



THE VOICE

Vol 28 Issue 03 2020-01-17

Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You!

Distance Education

A New High School Norm?

Alberta Budget Cuts

Affecting So Many

Plus:

*Don't be an Ignoramus
Into the Woods
and much more!*



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The Voice Magazine

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Views and articles
presented here are those
of the contributors and do
not represent the views of
AUSU Student Council.

The Voice is published
almost every Friday in
HTML and PDF format.

For weekly email reminders
as each issue is posted, fill
out the subscription form
[here](#).

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Volume 28, Issue 03

© 2020 by The Voice
Magazine

ISSN 2561-3634

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

Hold on to Your Wallets

Karl Low



It's now official. Athabasca University will be increasing tuitions by 7% across the board. At the same time, negotiations with the various labour groups at the university seem to be heating up as well, with AUFA having recently done a survey and finding out that almost half of those surveyed don't trust the senior management of AU.

AUSU, along with the AUGSA, has been arguing against the university needing to make these increases based on their solid financial footing and on how these fees will make the university less competitive when it comes to attracting out of province students, but to no avail.

Given how various members of the board were replaced with the advent of the United Conservative Party taking over the Alberta government, I'm not surprised. The Board is unfortunately being required to take marching orders based on what the UCP feels is best for them, not necessarily for students or Albertans. And what's best for them is to ensure that they are able to lower their deficit despite the tax breaks

they're giving out, but you can find more about that in Francesca Carone's story this week about the Alberta Budget.

Also this week, Natalia Iwanek returns with her second article. This time she looks at the new push in Ontario to make all high school students take some of their education online. This is being met with various types of pushback from educators who are not sure if this is the best course to be setting students on, especially those of high school age. As you might expect, I think it's a good thing. Exposure to distance and online learning early will help deal with whatever stigma is remaining about it as opposed to bricks and mortar education.

And while I don't discount some of the concerns Natalia notes, they are, at this point, merely concerns, not proven problems. Concerns are no reason not to proceed, they merely suggest things we need to watch for to see if they actually become problems. I also tend to think that some of what they list as concerns aren't taking into account that the world and society continues to change. Socialization for students no longer happens at the drive-in movies, or at the local drive-through while waitresses roller-skate up to car windows, for instance, but it still happens—these days, often while playing *League of Legends* or some such with their friends half a continent away. Life proceeds, and unless we're willing to prepare our young people for how life is instead of how life was, we're making things more difficult for them.

Plus, our feature article is an interview with a well travelled student coming to AU to get his professional accounting designations. And then on top of that we of course have various articles of advice, thoughtful considerations, a great mood piece from the Porkpie Hat, scholraships, events, and more! Enjoy the read!



MINDS WE MEET



Kieran Soora is currently in his last year of the Bachelor of Commerce program with a major in Accounting. His plans on obtaining his Certified Public Accountant (CPA) licence once he finishes his degree at AU and would love to eventually be a Chief Financial Officer (CFO) for a major company. This is Kieran's story.

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

My name is Kieran Soora and I am 26 years old. Where I come from is a bit of a complicated question to answer. I'm what they call a "Third Culture Kid" which basically means I spent the majority of my formative years living in countries whose culture differs from the culture in my home country. I was born in Windsor, Ontario after my parents immigrated to Canada from England. Ethnically I am Northern Indian, however, my family moved away from India about 100 years ago and are now spread across the UK and North America. When I was five, my dad got a job in Dubai which is in the United Arab Emirates. I lived there

for about seven years and then moved to London, England for two years and then back to the Middle East, but this time to Doha, Qatar. I completed my high school and college diploma there before returning to Canada. I feel extremely privileged to have been able to live in the places that I have as it's given me exposure to a whole host of people from different walks of life and different cultural backgrounds.

What was it like living in so many different places? As a kid, do you remember finding it difficult?

It was difficult in some respects, for example, having to readjust to new schools, teachers and making new friends. But overall, I enjoyed it. It's taught me how to be an adaptable person and I've made some great memories along the way.

Out of all the places you have lived, which do you remember being your favorite?

I would have to say Qatar, mainly because it's where I spent my high school years and I had a lot of firsts there but also, I got to see the country's growth firsthand.

So what program are you in at AU?

I am currently in the last year of the Bachelor of Commerce Program, majoring in Accounting.

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 Commerce program?

Before enrolling at AU, I had completed a two-year Business Administration Diploma in Accounting at the College of the North Atlantic - Qatar, which is an institution based on the east coast in Newfoundland with an overseas campus. Originally, I had planned on continuing my

education and completing a degree, but I ended up getting a job and put those plans on hold. Last year, however, I ended up leaving the job I was at due to issues within the business and the toxic environment arising as a result of those issues. It was while I was job hunting that I realized my options within accounting were limited without a degree or CPA designation. I thought hard about what the best option for me going forward was and decided that the older I got the harder it would be to return to school. It was then I decided to take the plunge and enrolled into the Bachelor of Commerce program post diploma route at AU.

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

My advice to people who are on the fence about going back to school would be: if not having the credential is holding you back or preventing you from achieving goals you are passionate about, take a chance on yourself and go for it. I found the idea of going back to school after 4 years to be daunting and even more so because of it all being online. After 11 months of working towards my degree, however, I am happy with my decision.

What do you do like to do when you're not studying? Do you have any hobbies?

There are a number of things I enjoy doing when I'm not studying. I enjoy riding motor bikes, playing sports (mainly ice-hockey and squash) and working on cars. I am also trying to get myself to read more books.

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

I would like to go on and obtain a CPA license once I graduate from AU. My dream job would be being a CFO for a major company.

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

My dad. He is the first person in his entire family to not only attend university but also obtain a master's degree. It gives me a huge sense of pride knowing what he has achieved and has inspired me to learn as much as I can. Through him I have seen what the power of knowledge enables you to do. He has been able to support his family, including extended family and has always been a huge advocate for education. When I was debating whether to look for another job or to go back to school, it was his support which helped me to take a chance on myself and pursue further education.

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

My experience so far has been pretty good. At first it was a huge adjustment for me but now that I have completed several courses, I have figured out a system that works for me. I love the flexibility of being able to work on my courses at any time.

Is there anything that you have found that you dislike about online learning?

One thing I dislike about online learning is the lack of contact time with professors and students. It can get very lonely.

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

It was my first semester. I found it quite hard to get into the rhythm of doing my courses online and felt I wasn't getting enough done in a day even when I'd spend an entire day in front of the laptop. As time went on, I learnt to not put so much pressure on myself and follow some techniques to navigate the course materials more efficiently.

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

My favourite course has been ACCT 356 (Strategic and Competitive Analysis). I enjoy analyzing businesses and looking for ways to improve them.

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

I feel like I've given up a lot of my free time since enrolling into the program. Although it can get tiring it'll be worth it in the long run.

How do you find communications with your course tutors?

It took me some time to get used to not communicating face to face with tutors, as I've done in the past, but I've not had any issues in doing so since I started at AU. They generally reply quickly and have been helpful.

What's your biggest pet peeve, if you have one?

People chewing with their mouth open

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

Jay Z. I think its fascinating that he came from such a rough background dealing drugs and managed to turn his life around and is now a successful businessman with a net worth of \$1 billion.

Could you describe the proudest moment in your life?

In high school I was involved in a program called The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award and the expedition portion of my Silver award consisted of climbing the Chandrashila summit in the Himalayan Mountains which is about 13,000 ft above sea level. A couple of weeks prior to leaving for the trip I tore my meniscus in my right knee. Regardless of the injury I was able to push myself and was among the first few to make it to the top.

What was it like climbing the Chandrashila Summit? What was the view like when you reached the top?

It was a surreal experience. You notice the air becoming thinner as you got higher and higher. Walking at a normal pace could make you feel breathless, which was weird. The view at the top was incredible. We were above the clouds, which was cool.

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

Given the fact that I moved around so much as a child I am very adaptable to change. Having different friend groups from year to year was normal for me growing up and as a result of that I feel I am able to connect with people easily.

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

Life is about taking risks. Once you are out of your comfort zone, that's where growth happens.

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

I have been extremely fortunate to have travelled to seventeen countries so far. Some of the places I have been include: South Africa, Kenya, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Bali, Australia, Holland and India.

Out of the places you have travelled to, which was your favorite?

It's hard to pick a favourite place. Every one of them has been great in their own way!

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



Distance Education the new Norm for High School Students?

Natalia Iwanek



Canadian On March 15, 2019, the Ontario Ministry of Education released “Education that Works for You — Modernizing Classrooms,” which states that starting in 2020-2021, “the government will centralize the delivery of all e-learning courses to allow students greater access to programming and educational opportunities, no matter where they live in Ontario.” Although few specific details are currently available, the report specifies that Ontario high school students will need to complete 4 out of 30 required credits online

to obtain their Ontario Secondary School Diploma. Exceptions will be made for students with individual needs on a case-by-case basis. In addition, the document states that “Ontario students and educators will have access to reliable, fast, secure and affordable internet services at school...” and will have access on any type of device. No information about how students will access online materials from their homes has been offered.

It is believed that up to 630,000 students will be enrolled in online courses each year, a dramatic increase from previous years. The Canadian eLearning Network reveals that, during 2017-18, only 65,000 Ontario elementary and high school students were enrolled in at least one online course. In 2018, 10.5% of Ontario high school students were enrolled in online high school courses.

Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education, announced on November 21 that, amidst controversy, students will now only be required to complete two courses online. Students graduating in 2023-2024 will be among those affected by these changes. Courses will include Grade 10 Career Studies, Grade 11 Biology, and Grade 12 Data Management.

In a response to the query about the benefits of online education, Sandra Zeni, Senior Media Relations Coordinator of the Communications Branch of the Ontario Ministry of Education states that “Online learning offers a number of significant benefits for students. It provides students with a wider variety of courses no matter where they live or go to school, allowing them to shape their education based on their individual needs and goals.”

Despite optimism from the Ministry, this move continues to create controversy and protest against Doug Ford’s Conservative government. Some educators have stated they feel unprepared for this sudden change and lack the skills and expertise to teach students online. They also fear job loss. In addition, there are fears that online education, especially for those with diverse needs, will only increase difficulties with these mandatory changes. Ontario educators wonder if, unlike university students, high school students have developed sufficient skills to succeed in self-directed learning. E. Ladna, an Ontario educator with over 30 year’s experience, states, “Online courses are a great addition to traditional classroom education. However, in my experience, some

students are not comfortable with online delivery of courses, do not have the required time-management or organizational skills.” He believes that courses should be offered on a voluntary, not mandated basis. “The focus should be on expansion of available eLearning courses and not on mandating them. Students will choose them if it fits their interests and they like this type of course delivery.”

Although he has avoided these changes by one year, Tegan Cutuli, a Grade 9 student from Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board, believes that, “It’s over complicating the way we are being educated and is going to be inefficient compared to being in a classroom with a teacher.” He does not see the benefit and offers a helpful analogy. “It’s like going on the internet and watching a video on how to bake a cake as opposed to learning from someone who knows how to make a good cake. Sure, you’d probably be able to kind of understand what to do, but not as well as if you had someone to help you with your difficulties and answer questions you have. When you don’t have someone to help you with certain questions or guide you through what to do, it makes the learning process much harder.”

Additionally, educators fear that high school students may miss out on the formative years of socialization that high school provides. Increased isolation may have detrimental effects on students. However, Zeni counters that online education “can also provide ...[students] with new and engaging ways to learn, such as through hands-on, interactive games and simulations and collaboration with their peers.”

Students at Athabasca University are well versed in the advantages of online education. Yet despite its many benefits, distance education requires strong study habits, time management skills, and the ability to teach oneself.

The outcome of Ontario’s program remains uncertain. If successful, perhaps it may impel students to consider online post-secondary options, such as Athabasca. In addition, students will enter the workforce with more marketable skills. Zeni remains optimistic. “By expanding and modernizing online learning, students will have greater flexibility, more choice, and will graduate with the skills needed to enter the workforce. Employers are looking for people who understand the importance of technology and can use it in ways that will help their businesses thrive in a competitive, globally connected economy. Online learning is one important way that students can develop these skills and become lifelong learners.”

However, educators, such as Ladna, worry about the negative impact on graduation rates. “I can easily predict that mandating online delivery of courses will result in lower number of high school graduating students.” If he is correct, this may affect the amount of students entering any type of post-secondary education.

Despite the controversy, statistics reveal that Canadians support online education, at least at a university level. Since 1995, Canadian online education has increased by 8.75%. In 2016, Canada’s first national survey regarding online learning in Canadian universities was carried out by EduConsillium, a Montreal-based consultant on behalf of Global Affairs Canada. Although it mainly focused on attracting international students, it “provides the most extensive data-based analysis to date of online and distance learning in Canadian universities.” The survey of 73 out of 93 responding Canadian universities revealed that 360,000 or 29% of all Canadian university students were taking online courses.

Natalia Iwanek is currently completing her Bachelor of Arts in English at Athabasca University and is also a freelance editor and writer. She can be contacted at <https://www.nataliaiwanekediting.com>



Alberta's Budget Cuts; Affecting So Many

Francesca Carone



In November, the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees said the government plans to cut up to 5,900 jobs as part of its elaborate plan of balancing the budget before the 2022-23 fiscal year. Most of these cuts will affect Alberta's Health Services and government employees. While their jobs will not be affected until March 30, 2020, that is not too far away ([National Post](#)). Meanwhile, the Alberta Union of Provincial Employee (AUPE)'s president, Guy Smith, has encouraged rallying and picketing to fight back and, during one rally attended by 75 people that took

place recently, a man dressed in a Santa costume collected lumps of coal to deliver to the government ([Kornik, online](#)). Many believe that these cuts are unfair and will hurt Alberta but not all see it that way.

In defence, Finance Minister, Travis Toews, said in November that, "Despite spending far more per capita on services than other larger provinces, our outcomes are no better and often worse" ([Kornik](#)). He feels we need to direct the spending towards front-line services that Albertans need the most.

What other changes to the budget were there? I am sure most students have already heard about the cuts to grants for students, "Operating expenses were reduced by 12 per cent to \$4.8 billion by 2022-23, largely by reducing provincial grants." ([CBC, online](#)). This is affecting Universities all over. For example, the University of Alberta will see a \$44.2-million cut. Tuition funding and education tax credits are being cut and these will affect students the most. Even public schools will see a cut through grant removal. The current Alberta government has abolished about 275 million in grants alone. As for public service, "The government will cut "2,100 public service positions — a 7.7 per cent reduction — by 2023" ([CBC](#)).

It seems ludicrous that the government, throughout these budget cuts that affect working people, has, at the same time, introduced a tax cut. Who, you may ask, will be getting a tax cut in these times of budgetary restraint? Businesses making more than \$500,000 per year in profit ([CBC](#)). Their tax rate will be slashed from twelve to eight percent by 2022-23. To be fair, small business rates also went down 1% under the previous government. Of course, it is justified to them because "It is part of a larger strategy to lure investment to the province"([CBC](#)). At the same time, they are increasing education property tax for non-residential properties and that will probably affect small businesses the most.

The opposition (NDP) claims that this is against what the Premier said he would do stating "Jason Kenney repeatedly claimed that he was going to protect front-line services," Notley said. "He does not have a mandate for this because this is the exact opposite of what he told Albertans he would do." ([Russell, online](#)).

No matter your feelings toward the Alberta budget cuts, the overall picture doesn't look so good. If there is a dire need to cut funding and jobs, why are corporate businesses gaining in all this?

Whether the government will succeed in the budget and plans for Alberta's future will eventually be seen, but many will not give up until something changes. I think people will continue to rally and picket, perhaps even strike in the near future, but many remain hopeful that they can save their jobs.

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Course Exam

POLI 307 (Political Ideologies) is a three-credit, upper-level political science course that surveys the origins and development of modern political ideologies in their historical, cultural, and socio-economic contexts, beginning with the origins of liberalism, followed by responses to it which include capitalism, conservatism, socialism, Marxism, and nationalism. This course has no prerequisites and offers a challenge for credit option if anyone is interested in taking that route.

Students should be aware that POLI 307 qualifies for a reduced learning resource fee of \$130 which covers the cost of mandatory, Athabasca University-produced learning resources, library services, learning management system support, and learning design and development. All materials for this course are available online. These materials include a student manual, course information, an electronic textbook, and any required readings.

Political Ideologies is made up of four parts: Ideas to Ideologies, Liberalism in the Long Nineteenth Century, The Age of Mass Ideologies, and Ideological Currents in Our Time. Within these four parts are thirteen chapters that cover a lot of material, such as liberalism, capitalism, democracy, fascism, nationalism, anti-liberal ideologies, anti-capitalist ideologies, and so much more. POLI 307 also has four assignments. The first assignment is based around participation posts and weighs ten percent, the second assignment is research preparation and is worth thirty percent, the third assignment is a research essay weighing thirty percent, and the fourth assignment is a final project that weighs thirty percent. There are no mid-term or final examinations for this course. To receive credit for POLI 307, students must obtain a composite course grade of at least a "D", or fifty percent.

Brittany Daigle

AU courses, up close

Kayla Konowal enrolled at Athabasca University in July of 2019 in the Bachelor of Arts program, majoring in political science and minoring in philosophy. She provides an introduction, stating “I am originally from just outside of Hamilton, Ontario. I am currently living in a city called Mérida which is located in the state of Yucatán in México. I am not currently working, and I chose Athabasca University because of the flexibility it provides me. I am able to enjoy living in México while learning the language, experiencing the culture and wonderful weather, and relaxing - all while still pursuing my educational goals. University is important to me because my ethnic background is Russian and Ukrainian, and many of my relatives and ancestors did not have the option to attend university largely because of the political and historical conflicts in the 20th century (communism, World War II, and other similar factors). I want to take advantage of my ability to attend higher education. In my spare time, I like to read ancient and foreign literature, learn languages (Polish and Spanish), visit historical Mexican buildings and villages, play piano and violin, and collect antiques and coins.”

When asked to explain the course to students, she states that “POLI 307 covers the rise of political ideologies, beginning with classical liberalism and ending with the current political trends in the world today. The textbook starts by detailing the nature of ideology and an ideology’s adherents, and goes on to cover the dominant political and socio-economic systems that preceded capitalism and classical liberalism. It then goes on to discuss liberalism, capitalism, and democracy, and this second section of the textbook also covers anti-liberal and anti-capitalist ideologies, as well as the nature of nationalism and its influence on various ideological positions. The third part of the textbook discusses contemporary liberalism and democracy, as well as socialism, Marxism and Leninism, Fascism and National Socialism, and ideologies that have been tested in other parts of the world, such as in Africa and the Middle East. The fourth and final section of the textbook elaborates upon the current ideologies at play in the world, such as environmentalism, feminism, indigenous movements, and postmodernism.”

As for the structure of the course, Kayla explains that the “The first assignment consists of two participation posts in which the student must write one paragraph of up to 200 words explaining what he or she found most surprising, puzzling, or problematic in the study of early liberalism. The paragraph is then posted in a discussion forum. In the second paragraph, the student must

AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Events

The Paradox of Disillusionment: a talk with Steven Heighton, AU's Writer-in-Residence

Fri, Jan 17, 3:00 to 4:00 pm MST
Athabasca University, Peace Hills Trust
Tower, Room 1112,
10011 - 109 Street NW, Edmonton AB
In-person and livestream
Hosted by AU and FHSS
news.athabascau.ca/events/the-paradox-of-disillusionment-a-talk-with-steven-heighton-aus-writer-in-residence
No pre-registration required; access
livestream through above link

Keeping Organized as You Search

Wed, Jan 22, 9:00 to 10:00 am MST
Online
Hosted by AU Library
library.athabascau.ca/orientations.html
No pre-registration necessary; access
through above link

Sense of irony or perfect timing: Examining the research supporting proposed e-learning changes in Ontario

Wed, Jan 22, 11:00 am to 12:00 pm MST
Online
Hosted by AU's International Review of
Research in Open and Distributed
Learning (IRRODL)
athabascau.adobeconnect.com/cider
No pre-registration required; for more
info visit cider.athabascau.ca/

elaborate upon, question, or challenge the post that another student has made. Each of the posts is worth 5%, meaning that the whole assignment is worth 10% of the student's grade."

She continues, "The second assignment consists of a 1250-1500-word essay worth 30% of the student's final grade. The student must select an ideologist from the list provided in the course, and then research and write an essay that outlines and analyzes what brought the ideologist to form his or her ideological beliefs. For instance, one might touch on the relevance of an event in the ideologist's life that influenced the ideologist to adopt nationalist tendencies. The assignment must also touch on the relevance of liberalism, capitalism, socialism, and nationalism, if possible. My tutor was more lenient about this, and advised me to focus the essay on what influenced the ideologist to adopt his or her ideological position."

"The third assignment was similar to the previous and consisted of a 2000-2500-word essay worth 30% of the final grade. Using the same ideologist as the previous assignment, the student must avoid being descriptive and aim for an analytical approach while explaining what the ideologist contributed to the development of his or her ideological stream. For instance, perhaps the ideologist implemented a specific idea that had never been thought of or implemented before."

Kayla explains the fourth assignment, stating "Assignment four consists of 3 choices and the student must select one of the choices. Each is worth the final 30% of the student's final grade:

The first involves identifying 4 important concepts that were studied in the course, 4 ideologists and 4 ideological publications relevant to those concepts, and an explanation regarding how those concepts are relevant to the ideologists. Then, the student must have a telephone call with his or her tutor to discuss what was written and elaborate upon it. The telephone conversation is not a presentation of what was written; it must elaborate upon it. All marks are awarded based solely on the telephone presentation.

The second choice involves a 2000-2500-word essay and involves analyzing four ideologies using four criteria. The essay must cover the course and use 5-10 primary sources.

The third choice consists of an essay of 2000-2500 words that allows the student to elaborate upon why he or she feels that the textbook has not remained objective throughout the course (and has therefore been ideologically biased). There must be at least 5 scholarly articles that support the claims the student makes."

AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Events

Live chat—Doctorate in Business Administration

Wed, Jan 22, 2:00 to 3:00 pm MST
Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business
news.athabasca.ca/events/live-chat-doctorate-in-business-administration-20200122

Access through above link

Faculty of Business Undergrad Program Orientation for New Students

Thurs, Jan 23, 5:00 to 6:00 pm MST
Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business
news.athabasca.ca/events/faculty-of-business-undergraduate-program-orientation-for-new-students-20200123

Register through above link

Bannock and a Movie "The Long Ride Home"

Fri, Jan 24, 11:50 am to 1:00 pm MST
Athabasca University, Peace Hills Trust Tower, 12th floor, Room 1222,
10011 - 109 Street NW, Edmonton AB

In-person; limited seating

Hosted by Nukskahtowin (Meeting Place)
news.athabasca.ca/events/bannock-and-a-movie-the-long-ride-home

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

All events are free unless otherwise noted

Kayla would recommend this course to other students, however, she says to “keep in mind that the textbook does not always elaborate in great detail about certain ideological positions and you may need to do some of your own research to feel truly fulfilled with your learning. For example, I did not feel that the chapter on Fascism and National Socialism (Nazism) gave me a good understanding of what the actual ideological beliefs of people who hold/held these views are.”

As for tips and tricks to completing the course, she states “I would recommend trying to avoid being descriptive because the tutors and the course assignments stress the need to be “analytical”. I found it difficult to understand what was meant by analytical, so make sure to contact your tutor and the course coordinator for further clarification.”

When asked how communication with her tutor was, she explains that “The tutor provided some feedback and marked relatively quickly, within 5-7 days. My tutor responded quickly to my emails, but I did not always feel that the comments were helpful. Sometimes the feedback was unclear, or I felt that more was needed. At times, I was disappointed with the level of support I received and I would recommend contacting the course coordinator for further clarification or to switch tutors if you run into similar problems as I did.”

Whether POLI 307 is a degree or program requirement of yours, or if the topics mentioned above are of interest to you, this course will have you learning a lot of interesting material surrounding the topic of political ideologies.

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

Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

AthabascaU Facebook Group

Eve wonders what happens if a student flunks an exam near the end of the contract date; most responses mention the 90-day window for exam re-takes. Sandy asks if a dictionary and thesaurus are permitted in the ENGL 255 exam; replies are mixed, but Sandy finds the answer (dictionary permitted) in the exam info.

Other posts include withdrawing from a course, Ebscohost, and courses INFS 200, PSYC 406, and WGST 305.

reddit

The most-asked question about easy courses returns; always fun to see what other students think of as “easy”.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: “How has #AthabascaU transformed your life and the way you envision your future? We’re celebrating a milestone and want to celebrate yours! <https://bit.ly/2FPOgeE> #AthabascaU50 #MovingBeyond.”

@austudentsunion tweets: “Check out our latest AUSU Open Mic podcast with #AthabascaU students discussing breaking down barriers that face indigenous students. Listen in at <https://bit.ly/2NdwWog> or visit our website for all episodes. <http://ausu.org/services/ausu-podcast/> #igo2AU #cndpse #abpse #indigenous.”



Fly on the Wall

Don't Be an Ignoramus! Is that Even Possible?

Jason Sullivan



The ignoramus may be the only dinosaur that never went extinct. Its DNA is in us all whenever we feel superior and better-informed than others. Ironically, education itself can exacerbate this chronic condition where we become dinosaurs by resting on our intellectual laurels. Many classes teach their disciplinary bias as though it were universally applicable and one, psychology, may even do so to the detriment of its status as a prized member of the social sciences. Crucial to our ability to put our learning to practice use, we must beware of becoming one of “those who boast professional knowledge yet who do not know what they

do not know” ([McGavin., 2019](#))

At the broader societal level there are some things many people agree on: that science is a great way to discover facts is one such example. Yet Stephen Hawking himself left not only a treasure trove of scientific learning but also a classic quote about the dangers of over-stretching the bounds of our learning. “The greatest enemy of knowledge is not ignorance, it is the illusion of knowledge”, he said ([Hawking, 2018](#)) With this in mind let us consider the consequences of allowing our thinking to become ignorant of what it does not know or understand.

It's Not Always About Thy Neighbour's Wrong Ass

Few assumptions make a greater ass out of you and me than assuming that our education automatically moves us away from ignorance and toward enlightenment. Particularly in social sciences like psychology and sociology, 'ologies where human delight and disdain encounter the manic and sometimes bewildering flux and flow of cultural tides, the belief that learning leads to superior knowledge often swamps the fact that society itself is as changeable and ineffable as human nature itself. No matter how much we learn we are still human; disciplines evolve over time and sometimes they abruptly alter their essential epistemological grounding. In psychology, for instance, neuroscience has removed mystery from once-common dream analysis even as the murkiness of our unconscious has sunk into the psychiatric backdrop. Our brains are more than mere machines, or they are in terms of how we understand ourselves and others, but from a neuroscience perspective this is too tenuous of a reality to base 'good science' upon. In terms of questioning neuroscience in psychology, a course I highly recommend for fellow MAIS students is therefore [PSYCH630](#) This class provides an antidote to the belief that psychology need not revisit its past; such assumptions are called 'presentism' and belay the all-too human reality that minds require more, not fewer, approaches if they are to be understood.

To avoid being an unknowing ignoramus we must beware of believing our studies accumulate cultural capital we can then dispense to others from on high. Contested terrain isn't just the way of discourse, it can limit even our discussions with others of a similar educational background if we assume “we know” simply because we have studied a given topic. The knowledge/ignorance binary isn't only woefully simplistic, it's ironically wrong because while our learning specifies details we learn, it also tightens the screw of truth by limiting the scope of how we know what we know. As we narrow our academic focus we may exclude other ways of looking at a given topic.

The idea that knowledge is something you either possess or lack is overly simplistic; social sciences do not bequest their truths in the form of Jeopardy answers. P.A. McGavin, in a book review of *Understanding Ignorance: The Surprising Impact of What We Don't Know* by Daniel R. DeNicola quotes the latter: "Only recognition of the possibility of our own ignorance opens a cognitive space for unlearning false knowledge or for genuine learning (or an improved ignorance)" (McGavin, 2019) Humility in life depends upon our willingness to learn and acquire new knowledge; but are any of these truths we learn universal or does each reality morph its spectrum depending upon the perspective of our mind's eye? We can't just expect the world to match our textbooks, no matter how current be their publication date.

McGavin's book review illustrates the great dichotomous chasm between lived experience as it subjectively appears and cultural reality as social science sometimes teaches it. DeNicola writes: "wherever mastery of knowledge and skills creates professional status, especially in practices that give professional power over clients, there arises a natural pride that rests on what one knows, and a regrettable tendency for authority to develop arrogance. We know the effects: failure to listen, premature dismissal of relevant information" (ibid). My best brick and mortar psychology professor, in a course aptly titled "Interpersonal Communication" was at pains to remind us that, too often, psychology's ideology focuses on individuation (the mapping of a given discontent onto a framework of individual core beliefs, neurological chemistry, and temperamental moods) to the poverty of a client's social circumstances. She reminded us that many well-meaning psychiatrists and psychologists go through entire careers without seriously considering individuals as being more than minds vacuum-locked in their solitary shells. An ironic fact indeed, given that counselling itself is an eminently social act!

Believing oneself to have learned truths about social life that need only be dished out as from a Pez dispenser is problematic enough. Yet, even more damningly when we consider the groupthink endemic in many education settings, DeNicola also states that "the restriction of experience, the prohibitions and censorship of knowledge that such sustained naiveté would likely require, become a kind of imposed ignorance... [such innocence does] not cross the threshold of moral maturity" (ibid). To downplay experience isn't just something cults do to have members drink the proverbial Kool-Aid. It's also a classic social science trick aimed theoretically at getting students to challenge their ideological predilections. If you've ever been lectured in a brick and mortar classroom and then realized that the conclusions the professor were drawing did not match your own experience, or even possibly the experience of you along with everyone you knew, then you get what I'm saying. The struggle is real!

Happily, at AU we can learn material and better our brains without having to be marinated in a social environment that doesn't match our lives. We want to question our beliefs if they don't match the data. Yet education isn't about producing yes-people to whatever authority figure is present. Learning is about teaching us to use our critical faculties especially where unassailable dogmas are concerned. And sometimes those dogmas are embedded deep within our chosen discipline.

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- Hawking, S. (2018). QuotationsPage. Retrieved from <http://www.quotationspage.com/quote/33235.html>.
 McGavin, O. (2019). "Understanding Ignorance by Daniel R. DeNicola" *Philosophy Now*. Retrieved from https://philosophynow.org/issues/133/Understanding_Ignorance_by_Daniel_R_DeNicola

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



Porkpie Hat Into the Woods

Darjeeling Jones



This world is a forest from a dark fairy tale, dreamed up by the fevered imagination of the Brothers Grimm. At the moment, it seems to be locked in eternal winter, but, far away, the sky is burning red, and I fear it's not from the approaching dawn. The trees here are black and gnarled; the petrified spirits of unfortunate travelers who came before us and had lost their way. They whisper in language of the wind, and clutch at our arms and legs as we follow the meandering trail. We carry only dim flashlights, navigating by means of the few pale lights in the sky we glimpse through the thick and twisted branches. I wonder, are they stars? Satellites? The searchlights of helicopters? We leave crumbs of Wonder bread to mark our passage, but I suspect the crows eat them as soon as we're gone.

To the east, a witch has built a house made of hard candy and glittery distractions. We enter it, meaning to stay for only a little while, but a spell falls upon us, and years go by. If you hadn't managed to rouse yourself and drag me outside, would they have found our bones lying in that bed made of sugar?

Older and wiser, our feet sore and swollen, our faces and hands cracked and raw from the northern winds, we wander on. We walk through knee-deep fog, which smells like the breath of wolves. Our flashlights have died, and it's never been so dark. Still, you somehow seem to know the way. The night is a melancholy candelabra, but it spills the light of an overripe moon onto your head and shoulders as you take my hand and lead me on. When I am too tired and cold to carry on, you give me your coat and carry me. In time, when my strength returns, I do the same for you.

Eventually, we come to a clearing in the woods. Miraculously, we find a box of wooden matches. We build a small fire there from frozen pinecones and the branches of trees that have been struck by lightning. To pass the remaining hours before dawn, we huddle together for warmth. (It is always darkest, it bears repeating, right before the dawn.) We exchange stories from our lives. All the people we have ever been, or ever hope to be, all the ages we have ever known, or might yet know, slowly come to greet us like magnificent beasts on the edge of our perimeter of light. I can see you in my mind's eye, a fairy-tale creature, but also flesh and blood. You are seven years-old, hanging upside down from the monkey bars. You are twenty-one, running through Orly airport at breakneck speed, carrying your high heels in your hand. You are an old woman, sitting in front of a light box, looking at an x-ray that might mean trouble, but still you smile at the dark beauty of the fairy-tale we have both lived through. Then, we just sit in silence, looking up at the majesty of the deep blue sky, waiting for the golden fingers of the dawn.



The Study Dude

Cure Yourself of Exam Anxiety

Marie Well



Perfectionism often leads to anxiety. And you don't want anxiety during exams.

"I'm going to fail!" I'd burst into tears, wailing those words before every math exam. I discounted the twenty-four hours each week I studied for that one course. I discounted my 4.0 in prior math classes, too. Luckily, my stress morphed into confidence once I scanned the test questions.

Those days disappeared. I've since become struck with workplace anxiety. The anxiety felt more horrific than burning your hand on a stove once every minute for eight hours straight. Almost every workday, I'd start the mid-afternoon with an eight-hour anxiety attack.

When my work term ended, I enrolled at AU. I hunted for AU courses that had no exams—

courses such as Web programming and robotics. Exams terrified me.

In between study sessions, I scoured books for an anxiety cure. I tried cures such as journaling, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, meditation, muscle relaxation, raw fruits and veggies diets, heavy exercise, forgiveness, letting go of grudges, positive affirmations, prayer, yoga, no more caffeinated and decaffeinated drinks, and so much more. I tried every strategy I came across. To my shock, the anxiety stopped. I've been free of anxiety for nearly five years now.

But I'm still terrified of exam-related anxiety. You might be, too.

So, here are Dr. George Kyei's strategies on how to bypass exam stress:

First, "understand that anxiety is normal. A level of anxiety for an impending test is normal for everyone. The important thing is to make sure it is manageable and does not overwhelm you" (93%). I read somewhere that journaling about your exam fears can improve your grade and lower stress. But I believe journaling about your exam goals is a better strategy. Even journaling about what you had for lunch can calm the nerves.

Second, "prepare well in advance of the exam" (93%). If you are prone to anxiety, it is vital that you don't cram. Instead, study daily, weekends included, for as much of the day as possible. Also, do extra preparation for exams two to three weeks in advance of the exams. The more time you prep, the more relaxed you'll feel.

Third, "get a good rest the day before the exam" (94%). If you suffer anxiety attacks, the last thing you want is an all-nighter. Get eight or nine hours sleep before exams. Once I did an all-nighter. The next day, I almost fell asleep on a sidewalk. An exam chair is much more comfortable. Zzzzz. Add an anxiety attack and you've got zzzzz's between each "Ugh!"

Fourth, "eat some food before the exam" (95%). Sugar and fats give you quick energy; protein prevents your stomach from grumbling. Prior to an exam, for an energy burst, I'd recommend eating blueberries for brain healthy sugars and unsalted mixed nuts for fat. If you're allergic to nuts, substitute an avocado. As for brain healthy protein, a can of sockeye salmon stops hunger

pangs. Whatever you do, don't have coffee and sweets prior to an exam. You'll crash from the highs. From my view, nothing triggers anxiety like a cup of joe prior to an exam.

Fifth, "don't rush to finish. Don't try to be a hero, to be the first person to leave the exam room" (95%). If you take the entire exam time (and you're well-prepared), then the longer you spend in the exam room, the calmer you'll feel. Plus, if you rush to finish, you'll make more mistakes. When I received a perfect final grade in multivariate calculus, I stayed in the exam rooms until the very last minute. I triple checked each answer, redoing each question from scratch three times without looking at my prior answers. If the answers were the same all three times, I felt confident. And you want to feel as confident as you can when battling anxiety.

Sixth, "manage your time effectively. Don't spend too much time on one question and neglect the others. Distribute your time according to how the marks/points are assigned to the questions" (95%). To calm down before an exam, carefully read all the instructions for each section. Read the first few questions in each section. Scan the remaining questions. Then see how many marks each section is worth and divide your time to spend on each section accordingly. Watch the clock. If you notice an essay question, then take scrap paper and quickly write down every point you can recall about the essay topic. You can then write three or more overarching themes. Put a roman numeral beside each theme. Then put the appropriate roman numeral beside each point you made. Then order each point within each theme with lower case roman numerals. Your essay will write itself.

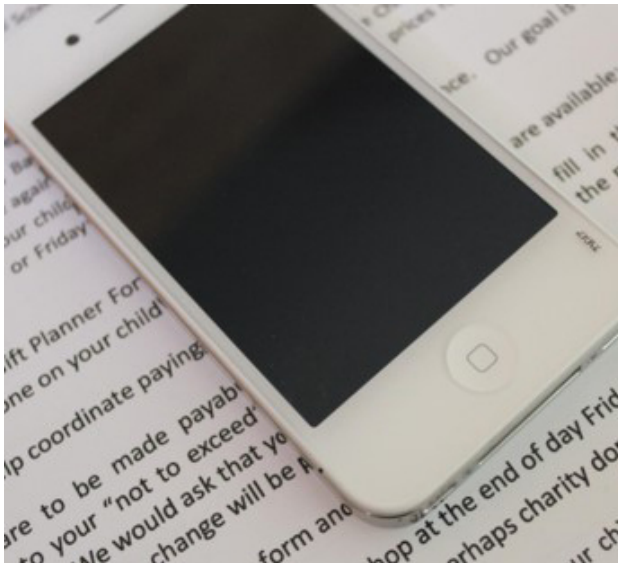
No matter how severe your anxiety feels, you can find a cure. Before exams, push aside the cups of Joe, sleep soundly, eat healthy, study smart, and use test-taking strategies. And long before your exams, do journaling, use Cognitive Behavioral Therapy—and try every healthy strategy to calm your mind. After all, you deserve straight A's.

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Kyei, Dr. George B. (2017). *How to Get an A in Every Examination: Get the grades you need, for the future you deserve*. E-Book.

Top Eight Productivity Tips for AU Students in the New Year

Xin Xu



1. Turn off distractions

We all know those times when it takes us hours to write one sentence of an essay or when we sit down to study but can barely read past the first page. Turning off distractions is a key to working effectively. This includes cell phones, social media, and loud music. Sometimes when it's not possible to control these distractions such as in a loud hallway or a busy cafeteria, opt for locations where these distractions can be kept at bay.

2. Write tasks down:

For myself, writing down tasks functions in two important ways. First, writing them down helps create a list of actionable things to be completed before the end of the day. Second, the simple

act of writing them down helps you stick with those tasks and commit to them.

3. Are you HALTy? Halty stands for: Hungry Angry Lonely Tired

At my most stressed times in my life, focusing on a task becomes infinitely harder which is why self-care comes first. If you feel that any of these four needs are unmet, then aim to resolve these needs or at least reduce their impact before getting started on a task.

4. Take 10 minutes to plan your next day

One habit I've perfected in the last year is to plan out the highest priority tasks the night before. Each night I spend 10 minutes to reflect on tasks to complete in the next day and it has helped me tremendously in staying organized and not missing important deadlines.



When I'm studying, I ensure I have all the necessary snacks to keep my mental fuel going



5. When you're not productive, go for a walk

For myself when I feel unmotivated, taking a walk (yes, even in the winter) helps me clear my head and reorient my mind. Going for a walk has a number of health benefits in addition to productivity. Sometimes, my best ideas have their roots in these reflective walks.

6. Ask for help or delegate

At times when stress is overbearing, asking for help not only improves your stress level but also helps you connect with others by being open and honest about your vulnerabilities. Another way to involve others

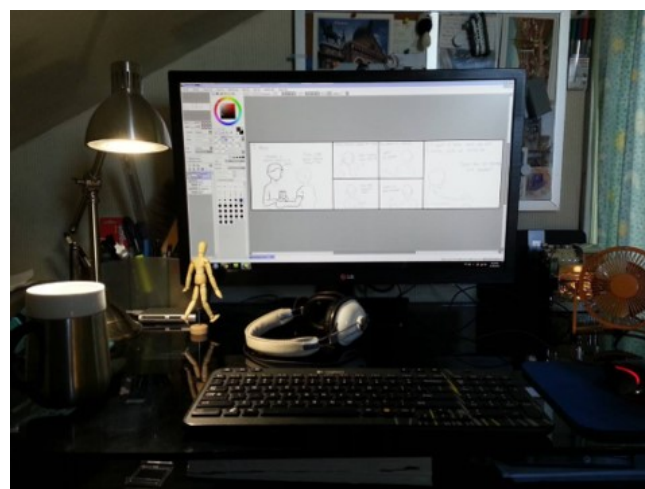
include delegating tasks that can be accomplished by a significant other or a friend or colleague.

7. Know when to say no

One of the hardest life lessons for me is to say "no". Being an inherent people-pleaser, I would often burn-out from taking on more tasks than I can handle. Knowing when to say "no" is a life-long skill that will help in both the workplace and in personal life.

8. Declutter your workspace

Having a large pile of clutter on my desk almost always signals chaos and physically impedes me from focusing on a task. While studying for example, I might find a shiny lipstick I haven't seen in years and then fiddle around with the item until I've realized that an hour has passed. Thus, create the right environment that helps you think and work effectively will boost your productivity significantly.



Having a cleaner workspace helps me think clearly and focus for longer periods of time

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



The Fit Student

The Tipping Point for Joy, Love, and Less Stress

Marie Well



(64%).

Imagine student life filled with joy, filled with love, and void of stress. Impossible?

We all feel bad at times. We might worry, feel irked, or blame ourselves or others. Whenever a bad thought arises, we can squelch it. More accurately, we can crowd it out with positivity. According to author and self-professed life coach, Beau Norton, “The key to your success is to increase the percentage of positivity in your mind The negative will still be there, but as soon as you hit the tipping point of 51% positivity and 49% negativity, it only gets easier from there” (34%).

If happiness is that simple, why aren't we all dancing and singing, holding hands while studying? Beau believes that “the mind actually gets pleasure from suffering. It loves to feel like a victim in life. It loves to judge and blame others. It loves to make you feel worthless. It just goes on and on and on with the unhappiness. If it did not love it, why would it keep on doing so”

There is a war bursting in our minds: bad thoughts versus good ones. The bad thoughts seem to attack us effortlessly. The good thoughts we are forced to shape and groom with sweat and toil. “One common error is to blame the past for our negative feelings in the present. You might think you are the way you are because of how you were raised, or because of some traumatic event that happened to you in the distant past. You must recognize that these explanations only serve to keep you in victim mode” (49%).

Avoid blaming others or holding grudges. “When you blame your past for your current problems, you make yourself powerless to solve those problems, because you can't change the past! The past is a learning tool only” (52%). And as students, we are masters of learning. Let us look to past issues as learning grounds only—ones void of grudges.

Send out love and forgiveness, not blame and grudges. Own and learn from hardships. Drop all ego. Once we do all these things, positives snowball. Positivity can lead to migraines healed, anxiety cured, diseases reversed, and relationships lasting. But purely positive thinking takes discipline. “Well, then, you must dedicate yourself to feeding your mind only the highest quality thoughts” (66%).

So, how do we fill our minds with positivity? Here are baby steps to help you gear your mind for pure positivity:

First, “Read at least 15 minutes of inspirational material every day” (34%). The more uplifting materials you read, the more positivity that appears. Machine learning on the Web is partly responsible. For example, the more books you seek on the keyword “enlightenment,” the more Google ads target you on the keyword. Soon you'll be seeing ads for meditation retreats, essential

oils, yoga classes, Jewish ministry courses, and Amazon spiritual books. But the same is true for the reverse. The moment you step into the dark side, the more Google ads lure you down the path of suffering.

Second, “listen to inspirational or educational audiobooks instead of the radio whenever you are in the car” (37%). I used to play Buddhist CD's on loop while I slept. I wound up memorizing many passages while snoozing. Imagine playing audio recordings of your textbook while you sleep? You could record textbook sections and link them together in the free Audacity software. Instead of lunch and learn, you can sleep and learn.

Third, “Set aside times throughout the day to daydream and imagine the life you want to live” (39%). Spend just 60 seconds imagining framing your degree, getting accepted into grad school, or winning scholarships.

Fourth, “plan your perfect life and write it down on paper” (39%). Don't hold back. Change yourself completely. Your current self is based on habits, many good, but some bad. Imagine that you've changed every bad habit into its opposite positive. Who would you be like then? Write down who the perfect you might be.

Fifth, “record positive affirmations onto an audio track with relaxing music and listen to them on repeat whenever possible” (39%). Record affirmations such as, “I am perfect, whole, and complete just as I am. I am an expression of Divine perfection. I am a bundle of positive energy, expressing only joy, love, and peace. I am unlimited, infinite, and not subject to labels or judgements placed upon me. I am the witness of my life, aware of thoughts and feelings but unaffected by them. I am loved, for I am Love” (68%). Turn these affirmations around so they apply to people in your life: they are perfect, whole, and complete just as they are; they are not subject to labels or judgements placed upon them. I like to see others as blameless and perfect; I believe people only stumble when they need to learn a life lesson. Affirmations such as these keep me happy and anxiety-free.

Sixth, “view personal development as fulfilling in and of itself, or else you will never stick with it. You have to love it and enjoy the process. It's not all about achieving goals” (42%). For personal development, I meditate to a near death experience clip while sending love to people in my life. I also like to pray for loved ones between breaths. But you may not be religious. If not, simply think love-filled thoughts about people in your life. It's free therapy.

Lastly, if bad thoughts arise, know that they are not you. Turn them around before they multiply. Block them with positives. Never feel guilty for a bad thought that enters your mind, but swiftly turn it to an uplifting thought. Forgiveness offers a wonderful means of freeing the mind. So do selflessness, gratitude, service, and accountability.

Then you'll reach the tipping point where the positive fills your headspace.

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Norton, Beau. (2016). *Prosperity Consciousness: How to Stop Negative Thinking Forever and Start Manifesting Abundance Today*. PerfectlyatPeace.com. E-book.

[This column is for interest and entertainment purposes only. The author is not medically trained or certified and you should always seek professional advice from a qualified practitioner before embarking on significant lifestyle changes for your well-being]



Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: Kin Canada Bursaries

Sponsored by: Kin Canada

Deadline: February 1, 2020

Potential payout: \$1000

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be Canadian citizens or permanent residents, and be full-time students in the process of graduating from high school or currently studying at a post-secondary institution. See full [eligibility criteria](#).

What's required: A completed application form, including financial information, information about community, volunteer, and school activities, and knowledge about Kin Canada; the application must be mailed to the closest Kin, Kinsmen, Kinette, or Kin Campus club.

Tips: Read the Application Tips section on the [Apply](#) page for helpful tips.

Where to get info: www.kincanada.ca/bursaries



Unearthing classic articles from previous issues of The Voice Magazine.

January 18 is [Thesaurus Day](#). In other words, a reason to dig, burrow, or mine The Voice's vault!

Another thing to resolve to do...sometime. Writer Maxie van Roye takes an inventory of things on her desk (mostly, one suspects, to avoid actually cleaning said desk.) "...that big red drip over there is not from popsicles at all. It's nail polish. Let me explain." [On My Desk](#), March 6, 2015.

Words to lose. Former Voice editor and wordsmith S.D. Livingston mulls over the words people take strong dislikes to. "Words...surround us all day, every day, both spoken and written. And we have absolutely no way to stop the constant flow of terms like orifice and irregardless that streams from other people's mouths." [Write Stuff - Word Fury](#), May 18, 2012.





Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

Faced with the Unthinkable

Dear Barb:

I hate to bring up such a sombre subject, but, in December, my husband was diagnosed with stage four cancer of unknown origin. We were both devastated, but with the Christmas celebrations we managed to put the cancer out of our minds. Now that the holidays are over, we are faced with the unthinkable. My husband was given months to live, with treatment he may have a year. We haven't told our family and friends yet. I just don't know how I can live with this. I have had a couple of friends who lost their parents to cancer, but never a spouse. I don't know how I can offer support to my husband when I can't manage myself. What is going to become of our relationship, how will it change? I'm just wondering how people do this, maybe you or some of your readers have some suggestions to help cope with this horrible situation. Thanks for any help you can offer, Brenda.

Hi Brenda:

I am so sorry for this diagnosis. Cancer is a terrible disease, but so many of us have to face this as we go through life, but there is always hope. A lot of progress has been made with cancer treatments and even living a few months longer than diagnosed can bring happiness to the patient and their loved ones. So, I would like to start out by saying never give up, but also be realistic. If treatment is not helping and you are

running out of options, you have to accept the inevitable. However, there are things you can do to make the time your husband has left as comfortable and fulfilling as possible. Try to focus on the present, not what may be in the future; the present is really all you have, and, at this point, you need to cherish it.

Enjoy the little things in life, like spending time watching a movie, or going for a walk. These things will become more important as your husband's health declines. You have to accept the situation as it is, you can't control the outcome, and acceptance will make this journey easier for both of you. As the disease progresses don't be afraid to ask for help. There are resources your oncologist can recommend that will assist with the care you both require if your husband declines. Most likely you will begin the grieving process before your husband passes, and that's ok. Your emotions will flip flop. One day you will be filled with hope and the next you will only see doom and gloom. Through it all hang on to hope, nothing is set in stone. Many people who are diagnosed with a terminal illness live for many years, but you have to maintain a balance between hope and reality. This is your new normal, do your best to create memories. I hope this information is helpful. Maybe some readers will send in their thoughts and experiences.

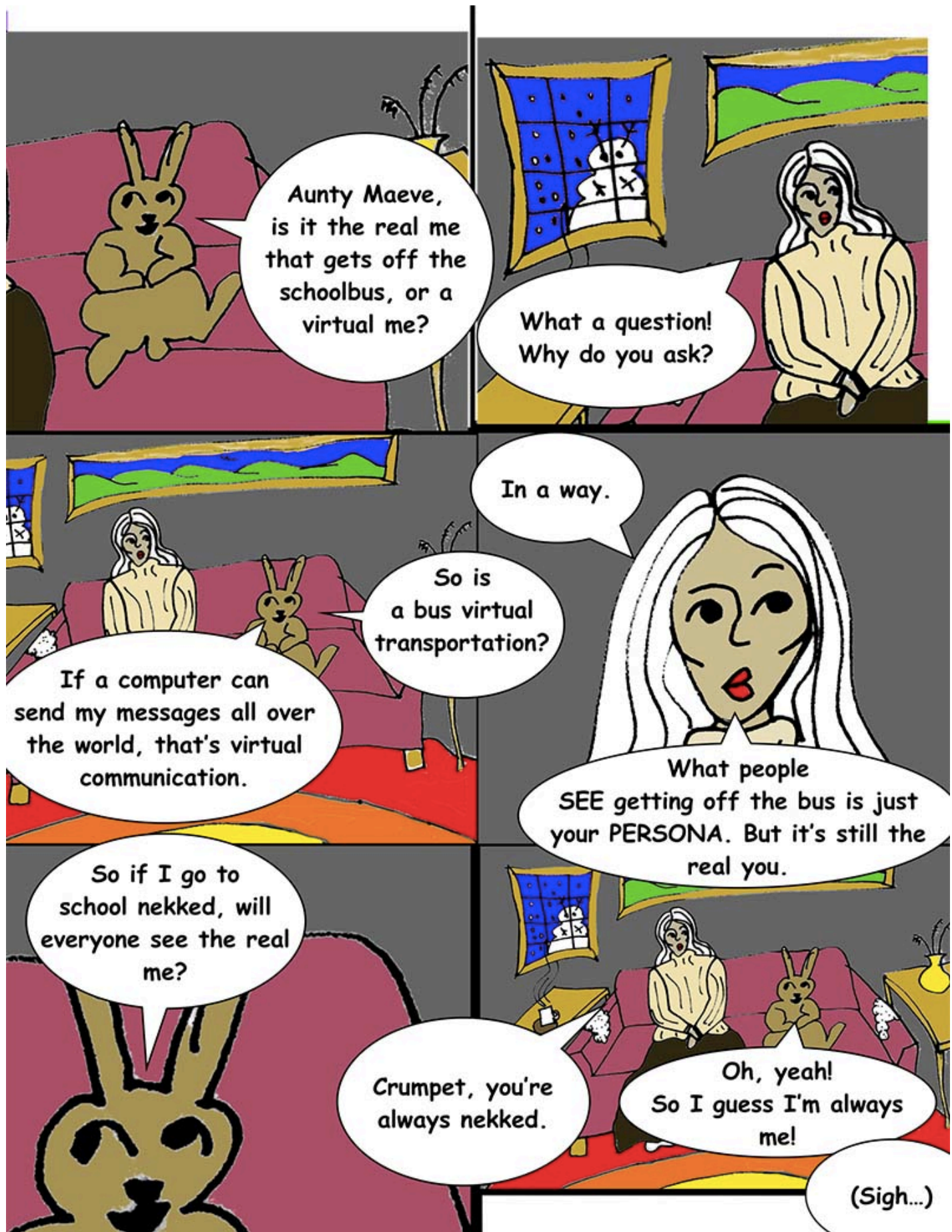
All the best Brenda to you and your husband.

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
My Persona

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

- Jan 24: [AUSU Election – Nominations Open](#)
- Jan 30: [Deadline to apply for course extension for Mar](#)
- Feb 7: [AUSU Election – Nominations Close](#)
- Feb 10: [Deadline to register in a course starting Mar 1](#)
- Feb 12: [AUSU Election – Candidates Announced](#)
- Feb 15: [Mar degree requirements deadline](#)

AUSU Response Regarding the AU Tuition Increase

Athabasca University students were disappointed to learn that a proposal to increase tuition by 7% was approved by the Board of Governors of Athabasca University, despite strong opposition to the increase being voiced by both undergraduate and graduate students. The proposal was in response to the cut of \$1.6 million to Athabasca University's operating grant and \$1.7 million in infrastructure funding in the 2019 Government of Alberta budget in October.

The increase was set at the largest possible increase allowable by the provincial government, at 7%. This increase was also applied to tuition fees paid by international and out-of-province students. Including the increase to the mandatory Learning Resources Fee, a single undergraduate course for Alberta students has increased by \$43. However, depending on a student's program, location of their residence, and the number of courses taken in a year, the increase can be substantially more – a degree program for out-of-province students, for example, will see tuition and fees rise from \$34,570 for the program to \$36,840, with the possibility of more increases in the next two years.

AUSU issued a media release on December 17 about the impact of the tuition increase for AU students, including statements from the AUSU President and VP External & Student Affairs.

Read the full AUSU media release about this on our website [here](#).



AUSU Open Mic Podcast

[Breaking Down Barriers for Indigenous Students](#)

In our latest AUSU Open Mic Episode, AUSU chats with two Athabasca University students to discuss the barriers that face indigenous students when going to university - and some of the ways distance education can help make post-secondary education more accessible for our indigenous communities.



Starring: AU student Alisha Gordon, VP EX Natasha Donahue, and Governance and Advocacy Coordinator Duncan Wojtaszek

Check out AUSU Open Mic Podcast [here](#).



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Check out AUSU Student App online [here](#).



CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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Publisher	Athabasca University Students' Union
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Jason Sullivan, Wanda Waterman, Xin Xu and others!

www.voicemagazine.org

The Voice is published almost every Friday in HTML and PDF format.

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ISSN 2561-3634