



THE VOICE

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Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You!

Moments Beyond Hope

How to Deal with the World Ending

You're Doing it Wrong

If School Bites it's You

Plus:

*Shop & Save into the Future
Tim Hortons: China Style
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

Ignoring the Debates

Karl Low



I have to admit, I've ignored the federal election debates that have been presented on television over the last few days. What I've read about them has essentially confirmed what I expected, if you were looking for solid information or ideas, they were mostly a waste of time.

In this age of the internet that isn't too terribly surprising. If you want detailed information about a party's plans or policies, you're best off going directly to their particular website, where you can look up for yourself what they have (or don't have, in some cases) written down as to what they promise.

What this means is that the debates are really only there for the parties to try to get a winning sound-bite, to trip another politician up into revealing something that will ruin their chances of being elected. And in the days when truth was somewhat respected, that may well have worked.

I don't feel that these are those days. In recent years, politicians have become quite comfortable in lying directly to our faces. (I know that some of you right now are probably raising an eyebrow at the phrase "in recent years", but bear with me.) It feels like, not so long ago, there was this idea that if you were being recorded, you had better make sure that what you were saying was, at least technically, truthful. Because people could go back and see those recordings later and confront you.

Somewhere along the way, however, politicians seem to have realized that even if they confront you, it doesn't much matter. We're getting bombarded with so much information and news and garbage every day, the scandal du jour really is "du jour" and not much else. So why not lie directly to the camera. And then if challenged on it, double down. When then presented with the recorded evidence, shrug it off as out of context or sloppy reporting, or, more often than not, simply ignore it altogether and proceed to bull forward with whatever point you were attempting to make before. Such as how Mr. Kenney promised to fight for a better equalization formula for Albertans, but when questioned as to whether he'd approached any of the candidates with concerns about equalization, answering with a quick "No" and getting into his vehicle. He knows it doesn't really matter, because so few of us care to make it matter.

But I don't have a good answer. The media thrives on the horse-race and the constant search for scandal, because that's what brings viewers, when we can collectively point at someone else and tut-tut them, affirming our own superiority and making us feel good, even though we're probably not the ones pulling down six figure paycheques for arguing with other people. Yet that same search also lowers the opinion and the expectations for our political figures, our erstwhile leaders. We stop trying to hold them accountable because what's the point? The next guy is just going to do something just as bad anyway, right? I don't know how to fix that. But I know it shouldn't be that way.

At any rate this week, we're featuring a great student interview, along with the Fly on the Wall as it looks at ways to deal with study irritants, and a struggling student rants with some great advice on how to save some money, maybe a lot of money, when going for a big purchase. Plus of course advice, events, and more! Enjoy the read!

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karl".

MINDS WE MEET



Currently living with his wife and two kids in Calgary, Alberta, Gerard Baptist has completed one third of the Bachelor of Management program at AU and hopes to eventually advance in the company he is employed at. This is his story.

Can you give us a little bit of background information about yourself? Who are you? Where do you live, where do you come from? What program are you in? Do you like your program?

My name is Gerard Baptist. I'm 38 years old. I'm originally from Edmonton, Alberta but live with my wife and two kids in Calgary, Alberta. I currently work in the oil and gas industry for a global distributor of products and services called DistributionNOW (DNOW). I'm enrolled in the Bachelor of Management program and am about one third of the way through my program. At times I find it to be a bit demanding with some of the course load but overall, it's been very interesting and enjoyable.

Describe the path that led you to AU. What was it that made you realize you wanted to go back to school, and

what pushed you into the Bachelor of Management program?

I originally graduated back in 2002 with a Civil Engineering Tech. diploma from the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) but always had a desire to continue and finish off with a civil engineering degree at some point. However, in 2011 I switched industries and started working with the company I'm currently employed with, in a sales/technical services role and not really using my previous education. As the years went on, I saw other various coworkers and friends go on to complete various business and master's degrees which got me thinking about whether I could do it.

While I had always thought I wanted to go back and finish off my engineering degree, or, at this point, possibly a business degree, it began looking more and more that that wouldn't be an option. I assumed that with a full-time job coupled with a young family, I didn't believe university was realistic. However, with the continuing education options presented to me by my current employer and with the freedom of the online platform AU provides, I was able to consider the realistic possibility of pursuing my degree. Ultimately, after I decided I wanted to see if I could do it, it was my wife being more than supportive and encouraging that ultimately convinced me into registering and signing up for my first class.

Do you have any advice for people who may be on the fence?

I'd say do your research on the program and different courses you may have to take. I found the personal reviews of the courses in *The Voice Magazine* to be extremely helpful. But ultimately, go for it. You're never going to know what you're able to achieve if you don't try.

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

I love spending time with my wife and kids. As far as hobbies go, in the winter I love skiing and playing hockey. In the summer I love to golf and go on holidays with family and friends. I'm also an avid guitar player and enjoy playing when I get the opportunity.

What are your plans for this education once you finish? What would be your dream job?

I hope to continue working for my current employer at DistributionNOW, be able to extend the knowledge I received from my education to my current job, and advance myself through the company as opportunities present themselves and become available—they are the ones that are supporting my education.

Describe your experience with online learning so far. What do you like?

I've really enjoyed my experience with online learning. I originally thought I would struggle with online learning and the discipline it requires but I've come to appreciate the freedom it affords me to be able to study basically anywhere.

Is there anything that you dislike?

The only thing I guess I dislike or would consider a disadvantage is you don't have the same access to a professor/instructor as you would if you were in a traditional class. With that said, I've found most of the tutors I've had to be very accessible and have been extremely quick to reply with anything I've contacted them for. The additional supplemental resources that often accompany the course I've found helpful and between those and textbook there haven't been many problems that I wasn't able to work through myself.

Was there ever a point that you wavered about continuing your schooling?

I wavered the most right after I applied. It probably sounds funny but that's when I really started creating all the excuses in my head about why I wouldn't be able to get through it. This was mainly caused by what I'm assuming is a similar feeling to others, by not having enough time in the day, having a full-time job, family requirements, etc.

What got you through it?

After applying and enrolling in my first course, I quickly began to enjoy the new challenge of continuing my schooling but also began to appreciate the flexibility I had to complete it through AU as opposed to more traditional educational institutions.

What's your favorite AU course that you have taken so far, and why?

I've really enjoyed all of them for the most part. I recently just completed ACCT 250 (Accounting for Managers). Although it was extremely involved and very time consuming, I really enjoyed it and how applicable it has been to my current job and my day to day responsibilities.

If you would like to know more about ACCT 250 (Accounting for Managers) and Gerard's experience with the course, read my Course Exam article.

Would you recommend ACCT 250 to others?

I don't know if I would pick the course strictly just as an elective to fill a course in a program if I didn't have to take it. This is based solely on the intensity and time-consuming nature of the course. However, I would recommend the course to anybody interested in a greater

understanding of business practices, costing procedures, and understanding the day to day numbers of doing business.

What have you given up going to Athabasca University?

This is the one question that the answer surprised me the most. I don't feel I've given up overall too much of anything. If anything, it would be a bit of social time specifically as I get close to an exam. However, I've tried to stick to a schedule that limits the amount of time that I must take away from other important areas of time such as my family. While there are exceptions, as I mentioned more typically around exams, I've found that utilizing the other areas of time throughout the day I probably took for granted in the past. i.e.; lunches, commuting to and from work, travel time with work, etc. I found these times gives me plenty of time to study and allows me to limit the time I might otherwise have to take away from other important areas.

How do you find communications with your course tutors?

Overall, the communication with my tutors has been quite good. All the tutors I have had have got back to me usually within half of a day to a day. I even had one who went out of her way to contact me by phone a couple days after I received her email feedback just to make sure I was completely satisfied with her response to my question. While I certainly don't expect that all the time, I thought that was a nice touch and showed the concern she had for me as a student and her desire for me to succeed.

What's your pet peeve if you have one?

Bad drivers! Hands down easily my biggest pet peeve. I can't stand bad drivers.

What famous person, past or present, would you like to have lunch with, and why?

While I don't necessarily agree with all his politics, I think Barack Obama would be very interesting to sit down with. He seems like a guy you could sit down with, maybe not agree on everything, but still have a genuine intelligent conversation with.

Describe the proudest moment in your life.

Outside of marrying my wife, I'd have to say the birth of my two kids.

How has studying been like while being a full-time dad to two kids?

Children definitely make it more challenging. I don't get a lot of time to study when they are up. So, I've had to be more disciplined in the hours that they are napping or in the evening when they are sleeping. This does make for some late nights or early mornings at times, but overall, it's not too bad. I also try to use some time at work usually at the end of the day especially when I need to concentrate and have minimal distractions. This is mainly around exam time or while competing assignments. I'm also very fortunate that my wife is very supportive and helps keep the kids away if I need to study and they are up. But again, the big thing for me is to make sure I am very deliberate utilizing and maximizing the time when I have it to study.

What is the most valuable lesson you have learned in life?

My dad taught me from an early age that while failure is a part of life, it's how you react to that failure that is most important. He taught me that if I set a goal and didn't achieve it that it was ok to fall short but to regroup and try again, but quitting is never an option.

Have you traveled? Where has life taken you so far?

I've had the opportunity to travel quite a bit around North America. Growing up in western Canada, I spent and continue to spend a lot of times in the Rocky Mountains. I've also done numerous beach vacations including my favorite spot in Saint Lucia where I spent my honeymoon.

Out of the places you have been to, which was your favorite and why?

Trips that I always remember most fondly are the trips I've had the chance to take through my church to build homes for people less fortunate in Mexico and setup playgrounds and work within some of the rural communities of the Dominican Republic.

What types of books do you enjoy reading (outside of AU textbooks, of course)?

I love reading biographies, especially sport biographies. Combining that with my love for hockey I often find myself reading biographies of former players and their memories and accounts of their playing days.

Are you reading any books right now? Could you describe the book?

I'm currently reading a book called *Tales from the Bus Leagues* which basically is a humorous recount of a former minor league players' days of playing hockey and the numerous shenanigans that he and teammates got in.

Have you been enjoying the book?

I've found it to be a very funny read. It's probably not for everybody, but for people that have either played the game and can relate or people that wonder what else goes on in the lives of players both on and off the ice it's a hilarious read.

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



The Struggling Student Rants Shop & Save into the Future

Angela Pappas

How the Pre-Rich Do It (Part II)

I've been trying to drill the importance of sticking to a proper budget into my head. I'll stay on track for weeks, and then wham, I'll see a deal and convince myself this is just too good to ignore. I'll even walk away, go home, carry on with my day, and then have nightmares about said missed opportunity. What I can't get into my thick skull is that it's not an opportunity at all. If I spend X amount of dollars, I am not saving any money, I am spending it. That's why I don't carry credit with me—at all—unless it's planned and paid for in advance. That being said, there are good deals out there, you just have to know the item you need so you can formulate a plan on how to save for it.

I'm not talking about clipping coupons to save .75 cents on your yogurt. When you're saving and



spending smart on large-ticket items, that's when you truly see how, until now, you've been flushing your money down the toilet.

Buy a Quality Used Vehicle Rather than a New One

There's no question you'll save money when you buy a used car instead of a new one. All you need to do to confirm this is compare said models on an [Autotrader.ca](https://www.autotrader.ca) listing vs. a dealership website. We've all heard by a friend or family member that a car depreciates (by an astronomical amount), the second you drive it off the lot. But is there any truth to that, or is it just another urban legend? I have yet to buy a car, drive it off the lot, then turn around, and sell it that same day. However, there is truth to the large depreciation factor; you just have to do the math for your own, brand new, shiny toy. Once you sign the papers and finance the vehicle, at the tune of 84 low monthly payments, you may head home with your shiny new baby grinning from ear to ear. But what you may think are butterflies in your stomach from the *new car smell* and the leather seats may just be your gut instinct trying to knock some sense into you. You already know, deep down, that you signed yourself up for two vehicles—only you're heading home with one.

It turns out that most new cars can and do depreciate up to 50% during their first years of ownership; I'm saying this from work experience. I spent years as a total loss vehicle adjuster and can't remember how many times I witnessed the actual cash value settlement only covering half the vehicle loan. The vehicle owners would only then realize their folly and curse the day they were blinded by the shiny extras they had to upgrade to. The voice inside their heads, whispering 'you only live once' and 'I work hard, I deserve this' suddenly turns into 'Why didn't someone slap that pen outta my hand before I signed on the dotted line?' I'm not saying no one deserves a brand-new vehicle, but it's not a matter of being deserving. It's a matter of persistence, patience, hard work, and priorities. You should, technically, have the money in full to pay for this baby, and don't forget all the maintenance requirements. If you want a Kardashian, you better be able to maintain one. Not all cars depreciate at the same rate, so it's hard to put a concrete number on this. However, if you're curious, you can compare the depreciation for vehicles you're considering through various online tools, such as [Edmunds True Cost to Own](https://www.edmunds.com/true-cost-to-own/) tool, or [VMR Canada](https://www.vmr.ca). When I did this last September, I had a mild stroke – we owed more on our vehicle than what it was worth. So, I got my poo together and paid that sucker off. If you've never lived the *no car payment* life, you have no idea what you're missing. You can take that to the bank!

Now that you're convinced on buying used, rather than new, you should also be aware of a small detail. If you plan to finance a used vehicle, most lenders charge a higher interest rate on used cars than they do on new ones. If you think you're saving money by financing a used car, think again. How do you think the dealerships make a profit? You're damned if you do, and damned if you don't. Your best bet is to save up the cash first and then buy a used vehicle either at a dealership or through a private sale. Remember, cash is king, and I can guarantee you no one will see it coming, as long as you can keep a poker face. Walk into that dealership like Marlon Brando and make them an offer they can't refuse. Don't be scared to haggle their sticker price. It's your money we're talking about and you're in the driver's seat, literally and figuratively.

Before you make that offer, make sure you casually leave your business card with them or a way to contact you—this is key. If they do refuse your offer, this is where the poker face comes into

play. Don't freak out or get disappointed. More importantly, don't blindly accept the spiel that this is a clearance floor model and the price advertised is the lowest they can go. Simply smile politely and walk away. If you're feeling ballsy, you can even nonchalantly say, "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn." You will get a phone call within two weeks by the salesperson. It turns out, they value you and your business, so they did find some corners they could cut. When will you be able to drop by and pick up your new (to you) baby? You likely just saved yourself hundreds in interest, a minimum of two years' worth of car payments on your back, and, likely one to two thousand dollars off their rock-bottom price. Just make sure they throw in a pair of fuzzy dice for that rear-view mirror.

Seasonal Shopping

It's a bit too late to prepare for Thanksgiving, which is literally hours away. If you haven't already, in all honesty, it's probably best for your wallet at this point — the price of turkeys this weekend will be through the roof. When you're preparing for seasonal occasions, the smart thing to do is buy the items you'll need right after the event, or six months prior. These occasions and holidays pop up once a year; they shouldn't take you by surprise. Christmas rolls around every 25th of December – crazy, huh? If you know you need a Christmas tree, because the cat destroyed yours last year, the best time to start looking is December 27th, not now. I hear friends and family talk about how they start buying their Christmas presents in July and I roll my eyes at that moment. Secretly, I'm just jealous of how prepared they are and how much money they're saving compared to me frantically running around angrily sorting through all the over-priced leftovers in the shopping aisles and sales racks.

If you're looking to replace the grill you worked into the ground this summer, you should start shopping now, when prices are rock bottom. The same goes for lawn mowers, patio furniture, and kayaking equipment. These, and other pricey outdoor items, go on sale between September through November, when demand is low and stores need to make room for new inventory. I did do one smart thing this summer, however, I'll grant me that. In July, while it was 30°C, I knew that winter was coming. So, I bought a \$300 parka for 90 bucks! Who's laughing now?

AU-thentic Events **Upcoming AU Related Events**

Undergrad Program Orientation for New Students

Wed, Oct 16, 5:00 to 6:00 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business

business.athabascau.ca/event-details/business-undergraduate-new-students-information-session-102019/

Register online at above link

Symposium and Hall of Fame Awards Gala: Leading business transformation in an age of disruption

Thurs, Oct 17, 1:00 to 8:30 pm MDT

Matrix Hotel, 10640-100 Avenue, Edmonton AB

In person

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business

business.athabascau.ca/news/leading-business-transformation-in-an-age-of-disruption/

RSVP online through above link; \$299+GST

AUSU October Council Meeting

Thurs, Oct 17, 6:30 to 8:00 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AUSU

www.ausu.org/event/october-council-meeting-tentative/

No pre-registration required; e-mail governance@ausu.org for meeting package

All events are free unless otherwise noted

Patience, grasshopper

When we blow our budget, not only does it harm us financially, but it affects our psyche. In the *Journal of Aging and Health*, Drentea and Reynolds note, "debtors report greater symptoms of depression, anxiety, and anger in large part because they are worried about being able to pay off what they owe" (2012, pp. 688-689). On the other hand, when we have a solid plan and we stick to it, that roadmap can lead us to our goals. That doesn't mean you can't scratch the shopping itch – just don't do it with a cheese grater. If a purchase is a need, not a want, and you've properly planned for it, there are ways to save your hard-earned cash for the things that matter: you and yours.

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Fly on the Wall If School Bites then You're Doing it Wrong

Jason Sullivan



Finding Peace Through Study Irritants

One course that helped me overcome academic anxiety was PHIL 360: East Meets West. In it I learned to keep calm and appreciate and cherish all of life's moments, including angst-filled moments of deadlines. Writing the final assignment, I'd pause and really taste the words of assigned authors such as Aldous Huxley. His book *Island* serves to remind anyone to take stock of where they really are at in a given life moment. Huxley writes: "the bird cocked its

head and looked at him first with the right eye, then with the left. After which it opened its orange bill, whistled ten or twelve notes of a little air in the pentatonic scale, made a noise like somebody having hiccups, and then, in a chanting phrase, do do sol do, "Here and now, boys; here and now, boys." The words pressed a trigger, and all of a sudden he remembered everything" (Huxley, 5-6). Remembering where we are on our AU journey helps us recall how far we've come and how much success we can draw upon in moments of nervousness.

To adequately accomplish our goals we have to calmly collect ourselves and press into service that greatly under-valued, yet absolutely-crucial-when-reading-and-writing (not to mention that third R, 'rithmetic) skill: attention span. Attention span is a skill akin to crocheting or weaving or operating a circular saw. It's also the first thing the birds in Huxley's book chirp: "Attention!" (Huxley, 1962, p.1).

At AU attention span may be *the* skill to acquire, so that the passing of time doesn't lead us to pass by our studies. Anxiety begins where our focus lapses and we feel a loss of control. Remember how high school teachers used to implore us to be self-starters? They'd employ the phrase "no one is going to baby sit you when you go off to college". Well not only does no one baby sit us at AU there's not even a professor or fellow student in the building! Like common courtesy or table manners, we grow into the skill of attentiveness. To be effective learners we need to adopt a certain rational and scientific mindset to our studies. As with literacy itself, our development carries us along in Elias' "civilizing process." He elaborates, "scientific modes of thought cannot be developed and become generally accepted unless people renounce their primary, unreflecting, and spontaneous attempt to understand all their experience in terms of its purpose and meaning for themselves. The development that led to more adequate knowledge and increasing control of nature was therefore, considered from one aspect, also a development toward greater self-control by men" (Elias, 1975)

A humorous, and slightly tragic, example of how culture has changed is provided by Henry Miller. Flea infestations in 2019 tend to be a thing of the past, but imagined pestilence is alive and well in the likes of exam and deadline anxiety. Here's how Miller describes his friend's sense of being overwhelmed and persecuted:

"Apparently the boss wanted to get rid of him. But since he had nothing on Osiecki, he was at a loss how to do it.'

'So that's why he puts the lice in your desk every night, eh?' piped O'Mara, slipping me the horse wink.

'I don't say that he does it. All I know is that they're there every morning' and with this our friend would begin scratching himself" (Miller, 2004, p. 257).

A tickle can become an itch and shortly grow into a huge annoyance. That's the disease of procrastination and its attendant anxiety. It can be a compounding challenge. If we tell ourselves "I'm stuck, I'll phone the tutor during her hours" we all too easily slip into that coma of life itself. And weeks go by. Tick tock. Ominously our contract date creeps into view over the horizon like some apocalyptic asteroid. Soon it glows menacingly. But we need not be afraid; "keeping calm and studying on" means that we can take charge of our studies as well as our leisure. Maximum success doesn't mean maximum strain so much as being aware that it's in our own hearts and minds that our success originates and is perpetuated.

If we feel plagued by deadline nuisances in what ought to be an exercise in growth and development, then maybe it's time to just chill for a bit and get perspective. We are the animators of our academic sojourn, the creators of our own destiny. Where once university education was only the domain of dorm-room denizens and classroom attendees, our learning has the capacity to evolve far beyond our struggles with the pests of procrastination.

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Jason Hazel-rah Sullivan is a Masters of Integrated Studies student who loves engaging in discourse while working in the sunny orchards and forests of the Okanagan.



Porkpie Hat Moments Beyond Hope



Darjeeling Jones

"I think it is no exaggeration to say we are on the cusp of the further perfection of extreme evil, an evil whose possibility spreads well beyond that which weapons of mass destruction bequeathed to the nation-states, on to a surprising and terrible empowerment of extreme individuals."

- Bill Joy

"The best lack all conviction, while the worst/
Are full of passionate intensity"

- W.B. Yeats

Realistically, how much longer do we have as a species? Fifty years? Is that overly optimistic? I don't believe in the future; I believe in moments.

Life is a magician; her left hand is memory, her right hand is time, and she is shuffling these moments before me with no regard to

sequence: sitting in front of my laptop, watching the look of anger and betrayal on the face of Greta Thunberg, as she demands accountability and action from the leaders of the world; eight years-old, sitting on the living room rug, watching black and white images of the first astronaut setting foot on the moon; sitting in a concert hall, listening awestruck as the American soprano Renee Fleming performs "O mio babbino caro" from Puccini's Gianni Schicchi; holding the tiny hand of my newborn daughter. All those bright cards, with their luminous illustrations. All depicting moments of friendship, love, and wonder; all the inspiration and warmth that human beings are capable of.

All these moments, though, are no more than matches lit by scared children in a haunted house; a brief flare, and then gone. In the long run, is there anyone who doubts that we are done for? In the end, will our fear not prove to be stronger than our hope? Will our greed not prove to be stronger than our love? How to weigh the worth of the human imagination? For every Shakespearean sonnet, Taj Mahal, and Apollo 11, there is a Manhattan Project, a wall, an act of genocide. For every Albert Einstein or Greta Thunberg, there is a Vladimir Putin and a Donald Trump. For every opera house and every hospital, there is a prison for children and a weaponized drone.

We claim to care about environmental devastation, yet we can barely be bothered to leave our SUVs behind and walk to the store, or use recyclable shopping bags. We claim to want to leave a better world for future generations. But again and again, through some diabolical combination of ignorance, self-interest, avarice, and cowardice, we elect the most foul-breathed, yellow-toothed demagogues and tyrants, allowing them to plunder and rape our present and our future at will. We sit in movie theatres, stuffing our faces with popcorn, entertaining ourselves to death with CGI visions of the apocalypse, in order to escape the reality that is unfolding all about us.

I am an existentialist, not a believer. If there is a soul to the universe, it is the soul of a trickster, a thieving magpie, ever ready to snatch away our bright, shiny wishes. The only thing its beak can't snatch are our memories and our moments.

Perhaps I am wrong. Perhaps the future is much more filled with light and hope than I believe. Maybe we will come to our collective senses, and take actions that will lead us towards a brighter destiny. I am no genius, and I have spent much of my life being wrong about one thing and another. I certainly hope I am wrong. Really, really wrong. But, in the meantime, I plan to keep making moments happen with the ones I most care about, every single day.



Why a Jewel Tree?

Wanda Waterman



““The jewel tree opens its loving embrace to everyone and promotes happiness—which is our natural state and birthright.”

~Robert Thurman

“In the end, maybe it's wiser to surrender before the miraculous scope of human generosity and to just keep saying thank you, forever and sincerely, for as long as we have voices.”

~Elizabeth Gilbert

Today each one of us should build our own jewel tree. Let me tell you how— and, more important, why.

The Jewel Tree of Tibet, the book by Buddhist scholar Robert Thurman, was created to teach the basics of Tibetan Buddhism, but it revolves around a symbolic device which can be hijacked by novices and non-Buddhists alike. It's an image with tremendous power to comfort, lift up, strengthen, and exhort, and it can be yours.

A caveat: I'm clearly not going to replicate here in a thousand words or fewer what devout Buddhist scholars have discovered after millennia of study and meditation. If you want to really understand the jewel tree teaching you'll need to read books, including, if you wish, Thurman's book, and talk to the experts on the subject. Now you may proceed.

The quickest way to explain the jewel tree, sometimes called “the wish-fulfilling jewel tree,” is that it's a large and beautiful tree in your imagination, filled with jewels that light up with the faces of everyone you know who wishes you well, who's on your side, whose love for you remains largely unclouded by resentment and envy, who's happy to see you safe, well, and happy.

The jewel tree might hold the face of your mom, your grade eight home room teacher, your pastor, your best friend, your spouse, your hairdresser, some guy you talked with on a train once, someone who smiled at you from across a crowded, or the members of your bridge club. You

can even go into the past and add the faces of your favourite mystics, authors, composers, or artists, the people who really seemed to get you, who showed you who you are, and who maybe pointed the way for you. When thinking about someone gives you good vibes, their face belongs on your tree.

So how do you make your own jewel tree? You start with a list of all those people. Put it on a note somewhere where you can see it whenever you're struggling. You could actually make a drawing of this tree, but it's not necessary; all you need do is meditate on your tree until the faces light up. Keep meditating until they start cheering. They'll be so happy for any step you take toward awakening to the beauty of reality. They'll comfort you when you're discouraged and help you get back up again. They'll applaud when you do something truly good.

You need a jewel tree, not just for the aforementioned but because sometimes we deceive ourselves into thinking that humanity is basically evil, that nothing will ever change, and that everyone in our lives has let us down. The jewel tree is a way of remembering the good not only in humanity but also in our own histories. There's always at least one face that belongs on your tree, and that one face can be enough to restore your faith in humanity—and in yourself.

You may even develop enough compassion and lovingkindness to earn a place on someone else's jewel tree.

So get busy with that list.

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



Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

AthaU Facebook Group

Kayla celebrates her first A+; here's hoping it's the first of many! Katy wonders if a reference letter can be used for more than one award application; responses suggest that students have successfully used a single reference letter for multiple award applications.

Other posts include AU's MEd program, course load juggling, and courses CMNS 420, GEOL 200, POLI 277, and PSYC 356.

reddit

A current U of Waterloo student seeks points of reference for online studies at AU, including transfer credits, credits per course, course structure, and potential course load.

Twitter

[@austudentsunion](#) tweets: "Looking for help learning how to use a program for your [#AthabascaU](#) courses? Get online training from industry experts from LinkedIn Learning, provided FREE for AUSU members. <https://ausu.org/services/learning>."

[@AU_Press](#) tweets: "University Press Week is in exactly one month! Get a sneak peek of this year's theme and browse some incredible books on [@lithub](#)! <https://lithub.com/the-best-of-the-university-press-recommendations-for-smarter-reading/> [#ReadUP](#)."



The Study Dude

How Busy Mom & Pops Find Time to Study

Marie Well



Have you ever wondered how busy moms and pops make the grade? How they pass grad school while holding part-time jobs and raising a family? They must have some secrets to share. And I've found a book that tells all. Faithann Brown, MBA, lays out time-savers for swamped students in her book *Returning to School as a Busy Adult: 8 Practical Tips for Succeeding in Your Degree Program*.

But why do you need time-savers? Faithann says, "Higher Education and other regional accrediting bodies recommend two hours of preparation time for every one hour of class time" (34%). And, if you've got a lab, add another two hours to your study time. Just three classes, each with a lab, adds up to nine hours of lectures, three hours of labs, and 24 hours prep—all in one week. That totals 36 hours of studies, never mind the time needed for household cleaning, child rearing, dog walking, dinner prep, and a 20-hour part-time job.

Due to the time crunch, Faithann advises adults to "talk with their partners, children, and spouses about how all their lives would change as the result of them returning to school" (35%). I met a friend whose first class as an adult learner happened to be a class I was taking. I told her that she needed to put parenting on hold, lock herself in a room, and prioritize her books. It would pay off in the end, I reassured her. But I wondered if this was the right advice.

While my advice sounds extreme, you can still carve out decent study time by simplifying your routine. According to Faithann: "You've got to figure out what matters real quick and you have to put everything else on hold or leave it alone. Simplifying your life improves your grades" (35%).

Faithann says you'll need to "simplify your mind, simplify your money, simplify your meals, simplify your laundry, simplify your cleaning, simplify your responsibilities" (36%). Try saying that six times while cooking enchiladas. Let's run through the six strategies to simplify your life:

First, to simplify your mind, try meditating (37%) or doing light yoga. Meditation and yoga clear your mind for optimal focus. Second, to simplify your money, use only electronic statements and set up two different bank accounts: one for your bills, another for your spending money (37%). That way, you don't whack your bills account during a spending spree.

Third, to lower the burden of meal prep, order your food online (Faithann prefers Walmart for online grocery shopping). At Walmart, a bag of frozen blueberries or organic avocados can be up to \$2 cheaper than at other grocers. As well, at Walmart, the kidney beans, lentils, and chickpeas are cheap, and the salmon comes with big savings. Even a bag of Walmart apples can cost half the price of apples at most grocery chains. Walmart even offers organic frozen dinners. Faithann says, "You can shop for low-cost frozen nutritious and organic meals at your local Walmart. They even have vegan entrees" (42%).

But when prepping your food, “cook once per week: cooking in bulk and freezing the excess allows you to access food all week without the hassle of preparing a meal each day” (40%). To simplify food prep further, “use the slow cooker” (41%).

Fourth, to lower the load on your laundry, use “drop-off laundry services Some laundry services also offer delivery” (42%). To keep your clothes clean, use napkins and change out of your work or school clothes once you enter your home (43%). Don’t bother with ironing, unless you work a formal job: “find ways to retire your iron.... If you can get away with it, live with wrinkled clothes” (43%).

Fifth, make cleaning easier: “you will have to choose between having a clean home and having good grades” (45%). Faithann “recommends selecting one room in the house to clean regularly and tak[e] shortcuts on the rest. For most people, that’s the bathroom” (45%). Also, buy disposable plates, cups, and cutlery. As well, “You have to make peace with seeing dust bunnies under the beds, spider webs in the corner, and layers of dust on your TV and bookshelves” (46%). Faithann would’ve been proud of my dust during grad school.

Lastly, to simplify your responsibilities, “take on one major life challenge at a time. Amassing too many responsibilities at once without enlisting appropriate help is a recipe for disaster” (48%). During grad school, I trained like an Olympian athlete, sometimes up to five hours a day. When I’d cat nap, I’d fall fast asleep within the first minute. I took many cat naps. In fact, I hardly focused on anything but the next cat nap. Don’t treat your education like a tryout for the WWF.

But there’s so much more you can do. One author says to study on the toilet. An old friend of mine drew molecules on her shower wall. As for me, I love listening to audiobooks while I sleep. Pick and choose what works best for you.

References

Brown, Faithann. (2018). *Returning to School as a Busy Adult: 8 Practical Tips for Succeeding in Your Degree Program*. USA. Beta Draft. E-book.

Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: Nature's Cure Zone Scholarship

Sponsored by: Nature's Cure Zone

Deadline: November 15, 2019

Potential payout: \$1000

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be attending, or planning to attend, a university, college or graduate school.

What's required: A completed online application form, along with a maximum 1000-word article on any topic related to holistic living, as described in the Application Guidelines.

Tips: Read the Application Guidelines carefully.

Where to get info: naturescurezone.com/scholarship/



The Not-So Starving Student

China and Canada: Comparing Tim Hortons

Xin Xu



Typical Canadian Tim Hortons lineup

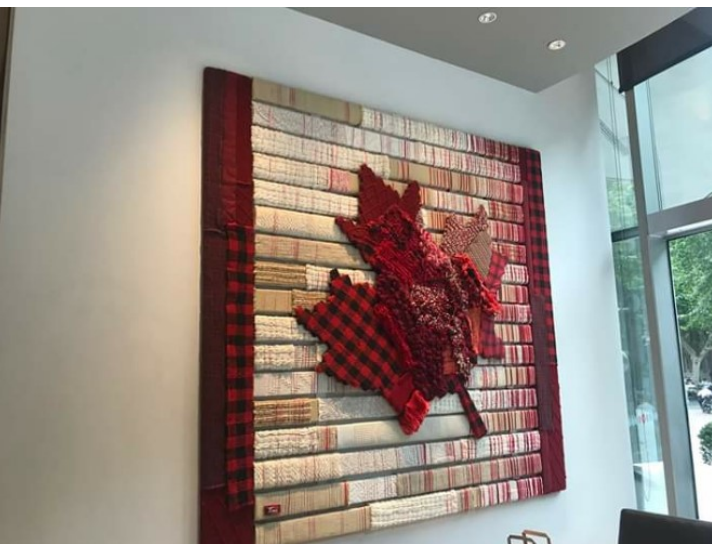
For many, Tim Hortons brand represents Canadian identity almost as well as our hockey fanaticism and our cravings for the iconic maple syrup. Halfway across the world, I came across a rare find - a Tim Hortons Cafe in the middle of a bustling street in Shanghai, China. I was also feeling slightly homesick and the discovery brightened my day. Taking a stroll inside the lounge I realized that this was quite unlike any other Tim Hortons that we're familiar with in North America. But, before I start, I'd like to make a disclaimer that I am not affiliated or sponsored by Tim Hortons in any way.

Shanghai Tim Hortons Ambience:

For one, the lounge was well-lit, cozy and even upscale. The interior decor was symbolically Canadian with a large maple leaf artwork, but some might say it had the aura of a Starbucks or a hipster cafe rather than your average Tim Hortons. Of course, it made sense that in a wealthier region of Shanghai, the Tim Hortons would appeal to the local population. The stereotypical Tim Hortons in Canada has a fast food feel that's meant for a quick dine in or take-out. Very few people would spend hours in one, whereas for its Shanghai counterpart, it was inviting enough to sip premium coffee under a chandelier.



Shanghai Tim Hortons exterior



Shanghai Tim Hortons interior decor

Tim Hortons Menu:

So let's talk about the food. After touring the interior and finding a snug couch to laze about, I took a peek at the menu which consisted of both hot and cold beverages as well as food items. The menu was written on a chalkboard not unlike that of many premium cafes. Having the advantage of being bilingual I was able to navigate the menu of ciabatta sandwiches and exotic-sounding drinks. One thing that caught my eye was the flavor of the Timbits available. Some unique offerings included the salted egg yolk flavor and black lemon peach oolong tea.

Moreover, the sandwich fillings included prawns and black pepper, beef quite unlike the typical BLT or grilled chicken available in Canada.



A typical Tim Hortons order in Canada might include a doughnut and ice cap drink



In Shanghai, I made an order of black forest doughnut, salted egg yolk Timbit and a peach fermented rice slushie drink

Tim Hortons Prices:

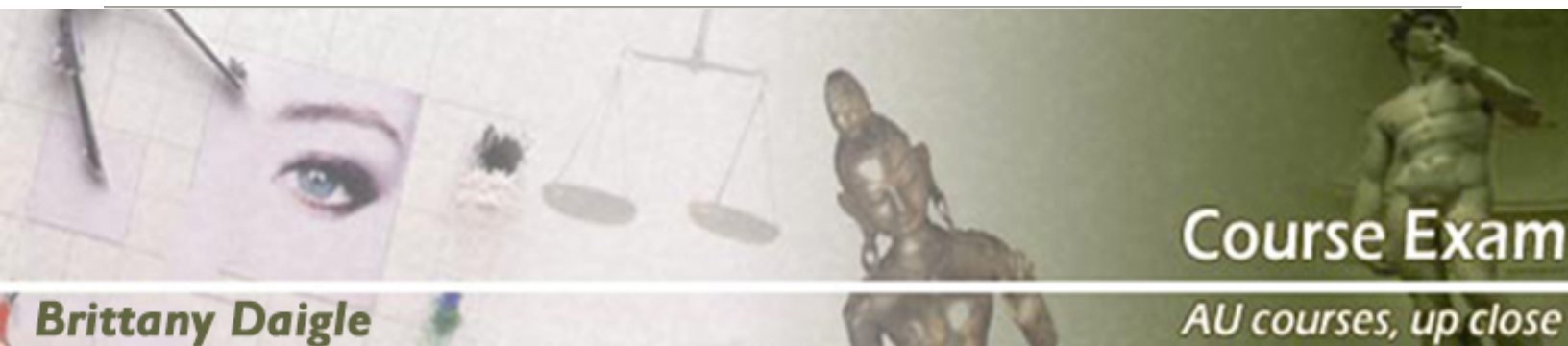
One of the things Canadians love about this brand is that not only is it convenient to grab a coffee or snacks at one of the many locations across Canada, but also because of the affordable prices. So how does Chinese Tim Hortons stack up with the western counterpart? I made a comparison chart of the most popular items on the menu. All the values are in Canadian currency and all taxes (Alberta's) are included.

	Canada	China
Timbits (10 pack)	\$2.51	\$7.91
Single doughnut	\$1.04	\$2.26
Small original blend coffee	\$1.62	\$2.82
Small iced cap	\$3.14	\$4.71

It was very obvious after stepping into the Shanghai Tim Hortons that this cafe wasn't for everyone. Unlike in Canada where individuals from almost all types of backgrounds can enjoy a cup of coffee, that wasn't the case here. In fact, some of the prices, even after converting to Canadian, were nearly double that of the Canadian menu prices. Hence, not many average Chinese people can afford a cup of coffee and doughnut here.

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





Course Exam

Brittany Daigle

FNCE 249 (Personal Investing) is a three-credit introductory business course that helps students gain the knowledge and skills to effectively manage their personal investments. Students will gain an understanding of the budgeting and investment process, familiarity with investment math and terminology, and the ability to apply and assess different approaches to investing. This course has no prerequisites and there is a challenge for credit option if interested.

Personal Investing is made up of six lessons, one preparation assignment, and three assignments weighing thirty, five, forty, and twenty-five percent of the course grade respectively. FNCE 249 has no midterm or final examinations. The six lessons within this course cover topics such as the financial statement, security analysis, investment basics, capital market analysis, and mutual funds. To receive credit for FNCE 249, students must complete and submit the three assignments in order from one to three. Your final grade is determined by a weighted average of the grades you receive on these three assignments. Students must achieve a composite grade of at least a “D” fifty percent or better for the entire course.

Students should note that registration in this course includes an electronic textbook. If you do not like electronic textbooks, you may be able to purchase a print version from the publisher through a direct-to-student link provided on the course website or acquire the textbook on your own. Another, cheaper option would be to check AUSU’s student mobile app, as sometimes students sell their old and sometimes unused textbooks.

Gayle St. Denis is currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Management in Human Resource Management at Athabasca University. She provides a bit of an introduction, stating “I am currently living in Fort McMurray, Alberta and I have lived here for over twenty years! I am currently working full-time as the executive director of a registered charity, Safe Community Wood Buffalo. I am married and have two beautiful daughters and three fun-loving dogs. In my spare time, I enjoy volunteering and supporting my local community.”

When asked to explain the course to students, Gayle states “There are three assignments (and a prep assignment that needs to be submitted to the tutor) with no final exam. The first assignment is making use of formulas and the BAII calculator, though you can show your calculations on paper without using the calculator if you would rather. The prep assignment does just that, it preps you for the last two assignments. You choose two stocks to follow and pretty much all of assignment two and three are following these stocks and answering questions about them.”

As for the structure of FNCE 249, Gayle continues, “Well, as luck would have it, I took FNCE 300 (Financial Economics) first! FNCE 300 was a required course, and I chose FNCE 249 for a business option. I found it to be quite interesting completing the last two assignments, because I followed two stocks and compared them throughout the final two assignments. I found it a really great way to show that you understand the course material. As for advice, just like with any FNCE course, show your work so your tutor knows how you came up with your answer. Showing your

work is not just for your tutor, it helps you understand the steps and methods! The major bonus for this course is that there is no final exam!”

When asked if she would recommend FNCE 249 to students, she states “I absolutely loved FNCE 249 and not just because it has not exam! I have investments for retirement and such so it really helped me understand my personal investments. I found this course to be quite easy, I finished it in a month. It is a good introduction level course for anyone who is new to finance and I would 100% recommend it!

As for tips and tricks, she states “Definitely start it right away! The prep assignment has you documenting weekly stats for your chosen stocks and reviewing news articles relating to each stock. You can, of course, find the history of the stocks, but it is much more interesting to get these stats current. Maybe start with your prep assignment so you have a bit of stock history recorded by the time you get your second assignment. Choose stocks that interest you or are a hot topic in the market. You’ll see a lot of movement in these ones which makes them interesting to analyze and the assignments more fun. For assignment 1, if you don’t know how to use a BAII calculator, there are tones of YouTube videos showing you how!”

When asked how communications with her tutors have been, Gayle states explains that “My assignments have been marked in a reasonable amount of time, usually within three business days for all of them. These assignments are fairly in depth, not just answering questions, so I did not expect to get my marks back quickly, so I felt the time was reasonable. The marking was fair, and the feedback was helpful for each assignment. With finance, it is easy to make an error in calculations, but I cannot say it enough, show your work. The marker can see how you came up with your calculations and you will still get marks for showing that you understand the concept, even if your calculations are wrong.”

Whether FNCE 249 is a degree or program requirement of yours, or the topics discussed above are of interest to you, this course will have you learning lots of useful and interesting material surrounding the topic personal investing.

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



The Fit Student

Feed Your Suzy Homemade Pablum

Marie Well



Author Are you a student mom, breastfeeding your baby? Or are you planning on giving birth? Whichever you do, bring your baby top nutrition. Homemade pablum could launch your baby into a healthier, happier life. On the flipside, store-bought pablum can come loaded with sugar and salt. You shouldn’t feed sugar to a puppy, never mind a baby. So, stick with homemade pablum, as Paula Craven says in her book, *Homemade Organic Baby Food: Healthy Food for Babies. Learn How to Make Baby Food Yourself* “What’s freshly cooked will surely taste better, be cheaper, and you’ll have control over the ingredients. You’ll be able to leave out salt, sugar, spices and other things that might not be the best fit for your baby’s nutrition” (24%).

Top health for your baby won't cost extra according to Ms. Craven. "Quality doesn't mean more expensive. It just means paying more attention and making sure the product is in top condition" (39%). That means buying fresh and organic, free of blemishes. "Always use organic products: vegetables, meat, potatoes, and fruits. It's been proven that they contain fewer hazardous substances" (27%). As for me, pesticides in nonorganic avocados burn my tongue. So, I cringe at the thought of what pesticides do to babies.

So when should you start feeding little Suzy homemade pablum? "In very broad terms, at around six months your young child should have enough strength to hold its head straight and to be able to swallow easily. It is now time to experiment with new foods" (26%). You'll still feed your baby milk (preferably breastmilk) but coupled with your homemade purées: "it's recommended to start with rice cereal, and then trying an oatmeal cereal, and then the baby can progress to fruits and vegetables. Babies can have mostly fruits and vegetables" (45%). Just make sure the meals come well-mashed with a little breastmilk.

Don't shy away from feeding your baby meat, too: "at six months of age babies can also do blended meats (depending on the parents' choices). So, you can do beef, chicken, turkey, veal and lamb... as long as they're blended and mashed.... Fish is not recommended [because of bones]" (45%). But stay clear of honey: "Babies cannot have honey until age 1. Neither any kind of peanut, or choking nut, until age 3, because they can swallow it whole, and aspirate it into their lung" (46%).

So, how do you create your baby's buffet? "You'll need a blender, any kind really, to make your baby's purées" (40%). You'll also need a steamer, a cutting board, a digital thermometer, and ice cube trays for freezing your purées. Here's a simple recipe: place spinach and banana into a blender. After blending, pour the mix into ice cube trays. Freeze for 8 hours. Easy! Then, "put the ice cubes in their own Ziploc freezer bag (labeled), and they'll be good for 3 months" (76%). Also, "when using the ice cube trays, make sure that you seal the top with plastic wrap ... labelled and dated, and freeze immediately after preparation" (87%).

But don't quit breastfeeding. You'll still want to give "your child milk 4 to 5 times during the day, approximately every four hours" (88%). Immediately after you breastfeed your baby, feed the infant the homemade pablum. You can wait thirty minutes after breastfeeding if the baby's too full.

Why all the fuss for your baby? When I was in grade one, Miss Smith played video cartoons that insisted, "The most important person in the world is you." Even as a six-year old, I knew she had it wrong. Surely selflessness is what creates bonds—between Ma, Pa, and a healthy, well-fed baby.

References

Craven, Paula. (n.d.). *Homemade Organic Baby Food: Healthy Food for Babies. Learn How to Make Baby Food Yourself*. E-book.





Brotherly Loss

Dear Barb:

Recently I lost my younger brother to cancer. He was only thirty years old and just beginning his life. It was the worst experience of my life. He suffered for three years and we all hoped he would beat this terrible disease, but, in the end, he succumbed. We're trying our best as a family to get on with life, but it's so hard. Every day I think about my brother and our childhood and all that he will miss. Sometimes I think about the times I was mean to him and feel so awful, I just want one day with him to apologize and make things right. He was such a gentle soul, and always watched out for me. I feel so alone without him by my side. Nothing in my life ever prepared me for losing my brother at such a young age. It just never crossed my mind that I would lose Steve, he was my heart. My whole family is devastated. How do we make sense out of such a terrible tragedy? Feeling sad in Calgary, Melinda.

Hi Melinda:

So sorry for your loss. Losing a sibling is devastating at any age. When a parent loses a child everyone rallies around and supports them, however, often a sibling's grief is overlooked, and they are left to deal with the loss on their own. Whether you and your sibling were close or not does not make a difference, the loss is real and lifelong. We all have complicated relationships with our siblings, some are loving and caring, others are fraught with jealousy and sibling rivalry. Your role in the family may affect your relationship

with your siblings, as older siblings tend to be looked up to and idolized, while younger ones are often teased and not taken seriously and seen as stealing all the attention. No matter the relationship, there are things you can do to learn to live with and manage your grief. Most importantly, forgive yourself for things you may have said or done in the past; these things are all a normal part of the sibling relationship. Also don't isolate yourself. Share your grief with your parents and other siblings and offer support to each other. Every person's pain is unique and real to them. Give yourself time to heal. If you feel you are stuck and not able to move on with your life, seek professional help. A support group would be beneficial not only to you, but to your whole family. Some are geared towards a sibling's loss and others are for parents who have lost children. As you are working through your grief, find ways to remember your brother. Make a memory book of the life and times you both shared. Most importantly treasure the time you had together.

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.



Poet Maeve Give Them an Island

Wanda Waterman



The information on this page is provided by the AU Students' Union. The Voice does not create this content. Contact AUSU at services@ausu.org with any questions about this article.

IMPORTANT DATES

- **Oct 11-15:** [Advance Polls open for Federal Election](#)
- **Oct 15:** [Nov degree requirements deadline](#)
- **Oct 17:** [AUSU Council Meeting](#)
- **Oct 21:** [Canada Federal Election](#)
- **Oct 30:** [Deadline to apply for course extension for Dec](#)
- **Nov 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Dec 1](#)

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AUSU members who pledge have a chance to win one of the great prizes from AUSU, including:

- **FREE undergraduate course at AU** (2 available)
- Amazon Gift Cards (up to \$100 each, 5 available)
- Free Online AU Exam Invigilation through ProctorU (\$40 value, 20 available)

By pledging, you also have a chance to win \$100 from the Canadian Alliance of Students' Associations (CASA).

Visit www.getoutthevote.ca for details and to pledge.

AUSU has partnered with for this nation-wide Get out the Vote campaign. When more students vote, more issues facing students become key topics in the election. Make sure you help direct the future of Canada by voting in the 2019 Federal Election.

Visit the AUSU website [here](http://www.getoutthevote.ca) for more details.

Why Should You Vote?

We could list off dozens of reasons you should vote, but why not hear it from your fellow AU students?

"I'll vote because it's my right and my responsibility and because my children need to learn and understand that everyone's voice is important."

- Corinna Schmidt, [Facebook](#)

"I want to help ensure Canada moves forward in our vision of healthcare, and I want to make sure there's a Canada left for generations to come."

- Lanie Kristine, [Facebook](#)

"All the issues on the table directly impact the lives of my loved ones and clients and my field."

- Sharaya McCollum-Brown, [Facebook](#)

"To make sure that we are headed in the right direction with respect to climate change and the environment."

- Travis Hunt, [Facebook](#)

"I will vote because I am a woman and I can vote. This is my right."

- Kate Romanoff, [Facebook](#)

"I will vote because every Canadian deserves equity."

- Natasha Donahue, [Facebook Video](#)

Find out where to vote [here](#).



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