawn from the program—with no opportunity to re-apply.

These changes apply primarily to the LPN-BN program although many are applicable to the post-RN within the Bachelor of Nursing.

While on the surface, these may seem reasonable, their significance is that they were going to be applied retroactively, and so would affect all of AU's 2,140 current nursing students. These changes go against the usual protocol, where all students currently enrolled in the program aren't affected by changes to the program, and any new requirements are only applied to future enrollment. AUSU President, Shawna Wasylshyn, attended the January FHD Faculty Council meeting and was very vocal in raising concerns that the changes would negatively affect students and set a dangerous precedent for any other faculty's changes in the future. Despite this, the motions were all carried and went on to be passed at the Academic Planning, Policy, and Standards Committee.

The changes also modified the way that the cumulative GPA for nursing students was calculated as it applies to prerequisites for courses. Even though AU has a policy on transfer credits and how the GPA is applied, a faculty representative confirmed in the AUSU's summary of the timeline that they used the term "average grade threshold" for their pre-requisite requirements rather than the standard "GPA" to avoid being restricted by the AU policy on GPA that is in place to protect students. Under pressure from AUSU, the faculty has since backed away from the Average Grade Threshold determination and as gone back to using the proper GPA calculation.

Also since then, the AUSU Executive has repeatedly raised concerns about these retroactive changes and advocated for students hurt by the new standards. It has met with the Dean of the Faculty of Health Disciplines, the then-Interim AU President, Peter MacKinnon, the Interim VP Academic, and the Associate VP of Student and Academic Services. AUSU has also expressed concerns about these changes at General Faculties Council and the Academic Affairs committee of the Board of Governors. AUSU also has stated they

have strong concerns because some of the student contacts they have been receiving suggest they are afraid of trying to bring these issues up to the faculty directly for fear of reprisals in their practicums.

The AUSU Executive team submitted FOIP requests for information to gain an understanding of what work was done by AU leading up to these changes: how many students were affected and to what degree, and what the root cause or motivation for the changes was. AUSU also consulted with legal counsel to gain advice on a further course of action and were advised that pursuing a judicial review is a recommended next step against the changes applied retroactively. Council provided unanimous support for the steps and AUSU wrote another letter to AU Interim President, Peter MacKinnon on September 7, 2016, informing him that AUSU was considering pursuing the judicial review. While there have been preliminary conversations with AU administration in response to this, no formal response has been received.

Dr. Margaret Edwards, Dean of the Faculty of Health Disciplines was contacted by *The Voice* to provide more information about these changes from a Faculty perspective. She gave a lengthy and insightful response to the changes from a clinical perspective.

She said that due to the low pass rates of the NCLEX-RN (National Council Licensure Examination-Registered Nurse) exam, which is a required step in receiving the designation of Registered Nurse, the Faculty of Health Disciplines Post-LPN Program Council took immediate and proactive steps to better align the program to the reality of the new exam. Doing so to ensure that AU nursing students had the knowledge and preparation to succeed with the exam and ultimately in their professional practice as registered nurses. Dr. Edwards said that AU established a working group to coordinate information related to the exam and to identify where changes could be made within nursing courses to better align with the NCLEX-RN. These included a review bank of questions, quizzes, webinars, and other resource materials.

However, the nursing program realized that the current AU courses did not meet the needs of several areas of the exam; mainly anatomy, physiology, pathophysiology, and pharmacology. Therefore, additional program requirements were put in place to address these shortfalls. The changes were ultimately ratified in September, 2016. Dr. Edwards emphasizes that these changes were made to give all current and future nursing students the best possible preparation for the exam as well as their clinical practice. The changes were made retroactive to include all students currently in Cluster A of the Post LPN-BN program. She also emphasizes that transitioning students to the new regulations increases the opportunities to be successful on the exam and so receive their licensure as Registered Nurses.

She concedes that some students will require additional courses and their personal timelines may be altered. However, she says "completing a program and then failing the licensing exam and never being able to practice as a Registered Nurse is a far graver result." She says that students were informed of the changes through a variety of means including a written letter; program newsletters; one-on-one discussions with the BN program advisors, Directors, and the Dean; and the implementation of individualized program plans. As the majority of nursing students have been in consultation with her department, she does not share AUSU's suggestion that nursing students are afraid to speak with their advisors. She gives further insight to the changes by adding that implementing these changes at AU, rather than traditional universities, is more difficult. "At other universities, it is a much more straight-forward process to change courses when you know that the same students will be progressing in a lock-step manner through the program, rather than at AU when all but the four clinical courses are un-paced individualized study."

But AUSU is still advocating for nursing students who are affected by the changes. It is calling for AU to honour the students' original program plan and for the nursing program to grandfather in the changes to incoming students. While AUSU does not dispute the changes themselves, it disputes applying the changes retroactively. President Wasylyshyn says that "we have yet to see any research or proof that the changes implemented will have the result AU is seeking. At such a large cost to students, it is unacceptable for AU to blindly implement these changes which so clearly go against precedent and common sense." While AUSU was assured that the changes were in students' best interest, The Voice obtained the minutes from the January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016 FHD Facility Council meeting. These minutes contained a statement that the reason for the changes was not only to maintain the academic rigor of the program, but to reduce the number of students in the program without imposing a quota.

AUSU's position is that, while these changes may be required from a clinical perspective, the issue it has against the changes is the methods used to implement them, citing the ethicality of imposing prerequisites that would require students to leave the program or retake courses, as well as the short notice to students and lack of opportunity to prepare for the changes. AUSU says it has had many students come forward to express their concerns, which include feelings of being misled by AU and feeling like they cannot recommend AU to others who are considering becoming students because of what they have experienced. However, Dr. Edwards says that "...a key piece of information is that in the 46-year history of the university, retroactive changes have never before been made. The reason for the retroactive nature of the recent program changes related to the abrupt decision of CARNA to implement the NCLEX and we couldn't, morally or ethically, let students already in the program continue down a program path that was not leading to success on the NCLEX."

Despite the advocacy efforts on behalf of students, the AUSU Executive says that some students have lost credit for transfer they had previously been granted due to newly imposed residency requirements, and are also now required to take three extra courses, which affects their program plans—especially if they have taken out student loans. It also objects to the new rule that students who fail two nursing courses will be automatically removed from the program with no opportunity to reapply. AUSU has been successful on several fronts, including having AU commit to reviewing the policy, procedures, and delegated authority that allowed these changes to occur in the way they did. AUSU also has received a guarantee from AU that it will commit to a review of the process and authority for changes to course pre-requisites to ensure they can't circumvent program requirements.

Also, some of the changes were postponed for one year and will not take effect until Sept 1, 2017 to give students an opportunity to prepare. Additionally, the FHD has made individualized exceptions for students who would be negatively affected by some of the changes, specifically the GPA change. AUSU pointed this out in one of their meetings, noting that when they've approached the FHD advocating for an individual student, they've gotten results for each one. AUSU remains concerned, however, that the exceptions have completely stopped, despite a commitment from AU to consider each student's case. During the General Faculties Council (GFC) in October (the minutes are available to view online) the Dean and administration made a commitment to consider individual student cases. However, since then, the Dean has told AUSU that making an exception for one student isn't fair to anyone, and, in a letter she wrote to students a few weeks ago, in the "FAQ" section, it says that individual cases will not be considered. AUSU strongly voiced its concerns about this at GFC on Dec 7 and demanded answers. It asked of the GFC, "Which is it? Are you considering individual cases, or aren't you?"

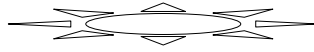
So far, there has not been a resolution to the differences of opinion between AUSU and the AU Faculty of Health Disciplines. President Wasylyshyn recommends that concerned students should contact the AU Ombudsman or



consider filing an academic appeal. Meanwhile, AUSU continues to survey the situation as it works to determine whether further advocacy is necessary.

Non-nursing students may not understand, or care, about the intricacies of the nursing program but this situation may become relevant to them. It remains to be seen whether retroactive changes to courses and requirements to one program may set a precedent for similar changes to other disciplines in the future.

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



## A Special Christmas Memory

**Barb Godin**



*Little Barb*

As my husband and I decorated our Christmas tree, my mind trailed off to past years, especially one particular Christmas with my mom. Although I didn't know it at the time, this would be the last Christmas day that I ever remember spending with my mom. I was a young girl, maybe eight or nine years old, and living in a small house with my mom and her boyfriend. We didn't have a lot, but that didn't matter; my heart was ready to burst because I was with my mom for Christmas. I couldn't remember any other Christmases with mom and I knew this would be a special one. My siblings were all living with different family members and I would not see them this year, but I was overjoyed to spend this Christmas with my mom.

On Christmas Eve mom's boyfriend, John, brought a little Christmas tree home for us to decorate. He set up the tree and mom and I dug out some decorations from her closet. I was anxious to open the old yellowed boxes. They were filled with red and green shiny, glittery bulbs. Mom carefully attached the hooks through the loops and handed them to me to hang on the tree. After the bulbs were all on the tree, mom handed me a special decoration. It was a little elf with long red legs and a pointy hat. I loved it and hung it right in the front centre of the tree. Mom and I laughed together. I

hardly ever heard mom laugh and I felt a catch in my throat as she put her arms around me. I was so happy I felt I was going to explode. I hoped I would be able to stay with mom forever.

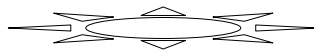
While we were decorating the tree, mom kept looking out the front window onto the porch as if she was waiting for something. From my bedroom I heard her said to John, "It's here." I came out to see what it was. John was carrying in a basket filled with stuff. I could see what looked like a turkey on top. Mom quickly went through the basket while I watched. Then she handed me a wrapped present and asked me to put it under the tree. As I carried it I peeked at the name tag and it said "To: Barbara." I was so excited. I asked mom if I could open it and she said not until morning. That evening mom and I sat on the sofa and watched *Miracle on 34th Street*. I loved spending time with mom, I felt so loved and special. After the movie, mom tucked me in bed and I eventually fell asleep.



The next morning, I ran into the living room and saw two more gifts. I woke up mom and she said I could open the gifts. I saved the biggest one for last. I tore open the wrapping and there was a beautiful walking doll! This was the best gift of all. Afterward, mom sat with me on the sofa and I placed the doll between us. Mom prepared a Christmas dinner with turkey, potatoes, and stuffing, my favorite. That evening as I said goodnight, I hugged mom tightly and whispered in her ear. "I love you mom, I had the best Christmas ever." She looked into my eyes and I could see the tears filling her eyes as she hugged me closely. I wondered why she was crying.

That summer I was sent for a visit with friends of the family. It was supposed to be a two-week visit, but I ended up staying there for many years. I missed my mom every day, but especially at Christmas. As the years passed that one Christmas day with my mom will always be a magical memory for me.

*Barbara Godin is a graduate of AU and writes the "Dear Barb" column. She lives in London, Ontario with her husband, and two dogs.*



## Reduce, Re-Use and Re-Gift

**Barbara Lehtiniemi**



It's a practice many people engage in but loathe to be caught at. We're not talking about picking one's nose, singing in the car, or pocketing a few extra restaurant ketchup packets for later. We're talking about re-gifting.

Re-gifting is simply the practice of giving, as a gift, something you yourself received as a gift. Re-gifting has a bad reputation. Some see it as cheap, lazy, and in bad taste. However, that depends on the reason behind it. Re-gifting can also be practical, time-saving, and—yes—even thoughtful.

We've all received gifts that we can't use: items that aren't to our taste, don't match anything we own, or we already possess. So we end up tossing them out of sight into a drawer, closet, or basement box.

There are more environmentally-friendly ways of dealing with unwanted gifts: reduce, re-use, or re-gift.

**Reduce.** Don't accumulate unwanted gifts in the first place. If you've received something you're absolutely sure you can't or won't use, make a decision on it right away. Can you exchange it for something else? If you're on good terms with the giver, tell them the item isn't quite right. They gave you a gift hoping you'd like it and, since you don't, they're probably happy to help you find something you do like. They may choose to return the item themselves, or just give you the receipt so you can exchange it. Even if you don't know the gift-giver well enough to suggest exchanging the gift, you might be able to exchange it without a receipt at a retail outlet that stocks that item.

**Re-use.** Just because the gift wasn't to your taste doesn't mean it won't suit someone else. Think about family members, friends, co-workers, neighbours. If the gift would suit them, ask them if they would like to have it. Be honest about how you came to have it and make it clear you don't want anything in exchange. By re-using, you'll get a good feeling because you brightened up someone else's day, and they'll get a good feeling from getting an unexpected treat.

**Re-gift.** Re-gifting isn't gifting, but it's a viable alternative in a pinch. If you've ever found yourself unexpectedly empty-handed when a gift was needed, you'll appreciate the art of re-gifting. Perhaps a family member shows up with a new significant other and you need a gift quick, or you've received a last-minute invite to a New Year's Eve party but you don't want to show up without a hostess gift. You don't have time to shop or to think. This is when the pen set you received from a client or that kitchen gadget from the office gift exchange comes in handy. Put a new tag on it and you're all set.

Re-gifting should be done thoughtfully. As advised on [emilypost.com](http://emilypost.com)—which frowns on the practice even while acknowledging it—the great thing is to avoid hurting anyone's feelings. That means that neither the person who originally gave you the gift nor the person you are re-gifting it to should ever know. Remember who you originally got a gift from and make sure that you re-gift far away from the original source.

Small-value items you received from your outer circle—acquaintances, co-workers, distant relatives—are usually the most suitable to re-gift. Don't re-gift anything that is damaged, outdated, or in poor taste. If it's that bad, why pass it on?

Anything handmade for you, personalized in any way, or got with a great deal of trouble and/or expense is a poor candidate for either reducing, re-using, or re-gifting. Best to just pack the item away until the giver passes away. And, until then, remember to put the item on display each time the giver visits.

There must be enough unwanted gifts out there to fill a fleet of Santa's sleighs. If you receive another gift that you can't use, don't just toss it in the closet. If you can't reduce by exchanging it, consider—thoughtfully—re-using or re-gifting it.

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

## From the PSE News Desk

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



**Student Accommodation meets the Geriatric Set.** Students at New York University (NYU) will soon be able to opt to bunk with seniors, according to a recent Associated Press news story. The housing scheme, set to be introduced in autumn 2017, hopes to ease the financial crunch of two age groups at once. NYU students who opt for this type of housing will only pay \$5000 per year for a room—thousands less than on-campus student housing—while seniors with extra space will receive almost that amount to open their doors to a younger generation. The initial roll-out of the housing program aims to place up to 15 students with seniors with spare rooms. No seniors have volunteered yet.

## Stop and Smell the Sugar Cookies

Deanna Roney



Over the holidays AU, like most businesses, closes. AU courses that would have ended December 31<sup>st</sup> have their exam deadlines extended into January to accommodate the closure; this can mean that you feel like you have some "bonus-time." It can feel like a great time to get ahead or caught up. But on top of other holiday obligations, this "bonus-time" can add stress to a time that is supposed to be rejuvenating.

When I was in the final courses to my degree, this bonus time felt like a gift—a way to get ahead. I used this time to get loads of work done on my courses, work that I felt could not wait. I wanted to

graduate in June, and, if I was going to, that meant I could not have a day off for anything other than Christmas itself. So, I put nose to the grindstone and finished—two whole months ahead of schedule. I guess I could have taken a week off at Christmas. I could have baked more, and visited more; I could have taken the time to see friends that were home for the holiday break instead of locking myself in a small room with a computer and a stack of books.

It is easy to take this "bonus-time" and lock yourself away. There is nothing wrong with ambition and being self-driven; they are key attributes to success. But knowing when to pause is important too. It is important to take the time, when many others have time off too, and join the festivities. To visit friends, to bake cookies, to take pleasure in the small moments, whether you're decorating a tree, or just enjoying a movie with family. Even if you do not celebrate Christmas, you still get this time off—time that is best spent with family and friends (whether it is in celebration of the holiday or not).

Old habits die hard, though, and despite believing in the importance of taking this time off, it is difficult to do. Many agencies are closing for the holiday break, which means I have "bonus-time" to perfect queries and pitches without the pressure of wanting to send them right away (because I can't). I feel like the time should be used to make progress on my works-in-progress or researching. However, this year I am determined to take some time off, to bake some holiday goodies, set up the tree, and visit with friends and family.

This time is bonus time, but it isn't, or perhaps shouldn't, be viewed as bonus time to get work done. Instead, consider it time off from everything. Time to spend guilt-free baking, decorating, visiting, or hiding out with a favourite movie.

On this note, I am going to stop what I am working on, stop researching, stop writing, take my time free of obligations and I am going to bake those sugar cookies.

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

## The Creative Spark

### Pit Bull with a Perm

Marie Well



Did writing your essays ever feel like locking eyes with a gnarly pit bull? Or worse, did you get bitch-slapped with a "minus" grade?

One prof labeled me an A-minus student. Everything I did, whether stellar or stupid, got the A-minus. Tainted a near-perfect GPA.

So, how do you nab an A in your essays? With the blood of an editor's comb. (Yes, beware the knots.) You see, without grooming your essay, you're left with a wigless Lady Gaga look—a first-week marine recruit. A sure-fire minus. And what are your essay's knots? "To be" verbs. Sloppy sounds. Deadwood. Muzzle those gnarls.

William A. Akers teaches screenplay editing in his book *Your Screenplay Sucks! 100 Ways to Make it Great*. I apply his tips to primp your essays.

**Read your work aloud: three times. If you hear something "off," correct it, then read three time all over again.** When profs read your essays, they hear your words inside their heads. So, make your words musical. The writers of *G.I. Jane* must have read the script a million times; I assume that because the actors' words sounded in perfect tempo with the soundtrack.

**Don't repeat anything.** Don't introduce or follow-up a quote with a mere repetition of whatever's already inside the quote. Instead, add a twist: an analysis or commentary. For instance, you could say, "'Jones (2016) forecasted Trump's election victory would result in a bull stock market.' *This quote suggests* that stock investors foresaw high growth policies in a Trump victory." Add insight.

Also, don't repeat words. Try not to say, "Jesse had a half-cocked gun coupled with a cocky smile." Okay, sometimes you can get away with it. But generally, try to substitute repeated words with synonyms.

**Want to write a 110-page script? Print the prior day's work and make edits in red pen. Only then continue writing.** In other words, write a portion of your essay on day one. On day two, print out day one's work and make your edits so you can start writing having a clear understanding of what came before and be able to continue smoothly. Only then, continue writing. But don't start rewriting until you've finished your first draft.

**Write daily.** When you have an essay due, schedule at least two hours a day of essay love. If writing a graduate level thesis, two hours a day will leave you on the fast track to a PhD.

**After you write your script's first draft, isolate 15-page chunks to rewrite.** After you finish the first draft of your graduate thesis, tackle fifteen page chunks for rewriting, too. On a smaller scale, after you write an undergraduate essay, tackle five-page chunks (or more) to rewrite per sitting.



**Make your first ten-pages count.** In an essay, give the first two pages more oomph than Lady Gaga's meat-dress-on-fire. But make these pages flawless: not a single spelling mistake or grammar error in sight. In fact, make the whole essay flawless. That's how you get into graduate school.

**Make your first sentence dazzling. Scriptwriters can judge your script based on your first sentence.** Similarly, make your essay's first sentence a looker.

**Have a friend read aloud your script—so you can hear how bad it sounds.** When you read aloud your script, hey, it sounds perfect. But when Moe reads aloud your script, hey, it sucks. Getting others to read your script aloud will help you fine tune weaknesses where your intended tone didn't come through in your writing

**Movie producers despise "to be" verbs.** Your prof does, too. When you see an *is, are, am, was, were, been, be*, then cross out those nasties and substitute new verbs. In general, *be-*, *have-*, and *do-*verbs need replacements as often as toilet paper does.

*Unknot your essay's gnarls — like combing a pit bull with a perm. When your words are as tight as the Philharmonic, you've nailed an A. So, turn your frizzy piit bulls into harp pickers—not skull biters! A paradox? I call it a creative spark!*

## Scholarship of the Week

**Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.**

**Scholarship name:** Senior Volunteer Scholarship *and* Senior Caregiver Scholarship

**Sponsored by:** SeniorAdvice.com

**Deadline:** January 15, 2017

**Potential payout:** \$1000 each

**Eligibility restriction:** Applicants must be attending college or university in a 2-year or 4-year program in Spring 2017. Read the full eligibility details for the applicable scholarship.

**What's required:** A 3-minute video in which you answer five questions about your experiences either volunteering at a senior's living community, or being a caregiver for an adult relative, depending on which scholarship you're applying for. A current high-school, college, or university transcript is also required.

**Tips:** Read about the [previous scholarship winners](#).

**Where to get info:** [www.senioradvice.com/scholarships](http://www.senioradvice.com/scholarships)



## Slow Brain Campaign for 2017

Wanda Waterman



### 10 Ways to Slow Down Your Mind and Why it Will Change Everything

You've heard of the slow food movement? Taking half a day to prepare a grand repast and then spending the rest of the day eating it? Sarcasm aside, making slow food a way of life is economical, healthy, sustainable, and life-enhancing. It's a way of living that belongs smack dab in the middle of the digital age.

The slow food movement ignited a series of generalisations, and thus was born slow fashion, slow parenting, slow travel, slow

gardening—you name it; whatever can be decelerated is now undergoing an existential experiment in speed reduction. By most reports, slowing things down leads to greater serenity, greater efficiency, creativity, better relationships, better health, and an escape from the exhausting and pointless treadmill that comes when we surrender our wills to the Internet with no thought to our own wellbeing, our dear ones, or our planet.

I came up with *slow brain* as a convenient umbrella term for slowing down the rate at which we read, write, learn, work, create, and communicate in the digital age. This involves assuming a position of personal control over what we intellectually consume and produce and an intention to do it all more mindfully.

The speed of today's online news media is a hyperactive hound dog that needs to be brought to heel, for everybody's sake. It jeopardises the health and livelihoods of writers, journalists, and bloggers, as well as the quality of their work, by demanding greater output with shorter deadlines. The pressure to be the first out of the gate reduces creativity by not allowing the mind to focus and reflect. It prevents the careful investigation necessary for delivering the truth in clear, comprehensible language. If you just rip through a bunch of tweets and headlines each day you may be getting what you think is the latest news, but you may not be getting any information that matters, and what you do get may not be accurate. It may also be a highly unpleasant read.

Many who've chosen the long way around have reacted to the prevailing absurdity by turning back the clock and pretending that the World Wide Web is still only being used by a handful of scientists trading the latest findings on *mycorrhizal networks*. The Mindful Bard is not about that, for obvious reasons. *Slow brain* is not a rejection of information technology, but, rather, a way to live within the context of the rapid gains of the internet age by carving out tranquil interludes in which to work, learn, and communicate—*slowly*. We need to see the Internet as a tool enabling greater tranquility, not as the paradigm on which to model our own behaviours.

Choosing *slow brain* means carefully selecting what you'll read. It means embracing "deep work" (Cal Newport's term), and turning off the Internet when you need to create, focus, or problem-solve. It means fewer tweets and status updates and more personal exchanges with other human beings, both online and in person. It means finding ways to exchange ideas with others in a way that leads to lasting positive social change.

Think of the Internet as an employee who'll take control of your company if you let it get too familiar. It will help you work better and faster, but then it will distract and interrupt you so often that you can't work, do important research, or make sound business decisions. It will call you at home at the worst times, eroding the quality of your family relationships. And it's constantly asking for a raise. In the end it will exhaust you, rob your life of meaning, and destabilise your sense of self. And when your business goes under, you'll be looking at its taillights.

Slowing down actually saves time and trouble. Remember "a stitch in time saves nine?" Slow Brain means fewer errors. Slow reading means fewer misunderstandings, slow writing means fewer mistakes, and slow communication means fewer hurt feelings.

Pausing to reflect on our carefully chosen and planned viewing, reading times, listening sessions, and conversations can also keep our minds from becoming atrophied from dogmatism, allowing us to see an issue from different angles and to respect, understand, and even learn from another's point of view.

*Slow brain* humanises consumers, respecting their real needs instead of viewing them as economic units whose buying patterns can be predicted to someone else's benefit. *Slow brain* respects creativity, giving the mind enough time to nurture the best ideas. If you don't slow down the hamster cage in your head, those brilliant thoughts, those wise life changes you need to make, are just never going to occur to you.

Step aside and let wisdom flow. Prayer, meditation, or both can help you to take control of the chaos in your head, forcing you to stop and acknowledge something bigger.

Looking for some guidance? Here's the short list:

1. Be a "prosumer," not a consumer; that is, exercise control over what your intellect consumes and produces. Instead of reading tweets and headlines on the run, make well-written, in-depth news investigations and literary journalism a part of your leisure reading, listening, and viewing. Be picky about your literature, thinking carefully before you commit to a book. Don't read something just because everyone else is doing it.
2. Once you've picked a book, really read it. Allow it to wake you up and stir you to act or create. Highlight it, make notes, reflect. Let the book direct you to other books it suggests and that continue to spark your interest. Talk to someone about what your reading.
3. Multitasking is exhausting and it's making you stupid. If you don't believe me, do the research. As much as possible, do one thing at a time.
4. Put a notice on your Facebook page that goes something like this: "I won't be on Facebook for a while because I'm trying to live a more meaningful life. I love hearing about you all, but I need something more. If any of you would like to share your problems, epiphanies, personal victories, and memories, or ask my advice, please write me a letter at the following email address so I can give you another email address for personal messages."
5. If you have the email or postal addresses of any dear ones, write them long, erudite, well-crafted *letters*. Send drawing or photos, or even that meme you found online that you think they'd love. (The goal is to be slow and thoughtful, not to chuck all the good the Internet offers.)
6. Stop leaving your social media channels open all day. Just stop.
7. Never think that you're socially obligated to check your social media accounts. Limit how often you check for updates and messages.

8. Never take your cellphone, laptop, or tablet to bed with you. Bedtime is for other things. These things take time, and should not be interrupted.
9. Find ways to use the speed of the Internet to help you find oases of silence and tranquility, and never let it waste your time. Time pressure increases with every moment you waste, so before you click on a scintillating online link title, like "You Won't Believe What This Man Did to Punish His Cat" or "Kim Kardashian's Patookus Falls Off," stop and ask yourself, "Do I really need to know this? And if I do need to know this, is this vacuous-looking, poorly spelled article likely to give it to me?"
10. Seek out in-person contacts and arrange your life so that conversations are easy, pleasant, thoughtful, distraction-free, and intellectually stimulating. You and other slow brains may just change the world.

And if you still need convincing— or exhorting— here are some great links to check out. Take your time.

<http://slowmedia.typepad.com/slow-media>

<http://en.slow-media.net/manifesto>

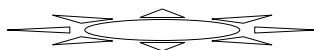
<http://www.forbes.com/2009/12/29/media-newspapers-internet-opinions-columnists-trevor-butterworth.html>

<http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2012/03/a-slow-books-manifesto/254884/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2010/jul/15/slow-reading>

<https://tracyseeley.wordpress.com>

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



## Student Sizzle AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

### AthaU Facebook Group

Vicki seeks advice on preparing for the ORGB 386 telephone interview.

Other posts include exam scheduling, transferring AB credits, and courses SOSC 366 and WGST 305.

### Twitter

[@AthabascaUBiz](#) tweets: "Have a bit of downtime? Check out the [@globeandmail](#) top 100 books of the year: <https://goo.gl/aM6hA2> [#ReadMore](#) [#NeverStopLearning](#)."

[@AthabascaUSU](#) (AUSU) tweets: "Are you funded through OSAP or Student Aid Alberta? You can use Aeroplan or TD Travel Rewards to pay for tuition!

<http://bit.ly/2hbBBWo>."

### Youtube

Revel in some virtual seasonal sizzle with six hours of [Christmas Fireplace Scene with Crackling Fire Sounds](#), posted by [Virtual Fireplace](#).







## Study Tips from a Semi-Anonymous Friend

### Thesis Down the Rabbit Hole

*There is nothing more that The Study Dude wants than for you to slip inside the rabbit hole to discover the truth behind lit reviews.*

*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 *Reason & Rigor: How Conceptual Frameworks Guide Research* by Sharon M. Ravitch

and Matthew Riggan. They show why our supervisors' explanations of lit reviews or conceptual frameworks spawn dizzy spells.

### Many-Faced? The Conceptual Framework

When I dreamt about conceptual frameworks and theoretical frameworks, I spaced out.

I eventually learned a bit about theories: one should focus mostly on theories published as whole books. And use multiple theories if possible. And disagree with parts of a theory if supportable.

But, I didn't know the difference between conceptual and theoretical frameworks. And, I bet, neither do you. And your likely professor doesn't know the difference either. That is, until now.

And once you learn what a conceptual framework really is, you still won't know. That's because everyone's got their view, and you're about to hear the biggies.

Ravitch and Riggan reveal what they think conceptual frameworks are:

- A conceptual framework is "an argument about why the topic one wishes to study matters, and why the means proposed to study it are appropriate and rigorous" (Ravitch & Riggan, p. xiii).
- A conceptual framework is also theory, methodology, lit review, and the researcher's personal views and experiences.
- But some people think a conceptual framework is merely the same thing as the theoretical framework.
- Others say a conceptual framework has three parts: 1. Theoretical literature, 2. Empirical studies from prior researchers, and 3. One's own experiences, values, and views.
- Others still say a conceptual framework is a visual model of the study's structure or of key theoretical findings.
- As a hint, when using theories in your conceptual framework, try not to make your data fit a single theory. Try to use multiple theories that complement one another.
- Put together a lot of contradictory views in your conceptual framework. (Contradictory views feel like an argument among academics that you mediate. Readers love conflict with a clear winner—or at least with a Rocky going the distance.)

- Synthesize your lit review to fit the unfolding of your research. In other words, let your lit review evolve with your emerging findings.

### **A Many-Eyed Being: The Lit Review**

If you go to graduate school, you'll write a literature, or lit review.

But like conceptual frameworks, I bet you really don't know what a lit review is. That's because lit reviews have many shades. If you see only one shade, you don't see the picture.

On the brighter side, some say lit reviews are like conversations. Imagine the giants on your topic in a room debating, but with your voice peeping through. Your peep could be what you glean from the conversation through selective hearing.

Or better yet, you can speak up and agree with Dr. X. Or you could disagree with Dr. X based on something you heard Dr. Y say. Or, if everyone gangs up on Dr. X, you could gang up on him too, but, let's face it, rarely does one care to hear the conformist view—unless you reveal something no-one mentioned about him. But, if everyone gangs up on him, and you side with him, pointing out a moral failing of the majority, then you've got our attention. Make your peep count.

Also, if you say something, give it strength. Puff up support: facts, expert testimonies, research, stats, news stories, surveys, interviews, focus groups, social media trends, government Websites, think tank Websites, analytics, artifacts, visual media, audio media, multimedia, edible things—even stench. (Stenches spark conversation.)

Be heard.

If you go to grad school, expressing your voice is a lot easier. As a grad student, you'll discover that many methodologies beg you to bear your soul.

Ravitch and Riggan explore the many shades of lit reviews:

- Many academics have different views of what a lit review actually is.
- Some think lit reviews show off your knowledge.
- Others think lit reviews are a way to place your research in the larger picture.
- Some think lit reviews are a conversation that you enter.
- The problem with seeing a lit reviews as a conversation? There's no agreement on how much or how little a student can voice his or her views.
- When doing lit reviews, see the clusters of similar or differing views. Ask yourself what questions are left unanswered.

## **AU-thentic Events**

### **Upcoming AU Events**

#### **AUSU Council Meeting**

Tuesday, January 10, 5:30 to 7:30pm MST,

Telephone and online

Hosted by AUSU

[www.ausu.org/event/january-council-meeting](http://www.ausu.org/event/january-council-meeting)

e-mail [admin@ausu.org](mailto:admin@ausu.org) for meeting package and to register

#### **AU Leadership and Management Development (LMD) Information Session**

Tuesday, January 10, 10:00 to 11:00 am MST, Online

Hosted by Athabasca University's Faculty of Business

[business.athabascau.ca/event-details/athabasca-university-leadership-management-development-lmd-information-session-3/](http://business.athabascau.ca/event-details/athabasca-university-leadership-management-development-lmd-information-session-3/)

register online at the above address

#### **AU Manufacturing Management (MMC) Information Session**

Tuesday, January 10, 5:00 to 6:00 pm MST, Online

Hosted by Athabasca University's Faculty of Business

[business.athabascau.ca/event-details/athabasca-university-manufacturing-management-mmc-information-session-3/](http://business.athabascau.ca/event-details/athabasca-university-manufacturing-management-mmc-information-session-3/)

register online at the above address

#### **Using Educational Technologies to Improve Teaching**

Wednesday, January 11, 12:00 to 1:00pm MST

Online, Adobe Connect

Hosted by Athabasca University's Faculty of Graduate Studies

[fgs.athabascau.ca/news/presentations/](http://fgs.athabascau.ca/news/presentations/)

e-mail

[fgseducation@athabascau.ca](mailto:fgseducation@athabascau.ca)

with your AU student number and program name to register

- Lit reviews help students know what's relevant in their areas of study. Lit reviews also help students build from the work of other researchers.
- Just focus on the most important literature when doing a lit review.
- Lit reviews also let us know where more research is needed in the general field of study.
- Lit reviews also help us know what methodology and research design we should undertake.
- Synthesize other's research to come to your own conclusions.
- You need to research the "conversation," figure out how to insert your own voice, and use that to help you choose your methodologies and theories.
- The lit review's primary purpose? To learn.

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

Ravitch, Sharon M., & Riggan, Matthew. (2012). Reason & Rigor: How Conceptual Frameworks Guide Research. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.



### **Council Connection** **November 23, 2016 and** **December 13, 2016 Council Meetings**

**Bonita Arbeau**

The December 13<sup>th</sup> AUSU Council meeting began with the swift approval of an agenda and two sets of meetings minutes. The second set of minutes was from a special meeting of Council held on November 23<sup>rd</sup> to discuss what was intended to be the final report of the Joint Council-Voice Action Plan Committee. Since I am a member of that committee and attended that meeting, I will provide you with a synopsis of it here before diving into the details of AUSU's most recent Council meeting (two for the price of one!)

First, I should note that the Joint Council-Voice Action Plan committee was formed July 2016 to provide student insight to AUSU Council on an action plan for improving the Voice and increasing its readership, and to advise Council on how they could achieve their goal of supporting the Voice through non-financial resources. In their report, one of the committee's primary recommendations was the establishment of a Voice Editorial Advisory Committee which would include the Voice Editor-in-Chief, Editor, writers, elected student representatives, and one AUSU Councillor as a non-voting member and Council liaison. The committee could provide direction and accountability for the Voice on ongoing basis, increase student engagement, and bring a variety of voices to the table, while lightening the workload of the Voice's lone staff member, Editor Karl Low.

Council disagreed. Councillor Andrew Gray felt strongly that the committee should have offered more concrete recommendations for changes to the Voice in the areas of format, content, and marketing, along with a more detailed timeline. He offered pointed criticisms about how long the committee had worked on the report, as well as frustration that work had not yet started on a new website. AUSU President Shawna Wasylyshyn expressed that she did not want AUSU Executive or staff to invest any time and energy in getting a new committee off the ground, but would prefer the Voice to work with the resources it already has. Council supported these arguments and accepted the committee's report as an interim report only, sending the

---

committee back to the drawing board with more specific details of what they would like the committee to recommend.

As for the December Council meeting, the first bit of new business on the agenda was to approve an annual budget for the Voice. After general agreement to remove the memos to the budget from the public document, the budget was passed unanimously. The budget proposes a deficit of \$45,386 (about 40% of Voice cash reserves) including \$25,000 for a new website, \$5,500 to archive old publications on that website, \$8,000 for other promotional expenses, and \$1,500 to fund a student focus group to help get all these changes off the ground. 2017 promises to be an exciting year for the Voice!

The next item was a motion to relax the criteria for AUSU's new Single Parent Bursary from a minimum of 45 credits to a minimum of 30 credits. This recommendation came from the AUSU Awards Committee in response to an absence of applications for the bursary in the latest awards cycle. The bursary also requires applicants provide a reference letter from a non-family member. This is an unusual request for a bursary of such a personal nature, and it could put potential applicants in the uncomfortable position of having to reveal their financial situation to a boss or co-worker. It is possible that this requirement contributed to the lack of applications. But these are simply my musings; none of this was discussed in the meeting and the motion was passed unanimously.

A discussion item was brought forward concerning AUSU's annual audit. VPFA Kim Newsome wanted to ensure that Councillors had read and understood an important e-mail that detailed their obligations surrounding the annual audit and their fiduciary duties to AUSU members. Then, after some straight-forward policy edits eliminating redundancies in AUSU's policy manual, Council moved to go in-camera. All non-Councillors, myself included, left the meeting and waited patiently for an e-mail that would tell us when we could return. After 25 minutes (of eating my supper and working on that assignment I'd been procrastinating), I re-entered the meeting and AUSU President Shawna Wasylyshyn read the resulting unanimously-approved motion: "Be it resolved that AUSU Council remove Mark Swarek's good standing as an AUSU Member and record him as a member not in good standing, effective immediately."

No information was provided as to what lead Council to this decision, but as indicated in AUSU Policy 4.08, the decision to remove a member from good standing is at the "sole and absolute discretion" of Council. You might remember this Voice article from September 2016 that [featured interviews with various candidates](#) of the AUSU Council by-election. Mark Swarek was one of those candidates. Unfortunately for him, one of the main ramifications of being a member not-in-good-standing is that he will no longer be able to run for a seat on Council.

And with that, the excitement was over. AUSU Executives and staff presented their monthly reports and, as usual, these reports were filled with interesting information about AU meetings, advocacy work, current membership usage of AUSU services, and much more. This month, the highlights were that the #igo2AU contest was a great success that yielded a large increase in social media activity, AUSU mobile app accounts, and course evaluations; AUSU's website is now more interactive, as students can post comments and share articles directly to social media; and lastly, AUSU's Smart Draw subscription expired on November 30<sup>th</sup> and will not be renewed. For the most part, everyone does a good job of providing very detailed reports of their activities, and the reports are well worth the read.

The next Council meeting is scheduled for January 10<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 MST. In the meantime, happy holidays to you and yours!





## Good Riddance 2016

Is it just me or was there more than the usual widespread angst in 2016? Some of it was global in the ferocity and atrocity of war. But, for many, I suspect those images and inconvenient reality are easy enough to ignore. I certainly haven't been moved to take direct action.

Then there's been the continuing, tortuous, over-the-top, mind-blowing drama of the US election cycle. The orange one has shocked and dismayed so many of us. Only in retrospect will we understand his true impact. And yes, it will affect us in Canada too. It's just one more uncertainty that plagues economists and markets. At least our know-it-all brother-in-law will of course, have the answer at Christmas dinner.

If you are a farmer 2016 has been a year of one damn thing after another. On a personal note, we've managed to get the canola we did finish harvesting dry enough that it could be sold. Thank God. Of course, the cost of bringing down the moisture content by the grain company was subtracted from the final cheque amount. All the costs we incurred getting it to that point already cut into our disposable income. Cattle farmers have had additional challenges with feed, bedding, and the delay to the normal fall animal husbandry activities. But, with the usual (misguided) farmer mindset, the battle cry is 'next year will be better.' Then, at the end of your life or farming career, you look around and realize, oh shit, it never did get better!

Maybe you were one of the tens of thousands who lost your job, got a buy-out, had your hours cut, or just gave up trying to get a position. Maybe you're living on employment insurance, savings, social agency programs, or the kindness of strangers. Maybe you are in dire straits. Maybe you're one of those Canadians whose *ratio* of *debt* to disposable income rose to 167.6 per cent. Ouch. The US fed has raised the interest rate by a quarter percent with three more increases likely in 2017. Can Canada be far behind in following suit? Perhaps you're losing sleep wondering how the carbon tax will affect you in 2017. Or waiting to see the changes to the income tax rules next year.

While Queen Elizabeth didn't invent the Latin expression, *annus horribilus* (horrible year), she did use it in a 1992 speech. An abolished monarchy, separation, divorce, affairs, scandals, Diana's tell-all book, phone leaks, and fire ruffled the unflappable monarch.

Wikipedia tells me there is a complementary *annus mirabilis* (wonderful year). May I suggest that after we do the whole Christmas thing and white knuckle our way through those last days of December, we psych ourselves up for *annus mirabilis*! Isn't that half the fun of starting a new planner or journal? The pristine pages of possibility, the fresh start, the chance to try again to make the year memorable and beautiful and fun.

Dear Reader, may you enjoy the blessings of the season and the possibility of a wonderful new year.

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



Dear  
Barb

Barbara Godin

## You Dog, You.

**Dear Barb:**

*I went to our company Christmas party last week and I haven't been back to work since. I drank too much and really screwed up. A co-worker and I ended up dancing and flirting all night. We were one of the last to leave the party and, since we live near each other, decided to share a cab home. Unfortunately, we ended up at a motel and you can guess what happened. I left early in the morning before he got up and haven't spoke to him, or anyone from work, since. I really feel like a piece of crap for this mess up and I don't know what to do now. If I could afford to I would quit my job and put this all behind me, but unfortunately that is not an option for me. I know I will lose my job if I don't do something soon. Do you have any suggestions on how I should deal with this situation? Oh, I forgot to mention my co-worker is married. Embarrassed Emma!*

Hey Emma:

Oops, you messed up! But you're not the first one to do so. You begin by taking responsibility for what you did. It's going to be difficult to face your co-worker. You might want to call or text him to see how he is feeling. There is also his wife to consider and whether she knows. Your co-workers would only be aware of the flirting, unless someone told them what happened afterwards. There are a lot of unknowns. If your co-worker has been to work, he can provide you with a heads

up on what you may be dealing with, but if he hasn't gone in, you will have to take the first step and face the music. Depending on how things develop, and if people are ready to let this go, you may end up moving on to another job. In any event this is a very important life lesson for you. Good luck in the future Emma.

**Dear Barb:**

*I was walking my dog, which is a Doberman, in a nearby park. I often take my dog there and let her off leash. She is a very calm, gentle dog, and has never been aggressive. One Sunday while walking I could see in the distance a couple of people walking two small dogs, also off leash. I wasn't concerned as I knew Lucy was gentle towards other dogs, however one of the other dogs came charging toward Lucy. Of course, Lucy responded with in an angry attack mode towards the little dog, but I don't believe she actually bit it. When the little dog started yelping I called Lucy off, but by this time the owners were yelling at me. They were claiming that I didn't have control over my dog and that their dog was only 10 pounds while mine was 70 pounds. I don't believe it makes any difference, if another dog attacks my dog, that dog is at fault. This ended up with a lot of screaming and hollering between me and the other owners. Who do you think was at fault in this situation? Jeremy.*

Hey Jeremy:

I think you were both at fault, if an owner is going to let their dogs off leash they need to have that dog under control. Your dog may not have done anything like this before, but now you know she is capable of this type of behaviour and therefore she should be kept on leash. Sorry, Jeremy as this may not be the answer that you wanted.

Merry Christmas to all my readers! Looking forward to your questions in the coming year!

Follow Barb on twitter @BarbGod

Email your questions to [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto: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.



*And who did Alan think he was, inviting another dame to our vinyl night?*



No, Emma! Go play your cello! If you bust in there now, she'll suspect we know!



I don't give a fig!

*Meanwhile in Do-Do Land . . .*



I'm so glad we're finally alone, Alan. Listen—there's something you need to know.



I have it from a trusted source that Emma's creating maps to help the Central extremists sabotage our negotiations.



That's poppycock!

You're letting love blind you, Alan! She's been playing you all along! Why do you think she spends so much time with Dewey?

Damn! I knew something was up! I'm going out there!

No, Alan! She'll suspect we know!

**SCREEEE!  
SLAM!**



Oh. Emma. Here you are. That was quick.

Didn't need as much cello practice as I thought. Suspect you know what?



♪ I'll be home for Christmas IF only in my dreams . . . ♪



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



## Lawrence Decore Award for Student Leadership

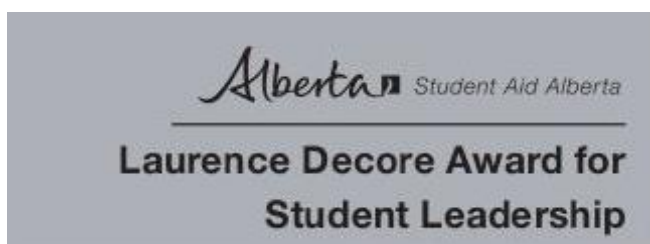
The Laurence Decore Awards for Student Leadership are intended to recognize those post-secondary students who have demonstrated outstanding dedication and leadership to fellow students and to their community. **The award is valued at \$1000.**

Each post-secondary institution in Alberta chooses a winner for one of the awards. The winner for Athabasca University is chosen by the AUSU Awards Committee.

**ELIGIBILITY:** Must be an Alberta resident enrolled full-time (min. \*9 credits) at AU. Nominees must have been involved in student government, societies, clubs or organizations. In addition, candidates may be actively involved in student organizations at the provincial or national level or in non-profit community organizations.

**NOMINATIONS:** The application form is online here. Forms **must be submitted to AUSU at** [admin@ausu.org](mailto:admin@ausu.org).

**Deadline: January 15, 2017**



## IMPORTANT DATES

- **Dec 23:** January course extension deadline
- **Dec 23:** Deadline to book exam for Dec course end date
- **Dec 23 – Jan 2:** 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
- **Jan 15:** Deadline to write exams for Dec course end date

## November Award Winners

AUSU is pleased to announce some of the award winners from the November 2016 Award Cycle. Congratulations to all of the lucky recipients!

### Academic Achievement:

Alison Rowney and Milena Tomol

### Balanced Student Award:

Kelly Ann Jobson and Rosemary Dawn Walbold

### Returning Student Award:

Darcie Fleming and Meara McIntosh

### Peter MacKinnon Student Services Award:

Dongwon Kim

### Student Service Award:

Tim Atlee and Brittany Williams

\*\*\*\*\*

AUSU provides many other awards but not all winners are announced for confidentiality reasons. For more information about the AUSU awards, visit our [website](#).

## Holiday Closures

AUSU is closed for the holidays from December 23 to January 2, inclusive. AU is also closed from December 23 at 3:00pm to January 2, 2017, inclusive.

We re-open for regular business on January 3, 2017.





---

# CLASSIFIEDS

---

Classifieds are free for AU students! Contact [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org) for more information.

---

---

---

## THE VOICE

---

500 Energy Square - 10109 – 106 St NW - Edmonton AB - T5J 3L7  
Ph: 855.497.7003 - Fax: 780.497.7003 attn: Voice Editor

<b>Publisher</b>	Athabasca University Students' Union
<b>Editor-In-Chief</b>	Sarah Cornett
<b>Managing Editor</b>	Karl Low

**Regular Columnists** Hazel Anaka, Barbara Lehtiniemi, S.D. Livingston,  
Wanda Waterman, Barb Godin, Christina Frey,  
Samantha Stevens

---

[www.voicemagazine.org](http://www.voicemagazine.org)

---

*The Voice* is published every Friday in HTML and PDF format.

Contact *The Voice* at [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org).

To receive a weekly email announcing each issue, subscribe [here](#). *The Voice* does not share its subscriber list.

© 2016 by *The Voice Magazine*