



# THE VOICE

Vol 28 Issue 07 2020-02-14

## **Minds We Meet**

Interviewing Students Like You!

## **The Search for Roots**

Finding them in the World's Largest

## **Council Connection**

Audit Findings Revealed

*Plus:*

*Canadian Science News  
Women of Interest  
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](http://voicemagazine.org),**  
**and please indicate if we may publish your letter!**

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

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

## Editorial

### Loving Every Minute of It

Karl Low



Sometimes this job has some interesting turns to it. Recently it came to my attention that there's a Facebook group out there devaluing AU degrees by advertising for students and running essay and assignment "sharing" (read, plagiarising) services. What's more, it's doing so using a photograph taken from one of the articles in The Voice Magazine. A photograph they definitely don't have permission to use.

So, steps are currently being taken, but if you're a student who wants to make sure your degree maintains the most value, consider helping out by contacting AU and asking them if they know about this type of activity, and what they're doing to stop it. (And if you're one of the students who's using such a service, good grief, stop it. You're only going to get yourself in trouble when you get that job that you're not actually qualified for and wind up blacklisted and wasting a year or so of your life. Buckle down and do the work. Be methodical. It's not really that hard if you simply put the effort into it.)

Also interesting is that the candidates for the next AUSU general election have been announced. Hit the link if you want to find out more about them, and if you want to know any specifics, the AUSU election forums are now open where you can post your questions directly to them.

But if that seems like too much effort, not to worry; next week, I hope to post the candidates' answers to eight questions that will hopefully help you decide which way you want to cast your vote. And while we're speaking of Council, this week, we've got a fairly long Council Connection, detailing what happened during the January 16<sup>th</sup> council meeting. Council just voted a raise for the members of the executive committee, and our report has the breakdown on both the how much and the why of it, as well as a report on the changes to the bylaws that came into effect, and what AUSU has been doing when it comes to dealing with AU's recent tuition hikes.

Also this week, we resume our regular feature interviews. This time, Brittany Daigle interviews Brittany Johnson. Sadly, the opportunity to ask about how awesome the name Brittany is was not taken, because that would have made me laugh. Even so, the interview is a good read, and Brittany (Johnson, not Daigle) gave a pet peeve that I haven't seen given before, even though I know it has to be annoying to a lot of people.

Also this week, if you've ever wondered just where the world's largest sausage is (as you do, from time to time) we've got the answer, as Natalia Iwanek takes us along with her as she explored many of the "World's Largest" things that are to be found in Alberta, and along the way, discovers a bit more about her own roots from her Ukrainian heritage here in Canada.

Plus, as always, news, events, advice, humor, and more! Enjoy the read!

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

# MINDS

# WE

# MEET



*Brittany is a third-year transfer student in the Bachelor of Business and Administration program at Athabasca University. Giving an interview to The Voice Magazine is now something she can check off her bucket list! This is her story.*

**Could you please provide us with a brief introduction? Who are you? What program are you enrolled in?**

My name is Brittany and I am a transfer student from York University. I am currently in my third year of a Bachelor of Business Administration Degree with a Human Resource Management focus and I am enjoying my program.

**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 Business Administration program?**

I decided I wanted to go back to school but I found it difficult with traditional schools because I work full-time. I decided to switch to Athabasca University because it allowed me a better work-life balance. I decided on the Business Administration with a Human Resources focus because I am working towards getting my Human Resources Designation and the degree would help me achieve this goal!

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

**hobbies?**

I like to travel, scrapbook, and check items off my bucket list when I am not studying.

**Scrapbooking is such a unique hobby! What do you love about it?**

Scrapbooking gives me the chance to relive some great memories that I have had!

**What are some of your bucket list items?**

My bucket list consists of things that I want to do in my life, such as skydiving and traveling!

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

My dream job would be to attain a position as a Human Resources Generalist position to start and work my way up to a Human Resources Manager. To do this, I need to finish my degree and obtain my human resources designation.

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

My parents. They always pushed me to focus on something that interests me and learn everything I can about the subject matter.

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

Online learning provides me with a lot of flexibility. I can work at my own pace and I can schedule my life around my studies.

**Is there anything that you dislike about online learning?**

I dislike that there are no deadlines. I have to push myself harder to focus on my studies and stop procrastinating, which can be hard at times.

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

I wavered about continuing my education while I was taking a core philosophy course. This course was one of the hardest courses I have ever taken. I struggled a lot and felt like giving up and dropping out of the course. I got through it because I knew I wanted to complete this degree and I knew this course was required. I had no choice but to finish the course. So, I buckled down and spent extra time focusing on the course and studying for the final and I was able to complete the course successfully.

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

My favourite AU course so far was ADMN 233 (Writing in Organizations). I found this course extremely enjoyable because I was able to use what I learned in the course immediately at work. I also really enjoy writing and the entire course was doing just that!

**Have you given anything up to attend AU?**

I have not had to give up anything to attend AU. AU gives me the chance to study while having a life outside of school.

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

Communicating with my course tutors is easy. I have not had any issues communicating with them. Sometimes the only concern is when I reach out to a tutor—because I know it can take some time for them to get back to me—I worry, or I have to wait until I receive a response to continue with my course.

**What's your pet peeve if you have one?**

My biggest pet peeve is when the myAU site is down or not working and I can't access my course webpages. Not having access during these times can definitely put a dent when trying to work through my courses.

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

One famous person I would like to meet is Rihanna. She is an amazing singer and she has launched one of the most successful businesses "Fenty Beauty." I would love to talk to her about how she came up with the idea.

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

The proudest moment of my life is when I achieved my first Bachelor's degree. I have a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy with a minor in Psychology.

**What is one thing that distinguishes you from most other people?**

I have an invisible disability that sometimes makes it difficult for me to do daily activities.



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

The most valuable lesson I have learned in life is that despite any circumstances that may arise, never give up.

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

I have traveled to a few countries. Some of the countries I have been to include: Jamaica, USA, France, Monaco, and Italy.

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

My favorite place was Jamaica because it was an all-inclusive vacation. I could eat what I want, when I want. I also really enjoyed having the chance to lounge by the beach!

**What (non-AU) book are you reading now? Could you describe the book and would you recommend it?**

I am currently reading *Becoming* by Michelle Obama. In this memoir, Michelle tells us the story about how she became who she is today. I would recommend the book because I found it inspiring.

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



## Council Connection

### January 16 Meeting

**Karl Low**  
**Samantha Crowhurst**



The AUSU Council Meeting took place Thursday, January 16th, 2020 at 6:30 pm-8:30 pm MDT. All Councillors were in attendance. Key items for the council at this meeting were reviewing the 2019 Auditors findings; voting new AUSU Bylaw revisions into effect; voting a new Executive Accountability and Compensation into effect, reviewing actions taken regarding addressing the 7% tuition hike for Students, as well as the growth AUSU Podcast “AUSU Open Mic” and YouTube channel.

The meeting was officially brought to order at 6:33pm.

Samantha Crowhurst, the Voice’s interim Council Meeting Reporter introduced herself, noting that she was from Toronto and currently taking WMST courses at AU. Aside from her,

only AUSU staff and Councillors were in attendance.

With no action items outstanding, the meeting moved quickly to the meat of it, which began with the presentation of the audited financial statements by the accounting firm Kingston, Ross, Pasnak, or KRP as it’s more commonly known. KRP representative, Chad, was present to answer any questions that Councillors might have about the findings. He noted in his presentation that

the audit overall “was a clean audit with no major findings. ... We were happy with [AUSU] management, Jodi, Brandon, and Brittany.”

In the audit statement, there is a chart that lists significant deficiencies identified during the course of the audit. There were only two entries in this chart, the first was that “Due to the nature of the organization, there are certain deficiencies in the design and implementation of internal controls.” President Brandon Simmons took the opportunity to ask if there were specific examples of these deficiencies that could be listed so that AUSU could possibly work on them.

Chad responded that any specific, actionable deficiencies would have been noted if there had been any. The note in the audit is more to reflect that AUSU has a very small control group in place to mitigate issues (ie, by performing more double-checking, or having individuals with higher authority sign-off on expenses by lower authorities) and that, in an organization the size of AUSU, this is not unexpected. He noted “You would need a few more people for the ‘perfect controls’”, but also that, “I don’t think there ever are really ‘perfect controls.’”

It would seem that, for this noted deficiency, the initial clause of “Due to the nature of the organization” is a key point of the sentence.

The second deficiency noted is that some of the invoices, while stamped for approval and signed, were not also dated. AUSU had already agreed to do this in future and will stress the importance of it to any staff.

Chad and KRP were thanked for their work, with a special notice going out to Georgia, a KRP employee who was new to working with AUSU’s books, and so brought a fresh set of eyes to better spot any issues that may have occurred.

The next item on the agenda was for AUSU to decide if they should keep the same auditor firm for another year. It was noted that any concerns that people might have with the auditor being too familiar with AUSU’s budget and operations (and hence perhaps making assumptions instead of verifying), were dealt with by KRP’s practice of switching auditors for the accounts every once in a while, as evidenced by Georgia this year. Also brought up is that AUSU’s systems are all in compliance with KRP’s recommendations now, and while most of that should hold for any auditing firm, different firms might have different ideas about how some things should be classified. But what AUSU has now is working well for the organization. Finally, it was brought up that changing auditors might also cause additional expenses as a complete lack of familiarity with various systems can result in the new firm having to take a long time to ensure everything is working appropriately.

That these notes were brought forward made me wonder if perhaps there’s been some talk among AUSU as to whether it might be advantageous to move to new auditors as a form of double-checking KRP’s work, since AUSU has retained them for several years now. Regardless, the motion passed unanimously.

Next on the agenda were the revisions to the bylaws of AUSU. It was noted that AUSU held the required consultation periods and open forums for people to contact them with any questions or concerns about the nature of the changes, but no students chose to attend.

The bylaw changes have removed the requirement of a GPA minimum to run for AUSU Council, and have also removed a requirement of having to be a student for a certain number of months per year while on AUSU Council, both steps taken to increase eligibility of the diverse student body of AU. For instance, these changes will allow students who have found difficulty with their first courses (and so have a low GPA) the ability to run for Council.



The motion passed unanimously.

Council then addressed two policies, the policy on Member Representatives on AUSU committees, where they expanded the timeline AUSU had to confirm appointments and the policy on Councillor Honoraria, where they codified the current practice of any changes to honoraria only taking effect following an election.

The last item before the Council Reports was to accept the recommendations of AUSU's Executive Compensation Review Committee (ECRC). This committee had spent the last few months examining wages, and executive duties, benefits, and responsibilities at the other students' associations in the province and beyond to come up with a final recommendation of a wage increase of about 4.5% for the executive positions based on the consumer price index of approximately 2.3% per year in Alberta over the past two years, and with the current AUSU Executive pay scale already being near the median for Alberta students' union representatives.

The committee also investigated other possibilities such as changing the number of executives, but determined that this was probably not necessary at this time, as there seemed to be a good balance of the needed work getting done without significant idle periods for the Executives. It was also noted that expansion of the Executive group would likely require expansion of support staff, all of which costs students more, so there needs to be a clear benefit to doing so.

These wage increases mean that the AUS President will earn, after the next AUSU election, to 41,860/yr and the AUSU Vice-Presidents will each earn 35,880/yr, plus various other benefits, which include a reimbursement expense of \$80/month for expenses incurred by working at home (telecommunications costs, printing/stationary costs, etc). This reimbursement expense is being increased \$5/month to reflect the higher costs of these items.

The last change which was noted in the recommendations of the ECRC, was to allow executives the option to participate in the Health & Dental plan currently provided to AUSU staff members, instead of staying with the current health & wellness benefit that accrues at \$130/month for Executives.

It was noted by Executive Director, Jodi Campbell, that AUSU's current budget should be able to absorb all of these changes.

One final discussion point brought forward was the discussion of AUSU Executive overtime, and if the extreme overtime that is sometime required might be leading to burn-out and problems with retaining talent in the executive group. However, it was noted that AUSU provides allowances for overtime to be taken as banked time, and that most of this overtime is accrued while executives are at various conferences and events that Council feels strongly benefit the student body. It was noted that perhaps executives need to be encouraged to make more use of their banked time.

That being the last discussion point brought forward, AUSU council voted unanimously to accept the recommendations of the report.

This, at 7:20pm, also ended the policy portion of the meeting, and councillor Sarah Blayney Lew expressed her regret at having to leave at that point to attend another meeting, and was excused.

AUSU then started discussing reports, and the largest issue by far was AU's response to the Alberta Government cuts, which are including a 7% hike in tuition for all students. President Simmons noted in his report that during their consultation with the AU Board of Governors, they stressed that these types of increases are going to be difficult for many students, and are especially concerning when it comes to out of province students, as such an increase is beginning to price

AU out of the market in other provinces. While it is expected that the same increase will be proposed next year, Brandon is hoping that the arguments made this time have laid the groundwork to convince the board to perhaps lessen the increases demanded, at least for the out of province students.

The report of the Vice President External and Student Affairs, Natasha Donahue, was up next, and she echoed President Simmons concerns with tuition. In addition to that, she discussed how the AUSU podcasts and AUSU YouTube channel were progressing, urging other member of Council to take the time to listen to the podcasts and watch the YouTube channel so as to be able to give additional feedback to help them improve. Executive Director Jodi Campbell encouraged council especially to check out the Christmas YouTube episode for some really funny segments. It also noted that this was the segment that Natasha sang in. It is possible that those two points are related, but we're not going to judge that here.

Because of the holidays, other the other reports noted that there was not a lot of activity in their areas. Although 135 applications had been received for the November awards deadline (which was processed during December) with only two computer bursaries and one emergency bursary awarded.

Finally the recent student survey had been completed and the results were going to be reviewed at the AUSU Council retreat, which happened a couple of weeks ago, and it was noted that staff had been kept very busy dealing with the audit and preparations for the election. Also, some new statistics about the Voice Magazine's readership have been made available, and it was noted that many of the articles in the Voice Magazine's archives continue to draw hits and readers from Google searches long after their initial publication date.

At 7:39, the meeting was adjourned with the next meeting scheduled for February 20, 2020. As of this report, that time has changed to February 27, 2020. Contact [ausu@ausu.org](mailto:ausu@ausu.org) for details as to how to attend.

## Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

**Scholarship name:** UCT Heaston Scholarship

**Sponsored by:** United Commercial Travelers of America (UCT)

**Deadline:** March 15, 2020

**Potential payout:** up to \$6000

**Eligibility restriction:** Applicants must be high school seniors, or equivalent, be enrolled and entering a university/college program in the coming academic year, have overcome obstacles through hard work, and are committed to community service.

**What's required:** A fully completed application form, including high school transcripts, university/college acceptance letter, letters of recommendation, and a 2-page maximum personal narrative. See [guidelines](#) for full requirements.

**Tips:** Applications must be sent by snail mail, so don't dawdle.

**Where to get info:** [www.uct.org/uct-in-action/scholarship-programs/](http://www.uct.org/uct-in-action/scholarship-programs/)



## The Search for Roots

### Road Tripping through Alberta's "World's Largest"

Natalia Iwanek



Photo by: ChrisStubbs

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Contentious Albertan travel brochures frequently attract visitors to the province with glossy images of aquamarine waters, majestic snow-capped peaks, and roving wildlife. This marketing technique has proven effective, as thousands of visitors, myself included, flock to Banff, Canmore, and Lake Louise each year. Although I settled in Calgary in 2012, and Edmonton in 2015, my fondest memories of Alberta occurred two years after I left the province.

Landing at the Edmonton airport one frigid January morning, with sudden clarity I realized that what was truly lacking in my life was a glimpse of the world's largest sausage. Thus began the "World's Largest" tour, a never fully assimilated Ontario transplant's road trip through oil country. As I braved harsh road conditions in a tiny rental car surrounded by impossibly large pickup trucks, I realized that I had never truly understood Alberta.

Perhaps this feeling of not belonging and not fully understanding stems from my heritage. As a member of the Ukrainian diaspora who immigrated to Toronto during the 1980s, I often feel that I exist between two worlds, constantly switching between languages, customs, and mannerisms. Ukrainian diaspora often suffer from

common experiences as many immigrants, such as anxiety over assimilation and language barriers, to deeper issues, such as collective and intergenerational trauma.

With so many unanswered questions, I set out to learn more about the history of Alberta, including its Ukrainian community. Unlike eastern Canada, which is often the first stop for newer Ukrainian immigrants, Albertan Ukrainians have settled and assimilated over the years. Ironically, the road trip that began as a search for history and roots turned into one filled with old bones, cemeteries, ghost stories, and hauntings.

It is only fitting that I began my trip into the past with a visit to where it all began. South of Edmonton, Drumheller's impressive Royal Tyrell Museum dedicates itself to the collection, preservation, presentation, and interpretation of paleontological history, with extensive fossil displays and mounted dinosaur skeletons. The surrounding Albertan Badlands, with their memorable reddish surfaces and signature hoodoos, are home to spectacular rock formations and fossil beds.

Continuing north, I officially began my "World's Largest" tour. Bypassing the world's largest Golf Tee in Trochu and the world's largest Oil Lamp in Donalda, I hurried north on Yellowhead Highway to see the world's largest Pysanka (Easter Egg) in Vegreville. The Pysanka, 25.7 feet long, 31 feet high, and 18 feet wide, is a large jigsaw puzzle, with 524 star patterns and triangles, facets, nuts, bolts, and struts. In 1973, the Alberta government established the Alberta Century Celebrations Committee to coordinate the following year's centennial celebration of the RCMP.



The Vegreville Chamber of Commerce chose the Pysanka to represent the peace and security that the Mounties had offered the area's multicultural citizens. It is also a symbol of harmony, vitality, and culture.

Leaving Vegreville, it was finally time to see the famed sausage. Mundare's 42 feet tall and 12,000 pound sausage, built as a tribute to Stawnichy's Meat Processing, a sausage factory famous for its kielbasa – and for serving the best Ukrainian sausage in all of Canada. Further north, in Andrew, the world's largest Mallard Duck weighs an impressive one tonne and has a 23-foot wingspan. Erected in 1992, the duck commemorates the duck breeding grounds in the surrounding wetlands. Continuing along, the world's largest Mushrooms in Vilna celebrate the mushroom hunting traditions of early Ukrainian settlers. At over 18 feet tall, the statue weighs over 18,000 pounds. Built in 1967, the world's first UFO landing pad in Saint Paul is adjacent to tourist information centre with UFO exhibit built in 1990. Finally, in Glendon, the massive perogy and fork, symbolizes the traditional Ukrainian dish, often filled with cheese and potatoes or sauerkraut and mushrooms. Erected in 1993, the monument is 27-feet tall and 6,000 pounds. Glendon's Perogy Park Restaurant at 12-4 Street East serves Central Alberta's best perogy and kielbasa, or *varenyky i kovbasa* in Ukrainian.

In addition to the "World's Largest," this Central Albertan area is filled with beautiful old Ukrainian churches, which can be read about in Historical Driving Tour: Ukrainian Churches in East Central Alberta.

Continuing east, no trip through central Alberta would be complete without a different sort of history. Fort Kent, northeast of Bonnyville, is famed for its Fort Kent Wendigo. Legend states a local doctor, grieving the death of his wife after a smallpox outbreak, became possessed by a Wendigo spirit. After killing approximately eleven people, he fled into the woods; to this day the spirit preys on the weak and has been blamed for a great deal of animal deaths in the area. However, many believe that the story actually began in 1879 with the possession of Cree trapper Swift Runner. Nearby Cold Lake has its own interesting history. As of the largest and deepest lakes in Alberta, Cold Lake is believed to be home to the great fish Kinosoo of Cree legend. During the 1920s and 1930s, people from all over Canada travelled to the lake in hopes of spotting the giant.

I ended my road trip in a place that tied everything together. The Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village, east of Edmonton in Lamont County, details the impact Ukrainian immigration had on Albertan identity and culture. The first Ukrainians arrived in Montreal in 1891, and later spread throughout Canada, with the majority in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. 150,000 Ukrainians arrived between 1891 and 1914. In Alberta specifically, Ukrainian settlement began in 1896, reaching its full proportions in 1898, with many from Galicia and Bukovyna, Ukraine. They settled east and west of the North Saskatchewan River, and further north of Lamont County. During this time, the Canadian government classified Ukrainians from Galicia as enemy aliens and interned over 5,000 in camps. The second wave of immigration came in 1922, with Ukraine's incorporation into the USSR, while the third wave came after the Second World War.

Looking beyond the obvious and digging deep, figuratively and metaphorically, can yield surprising results. With what began as a historical tour and desire to see famous landmarks, turned into one of increased understanding of this province, to a greater degree than in all my years living here. Thank you for the memories, Alberta.

*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>*

## Fly on the Wall

### Finding Soulful Poetry in the Toil of our Studies

Jason Sullivan



The saying goes: the devil makes work for idle hands. And yet, in the next breath, there's an aphorism stating that hard work is its own reward. So maybe those who toil are doing so because the devil made them do it! Did we merely enroll at AU to further some masochistic need to affix our noses to the grindstone of academic life? I mean, we could have bettered ourselves with a less taxing hobby or maybe taken a different job. Something drives us to be at AU and it's more than just a need to better our resumes. To investigate the meaning of that inner impetus that drives our

studies suggest the discovery of some cosmic wheel of inspiration that hums deep within our fundament. Our essential fulfillment may depend on realizing what's at stake in our studies: we're searching for a better life.

AU isn't about merely sitting and filling time, wiling away the hours in study as we unconsciously await our all-too earthly fate as mere mortals. The part of us that embodies our AU selves has a journey all its own and this speaks to the essence of our identity. Everything we feel and do illustrates who we are. And yet, even when speech—communication—is possible, there remains the rejoinder: *was this me*, was this the real me that emitted a thought or murmured a sound? In the right (or wrong) social contexts we can even feel like ventriloquists, merely mouthing the proper or expected answers on demand. Are we ever wholly ourselves and do the textual shards we express reflect enough of us to make it all worthwhile? There's a certain paralysis in trying to say or write what we mean and have it feel authentic. As writer's block in a course essay can attest; overcoming these nerves is key to academic success.

### 'You Can't Take it With You; Realizing What's Missing as We Write Out Our Hearts'

A languid tear caught the face of a sheet of lined paper in the moment I crumpled it into a haphazard ball. I'd been away from my home and its wood stove, out on an anthropological leave for a couple of days is how I'd put it. Partying and socializing, basically, conducting fieldwork in a sense. But now was time to settle back down and write and rekindle the home fires. But what was I working at? The intention of my original article had absconded like a ghost amidst weeds, a wraith only a chipmunk can see, and even its tiny seeds seemed to have vanished like a mustard seed through the eye of a needle. In a way all ideas, all sentiments, are things that, by nature, do get lost. No wonder Neil Young sang about wanting things that lasted forever. But it's in our pouncing after these glowing moments of erudition, with temerity and bravado, that we discover a key to academic success. Reading and writing is hard work and there are no manual directions—Ikea instructions seem a minor 'eek' in comparison to writing a well-worded assignment.

To have something to say on a course topic is to allow something truly new to enter the list of learning objectives. At the very least, we have to imagine new combinations of interpretations. Jacques Derrida reminds us of nostalgia for those fleeting origins, those magical flights of fancy that bring us new dreams and illuminations: "it is inspiration itself, the force of a void, the

cyclonic breath of a prompter who draws his breath in, and thereby robs me of that which he first allowed to approach me and which I believed I could say in my own name.” (Derrida, 176). Even when we speak with silvery tongues the incantations our hearts know to express do not assure us that the sentiments are ours alone. Our greatest exaltation, even the meaning of our greatest life's work, may belong to another mind like some stray linguistic trash that blew into the yard of our mind. Or our ideas may be merely from chance, like a sleepwalker who mumbles a haiku.

### Henry Miller and Arthur Rimbaud

Back at my home station, at my study pedestal—where copious notes and frazzled essays are created—I began to question all of this. Is expression about facing an inexorable abyss of meaninglessness? I'm no special case; we've all wondered nihilistically. Henry Miller discusses the epochal (and short-lived) poet Arthur Rimbaud whose life in the 1800s burned fast and bright, halfway through he gave up poetry altogether, and then was extinguished like an ember under an avalanche.

Rimbaud's poetry starkly fenced and illustrated the reality he found in what is now the region of Mogadishu. He was far from snowstorms but the elements of nature, and the whimsy of natural creativity, was in every word. There remains the inexorable fact that the element of communication (to whom are we writing and why?) is itself always in question. What are we saying when we really say something? In course work we must be sure to apply our perspectives to the relevant theories and heuristics on hand, but, beneath that, we want to ask our personal point of view. It's alright to disagree with what we're being taught if we can tease out where our intuition's empirical origins lie. Intuition, after all, rarely lies. To bring our heart to our coursework suggests that we feel personally about the topic.

Even though we write each assignment with the tutor as our stated target, and our academic ilk as a possible audience, we also want to write things that express our authentic selves such that we don't feel as though we merely passed time in school. Learning how to learn is a theme that includes learning to put ourselves into all that we think, feel, and do. Academic mindfulness, if you will. Each time we break linguistic bread we enter communion with our fellow beings, our

## AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Events

### MBA for Executives Application Webinar

Wed, Feb 19, 10:00 to 11:00 am MST  
Online  
Hosted by AU Faculty of Business  
[news.athabasca.ca/events/mba-for-executives-application-webinar-20200219](https://news.athabasca.ca/events/mba-for-executives-application-webinar-20200219)  
Register through above link

### Live chat - Doctorate in Business Administration

Wed, Feb 19, 3:00 to 4:00 pm MST  
Online  
Hosted by AU Faculty of Business  
[news.athabasca.ca/events/live-chat-doctorate-in-business-administration-20200219](https://news.athabasca.ca/events/live-chat-doctorate-in-business-administration-20200219)  
Access through above link

### Graduate Student Research Series: The Show Must Go On: A Story of the Canadian Accounting Profession

Thurs, Feb 20, 1:00 to 2:00 pm MST  
Online  
Hosted by AU Faculty of Graduate Studies  
[www.eventbrite.ca/e/the-graduate-student-research-series-david-albert-newman-dba-program-tickets-92241148759](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/the-graduate-student-research-series-david-albert-newman-dba-program-tickets-92241148759)  
Register online through above link

### Live chat - Online MBA for Executives

Thurs, Feb 20, 1:00 to 3:00 pm MST  
Online  
Hosted by AU Faculty of Business  
[news.athabasca.ca/events/online-mba-for-executives-live-chat-20200220](https://news.athabasca.ca/events/online-mba-for-executives-live-chat-20200220)  
Access through above link

### AUSU General Election

Tues Feb 25 to Mon, Mar 2  
Online  
[www.ausu.org/events/](https://www.ausu.org/events/)  
Check AUSU's Events page for timelines and details

*All events are free unless otherwise noted.*



readers, in a way that suggests, or even assumes, that some force of expression is passing between the participating parties. Magical, almost!

Miller, for his part, claims that Rimbaud is a unique specimen. We distance students may relate, as our unique journeys set us aside from our handier or more practical brethren in the physical realms we inhabit. Miller says that Rimbaud “is in our world but not of it; his allegiance is elsewhere. It is his mission to seduce us, to render intolerable this limited world which bounds us” (Miller, 55). To shatter these fetters we must allay our pride, that which leads us to do good schoolwork and set aside no extra time for literary dalliances, and seek out those terrifying, shadowy, nether regions of expression that are the stuff of poetry—of art—of life itself. Do we ever really say anything and does it really matter? Miller concludes that, despite the foibles of language, the written word elicits more than tears and angst: “language is a means of dealing with the unutterable and the inscrutable. As soon as the symbols become inscrutable on every level they lose their validity and effectiveness” (56).

Look too closely at a textbook's gloss and the veneer seems smarmy; study too deeply and you need a break from the churning words. But the meaning of what we learn, that it may invest in us so deeply that we emerge changed and born anew, that is the value of distance education. And in this moment of return to my study sanctuary I remembered that I am not alone, not part of what Miller called “a species in danger of being extinguished altogether” (vii). No, thanks to the glorious rebirth potential of AU I still share in that magical experience of distance education. Winter may be season of discontent but, when we have our studies, we have purpose.

#### References

Derrida, J. (1978). 'La Parole Soufflee'. *Writing and Difference*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Miller, H. (1946). *The Time of the Assassins*. New York: New Directions Paperback.

*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.*



#### Course Exam

#### Brittany Daigle

BIOL 235 (Human Anatomy and Physiology) is a six-credit introductory biology course that covers all major elements of the human body, including basic anatomy, fundamental organic chemistry, cellular structure and function, and the integration, organization, and control of all the body systems. Students will acquire an understanding of normal anatomy and physiology, of physiological adaptations to special conditions, and of some of the physiological factors in disease processes. There are no prerequisites for this course, although a basic knowledge of biology and

chemistry would be an asset. BIOL 235 has a challenge for credit option if students are interested, though students are encouraged to contact their program advisor to ensure this option will work for their particular program.

Students should note that BIOL 235 cannot be taken for credit if credit has already been obtained for BIOL 230.

Human Anatomy and Physiology is made up of twenty-nine chapters, two quizzes weighing three percent each, one quiz weighing six percent, three assignments worth five percent, two midterm examinations weighing twenty percent, and a final examination worth thirty-three percent. The twenty-nine chapters in this course cover a lot of topics, such as nervous tissue, muscular tissue, the respiratory system, the digestive system, the urinary system, the endocrine system, and so much more.

To receive credit for BIOL 235, students must achieve a minimum passing grade of fifty percent, or “D”, on each quiz, each assignment, and each exam. If students obtain less than fifty percent on any quiz or assignment, they may take another version of the quiz or assignment. This applies only to the quizzes and assignments for which you did not receive a minimum passing grade; you may not take an alternative quiz or assignment in an attempt to increase your grades. The examinations for this course must be taken online with an AU approved exam invigilator at an approved invigilation center.

Katherine Huston is currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts program with a major in Psychology and a minor in English at Athabasca University. She is also enrolled in BIOL 235. She provides a brief introduction, stating “My name is Katherine Huston, I’m 29 years old, and I currently work full-time in Calgary, Alberta. In my spare time, I love to hang out with my loved ones and to go on adventures whether that be hiking or going to a new restaurant!”

When asked to explain the course to students, she states “I have learnt a lot about the workings of the human body. The course is very in-depth, so if you enjoy the human body then this is the perfect course for you! The course comes with an e-textbook, but I ended up buying a used one because I like printed textbooks. The textbook, though, is very in-depth and very well laid out. The information is relevant, and I even use it in my everyday life!”

As for the structure of the course, Katherine explains that “There are three major assignment, two midterms, and one final exam. The final exam is multiple choice. Reading the textbook and doing the practice exams are a must for your success in this course. The assignments are fairly spread out, the first one is due after chapter 10. They are straight forward as long as you take detailed notes and read the textbook.”

When asked for more information regarding the structure of the assignments, she states “The assignments for BIOL 235 are written assignments. They have a particular topic or topics that you can choose from. Most of the assignments I find are about 3-5 pages long and usually take me about a week (between the research and rough drafts) All of the assignments are similar format, but the topics and length are slightly different.”

Katherine finds that “the course is very heavy and has a lot of commitment and work. I found that I really needed to be more organized than I normally am. I find I have to balance more, even though I am only in two courses. There are lots of things to memorize, but I use flashcards and try to, every Sunday, to go over them (or when I'm done a chapter).”

She would recommend this course, stating that it is great for “anyone who is going into the medical field, or anyone who is curious about the human body. I find the course to be medium in complexity. If you read the textbook and complete the quizzes it all makes sense. I also bought flashcards, which seem to help!”

As for any tips or tricks to completing BIOL 235, she states “Read, read, and read some more! Use tons of notes! Buy flashcards or make your own! I also use a YouTube channel called “Crash Course” and it helps a lot!”

When asked how communication with her tutor has been, she states “My tutor is Shawn Irwin. He is very responsive and is always communicating with his students. He provides excellent feedback and is very prompt on marking assignments.”

Whether BIOL 235 is a degree or program requirement of yours, or the topics mentioned above are of interest to you, this course will have you learning a lot of interesting material surrounding the topic of human anatomy and physiology.

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



## Canadian Science News

**Scott Jacobsen**



### Food Sustainability Moves Forward with Acadia

University Affairs reported on the new hydroponic system at Acadia University. It will permit the harvesting of hundreds of pounds of greens within a month in a refurbished shipping container. This means that Acadia University now has a year-round source of greens only steps away from the campus dining hall.

A Growcer unit was installed in October, 2019, at the university, which is 40 feet by 8 feet, set with shelving, a hydroponic system, and seeds, along with a climate control and monitoring system. It is a joint initiative between Chartwells (the universities normal food supplier) and the campus sustainability office.

The sustainability coordinator, Jodie Noiles, for Acadia University said, “It’s based on our food plan for Acadia, which focuses on healthy, sustainable and affordable food.” Peter Welton, Acadia University’s executive chef, stated that they harvested 100 pounds of greens



for the salad bar in the first month; 400 pounds are expected for the following months once everything is set at full capacity.

## **Immune Responses in the Central Nervous System in Molecular and Computational Analysis**

*The Science Advisory Board* reported on how advanced analyses, computational and molecular, of the immune responses in the central nervous system sheds light on blood immune cells' ability to enter the site of a lesion after injury or not.

Two types of immune cells, microglia and CNS-infiltrating macrophages, enter after an injury or can enter after an injury. Microglia account for 10% to 15% of all cells found in the brain. They are a first-response of the immune system. The CNS-infiltrating macrophages start in the bone marrow.

Researchers from the University of Calgary, the University of Alberta, and McGill University wanted to look at the "activation profile," how they became active over time, of the microglia.

Dr. Jason Plemel, a Medical Researcher from the University of Alberta, stated, "We expected the macrophages would be present in the area of injury, but what surprised us was that microglia actually encapsulated those macrophages and surrounded them -- almost like police at a riot. It seemed like the microglia were preventing them from dispersing into areas they shouldn't be."

Being able to study the microglia at this level may help researchers develop more effective therapies to treat some neurological disorders and diseases.

## **Artificial Photosynthesis in Action**

*SciTechDaily* talked about the fascinating world of artificial photosynthesis to turn carbon dioxide into methane with simply sunlight. This may be an assistance in making natural-gas-powered devices zero net carbon contributors, as the methane can be used as a clean burning fuel.

A collaboration between McGill University and McMaster University resulted in a methane-generating method for a new type of catalyst. Even better, the type of solar-powered catalyst is abundantly, or readily, available because of the bounty of available materials used to make it.

Zetian Mi, a Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, said, "Thirty percent of the energy in the U.S. comes from natural gas... If we can generate green methane, it's a big deal."

Emissions Reduction Alberta and the Natural Sciences, Engineering Research Council of Canada, and the Blue Sky Program at the U-M College of Engineering funded the initiative's research. U-M is seeking partners in order to bring the multiple patents on the catalyst (its own) to the market.

*Scott Douglas Jacobsen works with various organizations, and runs In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal, and In-Sight Publishing.*



## Women of Interest

**Barb Godin**



February is Black History month and it is a time when Canadians celebrate the contributions made by Black Canadians who helped to make Canada the culturally inclusive nation that it has become.

Portia White (1911-1968) was the first Black Canadian contralto singer to win International praise. Her voice was described by critic Edward Wodson of the Evening Telegram as a "gift from heaven." Another reviewer wrote "she sings spirituals with pungent expression and beauty of utterance..."

Portia White was one of 13 children. Following the war, the family moved to Halifax where William White, Portia's father, became the pastor of the local Baptist Church. Portia began singing in the church Choir at the age of six. She loved singing and was so determined to pursue a singing career that she walked 10 miles a week for singing lessons. In 1939 Portia won a scholarship to the Halifax Conservatory of Music but continued her education and graduated from Dalhousie University and began teaching within the Black communities in Nova Scotia.

In 1941 White gave up her teaching career to spend more time on her singing. She encountered many difficulties acquiring bookings because of her race. The high point of her career was reached on March 13, 1944, at a highly celebrated recital at New York's Town Hall. She was the first Canadian to perform there. She performed two more concerts at Town Hall in 1944 and 1945. Unfortunately, in 1952 White's career was cut short as she experienced vocal difficulties and had to retire from performing publicly. She moved to Toronto to teach voice while also performing the occasional concert. One of her final performances was in 1964 at Confederation Centre of the Arts in Charlottetown PEI, when she sang for Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip.

She received a lot of praise and accolades in her life. A quote in the Halifax Chronicle-Herald credited White with being "the singer who broke the color barrier in Canadian classical music." In 1995 the Government of Canada named White a "person of national historic significance." A postage stamp bearing her image was issued by Canada Post in 1999; also, in 2004, a life-sized sculpture of White was carved from a tree in front of Zion Baptist Church in her hometown of Truro Nova Scotia. At the 2007 annual East Coast Music Awards Portia White was posthumously presented with the Dr. Helen Creighton Lifetime Achievement award. This award, as described by the East Coast Music Association "recognizes an individual or group who has had a profound and lasting effect on the Atlantic Canadian music industry." Portia White died in 1968.

An exhibit which includes photographs, recordings and many of White's personal items has been gathered together and is on display at Don Heights Unitarian Congregation in North York Ontario to commemorate 50 years since White's death. There are plans to circulate this exhibit throughout Canada before putting it on display permanently in Truro Nova Scotia.



## The Perfect Valentine

Marie Well



How do you find the perfect Valentine? One where you can make it permanent? Well, I really like the Marriage Foundation, and have found their advice great for me, so I'm passing that on to you. To start, stay clear of the Hollywood dating rules. Instead, read this [Dating 101 guide](#).

But the dating scene's like Hollywood, baby! Mary meets Hank at a nightclub, wearing her tightest skirt and clingiest blouse. Days later, she's heading to Hank's home, ready to spend the night. *Who knows if it will last*, she thinks. *At least it will be fun, right?* And who knows—*maybe we'll live happily ever after*.

Wrong! At least according to the Marriage Foundation, she's wasting her time. She should be vetting a lifelong companion, not Hank the pickup artist. She's just messed up her love life by spending the night with Hank. She spent too much

time listening to the mantra: "Friends with benefits." Sex complicates dating. Sex can bind you prematurely to the wrong person.

What if the guy has a history of assault charges? What if the guy has anger management issues? What if the guy is a pig when she hates a mess? Or what if the guy drives her to his home in the countryside without another home for miles? So much for happily ever after.

So, who is the right person? Who is your perfect Valentine?

First, try to visualize yourself spending your entire life with your Valentine. If you can't, you're wasting your time.

So, how do you know if he or she makes a good Valentine? Before you date, you should spend a month coming up with a list of traits you would wish to see in a Valentine, according to the guide. You might have "happy, loyal, and spiritual" at the top of your list. But you might also have "fit, muscular, non-drinker, non-smoker, soft-spoken, and no tattoos" on your list. Jot down everything you'd love to discover in the person of your dreams. Then spend the rest of the month ordering your traits from highest priority to lowest priority. Put a line that divides the must-haves from the nice-to-haves.

Then, make a list of deal-breakers. You might list "smokes marijuana, drinks alcohol, watches Football, raises his voice, sports a tattoo, or looks like a convict." Make sure you don't have these traits either. If you do, change them.

After that, consider how you might embody those traits. If you want a loyal partner, are you loyal? If not, you'll need to work on your loyalty. If you want a non-drinker, do you drink? If so, you'll want to put aside your drinking habit. If you want a happy guy, are you happy? And so on. In the dating world, like attracts like. So, you'll need to cultivate the same traits you wish to find in your perfect Valentine.



By the way, The Marriage Foundation says that if you want a loyal partner, a religious person may make a good choice. After all, if someone can commit to God, chances are they'll commit to you. But are you religious? At least loyal? Again, like attracts like.

After three to five dates, you should know whether you want to go steady with this person. If so, you go into the next stage: courting. Courting should last anywhere from one to two or more years, again ideally nonsexual. During the courting period, you go exclusive with your date, interviewing the person to see if he or she fits your list. Does he or she want kids? Why or why not? How does he or she fare living with another person? Why did he or she end a prior relationship? Find out as much as you can. After all, this may be your lifelong Valentine.

But don't dress sexy during your dating or courting period. Wear modest clothing and light, not heavy, makeup. You're in it for a lifelong Valentine, not a one-night stand. And don't act like your over-the-top, enamored with him right away. In other words, don't signal you want to spend the night. Sex will make a mess of your courting time, binding you to someone who may not be a suitable spouse.

If during the courting period, you discover a deal-breaker, don't be shy to break off the relationship. After all, you want to be happy, right? So, choose wisely.

After the courting period comes the engagement, which is the time you plan your wedding. Keep on investigating your potential lifelong Valentine. If you encounter a deal-breaker, break it off before the wedding.

When you reach your wedding day, you'll know you've found your perfect Valentine.



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

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

#### **AthaU Facebook Group**



Angela wants to know if doing five courses in a funded (four month) semester is too much. Answers so far indicate that it's probably doable, but it is a lot to do. Added to the concerns are raising kids and having a part time job at the same time.

Meanwhile, Melanie takes advantage of the ten day window around your exam time to write it after her contract date, but is worried that the assignments she's been submitting between the contract date and her exam might not be accepted, even though the system is letting them be entered. The response seems to be that it won't be, but that a tutor may make an exception.

Other posts include questions about psych 289/290, general questions about the university, and do they accept purchase orders from your employer as promise of payment? AU's request for Social Insurance Numbers, Student IDs, and even an AUSU Candidate posting.

#### **Twitter**

@AthabascaU tweets: How much do you love online learning with #AthabascaU?

Head over to our Instagram channel, follow the easy instructions, and be entered to win an #AthabascaU50 prize pack! <https://bit.ly/2v7ska6>

@austudentsunion tweets: Know an amazing #AthabascaU Alumni? Today is the last day to nominate an outstanding AU graduate who is making a difference in their community.

## The Study Dude

### How to Choose a Skill to Master

Marie Well



Do you dream of gaining expertise at some skill? A loved one of mine happily works on a skill for hours daily. She's clearly a master. But she'll never admit it. Instead, she'll say, "I'm far from mastery. I'm just a lifelong student."

So, why do mastery and humbleness go hand in hand? According to the *Positive Trait Thesaurus*, wise people downplay their talents.

You might want to gain mastery of a skill, too. But perhaps you haven't decided on a skill to master. So, how do you choose?

The first rule of choosing your skill to master is to pick one and only one skill (Scott, 2016). But which one should you pick? Well, author Steve Scott says, "The simplest way to determine what's important to you is to ask a series of five questions:" (23%).

**First, "Is there something you want to learn that will improve your health or physical fitness?" (23%).** For instance, if you have an autoimmune condition and want to regain your health, then watch plenty of health and diet documentaries, read diet and fitness books, frequent a gym, consult a dietitian, read a nutrition 101 textbook, download a nutrition app, change your diet, and consider studying the Human Sciences at AU. I bet you find a cure—or at least lessen your suffering—while carving out a possible vocation. Studying the Human Sciences at AU can ready you for a medical education such as a doctorate in naturopathy. Seeking your own cure makes for an ideal skill to master.

**Second, "What skill is important for your career development?" (23%).** If learning design skills or Excel formulas help you gain momentum in a career, then it might be worth the time and money investment. Careers have grown more competitive in the flailing Albertan economy, so picking a career related skill can bolster your opportunities.

**Third, "Do you want to pick up a new hobby?" (24%).** You might have dreamed of conducting music in a home studio. Or you may have wanted to learn multiple languages to arm you in world travel. Full immersion in another country is a wonderful way to learn a language, just as long as you build on your studies through translator apps, books, audio courses, and an online foreign language coach. The more resources you use, the more rounded your mastery of the skill.

**Fourth, "Are you interested in starting a side business?" (24%).** The most ideal sideline business is one that builds on the skills you use in your day job. Another ideal sideline business builds on your education. The more synergy you can unearth in a skill, the better.

**Fifth, "Do you want to improve your financial situation?" (24%).** Don't be the guy who earns a quarter-million-dollar annual salary who claims he can't afford to eat organic. Boost your salary with a money-making side skill. For instance, you can learn stocks, options, futures, and currency trading. Or you could go into real estate house flipping. Any skill that boosts your income helps both yourself and those you love.

No matter what skill you choose, “you can achieve skill mastery by ... pick[ing] a single skill that you’d like to master... surround[ing] yourself with quality information ... creat[ing] a project around this skill ... [and] deliberately practic[ing] this skill every day” (7%).

So, what skill do you hope to master over your lifetime? Whatever it is, weigh the payoff with wisdom.

#### References

Scott, “S.J”, Steve. (2016). *NOVICE TO EXPERT 6 Steps to Learn Anything, Increase Your Knowledge, and Master New Skills*. Oldtown Publishing LLC. E-book.



## The Not-So Starving Student DIY Pickled Vegetables

**Xin Xu**



There is something special about the flavor that a bite of pickled veggies adds to a meal. Even for the blandest lunches, a bite into a piece of pickled carrot can instantly add flavor and crunch to the meal. After years of purchasing my dill pickles and pickled onions from supermarkets, I decided that I would try my hand at creating pickled veggies. I had the idea that pickled veggies would take months to age and develop flavor, but I learned that, in reality, they are both simple and quick to create. Pickling veggies in my fridge is not only a delicious add-on to a meal but it also helps me preserve vegetables that have been sitting at the back of the fridge for weeks. If you’re an AU student that finds it a challenge to use up ingredients in the fridge, pickling is a skill that can help tackle that problem.

To start mastering the art of pickling, you first need to invest in some good quality mason jars. You can also use any empty jam jar as long as it has been cleaned thoroughly beforehand.

While each jar of pickled vegetables might have a unique flavor, the fundamental pickling process is the same. Each jar requires an equal ratio of water to vinegar. If you’d like to create various flavors of pickled vegetables, having a variety of spices at your disposal is also useful. Also, by varying the type of vinegar used, the flavor profiles can be further altered. For example, using rice vinegar yields a sweeter flavor profile.

Total preparation time: 10 minutes

#### Ingredients:

- ½ cup chopped vegetables of choice (crunchier vegetables, root vegetables are best)



Securing a few mason jars will help you get started in the art of pickling.





*Chop your vegetables however you'd like but typically larger pieces are better.*

- 1 tsp salt
- 3 cloves garlic
- 1 tsp dill or your favorite spice
- 5 Cilantro wisps chopped or unchopped
- 1 tsp fennel (optional)
- 3 fresh chilli pepper (optional)
- 1 tsp whole peppercorn (optional)
- 1 tsp mustard seed (optional)
- Thinly sliced ginger (optional)
- 500 mL water
- 500 mL white or rice vinegar

#### **Instructions:**

1. Begin by adding spices to the mason jar bottom
2. Layer your vegetables in the mason jar ensuring you leave at least 1.5 inch from the top of the jar
3. Bring the water and vinegar to a boil in a pot
4. Carefully pour the boiling mixture into the mason jar submerging all ingredients
5. Leave the jar to cool on the countertop (30 minutes)
6. Move the jar to the fridge and leave overnight for 6-8 hours
7. That's it. Serve it up and enjoy!

While you may serve the pickled veggies after 6-8 hours, the flavor may not have fully penetrated. For a stronger, more pungent flavor, leave the pickles in the fridge for another 8 hours before serving.



*Having access to a variety of spices will help you customize your pickle flavors.*

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





## Adopt a Valentine

*Dear Barb:*

*My boyfriend never gets me anything for Valentine's Day, not even a card. I don't get him anything because he doesn't get me anything. My friends all get flowers and chocolates and dinner out. I always feel bad when they tell me what they got and I have to say I didn't get anything. I have talked to Matt about this and he says, he thinks it's a stupid day and it doesn't mean anything to him so why should he celebrate a day he doesn't believe in. Don't you think he should still get me something since I believe in celebrating Valentine's Day? Thanks, Jenna.*

Hi Jenna:

My feeling is if you believe in Valentine's Day you should celebrate. Giving your boyfriend an acknowledgement of Valentine's Day, shouldn't be contingent on whether he gets you something. Valentine's Day has been celebrated for centuries and some people go all out to celebrate and others, like your boyfriend, don't pay much mind to it. It's a personal preference. It is not a statement about your relationship or how much your boyfriend loves you. There is a belief that English poet Geoffrey Chaucer may have invented Valentine's Day, as no record of the day exists before 1375 when Chaucer wrote "Parliament of Fowles" a romantic poem referring to the date of February 14th, when birds and humans

actively find a mate. Chaucer wrote "For this was sent on Seynt Valentyne's day/When every foul cometh ther to choose his mate." Happy Valentine's Day Jenna.

*Dear Barb:*

*My sister and I were both adopted as infants; we are now in our mid twenties. I have always wanted to find my birth parents, but my sister has no interest. Every time I begin the search she discourages me, saying I will hurt our parents. I have discussed this with my parents and they assured me they are fine with whatever I want to do. When I tell my sister this, she says they are just saying that, but they would really be hurt. What do you think, should I do what I want to do, or could my sister possibly be right? Thanks, Janine.*

Hi Janine:

Thanks for your question. Being curious about your biological parents is normal for some adoptees and not for others. You need to do what feels right for you, if you don't you will always be wondering. Trust your parents when they say they are ok with you searching out your birth parents. I'm assuming you have done some research into possible scenarios you may be faced with when and you find your birth parents. Sometimes it works out and you end up having a mutually satisfying relationship with your biological parents, or you may have to face the fact that they may not even want to meet with you, thus triggering feelings of abandonment. It's important to have a strong support system around you. Good luck!

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





**Poet Maeve**  
Anger as Teacher

**Wanda Waterman**





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## IMPORTANT DATES

- **Feb 12 – Mar 2:** [AUSU Election Campaign Period](#)
- **Feb 15:** [Mar degree requirements deadline](#)
- **Feb 25-Mar 2 –** [AUSU General Election](#)
- **Feb 29:** [Deadline to apply for course extension for Apr](#)
- **Mar 5:** AUSU Election Candidates Announced
- **Mar 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Apr 1](#)

## Meet the AUSU Student Council Election Candidates!

AUSU's 2020 Student Council Election is just around the corner, and the campaign starts NOW!!

We are happy to announce we have 19 candidates running for student council!

Name	Location
Jennifer Bouley	Etobicoke, ON
Brittany Daigle	Kitchener, ON
Natasha Donahue	Barrhead, AB
Monique Durette	Okotoks, AB
Carly Erickson	Edmonton, AB
Darcie Fleming	Lethbridge, AB
Aleksandar Golijanin	Ottawa, ON
Kathryn Hadden	Williams Lake, BC
Jasmine Hernandez Banda	Calgary, AB
Fahid Hussain	Scarborough, ON
Stacey Hutchings	Calgary, AB
Natalia Iwanek	Mississauga, ON
Regan Johnson	Sylvan Lake, AB
Amanda Lipinski	Prince George, BC
Katy (Catherine) Lowe	Calgary, AB
Devon Romanick	St. Jacobs, ON
Joshua Ryan	Orleans, ON
Ian Stewart	Edmonton, AB
Mark Teeninga	Stoney Creek, ON

## Why Vote for Student Council?

AUSU has an impact on your experience as a distance education student at AU, no matter where you study from, what program you are in, or how involved you are with the Students' Union.

AUSU council guides and directs your students' union in its mandate to provide services, support, and advocacy for AU students, and is a part of creating an online AU student community.

There are a lot of important topics for AUSU council to focus on in the upcoming two years, including:

- AU tuition increase of 7% for 20-21, with potential 7% increases for 2 more years
- New AU Virtual Learning Environment with major online infrastructure changes
- Service standards and timelines at Athabasca University
- Relevance and competitiveness of distance education

The students you elect to council will be sitting at the table with AU administration and meeting with government officials, influencing the decisions being made regarding these important topics.

**Your vote helps determine who sits on council and impacts YOUR AU experience.**

Ballots will be emailed to all AUSU members on February 25. Voting closes on March 2, 2020 (12pm MT). Make sure to vote for YOUR student representatives on council!

## Find out more about the candidates:

- Check out candidate biographies and posters [here](#).
- Ask the candidates questions in AUSU's [Election Forum](#).

## Find out more about the election [here!](#)



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# CLASSIFIEDS

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

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## THE VOICE

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Jason Sullivan, Wanda Waterman, Xin Xu and others!

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