



THE VOICE

Vol 27 Issue 45 2019-11-22

Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You!

Struggling Student Rants

Credit Junkie Seeks Prepaid Card

In Conversation

The Healing Music of Nunavut

Plus:

T'aint No Sin

Silence as Pure Study Gold

and much more!



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www.voicemagazine.org
301 Energy Square
10109 – 106 ST NW
Edmonton AB
T5J 3L7

Email

voice@voicemagazine.org

Publisher

AU Students' Union

Editor-In-Chief

Jodi Campbell

Managing Editor

Karl Low

Regular Contributors

Barb Godin,
Barbara Lehtiniemi, Jason
Sullivan, Wanda Waterman,
Xin Xu, and others

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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 Taxing Questions

Karl Low



One of the changes that the Alberta government has made with the new budget is to remove the tax credit that used to be given to students for full-time or part-time studies, along with the corresponding tax credit given for textbooks.

Personally, I've never been a fan of tax credits as a form of student aid, even though they're able to be carried forward until you decide to use them (presumably when you're making some money) because they really don't help with the here and now costs of actually getting into school. School administration offices, after all, are understandably reluctant to accept an IOU as payment until your tax refund kicks in.

That said, the recent AUSU Council meeting has to deal with this question, because one of their position policies, the policies that guide the executive as to what's important to AUSU members, says that they should advocate for improved tax credits. And the reason is that, when it comes to AU students, as usual, we're different. Many AU students are coming to AU as upgrading; we're already working, so a tax credit can be

immediately applies. Also pointed out during the Council meeting, and something that I hadn't really thought about before, the tax credit is one of the only types of student assistance that's available for students taking courses part time.

Both of these factors mean that the tax credit was particularly appropriate to AUSU's members. But that's gone, and from what I'm hearing being told, the government has no particular appetite to bring it back, students simply aren't as worthy of tax breaks as corporations according to the UCP. But this means that AUSU Council has to make a decision. Because tax breaks were particularly helpful for a large number of AU students, should council double down on them, and work to insist that they be reinstated, or should they instead spend that effort figuring out other ways and things to advocate for that AU students would benefit from, such as making funding available for part time studies specifically, or types of bursaries for working students.

Council was pondering this question when Councillor Alice Namu asked if there was a way that Council could seek some direction from the students on this, and personally, I think that's a great idea. Given that we simply can't do everything, what do you think AUSU council should focus on when it's talking to governments about student aid? Should it press to bring tuition tax credits back for students, as a program that was able to help students at AU no matter how quickly they took their courses, or should it instead argue for some sort of different arrangements, and if so, do you have any ideas as to what? Write me at karl@voicemagazine.org with your thoughts on this, or leave a comment way at the bottom of the page here if you're reading this on the web. Or better yet, write AUSU council directly at admin@ausu.org (or use their [handy form](#)).

When you're done that, come back here and check our our feature interview, with a mathematics student who's been published—in knitting magazines for her patterns! And be sure to look at Wanda Waterman's interview with Thor Simonsen of Hitmakerz, a record label specializing in music from musicians across Nunavut. It's a story you don't often hear. Plus advice on how to handle credit cards, scholarships, events, and more! Enjoy the read!

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

MINDS WE MEET



Karen Fletcher lives in Ottawa, Ontario with her husband and three young children. She is currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Science program with a Major in Mathematics at Athabasca University. She hopes to complete a masters and a PhD and to eventually work as a university professor teaching mathematics. This is her story.

Can you give us a little bit of background information about yourself? Who are you? Where do you live and what do you do for work?

My name is Karen Fletcher and I live in Ottawa, Ontario, which I love! There are a ton of museums and festivals throughout the year to go to, which I really enjoy. For work I design and sell knitting patterns to yarn companies and magazines, and my husband and I have three young children.

What program are you enrolled in?

I am taking the Bachelor of Science in Mathematics, which I'm really enjoying so far.

Could you describe the path that led you to AU?

I got a degree in Classics and Religious Studies when I was younger, which I really enjoyed but it did not lead anywhere professionally. After university, I had an administrative job at a non-profit until I had kids. Since then, I have done freelance work designing knitting patterns at home, which I also love, but in the next few years all my kids are in school and there are about 30 years until I'll be close to retiring and I felt stuck. I felt like there wasn't a lot of places I could go with what I had.

What was it that made you realize you wanted to go back to school, and what pushed you to major in Mathematics?

The first time I went to university I was pressured by family only to switch programs if I could graduate on time, and I'd been thinking that I wish I had pushed back and just taken an extra year to study math or something STEM related, and then, one night, I couldn't sleep. It was about 2am, and I just had this epiphany that just because I didn't do it then doesn't mean I can't do it now and I think I applied to Athabasca University the next day.

Any advice for people who are on the fence about going back to school?

If you are thinking about going back to school, I would say that you are not too old and that just because you did not do this when you were 20 years old doesn't mean you can't now.

Selling knitting patterns is such a unique job. Could you describe one of your proudest moments in relation to your work?

I'd been working on publishing knitting patterns independently for a while when I started to get contracts for magazines. The first time I got to hold the hard copy of a magazine that was being sold across Britain in major stores that had my pattern with my picture in it was really cool. There are lots of things I've done in life that are more important or have had much more of an impact but I think what made this accomplishment meaningful was that it wasn't something that society or my employer expected me to do but something I had run after just because it was important to me.

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

I love sewing clothing, there's something satisfying about not being limited by what stores have in stock, but to say "I want a sweater with this neckline, this kind of fit, these sleeves, this sort of pockets" and then to make it fit exactly right. I also love the body positivity of online sewing communities. I cannot count how many times someone will post a photo and say they don't like how something looks on them and 100 or so people will respond "You look fantastic, that sweater needs a narrow shoulder adjustment, let me explain how to do that." To be a part of a group where the emphasis is on changing clothes, so they fit someone's body instead of changing someone's body to fit clothes is really awesome.

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

I'd love to be a university professor teaching math. After this degree, I'm hoping to get a Master of Mathematics and then eventually a Ph.D. but we will see where life takes me.

Has there been someone in your life who has influenced your desire to learn?

I've always been terrible at spelling (I'm mildly dyslexic), and so many teachers just assumed I was dumb or always going to be bad at this, but my grade one teacher Mrs. Van Hemert would sit down with me and my writing and say, "Let's correct this together" and patiently went through each word to show me how to get it right, she never made me feel dumb for not getting it, and there was something about how she handled that that made me love school.

Could you describe your experience with online learning so far? What do you like?

I love that the schedule's flexible, really that makes it possible for me to do this because, with little kids, even if I had daycare, then as soon as they get sick I wouldn't be able to get to class. I also love that I can sign up for new courses any month which means I'm not tied into a three-semester schedule like a typical university.

Is there anything that you dislike?

It is a bit lonely at times, but I love the AUSU mobile app because it makes it possible to connect with other students.

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

I loved ASTR 205 (Universe—The Ultimate Frontier), which is an introductory astronomy and astrophysics course.

What made it your favorite course? Would you recommend it to other students?

The course was really interesting, and my tutor was great. I would absolutely recommend it but be aware that it will be a good amount of work. I've always been fascinated by space, so I enjoyed

getting to use one of my electives to study something that was a personal interest. I'm planning to take the next astronomy course Athabasca offers after I finish my calculus courses.

Have you given up anything to attend AU? Was it worth it?

I don't really feel like I've given up a lot, maybe just time and money, but I think that's worth it. I don't want to spend the rest of my life freelancing and feeling stuck. The fact that Athabasca University is online, and that I can start a course any month of the year means I did not have to give up a lot to go, if I had been locked in to a more traditionally university timeline or been tied to a physical classroom I'd either have to put off going to school or give up much more family time.

How do you find communications with your course tutors?

I find it really depends on the tutors. The one I have right now is fantastic; he usually answers questions within the hour. I've had another one that responded to my detailed question about not understanding why a particular math technique was used in a particular question with a form letter that suggested I should read the textbook and maybe take notes and that would help me succeed in class.

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

Amelia Earhart, I love how she followed her passions even though they were unconventional and atypical for a woman of her time. I think it would be really interesting to hear about what she struggled with as she pursued flying, what her favourite parts were, and to hear about her work in forming the 99s, a group of female aviators.

Could you tell us something that few people know about you?

I spent a ton of time as a kid dreaming about and attempting to design a flying bicycle, I lived on a steep hill and figured the sidewalk would be the perfect place to gain speed and take off. I was forever using my furniture to build airplanes in my room.

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

When I was in high school, I tutored this girl in math, she was a good student, but math didn't come easily to her. One day she showed up and said, "I did my homework for the week. I re-did all the questions I got wrong, but these ones I still don't get." School always came easily to me, so I hadn't had to work like that, it never occurred to me to work like that, but following her example has helped me in my studies and other things I've gone after in life.

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

I got to organize a number of trips to deliver medical aid to Cuba (they have awesome doctors, but the US embargo makes getting medical supplies difficult). I loved it because we were hosted by churches (we camped out in their Sunday School rooms), and got to see people's real lives instead of just hotels, we got to go to a bunch of places that weren't normally open to foreigners and spend time with people in their homes. I love travels where I get to not just be a tourist.

What (non-AU) book are you reading now? Could you describe the book?

Skunkworks, which is about the development of the SR-71 Blackbird, the fastest spy plane ever built. I'm really enjoying it; the author was the head of thermodynamics working on the project and the stories of what went on behind the scenes are crazy.

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



The Struggling Student Rants

Credit Junkie Seeks Prepaid Credit Card

Angela Pappas



Credit cards are not the source of all evil. Yes, you read that correctly. They are not our friends, but neither are they our foes. They are objects, and objects don't have intentions. This would be like saying a carrot stick or a textbook intends to murder us in the middle of the night. Although many AU students would disagree about the murder-by-textbook, we still have to remember these objects don't start their day with the intent of sabotaging our happiness. They don't start their day at all, we do. Neither do they have intentions; we have the responsibility for those also. Furthermore, our intentions manifest through our habits—our spending habits for the purposes of *The Struggling Student Rants*. Therefore, just like the textbook or the carrot stick, the credit card just sits there lifeless and ready to do our bidding. Our bidding is the

key—we can use it for good or evil—it's all about leverage. This may sound cliché, but think about it. We can use our textbooks to ace our exams or we can use a particularly heavy one to knock someone out cold if they piss us off. With that same intent, we can use the credit card to our advantage and as a tool to help us along our journey. The other option is to use the card to go on a wild and crazy shopping spree, with no regard for blowing the budget. When I can't control my spending and end up with an exorbitant bill, I like to think I can always just fake my own death, buy a plane ticket to Havana and spend my remaining days on the beach, listening to samba and smoking cigars; but then I snap back to reality. My demise is my own doing and I have to face the music I composed.

There was a time when we didn't have to control our spending; not the way we do now. Credit cards weren't an option—they didn't even exist. Cash was King; you either had it or you didn't. Anything you needed, you paid for with cash. Some folks still prefer it this way, but it's getting harder to choose your vehicle of choice. All this has changed, however, in the past couple of decades. From buying your daily latte at Starbucks; paying for groceries and utility bills; to buying big-ticket items, like home appliances and furniture. The shift towards a cashless existence started by cutting cheques; something millennials may never get to experience in their lifetime. Even cheques are now becoming obsolete—archaic almost—to make the consumer experience as seamless as possible. Credit cards are now the vehicle of choice, and they don't even need to be anywhere near the consumer to use them. The bearer can upload everything to their smartphone app, or they can even pay with a swipe of a wrist, if they've been suckered into paying a grand or two for a smartwatch.

Therefore, if money, in one form or another, is available 24/7, how is it our fault if we can't keep our finances in check? Again, money itself is the object, not the wrongdoer. It's the vehicle we use to get where we're going. Vehicles have neither good nor evil intentions. Similar to using a weapon to hurt someone, or eating two large pizzas rather than two slices, the doer is to blame, not the item. Therefore, any responsibility in overspending is on us, not the credit card. There are thousands of studies that look at the actual source of this behaviour in depth; it's not just a matter of will power or lack, thereof. However, I believe the true power lies in recognizing there's

an issue, to begin with, rather than continuing to live and spend in denial. You can't correct something if you don't know it's wrong. Compulsive spending is known as an impulse control disorder in the psychology world and has similar features to other addictive illnesses, such as eating disorders and substance abuse (Black, Shaw, McCormick, Bayless & Allen, 2012).

Our AU psychology majors should be nodding their heads right about now. In a Psychology Today article, the author explains, "compulsive buying is characterized by excessive preoccupation or poor impulse control with shopping," and can result in some very ugly consequences, like serious marital conflict relating to financial problems (Heshmat, 2018). It does make sense, however, if you and your significant other are paddling in different directions—you to the bank and they to the mall. At some point, you're both going to get tired of the resistance and either let the other take control or give them a nice goose egg with the oar and throw them overboard. Similarly, it's not just the shopping sprees we should beware of. There are myriads of financial disorders associated with spending, wealth accumulation, and even the tendency to sabotage our financial wellbeing. These tendencies may not be as simple as shrugging it off and blaming it on our love of a good Black Friday sale.

Brad Klontz, an associate professor in Financial Psychology at Creighton University (among many other impressive feats), specializes in researching and defining money disorders. He and his colleagues published their research in 2012, in *The Journal of Financial Therapy*. The authors explain there are many financial-related disorders, in addition to overspending and compulsive buying. Underspending, compulsive hoarding, and workaholism are also issues to keep in mind (Klontz, Britt, Archuleta & Klontz, 2012). To make it even more confusing, as psychology tends to be, these tendencies don't just all fit into one neat pile. However, to save you some reading time from your busy schedule, Klontz et al. summarize that, "in general, a money disorder is a chronic pattern of self-defeating or self-destructive financial behaviors." Although the research is a few years behind, it's eye opening and still relevant. Everyone should glimpse through it before the Black Friday sales this weekend or the upcoming Christmas Season, to make sure there are no lurking, self-sabotaging factors at play. How would we recognize these within? Well, walking out of a bargain centre with Christmas gifts for everyone—including the best friend's cousin's next-door neighbour—would be a good sign of a bigger problem that needs looking into.

AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Events

Research Webinar Series:

Cybera: Computing Resources now available and free to AU

Tues, Nov 26, 11:00 am to 12:00 pm MST
AU Edmonton - Peace Hills Trust
Building, 10011 109 Street, Edmonton AB
In person and Online
Hosted by AU

news.athabascau.ca/events/research-webinar-series-6

Access online through above link

Live chat - AU's MBA for executives program

Tues, Nov 26, 11:00 am to 12:00 pm MST
Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business
news.athabascau.ca/events/mba-live-chat-111919

RSVP online at above link

MBA Info Session - Calgary

Tues, Nov 26, 12:00 to 1:30 pm MST
Fairmont Palliser, 133 9 Ave SW, Calgary AB

In person

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business
news.athabascau.ca/events/mba-information-session-calgary-1119/

RSVP online at above link

Seasonal Cheer - Calgary

Tues, Nov 26, 5:00 to 7:30 pm MST
Barcelona Tavern, Upstairs Terrace, 501 8 Avenue SW, Calgary AB

In person

Hosted by AU

news.athabascau.ca/events/seasonal-cheer-calgary-2019/

RSVP online at above link

However, a shopping-spree addiction, as the root cause of mental anguish or family strife, doesn't strike people as troubling—most just laugh about it. When brought up, people will join the conversation and relay their own hoarding tendencies or flaunt their deal-sniffing abilities. People will intervene to help a loved one if they're drinking themselves into a stupor 24/7—we all now know through the myriad research studies that it's much deeper than the alcohol itself. However, folks may not recognize the alarm bells going off with a spouse's fifteenth trip to *Winners & Home Sense* this month. They'll just accept that, "the kids needed their 200th pair of socks," and carry on with their day, without wondering whether that one more pair of socks is an attempt to patch up all the holes in our significant other's heart. We won't talk about finances to strangers but, often, we won't talk about finances with our friends and family, either. In a world where other, much more serious and controversial topics have been brought to the forefront to get people to speak up and, hopefully, alleviate some internal suffering, money is still kept hush-hush and not talked about at the dinner table or the office water cooler.

People see finances as an awkward and controversial topic. Those that have more than enough of it feel ashamed, as if they did someone injustice; and those that don't have enough of it also feel ashamed, as if their self-worth is attached to their wallet. Both sides, therefore, remain quiet in hopes that the other side won't notice. The question, then, is that if neither side talks about it, how is anyone going to help? It's common knowledge that disagreeing with how finances are handled can make or break family life. I have seen close friends divorcing and losing everything, including their family's support, due to their gambling habits; there was no support available to see this and treat it for the addiction it is. I have also witnessed siblings take part in battles that make the Wars of the Roses seem like child's play, which is depressing altogether. People's clear lack of ethos over the dollar shouldn't come as a surprise; however, the fact that money is thicker than both blood and water is disheartening. This holiday season, make it a priority to promote your love of family and friends, not their presents. If you're feeling particularly ballsy, try to spread the financial know-how and talk about the issues. We all know they're there; we're just not used to talking about them in the open. Being open about these matters, however, is the only way to overcome them, and spread the cheer.

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Online MBA Info Session

Thurs, Nov 28, 10:00 to 11:00 am MST
Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business
news.athabasca.ca/events/online-mba-information-session-3-3-2-2-2-2/

RSVP online at above link

Seasonal Cheer - Edmonton

Thurs, Nov 28, 5:00 to 7:30 pm MST
Ritchie Market Event Space, 9570 76
Avenue NW, Edmonton AB

In person

Hosted by AU

news.athabasca.ca/events/seasonal-cheer-edmonton-2019/

RSVP online at above link

Learning Café: November Session

Fri, Nov 29, 2:00 to 4:00 pm
Athabasca University - Peace Hills Trust,
Room 1223, Edmonton AB

In person and Online

Hosted by AU

news.athabasca.ca/events/learning-cafe-november-session-2019/

Access livestream through above link

All events are free unless otherwise noted



In Conversation.. .. with Thor Simonsen

Wanda Waterman



Healing Through Music in Nunavut

Thor Simonsen is a creative entrepreneur and the mastermind behind Ajungi (AH-YUNG-EE), a collective made up of 19 Nunavut singer-songwriters whose debut album is being released today (November 22). The idea for the recording project came to Simonsen via his role as Creative Director of Hitmakerz, a record company in Iqaluit that supports the development of musical talent in Nunavut. The album is beautifully engineered, manifesting a phenomenal degree of creativity and artistic authenticity, and showcasing a captivating mix of song styles. The prevailing theme is mental health, and so a portion of the album's sales will be donated to the Kamatsiaqtut Nunavut Helpline. Recently Thor Simonsen took the time to answer our questions about the making of Ajungi.

What was the spark of inspiration that eventually became *Ajungi*?

The project began in 2015, during a time when I was producing music for many artist friends in Iqaluit. I discovered that it was very fun (and sounded incredible) when I began to merge, remix, and

otherwise mix and match various artists together across different songs and genres. The songs became bigger than the sum of their parts.

Why are music collectives becoming more relevant in today's music scene?

I can't speak for the industry as a whole, but in Nunavut, where air travel is prohibitively expensive, it's sometimes the only way to give relatively unknown artists an opportunity to showcase their music to the world. Even for this album we needed to secure funding for several \$4,000+ flights to Iqaluit (to record) for the artists who were living in other Nunavut communities.

How did you come up with the name "*Ajungi*," and what does it mean for you?

Ajungi is a modern Inuktitut word, derived from the traditional word "ajungittuq" which means "capable people." The name is an homage to the incredible, undiscovered (and too often, unsupported) talent that lies dormant in the young population of Nunavut.

Why do you suppose most of the songs selected for the *Ajungi* album were related to mental health?

The songs on the album were selected solely on the basis of their musical and storytelling merit as well as on the professional potential of the various artists. However, it's no secret that the Inuit

and Indigenous communities are facing incredible challenges, both mental, economic, and cultural. Mental health issues are a big part of daily life in Nunavut, and I think the fact that so many of the songs are about mental health is simply a reflection of the people and the times.

How do you plan to get it the attention it deserves in a music world that's swamped with monotonous, mediocre sounds?

Our mission is to create sustainable careers in the arts for Nunavummiut. *Ajungi* is our showcase album, and we're using all the tools and connections at our disposal to share the artists' messages with the world. The fact that the artists are from Nunavut and that the vast majority of them are Inuit already gives the music a very unique sound and story. How the world received the music is out of our control – all we can do is try to stay true to ourselves and make the music as good as possible.

What is it about your background that made it possible for you to conceive of a project like this?

I was born in the Faroe Islands (just south of Iceland) and moved to Iqaluit when I was seven. I was fortunate to have a childhood which was a pretty equal mix of Scandinavian, Canadian, and Inuit culture. My family was Scandinavian, but my stepfather was Inuk, as were most of my friends and schoolmates. Because of this, I was able to see many large cultural divides between the three cultures.

As a music producer my job was to bridge these gaps using the universal language of music. Ironically, the fact that I'm not biologically Inuk (nor fluent in Inuktitut) helped me to produce music for a non-Inuk audience because it allowed me to view it from the angle of "southerners." *Ajungi* was a natural progression of this work, and the fact that it helps us develop careers in the arts for fellow Nunavummiut is extremely powerful motivation.

How have you and your team been changed by the Hitmakerz initiative and the *Ajungi* project?

Growing up in Nunavut, we saw the rest of the country ("the south") as being far away and very separate from our daily lives. Working to connect Nunavut to the rest of Canada (culturally and economically) has been an eye-opening experience. The two worlds are very different, but we're very proud of our work that is (hopefully) bringing them a little bit closer together.

Do you believe music can make things better for the Inuit and other Indigenous Canadians?

Yes. From a purely economic perspective, music can create local entrepreneurship (selling music), that in turn creates a viable, sustainable economic resource, and a great alternative to current exports like mining and fishing. Culturally I think music can play an even more important role in strengthening language and keeping traditional songs, stories, and ways of making music alive.

Did anything funny or weird happen while you were preparing and recording the album?

The road to completion was long and winding. Several artists dropped out, a few last-minute additions were made, and the overall process of completing all 12 tracks on time and budget was much more intense than we'd anticipated.

For the song "Change the World," Ryan (N-16) had been flown to Iqaluit to record. However, on the day of recording, there was a big blizzard in Iqaluit and taxis had gone off the road. We only had one day to record, but Ryan was from Rankin Inlet – a notoriously cold community – and simply walked from the hotel to the studio wearing just a hoodie. The blizzard didn't faze him one bit, and he said he thought it was quite warm.

For the song "Monster," scheduling forced us to record Mister (FXCKMR) in a makeshift studio in Montreal. We couldn't get good acoustics in the office room, so the verses were recorded in a

tiny closet. It looked, felt, and sounded very awkward, which is ironic since the final song sounds so cool and polished.

What's next for Hitmakerz?

In the future, we hope to continue working with Inuit and Indigenous artists, creating amazing music and helping to launch and further sustainable careers. We've got two artist albums coming out in 2020 and several others in the works. We also hope to continue making *Ajungi* albums to help unknown artists in remote communities get a chance to have their voices heard and "get their foot in the door" of the music industry.

How can Canadians support *Ajungi*?

Canadians (as well as people all around the world) can help by listening to the album, sharing it with their friends, and following [Ajungi on Facebook](#). If they want to financially support the artists directly, they can also purchase albums and merchandise at [Hitmakerz](#).

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



The Study Dude Get Noticed to Get Into Grad Studies?

Marie Well



I So, you've got ambitions beyond your AU degree? Perhaps a master's degree or a PhD? But what if AU doesn't offer the master's or PhD program you desire? Well, Paul Lloyd Hemphill, author of *25 Top Secrets Expensive College Consultants Reveal Only to Their Clients about College Admissions*, has got you covered.

According to the NAICA Survey, 2018, (as cited in Hemphill), the following is a sample of the "top 10 reasons colleges use to admit your child." But, from my experience, the top 10 reasons also work for

masters—and PhD—applicants.

With that said, here is a checklist to boost your chances of acceptance into any grad schools—even Ivy League schools. You've got it in you! The more reasons you give an Ivy League to accept you, the better your chances.

So, you'll need the following:

"A high school curriculum that challenges the student ... students should include ... Honors and Advanced Placement classes" (87%). Similarly, if you're a fourth-year university student, don't shy away from taking a graduate level course as a replacement for a 400 level one. You might surprise yourself with a spectacular grade. But first, research the course to see if you're up to the challenge. Then, ask the prof for permission to take it.

“Solid scores on standardized tests (SAT, ACT)” (87%). If you take the GMAT (to enter the MBA), MCAT, or some other test, make sure you score high. But don’t just study the test willy-nilly. Instead, pay for high-quality tutoring, preferably from an agency that specializes in your test. It might cost, but your future’s worth it.

“Passionate involvement in a few activities, demonstrating leadership and initiative” (87%). Believe it or not, a lot of companies want to hire people with military training. I see that question asked on lots of job applications. Experience as a cadet helps, too. And I believe the military may help fund your schooling. On a less risky front, sports experience helps, such as serving as captain of a team or as coach of kids’ soccer. Working as a Starbuck’s or McDonald’s supervisor helps, too.

“Community service showing evidence of being a ‘contributor.’ Activities should demonstrate concern for other people” (87%). Volunteer in a field that moves you. I feel great empathy for anyone undergoing pain. So, I’d love to help people with chronic illnesses. Maybe you have a different passion. Maybe you’d love to help the elderly, children, or homeless single-parent families. Whoever has your heart, help them out. In return, they’ll boost your odds of getting into a topnotch school.

“Out-of-school experiences (including summer activities) that illustrate responsibility, dedication and development of areas of interest. Work or meaningful use of time demonstrates maturity” (87%). If you taught kids at summer camp, that’s a great summer activity. If you spent your summer learning how to paint Picasso, that, too, makes for a great out-of-school experience. Whatever develops your skills or character, do it. Just be sure to get photos or other evidence of your out-of-school experiences to add to your application.

“Letters of recommendation from teachers and guidance counselors that give evidence of integrity, special skill, and positive character traits” (89%). Always make allies with your profs. If you can’t stand your prof and want to wage war, take the high road. In other words, stay polite, cooperative, and appreciative. They have the power to write you a letter of recommendation. Aim for at least three strong letters of recommendation. Show your integrity by helping a professor you like get a teaching award. Score as many A’s in your professors’ classes as you can. Give fellow students lots of advice and resources on the Landing. Basically, the more you serve others and the more effort you assert, the stronger your letters of recommendation.

“Anything special that makes the student stand out from the rest of the applicants. Include honors, awards, evidence of unusual talent or experience” (87%). If you’ve spent the first decades of your life studying violin, put that on your application. If talent scouts hovered over you during your soccer youth, highlight that, too. Or if you’ve travelled to Africa, digging wells, on a missionary with your Church, add that.

Now you’ve got a head start on how to woo your way into any grad school. If your grades are high enough, and you excel at the above, who knows, you might find yourself studying at Harvard. Just look at AU’s [Jason Nixon](#), who “served as the Opposition House Leader in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta [and now as] Alberta’s Minister of Environment and Parks.” His AU degree led to one of the most powerful roles in Canada. So, give the above a go, and see which elite schools compete to accept you.

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Porkpie Hat T'Aint no Sin



Darjeeling Jones

I'm writing this late on a Saturday morning, drinking Irish coffee, still dressed in my fake-silk chinoiserie bathrobe, the one that's decorated with orchids and small blue dragons. It's a cloudy day, but every now and then the clouds part, and sunlight comes pouring through my window, like the visual equivalent of condensed milk flowing from the back of a silver spoon. Breakfast is a leftover chicken drumstick and a slice of cherry pie. On the stereo, I'm listening to a recording from the 1920s by the extravagantly beautiful jazz and blues singer Lee Morse: "When you hear sweet syncopation/ And the music softly moans/ T'ain't no sins/ To take off your skins/ And dance around in your bones".

How I love this song, with its saucy reverence for the pleasures of the flesh, it's cheeky thumbing-of-the-nose at mortality. There is a fascinating version of it sung by Tom Waits, contained within *The Black Rider: The Casting of the Magic Bullets*, a beautiful and unsettling avant-garde musical that is a collaboration between Waits, the beat novelist William S. Burroughs, and the experimental theatre director Robert Wilson, that is based upon a sinister German folktale. It's a

darkly fascinating piece, and well worth a listen-to. For me, though, nothing can compare to Morse's version, charged with a wistfully joyous, slightly erotic glamour.

Partly, I suppose, my fascination for this song relates to childhood nostalgia. It was one of my grandmother's favorite recordings, along with music by Louis Armstrong, Maria Callas, Edith Piaf, and Julie London. I remember some glorious times, when nobody was home and I had pretended sickness so I could stay away from Mrs. Urquhart's dreaded grade three classroom, dancing to this music. I was wearing my older sister's orange satin dress, a tinsel tiara on my head and a glass bead necklace about my neck, singing at the top of my lungs. I'm not sure I have experienced a deeper feeling of intense connection to the arts since. T'aint no sin, indeed. Even then, I think a part of me understood the wonders that artifice and illicit joy can bring.

They may have drifted by, like brightly lit passenger ships, long before I was born, but those decades of the early twentieth century, from fin de siècle through to Bauhaus, resonate with me like no other time. It seems to me they are the modern golden age of artificial charm.

I always get slightly annoyed when the word "artificial" is used in a negative way, denoting something false, unfavorably contrasted to what is supposedly "real," or "natural". Well, bugger that for a game of soldiers! I love artifice. Let me be surrounded by charming rogues, silver-tongued devils, and interesting people dressed in glitter. Give me harlequins in masks, and bel canto operas divas dying for love, coughing blood into silk handkerchiefs and clutching at pearls. After all, each of our lives is nothing more than a constructed projection of an inner life; we are just skeletal actors, endowed with a brief miracle of being, and dancing around in costumes of flesh. So, preserve me, please, from the tediously pious and the judgmentally sincere. I'll sleep when I'm dead, for now, let me dance in my bones.

The Fit Student

So who Are You Really?

Marie Well



When I was in grade nine, I went through an identity crisis. I had no idea who I was. I had no idea who I was meant to be, either. I looked to movies, such as *The Breakfast Club*. I looked to singers, such as Madonna. I looked to role models, like my brother. But I missed the point.

I then approached a teacher after school, asking her, “Who am I?” as I burst into tears. She didn’t have an answer. No-one had an answer.

After that, I sunk further down a path of suffering. But today, I believe I can save both you and

I from spinning down the wrong road.

In short, I believe I’ve discovered who we are truly meant to be. And I wish to share my vision on who your true authentic self might be. Accept it, reject it. But it resonates with me, deeply. I hope in some way it touches you.

So, who are you, really?

Author William Courage says, in his book called *Improve Your Social Skills*, “As you interact with people in the future, work on presenting your true authentic self to them” (8%). I believe it’s one thing to be your authentic self. But it’s another thing to know who your authentic self truly is. Many of us don’t know. Many of us think we know. When you put your best foot forward, when you stay upbeat and positive, when you try to delight the people in your life, when you build others up, that’s your true authentic self, says Paul Friedman. The person who is polite, complimentary, pleasant, wonderful to be around—that’s your true authentic self.

But you’re more than that.

The person who invites a starving single parent family over for Thanksgiving dinner—that could be your authentic self. The person who sponsors a disabled child to go to the Paralympics—that could be your authentic self. The person who shovels a senior’s walks—that, too, could be your authentic self. There are so many wonderful thoughts, words, and deeds that could define your authentic self. Your inner beauty—a.k.a., your authentic self—has no limits.

But the person who complains, criticizes, or condemns—the three killers of any relationship, according to Paul Friedman—that is never your authentic self.

You have inner gifts—extraordinary gifts—that no-one else has. Not for a moment should you think your gifts lack when compared to others. Magnify the value you give your gifts by infinity to see how glorious you truly are. And while you’re at it, magnify your inner beauty by infinity—especially during those moments when you share your heart, or shed a beautiful tear, or perform

an act of kindness—however small. I'm here to tell you, no matter where you are in life, you are magnificence.

I recently saw a video where a woman had the gift of trust. She developed her trust (in God, in her case) so intensely that she no longer felt anxiety or fear. She no longer worried about the future, either. Her convictions struck me as absolute, spoken from her heart. You, like her, possess gifts that have benefitted countless others, whether you realize it or not.

Your gifts are part of your true authentic self. And your true authentic self is solely defined by your positives. Brush aside the negatives—they're not you. They never were. And you can develop even more gifts by putting your best foot forward.

One gift you can develop today is the gift of positive communications. Author William Courage says, "No one wants to speak with someone only to find out that they will be discussing negative things. When you communicate with others, try to keep the negativity to a minimum if you can help it" (10%). I believe if we speak only uplifting words, we grow happier. And others around us grow happier, too. So, replace or reframe negative thoughts with uplifting ones.

And, wow, do I have a way to uplift your mood. Watch a near death experience (NDE) clip highlighting a visit into "the light." And then meditate (deep breathe) for ten minutes, rejoicing in all the things you love about people in your life. See only their perfections, their gifts, their beauty. Turn even their faults into points of delight. After the ten minutes, you'll feel refreshed, recharged with pure positivity.

Then you come closer to your true authentic self.

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Fly on the Wall

Celebrating Silence as Pure Study Gold

Jason Sullivan



Rat race fatigue got you down? Maybe the demands and expectations of what life was supposed to be have paved over those empty lots in your mind you once explored with abandon and zeal. Sometimes something new is needed to break out of this funk. And, as if on queue, a clarion cry echoes through your mind's mountains and canyons: there's gold in them thar hills! Creative gold, the kind that stimulates plucky fingertips to type with reckless joy.

And wham, the rush is on. Anything's possible in this new frontier of excitement. Be it a new book, a new

documentary, or a new AU course, the frenetic pace of action stimulated by new intellectual

inputs leads to a sense that somewhere, somehow, at any moment and in any place, you're about to strike it rich. Just keep digging; keep typing!

Such must have been the mindset of legions of gold prospectors as they descended on Dawson City, Yukon, following the discovery of gold in August of 1896. Joy would have continued into September and October until the frost brought a bitter reality to the passing nature of anticipated triumph. The original triumvirate of intrepid fortune-seekers were aptly named (could Disney do better?) George Carmack, Dawson Charlie and Skookum Jim. Shortly after, almost 100 000 people, all clamouring for riches, thronged over and across the Klondike gold fields (<https://dawsoncity.ca/event/discovery-days/>). To newcomer eyes the virginal landscape must have seemed at once daunting, barren, and silent. We, too, at AU may, in honour of this climax of Canada's archetypal rush to riches, recall that epochal moment when, with daring temerity, we struck out to further our education through Athabasca University.

Yukon: Not a 'The', A Place of Pure Potential

Yukon is one of those regions that you hope to land on while playing spin the globe with friends. For those non-initiates: spin the globe involves closing one's eyes and extending one's index finger onto the spinning surface of a globe. It can't be a Google Earth touch screen either!. When the globe stops spinning you will, beside feeling a faint burning friction upon your digit, have arrived at the spot on our planet that You Will Travel To Next. Even with eyes closed the players do have some control over where they land—depending upon geometric method in terms of the finger's interaction with a sphere we can somewhat aim for the poles or any meridian between. Thus, Yukon and Antarctica are each eminently doable. Personally, I'd pick gold over penguins, although the latter certainly would be worth a visit. In any case, the mystery of wide open silent expanses yields a natural intrigue. Back in the waning 1800s, the Klondike must have seemed even more remote and mysterious than it does today. It's no longer preceded by the term 'the'; it's awesomeness stands alone.

Facts and Figures; The Gold in the Details

There's more to Yukon than one Gold Rush, though. Like any person, place, or thing we have only to look at it closely to acquire new and interesting tidbits of interest. (<http://www.gov.yk.ca/aboutyukon/history.html>)

For instance, 10 to 25 000 years ago there were “woolly mammoth, Yukon wild horse, steppe bison, scimitar cat and saiga antelope” roaming its land.

In the early 1800s Tlingit fur traders, “acting as middlemen for Russian traders, began trading with interior Athabaskans” That's a neat Athabasca link right there; but wait, there's more! By 1852 the Tlingit were so adept at managing their input/export portfolios that they decided to “run the Hudson's Bay Company traders out; the latter were forced to abandon Fort Selkirk. Today Yukon has 333 fur trapping concessions; about half of these are owned by indigenous persons.

Mysteries Anew, Progress Aplenty

Whatever else those miners discovered, they certainly experienced a new life and landscape. And experience, unlike riches or a cushy job in a prison of a cube farm, are things you can take with you wherever you go. The key is to overcome the tendency to drive forward, ever onward, in search of that next fantasy nugget or that more impossible posture. Sometimes we can get bogged down in our studies and need to give them room to breathe; even the most enjoyable course can descend into mentally-exhausting chaos, for a time. To this end, Deleuze and Guattari remind us to disconnect from our impetuous search for pure answers as we memorize and concatenate our course information: “interpretation is carried to infinity and never encounters anything to interpret that is not already itself an interpretation” (Deleuze & Guattari, P. 114). Just by speaking

we enter into discourse and rupture our flow of thought; sometimes silence really does speak volumes and that translates into good essays.

The Yukon's mystery and potential echoes the excitement we likely felt as we embarked on our AU journey. Anything was possible; not only monetary gain and career advancement but also personal improvement, as we embarked on the academic adventure of a lifetime. After all, most of what makes us who we are happens in our minds; the input of new stimuli yields vertiginous results at the level of self and imagination. Yet unlike us at AU, whose intrepid efforts lead us to the apex of our goals, most of those gold prospectors ended up broke. They straggled home with their tails between their legs. There were only so many mother lodes to go around, after all, and in the silence that followed the city of Dawson fell from its status as the largest Canadian settlement west of Winnipeg to that of a small tourist attraction. Silence followed the rush and this too is how our studies progress; we can crow enthusiastic about what we are about to do, being newly enrolled at AU, but when the metaphoric boots hit the gravel our labour becomes a tedious and silent investment of time and mind. But the Yukon and AU remain similar; each suggests a process of discovery leading to a better life.

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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.



Brittany Daigle

Course Exam

Course Exam

AU courses, up close

Brittany Daigle

COMP 210 (Introduction to Information Systems and Computer Applications) is a three-credit introductory computer science course that is designed for students who are not planning to major in information systems. The course covers basic hardware concepts; the structure, or architecture, of computers; the software hierarchy from systems software to application programs; and information systems concepts and development at a more basic level than COMP 200 (Introduction to Computing and Information Systems). This course has no course prerequisites, however, some basic competence in Windows is required. COMP 210 is not available for challenge.

Students who are concerned about not meeting the prerequisites for this course are encouraged to contact the course coordinator before registering.

Students should note that they must have an ISP connection supporting a graphical user interface, a working email account, and must be able to use email to register into COMP 210. Students are also required to have their own copy of Microsoft Office. Or in other words, they have to have

access to the web, and can get a copy of Microsoft Office for free from Athabasca University while they are a student.

Introduction to Information Systems and Computer Applications is made up of eight units, eight projects weighing ten percent each, and a learning resource conference participation component that weighs a total of twenty percent. The eight units within the course cover several topics such as hardware and software, networking, the internet, internet security, computer privacy, and emerging technologies. To receive credit for COMP 210, students must achieve a course composite grade of at least a “D”, or fifty percent, on the course portfolio, which combines projects one through eight and the learning resources conference activity. This course has no midterm or final examinations.

Karen Fletcher enrolled in the Bachelor of Science major in Mathematics program at Athabasca University in May of 2019 and completed COMP 210 recently. She provides a bit of an introduction, stating “I’m from Ottawa, and I have three kids (ages 2, 4, and 6). I got a Bachelor of Arts when I was younger but as my kids will all be in school full-time in the next couple of years, I’m looking to do something a bit different, and have recently returned to school to get my Bachelor of Science in Mathematics. I work part-time designing knitting patterns for magazines and yarn companies and when I have free time I love to sew or play board games with my husband.”

When asked to explain the course to students, Karen states “This is a required course for Bachelor of Science students to learn about computers, the text seemed like it was written in the early 1990s and had not been sufficiently updated. For example, it explains that one way to input information into a computer is to use a “mouse” which you can use to move your cursor around, it also explains how to “drag and drop” as if it were possible to be taking an online course and not know that. One of the assignments required students to use software to crop a photo, change its brightness, and make it greyscale. That was the entire assignment. I normally love school, but this course felt like pulling teeth, thankfully it was over in about a week and I got an A+.”

As for the structure of the course, she explains that “There were eight units with one chapter of reading and one assignment. The assignments are not difficult (demonstrating that you can crop photos, or answer some questions about computer security), and are not necessarily on the content of the chapter they are grouped with. The assignments took me between fifteen minutes and three hours with most around the one-hour mark. After that there’s a “learning conference” which is actually just a PowerPoint presentation you need to create with some online resources you find that relate to the chapter topics. There are no exams.”

When asked if she would recommend the course to other students, she states “If you need a quick easy A+ this course should fit the bill, I did not enjoy it though. I think if the university is going to require us to take a computer course it should be changed to be relevant, maybe change the content assignments to be about graphic design basics and keep the introduction to programming unit, so that students are walking away having learned something.”

As for communications with her tutor, Karen states “I submitted all my assignments over the course of three days, and they were marked a day or so later with minimal feedback.”

Whether COMP 210 is a degree or program requirement of yours, or the topics that were mentioned above are of interest to you, this course should give you the basics on some computer software you may not have tried yet, and on the topic of information systems and how computers run.

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



The Not-So Starving Student

Exotic Beef 101

Xin Xu



While for most AU students, splurging on the perfect slice of steak may seem far-fetched, especially with rising tuitions. However, that doesn't mean that one day there won't be an opportunity to test out these succulent gourmet beef options. As a big fan of steak, myself, I've found that the perfect slice of steak can be life changing. For one, after sampling a piece of melt in your mouth New York Steak from a Las Vegas buffet, I never wanted to go back to the boring, overcooked beef that I make in my kitchen. Regardless of whether you're passionate about steak or beef in general, there's still a lot to learn to "beef" up your knowledge in this area. Perhaps one day AU students will find themselves indulging in these treats—as a graduation gift perhaps?

Japanese Kobe beef steak

One of the most well-known grades of beef in the world is the Kobe beef. There are a limited number of cows produced each year that can qualify as Kobe beef. The cows originate from the Kobe area of Japan but was historically transported from China. Through years of crossbreeding, the perfect breed was born, with an impressive quality of protein thanks to the special diet the cows consume. Unlike other beef cuts, the Kobe distinctly varies in its color and level of marbling. The marbling is a reflection of the fat content of the beef that gives the Kobe beef its distinct buttery flavor. The passion for high-quality cuts of Kobe beef is so strong that there are export committees and certifications available to ensure the quality and reduce the mislabeling of various cuts of beef as "Kobe". In today's gourmet cuisine, the Kobe name in itself, when attached to beef, signifies utmost quality and exclusivity, thus it makes total sense to regulate the use of this title for cuts of beef.



Filet Mignon

Another cut of beef I am thoroughly passionate about is filet mignon. The filet mignon, or "tender filet" in French, is a cut of beef from the tenderloin. Particularly, it is the end portion of the tenderloin. Undoubtedly, tenderloin is essentially the most delicate cut and thus the most expensive compared to other cuts of beef. When cooked properly, this juicy piece of tenderloin is a delicacy in many restaurants. Unlike the Kobe beef, the filet mignon is much less marbled and sometimes less flavorful depending on the cooking style. Thus to help enhance flavor, oftentimes sauce is served alongside the beef.

Strip Steak

In most steakhouse menus, the strip steak places first on the list of most costly items on the menu. There are many names for this cut of beef including New York strip, Kansas City strip among many more nicknames depending on the style of cuisine used. The strip steak differs from filet mignon in that rather than using the tenderloin, the cut of beef originates from a major muscle in the cow. Unlike the Kobe beef, the strip steak is lean and low in fat content. There is however, a small degree of marbling that help add juice and flavor to the steak.



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

Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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



AthaU Facebook Group

Shannon wonders where other students seek additional resources beyond the course material; a variety of tips flow in, including biblio lists, Google Scholar, the AU library, and, hey, the tutor. Jeffi inquires if alumni can still access AU's library; short answer is yes, with limitations.

Other posts include student discounts on public transportation, AU's HR program, timing for booking exams, exam tips from tutors, and laptop preferences.

reddit

Timothy is curious what an "A-R" notation is on his transcript. Anybody? Anybody? Other posts include courses COMP 200, MATH 309, and PHYS 210.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "The #AthabascaU writer-in-residence committee is very pleased to announce that award-winning author Steven Heighton will be the 2019-20 AU writer-in-residence. Learn more on the #AUHub. t.co/6EcVrvfuEZ "

@austudentsunion tweets: "AUSU has an Emergency Bursary for #AthabascaU students in financial need who need help paying AU fees for late exams, supplemental exams, or course extensions. Find out more at <https://bit.ly/1GIWJhi> #igo2AU."

Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: 10 Words or Less Scholarship

Sponsored by: StudentScholarships.org

Deadline: November 30, 2019

Potential payout: \$500

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be between the ages of 14 and 25, and attending school in Fall of 2020.

What's required: A comment of ten words or fewer on any post on the [MyScholarships Facebook page](#) describing why you deserve the scholarship; you must also "like" their Facebook page.

Tips: Make sure you meet the age range requirement.

Where to get info: studentscholarships.org/easy.php





Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

All Manners of Twins

Dear Barb:

Hi, my sister has 2-year-old twin girls. Ever since they were born, my sister has dressed them identically. I don't think that is a good idea. How will they ever establish their own identity? I have talked to my sister about this, but she says, twins are supposed to be dressed the same. She doesn't believe it will impact their sense of self at all. What do you think? Thanks, Trish.

Hey Trish:

Thanks for your letter. I personally tend to think it is okay to dress them the same some of the time, but they also need to develop their own identity by dressing differently at times. According to research from the Multiple Birth Association, after the age of three, twins should be able to choose their own clothes and develop their individual personalities. Also, as they get older, they should not be referred to as the "twins" but rather by their own names. I'm sure that once they assert their unique personalities your sister will allow them the opportunity to express themselves through their dress. At this age it is easy to choose how to dress them, but they will eventually assert themselves and want to choose what to wear and how to do their own hair etc.

Dear Barb:

My sister has two adult sons, who each have teenage boys. When we have family gatherings I can't believe how these boys behave. They basically sit on their phones the whole time and rarely interact with anyone. When the family get together is at my home, I insist no phones during dinner and the boys almost seem lost. They have no social skills and forget about manners! The boys never say please or thank you and my sister and her husband don't say anything to correct this behaviour. What is happening to this generation, I worry about how they will function as adults. Is it just me, or is this a concern for others as well? Thanks Karen.

Hi Karen:

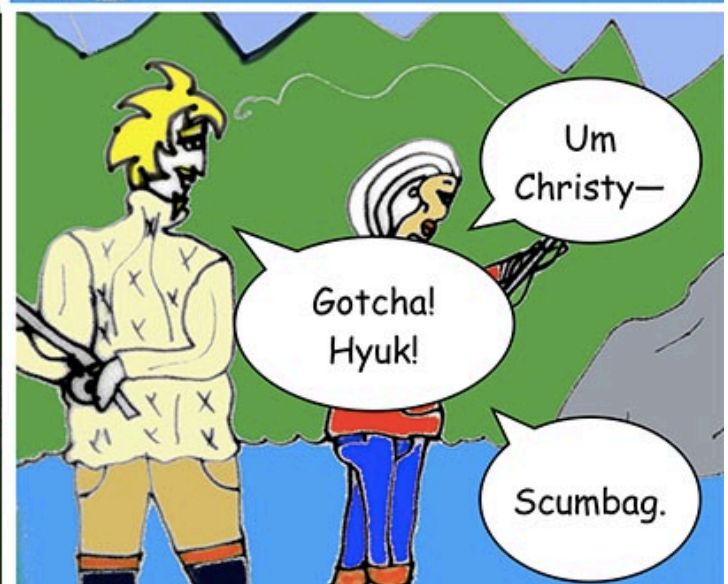
I think your letter reflects a lot of the thoughts and feelings about the young generation. However, I think we need to keep in mind the behaviour of teenagers of previous generation, and the concern adults had for them. I don't know about you, but I remember being a teenager and when family visited for special occasions, I would be barricaded in my room on the phone. Or if I was at someone else's house, I sat there totally uninterested in what the adults were talking about. Even when someone spoke to me I grunted out a one word answer. It seems that we all got through that and turned out to be half decent people, so I wouldn't worry too much. Your sister and her husband are probably choosing their battles carefully, so as not to totally alienate their children. Hope this helps Karen.

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
Dark Night of the Soul Helpline

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

- **Nov 30:** [Deadline to apply for course extension for Jan](#)
- **Dec 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Jan 1](#)
- **Dec 15:** [Jan degree requirements deadline](#)
- **December Note:** No AUSU Public Council Meeting
- **Dec 20 – Jan 2:** AUSU Holiday Closure
- **Dec 31:** [Deadline to apply for course extension for Feb](#)

Take our Survey to WIN PRIZES!

AUSU is giving away **over \$1,200 in prizes** to members who complete our [AUSU Services Survey](#), including:

- **\$500 Amazon Gift Card** - Grand Prize!
- \$50 Amazon Gift Card - 4 available
- \$25 Amazon Gift Card - 4 available
- AUSU Prize packs - 5 available
- 10 free AU online exams from home via ProctorU

Click [here](#) to take the Survey!

Note: Prize winners will be selected at random after November 25, 2019. The prizes awarded cannot be exchanged for any other prize, monetary value, or service. Only current AUSU members as of November 2019 will be qualified for a prize.

Deadline to take the Survey: Nov 25, 2019



AUSU Open Mic Podcast - The Alberta Budget and Why It Matters to AU Students

The Government of Alberta has announced lots of changes coming for all Alberta universities and colleges, including Athabasca University, through the provincial budget. In our latest podcast episode, your AUSU VPEX and staff break down the coming changes, such as impacts to your education and the cost of taking classes.

Check out our latest podcast [here](#).

Starring: VPEX Natasha Donahue, Executive Director Jodi Campbell, and Governance and Advocacy Coordinator Duncan Wojtaszek

Open Mic is also available for free on [Spotify](#), [Apple Podcasts](#), [Google Podcasts](#), and [Pocket Casts](#) (search "AUSU Podcast").



Mental Health and the Holidays

AUSU's latest executive blog, by our VPEX Natasha Donahue, is all about mental health and the holidays.

Check out the blog online [here](#).



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301 Energy Square - 10109 – 106 St NW - Edmonton AB - T5J 3L7
Ph: 855.497.7003

Publisher	Athabasca University Students' Union
Editor-In-Chief	Jodi Campbell
Managing Editor	Karl Low

Regular Columnists Barb Godin, Barbara Lehtiniemi,
Jason Sullivan, Wanda Waterman, Xin Xu and others!

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