



THE VOICE

Vol 28 Issue 43 2020-11-06

Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You!

The New Writer in Residence

Introducing Joshua Whitehead

Set Up For Success

Using AUSU's VMock for your Career

Plus:

*Remembering 102 Years Later
Never again vs. The War of Tomorrow
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

The Triage of Liberty

Karl Low



We're back, and what did we come back into?

At the moment I'm writing this, former vice-president, Joe Biden has the lead in four of the six states left uncalled, with the current voting trend favoring him.

Upcoming remain the court battles, and then, if we allow the cynic in me full reign, the real challenge to a change in power, the electoral college. Many in the electoral college are not legislated to respect the will of the people in the states. While I'm hoping the US election will be over well before the new year, I'm not hopeful about the chances of that happening.

The results of this election stand to make a significant difference to Canada. I tend to believe that Mr. Biden would be better for Canada, and the world, than Mr. Trump, but only because President Biden would be predictable, allowing us to plan. President Trump has demonstrated that he is not.

More concerning, however, are the number of people who we can see on the news standing outside ballot counting offices, sure as can be, because President Trump has said so, that something nefarious is going on within. Whoever wins the election, these people won't quietly fade away. Their sense of justice and of being cheated has been activated. They are surrounding themselves, as so many of us do, with likeminded people, all of whom work to amplify their own message and, in doing so, leave no room for critical thought. And if the election does eventually turn to Biden, what will these people turn to to seek their justice?

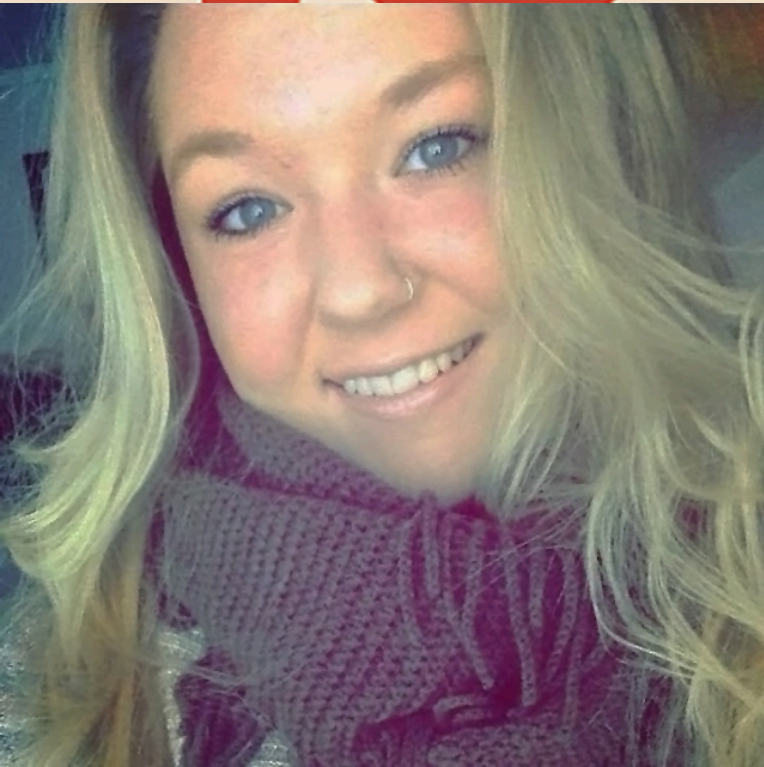
This is the greatest concern, that, feeling cheated, egged on by President Trump to feeling that way, these people will conclude that civil society as a whole is corrupt and against them, and it is that kind of feeling that turns people toward terrorism and acts of violence. To me, this is especially concerning in the US, a nation where a founding father noted that the tree of liberty must be refreshed with the blood of patriots and tyrants from time to time.

However, for now, the vote remains officially undecided, the issues of the future remain just suppositions and could simply be fever dreams of a pessimist.

Instead, right now, you have a brand new issue of The Voice Magazine, and this week, we start up with a number of solid articles, including not only our interview with fellow AU student, Chelsea Hinds, but we also talk to AU's newest Writer in Residence, getting an idea of his background and his advice for students who are looking to write and realize themselves, not necessarily in that order.

We also have a look at AUSU's newest career aid offering, VMock. Adrienne Braithwaite talks to AUSU's Executive Director Jodi Campbell and looks at what VMock promises and offers. It turns out it's much more than just a resume database and can give tips specific to your resume and career goals that can help you make the transition from student to employed. Plus, of course, news, reviews, advice, scholarships, events and more! Enjoy the read!

MINDS WE MEET



Who are your fellow students? It can feel like you are all alone in your studies, but across the nation, around the globe, students like you are also pursuing their AU education, and *The Voice Magazine* wants to bring their stories to you and vice versa. If you would like to be featured next, do not hesitate to get in touch!

Orillia, Ontario's Chelsea LeCamp is 21-years old, and enrolled in the Bachelor of Professional Arts in Human Services program. "Born and raised in Ontario," Chelsea stated that she "live[s] in a smaller city, but not one where everybody knows your name." She continued, "I live a pretty simple, modern day life but with high morals and values. I grew up sitting at the kitchen table every day for dinner at 5:00pm with hats off and elbows off the tables. Growing up with that sort of lifestyle really influenced my educational journey, making it an important and essential component of my life. I'm an extremely shy introvert. I was never a co-curricular sports player or had a lot of friends –

but I like that. I like it just being me! I'm a memory maker, always planning the next adventure and that is a whole other life in itself!"

Upon completion of her program, Chelsea plans to further her education, working toward a "Master's degree in Counselling with a future goal of achieving a PhD (specializing in Mental Health)." She stated, "This program will open the doors for me into the career path that I need to be on to achieve my final goal."

When she is not studying, Chelsea "enjoy[s] bingeing Netflix and eating comfort food." She stated, "I mean, who doesn't, right?! I'm a country singer (by hobby) and an acoustic guitar player—so if I'm not behind my computer screen trying to pass the next assignment or exam, you can likely find me strumming a couple chords, writing a few lyrics, or online shopping. Online shopping is my current addiction, and I admit it takes up some valuable study time if I get a little sidetracked with Amazon deals!"

Her life's greatest influence has been her father, who she credits with her strong educational focus. She revealed, "My dad was very adamant about me getting education. My mom was too, but my dad was hard on me. He kept me inline when I didn't want to be and taught me that education is a privilege when I felt like it was an option. He set these big career goals for me when I was younger and now I think I just strive to get somewhere in life where he can say: 'Yep, that's my kid.'"

Chelsea opened up about her experiences with online learning, stating, “I struggle a lot with mental health issues, so I chose AU for the fact that I would no longer have to go to a physical location every day to achieve more education. Online learning is definitely challenging because a lot of courses are new and unlike any of the ones I took at my previous institution ... teaching myself new concepts and courses is definitely a downfall to online learning. The flexibility of setting your own deadlines and being able to work around home/work schedule is obviously the best part, but when understanding a concept or course doesn’t come naturally, you’re saying a prayer to your higher power all the time and that doesn’t sit well with my passion for education.”

Like many AU students, Chelsea’s educational journey has not always been linear. She spoke briefly about some earlier struggles, “Last year was my first year as an AU student. I was enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts in Psychology program and struggled immensely through some of the psych courses. I wanted to specialize in psychology and the program was recommended by an academic advisor. I started at AU with a clean education record, amazing grades (not to toot my own horn!), and as an academic scholar ... [W]hen I was unsuccessful in a course it really set me back. I’m very adamant about being a good student. I do school regularly, ask for help when needed, and always do my best. It was not right that I failed a course. I remember being so upset that I dropped the program altogether, never re-taking the course. I have a future dream of becoming a counsellor (PhD specializing in mental health) so I knew I needed [a] university education, so I knew I had to keep going no matter how much I didn’t want too. I took four months off and enrolled in a new AU program. Looking back, I would not re-take the failed course. I’m smart enough to know that a failed course after all of my education[al] accomplishments means nothing.”

Chelsea has not had “a memorable AU course yet or even a favourite so far,” stating, “I think all of my courses taken so far have all had their ups and downs. If I had to choose one, ENGL 255 [: Introductory Composition] was relatively easy for me, and I remember feeling so confident about the exam – a feeling on an exam that I will likely never experience again.”

As for communication with tutors, Chelsea echoed recent student sentiment, stating, “If I’m being extremely honest here for my fellow students, the communications with my course tutors so far have been anything but good and have probably been my least favourite part about online learning. I have really learned over the past two years that my tutors have not all been passionate about ensuring I understand the course they are tutoring. Most of my tutors have been quick to respond which is about the only positive thing. They have very brief responses and often don’t answer my questions directly to give me the clarification that I reached out for. I honestly believe that AU would be an overall better experience if the tutors improved their service.”

When asked what her first project would be if elected as the new AU president, Chelsea stated, “I don’t know if the president of AU is the person responsible for this, but the layout of myAU portal is not actually as easy to navigate through as it seems. I have experienced a lot of difficulty with it and have realized over the past two years that some fellow AU students feel the same. I would make it easier to navigate and I would ensure deadlines are presented more visibly on the website so that they are missed less by new students who aren’t used of having to know when to submit a course registration plan. After missing out on two months of precious education time because the AU deadlines changed without notice/informing me, I definitely see a problem there that I would strive to ensure never happened for another student who values their education.”

As for pet peeves, Chelsea feels that she has “more pet peeves than a human being should.” She revealed, “I’m an easily irritated person because my biggest pet peeve is repetitive noises. Imagine just how many repetitive noises can actually be heard every day. There is a lot! Clock

ticking, people clicking pens, the microwave going, ‘Beep, beep, beep’ to tell you your three- hour old coffee is ready – my favourite, people chewing. It sends an adrenaline rush of annoyance through my veins, and I feel absolutely terrible that so many people get victimized ... [by] my outbursts because they were just eating their potato chips!”

When asked about which famous person, past or present, she would have lunch with, Chelsea stated, “My answer has always and will never change. Miley Cyrus. This may sound rather odd or surprising but the transitions she has gone through in life have been so inspiring to watch. I would love to learn how to go from being a sweet, innocent soul to dancing around on a wrecking ball without a care in the world! I would just love to share with her how much she’s influenced my life growing up.” When asked where she would have lunch with Miley, Chelsea stated, “Anything but sushi. I would love to dine at a simple restaurant and order appetizers. I’m not a huge ‘meal-eater’ but who doesn’t love a ton of appetizers to share!?”

Chelsea stated that she has “learned so many lessons over the years, a lot about living and a lot about life.” In particular, she stated, “I have learned the hard way that at the end of the day the only person you should count on is yourself because people can turn at any given moment, but you will always be there for yourself. This also ties in with ‘if it hurts you, it hurts you.’ Reminding myself to only count on myself has helped me let go of toxic people, have more success in life, and be more passionate about my future career choice. It was a hard lesson to learn, but probably the most valuable.”

Chelsea’s proudest moment was graduating from college two years ago. She stated, “I didn’t attend my graduation because I was just so thrilled to never have to return to a physical school location ever again. I was proud to see ‘with honours’ on my college advanced diploma and was even more thrilled that my family could know that my education was completed. I made it to where they wanted me to get. That mattered the most to me. It was the biggest weight off my shoulders to date and although I am still trying to keep up with my education and obtain more degrees, now I feel like I am really doing it for me.”

Although Chelsea described herself as “one of those rare persons that doesn’t read books,” she did mention Rory Feek’s *This Life I Live: One Man’s Extraordinary, Ordinary Life and the Woman Who Changed It Forever*. She stated, “I follow their journey over YouTube and have for years. Reading their book gave me a bit of hope when I needed it most and I knew it would before I even opened it. It was inspiring in a way that no other book could ever be.” As for something on-screen, Chelsea is currently binging on Heartland. “Who doesn’t love a good classic? It is a classic. It took me years to decide to finally start watching it. Now, it consumes most of my time. I love the idea of living in the country, on a ranch, and living life with family always at your side.”

As for what distinguishes her from other people, Chelsea revealed, “I really don’t think anything about me sets me apart from other people. Most people who know me know that I am not afraid to be open about mental health, but it’s not something that a lot of other people can do so maybe it is something that sets me apart. I have struggled with mental health issues for a long time and I think talking about it has saved my life. When people talk to me about their mental health, I am one of the few people who do not sugarcoat it. I don’t say, ‘It’ll get better,’ or tell them what they want to hear. Life is TOUGH. It’s okay to feel sometimes like you’re not living you’re just breathing, but you have to learn that it’s okay to feel how you feel.” Best of luck Chelsea!

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>.



Set Up for Success Using VMock as a Way to Boost your Marketability

Adrienne Braithwaite



This fall, AUSU began a new partnership with SMART Career Center to use their VMock program to provide Athabasca University undergraduate students with an innovative way to navigate the tough job climate. Using artificial intelligence, VMock matches a candidate's skills and talents with specific career opportunities. The online technology differs from traditional job databases by helping candidates build the best possible online profile to market their experience and education. VMock's services include streamlining candidates' résumés, conducting mock interviews, scanning online profiles, and providing personalized feedback. The program is designed to utilize modern technology to enhance students' online portfolios. AUSU's decision to invest in VMock has been influenced by graduate feedback and a desire to help AU

undergrads succeed in their future careers.

Why VMock?

I caught up with AUSU's Executive Director, Jodi Campbell, to discuss why VMock was chosen for AU students. Campbell said that, during a 2019 review, AUSU identified career services as one area where AU students are under supported. When looking for a way to provide students with access to résumé services, AUSU "focused on 'online' career options/services that all AUSU members could access". He noted that VMock's focus on candidates' online portfolio development made them stand out against other more basic job databases. Their AI technology supports successful job applications by guiding you through what a good résumé looks like, how to prepare for competitive interviews and how to highlight marketable education and skills.

The benefits of the program are not just to match students with potential employers, but for students to be able to concisely market all of their talents; this includes feedback on mock interviews with attention to appearance, tone, body language, and industry related literacy. Campbell also indicates user friendliness and personalization were strong factors in AUSU's decision to partner with VMock. I personally see VMock's innovative strategy as an effective tool for highlighting candidates' best characteristics; their scanning technology optimizes your strengths, identifies key competencies and makes résumés more noticeable to employers.

However, this program does come at a cost and AUSU has invested \$15,000 USD to ensure students have the tools they need to be competitive in the job market. Campbell notes during this first year, AUSU is eager to measure how well the program benefits students' ability to gain meaningful employment either during or after their studies at Athabasca University. AUSU is not alone in partnering with VMock and the program is used in 130 countries and by 250 academic institutions. These statistics alone infer universities all over the globe are investing in the success of their students.

What are the Main Features?

Initially, I assumed VMock was just another online job databased, but upon further investigation it actually has some really innovative features such as:

- **SMART Career Platform** – Provides personalized feedback on your résumé and utilizes AI technology to compare your experience against corporate job criteria and global standards. This allows you to modify your information to match employer job postings or take notice of areas where you may need more professional growth and development for your chosen occupation/career path. The best part – it is quick and personalized to your résumé and career ambitions.
- **Social Media (LinkedIn) Analysis** – Allows you to match your online presence with your résumé and qualifications. This ensures you send a consistent message across all online platforms as prospective employers do check your social media accounts!
- **Smart Pitch** – Practice makes perfect. VMock gives you real time advice on your interview skills. Practice and perfect your pitch to make yourself stand out against other candidates. A score is provided to benchmark your skills and attributes over possible competitors.
- **Cross-placement of talent** – By engaging with VMock's portfolio process, potential candidates are linked to any number of career options, some they may have not considered. With the recent pandemic this is even more essential as jobs become more competitive and companies are looking to hire based on specialized skills and education backgrounds.

What are VMock's Limitations?

When comparing the value of different career placement technologies, VMock scores quite well but AI technology does have some “human” limitations. VMock can match you to jobs you may qualify for, but it can't provide you with the knowledge gaps you may need to be competitive across different industries and job descriptions. For example, the AI might match you to eligible jobs, but it doesn't necessarily know which jobs would be a perfect fit for your personality. In a recent article, Sharpening The Spear: 5 Ways To Leverage The Lockdown, Forbes recommends investing in your own future during this global pandemic by taking to heart the knowledge gaps you may have and building skills which will make your profile more competitive. VMock can shed light on skills you should invest in, but it doesn't give you direction for to how to acquire them.

Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) present another shortfall to VMock's abilities. Jobscan argues many employers use ATS to weed out applicants without needing to cite a reason for their résumé being disregarded. You may qualify for one job posting in your chosen industry but not another and not know why. Jobscan investigates what algorithms are being

AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Events

Bannock and a Movie November Edition: The Road Forward

Nov 1 to Nov 30

Online

Hosted by AU Nuksahtowin

indigenous.athabascau.ca/bannock/index.php

Access through above link

Talk to a Librarian Drop-in Session

Tues, Nov 10, 9:00 to 9:30 am MST

Online via Microsoft Teams

Hosted by AU Library

library.athabascau.ca/orientations.html

No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

Talk to a Librarian Drop-in Session

Thur, Nov 12, 3:00 to 3:30 pm MST

Online via Microsoft Teams

Hosted by AU Library

library.athabascau.ca/orientations.html

No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

The Grad Lounge

Professional Networking Session

Fri, Nov 13, 1:00 to 2:00 pm MST

Online via Microsoft Teams

Hosted by AU Faculty of Graduate Studies

fgs.athabascau.ca/news/events/index.php

No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

All events are free unless otherwise noted

used by employers to sort applicants and uses the information to make recommendations for specific words and skills candidates should include in their applications for certain job titles.

The scoring system used by VMock also does not support creativity or artistic expression in résumés, it is only qualifying your content. Applicants should consider adding more qualitative measurable data over the inclusion of stylistic elements. Boston University has tips and tricks for student submissions to VMock, citing that even the best résumés they submitted during their trial only received a score of 80%. Even with these challenges, there are many benefits for students to improve their applications, highlight their experience and skills and be connected with jobs in their preferred career paths.

Do you have a VMock Success Story?

AUSU's previous President, Brandon Simmons, tested VMock's platform during a review of potential career services for AU students. Simmons had a positive experience, citing the online services and résumé advice as beneficial. Through the comparative research on other similar online products and based on Simmons personal feedback, AUSU initiated the partnership with VMock. Since it has been available, over 70 AU students have interacted with VMock. I am eager to hear how these students interacted with the program and if they thought it was a valuable tool for building eye catching résumés. I also wonder if the process as user friendly as it claims. I would love to hear your feedback if you have personally tried VMock. AUSU hopes it will be a valuable career service to AU students and I believe this service is both timely and essential for students to be competitive in an increasingly challenging job market. I am definitely intrigued and anticipate that I will want to try it once I have completed my program.

References

Jobscan Blog. "VMock vs. Jobscan for Universities." Retrieved from: <https://www.jobscan.co/blog/vmock-vs-jobscan/>
VMock—Higher Education., "The AI Assistant for Career Services". Retrieved from: <https://www.vmock.com/higher-education>

Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: ServiceScape Scholarship 2020

Sponsored by: ServiceScape

Deadline: November 30, 2020

Potential payout: \$1000 USD

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be attending, or will be attending, an accredited university, college, or trade school in 2020, and be at least 18 years old.

What's required: A completed online application form with contact info and a 300-word essay describing how writing impacts today's world.

Tips: Check out [previous winners](#) for inspiration.

Where to get info: www.servicescape.com/scholarship



Introducing AU's Newest Writer in Residence—Joshua Whitehead

Natalia Iwanek



The Voice Magazine was recently able to conduct a Q&A with Joshua Whitehead, the new Writer-in-Residence (WiR) at Athabasca University. On October 1, 2020, Whitehead was announced as the WiR for the 2020-2021 term, a yearlong position previously held by celebrated authors, Katherena Vermette, Esi Edugyan, and Hiromi Goto. WiR's typically spend 60% of the year working on their own projects, and 40% as a manuscript resource for the AU community, while taking part in public readings and literary events.

Whitehead, "an Oji-nêhiyaw, Two-Spirit member of Peguis First Nation" (Treaty 1), is a PhD candidate in Indigenous literatures and cultures and lecturer at the University of Calgary. He is also author of acclaimed and award winning works, *Jonny Appleseed* and *full-metal indigiqueer*, as well as *Love after the End: An Anthology of Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer Speculative Fiction*. Currently, he is working on *Making Love with the Land*, a creative non-fiction, "which explores the intersections of Indigeneity, queerness, and, most prominently, mental health through a nêhiyaw lens."

Other work can be found in various publications, such as *Prairie Fire*, *Red Rising Magazine*, *The Fiddlehead*, *Arc Poetry Magazine*, and more.

Can you tell AU students a little about yourself?

"tânsi nitotemak! I'm currently a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Calgary (Treaty 7) where I focus on Indigenous literatures and cultures—and within that, primarily Indigenous (nêhiyaw/Cree) genders and sexualities. I moved to Alberta five years ago from Manitoba where I did my B.A. in English Honours and my M.A. in Cultural Studies at the University of Winnipeg (Treaty 1). I hail from Peguis First Nation and identify as a Two-Spirit person. I also am very much an Indiginerd, when I'm not studying, reading, or writing, you can usually catch me watching copious amount of horror films (B-grade horror is a must), playing RPGs on my PS4, dabbling in VR, watching Billie Eilish's music videos, or being the most conscious, and thereby worst, colonizer in a round of Settlers of Catan. My book of poetry, *full-metal indigiqueer*, is a cyber/bio-punk foray into decolonial poetics centered around the canon, my novel *Jonny Appleseed* is, what I call a sibling story to *full-metal*, a rumination on Two-Spirit sexualities and livelihoods in downtown Winnipeg. Currently I have an edited anthology entitled *Love after the End* which details Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer speculative fiction geared towards the utopian. And currently, I'm working on finishing a creative non-fiction manuscript, *Making Love with the Land*, which revolves around Indigeneity, queerness, and mental health slated to be released Spring 2022 with Knopf Canada."

Can you tell us a little about your journey to becoming a writer?

"I have been storytelling since I was a child, my parents have stories and poems saved from when I was five years old—one of which is a short story about my anthropomorphic toys, I'm not sure what came first, mine or *Toy Story*. My refuge as a kid, remembering this was when the internet was first being introduced and we played on floppy discs, was the library where I'd go and spend

entire weekends reading the likes of Ursula Le Guin, C.S. Lewis, and Shirley Jackson. I took all of the extra credit English and writing classes in high school and have this horror novella I wrote about the cloning of Christ and the onslaught of an oncoming WW3 saved from when I was a teenager, hah (it's dreadful). In my undergrad, I began taking creative writing courses and became fixated on the Beatniks—Kerouac, Ginsberg, and Albert Saijo primarily. This was also in the time of my coming into my queerness, which is when I learned that stories are always a homecoming. In my M.A. I encountered Toni Morrison and *Beloved*, which was one of the first BIPOC texts I had ever been assigned or read really throughout my academic tutelage—it was when I learned what real stories can do, when the body of text is attached to the body of the writer (which it always is, living and writing are wholly political acts). What I learned here was that I was being taught to write white, and since that realization, I have been actively trying to embody myself, hi/stories, communities, and experiences into the stories I now tell.”

Can you tell us a little about the Writer-in-Residence program? How did you come to AU?

“I was invited by the lovely Angie Abdou to join the AU WiR and I couldn't be more honoured to be a part of this family for the next little bit—especially in a time where we are all sorely starving for conversation and intimacy under COVID-19.”

What do you hope to accomplish during your residency here at AU?

“I hope to make new kin, have amazingly delightful (and difficult) conversations with the community in Athabasca, learn new ways of being and speaking, and, most importantly, help foster a community in the ways I can virtually.”

If you could give new writers one piece of advice, what would it be?

“Be wary of the ways in which we, as storytellers, archive or note take in our lives as people—don't consume voraciously, be strategic in how we curate our inspirations and our traumas. What I've been teaching myself is: I need to be a person first, a writer second. Don't forgo your relations, prioritize them.”

Which books (fiction/non-fiction) have made the biggest impact on your life and why?

“*Kiss of the Fur Queen* by Tomson Highway was one of my first forays into Two-Spirit/Indigiqueer literature and it was also based in Winnipeg and Manitoba, it was one of the first times I saw myself in story.

Larissa Lai's *Salt Fish Girl* which taught me the fundamental writing truth I hold now: that even in speculative fiction, the noun body is a magnitude, that such a noun holds all of us in relation: bodies of text, physical bodies, bodies of water, land, sky.

Alexander Chee's *How to Write an Autobiographical Novel* for his ruminations on Korean-American queerness and the form of both the novel and the essay—in how there are times in which literature becomes a peeking into voyeurism.

Garth Greenwell's *Cleanness* because of his propensity for nostalgia and love even as his speakers are transplanted into new regions and places—as well as his ability to write about pain and trauma in ways that are rejuvenative and healing.

Billy-Ray Belcourt's *A History of my Brief Body* because of his willingness to find utopia even in dystopic conditionings: such as within parameters of loneliness, in intergenerational trauma, on Grindr, and his skill to eat theory and regurgitate it as prose.”

Which author has had the greatest impact on your life and why?

“Toni Morrison and Eden Robinson will forever be the literary matriarchs to my writing practices for showing me the inherent power within oratory, histories, survival, and taking up space in a world that has continually positioned you on the wayside.”

What advice would you give to students struggling with impostor syndrome/struggling to find their place in writing/publishing/academia, especially underserved and marginalized communities?

“Forget what you were taught about the greats, the masters, the canons—never write to whiten yourself; edge your stories so as to maintain the fluidity of your queerness; cough up a lung of glitter and maintain the femme glimmering. Your story is valued and valuable. Conceptualize your elders as theorists, community as canonic, your stories as sorely needed—because they are. Nourish your body so as to enrich the body that is textual, and never sell or give it away freely for the idiom of success. Having said that, never consume wholly and freely, be strategic and selective in what you choose to record and narrate—be weary not to become the consuming voyeur, yourself. Stories are animate kin, those we write and those we are gifted, treat them as such. Storytell as if our lives depend on it—because they often do, stories are survival mechanisms. We need you with us, literarily and literally, as we reshape the horizon of this nation’s oral hi/stories.”

In many ways, 2020 has been a culmination of historical (and current) injustices reaching a boiling point. I would like to focus on the ways various communities, including the Two-Spirit community, are resisting and thriving in beautiful ways as well. In 2020, what have been some examples of resistance that give you hope for the future?

“I’m thinking right now of having come back from the #ShutDownCanada protest in Calgary this past Saturday which was curated and enacted by the Idle No More Calgary chapter. It was organized and ran primarily by Two-Spirit and Indigenous youth. I was filled with hope and strength from their stories, songs, chants, and protests even as I returned home to sit back in the maw of settler colonialism. I think too of the national protests that happened that same weekend, the shutting down of Yonge St. in Toronto by more Indigenous youth—what a time to be witnessing such revolution. I’m hopeful about the plethora of BIPOC and/or queer writing that is emerging into the Canadian literary landscape and actively changing the parameters of excellence. I’m inspired by the ongoing work of Wet’su’weten, Land Back Lane, Mi’kma’ki sovereignty, the moose moratoriums with the Anishinaabe, the Kumeyaay activism around the wall in the southern US, the BLM movement across Turtle Island—we are living in a time of unprecedented imperialism but we are also on the cusp of civil, treaty, and humanitarian rights too.”

What work needs to be done? How can AU students get involved?

“My advice would be not to leave the work of social and systemic change simply on those being actively impacted—it’s one thing to share a black square or to a post of “All Eyes on Mi’kma’ki” but its another to actively engage and interrogate one’s self, community, family, and standing in the ongoing colonization and imperialistic killings of BIPOC folk across Turtle Island. I would encourage folks to follow social media accounts led by front line defense groups, to donate what you can, albeit time, money, or conversation, around issues of decolonization and BLM.”

Submission Guidelines for AU’s Writer-in-Residence Program

Aspiring writers are encouraged to apply to AU’s Writer-in-Residence program. Submissions should include a brief introduction, previous writing experience, future writing goals, and desired feedback, in under 2,500 word, 12-point font, and double-spaced Word documents. Further information can be found on AU’s Writer-in-Residence website.

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

Never Again Versus the Wars of Tomorrow

Jason Sullivan



Remembrance Day as Seriously Contested Terrain

Huddled as a mass, we across Canada gather at our local cenotaph on November 11th. The experience transcends differences of rural and urban, class and race, gender and belief, because the spectre of war brings us together today as it has throughout our history as a nation. As we give thanks for those whose sacrifice transcended their own lives at the moment their flame was snuffed out, our thoughts may invariably drift to two phrases: never again and the wars of tomorrow.

Remembrance Day seems to ask us to see reality and history as what they are: war is about terrain contested both literally and figuratively. The winners write the history books, but the printing press whirs onward. Therefore, words and discourse, each acting in their own right and as the ultimate impetus for mortal sacrifice, guide our minds through the charnel house of history. As students, it behooves us to consider our role in the future world as we acquire knowledge about the world around us.

Not Just A Game, That Electronic Babysitter

Of the wars of tomorrow, we don't have to look far for their preparation; in terms of the valorization of combat at the expense of depictions of the suffering caused. Consider one staple video game of our times, its name bearing a hallmark phrase that can be as noble or as vapid as its bearer: *Call of Duty*. Their website uses stark advertising phraseology: "Earn new functional weapons and get to the fight faster with the newly-opened subway system in Verdansk." Functional weapons for maximum efficiency, right? It sounds akin to finding the fastest pipeline route from pancake land tar sands through the mountain morass of the Pacific northwest.

Yet, there's more to building infrastructure than just gettin' it done; every *how* defends or denigrates a mound of *why*, a few alternative visions for society and the planet. Analytic precision, key to winning a video game or engineering a pipeline, has little room for broad historical perspective or the emotions of stakeholders. Cerebrums take second place to the heart when we consider the grim fate of real warriors fighting a real war, far removed from inhabitants of Dorito-laced sofas with legs up on Ottomans without an Empire.

In contrast, feel these few words by a veteran of the Second World War: "Our destination is Dieppe. There are a lot of embankments, and so there'll be a lot of climbing. It's not going to be a picnic. But the worst part I have to tell you is that only one out of every four of you people will come back alive." The worst parts of war are often the parts least understood by those who play at it; likewise, the worst outcome for the planet fails to figure in economic calculations. Historical perspective on our times remains for the future to find, ironically.

The muted suffering of war, for the service of Queen and country and for the preservation of our ideals and liberties, has little place in the realm of video games. Perhaps this is why countless users online, people of all ages, so blithely rampage and ransack each other's fortresses of personal belief with nary a need to feel the real consequences of their actions. And, lest we forget to put our own studies in perspective, let's remember too that our deadlines and future careers are also not life and death. November 11th is a chance to balance the act; my decades of attendance on what, in my hometown, annually feels like the coldest day since February have never failed to help define where I'm at in relation to my life as a Canadian. Not just a consumer or a student, but as a Canadian. No moment of silence is more deadening than the one at 11 AM on that day. The machine gun mind stills as the reality of peace descends on us all. And then, when the tune of the reverie wafts hauntingly through the air the real cost of our freedoms becomes clear: to simply live and speak as we will, and know that our flag and our cenotaph and our valued civil liberties will be there, without beheadings and without the evisceration of historical monuments, is a right and privilege that can be lost and thus that we must defend in our discourse and with both our minds and our hearts.

AU Scholars United in Appreciation of our Hard-Won Freedoms

Besides giving thanks to our veterans past and present, Remembrance Day can provide a broader perspective on our role within the Canadian mosaic. (Canada Day, and its attendant concepts of unity and harmony, is perhaps the inverse Janus face of this sombre occasion.) At AU we can see an image of the greatest facets of Canada in our own small struggle for academic success. On Remembrance Day the distance between us as AU students diffuses; what unites us is our valuation of the evaluative faculties of the human mind in terms of intellect and development.

While it may be a fool's pragmatism to believe that we can fully predict our future life outcomes based on skills we acquire in the present, we fight our own noble fight by working to better ourselves through education. We're here to learn, not merely to follow orders. We don't just stand at attention with vacant eyes and zombie souls like conscripts forced to die on foreign shores. And we don't just wander to class like fresh-faced students piling into dorms straight out of high school at their parent's bequest.

Each victim of war was exercising their individual agency in the best way they knew how, and we have to honour their service because to believe in something enough to put our body in the line of fire is part of the passion that makes life for living. To limit our struggles to a hedonistic search for pleasure would be like surfing the internet randomly and claiming to have learned as much as a student who pays for the privilege of an education. In this way, AU is about a private struggle for valuable meaning in the way that the tragedy of war is based on people fighting for worthwhile beliefs.

Poetry in Motion; The Wheels of History and The Heroes Who Keep Us Strong

Poetry, that expression of the mirrored soul on the surface of life's sunny skies, ironically expresses the real shock and awe of war that moving images often fail to capture. Consider this First World War poem about a victim of the first weapon of mass destruction, mustard gas:

"In all my dreams before my helpless sight,
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.
If in some smothering dreams, you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,

His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;
 If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
 Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
 Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
 Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—
 My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
 To children ardent for some desperate glory,
 The old Lie: *Dulce et decorum est*

Pro patria mori." (<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46560/dulce-et-decorum-est>)

Key to the poem is the Latin line, which means "it is sweet and fitting to die for the homeland." A harsh sentiment, but that's war.

And that's the point: war has no glory when you're the one dying in it. Glory comes later or, in a video game, as an artifice achieved without any real sacrifice other than that of one's precious time. War is emotional, not calculating, and the struggle is in the heart as well as the mind. Feelings aren't just for the therapists colouring book. The question becomes, in life and in struggles, what do we value enough to suffer and even die for?

Strange Times: All the More Reason to Remember Those Who Fought and Died

That we are blessed with peace in our time gives a healthy perspective on cultural troubles and social media disputes, including riots over police violence and the destruction of monuments to our history. (Recall how in the aftermath of 9/11 monuments were officially protected from terrorists). In our scholar world, our struggles to succeed at our studies clarifies too.

When we ponder the real loss faced by veterans who lost their comrades, families who lost their relatives, and above all, by brave soldiers who lost their very lives, our private troubles lessen in the face of historical fact. There's no fake news names engraved onto those cenotaphs. Those who fought and died did so not only because they believed that their battle was just or because they were told that this was the way forward but also because, in their heart of hearts, they felt that the history and the future of our humble Canada depended upon them. That's why their sacrifice is so powerful: the fight for freedom is not a bumper sticker, it's the ultimate expression of meaning. But war is a last and horrible resort.

To arrest future senseless bloodshed requires nothing less than we ask ourselves what it is that matters most. And in the immortal lyrics of Edwin Starr, that war, all too often, is good for "absolutely nothing", we can realize that petty cultural bickering withers in comparison to the consequences of real turf battles around the globe. If war is good for only one thing it is that it provides perspective that we may acquire the ability to foresee, forestall, and foreclose the possibility of unleashing of future horrors upon the world. And we can only do that by preserving our freedom of expression and maximizing our knowledge, our book learning and our school smarts, that we may face the future with a real education. One day as AU graduates who studied our world and have the diploma to prove it, we can, when someone speaks of wars of the future, respond with with dignity in our hearts and respect for our forebears under our brow, with a hearty: "never again!"

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.



The Study Dude

Reflections on How to Write a Reflective Essay

Marie Well



A friend of mine said we must listen when somebody speaks from the heart. When someone is sincere, candid, or vulnerable, it's time to lend a heartfelt ear. She also said, we must put our biases aside.

When you write a reflective essay, you speak from the heart.

But what exactly is a reflective essay?

According to EssayShark (2017), "A reflective essay is a type of academic paper that reflects your personality, and describes the scene of events that influenced your knowledge and experience. For example, a student from a medical university comes to practice in a real hospital and describes what problems he or she faced and how they were solved, what new experiences were gained, and what his or her hopes and expectations were before practicing

and if they were fulfilled" (Essayshark, 2017, 61%).

Let's look at some things to consider when writing a reflective essay:

No literature is needed.

"In reflective writing you don't need to use literature—the entire paper is built upon your own experience. Also, you should express your own view instead of comparing the views of others" (ibid).

Older students have the advantage of more life experiences, more life lessons, and more time spent in the literature (if they love to read). Therefore, they have a great deal to offer a reflective essay.

But some younger students can be wise beyond their years. One fellow student in grade four was a deep philosopher, always questioning the meaning of life. Everyone called her their best friend. In grade four, she could've written a prize worthy reflective essay, I'm sure.

And many of us have met someone in his or her twenties who leads a moral and clean life, one rich with meditation, education, fitness, spirituality, or community service. If you've led a life like that, I bet you've reaped many benefits that could fill books.

But even those journeys marred with hardship, or perhaps *especially* those, have deep, rich lessons to teach.

What it boils down to is that everyone's story is meaningful. Even the stories that seem insignificant are woven with profound beauty. We all have lives worthy of endless reflective essays.

Choose a topic you know.

"Find a topic that is closely connected with you and your experience So, if you have never been to a summer camp, don't choose it as the basis for your topic" (66%).

I couldn't write a reflective essay on travel to Europe. Nor would I want to. Just the thought of the plane ride makes me ill. I can barely stomach a Ferris wheel. But you might love travel, or music, or science, or acting. And those things might lead to a certain career or lifestyle. And each career or lifestyle has its own unique ups and downs.

But there are some things you may never experience. Perhaps you'll never experience cocaine addiction or the trials and tribulations of being a nun. Some people never feel love from another human, even though we are all loved in ways we may never know.

So, pick topics you know well for your reflective essays.

Choose an exciting topic.

"Choose a topic that excites you the most. You will be surprised how writing can be joyful and easy if you write about something interesting for you" (ibid, 66%).

What is your favorite hobby? Your passion that keeps your heart pumping at high speed? I love learning about relationships and personalities. I heard of a near death experience that said, in heaven, our life stories are being written in a book of gold, inked with every one of our thoughts and deeds—in real time. If that's the case, I'd love to read your story, to truly empathize with your every point of view, to see how you grew from the lessons you learned, to experience your amazing journey. Your life story would make for an A+ reflective essay. You are fascinating to me.

Topics to consider:

So, you've narrowed your topic down to both what you know and what excites you. How should you now fine tune your topic?

"Pick a reflective essay topic that you can present at an unusual point of view" (ibid, 67%).

Here are some possible reflective essay topics:

"Describe the most outstanding accomplishment you have ever done" (ibid).

"Describe how you have gained new skills (painting, cycling, hiking, swimming, etc.)" (ibid).

Describe the person you loved the most and the ways you expressed the love?

Describe a situation where you refused to judge another human being. How did withholding judgement make you feel? (I've discovered that withholding judgement not only feels terrific, but it also prevents us from judging ourselves harshly.)

Describe a moment when you discovered your most tragic news. How did you feel the first day? The first week? The first month? (I've realized that even the most disturbing shockers can settle down into a calm new normal after about three weeks. It just takes patience, forgiveness, and love.)

Questions to answer:

As you write your reflective essay, you may want to answer certain questions. These questions can include the following:

"What feelings did I experience?" (ibid, 68%).

"What could I have done differently?" (ibid).

How could I best grow from the experience?

What are the best resources to help me cope?

How can I bring unconditional love into the equation?

Now that you know some of what it takes to write a personal essay, maybe you'd like to draft one. Try it out if you haven't already. Just give it a thesis statement, a structure (like a normal essay), and a level of formality. Your prof will love you for it.

I just wish I could read it—as a soul longing to learn from another soul. I believe your reflective essay can set free a journey for all of us to relish.

Reference

EssayShark. (2017). *Essay Becomes Easy Part I Analysis * Persuasive * Classification * Evaluation Reflective * Narrative * Compare and Contrast Essays*. [Kindle Unlimited]. Retrieved from amazon.ca.



Remembering 102 Years Later

Emily Viggiani



In 1918, the First World War came to an end after a long four years. Even though the vast majority of us in Canada were not even born at the time, we still remember. Most of the men fighting for our country were conscripted at a very young age. The women basically kept Canada running whilst the men were overseas.

As a result of these men's bravery, Canada is a free country where we can speak and worship how ever we choose. And I think it was a result of the women's entrance into the workforce, that we can vote in elections and hold public office. We owe the wartime generations everything.

So, I believe we must wear poppies every November to honour the fallen and surviving heroes. It's the least we can do. Veterans will stand outside and distribute poppies to Canadians in return for a donation to the Royal Canadian Legion.

And then at 11:00am, sing *O Canada* whilst you wear a poppy over your heart. And at sunset on November 11th, you ought to take the poppy off and place it somewhere respectful. Don't throw it in the garbage!

In 2011, Target came to Canada from the United States of America. There was a bustle of excitement for a few days over that. The excitement fizzled out quite quickly when Canadians realized that we do not receive the same products or prices as the Americans do. To put a nail in the coffin, Target refused to allow veterans to distribute poppies in their stores. A foreign entity disrespecting the most honourable citizens this country has to offer. For what? Well, Target left Canada shortly after that debacle.

Many left-leaning politicians are now wearing the rainbow poppy or wearing white poppies for peace. But I say that if you want your health care provided to you by your province, or your education subsidized, I highly recommend you don a red poppy or pay for your own privileges. A white flag means to surrender. I don't want to even consider a surrender. As for the rainbow,

as brave as it is to come out, it pales in comparison to trench warfare. Please, only wear poppies distributed by veterans.

Every year, we witness poppy box theft. People of exceedingly ill repute steal from society's most vulnerable: the veterans of the Royal Canadian Legion. The poppy box is full of donations, and everyone in Canada is aware of this fact. Very few people would ever think to steal a poppy box, but every year, someone does.

I'm writing this because I know that the current society in which we live will put me into another righteous rage again this year - like this society does every year.

Aspiring to be a journalist, Emily Viggiani decided to start with The Voice Magazine. It makes perfect sense given Emily's passion for the arts, and she hopes to be promoting artists within Athabasca University.

Should we organize our day based on energy levels?

Xin Xu



Often when it comes to scheduling our day, we block off chunks of time for allotted activities, we jot down to-do lists of items, and we're lucky if we get to half the items on the list. Is our time management fundamentally flawed? What can we do to be more productive and feel less mentally drained at the end of the day? This has been a question going on in my head for many months during the pandemic. My motivation was at an all-time low, yet I had several activities that needed to be completed. I also felt that, even though I was doing everything from planning my day to using all the tools in my toolbox when it came to producing meaningful work, I wasn't fully satisfied with the way I had used my time. Moreover, for more mentally taxing work that happened later during the day I took significantly longer to complete them and felt grumpy and unsatisfied by the end.

However, I've come across an excellent article in [Harvard Business Review](#) that shed some light on the way that I can improve my routine. Some of these tips might be valuable for AU students who are struggling to fit more and more into

their day and falling short of expectations.

What if, instead of organizing our days based on one or two hour time slots, we organized them based on the energy levels both physical and mental required to accomplish those tasks?

What does that look like?

Mental Energy

Unlike time, which is consistent and continuous, mental energy fluctuates throughout the day. For example, I am someone who is highly productive and energized during the early hours of the day. This means that, during those hours, I can channel my motivation to finish just about any task. If I were to use this time for activities such as cleaning or cooking, it may be a poor choice given my capacity to complete an essay or finish a report at the time. Therefore, having an understanding of where that mental energy is high and times when our mental energy is low is a better, more effective use of our day. If you're a night owl, perhaps those hours are the times when larger projects and activities can be completed.

This is highly dependent on the individual, and requires you spend some time analyzing yourself and how you perform. Be honest. And then write it down.

Physical Energy:

Like our mental energy, our physical energy is also highly limited. If we're using our physical energy to work out at the gym for forty minutes, that same energy cannot be used to walk the dog for another forty minutes. Therefore, it is critical to consider where that resource can be spent. For example, my peers enjoy morning workouts whereby they can check off this activity early in the day and not worry about it for the rest of the day. This might also prevent them from skipping on a gym day if they feel less physically energetic later in the day. So, scheduling these activities based on personal energy levels can make a significant difference in your day-to-day experience.

Ultimately the take home message is:

- Stay in tune and record your peak times of mental and physical energy so give you the insider's understanding of your own finite energy resource.
- Adjust your activities to optimize the use of that energy
- Interspace activities that drain your mental energy and physical energy with activities that refresh and energize you. This will go a long way in helping you stay happy and productive.

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

Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

AthaU Facebook Group

Kodi-Lynn asks about exam completion dates for courses ending December 31; a response suggests students have an extra 15 days after the end of December to complete the exam. Ashley seeks input on a prerequisite for a masters of counselling program; responders recommend one to two courses that can be done quickly to satisfy the requirements.

Other posts include Grammarly, calculator hunting, GCID, ProctorU disconnections, and courses ACCT 351, BIOL 205, COMP 266, and ECON 247.

reddit

Among a slew of course-related posts, one student asks for insight on how to deal with the lack of due dates; among responses is advice to use the suggested study schedule as a base.

Twitter

@austudentsunion tweets: "Finished any AU courses recently? Fill out a Peer Course Review and be entered to win a \$250 Amazon Gift card! Reviews are anonymous, but tallied results can be viewed online and benefit your fellow students! <https://bit.ly/2FZEzOE>."

@aulibarchives tweets: "Share your story to the #ThomasAEdgeArchives COVID-19 Memory Archive Project! Entries in Nov. can WIN 1 of 200 avail. packs of AU playing cards w/ historic photos of AU! If you refer a friend you can also win! Read more about the project and how to submit: <http://archives.athabascau.ca/covid-19-memor>."



Homemade is Better Easy Sauces: Mayonnaise

Chef Corey



A while back, it occurred to me that many of the sauces and spreads we use are almost always easy enough to make. I'm going to start a series of easy sauces to make that have multiple applications! For example, mayonnaise is the main ingredient in some salad dressings, like creamy coleslaw or even a quick hollandaise sauce (future recipe).

There are five "Mother Sauces" that all students in culinary arts learn to make. They are tomato, velouté, hollandaise, béchamel, and brown sauce (Espagnole). Hollandaise is eggs and hot butter. You would quickly whip the eggs, add the butter in small amounts at first, and then eventually increase it until you have a beautiful looking buttery sauce for eggs benedict. But this mayo recipe gives us a way to hack the hollandaise and keep it stable in the fridge for longer than a day. You can reheat and reuse it a few times too.

The other mother sauces are common as well; you probably don't realize it, though. Tomato sauce is likely an obvious one; pasta sauce or pizza sauce are common uses. Velouté is a thickened sauce made from stock, butter, and flour.

The stock can be beef, chicken, fish, pork, lobster; it just must be a stock where the bones are not roasted in the oven. A chicken volute is probably the most common. Supreme sauce, which has cream, butter, and lemon juice, is the most popular version of this sauce. It's kind of like chicken gravy, but it's not browned like a gravy.

Béchamel is a type of cream sauce with the main ingredients of butter, flour, and milk. You might recognize those from mac and cheese. That's what is in the dry cheese packs of KD, mostly. But it's super easy to make on its own. The last of the mother sauces is the brown sauce, also known as Espagnole sauce. Its familiar form is called demi-glace. It's a beef gravy

with tomato products added. The chef will roast beef bones and add tomato paste and mirepoix (an equal combination of carrots, celery, and onion) when making it. Then the bones are added to a pot with water, mirepoix, and herbs to make a rich stock. Then it's thickened with flour and butter (also known as a roux) and becomes a brown sauce. It's a beef gravy, but it doesn't have to be beef; in fact, turkey or chicken are possible substitutes, although it's not common.

I use a whole egg in this recipe, but egg yolk is traditionally the main ingredient. I used the entire egg because I feel like it adds a certain amount of insurance for the emulsion; it's also possible I'm making that



up in my head. The critical factor here isn't whether you choose to use egg yolk or a whole egg; it's the speed at which you add the oil. It has to be added slowly at first to the sauce. You may speed this up later as the egg absorbs more oil but take it very slowly. One egg yolk can also hold a maximum of 1 cup of fat (such as oil). There is a new factoid for you. If you use a stand mixer with your whisk attachment, you'll want full power! Turn up to eleven, as the saying goes. Add your oil, one tsp at a time, until the mixture is starting to turn white. Then add the oil a little faster in a thin steady stream. Once the oil is gone, you should have a lovely fluffy white mayonnaise. Taste it for acid (lemon juice and vinegar). Add a little more if you think it needs it, or just leave it.

Now you've made mayo! Good work, you!

Mayonnaise

Ingredients:

One large egg (or egg yolk)
½ tsp fine salt
½ tsp ground mustard
2 tsp lemon juice
1 TBSP white vinegar
1 cup canola oil

Directions:

- 1) Crack the egg into a stand mixer OR a bowl.
- 2) Add the salt and mustard.
- 3) Add half of the vinegar and lemon juice.
- 4) Slowly add the oil, 1 tsp at a time while mixing on high.
- 5) Continue to add the oil 1 tsp at a time until an emulsion has formed.
- 6) Once the mayonnaise starts to turn white, you can add the oil a little faster in a steady thin stream.
- 7) Once the oil is added, taste it for tartness. If you can't taste the lemon juice yet, you can add the remaining tsp.
- 8) If the mayo seems very thick, you can add the remaining vinegar 1 tsp at a time until it looks like the right consistency for you.
- 9) Leave it at room temp for one hour, then refrigerator for up to a week.



Chef Corey is a student in business management who first graduated from NAIT's Culinary Arts Program in 2007



Beats from the Basement

Milica Markovic



Album: *Greatest Hits*

Artist: Spice Girls

I don't think there's ever been a girl group as influential as the Spice Girls. Their massive success in the late 90s has inspired the emergence of other pop acts over the last two decades such as *NSYNC, The Pussycat Dolls, and, more recently, Fifth Harmony.

It's easy to see why that would be the case: their songs, as catchy and cheery as they mostly are, also promote messages that would appeal to a greater number of listeners beyond their original core audience of young girls. These include the empowerment of all genders, embracing family and genuinely supportive female friendships, being ambitious in one's career, and the concept of love as a serious life endeavour rather than a frivolous episode that can be quickly forgotten.

Many of their lyrics also contain unique catchphrases that would make the Girls instantly recognizable, such as "spice up your life," "zig-a-zig-ah," and "she's a downtown swinging dude." This clever branding had initially extended to their image, both collectively and individually; each Girl was assigned a nickname according to their style, whether they were seen as bold, fashionable, sporty, or simply delightful. Fans would inevitably identify with at least one of them, and witnessing their mingling personalities in songs and other media has been a big part of their charm.

I'd say it's because you really do feel like you're friends with them, joining in for a night on the town or a slumber party as you listen to these tracks. However endearing they may be, I feel none of their vocal performances truly stand out on their own, but their harmonies and stylizations always shine through without overshadowing each other.

This brings me to the Girls's *Greatest Hits* compilation, which largely retains those signature attributes. The most notable of their tracks tend to be the ones that express their aversion toward shallow and/or hasty romantic relationships, namely "Wannabe" and "Stop." Not only are they tonally different—the former being sassy while the latter is sweeter—but at no point do they come across as mean-spirited.

Much of the album is future-oriented, but in the ballad "Viva Forever," the Girls take a step back and reminisce about a past love they will continue to cherish as time goes on. I like that they don't view vulnerability as a weakness despite their push for "girl power" and can turn bittersweet feelings into a hopeful attitude. If we're to think of the track listing as something akin to a singular narrative, they're being honest about and catching up with their emotions here. Considering all the upbeat bops, this was one of those much-needed breaks.

"Headlines (Friendship Never Ends)" is the only hit exclusive to this record, written for the charity telethon Children in Need. It was met with lukewarm reception when *Greatest Hits* released in 2007, but I personally disagree with it. The Girls only improved with age vocally, and the

production recaptures the magic of their ballads from the 90s. Even after years had passed since their disbandment, everything is still in sync.

What more can I say? From music to movement, the Girls were trendsetters for artists of their time, and a pleasant rush of nostalgia that never seems to lose its momentum today.

Milica Markovic is a Toronto AU student enrolled in the MA-IS program with a BA in criminology and political science.

The Creative Spark Brick Walls may Lead to Bliss

Marie Well



The most painful way to grow is to face a brick wall. But if managed well, brick walls can lead to bliss. Indeed, brick walls can make life exciting and rewarding.

Let's examine the role of brick walls for characters in fiction—and for us.

Everyday People Live Exciting Lives.

If people were to walk in our shoes, they'd surely walk fascinating lives. We may have led thrilling lives. But even if we hadn't done anything ultra-exciting, we've still led deeply meaningful lives, just by the nature of being human.

Author Charles Euchner (2015) says, "The most ordinary people lead rich, complex lives: ministers and teachers, housewives and factory workers, lawyers and accountants, cooks and janitors, scientists and artists" (13%).

It's the little things that matter most: smiling at a stranger, helping out a child, petting an animal, giving a hug to a hurting friend.

What matters most is not a grandiose role as an FBI agent, an astronaut, or a Navy Seal. What matters most is where our hearts reside while doing most any job.

He goes on to ask "How do [we] know when [we] have a character worth developing? 'I have to be able to defend this character,' says Aaron Sorkin, the screenwriter for *The West Wing* and *The Social Network*. '[We] want to write the character as if they are making their case to God why they should be allowed in heaven'" (Euchner, 2015)

Wonderful traits can arise in most any character, especially in characters undergoing hardship. These redeeming traits could be forgiveness, kindness, humor, spirituality, love, fairness, generosity, mercifulness, and so much more. To be a true hero, a character should grow more inwardly beautiful. Inner beauty makes any character book-worthy.

But what makes a character mesmerizing? Charles Euchner (2015) advises, "Push ... characters hard to discover what they choose and avoid. Put ... characters in challenging situations; make life hard on them. As soon as they begin to resolve their problems, throw new challenges their way. Kick ... characters; as soon as they get up, kick 'em again. Test their capacity to learn and grow"

If characters respond to brick walls with love, patience, and forgiveness, I believe they can speedily recover. And not just recover, but discover bliss.

Charles Euchner also says, "Don't just discover the surface facts of [our] characters' lives; explore the backstories. Don't just find [our] characters' names; discover how they got their names and

what they mean. Don't just talk about their jobs; find out what work means to them emotionally. Be complete. Don't dismiss any ideas as unimportant. Each detail, somehow, matters" (ibid)

Details matter. A person's job can dictate the hardships he or she goes through. A paramedic is at risk of post-traumatic stress disorder. A cashier may be at risk of not earning enough to support her child. A cab driver may be at risk of assaults, theft, or even murder.

Names, too, matter. I read a study on bias that said elementary school teachers tend to give higher grades to students with common names—and lower grades to those with foreign names. A name like Candy can have a different social impact than a name like Beatrice. And a name like Bob gives a different impression than a name like Archibald.

Every little detail about us matters, even the trim of our nails and the glimmer in our eyes.

Your Choices When Times are Tough Define your Character.

"We find people's character in the choices they make in their most difficult moments," says Charles Euchner (2015, 14%).

I find it quite shocking that horrific events can draw out our greatest beauty. Something traumatic can turn out either devastating or redeeming. Just by refusing to judge another, by loving on everyone, and by forgiving every sin, I believe we can come to a state of bliss.

Most anyone can change from a sullen, defeated state to a charming, loving state. It's attitude. The trick is to put love in every interaction, as if we were on stage; as if every person we meet, we hope to spend an eternity with; as if everyone is the most important person in our lives.

The next time we hit a brick wall, think of it as an opportunity. Treat that brick wall like a treasured friend—for that brick wall may lead to bliss.

Reference

Euchner, Charles. (2015). *The Elements of Writing: The Only Writing Guide You Will Ever Need*. [Kindle Unlimited]. Retrieved from Amazon.ca.



Celebrate the Life and Legacy Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader-Ginsburg

Emily Viggiani

Who was the Notorious RBG?

The notorious Ruth Bader Ginsburg the second female Supreme Court Justice, and the first Jewish female Supreme Court Justice. Back when she first studied law in the 1940s, it was more common a priority for women to pursue marriage than a law degree.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg 'made law review at Harvard in 1959. Yet, she still had a difficult time finding work after her graduation from Columba Law School and Harvard Law School. Eventually, Judge Edmund L Palmieri hired her as a clerk. She began to work with people who had sex discrimination complaints, referred to her by the American Civil Liberties Union.

RBG saw a parallel between the Civil Rights Movement and the fight for gender equality. She was an avid supporter of the Equal Rights Amendment.

She helped found the Women's Rights Project. In the case of *General Electric Co vs Gilbert*, she helped end the workplace discrimination facing pregnant women. It is, according to her, the same as sex discrimination.

Known for her advocacy on the reproductive right to end a pregnancy, lesser known is her work in the 1970s to end enforced sterilization, particularly of poor women in the southern states of the US. She helped found the ACLU Reproductive Freedom Project in response to this enforced sterilization.

There was also a law that prevented women from working on navy ships. She and the Women's Right's Project challenge this law in the case of *Beeman vs Middendorf*.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg was appointed to Supreme Court Justice in 1993. There, she fought for the workers' rights of pregnant women. She worked on intersectional issues, such as race and poverty that affects some women, as well. Equal access to education for women was also important to her, her career, and now her legacy.

Concern for Justice

Ruth Bader-Ginsburg grew up as a Jewish girl during the Second World War. Her parents were immigrants who had to leave the old country, because being Jewish in Europe was dangerous. Even in the United States, RBG had to face discrimination, as seen by her quote to Senator Edward Kennedy here:

Senator Kennedy, I am alert to discrimination. I grew up during World War II in a Jewish family. I have memories as a child, even before the war, of being in a car with my parents and passing a place in Pennsylvania], a resort with a sign out in front that read: "No dogs or Jews allowed." Signs of that kind existed in this country during my childhood. One couldn't help but be sensitive to discrimination living as a Jew in America at the time of World War II.

Supreme Court Justice RBG feels that the Jewish tradition of justice goes back even before the pogroms of Europe:

I am a judge born, raised, and proud of being a Jew. The demand for justice runs through the entirety of Jewish tradition. I hope, in my years on the bench of the Supreme Court of the United States, I will have the strength and the courage to remain constant in the service of that demand.

What happens now?

Well, may she rest in peace, Ruth Bader Ginsburg has left us. There are dolls that look like the notorious RBG that are available in the United States for children to inspire them.

Now it is up to President Trump to nominate a new Supreme Court Justice, though some argue that he should be constrained as President Obama was in the last year of his presidency from nominating a Supreme Court Justice. President Trump has selected Amy Coney Barrett as his nominee. She would be the youngest Supreme Court Justice if she gets approved. She is also a staunch Social Conservative, especially when compared to Ruth Bader Ginsburg. She emphasizes gun rights, as opposed to reproductive rights.

And, personally, I don't feel that we as women should end a pregnancy unless our lives are endangered. I side far more with Amy Coney Barrett, compared to Ruth Bader Ginsburg, but I cannot deny the accomplishments of the latter. Of course, I'm looking more forward to Amy Coney Barrett's rulings on gun rights and the rights of the unborn.

Further Reading

<https://www.aclu.org/other/tribute-legacy-ruth-bader-ginsburg-and-wrp-staff>

<https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/ginsburg-ruth-bader>

<https://quotefancy.com/quote/1206873/Ruth-Bader-Ginsburg-I-am-a-judge-born-raised-and-proud-of-being-a-Jew-The-demand-for>

<https://www.npr.org/sections/supreme-court-nomination/2020/09/24/915781077/conenator-who-is-amy-coney-barrett-front-runner-for-supreme-court-nomination>



Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

Growth and Remembrance

Dear Barb:

Hi, my neighbor has a small black dog that has a huge growth of some kind on its stomach. It is so big it almost touches the ground. The poor dog walks awkwardly because of the weight of this thing. I have talked to her and she always says, "oh its fine, he is doing well." My heart breaks for this dog. Why don't people fix these things before they get to this point? It is just not fair to the poor dog. It is now to the point where it would be major surgery to remove. If my dog had a growth I would have gotten it taken off before it got to this point. Am I alone, or do others feel the same? Looking for some opinions. Thanks, Linda.

Hello Linda:

I hear what you are saying, but this is not a black and white issue. While it's important that the dog is taken to the vet for examination and a biopsy done, whether the lump is cancerous or not will make the decision clearer. If the lump is not cancerous, then the decision to remove it depends on the health and age of the dog. You shouldn't assume the owners haven't already done this, so clearly there is no easy answer. This is a decision the owner will have to make with their veterinarian. Thank you for your question.

Dear Barb:

Since Remembrance Day is only a few days away I was wondering if you could write a brief description of the

meaning of Remembrance Day, or as some call it Armistice Day. Thanks, Mike.

Hey Mike:

Good suggestion! Here are some brief facts about Remembrance Day. It was first observed in 1919 and was called "Armistice Day" to acknowledge the Armistice agreement that ended the First World War on November 11, 1918. It wasn't until November 11, 1931 that "Armistice Day" became officially known as Remembrance Day. Every year on November 11th Canadians partake in a moment of silence to remember all who have served Canada during times of war, peace, and discord. The poppy is widely available and is the traditional symbol of Remembrance Day. Every year a ceremony is held in Ottawa at the National War Memorial and is presided over by the Governor General of Canada. The Prime Minister along with other dignitaries, Veterans and members of the general public are all in welcome to attend.

Many of the Commonwealth member states observe Remembrance Day on November 11, including Canada and the United Kingdom. In 1954 the United States changed the name from Armistice Day to Veterans Day. Other countries observe Remembrance Day, but on different dates, for example South Africa refers to it as Poppy Day and it is acknowledged on the Sunday closet to November 11.

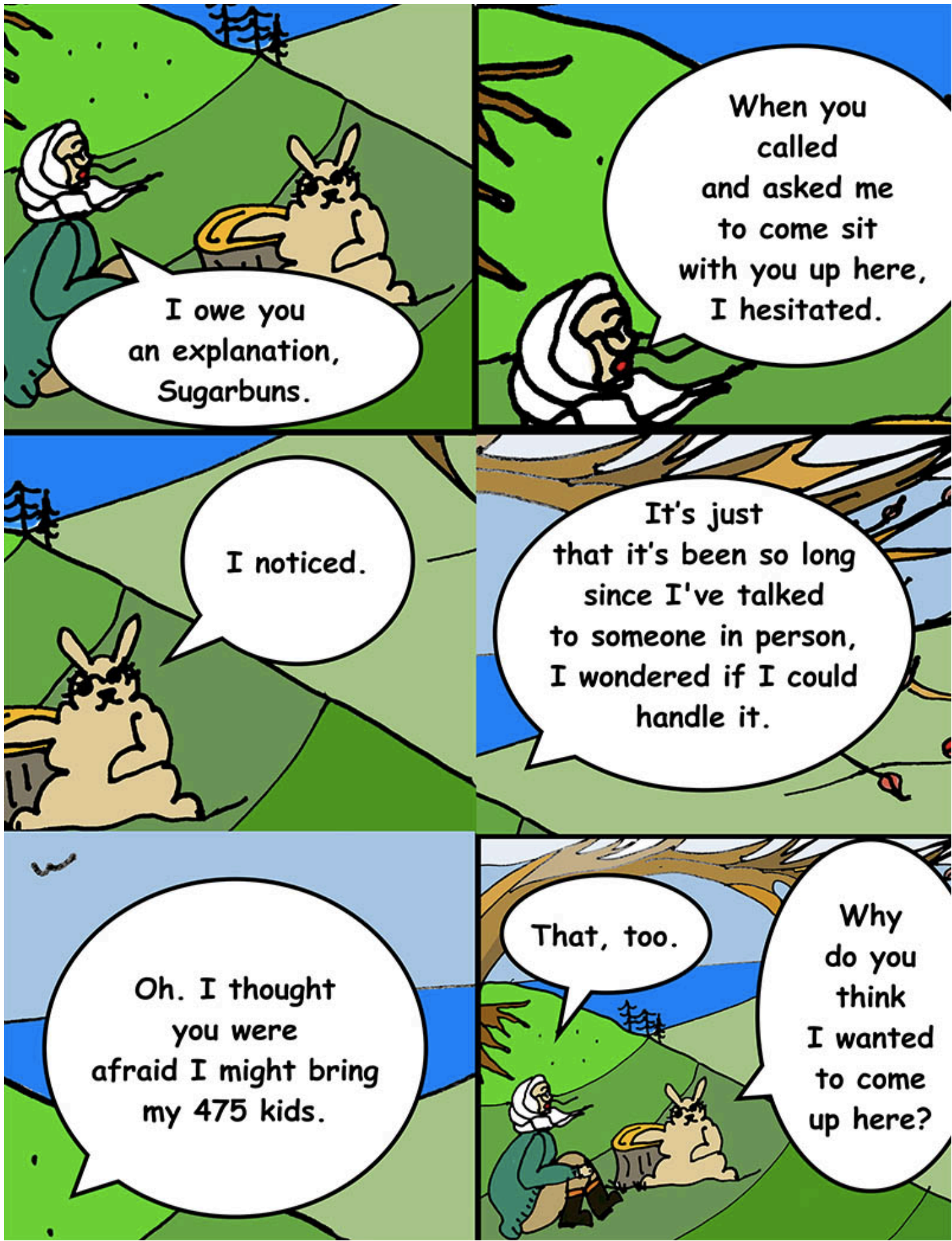
"Lest we forget."

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
Covidagoraphobia

Wanda Waterman



The information on this page is provided by the AU Students' Union. The Voice does not create this content. Contact AUSU at services@ausu.org with any questions about this article.

IMPORTANT DATES

- **Nov 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Nov 1](#)
- **Nov 15:** [Dec degree requirements deadline](#)
- **Nov 25:** [AUSU Annual Survey Closes](#)
- **Nov 26:** [AUSU Virtual Student Social](#)
- **Nov 30:** [Deadline to apply for course extension for Dec](#)
- **Dec 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Jan 1](#)

Take our Survey – You Could Win \$1,000

AUSU values your opinions! We want to know how we can best serve our members and help you have a positive experience as a student at Athabasca University. Your feedback helps us set our goals and advocacy priorities each year to represent your priorities.

We encourage all AU undergraduate students to take our [AUSU Services Survey](#) and make your voice heard!

You Could Win up to \$1,000 for Taking the Survey!

Take the Survey Now!

AUSU is giving away \$4,000 in prizes to members who complete our survey, including:

- \$1000 Prepaid VISA Gift Card - (2 available)
- \$500 Amazon Gift Card - (2 available)
- \$100 Amazon Gift Cards - (5 available)
- \$50 Gift Cards to the AU apparel store - (10 available)

**YOU COULD
WIN THIS!!!**



Note: Prize winners will be selected at random after November 25, 2020. Only current AU undergrad students are eligible. Contact services@ausu.org with any questions.

Deadline to take the survey: Nov 25, 2020

Digital Advocacy Month

Student lives have been significantly impacted by COVID-19, and there is a long road to recovery. This month, AUSU is partnering with the Canadian Alliance of Students Associations (CASA) and the Quebec Student Union (QSU) for a month of digital advocacy, representing 365,000 students across Canada. This is one of the largest advocacy efforts ever hosted by students! Student leaders will meet digitally with Member of Parliament to bring forward advocacy priorities and ask the federal government for ways to support students through Canada's economic recovery and beyond.

This year, the Advocacy Month will be focusing on five major topics that have been identified as priorities for students across Canada, including:

- improving access to affordable childcare.
- reducing mental health barriers for Indigenous post-secondary students.
- expanding access to trade re-skilling.
- streamlining the ability for international students to work in Canada.
- increasing the Canadian Research Granting Agencies student scholarship funding.

AUSU will ensure that the voices of Athabasca University students are heard, and the unique perspective of distance education students is considered when supports are being put in place for students at the federal level.

Find out more on the AUSU website [here](#).

Follow us on social media @austudentsunion for updates!

**Take the AUSU
Annual Survey**

Enter to win up to \$1000!



#StudentsOnTheDigitalHill



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