

# THE VOICE

Vol 27 Issue 49 2019-12-20

## **Minds We Meet**

Interviewing Students Like You!

## **The Humbug of Political Correctness** The Right Words for Christmas

## **Echoes of Bereavement**

The First Holidays are the Hardest

*Plus:*

*Christmas Vintage Voice  
Women of Interest  
and much more!*

HAPPY  
HOLIDAYS



# CONTENTS

*The Voice's* interactive Table of Contents allows you to click a story title to jump to an article. Clicking the bottom right corner of any page returns you here. Some ads and graphics are also links.

## Features

Minds We Meet: *Interviewing Students Like You!* ..... 4

## Articles

Editorial: *Another Spin Done* ..... 3

The Humbug of Political Correctness..... 7

Echoes of Bereavement at Holiday Time..... 9

Council Connection: *November & December Meetings*..... 21

## Columns

Course Exam: *ORGB 300*..... 10

Porkpie Hat: *he Mind and the Year to Come* ..... 12

Women of Interest: *Emma Gonzalez* ..... 13

The Study Dude: *Cornell and SQ3R Study Methods* ..... 14

Fly on the Wall: *A Marathon of Learning*..... 16

Kitchen Gadgets Review: *Spiralizer* ..... 20

The Fit Student: *The Purpose of Mistakes* ..... 23

Dear Barb: *Coming Out for the Holidays*..... 25

## News and Events

Student Sizzle ..... 8

AU-Thentic Events (and Closures) ..... 17, 18

Vintage Voice..... 19

Scholarship of the Week..... 24

AUSU Update ..... 27

## Graphic

Poet Maeve: *I am Loved, And so Ain't We All*..... 26



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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



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

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

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

## Editorial

### Another Spin Done

Karl Low



Welcome to the last issue of *The Voice Magazine* for 2019. We're off on holidays next week, and the week after that we reveal our "Best of" 2019. So if there's an article from the last year that you really thought deserves more love, now would be the time to send it to me at [karl@voicemagazine.org](mailto:karl@voicemagazine.org).

We close out the year with our feature interview being with a student from Red Deer, Alberta, who looked at her life as a cashier at Subway and felt there must be something more, but to attain it, she needed AU. Be sure to check out Rebecca Snider's story in this week's "Minds We Meet".

Also this week, Wanda Waterman is inspired by Christmas to take a look at how political correctness is running amok, and in its quest to avoid giving offence, is creating a new class of offensive words. While I agree with the premise, I tend to argue the opposite, that while perfectly good words are being ruined and made offensive, this isn't through political correctness, but rather through humans being, well, human. If we, as a group, tend to view others as "less than", then it doesn't

matter what words we use to describe them. Even with the best of intentions, those words will come to represent "less than". The problem, to me, lies in us spoiling the words, not in the attempt to not use spoiled words.

And it's not something many of us like to think about it, but the Christmas season often brings echoes of a loss in the family, if there's been one. So in this last issue of the year, Barbara Lehtiniemi returns with an article about what you can do to deal with, or help someone deal with, those echoes when they loom large around the Christmas tree.

If that isn't enough, we also have the Council Connection report from November's meeting, the one that started the bylaw review you may have seen me writing about or posted on Facebook. What's going on and what bylaws are being changed? We fill you in on that, as well as what went on during the very short meeting in December that just passed.

And of course, we can't have a final issue without our plethora of regular allotments of advice, events (and closures this time), scholarships, and more, including a look back at some articles on Christmas Classics run in the Voice Magazine in previous years.

Most important, however, I want to thank all of you who've been reading and especially those of you who've taken the time to contribute to or comment on what you've read in *The Voice Magazine*. We're a bit different from your standard university paper, and being all online, it's tough sometimes to see if you're connecting with people.

But every once in a while we hear from someone who found something we did useful, like a Course Exam or Struggling Student Rant, or insightful, like a Dear Barb or a Study Dude, or just simply a good read, like the Porkpie Hat or our student interviews. And I occasionally hear from one of our interviewees how they appreciated the opportunity to share and to see other's sharing, as it makes it all feel like we're not quite so alone in our educations, and to me, there's no higher praise that can be given to *The Voice Magazine*. So, until next year, enjoy the read!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karl", located in the bottom right corner of the page.

# MINDS WE MEET



*Rebecca Snider currently lives in Red Deer, Alberta and is enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts major in Psychology program at Athabasca University. She recently spoke to the Voice Magazine and shared why she decided to go back to school and what she loves about online education.*

**Can you give us a little bit of background information about yourself? Who are you? Where do you live, where do you come from?**

My name is Rebecca, I grew up in a small town called Ponoka, I moved to Red Deer about three years ago, and within my move I decided to peruse the conveniences of online schooling.

**What program are you in? Do you like your program?**

I am enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts major in Psychology program. I have been enjoying my program and have also found the new journey of online learning to be an interesting, knowledgeable experience, which I am trying to embrace to the fullest.

**Could you 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 Arts, major in Psychology program?**

I decided to go back to school when I realized I was not happy in what I was doing anymore, which was working full time at Subway. The decision was a very big one for me, as I have never participated in any form of online schooling and was unsure about juggling finances, scheduling, and how to still pursue what interests me. I decided to sign up for the psychology program, as this is something that has always been with me throughout high school, always capturing my attention and interests.

**Do you have any advice for people who are on the fence about going back to school?**

My advice for anyone on the fence about whether to go back to school would be to take the leap and think about it when you are done, just keep moving forward.

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

When I am not studying, I have a part-time job where I am a cashier which takes up most of my time outside of school. When I am not working or studying, I like to attend concerts and have nice movie dates with my significant other.

---

**What is it like working part-time and studying? Do you find it difficult to find time to study, work, and still have time for the things you love?**

When I first decided to pursue my online education, I was working full time, but it only lasted two months before I had to drop down to part-time, it was just too much! I find working part-time more beneficial to me mentally and physically but for sure more challenging when it comes to wanting to do things outside of school and work.

**What are some of the best concerts you have seen?**

Some of the best concerts I have seen vary from small venues where nobody knows the artist to massive venues with everybody knowing the artist. Some of my favourite concerts I have been to would include Mayday, Steve Miller Band, Ice Cube, and Shaggy!

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

I want to help the people who do not know how to help themselves. I want to be a person who someone will come to for a helping hand or a listening ear, helping the next generations to come. My dream job would include somewhere with children and helping make sure they get the full experiences and care for their young fragile lives.

**Do you plan on enrolling in a master's program once you are finished your degree?**

I do plan on enrolling into further studies once I am finished my program, but I have not completely decided yet, as I am waiting to explore more options.

**Who in your life had the greatest influence on your desire to learn?**

My boyfriend has been the greatest influence and supporter when it comes to my learning destinations. He has provided a stable environment, encouraging me and pushing me on my deadlines and studies. Another great influence has been my mother, helping me to understand the registration process.

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

My experience with online learning so far as been very interesting, from learning how to register into courses, and how the programs and courses work. Now that I am going into my second year of online learning, I feel more prepared and encouraged then ever, knowing I can do this by myself, with my teachers, and peers right there if I need them. One of the things I enjoy the most (which is another reason I decided to pursue online learning) is being able to make my own schedule and work on my assignments from the comfort of my own home!

**Is there anything that you dislike?**

I dislike not having that personal connection and being able to ask questions face to face to working out problems on the spot. In an online setting you need to wait for a response email or a certain date.

**At what point did you waver the most about continuing your schooling? What caused it and what got you through it?**

The point in my life where I thought the most about going to school was a couple years ago, when I realized I am not going anywhere working at a fast food chain. It suddenly clicked that I can waste years and years to just be another number in a company, or I could do what makes me happy and keeps me going and interested new things.



**What is your favorite AU course that you have taken so far, and why? Would you recommend the course to others?**

My favourite course that I have taken so far, is PSYC 345 (Psychology of Women). This course has taught me things that was never in any of my other courses. It encouraged me to expand my horizons. I would recommend this course to anyone wanting to learn more about how women have affected our world.

**What have you given up to go to AU that you regret the most? Was it worth it?**

The biggest thing I have given up was my full-time paycheque. To me it was worth it so I can move forward from where I am stuck at to start beginning my career, even though I do not get paid as much, my life has been busier with school distracting me from the things that need money.

**How do you find communications with your course tutors?**

I find communication with my teachers mediocre, being able to only get responses sometimes on certain days. Communication can be difficult at times when you are working on an assignment sometimes its easier to have the answer right away instead of in a couple business days, but saying that I also understand how busy these teachers must be.

**What is your biggest pet peeve, if you have one?**

My biggest pet peeve is rude people. I just resent how people can have so much negativity that they feel the need to disease others with it.

**Could you describe the proudest moment in your life?**

The proudest moment in my life was when I graduated high school. This may not seem like a huge accomplishment to many, but so may doubted me as I went down a rough path, but I was able to prove those people wrong and it felt good.

**Could you describe one thing that distinguishes you from most other people?**

Something that most people do not know about me is that I have a soft and sensitive side, many people do not realize this because I portray myself to have a strong personality.

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

The most valuable lesson I have learned from life is to just keep going, no matter what life will always go on.

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

I have traveled to Mexico when I was twelve years old with my family, and I previously have been to Nova Scotia with my boyfriend.

**Which was your favorite?**

Nova Scotia was my favourite just because it was a special time for me and him with meeting his family and showing me around his hometown.

**Do you have any travel destinations on your bucket list?**

I would love to travel the whole wide world if I could. Some destinations I have always wanted to go to include Germany, France, Jamaica, Australia, and Greece.

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



## The Humbug of Political Correctness



### Wanda Waterman

What better time than Christmas (that's right, I said *Christmas*) to address the issue of why political correctness needs reforming?

The weakness in the whole inclusive language argument is that today's politically correct term evolves into tomorrow's insult. (Thank you, original sin.) The word "idiot," once a legitimate medical term, had to be changed to "mentally retarded" not long after it hit the playgrounds and boardrooms. When that term went into insult circulation the

social workers were at a loss, but then came political correctness to the rescue with the word "special." A nice word. A pity we can't use it anymore thanks to all the jokes. Ditto for "gay" and a host of other words, once safe but no longer acceptable in polite company.

But there's a deeper, more sinister fault line here, the one thing about political correctness that drives me absolutely batty: the fact that it so often speaks *for* people mistakenly assumed incapable of speaking for themselves.

I'm not alone in my annoyance. You only need Google "political correctness gone mad" to see that inclusive language has been a sticking point from the git go. But my problem with it has less to do with its weirdness than with the sanctimonious hypocrisy of terms created not by the marginalized but by those offended *on their behalf*.

The list goes on and on: middle and upper-class feminists dictating what poor working women should be calling themselves, white folks dictating what non-white folks should be called, anglophones who claim francophones get offended when we mispronounce French words, walking people dictating what people in wheelchairs should be called, etc. Deaf people have told me they don't like to be called "hard-of-hearing." Black people often refer to each other in very un-politically-correct ways. And on it goes.

I wrote an article once about how to become a creative Sherpa by always going out into the world armed with things like a sketchpad, a journal, writing implements, a camera, and a recording device. I was soon told that Sherpas get very offended when people usurp their vocations and exploit them as metaphors. I was mortified and immediately changed the article's wording. Now I wish I'd told the complainant, not a Sherpa, to go stuff it, or at least to find a Sherpa willing to back him up.

The idea behind political correctness isn't bad, and it's actually quite noble: Let's refer to persons, events, and conditions in a way that includes people and respects their dignity. Yet somewhere in the process of developing and using inclusive language the respect rolled off into the ditch. As Saul Bellow pointed out, "We mustn't forget how quickly the visions of genius become the canned goods of intellectuals."



Which brings us around to Christmas. Whether or not the “Christmas or holiday” debate was designed to stir up animosity against Muslims belies the fact that it has certainly done so. Most of us have had to listen to red-in-the-face ranters asking why we should change just because the Muslims don’t like Christmas. I know from experience, so don’t bother; asking them if they actually know any Christmas-hating Muslims won’t even slow them down.

When I lived in a Muslim country I was frequently greeted, at Christmastime, with “Merry Christmas!” and this from people who knew nothing about me except that I was obviously of European descent. I’ve never met a Muslim offended by the idea of Christmas. I’ve met a few Christians who refused to celebrate it, but no one seems to worry about them feeling excluded.

Here's an idea. Let’s forget about the labels — they’re so rarely even necessary! Let’s simply respect each other and show it. Let’s insist that those around us refrain from blatantly insulting people or groups. And let’s let people speak for themselves.

Merry Christmas, and “God bless us every one!”



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

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

#### **AthaU Facebook Group**

Razanne seeks tips for balancing four courses with full-time work; fortunately many AU students have done just that. A reminder from Olivia about the AU Textbook Buy/Sell group at [www.facebook.com/groups/683489552051685/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/683489552051685/). Eddy wonders if any other students are attending the BIOL 325 lab at AU in February.

Other posts include buying used textbooks, AU tuition increases, citing textbooks from other courses, easy electives, and courses BIOL 401, FNCE 401, PSYC 356, and SOCI 305.

#### **reddit**

A student gets post-exam jitters and worries their ProctorU exam-day fidgeting might be construed as cheating attempts. Other posts involve supplemental exam format, Cengage, and courses ANTH 272, BIOL 204, and PSYC 289.

#### **Twitter**

[@AthabascaU](#) tweets: "Our friends over at PowerEd™ by [#AthabascaU](#) are in the holiday spirit! They're giving away a Google Home Mini over on their LinkedIn page! Be sure to enter: <https://bit.ly/2S5ET27>."

[@austudentsunion](#) tweets: "AUSU is now accepting applications for the Chief Returning Officer for our 2020 General Election! Deadline to apply: January 9, 2020. Click link for details! <https://bit.ly/2PH1FdR>."



## Echoes of Bereavement at Holiday Time

### The First Holidays are the Hardest

Barbara Lehtiniemi



The holiday season brings comfort in tradition and ritual. At the heart of many celebrations, including Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and others, are patterns that have comforted us throughout our lives. The rituals, the food, the family gatherings.

When someone has lost somebody special in their lives, whether a spouse, family member, or friend—even a pet—everyone knows they'll go through a period of mourning. Others become attentive to their loss, solicitous about their needs, and keep watch over their mental state.

If the death occurred early in the year, however, it's easy to think grief is long over by year's end. But the holiday season can prompt a heady swirl of nostalgia and heighten feelings of loss. The "first" of each yearly celebration—birthdays, anniversaries, Christmas—can resound with the echo of the original loss.

The grandparent who never failed to dress as Santa for his grandchildren. The aunt who made the best latkes. The friend who always hosted the New Years Eve party. Their loss, whenever it occurred in the year, will leave a hole in

the celebrations, as well as in the hearts of those gather to celebrate.

If you have lost someone special recently, here are a few things you can do to help get through the first set of holidays without your loved one:

**Take the lead.** Others may not be aware how difficult the holidays are going to be for you to get through. Or they may feel uncomfortable addressing the topic unless you do first. Open the conversation.

**Cut yourself some slack.** There's no timetable for grief so don't worry that you should be "over it." Accept that you might feel sad, angry, or even happy, during the holidays.

**Introduce new traditions.** This year will be different anyway. Perhaps it's time to retire some traditions if they no longer seem right, or start something new that honours the memory of the one you've lost.

If you know somebody who has lost someone special in the year, here are a few things you can do to help make the holiday season easier:

**Start the conversation.** Acknowledge that the holidays can be tough on the recently bereaved. Just raising the topic helps.

**Offer to help.** What can you do to make the holidays better? Offer to step in and fill in a role the deceased formerly did, or to talk to other family members to increase awareness and understanding.

**Don't push.** Let the bereaved person decide what's right for them. Don't try to force them to do, feel, or think anything if they don't feel up to it.

**Honour the memories.** Gatherings of family or friends are good opportunities to remember what a special place the deceased had in your lives. Share stories and special memories. Show the bereaved that you, like them, have not forgotten.

There's no manual for grief nor rules for bereavement. Each individual forges their own path through the process. A heightened awareness of the echoes of bereavement during the holiday period can help everyone get through the first holidays with that someone special.

*Barbara Lehtiniemi is a writer, photographer, and AU graduate (BGS 2018.) She lives on a windswept rural road in Eastern Ontario.*



### Course Exam

**ORGB 300** (Organizational Culture) is a three-credit, upper-level business and administrative studies course that deals with issues and concepts in organizational culture and focuses on the impact of organizational culture on individuals in North American work organizations. The course introduces the tools you will need for conceptualizing and understanding culture. The goal of this course is to help students understand how culture is learned and internalized, and to appreciate its importance in relation to all activities undertaken in organizations. Students will also gain an understanding of the effects of ceremonies, myths, rituals, and symbols. ORGB 300 has no prerequisites and has a challenge for credit option if students are interested.

Students should note that ORGB 400 is a precluded course, meaning that ORGB 300 cannot be taken for credit if credit has already been obtained for ORGB 400.

Organizational Culture is made up of seven lessons, one assignment weighing twenty percent, two other assignments weighing twenty-five percent each, and a final examination worth thirty percent. The seven lessons within this course cover several topics, such as why organizations are cultures, cultural forms, occupational subcultures, and more. To receive credit for ORGB 300, students must obtain a grade of at least a "D" or fifty percent on the final examination and an overall course grade of at least fifty percent. Examinations for this course are taken online and must be taken at an invigilated location. It is your responsibility to ensure a computer with an Internet connection and a current web browser is available for your use at the invigilation centre.

Andrew Turner is currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Commerce program with a major in Accounting and has recently taken ORGB 300. He enrolled at Athabasca University in November of 2018 and has about ten classes remaining before graduating. He started his business schooling when he was younger and received a diploma with a major in marketing. He provides us a brief introduction, stating "I am a 30-year-old working in an entry level accounting position in Winnipeg, Manitoba. I actually have quite a few interests that keep me busy outside of school and work. I am really into sports, both playing and watching. I play hockey 12 months out of the year and I play as much tennis in the summer as I can. I also watch a lot of hockey, tennis, basketball and many other sports. I really enjoy music, reading, playing and taking care of my English bulldog, travelling and learning different languages. I am currently learning German."

### Brittany Daigle



When asked to explain the course to students, he states “ORGB 300 (Organizational Culture) is the theory of how cultures in organizations come into existence, how they develop and change and the different aspects of what makes up a culture. The course breaks down culture into its basic forms and then expands into other aspects of culture including subcultures. I think the course is extremely relevant because every company has a unique culture or cultures and it can help you become aware of different things happening around you that you might not have noticed before. The only downside is that the textbook is extremely old (early 1990’s) and there have been many new developments in organizational culture since then so it would be nicer for the reading to be more relevant. The examples that are explained in the book are also very American-centred and outdated which can make it difficult to always grasp the concepts in a clear relevant way.”

As for the structure of the course, he explains that “The course was very straight forward. There are seven lessons in total, three assignments, and one final exam. Each lesson consisted of reading a textbook chapter. The first assignment consisted of two questions that needed to be answered in written form (Approximately 900 words in total). The questions are from the textbook review questions provided after each lesson, and then the second part consisted of choosing an online article from the list provided and write about it. The second assignment has a very similar layout to assignment one except there is an extra question. The third assignment consists of reading a non-fiction book, *The Corporation*, and then writing a 2000-2500-word book review. The final exam consists of only short answer questions that more or less came from the review questions from each chapter and then a few questions about the book *The Corporation*. There were approximately twelve questions on the final exam, but they were very fair and covered the main topics of the course. There were no surprises or ‘trick’ questions.”

Andrew would recommend this course, explaining that “The only difficulty with the course was reading the textbook because it was quite old and at times quite dry. But if there was a new textbook that could be used for this course, I would actually say that this course should be required by every student in business. It is extremely relevant to every single person no matter what field in business they are in (marketing, accounting, finance, etc.). It really helps to make students and future employees become more aware of how cultures affect companies and its employees.”

As for any tips and tricks to completing this course, he explains that “One thing that will really help as students progress through the course is to make sure you complete the review questions provided after each lesson. This will make studying for the final exam a million times easier. Also, when completing the assignments make sure to connect the information in the textbook to your answers. Sometimes this can be a little bit difficult, but you need to make sure it is done to get top marks.”

When asked how communications with his tutor was, he states “To be honest I usually do not communicate with my tutor unless I have issues and/or questions which is not that often in a class like this one because it is very straightforward. My tutor was great though, she marked my assignments and my exam within a day and gave great feedback and marked very fairly. If students are very keen, they could probably finish this course rather quickly.”

Whether ORGB 300 is a degree or program requirement of yours or the topics discussed above are of interest to you, this course will have you learning a lot of interesting and useful information surrounding the topic of organizational culture.

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



## Porkpie Hat

### Random Thoughts About the Mind and the Year to Come

Darjeeling Jones



"To live is so startling it leaves little time for anything else." -  
*Emily Dickinson*

Ah, the human brain. That overstuffed gray matter enchilada, filled with shredded images, diced ideas, and gooey melted memories. Packed full of primo chemicals, tiny electrical sparks, Shakespearean sonnets, nursery rhymes, erotic visions, misremembered lyrics, film noir dialogue, esoteric formulae, baroque song cycles, awkward dance moves, monetary systems, dress designs, regrets, fever dreams, psychotic rages, quantum physics, and I don't know what all. There are whole lifetimes, whole worlds, hidden in its byzantine folds like loose change and scattered pearls down the back of the couch.

It's such a bizarre contraption, by far the most valuable thing we own, built for wonder, wired for joy, diverted by love, and programmed to destroy. And within the apparatus of the brain there is the mind, the ghost in the meat machine, using the

relatively rudimentary accessory of its body, its achy, perpetually malfunctioning carapace of wiring and bone, to explore and shape whole worlds. All of this astonishingly springing forth from a nondescript wrinkly lump about the size of a Sunday pot roast. This miraculous device so advanced that it is capable of conceiving and manifesting pipe organs and Venetian lace, hollandaise sauce and the large hadron collider.

And yet, paradoxically, it's short-sighted enough to bring the world to the point of any number of potential apocalypses, and even to begin designing and building its very own replacement species (and potential predator) in the form of artificial intelligence, and whatever artificial intelligence ultimately brings forth. (Seriously, how long until our precious cerebral matter is mechanically harvested, stacked by the millions in air-conditioned silos, wired in parallel, and set to work like some sort of organic bitcoin mine? Isn't our research in this area just a tiny bit analogous to a flock of sheep planning and developing a super-efficient wolf? I'm just saying don't put off that long-planned trip to the Alps or to Bali for too much longer.)

On the plus side, of course, you also never want to underestimate the potential of that clever little bastard the brain to dig itself out of a tight spot or two. I'm no astrophysicist, but it seems to me that the universe is composed largely of dark matter and surprise, and our quirky little minds seem to flourish in those deep waters. It ain't over 'til it's over, that's for sure.

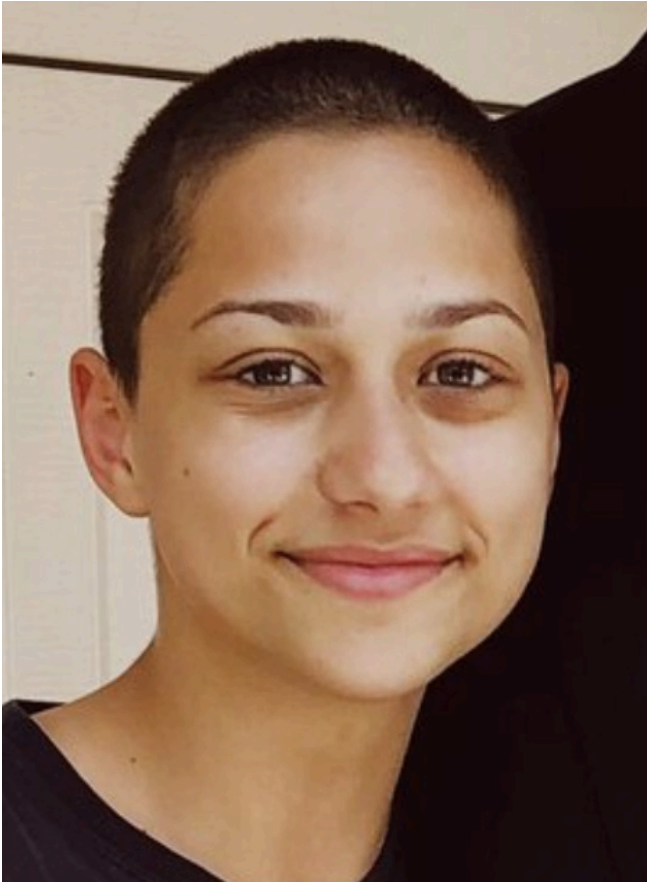
In the meantime, another year is over, and a new one is looming. Another year of weirdness, danger, calamity, beauty, exhilaration, devastation, mystery, and love. I would be the first to admit that I am not overly optimistic about our collective long-term chances. But I do hope and believe that we will last a while yet. For now, we (amazingly) exist. For now, we are laughing, and dancing, and crying, and fucking, and our minds are experiencing the raw richness of simply being alive. May the new year bring to you, dear reader, dear fellow brain, many a moment of luscious experience that you had never even dreamed of. Comfort and joy to all.



## Women of Interest

### Emma Gonzalez

Barb Godin



Emma Gonzalez is a survivor of a school shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, in 2018 that killed 17 people and injured several more. Emma became a gun control activist and cofounded the gun control advocacy group "Never Again MSD."

Emma was born November 11, 1999 and has two older siblings. Her father, Jose Gonzalez, is a cyber security attorney who emigrated from Cuba to New York City in 1968. He eventually met Beth, a math tutor, and they settled in Parkland, Florida, to raise their family.

On Valentine's Day 2018, a former student of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School arrived at the school, just prior to dismissal time, carrying a rifle case containing a legally purchased AR-15 semi-automatic rifle and a backpack with multiple magazines. After pulling the school fire alarm he began randomly shooting at teachers and students. The shooting lasted 6 minutes, he then stopped, possibly because the gun jammed, and then blended into the fleeing students and walked to the mall where he purchased a drink. He was arrested without incident approximately two miles from the

school.

Emma Gonzalez was in the school auditorium at the time of the shooting, where she remained for two hours until the police allowed her and other students to leave. On February 17, 2018, Emma attended a gun control rally where she delivered an 11-minute speech. Her speech, entitled "We call B.S.", in response to gun laws, went viral. On February 21 she attended a widely televised CNN townhall where she and fellow students criticized the NRA. Within 10 days of giving the "We call B.S" speech Emma's twitter followers grew to more than a million and she was featured on the cover of Time Magazine's March 2018 issue. Emma, along with other survivors from what came to be known as the Parkland School Shooting, arranged a countrywide protest called "March for Our Lives."

Gonzalez and other survivors have since suffered attacks and criticism from right wing activists. For example, Leslie Gibson, a Republican Candidate and NRA member, called her a "skinhead lesbian." Gibson was forced to resign from the Maine legislature as a result.

Emma's persistent activism has made a difference, as the Florida Legislature passed a bill titled the "Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act." The goal of the Act is to provide additional means of security for students. There is to be additional law enforcement officers and at least one Safe School Officer at public schools; but due to funding constrictions this will not be possible at every school. Some other significant changes from the Act include raising the age for buying firearms to 21, banning bump stops on automatic rifles, and establishes waiting periods



and stricter background checks for individuals purchasing firearms. \$400 million has been allocated for execution of these amendments.

Emma Gonzalez has proven that speaking out and fighting for what you believe in is a perfect example that one voice makes a difference. Even though the shootings continue, Emma has paved the way for change.



## The Study Dude

### Cornell and SQ3R Study Methods

Marie Well



Most students scramble to stumble on study techniques. Some struggle to find a study system their entire student life. But systems exist to streamline studies—systems such as the Cornell and SQ3R methods.

My dear-hearted prof once suggested another system: cue cards for researching and writing papers. I decided to try it out, as she hinted it came with the promise of higher grades. And what a delight it turned out to be. My papers wrote themselves and my grades got a boost.

So, let's dive into two study methods: the Cornell method and the SQ3R method.

First, here is a lead-in to the Cornell method. If you love MS Word for note taking, then try working with two column tables. "Split your notebook page in half, and separate the 2 parts with a straight line. On the

left side, write down textbook material, while on the right, write down notes you got from class that supports it. Using this technique will help you easily understand how your notes from the lecture and text from your book relate to one another" (15%). At AU, we may take courses that have few, if any, lectures. In these cases, use the right-hand column to add mnemonics such as acronyms or to sprinkle in insights from Google or other sources. You can top it off with personal insights from your own life, which won't likely gain you marks, but may add meaning.

As for Cornell, the Cornell method advises, "All you need to do is split your notebook page into two parts, one measuring around 2 inches, and the other measuring around 6 inches. Use the smaller column to take down summaries and general cues, while the bigger column should be used mainly for important facts and details from the lecture. Key phrases, important dates, and definitions should be recorded in this column" (19%).

Don't feel shy about crafting your own add-ons to the Cornell method. A "way you can get creative is by using different colors of ink when you take down notes. Have a color system that will help you scan your notes faster. For example, use black ink for textbook notes, blue ink for explanations, and red ink for citations. The different ink colors can help you retain more information next time you study for exam" (19%). Another system is to use cue cards, with a one-word subject followed by a quote on the front-side—and the bibliographic citation on the backside. This method works like a charm for sorting citations for essay writing or for randomizing quotes to memorize for exams.

The second study system I want to introduce to you is called SQ3R. “SQ3R stands for the 5 steps that you need to do if you want to fully comprehend study material. Survey–Question–Read–Recall–Review” (50%). Let's look at these five parts of the SQ3R in more detail:

First, start by surveying the material. “Scan the contents of the book, check out headlines and boxed texts, and look for clues that will help you determine if the material contains information you're looking for” (56%). Speed read by drawing a large “S” down each page and letting your eyes follow the pattern. You'll take in enough info to gain comfort. But the trick is to make multiple rows of wide “S's” down the page the next time you skim the reading. On the final skim-through, try running your finger across each line at quick speed.

Second, as for the question part, “list down questions that you want answered by the material” (56%). If you have questions that arise during your skim-through, add them, too. Often, books have voids that a timely question can help fill.

Third, actively read. “Take down notes or mind map important concepts if you want your mind to retain important information” (56%). When note-taking, capture all the facts, definitions, and exciting quotes. If you wish to resell your books after the class, draw the mind maps and write the notes in a separate binder. Kinesthetic people gain huge retention from handwriting notes in a separate binder. You're likely kinesthetic if you love to dance, exercise, do sports, or do yoga. A kinesthetic loved one of mine found herself in a PhD program with all of her prior textbooks scribble-free.

Fourth is the recall stage: “go back to your questions and see if you can answer them by memory” (56%).

Fifth, “once you're able to recall important information from the material, you can start reviewing it. Reread the material or your notes and find a way to discuss it. Do your best to explain the material without going through the text again. You can write an essay explaining what you have just learned” (61%). And don't forget to research and record the answers to your questions.

As for the fifth review stage, memorization, use cue cards or “if you're having a hard time learning a new concept, find ways to tie up what you just learned with your own real life experiences” (68%). Another memory trick is to “use the first letter of each keyword to form a new word. For example: the acronym HOMES for the name of 5 great lakes Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, and Superior” (73%).

You can try other systems for memorization, such as the “Image–Name technique: When trying to remember names of famous people or even people you just met, find a relationship between the name of the person and any unique physical characteristics that he or she has. Ex: Shirley Temple–Curly hair around her temples” (78%).

Whatever memory strategy you use, try to make it wild, funny, and exaggerated. We tend to memorize the fantastical more readily than the dull.

Now that you've been introduced to study methods, don't shy away from sifting through them in-depth. Adding a method to your toolkit can make you a smarter learner—bolstering your grades while speeding up your groove.

#### References

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## Fly on the Wall

### A Marathon of Learning

Jason Sullivan



Distance education can seem like a marathon: a lot of work over a long time with the end goal seeming to recede ever-further into the distance. Like snowshoeing through falling snow, our trail can seem, at best, nebulous. Marathons also imply suffering rewarded with moral and physical gratification. At AU our struggles over months and years are worth it but we have to pace ourselves. A young man in ancient Greece, who ran that first forty-two-kilometre marathon literally, delivered a message of the victory of democratic forces at the town of Marathon. Upon his arrival he dropped dead on the spot; “Pheidippides

ran from the battlefield at Marathon to Athens in order to relay news of the victory. He only said, “We were victorious!” and collapsed and died from exhaustion,” (*The Athens Marathon*, 2016). Let this tragedy be a warning to us all, lest we burn ourselves out in our academic exuberance.

To manage our exertion at AU requires a fine tethering of our ambitions for productivity and our whims toward inspiration. The latter can propel us forward in great bursts of progress, but the former are the shoes we choose for long term success. Seeing the rest of our life as the learning process it is can provide a framework for managed progress. Having a purpose in the rest of our life, as with the incipient democratic forces in their battle at Marathon, can only help grease the levers of our academic minds. Maybe we have big dreams over the rainbow of our graduation or maybe we just know that it'll feel great to finish this one course, but the key is to place ourselves in a larger context. There's a reason so many marathons (on pavement or on snow) involve charity; otherwise, why push ourselves at all? “Because it's there” is too trite an explanation to be taken seriously when we consider how much work it takes to woodshed our way to academic success. Without a larger goal we'd all probably just ramble around writing blogs or something.

Six months is a marathon period in which to complete our individualized study. What we don't want to do is push ourselves too hard or too constantly, lest our inner academic ticker fail in our quest to meet challenging time requirements. It's one thing to resolve to do well and another thing to be unrealistic.

### Back in the Day

Back in high school gym class we'd often do cross-country running. A few students would burst ahead at the start (some so they could dally amidst shadowy cedar shrubs and commit various minor misdemeanours such as smoking cigarettes). Others would waffle around at the outset only to be whipped into some semblance of a jog as the teacher finished taking attendance. Maybe he'd even blow his whistle, but that'd merely elicit laughter. At AU our tutors aren't there to badger us into our senses any more than college profs in a brick and mortar setting are paid to politely ask us to affix our eyes 'up here' or to 'put our thinking caps on'. In our university, as in our lives, we have to be our own self-starters; if we fail it's largely down to us that we didn't bother to think about the consequences of our actions or inactions.

It's with the third set of gym students that another problem arise; these kids would run and keep running, pausing to catch their breath but only doing so while slowing to a mild pace rather than



by plopping down in some old lady's petunias. These students worked hard and their taxing effort paid dividends. They might actually make the track and field team, for instance, or find true love at the finish line as their runner's high kicked in and they locked eyes with a hitherto-unnoticed classmate. These students aren't unlike our seat-locked student selves, bound as we are to our desks in our chosen study cubby. They had engaged in a bargain between their present selves and their future selves; if they applied themselves physically now, then they'd reap great rewards (not to mention grades) in the big metaphysical later. A balanced flow is key to success at the marathon of distance education.

### **Zeno's Paradox: No One's Getting Anywhere**

But there will always be a little bit more to study, more to write and more to do. That's life itself; it's tough to *just be*. Conversely, and here we may know this well as we write final essay assignments, there could also always be a little (or a lot) less in terms of our word count or our flowery verbiage. Footnotes can themselves stretch into eternity, like some Flying Spaghetti Monster of linguistics.

Sometimes it can feel like we're moving fast but going nowhere. This sentiment actually has ancient origins. Zeno of Elea noted that if a tortoise and a hare (remember that tale?) began a footrace at the same moment they would each have to transect half of the total course distance. And then a half of the remaining half and so on. Problem is, unlike we at AU, who know full well we've finished a course after we've sat on our keisters for three hours writing an invigilated exam, the leading hare is cosmically condemned to cross ever-teensier halves of the remaining course.

In principal, says Zeno, anything of substance is infinitely divisible into sections and the same goes for times and distances. By this logic, to literally get from one tangible place to another is impossible because there will always be a halfway to the end left to go, no matter how tiny the increments. Karsten Harris summarizes Zeno thus: after a series of segments of the race, "sequences decreasing unendingly in constant ratio" not unlike a series of marked intervals on a real race track or cross country skiing circuit, the rabbit "will never catch up" as the number of distances increase while their individual size decreases. (Harries, 374). We're talking about an infinite surplus of fractions. There will always be one segment left to cross, no matter how tiny the distances become. And to cross it one must first go halfway whereupon another, albeit smaller, halfway appears. No microscopic view can bridge these endless and ever-smaller gaps. As such, the turtle is destined to never quite lose to the faster

## **AU-thentic Events (and Closures)**

### *Holiday closures:*

#### **Athabasca University**

Closed Wed, December 25 to Wed, Jan 1, inclusive

Reopens Thurs, Jan 2, 8:30 am MST

More info at:

[news.athabascau.ca/announcements/holiday-closures-2019](https://news.athabascau.ca/announcements/holiday-closures-2019)

#### **AU Library**

Last day to order materials: Wed, Dec 18

Closed Wed, Dec 25 to Wed, Jan 1, inclusive

Reopens Thurs, Jan 2, 8:30 am MST

More info at:

[library.athabascau.ca/page/ann](https://library.athabascau.ca/page/ann)

AUSU

Closed Sat, Dec 21 to Wed, Jan 1, inclusive

Reopens Thurs, Jan 2, 9:00 am MST

More info at: [www.ausu.org/event/ausu-winter-closure/](https://www.ausu.org/event/ausu-winter-closure/)

### *Upcoming AU-related events:*

#### **Science Outreach - Athabasca:**

##### **Christmas Bird Count**

Fri, Dec 27, 10:30 am to 4:00 p MST

Muskeg Creek Chalet, 56 St and 48 Ave,  
Athabasca AB

In person

Hosted by AU

[news.athabascau.ca/events/science-outreach-athabasca-christmas-bird-count](https://news.athabascau.ca/events/science-outreach-athabasca-christmas-bird-count)  
No pre-registration necessary

*All events are free unless otherwise noted*

rabbit who will eventually tire out of frustration and go stomping off towards a Briar patch. This leaves the turtle the victor by acclamation! Brevity may be the soul of wit, but consistency is the ticket to ride the gravy train of success. Small progress will lead inexorably to long term progress if only we don't get overwhelmed by how much we must do and how teeny our academic feet may feel. All we can do is put one foot in front of the other in this war of attrition.

### **Success by Faustian Bargain; Getting Somewhere by Getting Our Priorities Straight**

At AU, the race to course completion is largely in our minds. To the outer world we're sitting the same at our laptop no matter what we're working on. So, to avoid burnout we have to mix mental pleasure with mental toil. But we do so at the risk of sliding into sloth and indolence. There's the famous story of Faust who made a bargain with the Devil in which Faust exchanges future benefit for present benefit. At first the outcome looks dicey for Faust's soul but then "God is persuaded that, despite Faust's errant ways, Faust is worthy of salvation. So he strikes a bargain with Mephistopheles: if he can persuade Faust to abandon striving and seek rest, Mephistopheles may claim his soul. Faust is so weary of academic learning that he dabbles in magic. Rejected by the Earth-Spirit, he contemplates suicide but is called back to life by Easter bells. He takes a walk, during which he encounters a beautiful young virgin, Margarete (Gretchen), and then a black poodle, which he takes back to his study. The dog transforms into Mephistopheles, who signs a pact with Faust: if Faust should ever rest from striving, he will lose his soul. At first, Mephistopheles tries to delight Faust with japes and drunken gatherings. Faust's only desire, however, is to renew his acquaintance with the modest Gretchen." (von Goethe, 1808). To give ourselves a temporary pass from striving is a great idea.

Hard work today is generally conceded to yield rewards tomorrow; yet we may also deplete our intellectual resources if we push ourselves to study harder and faster and thus poison the academic well of our future selves. Let's not condemn those future selves! On the other hand, if we work hard at school and then play hard at other sedentary mental activities at our computer we may slowly lower ourselves out of joy at our studies. A change of scenery benefits our brains; maybe not a marathon but perhaps, like Faust, a walk. Who knows what or who we will meet? Inspiration at the very least.

## **More AU-thentic Events**

### **Research Webinar Series:**

#### **The invasion of sexual boundaries and the cultural sensitivity of words**

Wed, Jan 8, 11:00 am to 12:00 pm MST  
Online

Hosted by AU

[news.athabascau.ca/events/research-webinar-series-the-invasion-of-sexual-boundaries-and-the-cultural-sensitivity-of-words](https://news.athabascau.ca/events/research-webinar-series-the-invasion-of-sexual-boundaries-and-the-cultural-sensitivity-of-words)

Access through above link

### **Live chat - Doctorate in Business Administration**

Wed, Jan 8, 2:00 to 3:00 pm MST  
Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business

[news.athabascau.ca/events/live-chat-doctorate-in-business-administration-20200108](https://news.athabascau.ca/events/live-chat-doctorate-in-business-administration-20200108)

Access through above link

### **AUSU Member Consultation #2 for Bylaw Revisions**

Fri, Jan 10, 5:30 to 6:30 pm MST  
Online

Hosted by AUSU

[www.ausu.org/event/member-consultation-2-for-bylaw-revisions/](https://www.ausu.org/event/member-consultation-2-for-bylaw-revisions/)

No pre-registration required; access info at above link

*All events are free unless otherwise noted*

## Finding Our Pace, Finding Our Purpose

To walk is not to run, however. Many a well-meaning person has sought relief from their academic toil only to find themselves in the ultimate classroom of aesthetic and sensory ideology: a gym. The idea that we must push ourselves in all things goes back to ancient Greece, it's true. When democracy was in its infancy there birthed the idea that citizens were bound to one another through their responsibilities as voting participants. "L. Siegfried, a German philosopher said it this way: 'When Greeks were fighting at Marathon against the spiritually unconnected mass of Persians, they were fighting as people who had clear awareness of the right for a free political life. The consciousness of mankind ... was born at Marathon. We, the people of the West, must always kneel respectfully to the place where human dignity was established.'" (*The Athens Marathon*. 2016). Yet, what is shared in the anonymity of a modern gym or when we take a study break to play a computer game with online friends?

Perhaps we undermine the dignity of our studies when we work hard at playing without really considering that everything we do is a form of learning—with a purpose and a meaning. We can no sooner evade our sense that there's meaning in all that we do than we can put aside our coursework and engage in tasks truly frivolous. We're always on the racetrack of life. Perhaps only when we see existence as a classroom will the struggles in our academic courses attenuate to acquire a sense of natural comfort. After all, we're always learning while we're conscious, and what is life but a race course, the attitude to which makes all the difference. If our coursework translates into us learning to struggle, then that would be a tragic outcome of our foray into distance education.

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'The Athens Marathon'. (2016). Apostolos Greek Tours. Retrieved from <https://www.athensmarathon.com/history/>.

*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.*



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

With Christmas coming up next week, we cast a glance back at a trio of articles about Christmas Classics, both movies and television specials. Former Voice editor Christina M. Frey compiled these, and included interesting bits of trivia for many of the old favourites.

**Animated specials never get old.** You can watch these with your kids, or by yourself (you know you want to.) [Saturday Night at the \(Old\) Movies – A Classic Christmas for the Kids—and the Kid Inside Us!](#), December 4, 2009

**Get the tissues ready!** Holiday romances abound in [Saturday Night at the \(Old\) Movies – A Classic Christmas Romance](#), December 11, 2009

**It's not Christmas until you watch your favourite:** [Saturday Night at the \(Old\) Movies – A Merry Christmas with Heart](#), December 18, 2009



## Kitchen Gadgets Review

### Spiralizer

Xin Xu



Eating healthy is hard sometimes and having the right tools and reinforcements to aid good habits is a key to success. On Black Friday, I found a manual spiralizer that is easy to use and has helped me try some incredible recipes that would be sure to delight health-conscious AU-students. If you're looking for a kitchen gift for a health nut on Christmas, a spiralizer may be a great choice.

Spiralizers come in various models and brands, electric or manual, and compact or large. The particular model I purchased is manual and medium-sized. However, the size can range from the smallest, one no larger than the size of a peach (and resembling a basic pencil sharpener) while the largest spiralizer can be as large as an electric dough mixer. Because of the smaller size of my kitchen, I wanted a tool that could be easily integrated into the countertop.

#### Functionality: ★★★★★

When I first made the purchase I was very eager to test the set up out. However, it wasn't as intuitive as I had imagined. First, the quality of the spirals is highly dependent on the texture of the fruit or vegetable. For example a zucchini produces perfect spirals but a tougher-textured yam would not produce spirals that are as perfect. This is partly due to the plastic build of my spiralizer. Perhaps with a stronger metal build and a larger blade, nice spirals can also form that way. Another variable that affected the quality of the spirals was the size of the vegetables. An ideal vegetable would be the size of an English cucumber, however medium sized carrots (the width of a quarter) did not optimize the spirals since it required a larger surface area of the vegetable to produce continuous strands. Some thoughtful features the designers added included a suction cup at the bottom of the device which helps hold the set-up in place when manually creating the spirals. Additionally, there are five blades that help create various types of spirals and slices. The blades are stored in a smaller compartment underneath the spiralizer.

#### Clean up: ★★★★★

Clean-up was relatively simple since the device was plastic and easy to wipe. The blades are also removable and can be easily cleaned. Furthermore, a small drawer underneath the spiralizer helps contain the different types of blades after washing and drying.





### Overall: ★★★★★

Spiralizers can be a great addition to your kitchen depending on the model selected. After ordering this particular model, I've noticed various models including electric spiralizers that take the manual effort out of the equation! The general rule is to do plenty of research before committing to a single device. Sometimes, the product sounds good in theory but does not always hold up to expectations. If you're a kitchen nerd like I am, though, investing in a high-quality product that will last you many years should be an important goal.



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



## Council Connection

### November and December Meetings

**Karlee Kapler**  
**Karl Low**



The November AUSU Council meeting began at 6:37 PM, with the entire council in attendance, apart from Councillor Christine Hudder, as she was called into work.

The approval of the November 21, 2019 meeting agenda was unanimous, with the proposition to discuss item nine on student aid position policy. All were in favor to move for the approval of the October meeting minutes, and there were no action items to be discussed.

From this point, the council moved quickly into the In-Camera discussion, which began at 6:43 PM, and ended at 7:00 PM. The motion discussed In-Camera was defeated by a vote of 1/10.

After concluding this discussion, council moved on to discuss the policy revisions which had been tabled from the October 2019 council

meeting. First came the approval of Policy 2.14, Council Responsibilities and Honoraria edits. This policy discusses what is the responsibility of the councillors, and what needs to be upheld to continue as a member of council. The original wording required council members must be AUSU members for two thirds of a term, but council posed the question if this was an accurate reflection of what being an AU Student is, as students complete courses at different rates, some quite quickly, some much more slowly. Since you're only an AUSU member while actively in a course should AUSU penalize you if you do courses quickly with a significant break in between them?

It was concluded that the policy would need to have changes made to it that state that one course must be completed in a year to continue with council membership. But it was noted that for this policy change to be effective, the AUSU bylaws must also be adjusted, as they would override the changes in policy. To change the bylaws requires specific processes and timelines, including notices to the members and a minimum time period for members to understand and opportunities to comment on the proposed changes.

The council also made note that they did not want to restrict council members to having a GPA of 2.0, as some of those who have expressed interest in joining council are early in their academic career, and one bad grade can affect their GPA. The council expressed their concern that this might deter people from joining. Council voted to accept the changes and would enter into a discussion after the meeting as to whether they would be able to provide appropriate notice to change the bylaws before the next election. At the writing of this report, it appears they decided it's possible, and the first reading of the Bylaw changes was held on December 16<sup>th</sup>, with the second reading and opportunity for student comment will be held on January 16<sup>th</sup>.

After concluding the discussion on this policy, the council moved to discuss the president's report. President Brandon went on to elaborate on the success of the new virtual co-op program with the faculty of business and filled council in on how well it has been going. So far, he notes, it has been an interesting opportunity, although there are a few minor glitches. The new co-op program (as in computer program) creates situations and generates conversations that the student will have to respond to accordingly, and they will be rated on how well they respond. The program will continue to be worked on and improved, and hopefully will be available for students to use in January.

Also discussed in the president's report was the topic of provincial budgets. He noted that it was being worked on with AU what the budget will be, as they were, at the recent consultation with the student union, unable to provide what the proposals would be for tuition. The government is pushing institutions to raise their tuitions by 7 percent, and this has created several concerns and will be discussed with administration. (This has since been confirmed, and tuitions will be increasing by 7%, along with various other fees that are tied to tuition, such as the Learning Resources Fee.)

The council then moved on to discuss the success of the pledges from across the country for the Get out to Vote campaign. Every single province and territory had at least one pledge, which is a positive outcome and what was strived for. There were approximately 1500 pledges made, and that was about 300 more than what was expected. Vice-President External and Student Affairs, Natasha Donahue, went on to elaborate that at the CASA conference it was discussed that there should be the creation of an indigenous advisory group.

At the conclusion of the November meeting, it was not known if there was to be December meeting, but after the meeting AUSU council was able to schedule a meeting for December 16<sup>th</sup>, ensuring that they had enough time to meet the requirements for notice for the above mentioned change to the bylaws.

The December 16<sup>th</sup> meeting, however, was extremely short, and due to technical difficulties neither myself or Voice Editor Karl Low was able to attend, as a password had been somehow set on the meeting room, and, once provided with it mid-way through the meeting, that password did not work. AUSU staff has indicated that even councillors were having a problem getting in, and they were not sure how the password was set. As it was, the meeting ran for barely a half



hour, from 5:30pm to 6:00pm. We spoke to a councillor after the meeting and learned that all Councillors did manage to get to the meeting, the first reading of the bylaws was made and approved, and there was some short discussion about the 7% tuition increase, and how disappointed AUSU was with it and the effects it will have on students, especially those from out of province and internationally. However, it apparently was noted that AU has indicated that they may seek to avoid the same increase in the next two years, as the government is suggesting, due to the facts presented to them by AUSU. Whether this will bear any fruit remains to be seen.

The next meeting and final reading of the bylaw changes will be held on January 16<sup>th</sup>. Merry Christmas!



## The Fit Student

### The Purpose of Mistakes

Marie Well



We are all placed in this world to learn lessons. And how do we learn our lessons? Through hardships or mistakes. Wear your scars like badges of honour, says my beloved friend, but sometimes our mistakes have grave consequences. Like a one punch bar fight that leads to a death.

I believe we are not meant to walk away from mistakes with blame, hardened hearts, hatred, or smallness. No one needs to be vilified. I believe mistakes exist for us to tap into our higher selves, for us to learn noble traits: forgiveness, honesty, perseverance, authenticity, compassion, or unconditional love. I also believe mistakes arise for us to take responsibility from a growth-mindset, and less from a guilty conscience. “Very often, we do something that we wish we hadn’t done. Instead of simply feeling bad about it, let us look at the situation objectively, and see what we could have done better, so that we won’t make the same mistake again when confronted with a similar situation” (36%). The life-lesson you glean from mistakes have the power to bring you to a place of peace. “We should always look at the situation objectively, to see how we can resolve it,

and what we can learn from it” (36%).

When you make a mistake, try to seek an upbeat solution. Whatever you do, don’t let yourself get triggered into hopelessness. “If you let situations and words dictate your mood, then you’re a prisoner to these instances. You’re a hostage to anything and everyone around you. It’s not about being mentally tough here, but rather letting go of that which triggers negative responses. It takes a re-wiring of the mind, or at least quieting it for the most part. It’s about creating positive habits and putting them into practice in a self-disciplined and consistent fashion” (5%).

So, when you make mistakes, try to watch your thoughts. “Be extremely careful what you’re allowing into your mind, and how you’re interpreting it. Perceptions dictate everything, from insecurities and self-conscious behavior, to intentional success seeking traits” (8%).

In other words, shift negative thought to helpful ones—even to positive, constructive thoughts. “We need to be happy first, then accomplishing the things we are working towards becomes exponentially easier and less stressful by very nature. Its counterintuitive, but you have to relentlessly ensure you are thinking happy thoughts throughout each day to retain this positive disposition” (49%).

Whenever struck by a tragic mistake, seek the lessons. By doing so, your suffering finds purpose.

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## Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

**Scholarship name:** Dick Martin Scholarship Award

**Sponsored by:** Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS)

**Deadline:** January 31, 2020, 11:59 pm EST

**Potential payout:** \$3000

**Eligibility restriction:** Applicants must be enrolled full- or part-time, in an occupational health and safety related course or program leading to an occupational health and safety certificate, diploma, or degree at an accredited university or college in Canada.

**What's required:** A completed online application form, including information on academic achievements, an outline of leadership and civic activities, contact info for two references, along with a cover letter outlining career aspirations, and a 1000-1200 word essay on one of two supplied topics.

**Tips:** Read the FAQ section for helpful tips.

**Where to get info:** [www.ccohs.ca/scholarship/](http://www.ccohs.ca/scholarship/)





Dear  
Barb

Barbara Godin

## Coming Out for Christmas

*Dear Barb:*

*Merry Christmas! I am a gay guy in my early twenties. I recently came out to my family and they reacted better than I thought they would. Although my dad seems a little distant, my mom is pretty good with it. I am one of three siblings. My brother and sister are married with children. My parents always host Christmas dinner with all the trimmings. I am looking forward to coming home for Christmas as I live a two-hour drive away. My partner and I have been together for almost a year and I am thinking of bringing him home for Christmas to meet the family. I haven't told my parents about him yet, so I'm not sure if I should bring Derrick home. I haven't seen my parents since I told them that I am gay, but I have talked to them on chat and Facetime. I told my sister about my relationship, but she didn't have an opinion about whether I should bring Derrick home or not. I don't want to cause stress for my family, but I would like to include my partner. I'd be interested to hear your opinion on this issue. Thanks Dan.*

Hi Dan:

Merry Christmas to you as well. Since you recently came out to your parents, it will probably take a while for them to feel comfortable with it, especially if they didn't have any idea you were gay. When looking back in retrospect, most parents will admit that they had an inkling their child was gay from an

early age, but now that it's out in the open things will change. There are other family members, such as grandparents, aunts, and uncles that will have to be told. I don't think it would be a good idea to come home with your boyfriend right now, even though you really want to. My suggestion would be to talk to your parents and see if they are open to meeting your partner before Christmas. After the meeting ask them how they would feel about you bringing Derrick home to meet the family at Christmas. If they are reluctant or hesitant, give them some time to adjust. This is a significant adjustment to their lives, as they had a vision of how your life would unfold and that is all changed with this new reality. Remember they are from a generation where gays stayed in the closet and people lived their lives in denial. On the other hand they may surprise you and be open and receptive to your partner joining the family for Christmas. Good luck Dan, happy you are living your truth.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to everyone! I am going to end the year with one of my favorite quotes:

"Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."

- James Baldwin

Email your questions to [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org). Some submissions may be edited for length or to protect confidentiality; your real name and location will never be printed. This column is for entertainment only. The author is not a professional counsellor and this column is not intended to take the place of professional advice.





Poet Maeve

I am Loved, And so Ain't We All.

Wanda Waterman





## Changes to AU Course Materials

In the fall of 2013 AU began the process of replacing hard-copy textbooks for all undergraduate courses with e-text versions. Implementation has been staged in

The results will be shared with members in an upcoming newsletter.

## A New Era at AU - A New AU president

After two terms in the Office of President, Dr. Frits Pannekoek is retiring. Last week, in recognition of his contributions to distance education, the University of South Africa (Unisa) granted him an honorary Doctor of Literature and Philosophy award. AUSU congratulates Dr. Pannekoek on this great honour, and the recognition it brings to AU as a world leader in distance and open learning. We wish him all the best over his final weeks in the role of president, and in all his future endeavours!



We had hoped by now to be able to announce the selection of the presidential search committee for a new, full-term president; however, as a suitable candidate has not yet been found, AU has instead appointed an interim president: Dr. Peter MacKinnon, formerly of the University of Saskatchewan. Dr. MacKinnon has also served as chair of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) and on the Science, Technology and Innovation Council of Canada. We look forward to working with him over the coming year!**Convocation travel information**

AUSU wants to make sure this year's graduating class has a fantastic convocation. To make this happen, we're providing free transportation via bus or limo service to take people from Edmonton to the Athabasca Multiplex each day of convocation 2014. This applies to those graduating from AU undergraduate programs, and their guests (some limits may apply).

We've also arranged hotel discounts in Edmonton.

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# CLASSIFIEDS

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

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## THE VOICE

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