



THE VOICE

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AUGSA's Executive Director

An Interview with Ross Tyson

Happy Chinese New Year

Six Things You Should Know

Many Small Steps

The Path to Truth
and Reconciliation

Plus:

A Little History of the Emoji
Trusting Academic Instincts
and much more!



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



We love to hear from you!
Send your questions and comments to 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

Happy Chinese New Year!

Karl Low



Despite my name, I'm not of Asian descent at all. I'm a mixed bag of eastern European and Germanic elements. But that doesn't mean I don't get targeted by telemarketers that are only able to speak in some asian language I can never recognize.

Still, I'm always interested in the cultures and celebrations people have around the world. It's always amazing just how different and how similar we all can be at the same time. So this issue, I was quite happy to get an article explaining some of the traditions specific to the Chinese New Year (not, as it's explained in the article, to be confused with the lunar new year, which is celebrated by many cutlures.)

But in Canada, and especially in the wake of the George Stanley trial, the most common thoughts about other cultures tend to involve that of indigenous Canadians. It's an issue that's been on my mind in a number of ways lately, as if you're involved in literary circles, there's a large debate going on right now about the issue of cultural appropriation. A debate that, although I fully understand the reasons, I was still disappointed it was not touched upon in our recent interview with AU's new Writer in Residence, especially considering how it connects with

AU's own Angie Abdou.

And I'm not alone. The topic of how western and indigenous cultures are intersecting was also on the mind of our own Barbara Lehtiniemi, who looks at what she took from her own coursework in indigenous studies and how it's informed her take on the issues.

Coming back to AU, however, our feature article is an interview with the Executive Director of AU's Graduate Students' Association, highlighting some of the concerns unique to a distance grad program that are even different from the typical undergraduate program.

Next week, I hope to include a short questionnaire that will likely be a very long article, as the Voice Magazine is asking questions of all 19 candidates for the AUSU council election. Find out where they stand on issues that are likely to matter to you, as well as some of what makes them tick. Remember, these are the people who will be deciding what happens not only to your AUSU fees, but also to all of the programs AUSU currently runs. So make sure that the ones you vote for are the ones who will best represent your ideas and ideals. This may be especially important this year as the next council will be present during the next Alberta General Election, a key time to sway politicians into making promises for post-secondary education and when politicians actually start to pay attention to student concerns.

Of course, we also have a selection of our regular articles and some lighter fare, including news, events, scholarships, a brief look at the history of emojis (including the infamous chocolate ice cream emoji—which you probably know as something different), how to make your diet obsession work for you instead of against, and a look at why you might want to just start all over. Enjoy the read!

Meet AUGSA's Executive Director Ross Tyson

Scott Jacobsen



Ross Tyson is the Executive Director of the Athabasca University Graduate Students' Union. He earned a BSc and Med at the University of Alberta. Here he took some time to sit down and talk about how he found AU and the AUGSA, the tasks and responsibilities associated with the position, the open university environment, the big issues for graduate students at AU, and the bigger initiatives hoped for in 2018.

How did you come to find AUGSA and AU in general?

Well, it is an interesting story, Scott. I completed my BSc undergraduate degree and my MEd at the U of A. Originally, I taught with Edmonton Public Schools and served as a School Principal for many years. After retiring from EPSB, I joined Boys and Girls Club of Edmonton.

I served as their Executive Director for eight years and left them in 2013. I was looking to take it easy when I met a former president of AUGSA at our Rotary club. She was talking to me and

happened to mention that this position of Executive Director was open.

I thought, "Oh, this might be something I would be interested in." She said, "Really?" Then I met the current administrator at AUGSA who was heading into a study program. It fit beautifully of course. And here I am.

For the position, for those who do not know how much work goes into it, what are tasks and responsibilities?

As Executive Director, I am the administrator for AUGSA. That means, I am the sole employee of the organization. The four Executive and thirteen Council members are the elected student representatives responsible for the policies and procedures of AUGSA.

As such, my job is to run the organization as determined by Council and to make sure everything is kept current: from finances to website to all of the correspondence that takes place on a daily basis.

Our main job at AUGSA is, of course, to advocate for students and student life and engagement of students, and so on. Every decision we make as an organization is based on the needs of graduate students.

The larger decisions are determined by the Council. So, we have monthly meetings at which I take minutes and provide information and oversight.

The University has an agreement with AUGSA, which is mandated by the PSLA (Post-Secondary Learning Act). This agreement requires AU to pay the association to take care of their students

at so many dollars per credit. That is how we get our resources to operate, through this government agreement.

When you are working on behalf of graduate students at AU, I want to ask this within the framework of an online, open, and distance university because the concerns of students will be different from a bricks-and-mortar institution.

They definitely are. I think they are more pronounced at the undergraduate level, Scott, because the need for many students at an open university situation is to gain significantly more credits to be able to take care of an undergraduate baccalaureate degree compared to a graduate degree.

Once in graduate school, they have a baccalaureate degree under their belt. The interesting part of AUGSA is that we are international and multi-provincial with about one third of students coming from Alberta. Two thirds of our population come from outside of Alberta. Some as far away as Dominica, the US and Europe. It is interesting dealing with that wide and varied population.

It makes for some difficulties in terms of communication. It makes for difficulties for engagement with students because they can't drop into the graduate student office and offer to volunteer for an event.

We conduct our business all online. Additional activities are planned by Council and include meet and greets in various cities in Canada.

What are the big points of graduate students at AU?

Mental health is a big issue for all students, not just graduate students, because of the stressors for students. They have families, jobs, mortgages, kids, student loans, and so on. For example, an MBA student is a significantly different person than an undergraduate, even business, student in that they have been out of school for 10 or often 20 years.

Now, they are back into University learning mode. The average age of our members was surveyed at about 38/39 years of age. With some

AU-thentic Events

Upcoming AU Related Events

New Program Students Orientation (Undergrad)

Tues, February 20, 12:00 to 1:00 pm MST
Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business
business.athabascau.ca/event-details/business-undergraduate-new-students-information-session-feb2018/

Register online at above link

AUSU Election Debate #1

Tues, February 20, 1:00 to 2:00 pm MST
Online

Hosted by AUSU
www.ausu.org/event/election-debate-1/

No pre-registration necessary

AUSU Election Debate #2

Thurs, February 22, 6:00 to 7:00 pm MST
Online

Hosted by AUSU
<https://www.ausu.org/event/election-debate-2/>

No pre-registration necessary

Bannock & Movie "Wings of Johnny May" Part 1

Fri, February 23, 12:00 to 12:50 pm MST
Athabasca University, Peace Hills Trust Tower,
12th floor, Room 1222,
10011 - 109 Street, Edmonton AB

In-person; limited seating

Hosted by AU Centre for World Indigenous
Knowledge and Research

indigenous.athabascau.ca/documentation/Wings.pdf

Register by phone (780)428-2064 or e-mail
ivyl@athabascau.ca

Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA) Info Session

Fri, February 23, 5:00 to 6:00 pm MST
Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business
business.athabascau.ca/event-details/doctorate-business-administration-dba-information-copy/

Register online at above link
looking ahead...

Student Town Hall

Tues, February 27, 12:00 to 1:30 pm MST
Calgary Chamber of Commerce 600, 237 8 Ave SE, Calgary AB

In-person and online via Facebook Live

Hosted by Dr Neil Fassina, AU President

www.facebook.com/events/266678933869439/

No pre-registration necessary

in their 60s and some in their 20s. Most have jobs, and many have families. It makes for a stress-filled few years of work.

Back to mental health, we offer Student Lifeline through Ceridian insurance company. That program is offered free of charge to graduate students to make a phone call to them in many, many areas: family, legal, divorce, stress, money and so on.

They offer three free counselling sessions for these issues per student per year. It is quite an attractive addition to the organization in terms of helping students with their current needs.

We are asked to provide members to sit on the various committees at AU. We sit on the Student Appeals Committee, the Board of Governors with AU and many of the other committees. The HR Committee for example had our members help with the selection of the last Provost, the last President, the head of human resources and the last Director of IT that were hired.

You will recognize that at our annual convocation we help to sponsor the meals for the grads along with AUSU (the undergraduate students' union). We have done that for three years now. We plan to continue with this donation.

We have partnered with the Faculty of Graduate Studies to plan and promote an annual research conference. The students see it as a benefit since they get feedback from profs and fellow students on their research topics and work. Our conference this year is in October.

Looking forward to the 2018 year, what are the bigger initiatives you are hoping to undertake or are undertaking?

AUGSA is an integral part of a graduate student organization at the provincial and national level. We have abGPAC (Alberta Graduate Provincial Advisory Council) which is designed to be an advocacy format for grad students at all the Comprehensive Academic and Research Institutions. Calgary, Lethbridge, U of A and AU are the CARI institutions that are members of abGPAC. We sit with Minister Schmidt, who is for the Minister for advanced education and give advice and direction on any number of issues.

In Ontario, the Ontario Graduate Student Alliance was designed to do the same thing with the Ontario government. We have had a seat on that Council for four years. Keeping in mind that we have a significant portion of our population coming from Ontario, we thought that it was important that we had representation there as well. We formed the OGSA which works the same way as the abGPAC does in Alberta.

Then at the federal government level, we have the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations or CASA. It represents all student organizations across the country in a very effective advocacy and support role with the federal government.

We were recently told that in the last go-around lobbying with MP's (members of parliament), that we were one of the more effective lobbying organizations that the government has come to them. We are pretty pleased about that.

So, we are effective at the provincial and federal government level in terms of advocacy work.

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



A Little History of the Emoji

Carla Knipe



Spend some time on social media or send a text message and it's pretty much guaranteed you will come across some little faces and symbols. Ah yes, it's the emoji. Like them or loathe them, these little visuals are not only augmenting an online conversation, they often **are** the conversation. They express laughter, tears, and just about everything in between. Emojis have become so ubiquitous that they have crossed over to merchandise, greeting cards, stuffed toys, and even a feature length animated film.

How did emojis become what they are? And do they enhance

our communication, or detract from it? There is no easy answer to the second question, but their history can be traced back a lot further than what you might think. Egyptian hieroglyphs and Chinese and Japanese ideograms are examples of visual language, but one argument is that any written alphabet is visual; although most people tend to think of the symbols used for letters as different from other visual symbols.

In terms of using pictures to augment written language, the first real historical example is illuminated manuscripts during the Middle Ages. Intricate illustrations helped to tell the stories within the written text. Sometimes, the illustrations contained secretly embedded alternate meanings and inside jokes that were separate from the written text. Much later, during the 1800s, the early years of mass-market publishing brought a fervor to illustrations. The US-based humour magazine *Puck* is credited with the first use of what we would call an emoji. It put a series of faces alongside the text, conveying joy, melancholy and astonishment. Publishers termed it "typographical art." But the concept was seen as a passing fad and died out until the computer age.

The development of the emoji as we know was formed with the earliest glimmers of the Internet, known as ARPANET. Staff at Carnegie Mellon University communicated with each other through an internal computerized message board, but they discovered that it was difficult to tell the difference between serious, humorous and sarcastic posts in the digital forum. Faculty member Scott Fahlman came up with the first textual representation of faces which he called emoticons, which used keyboard strokes to make different faces--that had to be read sideways of course--but the intention was to guide readers to the intention of the writer's meaning. Fellow computer geeks began using these emoticons in earnest.

When email and the world wide web exploded on the scene in the early to mid 1990s, emoticons really took off. These were the days of dial-up modems and limited bandwidth, which prevented

the use of a lot of graphics. Emoticons expanded their repertoire and became virtual doodles that expressed everything from blowing a raspberry

:-PpPpPp to devilish grins >;) and even wishing someone a happy birthday <:P) that all found widespread use, particularly in Usenet newsgroups and Internet Relay Channel (IRC) chatrooms. Even though the internet has become almost unrecognizable compared to its earlier user interface, emoticons have not entirely disappeared. Many Internet users, especially those of a certain age, still like to pepper their emails with emoticons.

So, what about those little yellow faces we call emojis--the things that make texting more fun? Those were created in 1998 by Shigetaka Kurita, an engineer at the Japanese phone company, NTT Docomo. He took the ideograms of Asian writing and extrapolated them into a way for customers to communicate through icons. He derived the term emoji from the Japanese words for "picture" and "character." The resemblance to the English words "emotion" and "emoticon" was purely coincidental. The result was an initial set of 176 icons that drew inspiration from manga, Chinese characters, and the symbols used in weather reports and street signs.

Kurita and his team worked on the emoji computer code, but it wasn't until the programming became standardized in 2010 that emojis worked in all texting programs for mobile phones, in a programming language called Unicode. The Unicode standard also took the process of using emoticon keystrokes to render them into a visually pleasant face to read right side up instead of sideways. Japanese telecoms providers were the first to embrace emojis as part of their mobile phone code, and although these are viewed as a fun feature that wasn't very practical, users went crazy over them. More characters and symbols were added, and the artistry of the emoji continually improved. Crafting the perfect emoji was serious business.

Emojis might still be unique to Japanese phones if it weren't for Steve Jobs and Apple. When the iPhone was in its initial development, Apple took notice of emojis and recognized the potential for them in its iPhone technology. Apple also took the code and used it for its iOS operating system for other devices. As what often happens in the tech world, other companies took notice and the popularity of emojis exploded in western markets. Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp adopted them which led to them becoming what they are today. It is not an exaggeration to say that as emojis became standardized, they took over the world.

The popularity of emojis continues to skyrocket. The palate of emojis has expanded to a current repertoire of over 1800 (including the infamous poop emoji), and there are cultural variations between them. The detail of emojis, particularly with faces, is also improving and in 2015, Apple added diversified colours for its face emojis to reflect different races. Emojis are used to the point that they have acquired a cult-like following in pop culture lore and fans take them very seriously. In October 2017, users noticed that Google's revision to the cheeseburger emoji on Android placed the cheese underneath the patty while Apple's iOS placed the cheese on top. This created a firestorm of debate that made international news headlines. Google quickly responded and vowed to correct it. In late November 2017, Apple announced new emojis including the first animated emoji.

But are emojis just a bit of fun or are they a valid tool for communication? This is a matter of huge debate. Just as shortening words in "text message-ese" is frowned upon in certain circles, the inappropriate use of emojis may also have a negative effect on the intended message. For example, the current "rules" and decorum of writing are such that an academic essay or job application written in text message shorthand or dotted with emojis would be frowned upon. However, since emojis are still quite new, psychologists and linguists are just beginning to assess

what the phenomenon means for language and communication across cultures. Although these cute little symbols are designed to be a visual aid to convey meaning in conversation, it is yet unclear how that affects interpretation of the message compared to having in-person chats. There is still no guarantee that textual conversations, even when peppered with the clues provided by emojis, won't contain ambiguities that misinterprets intended meaning from the sender to the receiver.

But, one thing is for certain, the rapid pace of technology, and especially the explosion of social media in the past decade, has had a similar effect on the method and speed of how people communicate with each other. Just as people easily understand the intended meaning that other signs and symbols convey in the real world (such as the walk symbol on traffic lights or the airport sign with the airplane pointing upward indicating the way to the departures level) emojis may end up being the primary tools to help people navigate in the digital world. But whether you enjoy them or think that they are another indication that language is dumbing down, it is clear that emojis aren't going away anytime soon. But aren't you glad you no longer have to turn your head sideways to read them?

Carla admits that she likes to lightly sprinkle her online conversations with emojis. Her favourite is the crying with laughter emoji, but she swears she has never, ever used the "brown triangle with eyes" one.



Many Small Steps on the Path to Truth and Reconciliation A personal journey

Barbara Lehtiniemi



"We live on an island surrounded by a sea of ignorance. As our island of knowledge grows, so does the shore of our ignorance." — John Archibald Wheeler (1911-2008), American theoretical physicist.

Should every university program require mandatory indigenous-content courses? That's a question I pondered in 2016 after reading Tamra Ross's article, "[Truth and Reconciliation—Will Your Next University Program Have a First Nations' Content Requirement?](#)" (*The Voice Magazine*, February 19, 2016). In that article, Tamra discussed a motion put forward by the student union at the University of Saskatchewan (USSU), calling on that university to incorporate indigenous content into every program.

The USSU request was inspired by the 2015 "[Call to Action](#)" report from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The TRC's purpose is to "redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation." In the section on "Education for Reconciliation" the report calls upon educators to "integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into

classrooms" as well as build "student capacity for intercultural understand, empathy, and mutual respect."

By the end of 2016, two Canadian post-secondary institutions, Lakehead University in Ontario and the University of Winnipeg in Manitoba, had taken the initiative and implemented a requirement for new students to include indigenous course content in their programs. In 2017, a third institution, Trent University in Ontario, also instituted mandatory indigenous content.

Other universities are contemplating similar changes. University of Saskatchewan, for example, announced in 2016 it was planning to institute mandatory indigenous content in its programs but has not moved to implementation yet. Other institutions are likewise in the planning stages or have partially implemented mandatory indigenous content for some programs only.

AU has not yet announced a plan for mandatory indigenous content. However, one doesn't have to wait for something to be mandatory to recognize the value of it. Truth and Reconciliation is something we can all participate in. Every step we take toward understanding gets us closer to overcoming the challenges of a complex issue. The more we know, the more we grow.

In 2017, I decided to make my first individual step toward Truth and Reconciliation by enrolling in an Indigenous Studies (INST) course at AU. Up until that time, I had not even considered any of the INST course offerings.

AU offers twenty-three INST courses at the undergrad level. *Indigenous Studies I* (INST 203) seemed like the obvious place to start, but I had fulfilled all my junior-level course requirements. There were many senior-level courses to choose from and, after narrowing it down to three, I decided on *History of Canada's First Nations to 1830* (INST 368).

I have an avid interest in Canadian History. I consider myself reasonably well-read on the subject and fairly knowledgeable, but I recognized that there were gaps in my knowledge and would have described my awareness of First Nations' history as only "fair".

That turns out to be an overstatement.

Aristotle said, "The more you know, the more you know you don't know." That sums up my feelings as I worked through the course. I'd had no idea how much I didn't know. Now I know that what I *do know* is still only a small fraction of what I *ought to know*.

History of Canada's First Nations to 1830 covers a lot of ground. The first third of the course focuses on First Nations before European contact. There were no borders then and the course acknowledges that by covering First Nations in all of what we now call North and South America. The second third of the course covers the initial period of contact and how various First Nations dealt with Europeans arriving on their doorsteps. The final third of the course covers the increasing pressure European settlers and policies put on First Nations.

Does my taking this one course change anything? Does this represent even a fraction of a step in the Truth and Reconciliation journey? What I can say for certain is that it is not a step backward.

Taking this course increased my knowledge of First Nations' history exponentially (although nowhere near exhaustively.) More importantly, it increased my awareness of how we got to where we are today, with a complex mess that was centuries in the making. That doesn't solve anything by itself. But you have to start with the *truth* to get to the *reconciliation*. All journeys begin with one step forward.

I'm not indigenous, and I don't claim to speak for anyone indigenous or otherwise. I speak with my own voice.

I believe we're all part of the bigger picture. And every action (or non-action) contributes to the result.

I believe charting a course for our future is predicated on knowing our past.

I believe if enough people care enough to seek truth, we'll eventually accomplish reconciliation. Residential schools were not just an isolated incident. It's not just a matter of saying, "Oops, sorry!" without a fundamental change in thinking. The legacy of the residential school program may have been the catalyst for the TRC but residential schools were just one example of disastrous policies in a long line of such tragedies.

The TRC's Call to Action is also a call for a change in attitude. And that's not up to the government or a committee or God Almighty. It's up to every one of us. If everyone is taking small steps on the path to reconciliation then society as a whole will be propelled forward toward the country we claim we want to have.

So to the question about mandatory indigenous content in university programs. There are proponents and opponents in both indigenous and non-indigenous communities for such a plan. But it's so easy to get bogged down in the debate instead of taking action.

My answer is that I don't think we need a university or a prime minister to tell us that "We have to do better." The truth is, we can all choose to do better without being told.

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



Unearthing classic articles from previous issues of *The Voice Magazine*.

With the 2018 Winter Olympics in full swing in Pyeongchang, South Korea, we take a backward glance at Olympics past.

Sorry, Pyeongchang! Maybe next time! When the city of Vancouver BC was awarded the 2010 Olympic Winter Games, writes Stephen Thomson, not everyone was celebrating (especially not Pyeongchang, South Korea.) "The bidding process is kind of like a box of chocolates; you never know what you're going to get." [Olympic Win Gets Mixed Reaction](#), July 9, 2003.

Performance Pressure. Debbie Jabbour applies sports psychology to the competition to get to the competition. "It reminded me of the sometimes unjust and exclusionary tactics used by universities to keep post secondary education accessible to only the elite, top academic performers." From *My Perspective—The Olympics*, August 25, 2004.

Six Things to Know about Chinese New Year

Xin Xu



As I child, I would talk about the lunar new year instead of Chinese New Year. My father would correct me. “You mean Chinese New Year”. He corrected me not because he wasn’t aware the festivities were shared with many Eastern Asian cultures, but that the way our family celebrated the new year was particular to the Chinese culture and, sometimes, quite different from that of our neighbors: the South Koreans, Japanese, Malaysians, Vietnamese and other Southeast Asian folks. Every day, the lunar new year falls on a different day so, even as an adult, I never know exactly which day it falls on (until Google reminds me). Sometimes it comes at the

end of January, other years it would be mid to late February. The reason is that the lunar calendar follows the cycles of moon, obviously, rather than the sun as in the Gregorian system. One way I explained the lunar new year to my multi-cultured classmates was that the importance of this celebration was equivalent to Christmas in Western cultures. Hence, what are several rituals that you should know about the holiday?

On New Year we wear red. Red is the color of fortune and the folly of not wearing red on the first few days of new year might mean a year’s worth of trials and tribulations. Superstitious, I know! But the tradition is significant and very much honored.



Red not white envelopes. You might be wondering why these miniature envelopes suddenly come into view at major Canadian banks or are exchanged during festivities. Red envelopes, also known as “lai see” in Cantonese or “hong bao” in Mandarin, are monetary gifts traditionally gifted from older to younger generations. The sum of money usually ends in an even number as this is considered to be prime fortune. If you’re an expert on Chinese culture, you might even be aware that certain numbers carry underlying meanings. For example, the number eight rhymes with the word prosperity in Chinese and is a common value gifted. The number six

rhymes with smooth and is a value given to promote smooth sailing in the gift-receiver's career, academic endeavors, and life aspirations.

Year of the Dog. You might also be aware that each year correlates with each of the twelve animals in the Chinese zodiac. If the zodiac animal corresponds to your birth year, then an old saying goes that you should always wear red underwear. Red-colored underwear will help ward off unlucky spirits. Moreover, each zodiac year presents its own set of fortunes and misfortunes. For example, the dog symbolizes loyalty in one's career and relationships, but individuals born in this zodiac year should remain flexible and open to new opportunities.



Eating rice cake. The Chinese love puns. In fact, the word used for rice cake is a play on words for “higher each year”. The metaphor speaks to a desire for betterment in each new year. Rice cakes can be store-bought or even homemade. You might be wondering, “What is a rice cake?” Don’t be deceived by the word cake, because this dish could be prepared as a dessert or as a savory entree. The rice cake tastes gelatinous and chewy, quite unlike any other cakes you’ve had!

I’ll be home for the New Year. Similar to Christmas, not reuniting with family for the New Year induces a significant deal of guilt in the individual. Having visited my extended family in Shanghai during the festivities, I noticed a handful of commercials that reminded individuals to visit their loved ones. Hence, each year, in the weeks leading up to Chinese New Year, a great migration begins consisting of hundreds of millions of people rushing home. This picture was taken a few days before Chinese New Year last year at one train station.



Chinese door banners. The Chinese refer to these as red couplets given that they are always attached in pairs. The tradition of these couplets originated in the Five Dynasties in 900 A.D. The Spring couplet is written on red paper with black calligraphy ink. Typically, a professional calligrapher is invited to express their good wishes. Many excellent couplets are passed down from generation to generation.

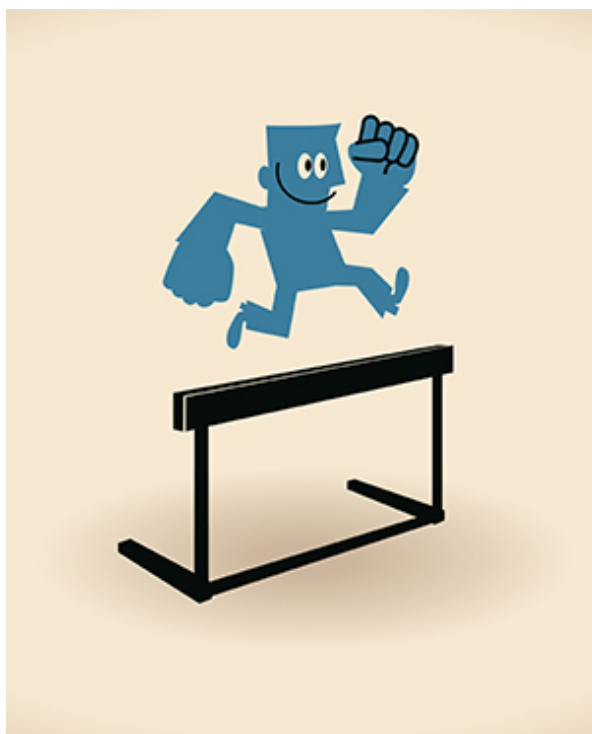
Xin Xu is a post-graduate health-science AU student, aspiring clinician, globe-trotter, parrot-breeder and tea-connoisseur



The Fit Student

Eat Your Worms

Marie Well



Would you eat worms? A rat buffet? Hamburger Helper? If so, you're well on your way to a three-thousand calorie day.

My favorite childhood memories? Me and Mom munching crazy dishes: gizzards, livers, and cow tongues. Even Papa joined the charade, chomping snake meat, frog legs, and other crawlies. To this day, Papa boasts watching a show about a nine-course rat buffet.

But once, Mom brought me a bowl of writhing worms. Memories of a documentary on tapeworms reeled in my skull. Mom whispered, "I'll tell you what it is after." When I humbly handed back a barely eaten plate, Mom let on, "It's cow gut." I could've stomached guts, brains, bees—but not worms.

Later, as a young adult, I came to live with Mom, my bones visible. So, Mom fattened me. She cheered when I gulped liters of chocolate milk in one swallow. She clapped when I ate not seconds, but third helpings of roast beef dinner. Yes, I felt that mother-daughter

foody bond. But I ballooned, gaining up to seven pounds in a single month.

Later, Mom shooed me out of her house. A grandchild needed her love more. "Your weight will level off," Mom reassured. But in my new home, I ballooned bigger. I'd open my fridge every five minutes, wolfing foods I hated. Kraft Dinner. Campbell's Tomato Soup. Hamburger Helper.

One morning, my weight tipped 180. I screamed, cried, paced. Twenty-four hours later, I changed my world. I started swimming backstrokes, a hundred laps each day. I filled my plates half full. I timed my chewing to the second hand of the clock.

Half a year later, I lost forty pounds. But then I turned anorexic. Then super fit. Then fat. Then skinny. Then sickly. All during a twenty-year timespan.

Since then, I stumbled on how to stay fit without starving: no sugar, no flour—and daily exercise. Vera Tarman, MD, and Philip Werdell show how to halt food addiction in their book *Food Junkies: The Truth about Food Addiction*.

- Why worry about food addiction? "Late-stage food addicts finally realize they have no control over food, although many die before they reach this stage ... But a small number 'get it' before the downward spiral happens" (p. 107).
- The cure for food addiction? "Stop eating sugar, flour, and processed foods and ... stop drinking soda" (p. 159). In sum, "eliminate the major addictive foods, such as sugar, flour, excess fat, and caffeine" (p. 169).
- What! No sugar? "No amount of willpower ... can withstand the powerful addictive impulses ... sparked by ... sugars and starches" (p. 158).
- And no flour? "While many understand that sugar is toxic, people are less likely to identify flour, especially in its 'healthy' disguises, such as whole-wheat pasta or multi-grain breads, as a danger" (p. 159).

- No wheat! Wheat fosters food addicts: “Some clinicians ... claim that the gluten in wheat promotes an opiate-like response in the brain” (p. 160).
- Cut out bad fats, too: “Many fatty foods are addictive ... [B]e selective about which fats are eliminated ... such as trans fats and some saturated fats” (p. 160).
- No caffeine, no artificial sweeteners, no salt: “Another substance that recovered food addicts avoid is salt” (p. 160). Plus, they “remove artificial sweeteners and caffeine completely from their diets” (p. 162).
- What should you eat? “Our proposed diet [is] of green and brown vegetables, proteins, and healthy fats” (p. 169).
- And record every calorie. Food addicts “constantly underestimate their food intake. Unless asked to keep a food diary, they forget about their daily cola and morning bagel slathered with jam” (p. 107).
- Measure everything you eat: “Food ... addicts need the discipline of using a food scale or a set of measuring cups and spoons to measure portions of food” (p. 164). Cart your weigh scale to restaurants.
- And never cheat: “Cheating by having a bite here or a spoonful there is also an excellent way to suffer withdrawal in perpetuity” (p. 169).

Yes, gone are my dreams of barbecued worms, gophers, and bees. Now, sugar-free, I feel sickened by the scent of cookies; enlightened by the stench of freshly cracked cans of kidney beans.



Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: A-1 Auto Transport Annual Scholarship

Sponsored by: A-1 Auto Transport

Deadline: March 10, 2018

Potential payout: up to \$1000

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be current full- or part-time students at an accredited or non-accredited institute, truck driving school, or other logistics program, and have a minimum GPA of 3.0.

What's required: An e-mail with contact and school info, along with a minimum 1000-word essay/article on a topic related to A-1 Auto Transport's site (suggested topics provided.)

Tips: Check out the previous essay submissions posted on the site.

Where to get info: www.alautotransport.com/a-1-auto-transport-scholarship/



Trusting Academic Instincts

Deanna Roney



Submitting my first essay for my first graduate level course was stressful; it was probably similar to the first essay I submitted for my undergraduate course. I spent a lot of time preparing quotes, editing, editing, and then a bit more editing. I used a trick taught by *The Voice Magazine's* editor and worked through my essay backward to read each sentence on its own. Reading straight through sentences can blend them together making fragments go unnoticed. It was four pages of highlighting.

I hit submit, and then remembered the many questions after each asking me if I

am *sure* I want to submit—by the final question I was doubting it. However, I took the plunge and pressed yes, again.

I know I was overthinking the essay. I over thought the depth I needed to go, or rather, the amount of information I needed to cover, which sacrificed depth. I had read through it so many times that I was no longer sure what I was even reading. I had taken breaks and come back to it and it got to a point that I needed to let it go.

For the following week, I tried to bury the anxiety of what was going to come back. This was it, it was either going to boost my confidence or shatter it. I imagined all kinds of outcomes; I thought about the essay, and I thought about ways I should have focused it more: I had been too scattered; I tried to cover too much.

But the essay came back, and I did well—could have done better—but it did not shatter my confidence. The areas to improve were ones I had been stressed about, but there were many good comments, and I reminded myself that I am not taking these courses because I already know what I am doing. I am taking them to learn. To figure out what I am doing, to learn how to analyze and dissect novels to another level. This essay showed me that I have the ability to do this work at this level, I have insights into novels that I need to trust and learn to explore.

This first essay showed me more than just how to improve my next one. It showed me to trust myself, that the imagery I commented on was worthwhile—that it was an impressive observation. When I was overthinking the essay some of these observations were ones I had considered cutting from the essay altogether; I had evidence to back up the observations but were these meaningful enough?

It is easy to get lost in the work, but it is important to remember that you are not here to prove what you already know. You are here to learn, to improve. And I know that for the next essay I will trust my instincts. I will take the feedback, and I will improve my critique. There is always room for growth, whether that first paper gets a 100% or not, what would the point of all this be if not for personal growth?

Deanna is an AU graduate who loves adventure in life and literature. Follow her path on the writing journey at <https://deannaroney.wordpress.com/>



**Brittany Daigle****Course Exam****Brittany Daigle****CMIS 311—Supporting End-User Computing**

CMIS 311 (Supporting End-User Computing) is a three-credit business and administrative studies course that has no prerequisites, though “students are expected to have experience using Microsoft Office products.” Students should take CMIS 245 (Computers and Management Information Systems) which focuses on the four primary applications, including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access if they are concerned about their Microsoft Office skills. If you are interested in learning more about this course, read my [CMIS 245 Course Exam Article](#).

Supporting End-User Computing is comprised of three main units and four assignments (technically projects) weighing twenty-five percent each. This course does not have a midterm or final exam. The three units within this course cover topics such as customer service skills, how to troubleshoot computer problems, common support related problems, help desk operations, how to properly address customer issues, and how to solve customer issues.

The four projects can be very time consuming, though easy, for the most part. The first project requires students to write a one-or-two-page written report, design a simple website (basic knowledge of writing in HTML would be beneficial), create a PowerPoint presentation, create a user guide, write a troubleshooting script, and write steps on how to enable software features. The second project requires students to write a brief analysis, design a website layout, create a survey, write a product comparison, and create a project charter. The third project has students installing software, explaining how to obtain and use that software in a Word document, writing a simple short script (experience with [AutoHotkey](#) would help), taking a survey and comparing results, and benchmarking PC internet connections. Finally, the fourth project is something that students will want to start early within their course contract. This project requires students to post support requests, respond to others’ support requests, and compile all the requests into a Word document.

Terrence Taylor, the coordinator and developer of CMIS 311, has been with Athabasca University for almost thirty years. Also, he is the coordinator and tutor for [COMP 210](#) (Introduction to Information Systems and Computer Applications), [COMP 214](#) (Interactive Technologies), [COMP 282](#) (Social Aspects of Games, Leisure, and Entertainment), and [COMP 283](#) (Effective Use of Myths and Facts in Computer Games); meanwhile, a coordinator for [CMIS 245](#) (Computers and Management Information Systems), and a tutor for [CMIS 351](#) (Computers and Management Information Systems).

Taylor states, “CMIS 311 is a project-based course in User Support and aims to develop competence in a wide range of related areas, including direct user support, troubleshooting, benchmarking, product evaluation, effective communication, training, support website planning and helpdesk management. A combination of reading assignments from the text and hands-on exercises are used.”

He continues, “Like any course, CMIS 311 requires that students engage in the readings and activities in a systematic and attentive manner. Do not gloss over the textbook reading just

because you do not have to spit it all back out on a multiple-choice exam. The text provides great context and detail relating to the assignment activities. As the assignments are practical, I think students generally find them interesting, which motivates them to put in the extra effort. The standard of achievement certainly reflects that as I rarely see a carelessly or inadequately completed activity.”

When asked which students he would recommend this course to, he states “Any one who thinks they may at some point have a training or support role, or anyone who thinks (as I do) that some knowledge in this area will strengthen your own computing skills and competence, by making you better at being able to support your own use, and better able to relate to external support when you need it. Students will get a better understanding of how to support other users when called upon to do so, and a better understanding of user support in general. We all will have many situations in our computing careers where we are either offering or needing support or training, or where we are in collaborative situations where these skills can be applied.”

I recently completed this course and, overall, I enjoyed it. This course allows you to apply your creative Microsoft Office skills to the projects. For example, each of the assignments are graded heavily on design, meaning that they want you to insert photos and make use of different fonts, font sizes, headers, and background colors to make your work more visually appealing. Also, I feel like the assignments gradually became less demanding. For instance, project one took a lot more time than project two, project two took more time than project three, and project four did not take much time whatsoever. I would recommend this course to every Computer Science student or anyone that wants to learn more about tech support positions.

Brittany Daigle is 22 years old and completing her BSc in Computing Science & Information Systems with AU from Toronto, Ontario.



Starting Over

Tara Panrucker



Embracing a major life change late in life is no easy task. Perhaps a marriage did not turn out the way you expected and you found yourself single after envisioning a long life together with one person. Perhaps your job ended unexpectedly and options remain scarce to continue in the same field. Or perhaps where you are no longer befits who you’ve become. People change. Jobs and housing markets change. The costs of living change. And values change. But though starting over as an adult can be difficult, a fresh start somewhere new is exciting and doable. Equipped with experience and pre-

planning skills, moving can be the best decision you’ve ever made. Additionally, taking university courses online through AU makes it simple to take your education with you anywhere you move.

However, there are obstacles to overcome. Your fears, emotional ties to family and friends, or lack of income due to job loss must be faced and dealt with. You may go through various stages: over-analysis, paralysis, or even depression. You may also need to consider children or pets and

how moving will affect them. Ignoring your emotions is not realistic. Talk to friends and family, talk to your doctor or a counselor. It's important to have emotional support to get through. If all else fails, Google specific help you're looking for and read articles, blogs, and books by people who have gone through similar life changes. You will pick up practical advice and online support to give you the courage to move forward. Additionally, remember to take care of your health and eat plenty of fruits and vegetables, drink lots of water, and get enough rest. Avoiding drugs and alcohol as coping mechanisms will help you think clearly and make the best decisions for your future.

Next, ask yourself some questions and answer them honestly. Where do you want to move? What type of climate do you prefer? What kind of people do you want to meet: artists, social activists, or ambitious professionals? Can you make a living there? Can you work online—in that case, you can live anywhere. Scout your new city beforehand; stay at an affordable Airbnb or with friends since locals typically know inside information about their town. Then, follow the checklist below and move closer to your goal:

1. Get 3-5 quotes from movers. You will notice a wide gap in pricing – ensure you are paying for the best service by reputable movers for peace of mind.
2. Prune your possessions and donate or sell items you no longer use. Not only does this cut down on moving costs, but it frees up space for your new start.
3. Ensure you have enough money set aside for living expenses until you have an income.
4. Hunt online for a new home to rent or buy. Renting through a property management company is a safe way to ensure you're renting from a reputable landlord.
5. Notify all utilities, credit card companies, driver's license, family, and friends of your change of address.
6. Job search ahead of time. Bookmark all online job boards in your new community for quick access. Update and polish your resume with your new address and contact information.
7. Drop your usual routine. Trying to stick to it will only cause added stress. Simply accept things will be up in the air for a few months and plan to begin a new routine once you are settled in your new home.
8. Once you've moved, join newcomers clubs or meet-ups that will get you out into your new community and connecting with new friends. If you can, find and phone the local welcome wagon or community association. A friendly representative may help you get to know local businesses and also present you with nice gifts to welcome you to your new home.
9. Accept uncertainty and embrace the unknown. Think of it as a new adventure and visualize all the good things ahead.
10. Pack all your items in boxes and totes; label everything with tape and a marker so the moving company will place them in the proper rooms in your new home for ease of unpacking.

Undoubtedly, starting over is not for the faint of heart. It takes determination, courage, and a clear vision of where you want to be. Starting over because you've obtained your AU degree or you want to get out of rut can be tough. Yet, after your wealth of experience and knowledge, you can do better this time around. What is the worst that can happen? If you don't like your new home, you can always move back. But nothing comes with a guarantee; welcome the unknown and go for it!

Tara Panrucker is currently enrolled in an AU online English course to help hone her writing skills and eventually achieve a General Arts Degree. She is a freelance writer and avid enjoyer of the outdoors, currently residing on Vancouver Island.



Canadian Science News

Scott Jacobsen



Federal Funding for Basic Science Research May Increase

CP24 News said that the research community of Canada has, for a long time, wanted a substantial increase in funding for science. 2018 may be the year for this to happen. With the Liberal government federal budget being only a few weeks away, there is a predicted or expected “lift” for basic science research.

The article claims that there has been an increase in the confidence for the academic world on the potential for an increase

funding. This may address some of the concerns of the previous year with the national review on the state of fundamental science.

Some concerns have been raised about a possible focus on basic or fundamental science research and a resulting lack of focus on other areas of science. However, some disagree. Nobina Robinson, Chief Executive of Polytechnics Canada, said, “I don't really care for this discussion around unfettered research versus applied research... A G7 country should be able to do both.”

Canada in Potential Risk for Decline in Relative Space Science

CBC News: Technology & Science noted that the unmanned SpaceX Falcon Heavy rocket was launched on Tuesday, in the afternoon. It launched from launch pad 39A at Cape Canaveral—the same pad as the Apollo 11 spacecraft. Andrew Radar, a graduate of Carleton University in Ottawa, was the mission manager and is one of the top executives within SpaceX.

Relative to other countries, Canada has declined in its previous dominance in the area of rocket innovation and science, according to the article. Professor of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Victoria, Afzal Suleman, said, “My feeling is that, at the end of the day, our sovereignty could be at risk...With crucial technology, if we depend on foreign entities, we are basically dependent. Do we want to depend on [other countries] to have these capabilities?”

Brown Mouse to Help with Research into Human Neuromuscular Diseases

The Vancouver Sun stated that a special brown mouse in Fabio Rossi's lab at the University of British Columbia carries a specific genetic mutation that is for muscular dystrophy. The brown mouse with the genetic defect is being used to study neuromuscular diseases found in human beings.

Unfortunately, especially for the squeamish, the poor little brown mouse has to have Australian tiger snake venom injected into the muscle tissue in order to see the mouse's own regenerative response. According to Rossi, the injected venom “burns.”

Canada is criticized for its treatment of animals in research. The Executive Director for the Canadian Centre for Alternatives to Animal Methods, Charu Chandrasekera, said, “Animal research has been the foundation of biomedical research for the last 100 years,” continuing, “It's

difficult to initiate culture change. It's a paradigm shift that we need. We're not ready to end animal testing tomorrow morning, but we certainly need to start moving in that direction."

Meteorites and the Telus World of Science Edmonton

Global News reports that the facility director, Frank Florian, for the planetarium and space sciences gets a lot of calls about the Telus World of Science Edmonton. Florian talked about receiving many calls from members of the Alberta community regarding the "bright fireball" that crossed the province, among others.

It turned out to be a meteor. Florian described how this could be valuable for the discovery meteorites in order for "researchers, astronomers, geologists" to look into the early history of the Solar System.

"When we take a look at these rocks from space, they kind of give us a clue about what the solar system was made out of... four and a half billion years ago," Florian said, "Meteorites, because of their rarity and that they're not of this earth, they do have some monetary value but again, the big thing... is their scientific value."

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



Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

Following What's Hot around AU's Social Media Sites.

AthaU Facebook Group

Chris stirs up team spirit with information about Olympic athletes who have an AU connection. Alison questions the disparity between AU and ProctorU exam-request timelines. Stephanie is looking to connect with other students doing a BA in Anthropology and several human beings respond.

Other posts include access to course materials, feline study buddies, and Office 365 access.

Youtube

The Feb 15 MBA application deadline has passed, but you can get a head-start on the May 15 deadline with the AU Faculty of Business - MBA Application Workshop video.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: " Learning online can be intimidating. #AthaU's MOOC: Learning to Learn Online starts Feb. 26 & is open to ALL...plus it's free: <http://ow.ly/Otwx30i7pLF> #CdnPSE #EduCanada #elearning #MOOC."

@AthabascaUSU (AUSU) tweets: "AUSU election debates are coming up! <http://bit.ly/2ExHRWP> ...Submit an idea for an election debate question and like this post for a chance to win an AUSU swag pack! Reply to this post with your questions or email to ausu@ausu.org."





Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

Stuck in the Middle

Dear Barb:

I am the mother of two teenagers and I work full time and take care of my aging parents, plus my husband takes care of his aging parents. We are so busy taking care of everyone that we don't have a life of our own. We both have siblings and they are doing what they can. The stress is wearing on our relationship, both with each other and our teenaged daughter. Our parents are fairly healthy, they just need someone to check up on them and do their shopping and stuff like that, which wouldn't be a problem if we weren't both working full time. Help! We want to be there for our parents, but we also want to have our own life. Thanks, Julie.

Hi Julie:

You are presenting an all too familiar scenario, called the sandwich generation. You have your own family to take care of and now your parents need you to care for them as well. It's a difficult place to be in, but you can learn to manage.

First you need to step back from the situation to get some perspective. Talk to your parents, their doctor and any other professionals they are dealing with and find out what kind of care they need. After you have a better picture of what is required of you

and your siblings, you need to have a family meeting. You cannot take this on yourself. Also you mentioned you have a teenager, perhaps they can help with the care of their grandparents. They can shovel the driveway, cut the grass or pick up some groceries. This is a family affair and everyone needs to get involved.

Don't be afraid to reach out to the resources that are available in the community. For example, you could have meals on wheels come in to deliver fully prepared meals to your parents and your parent's in-law. This will ensure they are getting a healthy meal, when preparing meals becomes too much for them. You could also explore housekeeping services for your parents. Vacuuming and cleaning bathrooms becomes a cumbersome task for someone with a health issue.

But in addition to caring for your parents, you need to take care of yourself. If you are tired and not eating right, you are not going to have the energy to care for anyone. Make sure you get a good night's sleep and make healthy food choices which will keep you from getting sick. Most importantly, take some time away from your parents. Let your siblings take over while you go on a short vacation, like a weekend getaway. Also make sure you take time to participate in family activities. Take a skiing vacation with your kids, or a day out hiking or to the beach. Most importantly keep the lines of communication open with your parents, spouse and children. At this point your parents do not seem to be needing a lot of care, so now is the time to discuss the future and what choices you and your siblings will make when more care is needed. Take a deep breath and pace yourself, you can do this Julie.

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.





She lied to me,
Maeve, and I
believed her! She
betrayed my trust.
I don't know if I
can forgive her.

With time, Fumes.

I'll never trust
anyone again.

You will. And next
time you'll know.

Know what?

That sometimes
trusting means
forgiving
in advance.





AUSU
ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY
STUDENTS' UNION

This space is provided by AUSU. The Voice does not create this content. Contact services@ausu.org with any questions.

IMPORTANT DATES

- **Feb 15:** [March degree requirements deadline](#)
- **Feb 28:** [Deadline to apply for course extension for Mar](#)
- **Feb 28:** [AUSU General Election Ballots Open](#)
- **Mar 6:** [Last day to vote in the AUSU General Election](#)
- **Mar 8:** [Special Meeting to Announce Election Results](#)
- **Mar 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Apr 1](#)
- **Mar 15:** [April degree requirements deadline](#)

Election Candidates Announced

AUSU is holding a general election in February 2018. We are pleased to announce we have 19 candidates!

To find out more about each candidate, just click on their name below:

- [Sandra Boivin](#) (Montreal, QC)
- [Brittany T.M. Daigle](#) (Toronto, ON)
- [Lana Deets](#) (Edmonton, AB)
- [Natasha Donahue](#) (Barrhead, AB)
- [Darcy Fleming](#) (Lethbridge, AB)
- [Melinda Goertz](#) (Athabasca, AB)
- [Christine Hudder](#) (Palmer Rapids, ON)
- [Alexandria Kowalski](#) (Calgary, AB)
- [Sarah Blayney Lew](#) (Kingston, ON)
- [Amanda Lipinski](#) (Prince George, AB)
- [Jenna Mohamed](#) (Edmonton, AB)
- [Alice Namu](#) (Toronto, ON)
- [Lisa Orcheski](#) (Edmonton, AB)
- [Lionel Pinkhard](#) (South Africa)
- [Joshua Ryan](#) (Orleans, ON)
- [Brandon Simmons](#) (Duffield, AB)
- [Paddy Storey](#) (Hixon, BC)
- [Mark Teeninga](#) (Stoney Creek, ON)
- [Julian Teterenko](#) (Edmonton, AB)

If you have any questions, please contact the Chief Returning Officer, Jacqueline Keena, at cro@ausu.org.

Election Debates

Do you want to learn more about the election candidates and hear their views on important topics?

Join in on AUSU's 2018 Election Debates!

They are being held by teleconference and all members are welcome to attend! There are three election debates, each with 8 or 9 candidates signed up.

Debate 1: Tuesday, February 20 at 1pm MT

Debate 2: Thursday, February 22 at 6pm MT

Debate 3: Saturday, February 24 at 1pm MT

The instructions to join the teleconference debates can be found online [here](#).

Have Ideas for Question to Ask the Candidates?

Email your questions to us at ausu@ausu.org for a chance to win an AUSU swag pack!

You can also find out more about the candidates and ask them questions in the online [AUSU election forum](#).



CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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