



# THE VOICE

Vol 26 Issue 18 2018-05-04

## Meeting the Minds

Dr. Bob Barnettson

## Choosing a Career Path

Tips & Resources

## Sunburn & Screen Protectors

Don't Leave Home Without It

*Plus:*

*The Secret to Confidence  
Course Exam: COMP 361  
and much more!*



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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Good Morning,

Imagine my surprise, when I open up an email in my browser at work to see a photographic image of a dog defecating in the body of said email. Not that it matters, but there is no tie to the image in the adjoining content. Adding images for sensationalism, good, bad or indifferent has led us to an era, where intelligence and expected intelligence have a low valuation.

So it should come as no surprise, that I am unsubscribing to your online magazine as I'm sure the content is not worth my time, since it was not worth the editor's time to consider the ramifications of such imagery.

Marcie Ellis

*Apologies for any offense, but in truth, the image was connected to all three pieces on the cover (my editorial explains further). Hopefully, even though you've unsubscribed, you'll continue to check us out, because we've got some great content coming up in the next few weeks! - Ed.*

**We love to hear from you!**

**Send your questions and comments to [voicemagazine.org](http://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 Context Contested

Karl Low



This week, I received a letter from a reader who was upset by the most recent issue cover. Some of you may not even realize that we have a magazine cover. If you choose the Past Issues Link from any story you can see all of them, or you can click the “Download this issue” from the front page and have the entire thing in a snazzily laid out PDF version. If you’re a subscriber to our reminder list you’ll see the newest cover in each Friday’s email, or perhaps you’ll spot in in our Facebook or Twitter feeds.

But to maintain context, here’s the offending cover:

She pointed out, rightly, that the image was surprising and that “Adding images for sensationalism, good, bad or indifferent has led us to an era, where intelligence and expected intelligence have a low valuation.”

I actually agree with all that. I’d even go further, and suggest that for most subscriptions,

intelligence or expected intelligence has no valuation at all. Advertisers and news purveyors do not value you for your intelligence, they value you for your subscription. And why should they? You’re not working for them, you’re a customer, your intelligence is unimportant. Every person hopes, of course, that intelligent people like their product, but few are concerned if those of less intelligence enjoy it as well.

However, I do disagree that the image has no connection. I specifically chose this image because I found it connected with all three of the cover stories, something that is quite rare. It also had the added bonuses of being both surprising, and, at least to my mind, kind of cute at the same time. (It’s a puppy, for goodness sakes, how could it not be cute? That’s just inherent.)

But what are those connections? The first might not be apparent, because it’s a bit of a word-play on the idea of a too-soft finish. (I never said the connections weren’t groan inducing.)

The second story is absolutely connected, as it was all about a writer’s struggle with procrastination, specifically with cleaning up after her dogs during the winter, leading to a harder job come spring. Of course, that would take reading the article to figure that out, but I thought the line about the shovel served as a hint.

And the third connection is obviously doing something I shouldn’t, such as using that very image, which I knew was surprising, for the cover that gets sent out to all of my subscribers. As the letter points out, it seems to have been successful in that aspect. Although I’ll admit, that one might be a bit too meta for some people to get.

I feel that, to a person critically examining the issue and cover, the image makes sense, in context. And learning to fully critically evaluate something is, to my mind, part and parcel of what



undertaking a post-secondary education is all about. However, it seems the letter writer above was so put off by the image that she decided not to read the issue, and thus did not see the contextual connections. And I'll admit, that's a bit of additional context that I didn't consider.

All of which brings me to the point of this editorial. While we're supposedly being trained to critically evaluate facts and situations in life, bringing in context and a wider view-point than those who haven't taken post-secondary studies, there is some truth to the idea that context itself has contexts. I didn't think of this issue in the context of someone who might be put off by the image so much that they'd refuse to read further. My context is of someone who always tries to look beyond first impressions, but, obviously, not everyone shares that.

And it's these conflicts of contexts that seem to cause us the most difficulty, these days. So how do we ensure that our education is giving us the ability not just to see contexts, but to consider the contexts that others might be viewing things in? This is especially difficult because, once you start to postulate contexts that you don't have, how far apart is that from simply making stuff up that has no connection to reality at all?

I think it has to come down to communication and a willingness to accept differences. We may all have separate contexts, but the difficulty becomes when we stop trying to see the context that the other person is seeing things through. And sometimes we'll get it wrong. But the more we communicate with each other, the less often that will happen.

So here's what I'm asking you: communicate with me. What do you think about that cover? Is the image too graphic, shocking, or off-colour for you? Or maybe the image is fine, it's my word-play you find offensive (you wouldn't be alone, but it's so hard to stop). Or maybe it's all good, and I just need to accept that because one person has a different context, I shouldn't assume that I'm the one who's out of touch. Either way, let me know at [karl@voicemagazine.org](mailto:karl@voicemagazine.org), I'm very interested in what the response is.

Meanwhile, in this issue, we have a return of our Meeting the Minds column, starting with Dr. Bob Barnetson, a professor of Human and Labour Relations and also a member of the Grievances Board of Athabasca Universities Faculties Association. It's something you want to read, especially when he talks about the possibility of work stoppages happening at AU and what it might mean for students (to avoid a sense of sensationalism, I'll point out he says that there will "probably not" be one, but it's a bit scary to read about in any event).

We also have an article looking at some helpful tips for you to determine your career path, as I know many students who had a goal in mind when they started post-secondary often find themselves at a loss part way through their program and wondering if it's what they really wanted to do.

And although winter seems to have finally left us, that doesn't mean the weather related challenges have. So before you rush outside with the advent of warm weather, take a look at our article "Sunburn and Screen Protectors" to give a moments thought to what you might need to do to really take advantage of the sun.

Plus, as always, we have reporting on upcoming events for next week (including the new time and day for the AUSU Council Meeting—if you're out east, it could wind up being a late night), some scuttlebutt on what went down in AU related social media, and of course scholarships, advice, and even some quick recipes now that you've finished your final exams and are getting ready for convocation with a well deserved bit of binge watching all those shows you missed out on during that final push.

Enjoy the read!



# MEETING THE MINDS

INTERVIEWS with AU's EDUCATORS



*Dr. Bob Barnetson is a Professor of Labour Relations at the one and only Athabasca University. Professor Barnetson has experience working for the Alberta Workers' Compensation Board, Alberta Labour Relations Board, and the Alberta government.*

## **You teach Labour Relations at AU. What does that entail?**

Labour relations examines employment relationships from both a technical and a political perspective. What this approach recognizes is that labour relations is a technical undertaking because employers apply specific skills and techniques to manage a workforce. But getting workers to do things they often don't want to do is also a political act, because it is an exercise of power. And exercising power in this way can often result in resistance.

My research focuses on the political economy of workplace injury. For example, about 1 in 5 Alberta workers is injured (to some degree) on the job each year. Having 400,000 workplace injuries a year means that Alberta's injury-

prevention system is a failure by any standard. I examine why and how the state continues to allow employers to arrange work in ways that trade workers' health for profit.

## **Why do students tend to choose to specialize in Labour Relations?**

Most of us are (or will be) workers. Some labour-relations students are interested in working as human resource professionals or other kinds of managers. Others have an interest in working in government or for unions to regulate the behaviour of employers.

In the Bachelor of Human Resources and Labour Relations, we suggest to both kinds of students that the need to be technically competent but also politically savvy. For example, new HR professionals are often surprised when workers resist seemingly common-sense HR activity, such as centralizing customer contacts in a call centre.

Graduate of our programs are able to think about how such a change will affect the day-to-day experience of workers. Call centres are, fundamentally, about increasing productivity—getting workers to perform more work for the same (or less) pay. This happens through specialization, deskilling work, and setting aggressive performance targets backed up by surveillance.



Even a moment's reflection illustrates why that sucks for workers. But relatively few employers think about their decisions from the perspective of workers. And then they are surprised when workers resist—whether through presenteeism, absenteeism, quitting, sabotage, or unionizing.

**What is the most interesting part of your job?**

Right now, it is working to prepare the faculty association for the possibility of a work stoppage if this year's round of collective bargaining goes poorly.

**There might be a work stoppage at Athabasca University?**

Probably not. The government recently changed the rules around collective bargaining in the post-secondary system. In the past, if Athabasca University and the faculty association could not come to agreement about wages, the matter was referred to an arbitrator to decide.

In response to a 2015 Supreme Court decision, the government altered the rules in 2017. Now, if the university and the faculty association can't agree on a new contract, the workers can strike, the employer can lock out, or both. This is how labour relations are handled in virtually every other sector of the economy but it is a big transition for Alberta's universities, colleges and technical institutes.

**What are the chances of a strike or lockout?**

Relatively low. In Alberta, only about 1% of negotiations result in a work stoppage. The risk is likely a bit higher at Athabasca. This reflects a few things. First, historically the employer has been very aggressive at the bargaining table, demanding wage and benefit rollbacks. In the past, the university has been unsuccessful in achieving these because a neutral third party—the arbitrator—has generally found the employer's demands unreasonable.

With the 2017 changes, the university can now try to force rollbacks onto the faculty by locking us out for a short period of time. A lock out—where the employer stops paying staff and refuses them access to the workplace—terminates the collective agreement. The employer can then invite faculty members back to work under the employer's terms—say, working for less money. The workers' only real option at that point is to strike—refuse to go to work—until the employer agrees to a reasonable collective agreement.

Whether Athabasca University plans to lockout its workers is hard to say. So far, collective bargaining has not yet commenced so we don't know what (if any) rollbacks the university will propose. In fact, the faculty association was forced to file an unfair labour practice complaint against the employer in April because the employer wouldn't come to the table in a timely way to negotiate and was generally ignoring its contractual obligations.

**If there were a work stoppage, how would it affect students?**

That's a good question. The effect would depend, in part, on how long the work stoppage lasted. In Canada, a typical post-secondary work stoppage lasts about 3 weeks with most lasting no longer than 6 weeks. This reflects that the work stoppage generates significant pressure on both sides to strike a bargain.

During a work stoppage, the members of the faculty association would likely not be doing their jobs. So academic staff—professors and academic coordinators—would not be marking papers, answering questions or doing course administration.

Athabasca's professional staff—course production staff, many student services and library staff, and the IT department—would also be off the job. This would profoundly interfere with the ability of the university to operate anywhere close to normally.

Students would likely see delays in academic work as well as in the processing of course registrations and grades. Whether and how the university might be prepared to cope with such a disruption is unknown. Based on how reliant the university is on faculty association members to carry out the day-to-day work, I'd say the university would struggle.

Hopefully, the potential impact on students will make the university reluctant to lockout its staff in pursuit of rollbacks. But we'll have to see.

### **Does the faculty association want to strike?**

No. I've spoken with about half our 400 members in the past few months and no one has any interest in striking. It is disruptive to students and to their own lives. But what most staff recognize is that, if the employer tries to drive rollbacks though a lockout, they may have to strike just to maintain their pay and working conditions.

Most also recognize that the university has historically stalled collective bargaining to try and grind down the union. Last round, for example, the university was only able to schedule 5 meetings over 9 months, which is clearly ridiculous behaviour on their part.

If the university won't come to the table or won't bargain in good faith, the faculty might also be forced to strike to get a settlement. A lot of what happens in the next year turns on how the employer behaves.

### **So if that is the most interesting part of your job, what is the most frustrating part?**

I do a lot of paperwork. Some of it is necessary. But a lot sure isn't and it takes me away from teaching and research. For example, the university is accredited by the US Middle States Commission on Higher Education. We got this accreditation about a decade ago with the idea that it would result in increased enrollments, particularly from the US.

That didn't happen and there isn't really a compelling reason to maintain this accreditation. Nevertheless, Athabasca continues to do so. This, in turn, requires us to "map" our curriculum. Curriculum mapping means that each academic has to go through their courses

## **AU-thentic Events**

### **Upcoming AU Related Events**

#### **Nursing and Health Studies Library Orientation**

Sat, May 5, 11:00 am to 12:00 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AU Library

[library.athabascau.ca/orientations.html](http://library.athabascau.ca/orientations.html)

No pre-registration required

#### **Online MBA Info Session**

Thurs, May 10, 10:00 to 11:00 am MDT

Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business

[business.athabascau.ca/event-details/online-](http://business.athabascau.ca/event-details/online-mba-executives-information-session-8/)

[mba-executives-information-session-8/](http://business.athabascau.ca/event-details/online-mba-executives-information-session-8/)

Register online at above link

#### **Adventures in Indigenous Methodologies: Making Space for Métis-Specific Approaches**

Thurs, May 10, 12:00 to 1:00 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Graduate Studies

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

e-mail [fgs@athabascau.ca](mailto:fgs@athabascau.ca) with your student

number to register

#### **AUSU Council Meeting**

Thurs, May 10, 6:30 to 8:30 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AUSU

[www.ausu.org/event/may-council-meeting-3/](http://www.ausu.org/event/may-council-meeting-3/)

No pre-registration required; e-mail

[governance@ausu.org](mailto:governance@ausu.org) for meeting package



and assignments and determine how they contribute to their program's goals.

This is a significant amount of work and results in a spreadsheet that is too large to either print or easily view. Program directors—like me—must then go through the spreadsheet and see how the core and elective courses all align (or not) with their program objectives. For me, that is 108 courses.

### **But isn't curriculum mapping a good way to ensure quality?**

In theory, sure. But, having done 11 courses so far in my program, some really clear patterns have emerged. First, assignments measure course learning outcomes. Second, course learning outcomes support program-level learning outcomes.

Basically, it means that academics are running their courses and programs competently without ever having gone through the laborious process of mapping the curriculum in this level of detail. I'm hearing similar things from other program directors.

And, if you think about it, that is pretty much what you'd expect when your workforce comprises a bunch of smart, over-achievers who are good at navigating complex systems.

It's interesting to think about curriculum mapping from a labour relations perspective. Basically, the employer is telling its workers that it doesn't trust us to do our jobs competently. And there is little recognition of the time required to do this or the significant opportunity cost of this apparently unnecessary process.

### **So what is real effect of this process?**

An important result is a significant decline in morale and other citizenship behaviours, such as attending meetings and volunteering for tasks. There is also growing cynicism. Last week, several of my colleagues opined that curriculum mapping was a pointless project that will just generate a report that everyone will ignore once it is written. So they were complying in a perfunctory manner and waiting for it to go away.

This kind of response isn't surprising. Being assigned meaningless and thankless bureaucratic work almost always pisses off workers. Managers who can see their behaviour as both technical and political acts are better able to predict this kind of response and avoid increasing employee disengagement. Those who can't see their behaviour in these ways find that managing in absence of worker consent is a tough go.

### **How can students or others get to know you better?**

Probably the easiest way is to follow my blog ([www.bobbarnetson.ca](http://www.bobbarnetson.ca)). It is streamed into the Moodle pages of my courses and I update it twice weekly. On Tuesday's, there is some sort of substantial post about labour and employment issues. On Friday's, I do a post about labour and pop culture—usually analyzing songs about work or workers but also occasionally books, movies, or TV shows. I'm also reasonably active on Twitter (@bobbarnetson)

**Thank you for the opportunity and your time, Bob.**

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



## Choosing a Career Path

**Tara Panrucker**



Beginning in childhood, we are asked what we want to be when we grow up. Some of us have great imaginations: an astronaut, a race car driver, a rock star! Some of us know from the second we receive a certain toy what our career paths will be: doctor, police woman, or chef. But for many, what we want to be when we grow up remains a mystery well into our forties, and often beyond.

Fortunately, it's no longer uncommon to have many different careers throughout a lifetime. Economies and social circumstances change, and we must remain flexible to changing with the times. While it's

commendable to adapt and acquire as many skills and as much education as we can, the cost of education is making it difficult to freely experiment as bills accumulate and rewarding job opportunities remain scarce. Additionally, with the vast occupational choices we have available, where do we begin?

Scheduling an appointment with a reputable career counselor may benefit you in discovering a more focused path. Many will offer a career assessment. A career counselor will also ask you pointed questions and guide you to specific educational requirements for specific professions.

Online quizzes also abound to assist you in discovering a career track. While some may be helpful, others are too general to be of much help. The quiz claiming to be the most popular aptitude test on the internet is accessible at <https://www.whatcareerisrightforme.com/>. Athabasca University also provides education and career planning services, beginning with an online assessment you can take on the web site.

You can prepare by considering your response to the following questions: What are your interests? Do you love working with numbers? Do you thrive doing anything outdoors? Do you relish reading and writing? Do you enjoy teaching new skills to others? Do you require complete autonomy or require a great deal of direction? Write down your answers and it may shed light on a vocation you hadn't considered.

Alternatively, think about tasks you dislike and try to avoid choosing an occupation involving work you find unbearable. What do you absolutely hate? Truly, there is nothing more disheartening than dragging yourself out of bed five or six days a week to a job that holds no meaning other than a pay cheque. The earlier you figure this out, the healthier and happier you will be.

Another good way to find out if a career is right for you is to interview people who are already working in the industry. Phone, email, or ask in person what a typical work day entails. You may be surprised to find it is something that holds no interest for you or perhaps fascinates you even more.

Uncovering what motivates and inspires you are great places to begin. While being practical is important, it's not always the road to happiness or satisfaction. Reigning in your wants and desires can make life more affordable. It's easier when you're not trying to impress everyone with a big house and a shiny new vehicle, after all.

Stephen Covey, who wrote the bestselling book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, once said "I am not a product of my circumstances. I am a product of my decisions." While all our decisions may not transform into perfect results, choose what's best for you and not what other people may be forcing upon you. You are the one who ultimately must live with your choices. Choose a career that has meaning, value, and interest to you. Now go forth and conquer!

*Tara Panrucker lives on Vancouver Island and is seeking a General Arts Degree at AU.*



**Brittany Daigle**

**Course Exam**

*AU courses, up close*

## Course Exam

**Brittany Daigle**

### **COMP 361 (Systems Analysis and Design)**

COMP 361 (Systems Analysis and Design) is a three-credit upper-level Computer Science course that has students solving business problems by analyzing the requirements of information systems and designing such systems applying analysis and design techniques. The practical component of COMP 361 is object oriented and use-case driven, requiring students to go through the steps of system analysis and design to solve a real-life business problem.

This course requires students to either have taken COMP 200 (Introduction to Computing and Information Systems), CMIS 351 (Management Information Systems), or to request the permission from an instructor as a prerequisite. Permission from an instructor is based on three things, which include the students' basic knowledge of programming (Java for instance), the students' basic knowledge of object oriented languages, and the students' basic knowledge of databases. If you are interested in learning more about Introduction to Computing and Information Systems, read my COMP 200 Course Exam Article!

Systems Analysis and Design is made up of seven units, five assignments weighing a total of seventy percent of your final grade, a weighted participation grade of five percent, and a final exam worth twenty-five percent. Students must achieve at least fifty percent overall and must get at least fifty percent on each assignment, participation mark, and final exam to pass the course.

Throughout the seven units within this course, students will gain the comprehensive theoretical knowledge as well as practical skills that are related to the system development process of information systems. These units will teach students how to gather data to analyse and specify the requirements of a system, design system components and environments, build general and detailed models that assist programmers in implementing a system, and design a database for



storing data and a user interface for data input and output, as well as controls to protect the system and its data.

Dr. Vlad Voytenko (PhD in Computer Science) has been with Athabasca University for eleven years and has been tutoring COMP 361 for ten of those years. He is also associated with [COMP 272](#) (Data Structures and Algorithms), [COMP 372](#) (Design and Analysis of Algorithms), [COMP 410](#) (Software Engineering), and [COMP 489](#) (Distributed Computing). If you would like to learn more about Data Structures and Algorithms, read my [COMP 272 Course Exam Article](#)! He states, “My current research interests and projects focus on the following aspects in the areas: software engineering, mobile application, mobile computing, machine learning.”

Dr. Voytenko states, “COMP 361 takes an integrated approach to the subject. There are five marked assignments for the course. The assignments in the course reinforce the textbook materials by applying systems analysis and design concepts, skills, methodologies, techniques, tools, and perspectives to specific issues and subjects. The assignments support each other: Assignments one through five successively refine the requirements and design for an information system case study.

He continues “Each assignment consists of at least three parts: 1) a practical part where you are asked to apply analysis, modeling, and design techniques; 2) an essay part where you are asked to answer an essay question; 3) a blogging part where you are asked to write a blog posting. Because the assignments are related, you should leave sufficient time between assignment submissions to allow for tutor feedback. Also, some additional examples of problem-solving and modelling exercises are identified and made available to students.”

When asked to give advice to students who are planning to enroll or are already enrolled, he states “Because of the integrated nature of the treatment of the subject, students are advised to follow as closely as possible the suggested module sequence. Furthermore, they are strongly encouraged to communicate and discuss topics with other students through blogs and discussion forums. The suggested sequence assumes part-time study: that students will spend ten to fifteen hours per week on the course and will take approximately sixteen weeks to complete it. Students who intend to study full time, or whose personal schedules are likely to be problematic or significantly different from this norm, are encouraged to develop their own schedules.”

He concludes stating “We would recommend following the Online Study Plan, and do not jump directly to the Assignments section. We strongly discourage students from taking an assignment-oriented approach to the course, that is, seeing the course as a collection of assignments with supporting materials. This will almost inevitably lead to two outcomes: first, an incomplete understanding of the course materials because the structure implicit in the materials is ignored; and second, difficulty completing the assignments because of incomplete and/or incorrect understanding of the applicable concepts, skills, methodologies, techniques, tools, and perspectives. When students have completed the course, they should have a theoretical and practical understanding of the analysis and design techniques and tools used in a systems development project.”

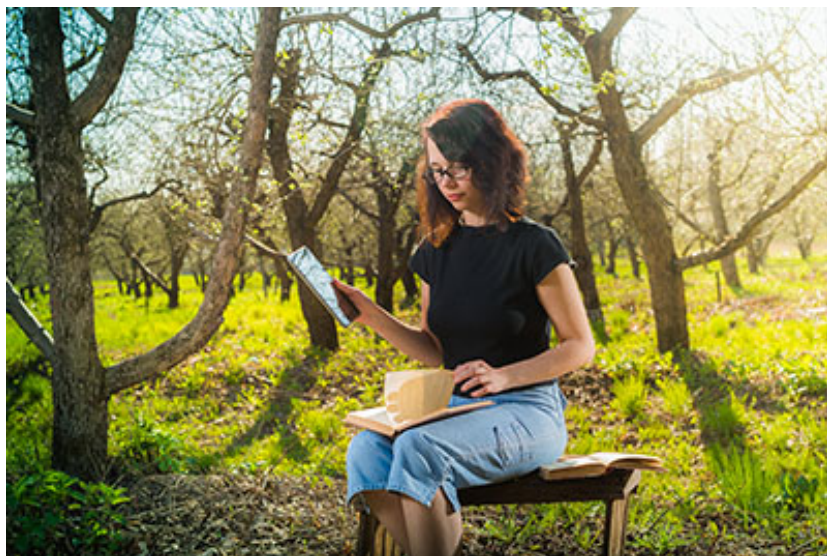
Whether this course is a degree requirement of yours or the topics above are of interest to you, COMP 361 will have you immersed in the interesting topics surrounding systems analysis and design!

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



## Sunburns and Screen Protectors

Deanna Roney



I think we skipped spring. In only a few days the snow has mostly disappeared, and the yard work that is usually done in about plus 10 degrees Celsius, with a toque, because, well, wind, was finished this year in plus 20 degrees, in shorts and tank tops. One unfortunate thing about the sudden heat is that no one (around here) expects it, I was soaking it up and entirely failed to remember that I burn relatively easily. So, day one of sunshine also meant the first sunburn of the year. But, these beautiful days pose another challenge, especially after the exceedingly long winter, finding the motivation to sit inside and work.

When these summer days roll around it can be hard to stick yourself in the back office and try to ignore the beautiful day. If you are able, I think the best way to stay motivated during these days is to take your work outside (another reason I think physical textbooks are better than etexts). Combine enjoying the nice weather with getting work done: it means no guilt! No guilt for not working and no guilt for missing out on the weather.

Working remotely means that I get to work from home. I have the option to work outside, which I don't want to toss aside after so many years sitting inside at work and looking, longingly, at the beautiful weather. All that time spent just waiting for my shift to end so I could go out and enjoy great weather while it lasts (because around here, these days are often too few). So, I tried to take my work outside and work on the deck, but the unfortunate thing with a lot of technology is that the screen is nearly impossible to see in any kind of sunlight. I tried to sit in the shade and read off my tablet but all I could see was my face squinting at the screen. I resigned myself to going back inside and working for a few hours, then going back out and soaking up some sun for a short break. While it should be possible to work outside, technology can make that difficult. With my new computer, I made sure to buy one with a screen that didn't have the high-gloss look that most seem to. The matte screen means that, for computer work, I can take it outside. But, for reading, which is what I spend a lot of my time doing, it was nearly impossible and certainly not efficient.

There was no way I could read with my face squinting back at me in the screen. I needed to find a solution to the problem. I didn't want to look for another tablet with a better screen because that just felt wasteful, and the thought of trying to switch over gave me anxiety.

I posted my "issue" on Twitter, asking for input, because where else would I go? While I got no responses, I started to think, I can't be the only person with this problem. So, I did a search for matte screen protectors, and such a thing exists! I didn't care if the anti-glare matte screen protector was the right fit for my tablet, I would cut it down if I had to.

Sometimes the best thing you can do to motivate yourself to stay on top of work on these beautiful summer days is to make it possible to be outside working in them. Set up a comfortable work area and make it so anything you need is accessible in the bright daylight. I wish I could

say that this tablet problem only started now, that I resolved the problem within days of noticing it. However, this is something that has bothered me for awhile, before now I just sequestered myself inside. Sometimes the solution to our problems is simple, and cheap.

But, of course, by the time the protector arrives the sun will probably disappear, but at least I will have it for the next stretch of beautiful weather. So I can sit outside, work, and be free of guilt.

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



## The Fit Student The Secret to Confidence

Marie Well



Success, whether in academics or life, flows from confidence. But confidence seems as mysterious as the bacteria in Michael Moore's belly. Bacteria crossbred from beer, pizza, and too much Kathleen Griffin.

Confident people tend to look beautiful, don't they? But I met a business-savvy supermodel who lived a lonely, troubled, fragile life. She had it all, but happiness. So if good looks don't ensure confidence, what does? Well, for one, fitness bolsters confidence.

I once slouched and huffed while walking malls. But after ten months of exercise, I now strut the aisles, spine straight, shoulders wide, head up. Fitness sculpts the clay of confidence.

Also, skills boost confidence—practical skills. At job interviews, I whispered when I listed my skill-set. My

master's degree didn't teach practical skills. Instead, my degrees force-fed social justice. In hindsight, I should've gotten an MBA. After all, employers want transferrable skills, not political correctness, not snowflakes with fish handshakes.

At least I avoided the math degree. I still shudder over job prospects for math majors: tutoring, programming synthesizers, or teaching rowdy tenth-graders. Jobs that would leave me number-crunching my next meal.

As for psychology or sociology degrees, you generally need a master's to make a name for yourself. Or you need to get lucky in job interviews. I tend to believe that most airy-fairy degrees matter little to employers. But with a business degree, you run the office. Confidence beams from bosses taught to avoid losses.

Brady Moller shares ways to gain confidence in his book *Unveiling Happiness: Discover the Keys to Creating Happiness within Yourself, at Work and in Your Relationships*:

- Confidence leads to motivation, success, and happiness: "When you're confident in your abilities, you feel motivated to achieve your goals and obtain success. When you achieve the successes you have set out for yourself, you feel happy" (location 100 of 250, 40% of preview).



- On the flipside, “people that lack self-confidence struggle to find inner peace, they struggle to find success, and ultimately, they struggle to find happiness” (location 100, 40% of preview).
- What is confidence? “Confidence is having faith in an ability. It’s as simple as that. If you have faith in your ability to do something, then it’s backed up by your confidence” (location 133, 53%).
- So, hone skills to gain confidence: “Confidence is only gained through practice .... It takes months, if not years of training before [you] become confident in [your] skills” (location 155, 62%).
- But hone skills you love: “It is crucial that you become confident at something you: value, respect, long for, and/or love” (location 155, 62%).
- Why must you feel passion for pursuits? “We can learn anything we want, but success is determined by how badly we want it” (location 155, 62%).

Lastly, experience gives you confidence. The more you memorize, the better you memorize. The more you write, the better you write. And the more you move, the more confident you grow. So, for a chest-puffer, chin-upper, nose-lifter, move like Michael Moore on Metamucil.



## Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

#### AthaU Facebook Group

Kim seeks input on whether it's better to go with student loans or a line of credit; students who have gone those routes provide advice based on their experiences. Chanelle expresses concern that Moodle will block an assignment submitted past the course end date; responders indicate that she can still upload it late, but acceptance depends on the course tutor's prior approval.

Other posts include AU website woes, permission to register for courses, uploading a Powerpoint assignment, and courses COMP 325, LGST 489, and PYSC 304.

#### reddit

"How quickly can a 3- or 6-credit AU course be completed?" asks user LavenderTulip89; only two responses as yet, so still time to join the discussion.

#### Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "The @KPMG Foundation Community Leaders Scholarship will award up to \$50,000 to an #MBA student for tuition, course materials, & to support attendance at one in-residence elective course. Deadline to apply is June 15: <http://bit.ly/2HZ0z8N>."

@AthabascaUBiz tweets: "As easy as 1, 2, 3 - Click the link and start chatting with us! <http://goo.gl/zg1YHD> #ReadyForYou."



## The Creative Spark

### Fitness Makes you Creative

Marie Well



Fitness might not make you Michelangelo, but it makes you more creative than Jim Carrey's graffiti porn. *Sheesh!* The guy needs a lifetime pass to Curves.

In high school, I took art. Once, a guest instructor taught me and my two friends pottery. We acted up, laughing as our clay slapped onto the floor from the whirling table. We howled until the instructor started crying. Feeling bad, we inquired about advanced techniques, soothing the instructor. By the end of the class, I made a mug with a big-nosed face that resembled my friend. My mug got showcased for all students to see.

But *most* young people bubble with creative energy, don't they? After age twenty-one, that energy starts to droop.

For instance, during high school, I avidly painted. My brother bought me paints and canvases. He furnished me with a room where I painted nonstop. But by age twenty-one, I stopped. Not long after, my singing and song-writing stalled. By the time I finished my undergrad, most of my creative spells had shriveled. Cooped up with textbooks, I had energy for studies, but little else.

But during grad studies, I hit the gym hard. With newfound pep, I dabbled into everything artistic. I crafted creative performances, took singing lessons, starred in a documentary film, and danced on an academic stage. Fitness fueled me for creative extracurriculars.

But it's not just me. Studies show that whoever gets fit grows more creative. Anders Hansen reveals research on the link between creativity and fitness in his book *The Real Happy Pill: Power Up Your Brain by Moving Your Body*:

- Researchers know that creativity grows from fitness: "We have scientific proof that physical activity boosts creativity" (location 2058, 59%).
- Fitness makes you a master at brainstorming: "Physical activity seems to boost idea generation ..." (location 2058, 59%).
- Just ask fit authors how exercise sparks their creativity: "There is a slew of authors, musicians, actors, artists, scientists, and entrepreneurs who have borne witness to how they use exercise to become more creative" (location 2014 of 3512, 57%).
- But do your art after you train: "Improved creativity expresses itself mainly *after* exercise" (location 2080, 59%).
- Sorry to say, but if you lack fitness, a single bout of exercise won't boost your creativity. So exercise steadily to gain a fit person's edge: "Fit people actually perform better on creativity tests if they are done in tandem with physical exercise. Creativity does not seem to improve at all in people who are not fit" (location 2091-2103, 60%).
- But first, consider the two types of creative thinking: "divergent and convergent thinking" (location 2035, 58%).

- What is divergent thinking? “Brainstorming: coming up with many different solutions to a problem by thinking broadly and using plenty of associations” (location 2035, 58%).
- What is convergent thinking? “Not ... brainstorming a variety of solutions, but ... quickly arriving at one answer—the correct one ...” (location 2046, 58%).
- Fitness aids not only creative thinking, but also benefits creative stamina: “Exercise isn’t just beneficial for divergent and convergent thinking; it also helps to give us the energy to keep plugging away with ideas” (location 2125, 60%).

I read a study showing that quantity, not quality, leads to greater creativity. So, put up your hand in class or post on the Landing—nonstop.

And dance or lift weights to draw beauty, not draw porn. After all, Jim Carrey lacks the biceps required to paint Stormy Daniels’ fun-bags.



## Women of Interest

### Olga Kotelko

**Barb Godin**



Olga Kotelko was born on March 2, 1919, in Vonda, Saskatchewan and died of an intracranial hemorrhage on June 24, 2014. Kotelko was a Canadian legend in track and field who received 750 gold medals and broke many world records in her age category.

The seventh of eleven children born to Ukrainian parents, Olga grew up on a farm in western Canada at the time of the depression. After graduating from the University of Saskatchewan, Olga began teaching in a one room school house in her hometown of Vonda, Saskatchewan. Shortly after marrying, she discovered her husband was an abusive alcoholic. While she was pregnant with her second child Olga left this abusive marriage and moved to British Columbia to begin her life as a single mother where she worked as a school teacher to support her two children. Unfortunately, Kotelko's oldest daughter died in 1999 at the age of 53 following a diagnosis of non-Hodgkin lymphoma.

During her early years, Olga played baseball but quit playing while working and raising her two girls. At 77 she became involved in track and field and went on to earn hundreds of medals. As well, she broke numerous world records within her age category. Olga always kept active, participating in aquafit classes three times a week as well as sessions of jogging and walking. She also took part in shot put throws and long jump. In 2009, at the World Masters Games in Sydney, Australia, Olga proceeded to break world records in her age group (90-95 year olds), in hammer throw (5.64 metre) and the 100 metre race with a time of 23.95 seconds. Olga Kotelko was honored to be asked to carry the torch in the Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver in 2010. By the time she reached the age of 91 Olga held 23 age-graded world records in the Masters Track and field competition. As stated in "The Gazette" of Montreal, Olga Kotelko, at the age of 90 was the world's oldest known long jump competitor.



Due to her remarkable athletic accomplishments Olga's muscle tissue and physiology have been studied by doctors at both the Montreal Neurological Institute and at McGill University's Montreal Chest Institute. The results were astounding. Olga's muscle fibers did not show any of the mitochondrial decay what would be present in a person over the age of 65. Yet Olga did not believe she was unique, as when people would comment: "It's amazing what you do." Her response would be, "You know what? If I can do it, you can do it."

Olga Kotelko's life was documented in a biography titled, *What Makes Olga Run?: the Mystery of the 90-something Track Star and What She Can Teach Us About Living Longer, Happier Lives* by Bruce Grierson. Olga also wrote her own story *The O.K. Way to a Healthy Happy Life*.

Shortly before her death, Olga Koltelko said, "I think that it's once in a lifetime that you get an opportunity like that, but over 750 gold medals is quite treasured—and I give my medals away. I don't keep them. Because why do I need 800 medals? At this point, I know I'm going to get some more."

You can find more information on this truly remarkable woman in these links:

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/olga-kotelko-canadian-track-and-field-star-and-world-record-holder-dead-at-95-1.1886552>

<http://www.olgakotelko.com/biography/>

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/senior-athlete-olga-kotelko-dead-at-95/article19329789/>

Barbara Godin is a graduate of AU and writes the "Dear Barb" column. She lives in London, Ontario with her husband and two dogs. She can be reached on twitter @BarbGod

## Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

**Scholarship name:** 2018 Start Proud Leadership Award

**Sponsored by:** Start Proud

**Deadline:** May 25, 2018, 11:59pm EST

**Potential payout:** \$2500

**Eligibility restriction:** Applicants must be legal residents of Canada, have completed one year of post-secondary studies by September 1, 2018, be enrolled for the Fall 2018 semester, have a valid post-secondary institution e-mail address, and exemplify leadership within the LGBTQ+ community or any community the applicant is passionate about. Check the full eligibility criteria on the Criteria and Eligibility tab.

**What's required:** An online application with personal, contact, and program information, along with referee contact info, a one-page résumé, and answers to four candidate statements

**Tips:** Check the FAQ tab for more info, and download the scholarship brochure for an overview.

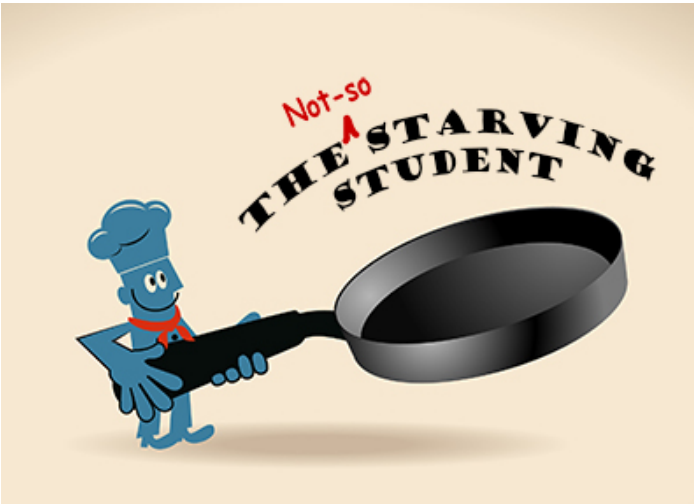
**Where to get info:** [www.startproud.org/awards/#scholarship](http://www.startproud.org/awards/#scholarship)



## The Not-So Starving Student

### Three-Ingredient Netflix-Ready Snacks

Xin Xu



Many students are finishing up their studies as convocation looms, so now's the time to lock yourself in the comfort of your bedroom to binge watch your family TV shows. While you're curled up in a cozy blanket, you might be tempted for some quick, easy snacks. It's unfortunate that most snackable foods are at room temperature and not piping hot like a sizzling pound of wings or refreshingly cool like a margarita. If you're looking for simple snackables for your next Netflix binge, look no further. We have a list that AU students can rely on. Moreover, all of these items that meet your snacking needs contain only three ingredients

that are affordable and delicious. Go ahead. Treat yourself now that exams are over. Now, which season and episode were you on again?

#### Nutella Crepe:

Banana + Nutella Spread + Tortilla bread

- I remember a younger me heading to Famoso's Pizza after school to check out a novelty menu item called the Nutella pizza. I was quite satisfied with the sugar boost in the late afternoon but some part of me felt cheated, given that the banana pizza was really a Nutella crepe. Simple to make and delicious, regardless of whether it was made by the Famoso chef or by myself. If you're looking for a quick fix, there's only 3 ingredients you need. Whipped cream can be an optional topping if you're hosting guests, but this recipe will be an essential to your evening of tv shows.



#### Jalapeno Poppers:

Jalapeno + Mozza Cheese + Bacon

- Why purchase Jalapeno poppers when you can create and improvise this infamous party food? Purchase the desired amount of Jalapenos and a pack of mozzarella cheese. Using a toothpick secure the cheese and Jalapeno with a single layer of bacon casing. Toss the concoction into the toaster oven for 15-20 minutes and you're ready for showtime.



**Mac & Cheese Dog:**

Kraft Dinner + Summer sausage + Hot dog Bread

- If Kraft dinner was a staple during the pre-exam season, then I recommend that you skip this delicious and simple recipe or replace the Mac and Cheese with some salsa or canned chili instead. For me, Kraft dinner still holds a unique place in my recipes given how versatile it can be. While the regular hot dog maybe downright dull, adding a unique topping will boost your appetite and set you in the mood for rest and relaxation.

**Baked Sweet Potato Chips:**

Sweet Potato + Salt + Rosemary flakes

- The trend towards healthier snacking starts with choosing quality ingredients such as sweet potatoes. They are delicious on its own but with some seasoning, you can create your own sweet potato fries or chips, customized for your taste. An alternative I have experimented with include carrots and rosemary flakes which are equally delicious and provide a boost of vitamin A.

**Sparkling Lemonade:**

Lemonade + Champagne + Club Soda

- If you're looking for some innovative drinks to chase down your snacks with, this combination is excellent for celebrations (such as completing that last final exam). For the non-alcoholic alternative, try adding some frozen fruits to your lemonade such as raspberry or cranberry for a natural edition of "pink lemonade".

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







Dear  
Barb

Barbara Godin

## The Too Full Plate

*Dear Barb:*

*I am really stressed out and in need of some advice. I'm a single mom with two boys plus I work full time and take courses at AU. My mother was just diagnosed with stage four cancer; I am so filled with anxiety that I just don't know what to do. I can't seem to do it all anymore. Once I get the boys off to school all I want to do is crawl back in bed. I have a hard time sleeping through the night since mind is constantly racing from one thought to the next. I'm short tempered with my kids and feel awful about it. And my boss is not too happy that I have to take time off work to take my mom for her chemo treatments. Since my dad passed away a few years ago, mom is alone too. I haven't had time to start the two courses I'm registered in at AU, so I may end up dropping out. I can't even seem to prioritize anything. Should I withdraw from my courses or take a leave of absence from work? I just don't know what to do. My ex takes my kids every other weekend, so I get a bit of a break. Sorry for my ramblings, but I really just need some direction. Thanks, Lynn.*

Hi Lynn:

Thanks for sharing your story. I'm so sorry to hear about what you are going through. From what you are describing it seems you are most likely suffering from either anxiety or

depression, or a combination of both. Once you get in the grips of either of these conditions, they are very difficult to overcome without some intervention. As things start to build up, you become overwhelmed and often don't even realize it until you can't function any longer. Medication and some type of counseling—either on your own or with a support group—may help you work through this difficult time. A visit to your family physician is the best place to begin, as they will be able to direct you to the proper facilities or prescribe the necessary medication. It's understandable that you can't prioritize right now, your mind is spinning, and you need to get help to calm this first. Be aware of some common symptoms of depression and anxiety. Depression - lack of interest in activities that you previously enjoyed, lack of energy, insomnia, trouble concentrating, increase or decrease in appetite. Anxiety - excessive worry, difficulty concentrating, sleep disorder, irritability, restlessness. As you can see they overlap in some areas. A counsellor would be helpful in diagnosing what treatment is best for you. Also attached is an online test for depression or anxiety. Hope this information was helpful. Best of luck Lynn.

You also may want to try taking a test about online depression or anxiety such as this one: <https://depression.org.nz/is-it-depression-anxiety/self-test/>

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.





# Weird Canada

In Port Coquitlam, British Columbia, it's actually illegal to own more than four pet rats.

Heinrich!  
Dumpledore!  
Come back to  
Mummy!!

The  
law's the law,  
lady.

And  
remember, no more  
than two kids or I'll  
be back!



WRITTEN BY WANDA WATERMAN





**AUSU**  
ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY  
STUDENTS' UNION

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## IMPORTANT DATES

- **Apr 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting May 1](#)
- **Apr 10:** [Council Changeover Meeting](#)
- **Apr 15:** [May degree requirements deadline](#)
- **Apr 30:** [Deadline to apply for course extension for June](#)
- **May 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting June 1](#)
- **May 15:** [June degree requirements deadline](#)
- **May 31:** [Deadline to apply for course extension for June](#)

## Stress Awareness

Going through a stressful time? You're not alone. Three-quarters of adults experience stress in their daily lives, recent studies have shown. Major stressors include money, work, and personal health concerns. Trying to balance your studies with work, relationships, and a social life – all while trying to set yourself up for future success – can be tough.

**Student LifeLine** is there to help you identify your sources of stress and find effective ways to manage them.

Check out the [Stress Awareness](#) feature on their homepage (Username: **AUSU**, password: **wellness**), where you'll find a variety of resources to help you lead a happier and less stressed life, including a brand-new Stress Management Toolkit.

You7 can also contact **Student LifeLine** any time, 24/7 at **1-800-567-2255 (TTY:1-877-371-9978)** to speak to a caring, professional consultant for free expert advice or help!

**This is a FREE service for all AUSU members!**

**Student Lifeline provides help and support 24/7 for any issues, from health, wellness, work, life, money, school, community referrals, and more!**



## Want to Know More About Your new AUSU Executives?

The new team officially took office on April 10, 2018! Click the links below to check out their biographies!

**AUSU President:** [Brandon Simmons](#)

**VP External and Student Affairs:** [Melinda Goertz](#)

**VP Finance and Administration:** [Natasha Donahue](#)



## Free Lynda.com Account

Did you know that AUSU provides free subscriptions to lynda.com for all members?

Lynda.com is the world's premier video training site with thousands of training videos! In March alone, AUSU members watched over 2,700 videos.

Get your FREE Lynda.com subscription on our website [here](#).





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# CLASSIFIEDS

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

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