



THE VOICE

Vol 28 Issue 04 2020-01-24

Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You!

AU's Writer in Residence Speaks

Where Obsession Meets Disillusion

Basic Rules for Post-MidWinter

Surviving the Longest Month

Plus:

Red Tape Extravaganza

Psych! A Confidence Trick

and much more!



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



We love to hear from you!
Send your questions and comments to voicemagazine.org,
and please indicate if we may publish your letter!

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

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

Editorial

Red Tape Extravaganza

Karl Low



Welcome to Red Tape Awareness Week. This week, the Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses hosted a week where it likes to put a spotlight on government regulations that hamper businesses. You know, things like regulations that ensure that businesses that want to put out hot meals have the proper equipment to safely cook and process the food and be inspected to be sure of that.

On Tuesday, January 21, the CFIB awarded Alberta the highest grade of reducing red tape across the country, a grade of B-. Presumably, to get an A, we would need to remove all safety or consumer protection legislation entirely. However, this grade was given before the government's latest announcement, of requiring post-secondary institutions to move to performance-based funding.

What this means is that, in future, universities will have a portion of their funding (15% this year, 40% by the next election) determined based on whether they meet 20 different performance measures, 19 of which are to be determined in negotiation between the institutions and the

government and one metric will be allowed to be set by the students and stakeholders of the institution.

[Measures being considered include](#) enrolment, completion rates, graduate employment rates and salaries, sponsored research revenue, and others. This means, for instance, that if you're looking to a faculty that doesn't get a lot of business research revenue, there is a lot less incentive for the university to put any money into developing (or even maintaining) the quality of instruction there. For AU, completion rates are particularly problematic because many people find that the self-directed nature of AU studies are simply too hard for them to manage.

However, what this has to do with red tape is that now, to ensure funding, post-secondary institutions will be required to do all kinds of activities related to measuring their own effects, as opposed to, you know, teaching. They also will no longer be able to rely on any sort of stable, predictable funding, as a downturn in the economy might mean they miss various targets, and then get less funding for the next year. (And as a side note, does it make any sense to tie next year's funding to this year's employment performance? If people are out of work, that's when education needs more funding, not less, so that people can re-train and get back to work).

This means that prudent universities and colleges will never commit to programs that require a full budget for multiple years, as they can not predict whether the funding will be there for all of those years. This will happen regardless of how much such an investment might help students, the institution, or Albertans.

So what we have is a way of forcing post-secondary institutions to cut spending on programs and students without ever having to claim that they're doing it. Which, when you think about it, is a pretty smart play. Maybe that's why Mr. Kenney thinks it's a good idea. After all, it's not like he needed any sort of post-secondary to become one of the most powerful men in the province. You know, aside from Mark Little. 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



Kieran Sylvie Boudreault is currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts program, double majoring in Psychology and Anthropology. Sylvie was kind enough to share her experience with online learning and why she chose to go back to school.

Could you provide a bit of background information about yourself? Who are you? Where do you live, where do you come from?

Hi, my name is Sylvie Boudreault. I currently live in Edmonton and has been for the last nine years, but I am originally from the beautiful province of Quebec.

What program are you currently enrolled in?

I am currently majoring in psychology with a second major in anthropology. It's a lot of theory but I like the programs!

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 double major in Psychology and Anthropology?

Somehow, I have always been attracted to the field of psychology. People always came to me to talk about their life and experiences but the study of what I call pure mechanics was what called me in my early twenties. I studied mechanical engineering and followed my passion for the first 15 years of my working life. After having kids, I slowly re-explored my second passion, brain mechanics (a.k.a psychology) and it took another couple of years where life seriously got in the way of my plan of going back to school until I told myself, enough is enough, I am doing it anyway, it's now or never. Because, clearly, no one would be taking that decision other than me. It was my life and my growth that was on the line. So last year I decided

to go for it, after taking with my kids—because obviously that was a big change for them too.

Do you have any hobbies? What do you enjoy doing when you are not studying?

I love knitting and crocheting, exercising, painting, going out in nature, reading, anything that makes my heart sing!

What are your plans for this education once you finish?

Well, I plan to get my Master and Doctorate after that. Right now, I have two options, but I still keep an open mind about it. Life can throw a different experience at me that might change those big plans. So far, the two options are either staying at AU and do my Master's in art therapy or go abroad and get my Masters in Forensic Psychology in the Netherlands.

What would you consider to be your dream job?

My dream job would be to have the opportunity to travel a lot, do speaking events, retreats, working with a multi-disciplinary team at a medical centre, and have my personal practice as well.

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

That's a great question. My first-grade teacher Mme. Michelle was the one who paved the way for me. She is the one who helped me love school, but I already had an inquiring and curious mind, she just created the spark.

Could you describe your experience with online learning so far?

Online learning was not a novelty for me, as I took some college courses in the last few years. The major difference was in the amount of material to read, it is way more than I expected. With three kids (13,12, and 10 years old), and all that a family life encompasses, it was a lot to manage, but we are getting there as a family. The schedule has to be reorganized multiple times during a semester, but it is life and we are surfing the tides and dodging the curveballs that life throws once in a while. It takes a lot of time management skills and resilience.

At any point did you waver about continuing your schooling? What caused you to continue?

Returning to school at 44 years old with three adolescents was a huge decision for me. The fact that I was looking at going back full-time meant no more work and going on student aid. That was a big decision that I had to look from my own perspective, but also from the kids' perspectives—as we are all in this together. I almost made the choice of not going on with going back to school, but, in the end, doing so was the best decision. I realized that if I wasn't going for my dreams that would teach my kids to give up when everything seems against you, and that would not move me forward in that beautiful human experience we are having.

Did you face any other major challenges going back to school?

There is also the fact that English is my second language (French being the first) and that was stressful for me to study in another language. I doubted myself, and still do sometimes. But I am here to learn in every way I can.

What is your favorite AU course that you have taken so far? Why was it your favorite?

My favorite course so far is one I am taking right now, PSYC 350 Adolescent Psychology. As a mother of three that are in the beginning of their adolescence right now, I thought it was a good idea to take that subject while they would be on summer holidays. I was surprised when I started the course, because the amount of knowledge I am gaining through it is phenomenal! I am even learning about my own adolescence, which was decades ago, and things I obviously didn't figure out until now!

Would you recommend PSYC 350 to other students?

I would definitely recommend this course to whoever wants to learn more about their teenagers and also about themselves.

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

The first two persons that I am thinking of right now are Edgar Cayce and Isaac Asimov. They have been on my mind since I was 7 or 8 years old. I was reading every book I could find that were either about their life or written by them. First, Edgar Cayce because of his work with the Akashic Records, and I still have a lot to learn and would love to talk to him about his work within the Records, how it changed his life and what he learned along the way.

Second, Isaac Asimov because one of his huge books (over 1000 pages) fell on my lap when I was a kid and I just devoured it cover to cover. He made me love science, math, physics, astronomy, and more. He opened me up to what our world is made of. I always was the one to take apart everything to know how it worked, it is the same with the universe, our planet, and also our brain. Having a conversation with him about his life would be nothing short of extraordinary.

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

Life did take me to the most beautiful country in the world: Canada. I travelled from coast-to-coast and saw how diversified and beautiful our country is. The fears and the joys are the same from one coast to the other. Most of the complaints within this country are built upon misunderstanding and fear of the unknown. It is easy to judge someone when you don't know them, because once you get out of your own little world and explore beyond your limitations and get to know people, you discover that your neighbour that lives 5000km away is you. He has the same fears, dreams, and preoccupations. Once you increase your knowledge about what scares you, you are not so frightened anymore. I will be travelling to Europe with my choir next year and I will probably make the same discoveries!

Are you reading any (non-AU) books? What are they about?

I always have at least 3-4 books that I read at the same time. Right now, I am reading the following:

The Tao of Leadership written by John Heider. It is an adaptation of the Tao Te Ching. The knowledge of this book prepares you to become the best leader you could be: trust the process, be faithful, be aware, and inspire others.

#IMOMSOHARD written by Kristin Hensley and Jen Smedley. It is a humorous and realistic view of the mom life. How beautiful and crazy it can be at the same time. It makes us moms realize that we are not alone.

High Performance Habits written by Brendon Burchard. That book is the results of his twenty years of extensive research into how extraordinary people become who they are.

In an Unspoken Voice from Peter A. Levine, PhD. In that book Peter Levine approach trauma from a naturalistic way, helping us understand that trauma is not a disease or a disorder but the way our body reacts to an injury caused by fear, helplessness and loss. He shares his knowledge of how the body can self-regulate and overcome trauma in a natural way.

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



Fly on the Wall Psych! A Confidence Trick

Jason Sullivan



Where an empathic desire to help others is built into many students desire to study psychology, it's easy to miss key epistemological blind spots in the discipline. A scanty half century ago a feminist writer named Germaine Greer eviscerated the core of psychiatry/psychology. In *The Female Eunuch* she wrote that "psychiatry is an extraordinary confidence trick: the unsuspecting creature seeks aid because she feels unhappy, anxious and confused, and psychology persuades her to seek the cause in herself. The person is easier to change than the status quo...Psychologists cannot fix the world, so they fix women. Actually, they

don't even manage that..." (Greer, 90). Sometimes our troubles really aren't so much our own as we may think; this is where sociology, gender studies, anthropology and history can help round off the individual focus of psychology

In consumer society, where we see our identity in terms of wage labour permitting the acquisition of possessions that supposedly express our inborn desire, psychology's individual focus seems natural and inevitable. Yet you don't have to go far into the anthropology literature to see that societies around the world and over the centuries each see the individual differently. No society has been more individual-centric than post 1945 North America and Western Europe. Yet you might never know this context by studying psychology alone; you'd have to add in some anthropology and history. Yet, often, these three varied disciplines bracket and even contradict one another in fundamental ways. For instance, anthropologists may dislike the claim that humans each possess the same mental processes. Culture may form us more than we realize—more than a psychologist might care to admit; a once-common term for the way even a given such as time exists in different cultures is the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. If you think people have been basically the same in all times and places then you must ignore both their words and actions, or summarize them down into convenient terminological pigeonholes. For Germaine Greer, this is what psychology often does in the name of its disciplinary bias. Ignorance becomes just another 'confidence trick': the client is expected to have faith that the psychiatrist will understand her simply because that is what the discipline of psychology claims to be able to do.

A Shot in the Social Dark? Nope, an Example of Why Context Requires Interdisciplinary Understanding

An example of this dualism between psychology and sociology is summarized in the life of a woman named Valerie Solanas. A half century ago she shot Andy Warhol and was committed to a psychiatric institution. Besides her violent act, she'd also written a manifesto titled 'Society for Cutting Up Men (SCUM)'; it was a literary and rhetorical response to "male arrogance and egotism" (Cohen, 2019). By her own reckoning she wasn't unstable so much as too smart for society around her. Facing professorial bias at the University of Maryland she, in her own words, evinced clarity and concision: "Do I detect a touch of male arrogance and egotism?...I'm afraid Mr. Parr's puerile arguments are doomed to fizzlehood" (*ibid.*)

Solanas's "impassioned loathing" for male privilege was chalked up to her psychiatric diagnosis of "paranoid schizophrenia" and yet an Arizona State professor named Fahs refuses to leave it at that.

Breanne Fahs teaches the SCUM manifesto in her classrooms and states that "Solanas embodies much of what feminism tries to distance itself from...a figure on the margins that shapes the centre" (*ibid.*). Without this sociological sense that Solanas herself expressed, we would miss out on a full explanation of her situation in her times and her society. Not that violence is ever warranted, but to understand its cause requires more than a mere psychiatric diagnosis. Individuals are far more than individuals as soon as we see their social context; limiting our knowledge of them to the confines (often literally a room) of psychology also limits our knowledge of their humanity. And yet, ignorance of social reality is built into the psychological discipline just as sociology restricts itself to big-picture interpretations.

Facts don't lie but facts are almost instantly interpreted; to ignore *that* fact is to requisition our inner ignoramus. For instance, *Time* magazine reports that between 1971 and 1972 a staggering 2500 bombs were set off on American soil by "radical activists" (*ibid.*). Were all these terrorist attacks merely bout of mental illness? Perhaps, but they were likely also a response to the 58 000 Americans killed in the Vietnam War and a litany of others social issues: women's liberation, civil rights and the general upheaval of so many young baby boomers amassed on a single planet.

People were reacting to “The Man” and while in Solanas' case “it's more comfortable to chalk her assault up to an individual mental illness”, this sort of psychological etiology would obscure, erase, and obfuscate the sociological truths of the situation (*ibid*).

As W.I Thomas famously stated, “if men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences”. Women too, of course, and only a Gender Studies approach would fully explain that aspect. Individual definitions of a situation are the social impetus to action. Our brains may exist in a neurological vacuum but only if we force ourselves to see them that way; psychological reality is subsumed within social consciousness. In 2019 it's almost inconceivable to imagine thousands of pipe bombs going off without an automatic assumption of mental illness; and yet, that explanation is more about the assumptions of our times than about knowledge or ignorance.

So next time you feel like proclaiming how much knowledge you've acquired at AU remember: whatever we learn can also reveal limits, not only within our given disciplines of scholastic study but also in terms of our willingness to realize that the bounds of what we learn are as wide as the terrain we try and cover. Knowledge and ignorance exist not on a spectrum, but as aspects of an intellectual prism. The view we receive of the world depends upon the ideological lens we choose to use; there's no 'just the facts' without a prior interpretation of 'what counts'.

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

AU's Writer in Residence The Role of Obsession and Illusion in Creative Work

Elizabeth Howell



Dan Harasymchuk [CC BY-SA (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)]

Young creatives should embrace obsession even though they may end up failing in the process, says Athabasca's new writer-in-residence, because then they will be making something important.

Canadian novelist and poet, Steven Heighon, delivered this advice to Athabasca Edmonton students at Peace Hills Trust Tower Friday (Jan.17), as part of a larger, livestreamed discussion on disillusionment.

Heighon recalled the industry buzz surrounding his first novel, "The Shadow Boxer" (Knopf Canada, 2000), which discussed the fictional struggles of a small-town young poet and boxer who moves to the big city seeking success. Heighon said there were structural weaknesses in the book that he and his editors ignored during writing. Numerous critics pointed out these flaws in their reviews.

The debut offering thus produced muted sales, and Heighon did not earn a profit beyond the advance payment for his work, he told the audience. Looking back, he added, he does not regret the disappointment. "Few things damage a career like an undeserved hit," he

said. Yet creative artists are often fuelled on obsession during the early stage of their development, Heighton said—including himself. In the decades since, however, a more mature Heighton continued writing. He has now completed more than a dozen books and received numerous accolades for his work, including the Governor General's Literary Award for Poetry in 2016.

Heighton philosophized about the English language's prefix "dis-", which in most cases implies a negative, he said. Examples include "disorder", "disprove" and "disenchant". Yet the word "disillusion", he added, implies a paradox. Perhaps the ancient Greek philosopher Zeno – so famed for his own paradoxes – would have enjoyed this play on words, Heighton joked.

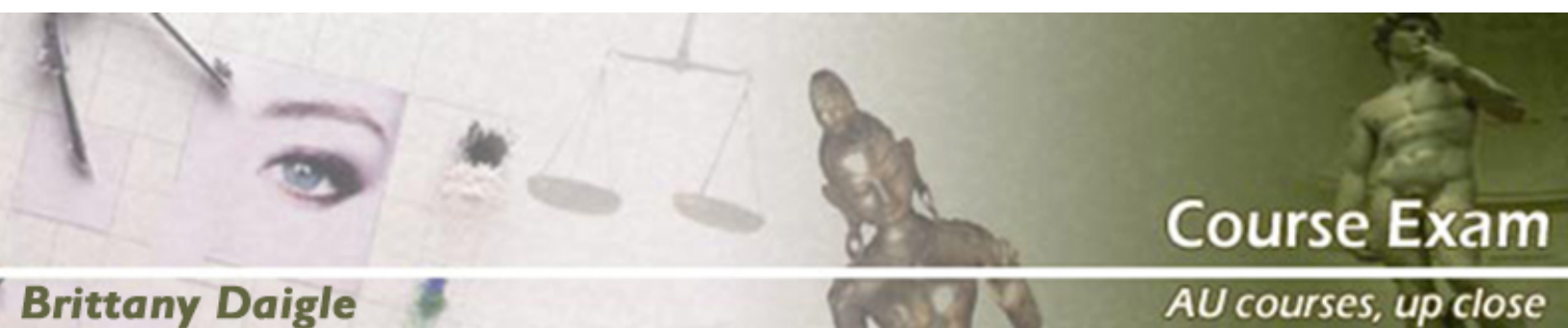
"If illusion is a negative ... disillusionment must be a positive," he explained. "Yet in common parlance, it is anything but." Based on his first novel experience, Heighton described disillusionment as "an acute, painful sensation" that goes to the very atoms of one's being.

A quarterly magazine recently asked the 58-year-old to write advice to his younger self. Heighton eventually submitted a 17-point list. Although obsession can lead to disillusionment, one piece of advice was to nonetheless go in the direction of your obsessions. "If it doesn't haunt you, you'll never write it well," Heighton explained.

He added that, with age and experience, novelists can learn to understand their obsessions and illusions, even though they will likely experience some paradoxes along the way. For example, he said, a common question among artists is whether to take medication to stabilize depressive moods that often fuel the creative process.

Heighton cautioned that answering that question is too difficult for a short talk. He offered, however, the hope that artists will "exorcise the demons while writing"—and may even come to understand those demons as they work.

Elizabeth Howell is a journalist who is also a student at Athabasca University (Bachelor of History), and who specializes in space, science and tech.



Course Exam

Brittany Daigle

CHEM 217 (Chemical Principles I) is a three-credit introductory chemistry course that provides an introduction to chemistry from both a theoretical and practical point of view. The combination of CHEM 217 and CHEM 218 (Chemical Principles II) is the equivalent to first-year university chemistry. CHEM 217 has no prerequisites, however, chemistry 30 or an equivalent high school chemistry course is strongly recommended but not required. This course is open only to students with previous chemistry experience. This course is not available for challenge and students should be aware that CHEM 217 may not be taken for credit if credit has already been obtained for CHEM 209.

Chemical Principles I covers nomenclature, the mole concept, and stoichiometry; thermochemistry; atomic and molecular structure; periodic relationships; the gas laws; and the properties of solids, liquids, and solutions. Students will have to complete some assignments that weigh a total of twenty percent, do some laboratory work that weighs twenty percent, and must write a midterm and final examination worth twenty percent and forty percent respectively. To receive credit for CHEM 217, students must complete all of the course work and achieve at least a “D” or fifty percent on each of the two examinations, and an overall course composite grade of at least fifty percent in the course.

This course also requires students to complete 32 hours of laboratory work, using a home-study laboratory kit, to obtain credit in this course. Students can order the [laboratory kit](#) online. It is strongly recommended that you complete units one and two before attempting any laboratory work. Note that the laboratory component accounts for 20% of your overall course mark. Students must satisfactorily complete and write up a specified minimum number of experiments in order to obtain credit for this course.

To help you complete this course, students should purchase an electronic calculator capable of handling logarithms and exponentials. Students are able to take their calculators to both the midterm and final examinations and can be used in laboratory sessions. Other items to consider purchasing are stationery, including paper for assignments, pens, pencils, a ruler, etc.

Heather Fox is enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Human Sciences program at Athabasca University and she hopes to be finished in just over a year. She provides us with an introduction, stating “My name is Heather and I am a stay at home mom in Calgary, Alberta to twin toddlers and a teenager. I work from home running a successful Etsy shop, and also volunteer on the side for our local twin association.”

When asked to explain CHEM 217 to students, she states that “This is a basic introduction to chemistry course that deals with learning stoichiometry, thermochemistry and mole laws. The textbook was digital but laid out well and easy to follow. It covered the course material appropriately and offered a lot of practice problems to help prepare for the exam.”

As for the structure of the course, she explains that there “were four assignments, a midterm and a final examination, plus laboratory reports. The assignments were sample questions that applied the knowledge in the course and I found they helped prepare for the exams. The laboratory reports varied per lab, some with simple write ups and some that required more in-depth responses. The labs were home based, a kit is sent to your house and you do them on your own time with the chemicals provided, as well as the addition of basic things from home. They were very detailed and easy to follow. The exams were reflective of the material and there were

AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Events

MBA for Executives Webinar

Tues, Jan 28, 10:00 to 11:00 am MST
Online, Hosted by AU Faculty of Business
news.athabasca.ca/events/mba-for-executives-webinar-20200128
Register through above link

Live chat - Online MBA for Executives

Wed, January 29, 1:00 to 3:00 pm MST
Online, Hosted by AU Faculty of Business
news.athabasca.ca/events/online-mba-for-executives-live-chat-20200129
Register through above link

AUSU Council Nominations

Now until Fri, Feb 7, 11:59pm MST
Online, Hosted by AUSU
<https://www.ausu.org/2020/01/run-for-ausu-council/>
Register through above link

All events are free unless otherwise noted.

practice exams to use to prepare. I felt there was enough practice material provide to prepare you for the exams.”

Heather would recommend CHEM 217 to other students, stating that she “found the majority of the course quite easy and the format was easy to follow.” She had “No complaints at all.”

As for any tips or tricks to completing this course, Heather states to “Practice, practice, practice! I recommend doing all of the practice questions at the end of each chapter, and review the practice midterm and final when preparing for the exam.”

When asked what her experience was like communicating with her tutors, she states “I didn’t have any issues with the tutor, exams and assignments were marked quickly and they were always quick to reply to emails.”

Whether CHEM 217 is a degree or program requirement of yours, or the content discussed above is of interest to you, this course will have you learning a lot of interesting material surrounding chemical principles.

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.

AthaU Facebook Group

Carrie seeks advice choosing between three courses to fulfill a qualitative research methods credit; so far WGST 200 is winning in the responses. Jordynn wonders if a supplemental exam can be written after the 90-day window has expired; short answer is no and long answer is in the student orientation link provided.

Other posts include multiple-choice tips, switching tutors, and courses IDRL 308, LBST 330, MATH 315, SOSC 366, and WGST 301.

reddit

A student planning to enrol in AU's Bachelor of Marketing program seeks feedback from other students on managing work/life/school balance. Another poster invites students to join a new Discord channel for student socializing.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "Due to changes from the Canada Revenue Agency, #AthabascaU is now required to collect Social Insurance Numbers for official income tax receipts. This is for anyone who took a course in 2019. If you received an email, yes it's legit <https://bit.ly/2FYv8LJ>."

@austudentsunion tweets: "Want to advance your skills with Word or Excel to help with your #AthabascaU studies? What about other software programs? AU undergrads get FREE online training with industry experts through LinkedIn Learning, courtesy of AUSU! <https://lnkd.in/ddgHV5j> #igo2au."



Porkpie Hat

Basic Rules for Post Mid-Winter Survival

Darjeeling Jones



This As we all know, January has been scientifically proven to be approximately twice as long as all the other months of the year put together. This is indisputable. This, by itself, is a problem, and contributes to psychological balance and physiological homeostasis becoming approximately as stable as an existential tilt-a-whirl. This, of course, follows hard upon the heels of the stressful winter holiday season, with its (at least for me) Caligula-like levels of self-indulgence, and its many literal, financial, and spiritual hangovers. Compounding the dire situation still further is the fact that January is followed pretty much immediately by the hideous hybrid month, known as 'Farch,' which T.S. Eliot famously described as "the cruellest month." (Note to self: renounce your lazy-ass ways, and be sure to verify this literary reference before embarrassing yourself and sending it off to the editor! You have been warned.)

[Mission accomplished – just not the one you wanted. -Ed.]

With all of that in mind, I feel it behooves me to provide my gracious, long-suffering readers with a few helpful hints and tidbits that may help them endure the frozen, sodden, windswept temporal territory between now and the arrival of spring. So, here goes:

1. Take the advice of Goethe: Never hurry, never rest. Well, I say "never rest," but really you should probably rest quite frequently. And eat those pink frosted donuts, the kind with sprinkles. You can do that while you're resting.
2. Make lots of mistakes. I mean, really fuck things up. You know you're going to anyway, because, well, human and all. But if you make it sort of a rule, then you can have the satisfaction of placing a check mark beside it. It may be helpful to invest in a clipboard.
3. Listen to more music, and expand your horizons. Listen to everything from Scandinavian death metal to Chopin etudes. Nothing cauterizes the ragged, wounded soul quite so well as the soft torch of music.
4. Take up four new interests, and stick with them. You can easily find the time by cutting back on social media and Netflix. You spend way too much time in front of a screen. You know it's true.
5. Always be kind, and be generous with your time and energy on behalf of others. But pay attention to the kick ass wisdom of flight attendants and adjust your own oxygen mask before seeking to assist others. I think you know what I mean.
6. Devote yourself to one massively ambitious project this year. Something you're passionate about, but that will really stretch your mind, body, and soul. Write a string quartet or a romance novel. Train for a marathon. Knit yourself a space shuttle.

7. Find lots of really good hiding places. Abandoned aquariums or treehouses can be good. Bring lots of candles, books, jujubes, pickled herring, and stilton cheese.
8. Read more, and eat more vegetables. Maybe trim back a little bit on an unhealthy habit or two. (But don't go overboard with that, okay? It makes the rest of us look pretty bad.)
9. Force yourself to do two things every day that you would rather not do. For me, it's getting out of bed in the morning and going to bed at night. (Don't forget the check marks. Man, this is gold!)
10. Finally, do yourself a favour and ignore all of this gibberish, and substitute your own, more helpful strategies. Do whatever feels right for you and gets you through to spring. Should any of the foregoing be helpful to you, though, please, be my guest.



The Study Dude Be Cool; Stay in School

Marie Well



"I quit high school," a woman said to me, someone I barely knew. "I don't have the willpower."

Who's she kidding, I thought. She was well-spoken, mature, and talented. I saw her potential more clearly than she did.

"If I can get a degree, you certainly can," I told her. I was partway through an undergraduate degree at the time.

She began bickering with me, coming up with excuses. I smiled back, telling her that her only limitation was her false belief. I shared with her study tricks to succeed like setting a timer for 30-minute study sessions followed by fifteen-minute breaks throughout each day. I grabbed her hand and held it. She pulled her hand away and cried out in pain.

She'd have none of it.

When I told her I wanted to get a PhD, she sputtered, "You?!" She agreed that if someone like me could get a degree, she could get her high school diploma. She didn't have high hopes for me. So I made a deal with her. Namely, if I could get a Master's degree, she would not just get her high school, but an undergrad degree, too. And if I got a PhD, she'd get her Master's. We shook hands as she howled in disbelief.

I got the Master's, although not a PhD.

At some point, we all tend to think of quitting school. Yet, some of us refuse to quit. That's persistence. We can all learn the art of persistence, even if we convince ourselves we don't have will power. You have something greater than will power—namely, free will. Use your free will to become the person you've dreamed of being. Aim high as you have no limits.

Here's what it takes to become persistent, according to Angela Ackerman & Becca Puglisi, co-authors of *Positive Trait Thesaurus: A Writer's Guide to Character Attributes*:

“Having an end goal in mind” (Ackerman & Puglisi, 63%). My end goal during the math program went from becoming a PhD to winning a Nobel prize. I also vowed to win the Silver Medallion for math. Consider making your end goal lofty, too. Big dreams make for exciting journeys. And having a goal in mind triggers a part of the brain called the Reticular Activating System. The RAS helps us to focus on the goal. And the more focused we are on the goal, the more opportunities appear to help us achieve that goal—opportunities we would’ve otherwise missed.

“Learning from past mistakes” (Ackerman & Puglisi, 63%). We can always justify our actions, however bad the deed. But justifying our mistakes keeps us in a dark place. It’s more freeing to learn from a mistake. To do so, avoid pointing out what others could have done better. Focus on your own growth instead. Learning from your mistakes frees your spirit more than finger-pointing ever could.

“Avoiding people or events that could impede one’s progress” (Ackerman & Puglisi, 64%). I dreamed of getting a PhD, but I was a social misfit in the math department. I asked a loved one for support. But he said, “Let go of your lofty goals.” So, I changed my degree program. And I always look back with regret. But we have free will. We can choose to avoid or, at least, not listen to naysayers, no matter how difficult our circumstances. That’s how we develop persistence. And anyone can develop persistence. You can be anything you desire—with free will.

Stopping negative self-talk. “You’ve got to take extreme measures to stop and constantly identify your own negative self-talk and what it’s saying to you to slow you down. More importantly, you’ve got to stop it. This is where we’ve got to be extremely aware of our thoughts and this is a must” (Coxe, 41%). We can only speak one word at a time; similarly, we can only consciously think one thought at a time. So, delete any thought that doesn’t serve your higher power, your family, or your goal. Replace it with an uplifting thought. If I ever dwell on a negative thought of some wrong done to me, I simply forgive, dwell on the good traits of the wrongdoer, and move onto the goal-focused thought. Problem solved. Goal-focused thoughts coupled with forgiveness feel so much kinder on yourself.

“Giving up former hobbies and interests; cutting back on other commitments” (Ackerman & Puglisi, 63%). I had a million extracurricular activities during grad school. And I failed to get accepted into a PhD program. I’ve since learned that persistent people give up distractions to zero in on the goal.

“Never giving up, even in the face of seeming impossibility” (Ackerman & Puglisi, 63%). I did well academically, and I succeeded in my first career. But after a long stint with extreme anxiety, I fell behind in needed career skills. But I kept squirreling away, learning the skills I needed, thinking, “They’re laughing now, but just wait. Someday, I’ll be the one laughing” (Ackerman & Puglisi, 64%). That’s a comment you’d hear from a persistent person (Ackerman & Puglisi, 64%). Go ahead, and say it when faced with your own roadblocks. That comment can goad you up the path of success.

As for the lady who dropped out of high school, who says she has no will-power, but who has all the talent to achieve miracles—and she might be *you*--I’m waiting to collect my bet.

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Ackerman, Angela & Puglisi, Becca. (2013). *Positive Trait Thesaurus: A Writer's Guide to Character Attributes*. JADD Publishing. E-book.

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My Experience Living in a Japanese Capsule Hotel

Xin Xu



Since researching for my trip to Japan, one of my bucket-list activities included living in a capsule hotel. The capsule hotel is exactly as it sounds - visitors sleep in a bed contained in a space capsule. Even before going, I've heard various mixed reviews about the living environment. While some visitors feel claustrophobic, others enjoyed the futuristic design and affordable cost of these Japanese hotels. After visiting a few of these capsules myself, I wanted to create an honest review for AU students who are thinking of travelling to Japan on a shoestring budget like myself.

When you check in at the hotel, you receive a tote bag with clean PJ's, towels and slippers

for the evening. You're provided with a QR-coded card used to access the gender-separate shower and change rooms. This space is shared between other hotel visitors while taking the escalator to a separate floor will lead you to the capsule-bed areas.

Cleanliness: ★★★★★

The hotel was extremely well-attended by the staff. The private showering stalls and washroom area was spotless for my entire three nights of stay. The capsule itself also has its own housekeeping that makes your capsule bed and gives you a new set of pillows and sheets each day

Cost: ★★★★★

The Tokyo capsule hotel averaged to about \$20 Canadian a night, which was significantly more affordable than other options I explored including a basic three-star hotel which started at \$80-130 a night depending on the location. Because of the compact size and optimal locations of the capsule hotels it made a lot of sense for student travellers to make use of the space. My hotel was conveniently located minutes away from a few of the tourist destinations making it easy to explore the city.

Hotel amenities: ★★☆☆☆

The particular hotel I stayed at (Asakusa 9), had a unique design where the entire hotel was vertically engineered. Essentially, the building did not have much horizontal space per se, as the capsule floors were stacked one on top the other. There was a small lounge, clean public washroom, lockers and shower space. Each night you would check in at the front desk and receive clean Pajamas and slippers for the evening. Male and female spaces were entirely separate as you cannot access the elevators for the opposite gender.





Comfort: ★★★★★

The capsule beds were surprisingly comfortable with lots of space to roam. In fact, I could sit up in my capsule entirely to read a book or browse the internet. Inside each capsule, there were two USB charging ports and two regular charging ports. Finally at night, you would pull down a screen for privacy. I noticed that when I pulled down the black screen, the air inside the capsule would feel mildly stuffy but if I left the screen open with my head toward the entrance of the capsule, I was able to sleep more soundly.

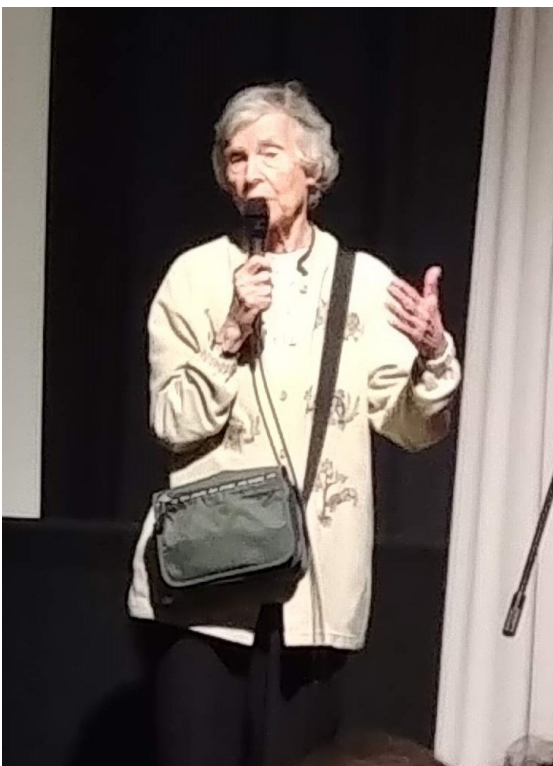
Xin Xu is a post-graduate health-science AU student, aspiring clinician, globe-trotter, parrot-breeder and tea-connoisseur.



Women of Interest

Anne Innis Dagg

Barb Godin



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Anne Innis Dagg was known as "the woman who loves giraffes," and was the subject of a 2018 documentary by the same name. When Anne was three years old, she saw a giraffe for the first time at the Brookfield Zoo in Chicago, and it became her favorite animal—as she wrote in her memoir *Smitten by Giraffe: My Life as a Citizen Scientist*.

Anne is Canadian, born January 25, 1933, in Toronto, Ontario. She received a B.Sc. in Biology and an MA in genetics from the University of Toronto. Her PhD in animal behaviour was granted from the University of Waterloo. Dagg was a zoologist and a feminist who wrote many books, but her love remained the study of giraffes. In 1956, at the age of 23, she travelled to the continent of Africa and was the first person in the world to embark on a study of animal behaviour in the wild. At the Fleur de Lys Ranch in South Africa she pursued her study of giraffes. Her trailblazing steps were later followed by Jane Goodall and Dian Fossey who became much better known. One year later, in 1957, Dagg came back to Canada armed with mounds of pioneering research from her time in Africa. Soon after returning she married physicist Ian Ralph Dagg (1928-1993) and they had three children.

Anne was hired by the University of Guelph as an assistant professor. She published over 20 scientific papers but was denied tenure, supposedly because of concerns about her qualifications, and because she lived outside of the town of Guelph. Although she was told by one of the Deans that he would never give her tenure because she was a married woman and had a man to support her. Dagg describes her treatment as "demoralizing" and this is seen as a precursor to her

becoming actively involved in feminism. In 1972, Dagg was hired as a professor at the University of Waterloo and again was told by the Dean that she could not apply for tenure because she was a married woman. She continued to work at the University of Waterloo for 35 years, as a resource person, senior academic advisor, and academic director. Anne Innis Dagg wrote extensively about the gender bias she faced in the academic world.

Although Anne was best known for her study of giraffes, she also studied other animals including Canadian wildlife. While a professor at the University of Guelph's Department of Zoology (1968 to 1972), she taught courses on wildlife management, mammal gaits, and other topics. In 1972, after going to the University of Waterloo, Dagg founded the Otter Press, a publishing company, and her first publication was *Matrix Optics* written by her husband Ian Dagg. In 1974 she published her first book on Canadian Wildlife, which was co-written by C.A. Campbell, titled *Mammals of Waterloo and South Wellington Counties*. Her first book about her study of giraffes was published in 1976 and was co-authored by Bristol Foster, and titled *Giraffe: Biology, Behaviour and Conservation* and was considered by many zoologists to be the "Bible" on giraffes.

Dagg received many accolades including the Batke Human Rights Award in 1984, the Lane Anderson Award in 2017, and was named Honorary Member of the Canadian Society of Zoologist in 2019. A documentary about Anne Innis Dagg titled *The Woman Who Loves Giraffes* was released in 2018, and [the site for the documentary](#) contains more information about this almost forgotten woman of interest.

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



The Fit Student

Meditate for Better Grades

Marie Well



Imagine Do you want to boost your grades simply by unwinding? Not just boost your grades, but make yourself a kinder, more forgiving—and smarter—person? If so, meditate during study breaks. Reporting on research done at MIT, author [Donovan Alexander](#) states that “there was an obvious correlation between mindfulness in schools and better overall academic performance, better behavior, and less stress.” And meditation and mindfulness are often married.

Mindfulness meditation involves noticing your bodily sensations, thoughts, and feelings as a detached observer. But there are other types of meditation, too, each with plenty of benefits.

So, what can meditation do for student life? According to author Lucy Loveman, meditation does the following and much more:

“improves your attention and focus” (14%),

“increases your ability to learn and remember” (14%),

“unlocks your creativity” (15%),
 “contributes to better relationships” (15%),
 “helps put things in perspective” (15%),
 “reduces anxiety (and phobias)” (16%),
 “helps you to stop worrying” (16%), and
 “reduces aggression” (16%).

I love to do something called the Alternate Nostril Breathing Technique followed by holding my breath for as long as possible, ending off with the Skull Shining Breath Technique. I then repeat. All the while, I do a variation of the Love and Forgiveness Meditation. These meditation techniques are explained below:

To start, my favorite meditation technique is called Alternate Nostril Breathing. It draws in and expels out strong and deep breaths through alternate sides of the nose. Loveman says we naturally breathe through one nostril at a time, but if we breathe mostly through one side, we tend to use more of just one side of the brain. We need balance.

So, to try the “alternate Nostril Breathing Technique ... close your mouth and put your fingers on your nose, pinching off your right nostril. Now breathe in deeply and slowly through your left nostril, then exhale slowly through your nostril. Do this four or five times in a row. Now switch sides. This time pinch off your left nostril to obstruct the passage of air. Now breathe deeply and slowly through your right nostril. Again, do this four or five times in a row” (66%).

I do a variation of the Alternate Nostril Breathing Technique where I breathe in through the right nostril, plug both nostrils for as long as I can, and then breathe out through the left nostril, and then reverse. I do this for ten full cycles. After that, I breathe out and hold my breath for as long as possible—aiming to hold my breath for a minute. I then finish up with a Skull Shining Breath Technique to release toxins (Loveman, 2013).

To try the “Skull Shining Breath Technique ... get into a position that is comfortable and allows you to breathe deeply and easily. Take a nice, deep (yet passive) inhalation. Then expel this breath out forcefully. Keep repeating the passive inhalation followed by the forceful exhalation for about five or six breaths” (67%).

I like to repeat this cycle of meditation techniques for 10-, 20-, 30-, or 60-minute sessions. If I do at least twenty minutes a day, I feel I’ve achieved my daily meditation goal.

I view the combination of the above meditation techniques as a variation of the famous Wim Hof Method. So, I try to follow up my meditation sessions with a cold shower just like [Wim Hof would](#) do.

But unlike Wim Hof, I enjoy listening to a spiritual video while I meditate—a video that talks about love as life’s purpose. As I meditate to the video, I feel love for God and all my family and friends. You might not be religious. If not, just feel sincere love for any being you choose. This form of meditation is one of many variations of the Love and Kindness Meditation.

To try the “Love and Forgiveness Meditation... imagine your heart opening like a large, blossoming flower. Let your love and compassion swirl all around you. Imagine that it is mixing with all the compassionate, loving and forgiving energy in the Universe” (85%).

“When you feel full of love, then imagine the person you want to forgive (or the one you hurt who you want to apologize for). See the loving energy swirling around this person.... If you feel hurt by something this person did, tell him you forgive him. Then acknowledge the pain and hurt you may have caused, and in turn ask for forgiveness. Then focus on wrapping both of you in the loving, forgiving energy that’s swirling around you” (85%).

Don't worry whether the person loves you or not. You can feel love for anyone, regardless of how they feel about you. And giving love feels magnificent. Savor the love.

So, meditation will not only make you smarter and sweeter, it'll surely make you wiser.

References

Loveman, Lucy. (2013). *Meditation: How To Reduce Stress, Get Healthy, And Find Your Happiness In Just 15 Minutes*. USA. E-book.



Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: EDC Youth Education Program scholarships

Sponsored by: Export Development Canada (EDC)

Deadline: February 14, 2020

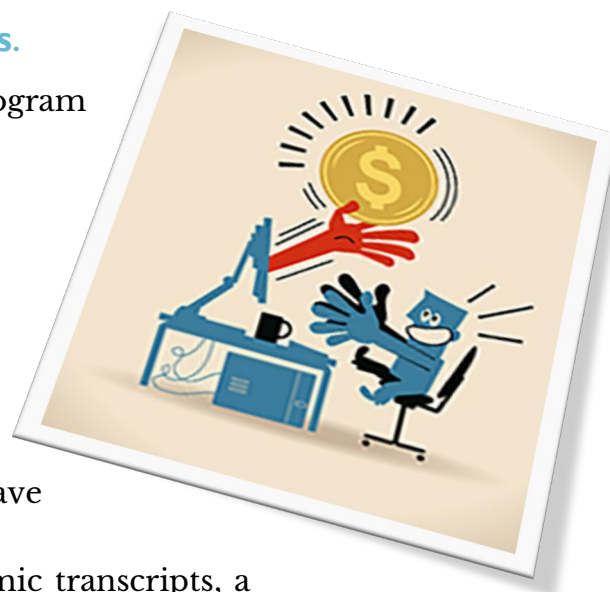
Potential payout: \$4000

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be Canadian citizens or permanent residents, enrolled full-time in an accredited bachelor's degree program at a Canadian university or college, studying business or a combination of business/environmental courses, and have a minimum B average. See full [eligibility criteria](#).

What's required: An online application form, academic transcripts, a resume, an academic or employer reference letter, and a letter of intent outlining your proposed career path.

Tips: Scroll down past the FAQ section to the How to Apply section for detailed information on the application requirements.

Where to get info: www.edc.ca/en/about-us/student-programs/scholarships.html





Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

Anger Management

Dear Barb:

Hi, I have been reading your column almost weekly and I finally decided to write in. For most of my life I have been an angry, some say vindictive person. I don't feel I have been treated well by my family and because of my anger I rarely see them. None of them seem to listen to what I say when I suggest things they should do. Even though I miss them, I can't seem to put the anger away and have a relationship with them. I know there are a lot of people who have been treated worse than I have and are able to maintain ties with their family, but I just can't seem to let go. It's not like I was abused or neglected, I just didn't like some of the things family members did. For example my sister kept a picture of my ex-husband on her face book and wouldn't take it down when asked, so I haven't spoke to her since. I'm wondering if maybe I over reacted. I don't want to hang on to this anger, but I can't make peace with it. I also don't speak to my brother or my mother. They have attempted to contact me, but I don't know how to respond, so I just don't say anything. I can't seem to admit that maybe I was wrong. Looking for suggestions on how I can move forward and let go of this anger.

Thanks, Lonely in PEI.

Hey Lonely:

Thanks for your letter. Obviously, you know that it's time to make some changes in your life, as this is not the way you want to live. When you think about it, do you think it is worth not speaking to your sister or family members because of a face book picture, or because they don't manage their life the way you think they should. These are not good reasons to cut ties with your family. This estrangement could go on for years unless you change it. What happened between you and your ex-husband has nothing to do with your sister. It is her choice to keep the picture up or take it down. You really can't control what other people do. You may not like what they do, but that is their choice, not yours. Life is all about making choices. If you truly want to let go of the anger, you have to choose a different response. Maybe your sister didn't want to be told what to do.

So, yes, I do think you are over reacting. Moving on to a more fulfilling life includes accepting the things you cannot change. I would suggest you look into some counseling or meditation to help you come to terms with your anger. I am sure that your letter will resonate with others in similar situations.

I believe this is the first step on the road to change.

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
Keeping an Open Heart

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 Election – Run for Council!

Do you want to get involved with your Athabasca University Students' Union?

Are you interested in advocating on behalf of your fellow AU students and helping to create a student community for AU students all over the world?

Would you like to participate in guiding the Students' Union in its mission to provide support and services to your fellow students?

Do you want to be part of an amazing team of AUSU staff and councillors and take your AU student experience to the next level?

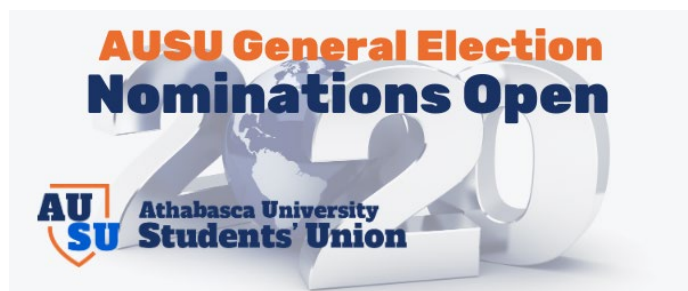
If so, then [run for AUSU Student Council!](#)

AU undergraduate students can run for council no matter where they live or what they study. Since AU students are all distance learners, councillors participate remotely from all over the world, and most council work is done through email and teleconference.

There are 13 council seats available, which will be elected during the [AUSU general election](#) held February 25 to March 2, 2020. Additionally, following the general election, the new council will internally elect the three executive positions - President, VP External and Student Affairs, and VP Finance and Administration.

To run for council, submit the completed [Nomination Package](#) to the Chief Returning Officer, Bailey Daines, at cro@ausu.org by February 7, 2020.

Visit the [AUSU website](#) [here](#) for more info.



AUSU Executive Blog

AUSU President Brandon Simmons shares insights about what it is like working on AUSU student council, what his experience has been, and what AUSU has worked on over the past few years. He also offers tips for students who want to learn more about the opportunity of being on council and preparing for the election!

Read the January Executive Blog [here](#).



AUSU Open Mic Podcast: [Take your AU Experience to the Next Level](#)

In our latest AUSU Open Mic Episode, AU student councillors Brandon Simmons and Natasha Donahue chat about the benefits of sitting on AUSU's student council, and how easy it is to get involved. Student leadership starts with nominating yourself to run in the AUSU election!

Starring: AUSU President Brandon Simmons, AUSU VP External and Student Affairs Natasha Donahue, and AUSU Executive Director Jodi Campbell.

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

Available for free on [Spotify](#), [Apple Podcasts](#), [Google Podcasts](#), and [Pocket Casts](#) (search "AUSU Podcast").



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