



# THE VOICE

Vol 28 Issue 44 2020-11-13

## Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You!

## Council Connection

October 21, 2020 Meeting

## COVID-19 Long Haulers

Why “Not Dying” is not “Recovered”

*Plus:*

*Three Mentors & The Lessons Learned  
Ergonomics During Covid  
and much more!*



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AUSU Student Council.

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

For weekly email reminders  
as each issue is posted, fill  
out the subscription form  
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Volume 28, Issue 44

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Magazine

ISSN 2561-3634

# 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****We Can't Have Nice Things****Karl Low**

The Alberta government has increased the restrictions, with those additional restrictions coming, as is appropriate, today, Friday the thirteenth. Unlucky if you're a gym or a pub owner. But many Albertans also feel unlucky that the government is not taking stronger actions, noting that the reason the disease is ramping up so quickly already is because too many people are not taking the personal responsibility that Premier Kenney says is what he expects them to do to slow the viral spread.

I went shopping the other day in Ikea here in Calgary. In retrospect, it wasn't the best of ideas, as their rat warren-like store doesn't help with social distancing in the first place, but on top of that I spotted two separate groups of people taking absolutely no COVID-19 precautions, and IKEA staff blithely ignoring it. Of course, I have to admit, I did little better, not wanting to take the initiative to confront these people and ask why they had so little concern for those around them or for the businesses in the province, as it is actions like theirs that are adding to our current outbreak and pushing the province to take increasing lockdown actions again.

Then again, it's not my job to act as store security. I'm not getting paid to do so, after all. The frustrating part is that those who were getting paid to do so weren't doing the job. We are why we can't have nice things, people.

However, the snow on the ground has reminded me that we're rapidly approaching the end of the year, and, as always at this time of year, I need your help. I need you to remind me of some of the best articles we published over the past year, so that, come January, I can start us off with a Best of the Voice issue. If there's an article you read over the past year that you think more people should see, or an article that just tickled you for some reason, let me know at [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org). There may even be some swag in it for a few of the better responses.

Meanwhile, this week, we interview student Jo-Mary Crowchild, a student pursuing an ecology focussed program, which may mean that she ends up having to transfer away from AU, but right now, she's pursuing her Bachelor of Science here and using the freedom of AU to allow her to continue her advocacy work and hiking with her dog.

We also have a look at what is happening to those people who have "recovered" from COVID-19, with some information on why simply not dying may not mean the type of recovery that many people seem to think it means. Natalia Iwanek expands that to look at other long-term illnesses and the difficulties that western medicine has in identifying and treating such problems, and what COVID-19 may mean in that respect.

We've also got the latest council meeting report, from our news Council Meeting reporter, Emily Viggiani. The next council meeting is coming up this Wednesday, November 18, and all students are welcome. Plus, of course, our usual selection of helpful advice, recipes, news, scholarships, events, and even some ergonomic assistance. Turns out, those old paper textbooks may still be useful for something. Enjoy the read!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karl', with a stylized, flowing script.

# 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!

*The Voice Magazine* recently had the chance to chat with Jo-Mary Crowchild-Fletcher currently in Calgary, Alberta, the traditional Treaty 7 territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy (the Siksika, Piikani, and Kainai First Nations), the Tsuut'ina First Nation, the Îyâxe Nakoda (the Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nations), as well as the Métis Nation of Alberta (Region 3).

Jo-Mary began the interview in Tsuut'ina, "*Dadanast'ada, sizi Jo-Mary at'a. Sinajunagha Crowchild uwa, Fletcher uwa Tsuut'ina uwa Gooji uwa Ik'oholi at'a*," ("Hello to each and every one of you, my name is Jo-Mary Crowchild-Fletcher. And my ancestry is Tsuut'ina and Siksika on my mother's side and French and Scottish on my father's side.") and is currently in her first year of the Bachelor of Science: General program, although she may potentially switch schools in the future to pursue a major in Ecology, "which sadly

Athabasca doesn't offer." She hopes to either pursue environmental law/Indigenous law at the University of Victoria, which offers "half Indigenous law and half Canadian law," or "continuing on the science journey, on the ecology journey, and eventually getting a Master's and working up to a Doctorate."

Jo-Mary grew up in Golden, British Columbia in the foster care system, stating that it has "been quite a journey to get to where I am today." After high school, she worked for the Ministry of Children and Families, "creating supports and changing policy ... for current and former youth in care, especially Indigenous youth." However, she decided to pursue higher education, choosing AU's online framework, which "was best for how I learn."

Two years ago, she moved from Vancouver to Calgary, stating, "This is where my people are from." She continued, "I wanted to learn more about my culture and about my languages."

When she is not studying, Jo-Mary tries "to do a lot of advocacy work for Indigenous people and the earth, [including] climate change." She stated, "In Calgary, I do some work with a group called Bear Clan [Patrol], and they do some frontline work," distributing food and clothing to help vulnerable populations on the streets. She also spends time outdoors with her year and a half

year old Mastiff-Black Lab mix, Xakiji, which means Chief in Tsuut'ina. She stated, "If I can be outdoors, that's where I want to be!"

She spoke briefly about her two proudest moments in life, the first of which was "graduating from high school." She revealed, "Being Indigenous and being a foster kid, graduating wasn't really what happens statistically for us and even surviving to be 18 or 19 ... I made it to this point in my life, and I get to decide what I want to do next." Her second proudest moment was "the first hike of this year." She stated, "I ended up doing a 15 km hike with my dog ... The last 2 km of this hike were straight uphill." She continued, "With all the deaths that were happening related to police brutality and a lot of things that were going on in the news; I just needed to get out of the city and do anything that wasn't super focused on everything that is going wrong in the world and everything that needs to change. In that moment, [the focus was] getting to the top of that hill."

She considers her biological father, Brian Fletcher, as one of her biggest influences in her desire to learn. She stated, "We grew up in the mountains and he had a degree in Forestry ... That was the start of my ecology learning." She also credits her "spirit parents, Kim Younger and Paul Bridger," who stressed the importance of being open-minded and showed her "how to live in a good way."

Jo-Mary's experience with online learning has been positive so far, based on her independent learning style. She has been enjoying her program, as well as her courses. One of the negative aspects, "which comes with being an online program or an online school is making friends and seeing who else is in the program or in the school." Although she has joined several AU Facebook groups, it can be isolating at times. Jo-Mary finds communication with her tutors great, stating that "all of my tutors have been fantastic. Usually they get back to me within a couple of days ... If they don't, they usually send out an email."

When asked if she ever wavered about the idea of her educational journey, Jo-Mary stated, "Being Indigenous, going to any sort of post-secondary institution [made me question], 'Is this the sort of environment I want to be in?' because school in general has rarely been good for Indigenous people, with residential schools or day schools. Even now, it's such a colonial institution that sometimes it's hard to find the supports ... Also, growing up with a lot of trauma from foster care ... I know what I want to do but how do I get to those steps?"

Her most memorable AU course thus far has been ASTR210: Introduction to Astronomy and Astrophysics, which despite being "from a colonial point of view," made it "really fascinating learning about space and the universe." She continued, "My last assignment was writing an essay, which connected Indigenous Creation Stories ... to different theories of science ... In these Creation Stories, they had similar theories or ideas to the big bang theory ... [However], these Creation Stories have been passed down for thousands and thousands of years, when the big bang didn't come into theory until the 1920s."

If she were the new president of AU, Jo-Mary revealed, "I know that there has been some work with decolonizing AU, so it would probably be something around that and Indigenizing AU for students." When I asked for her thoughts on the process, she continued, "Decolonizing is a big word; it can mean so many things to so many people. When I was applying to AU, (or any other post-secondary's that I have applied to), I always look up their Indigenous supports, and how does the school work around supporting different minorities ... so that all students can have success. This often involves reaching out more to students and creating space for students to feel comfortable." She also mentioned Nukskahtowin at AU, stating that it would be interesting to



speak “with them more and see what they need and making sure that there are Elders available for people.”

On a more personal level, Jo-Mary would love to have lunch with the late legendary environmentalist, conservationist, and wildlife expert Steve Irwin, “to talk about animal advocacy because we share some similar beliefs.” The lunch would be “on top of a mountain.” She continued, “Any conversations I’ve had on top of a mountain have usually been pretty great.”

Outside of her studies, she is currently “rereading [Robin Wall Kimmerer’s] *Braiding Sweetgrass* [*Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*].” Kimmerer, an Indigenous scientist and academic, is also a person that Jo-Mary would like to have lunch with! As for television shows, she is watching the legendary She-Ra, revealing that she “just finished exams” and is “binging on anything that is not school-related!”

One thing that distinguishes Jo-Mary from other people is that she often finds herself described as someone with a “calm demeanor, even in stressful situations.” Although she admitted that, like many of us, she “definitely gets stressed,” she always manages to handle situations calmly. As for something that she thinks about herself personally, she considers herself very optimistic, which “probably helped through my childhood ... to where I am today.” She left students with a bit of wisdom, as she related her most valuable life lesson in life: “To walk in a good way, we need to realize that we are both a teacher and a student and to be open-minded when we come to moments of learning.” Best of luck Jo-Mary!

*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>.*



## Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

**Scholarship name:** The Dalton Camp Award

**Sponsored by:** Friends of Canada Broadcasting

**Deadline:** December 1, 2020, 8 pm EST

**Potential payout:** up to \$10,000

**Eligibility restriction:** Applicants must be Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada. Applicants who are enrolled full-time at a recognized post-secondary institution are also eligible for a secondary Student Prize of \$2500.

**What's required:** An online application including contact and school info and a short bio, along with a maximum 2000-word essay on any topic relating to the link between democracy and the media in Canada.

**Tips:** Read [previous winning essays](#) for inspiration.

**Where to get info:** [friends.ca/dalton-camp-award/](https://friends.ca/dalton-camp-award/)



## Council Connection

### October 21, 2020 Meeting

Emily Viggiani



AUSU Council met on October 21, 2020. Regan Johnson delivered the land acknowledgement for the traditional lands of the First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples.

All councillors and regular staff were in attendance, with Councillor Kathryn Hadden expected to be slightly late.

During the approval of the agenda, an unusual, though perfectly allowable, request was made by Councillor Darcie Fleming to add agenda points to discuss the hiring of an organizational consultant, and to propose an ad hoc committee to review Executive Compensation and to changes to be made to the Honorarium policies due to privacy issues. These additions were all accepted unanimously by Council.

The previous meeting's minutes from September 16, 2020 were then approved unanimously.

AUSU's policy 7.03 about *The Voice Magazine* was approved by the executive committee as an informal review, meaning that no changes of substance were made. Also approved in the informal review was policy 6.01 Member Services Administration. Vice President Finance and Administration, Monique Durette only noted slight grammar changes.

In an email vote between meetings, council allocated up to \$100,000 total of surplus funds to be used during the 2020/2021 fiscal year. This will be distributed to the awards program and to the budgeted annual contest prizing. The motion was approved unanimously, and that vote was ratified in this meeting unanimously. Council noted it is happy to be giving back to students.

There was a motion to appoint Caitlin Smith to the Student Advisory Committee, which was approved unanimously. There was no difficulty in filling this position, as there was a lot of interest in this role. Council hopes that they can engage more students into finding similar opportunities.

The next item on the agenda was the new point brought forward by Councillor Fleming: hiring an organizational consultant. She is in favour of this motion, especially with the discussion about adding a fourth executive member, and the forthcoming recommendations from the Indigenous Student Representation committee (ISRC). The idea to be more inclusive to the indigenous people of Canada, might involve hiring someone from outside the organization to assess the organization for inclusivity options.

Councillor Fleming mentioned the possibility of, in addition to the indigenous organizational consultant, creating another executive position. If these changes are made, then AUSU council needs to prepare for big organizational changes in the future.

The question was asked if AUSU had ever had external consultants evaluate the organization before, and it was noted by Communications and Member Services Coordinator Donette Kingyens that there had been a similar evaluation in 2014/2015. President Donahue will put this



issue on the executive committee agenda, so as to bring a better prepared backgrounder and information to council, so that a full discussion can be had about the options surrounding an organizational consultancy hire.

The idea for an Ad Hoc Executive Compensation Review Committee (ECRC) was then discussed as the next added item to the agenda.. This committee is struck every second year and is chaired by a council member with no executives on it. The ECRC reviews the executive portfolio and wages and makes recommendations to council for changes. The current policy says that the committee will be struck in the third quarter of the second year of each Council Term, which is almost a year away. Darcie Fleming noted that if there is to be an addition to the Executive Committee, or some other shift because of the recommendations of the ISRC, it would be useful to have a more current evaluation of the current executive roles and wages.

President Donahue indicated she was planning to propose a fourth executive to the Executive Committee serving in a Community & Wellness portfolio, but if the ECRC was going to be struck early, she would not proceed with that to allow the ECRC the ability to do it's job. Councillor Stacey Hutchings questioned whether the point of striking the ECRC early was only to explore the idea of adding another executive member, and it was confirmed that the typical mandate of the ECRC is to not only explore those types of ideas but to also explore the compensation package executives are given and a breakdown of the hours they work. Vice-President Hutchings noted she felt uncomfortable with the full compensation package review in the middle of a council term, but was amenable to the ECRC solely exploring whether a fourth executive member is needed. President Donahue noted that it may be appropriate for executive to abstain from voting on this if Council decides to move to a vote.

Councillor Joshua Ryan, having sat on the most recently convened ECRC, notes that they already did a fairly comprehensive review of executive compensation and the need for a fourth executive, and wonders if a different mechanism might be more appropriate, one that focusses solely on the fourth executive question.

Councillor Fleming was asked why she felt compensation should be reviewed now, and responded about how, with COVID and the rapid growth in the organizations, the workload for the Executives has likely increased, and she wants to make sure the executives are being compensated fairly for the extra work. In addition, if another executive is hired, and research was done as to what the appropriate pay rate is, it would seem odd if that

## 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 Nukskahtowin

[indigenous.athabascau.ca/bannock/index.php](https://indigenous.athabascau.ca/bannock/index.php)

Access through above link

### **Talk to a Librarian Drop-in Session**

Tues, Nov 17, 9:00 to 9:30 am MST

Online via Microsoft Teams

Hosted by AU Library

[library.athabascau.ca/orientations.html](https://library.athabascau.ca/orientations.html)

No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

### **Zotero and Mendeley Citation Management Tools**

Tues, Nov 17, 10:00 to 11:30 am MST

Online via Adobe Connect

Hosted by AU Library

[library.athabascau.ca/orientations.html](https://library.athabascau.ca/orientations.html)

No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

### **PowerED™ Presents "Reimagined Micro-Learning in Response to a Global Pandemic" at D2L Fusion 2020**

Wed, Nov 18, 1:00 to 1:45 pm MST

Online

Hosted by AU's PowerED™ and Desire2Learn  
[news.athabascau.ca/events/powered-presents-reimagined-micro-learning-in-response-to-a-global-pandemic-at-d2l-fusion-2020](https://news.athabascau.ca/events/powered-presents-reimagined-micro-learning-in-response-to-a-global-pandemic-at-d2l-fusion-2020)

Register through above link

*All events are free unless otherwise noted*

person ended up receiving more than the rest of the executive until the regular striking of the next ECRC.

A question was also raised as to whether council is even allowed to appoint another executive midway through the term, and it was noted that according to AUSU bylaws, council can do so, but it would require changes to the bylaws as to the nature of the Executive Committee

Executive Director Jodi Campbell noted that while Darcie's not wrong about her idea that this should be going through the ECRC, he felt that it seemed there needed to be a couple more decisions made yet which would then allow the ECRC to be able to properly evaluate the situation.

President Donahue sought to move the meeting forward by asking if there were any objections to her proceeding with her plan of creating a proposal for the fourth executive position and keeping the ECRC on its current track, while also looking at a proposal to bring in an external organizational consultant. No objections were noted, and so Council began to discuss the second part of this agenda point, whether Executive honorariums should be made private. Darcie was worried that because the President and VPs were specific people whose positions gave specific amounts listed, that it might be a violation of privacy laws. President Donahue noted that these are not salaries, but honoraria, and it is typical and part of transparency for the amounts to be listed. Vice-President Durette suggested that the organizational reviewer could look into this, which was met with no objections.

We then moved on to reports, with the President's report being first.

The Re-Imagining Assessment in Support of the Learning Framework Ad Hoc Committee will have a focus group on October 28, 2020, where they will continue to try to find new and better ways of assessing student learning. Meetings with the Registrar have discussed Student Financial Aid accessibility, and it will be reviewed as many students have been noting difficulties. It was pointed out that SFA used to serve 1,100 students in 2010 and now has 4,900 students seeking financial aid assistance in 2020, with each financial aid staff member having between 600 and 800 cases.

President Donahue would also like to thank all members of the Student Advisory Committee for 2019/2020 for their contributions. She will make more effort into engaging the Student Advisory Council.

In the Vice-President External and Student Affairs Report it was noted that the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion policy has been drafted. The Student Energy Chapter meeting was on October 4,

## More AU-thentic Events

### **AUSU November Council Meeting**

Wed, Nov 18, 6:30 to 8:00 pm MST

Online

Hosted by AUSU

[www.ausu.org/event/november-2020-council-meeting/](http://www.ausu.org/event/november-2020-council-meeting/)

No pre-registration required; email [governance@ausu.org](mailto:governance@ausu.org) for meeting package

### **Talk to a Librarian Drop-in Session**

Thur, Nov 19, 3:00 to 3:30 pm MST

Online via Microsoft Teams

Hosted by AU Library

[library.athabascau.ca/orientations.html](http://library.athabascau.ca/orientations.html)

No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

### **Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA) Info Session**

Thur, Nov 19, 3:00 to 4:00 pm MST

Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business

[news.athabascau.ca/events/doctorate-in-business-administration-dba-information-session-20201119](http://news.athabascau.ca/events/doctorate-in-business-administration-dba-information-session-20201119)

RSVP through above link

### **The Grad Lounge**

#### **Talk to your Graduate Student Advisor**

Fri, Nov 20, 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](http://fgs.athabascau.ca/news/events/index.php)

No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

*All events are free unless otherwise noted*

2020. Four students have been in contact with the Chapter, and the group would like to start a podcast about sustainable energy. VPEX Hutchings and Councillor Iwanek have discussed starting a Discord server for LGBTQ2S+ students at Athabasca University.

One topic brought to AU was advocacy for financial assistance for students, to be included in AU's submission for the Alberta 2030 educational plan.. There was also talk that a three-credit course is six months worth of work at AU. VPEX Huthings noted that the course-load should be the same as it is at other universities, as many students don't understand that there is a greater amount of work expected at AU for the three credits and taking up the six months. Another problem is that funded students also often cannot get a course extension and maintain their funding, which council argues is unfair.

VPEX Hutchings also indicated that the AUSU Member Engagement and Communication Committee did not meet in September. It was discussed that a student advisor might join the committee.

During the Vice-President, Finance and Administration report, VPFA Durette, reported that she spent time working on a Wikipedia page for AUSU, encountering various challenges with conflict of interest and no original reporting, but felt that it is an important resource for students to be able to find.

She also noted that there are barriers to accessing Accessibility Services for students with disabilities. A student was informed about the Mental Health Committee, which is confidential for members and visitors.

Personally, this was the first time I'd heard students with disabilities or mental health issues mentioned during this meeting, and while it seemed to me that a lot of attention was paid to inclusiveness, AUSU has a very large population of disabled students and I was disappointed that VPFA Durette was the only one who brought concerns about their needs forward. It didn't seem to me like people with disabilities were a priority during this council meeting.

On the finance side of Monique Durette's report, we have an investment portfolio discussion. The work on the investment portfolio has begun and will continue through November.

Jodi Campbell, the Executive Director, reported that he'd like to welcome the newest team member. This new member is Tim Hanson, and he will be working as a social media assistant. He also indicated *The Voice Magazine* has been doing great, and he gave a shout-out to Councillor Iwanek for her writing, which is at the top in terms of views.

Donette Kingyens' report on communications and member service had to do with a popular podcast episode. The podcast in question received 461 views in one episode. There is also a large amount of course reviews, as compared to last year.

The social media 'hits' are likely to increase because of the new social media assistant.

As for Question Period, if any readers have any questions at all about the meeting that has just been covered, you are invited to contact the AUSU office with any questions that arise from the meeting at [ausu@ausu.org](mailto:ausu@ausu.org), 780-497-7000, or toll-free at 1-855-497-7003.

This has been your student council coverage by Emily Viggiani. The next council meeting is on November 18, 2020 8:30pm (MDT).

*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.*





## COVID-19 Long Haulers

### The Case for Masks as we Enter the Second Wave

Natalia Iwanek



In recent months, I have noticed increasingly polarized conversations about the current pandemic. On one hand, there are those who continue to maintain lives as before, forcefully denying the magnitude or existence of the COVID-19 virus, oblivious to the various privileges that have shielded them thus far, while countless others have begun sharing stories of fear, hospitalization, and death. As someone who has lived in countless towns, with family and friends spread across the globe, this collision of worlds is most evident on my social media accounts featuring obituaries juxtaposed with celebratory drinks on patios and family get togethers. Amidst these troubling binaries, another story is also emerging, one that I know far too well.

As we enter the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing reports of what have been deemed COVID-19 “long-haulers,” have been

steadily appearing in the media. Although technically considered recovered from the virus, individuals worldwide have been coming forward with stories of sustained illness. Various reports are now emerging that up to one in ten individuals report long-term complications, including breathing problems, debilitating fatigue, and cognitive difficulties. Other studies, such as those in the Journal of the American Medical Association, recently revealed that two months after being released from hospital, 87% of individuals had at least one symptom and more than half struggled with fatigue.

### Implications of Long-Term COVID-19 Symptoms

Common examples of reported long-term COVID-19 complications include fatigue, shortness of breath, joint pain, muscle pain, chest pain, cough, loss of taste and smell, abnormal blood clotting, vertigo, and headaches.

I have followed these statistics and personal histories with an increasing sense of dread and Déjà vu. These stories mirror my experience, which began two years ago when I was hospitalized abroad with a mysterious illness and never recovered. It later became clear that my condition was the result of many years of slow deterioration, culminating in a final blow to my immune system. Although my illness is quite different from COVID-19, many of my symptoms are nearly identical, and periodically, various COVID-19 medical theories have even led to shortages of my own medications. In addition, despite being studied for generations, like COVID-19, my conditions remain understudied, underfunded, and, at times, controversial.

Currently, I appear much improved in comparison to the degeneration that occurred in 2018. Despite outward appearances, it takes constant advocacy, as well as upwards of fifty pills a day, multiple injections a week, and countless medical appointments to remain at this baseline of functioning.

I know too well the long road ahead for those traversing COVID-19's long-term damage. I have experienced the moment when one's closest relationships disintegrate under the strain, when employers and instructors tire of one's constant medical appointments and inevitable slipping performance and grades, and when medical staff begin to lose patience. I also understand the grief of remaining ill and the mourning of a life that is forever changed. In many ways, those who become chronically ill later in life reveal that individuals cycle through various stages of grief, alternating between anger, denial, depression, bargaining, and acceptance. Much like the grief following the loss of a loved one, we bid farewell to former health, careers, and relationships, while navigating an unknown future and increasingly isolated existence. And this grief will not be linear with each setback threatening hard won progress.

### **Post-COVID 19 Theories**

Despite increased disregard for those most vulnerable and ableist rhetoric often seen in the media, it is becoming increasingly apparent that even individuals with mild COVID-19 symptoms and no pre-existing conditions are remaining ill long-term. One theory is that the immune system does not return to baseline functioning after infection, or that genetics may play a role. Other theories posit that while the infection has left most parts of the body, it remains in various areas.

Unfortunately, with widespread devastation and overwhelmed staff and facilities, the current medical focus remains on keeping individuals alive, while those who survive are slipping through the cracks, relegated to a liminal state. Long haulers remain isolated, unable to work, unable to perform basic tasks, and unable to obtain any form of aid from the overwhelmed, underfunded, and outdated medical establishment.

### **Gaps in the Medical System**

Unfortunately, COVID-19 is yet another example of the lack of research surrounding the immune system and other factors, such as genetics. It also reveals how the medical establishment treats countless individuals struggling with debilitating symptoms that testing fails to uncover; people who are eventually told that perhaps it is all in their minds. This separation of mind and body, and the compartmentalization of body parts, disregards the indisputable link between physical and mental health, and is further complicated by outdated concepts surrounding race, gender, identity, and socio-economic factors.

Gender bias in the medical establishment has long been reported. Many women are misdiagnosed as emotional or psychogenic or underdiagnosed, especially when it comes to chronic pain. Although most women expect to experience these biases, those disproportionately affected are those in the overlapping BIPOC, trans, and disabled communities. One prominent example was the recent death of Joyce Echaquan in a Quebec emergency room. With COVID-19 in particular, systemic racism in healthcare has become more apparent, with BIPOC women facing higher disproportionate death rates, which have led to increased discussions about the various social determinants of health and medical racism.

### **Turning to Social Media for Community**

With the advent of social media, as well as more individuals overcoming stigma and sharing their stories with mainstream media, many of those who find themselves remaining ill with long-misunderstood conditions are finding community, and countless others from all parts of the globe sharing strikingly similar experiences. Despite drawbacks, social media support groups for various conditions, including COVID-19, have proven beneficial to people sharing their symptoms, in many ways saving lives and providing research data opportunities.

## Other Misunderstood Long-Term Conditions

Over the years, many of these support groups have provided a safe place and advice for those with misunderstood conditions such as autoimmune diseases, namely Mixed Connective Tissue Disease, Lupus, Rheumatoid Arthritis, and Fibromyalgia, which causes widespread pain, fatigue, and cognitive difficulties, with no clear testing or cause.

Similarly, Myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS) is another example of a misunderstood chronic and complex disease, with no clear cause. Many doctors believe that it occurs after a stressor, such as a viral infection that causes changes to the immune system. While it is now considered a valid diagnosis, misinformation and misdiagnosis persists, even in the medical system. Advocacy groups, such as Millions Missing, advocate for further research funding and treatment.

Lyme disease is another example of a misunderstood and under-researched condition. Recently, concerns have been raised about striking similarities between COVID-19 and Lyme, including those considered “long haulers” in Lyme. As with Lyme, of which over 50% of antibody testing is believed to be inaccurate, concerns have been raised over the accuracy of testing for COVID-19 antibodies, with over 30% of false negatives. Similar to recent COVID-19 long haulers, more reports are emerging of individuals with Lyme not getting well after the prescribed two weeks of antibiotics treatment, with lingering controversy in the medical world on treatment options.

The term Lyme often refers to an infectious disease caused by the bacteria *Borrelia burgdorferi* (along with several sub-species), spread by blacklegged ticks, such as *Ixodes scapularis* and *Ixodes pacificus*. However, it is becoming an umbrella term for various vector-based diseases known as co-infections, including Ehrlichiosis/Anaplasmosis, Bartonella, Babesia, and Mycoplasma. Climate change appears to be spreading the prevalence of infected ticks, and there is also concern about spread by other forms of transmission as well.

## Hope for the Future

COVID-19 long haulers are just the most recent in a long line of medical conditions that reveal Western medicine’s lack of testing and limitations. In my case, although doctors were initially very concerned with my symptoms, their frustration became evident as tests revealed nothing. Amidst questions surrounding my mental health, the cause was later revealed by a simple blood test, one that had just not been performed. Despite initial answers, my treatment remains uncertain and fluctuating, and certain aspects remain unresolved.

It is hoped that in some way, research into COVID-19 will eventually trickle down to other misunderstood and underfunded illnesses. Until then, many individuals who feel abandoned by the medical establishment will continue to turn to alternative, as well as traditional forms of treatment, including Acupuncture and Gua Sha. While many of these prove beneficial and relieve symptoms for some individuals, they are also forced to consider various unproven methods as well, often, at the mercy of those who prey on the most desperate.

## The Case for Masks

Although COVID-19 is relatively new and further research is required, many experts appear to agree on one simple fact: Added to various preventative measures, such as hand washing and physical distancing, facemasks are believed to slow the spread of the virus. As with any new medical emergency, ever-evolving government and public health policies have led many to question the efficacy and even truth of public health recommendations. In my opinion, even if masks are eventually proven more ineffective than previously believed, we, as a society, are doing the best we can with currently available information to protect those most vulnerable.

Increased anti-mask rhetoric also focuses on the individual’s freedoms, without considering our civic duty to our communities or basic human decency. While some individuals understandably cannot wear masks for health reasons, often those most vocally opposed co-opt the disability



justice movement's years of work, while blatantly disregarding the community itself. As someone with allergies, breathing problems, irregular heart rate, and severe PTSD, I understand that wearing a mask can be difficult, yet I remain conscious of those who my panic and discomfort ultimately protects. Although I remain in isolation most days, I find myself more often confronting individuals who refuse to wear masks at my various appointments, those who disregard community safety protocol in locations serving the most vulnerable, and those who berate overwhelmed staff struggling to keep us safe.

I wear a mask as the bare minimum to protect my community as death rates climb amidst eugenicist rhetoric. I also remain conscious of the terrifying implications of a virus that can leave many more of us chronically ill and disabled. Despite progress, society remains inaccessible, and continues to disregard and devalue our lives. We, as a society, are also not prepared for an increasingly chronically ill and disabled workforce, with a lack of social supports and increasing individuals functioning as caregivers.

As we enter the second wave, let us make a fundamental paradigm shift and protect those around us. Our bodies remain beautiful and worthy even in the midst of chronic illness and disability, yet, for many, life is incredibly isolated and exhausting—not simply as a result of our varied conditions, but as a result of confronting daily ableist and eugenicist thought. Despite this, we continue to resist, to survive—and to thrive.

### Struggling at AU?

For students struggling, consider contacting AU's Accessibility Services, formerly known as Access for Students with Disabilities (ASD), which offers services including, Advocacy, Accessibility & Referral, Alternate Format Course Materials, Assistive Technology, Course Management for non-funded students, and Exam Accommodations. Other AU supports include Homewood Health, AU's wellness support program, offering student 24/7 support.

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## Homemade is Better Gnocchi Poutine

**Chef Corey**



Poutine is one of those iconic Canadian dishes. Some go kilometres to find good poutine. When the hot gravy melts the cheese, and the fries are crispy—so good! Here in Edmonton, there are a couple of places to get decent poutine. But what do you do when you have leftover mashed potatoes or maybe extra potatoes?

When I was writing my leftovers article a few weeks back, I was inspired to make up a new dish. Well, a new to me dish. In this recipe, I fused Italian Gnocchi and Canadian Poutine. It's not the deep-fried crispy fries, but it's still so good! As is, it's a very basic dish, but you could spruce it up a bit, say by adding some smoked brisket, Italian sausage, or even some leftover ham or turkey.

Using up leftovers is hard, but I hope that I can help you get inspired to try some new things with them! Enjoy!

## Gnocchi Poutine

### Ingredients:

#### Gnocchi:

4 large russet potatoes – peeled and diced  
1 egg  
1 – 2 cups flour

#### Gravy:

1L chicken or turkey stock  
125g butter  
125g flour

#### Poutine:

1-2 cups shredded or diced. Mozza

### Directions:

#### Gravy:

- 1) Grab a medium-sized pot and heat it over high heat
- 2) Add butter and heat until it starts to foam
- 3) Add flour and stir until it forms a thick paste.
- 4) Cook for 1 minute, stirring constantly
- 5) Add the stock and stir continuously to incorporate the roux
- 6) Add salt and pepper until you are happy with the taste.
- 7) Hold it until the gnocchi is done.

#### Gnocchi:

- 1) Peel the potatoes and dice them
- 2) Put the potatoes in a pot and cover with water
- 3) Bring to a boil over high heat
- 4) Boil until the potatoes fall apart easily
- 5) Strain them to remove the water
- 6) Put the potatoes in the bowl of a stand mixer (or a mixing bowl)
- 7) Turn the mixer to 3, using the paddle attachment, and whip them to break them up
- 8) Keep paddling for 2 minutes to cool the potatoes
- 9) Turn off the heat and scrape down the sides
- 10) Turn the mixer onto stir or its lowest setting and add your egg
- 11) While it is mixing, start adding your flour, 1 cup at a time. You might need more than 2 cups
- 12) Once the potatoes come together like a dough, stop the mixer
- 13) If it is still sticky, add more flour
- 14) Remove the mix to a floured surface and knead for one to two minutes
- 15) Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil while you complete the next portion
- 16) Cut the dough into four sections
- 17) Roll each section out into a ½ inch rope
- 18) Cut each rope into 1 – 1.5-inch pieces
- 19) Heat a frying pan over medium-high with some oil.
- 20) Once the pot of water is boiled, start adding the pieces

- 21) Once they start to float on the top, remove them to the frying pan, being careful as you're going to get some splatter.
- 22) Keep adding oil and gnocchi until you have boiled and fried all of it

#### Poutine:

- 1) Shred the cheese
- 2) Portion your gnocchi onto separate plates
- 3) Add the cheese
- 4) Top with the gravy
- 5) Enjoy

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



## Three Mentors and the Lessons I Learned

**Marie Well**



Three people changed my world dramatically. These are my mentors, and this is what I learned:

#### **My mentor, my brother.**

I had a mentor who valued intelligence and success. As a young child, I was mentored by him to excel at school. He taught me math, Roman numerals, microscopic science, and more math. He oohed over my art, praising me every step of the way.

Later in life he became highly responsible in business, as responsible as he once was with me. He earned over a third a million each year as a global finance director; that says a lot, given that he grew up in the ghettos of Calgary. I still recall the room he gave me to do my paintings, the easel he bought me for my sixteenth birthday, the pizzas and chocolates he fed me as staples, and the rooms in rundown giant houses he made sure I claimed my own.

"I don't care how you do at school. Just do well in math," I recall him once saying. Math mattered to him. Later in life, I became the top student in almost every university math classes, thanks to my mentor. He is my brother, my childhood mentor, but we haven't spoken in a year.

#### **My mentor, my feminist friend.**

I had a mentor who showed up when my life was in shambles. She did charitable work as her daughter was disabled. And this mentor and I crossed paths at a charity event.

I saw something powerful in her. She had high intensity, vision, and an incredible work ethic. She was a proud feminist and intense advocate.

I phoned her asking for a donation. She said she'd get a truckload of donations for my cause. I thanked her and said goodbye. And then, after a few moments of hesitation, I phoned her back, told her she inspired me, and the rest was history.

She helped me begin a charity, raise funds, host events, and gain media coverage. She guided me to go to university, even though I was a high school dropout. She coached me to lose 60 pounds.



We sold thousands of dollars in flowers for our charity. We were inseparable, until we parted ways.

### **My mentor, the spiritualist.**

When I didn't think I could face another day, my greatest mentor showed up. She taught me to pray, even though I was atheist. She brought me to Jesus, to the Buddha, to Hinduism, to Sikhism, although I ultimately became Christian. She taught me meditation, exercise, and self-defence. She taught me unconditional love and selflessness. She taught me survival.

Because of her, I changed my mind about dropping out of university, and I went on to claim a master's degree. Because of her, I learned that everyone is deeply beautiful—that no-one is better or worse than anyone else. Because of her, I learned to overlook people's flaws and to fix only the flaws within myself.

### **The biggest lesson learned.**

One thing I've learned is that rejecting a mentor due to flaws is as silly as rejecting humanity. Every mentor—and every human being—is deeply flawed. I walked away from two of those mentors, but the gifts they gave remain deeply embedded in my heart. Had I done things differently, I would've kept the doorways to my heart forever open to them, a delicate room dedicated to just them, ready at their whim, always filled with warmth and love. That's what life taught me: never reject a mentor. Or more broadly, never reject another human being.



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

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

#### **AthaU Facebook Group**

One day before the enrolment cut-off for December courses, a technical glitch prevents Cassidy from enrolling; AU staff respond with advice and a work-around solution. Ella asks for study tips for the CRJS 495 final exam, and a response suggests visiting the AU Criminal Justice FB group.

Other posts include ProctorU tech issues, final exam marked before assignments, and courses COMP 210, ENSC 200, LGST 390, PHIL 337, and PSYC 470.

#### **reddit**

One post asks when AU will reopen its in-person exam centres; so far, no clue. Another question inquires how much course activity a student can engage in prior to the start date.

#### **Twitter**

@AthabascaU tweets: "Grammarly is a learning tool that works one-on-one with a student to develop writing skills, reinforce proper revision habits, and prevent plagiarism. #AthabascaU Learners: want a free trial of their premium service? <https://bit.ly/3oFQse4>." (Available until Nov 30, 2020.)

@austudentsunion tweets: "AUSU values your opinions! Tell us about your experience as an @athabascau student and help us set our goals and advocacy priorities. Be entered to win a \$1000 Visa gift card or one of 18 other prizes! Click here: <https://bit.ly/32mMBce> #Igo2AU #advocacy #abpse." (Deadline Nov 25, 2020.)



## Beats from the Basement

Milica Markovic



**Album:** *into the rush*

**Artist:** Aly & AJ

Like Hilary Duff, Alyson “Aly” Michalka is a former Disney star I’ve always been fond of for her relatable and quirky personality. I first watched her on *Phil Of The Future*. In 2005, a year before the show ended, she released her debut album *into the rush* with her sister Amanda Joy, or “AJ”, and I knew I had to have it after hearing their cover of Katrina and the Waves’ “Walking On Sunshine” on YTV’s *Big Fun Party Mix 7*.

The record came at an ideal time: Aly was at the peak of her popularity as an actress, and having a couple cover songs by famous recording artists helps bring attention to newcomers as well as giving them an opportunity to showcase their talent. Although I enjoy the originals, both

“Walking On Sunshine” and “Do You Believe In Magic” by The Lovin’ Spoonful are nonetheless well-suited to the duo’s cute and youthful voices. The wholesome lyrics matched their image at the time, and the updated production preserves those unforgettable tunes. The covers also add to the upbeat songs on *into the rush* while balancing out the ones that deal with heavier subject matter.

But, truthfully, the latter is where the focus should be when discussing Aly & AJ, because their other songs address several different (unfortunate) experiences youth may have as they’re growing up. They weren’t stuck on the usual theme of high school crushes like Duff and many other teen stars tended to be around that time. Despite the album’s poppy nature, the sisters don’t entirely sugarcoat issues of bullying, neglect, and tragedy in their lyrics. They understandably couldn’t get too explicit for the average listener, but it nevertheless showed they were paying attention to affected children who need support and perhaps painted a picture for those who were unaware.

The tracks that have gotten them the most attention, however, are those that deal with personal identity. Even the romantically-charged ones are flexibly written in that they could plausibly describe various types of relationships—and by extension, could apply to any orientation. As a result, the sisters’ music resonates strongly with the LGBTQ+ community. I’ve covered artists who identify as members before, namely Ricky Martin and the Indigo Girls, but those albums aren’t necessarily targeted toward the community, nor are they as easily interpretive as *into the rush* is.

Aly & AJ were ahead of their time in the sense that their album opened up these types of discussions among young people instead of just adults. It doesn’t all have to be solemn, however. Their first single, “Rush,” is invigorating in its sound and empowering in its words, telling the audience to never stop being themselves—whoever they are—and that they can’t give up when they don’t know what’s possible.

“No One,” their second single, follows along these similar lines but is laid-back and far more introspective. The duo rightfully kept it short, otherwise the slow strumming on the guitar and drawn out notes would’ve gotten boring quickly.

Their current image may be much bolder, but Aly & AJ’s work continues to speak to fans who may need a voice themselves. I’m happy the girls are signed with an independent label, which means they have a lot more control over their concepts and we get to hear candid thoughts I’m sure even more of us can relate to.

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



## Fly on the Wall

### Knowledge in a Moment

Jason Sullivan



## Epiphanies That Motivate Our Future Selves

Every day holds potential for learning if we look at life that way. Glorious new experiences are only ever a mouse click or a calm stroll or an exchanged glance away. And knowledge is only partly contained in our AU course materials. One can read a text forward and backward and still only know it as a series of facts; we’re like that too as our identities evolve.

Unlocking the mystery of motivation requires knowledge of our self. Sometimes sloth and indolence leads us

astray and our study habits become an afterthought. Listlessness takes over and we may require an external jolt to awaken our drive for knowledge. Enlightenment can begin in a second, after all. Consider the characters in a John Prine song from fifty years back:

She was a level-headed dancer on the road to alcohol  
And I was just a soldier on my way to Montreal  
Well she pressed her chest against me  
About the time the jukebox broke  
Yeah, she gave me a peck on the back of the neck  
And these are the words she spoke:  
Blow up your TV, throw away your paper  
Go to the country, build you a home  
Plant a little garden, eat a lot of peaches  
Try and find Jesus on your own”  
(<https://genius.com/John-prine-spanish-pipedream-lyrics>)



Now, I'd wager there's not a student among us who hasn't at some juncture wanted to blow up their television if it's blaring while they try and study. The prerogatives of family, roommates, and friends know no bounds when facing our need for silence. Yet, when we really want to gain knowledge, our yearning for learning can be insatiable. The recently departed Prine is on about something deeper than aural and visual distractions. He's describing those magical enchantments by a previously unknown other who graciously leads us to see our world and our knowledge differently.

Years of study can wash away like an old tide if the timing of such a moment resonates with our soul. One such moment for me was many years ago, when a cab driver counselled me to be my own best friend. Yet my most cherished epiphany occurred when I met my wife on a dance floor. She curtsied me toward knowledge of how better to apply myself in all walks of my life, AU included. I've been evolving at a quicker pace ever since. Epiphany moments come in many shapes and contexts; it behooves us to keep our eyes open as waves of new experience arise.

### **Knowledge About Learning: Lightning and Dawn**

We all encounter a few *aha* moments that frame our journey and these hinge upon our existing beliefs about our self and our life. Knowledge solidifies out of mere belief, yet there's a vast difference between knowledge and belief. Think of the phrase "I don't think, I know." Anthony Quinton notes that in the history of philosophy "belief itself has received surprisingly cursory treatment." (Quinton, 345). Success at AU depends upon belief in ourselves combined with the knowledge of how we best operate. There are no counsellors to hold our hand or professors to pester with visits during their office hours. Our tutors can be a great help but when we sit down to write our assignments we do so alone, like hermits or saints or sages or Descartes with his candle.

Likewise, a tenuous chasm separates mesas of hope and expectation from the buttes of certainty and confirmation. Anthony Quinton notes that "one who comes to know what he formerly believed does not lose the conviction he formerly had" (Quinton, 345). We may begin our AU studies certain that we've made a wise choice. And that belief, imparted with hope and positive thinking, may substantiate into factual knowledge with the passage of time.

Knowledge, though, is it a thing to grasp or an ephemera to feel? Another binary absconds with our flow of being. Quinton reminds us that "knowledge is justified true belief" thus suggesting that a degree of faith underpins the facts we hold dear (Quinton, 347). Moments that transcend their context are prime examples where belief is stood on its head such that new beliefs about ourselves and our studies may emerge. Personal moments are ours to keep. They are gloriously "incorrigible in the sense that they are wholly certified by the experiences they report and are logically immune from falsification by the results of any further experience" (Quinton, 347). There's a reason that counsellors the world over like to coach clients to use statements that begin with an "I feel...". You can't argue with feelings the way you can argue with facts.

Plato, for his part, noted that false beliefs arise not from abject failures of knowledge but simply because, as Quinton puts it, "we can know a thing well enough to be able to identify it as a subject of discourse without knowing everything about it" (Quinton, 347). We know and are known only partially and never with our future fully in focus. Naturally our past and future selves differ and here is where inspiration guides our flow.

Quinton claims that Plato's "arguments for the unknowability and unreality of concrete, sensible things are not very persuasive" yet the take home message applies delightfully: "there would seem to be many propositions that are known by some people but only believed by others" (Quinton,

348). There's more than one way to run through a corn maze but if you enjoy yourselves you've won. The same is true at AU if we actually do the coursework!

To know ourselves is to know how we can succeed. Yet sometimes an inquiry and pep talk with ourselves isn't enough. Anyone who shines new light on our old selves reveals what was already there: a student with potential to flourish. Sometimes we just have to get into the weeds with another person so that we may discover our hidden potential. And knowing our potential, vague though it can feel, may be the greatest knowledge of all.

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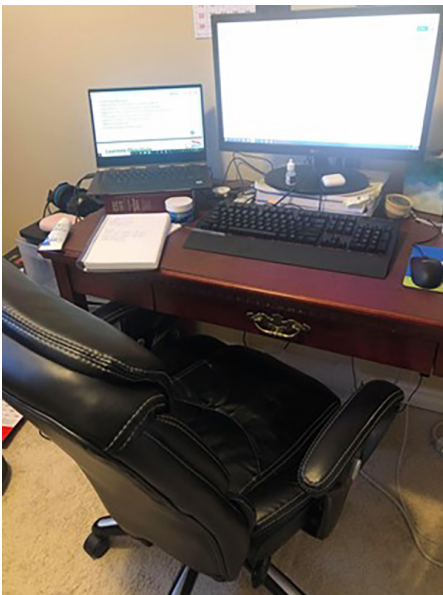
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*Jason Hazel-rah Sullivan is a Masters of Integrated Studies student who loves engaging in discourse while working in the sunny orchards and forests of the Okanagan.*



## Ergonomics During COVID-19

**Xin Xu**



Ever since work has moved to the home setting, many employees and students have made drastic changes to their home setup to improve their home-office experience. I've had times this summer where sitting in front of a screen for hours at a time has changed my posture, reduced my energy levels and left parts of my body feeling strained. This is not unfamiliar to many people during this new work-from-home reality. So how can we better take care of our bodies and improve our home-office experience?

Ergonomics has become a large theme in today's home-office environment. For some, this means making small adjustments whereas for others, this may mean larger changes to improve their experience. Larger boosts to your efficiency may mean actually changing your schedule or being mindful of your posture, mood and energy levels throughout the day. I wrote an [article last week](#) exploring some of these larger productivity changes. In this post, we'll explore smaller fixes that can boost

your productivity but also help you feel comfortable in your own shoes (or socks).

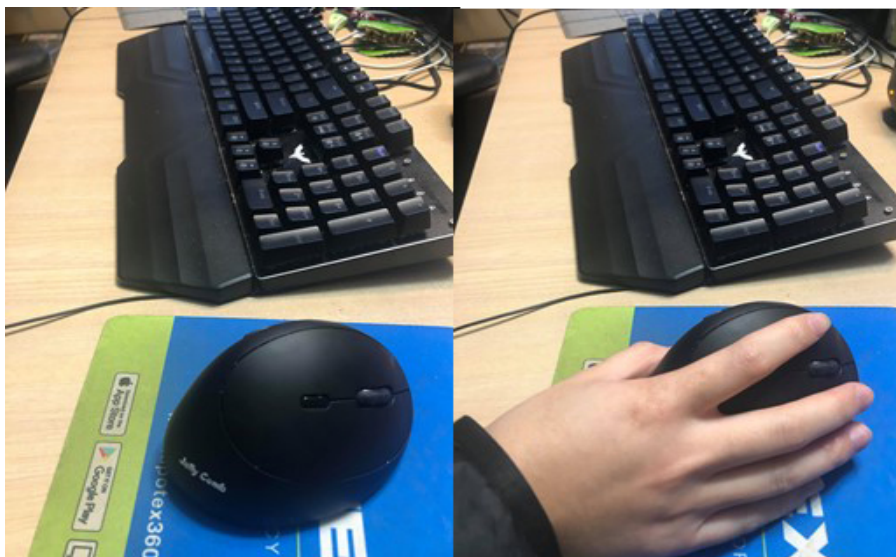
#### Chair:

Getting a chair with lumbar support is very important to ensuring your lower back is supported the entire time you are sitting. In the early days of the pandemic, I had a poorly designed foldable chair that would leave my back aching after just an hour of sitting down. Luckily, I was able to upgrade to a desk chair that has adjustable height, forward and backward lean so I could optimize the chair to suit my needs. If you're someone who completes a lot of remote work online or if you're an AU student completing courses online, having an ergonomic chair will go a long way. This is an investment that will be valuable for the long-term.



### Computer Mouse:

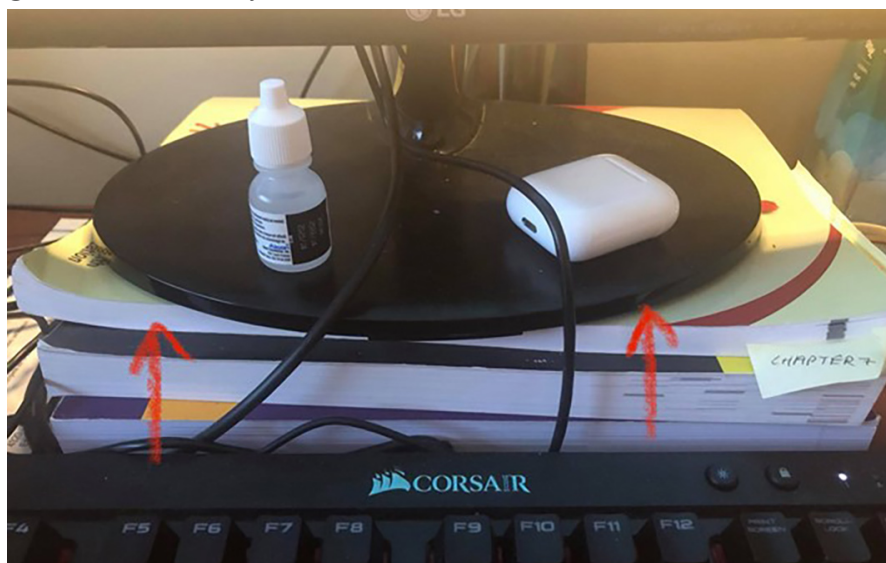
While strange to the touch at first, these mice actually re-orient your hand such that it is in a more natural position when your forearm is resting on the desk. This adjustment has made my remote work a lot more comfortable. Especially if my right hand is parked on top of my mouse for hours. The unnatural position of the hand hugging the standard mouse can be hard on the wrists as well. Since changing this set-up, I have experienced less wrist aches and pains.



*My hand position feels a lot more natural using the ergonomic mouse than a standard mouse.*

### Desktop Screen Lift:

Another change I've recently made was lifting my laptop screen higher than it would normally sit on a desk. Having to hunch over my laptop for hours had lasting effects on my posture and energy level. While I saw many options online for beautifully designed laptop lifts, I decided to use the budget-friendly option of propping up the monitor with a few textbooks. This has worked wonders in keeping the screen at eye-level.



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





## The Study Dude

### Three Tips for Planning & Writing Thesis Papers

Marie Well



Have you ever had your computer die while writing a term paper? It's a cause for grief, anger, and other prickly emotions. But with the next three tips, you may never lose grades due to the sudden death of a laptop, the loss of a file, or the lapse of a deadline.

That's because studies go smoother when you plan and organize your paper.

Let's look at how to plan ahead a thesis.

#### **Tip #1: Plan your studies the night before.**

According to Petteri Sahlman (2012), "An easy way to ensure your day will get an efficient start is to plan your next thesis session after you have finished the previous session. So if it is Monday and you have just written 2 pages of literature review, check out articles/sources for Tuesday's work and write the page numbers down on your document. On Tuesday, all you have to do is to check where you left off, open the right

sources and pages and start typing. Trust me, this really makes a world of difference" (20%).

Writing an essay is similar. Before you go to bed, sketch out what you'll write about the next day. To do so, type square brackets where you left off with your essay. Inside those square brackets, jot the first sentence of what you aim to write the next day. Add in a few words about the topics you wish to tackle. And then, open up your articles and books to the pages you want to read. Then, enjoy a peaceful sleep.

I guarantee, you'll write at the speed of lightning the very next day.

#### **Tip #2: Collect your data after you do the following three things.**

For a master or PhD thesis, you need to start your empirical research at a certain point.

But first, you might be wondering, "What is empirical data?" It's the data that you use in graduate studies to make original work. Surveys and interviews are types of empirical data. Observations are another form of empirical data, such as that done in ethnographic studies where you observe, say, a cultural group in its natural habitat.

You likely won't use empirical data in the undergrad program, as the emphasis is less on creating original work. But you'll likely be *citing* articles that use empirical data.

In grad school, you have a year to write a book-length document. Mine had to be a minimum of 50 pages. So, it's critical to pace your empirical research. In fact, it's essential to pace every component of the thesis, not just the empirical part.

Petteri Sahlman (2012) says, "[A] factor to plan is when you should start collecting empirical data for your thesis (if you need any). As a general rule ... if you have to collect the data yourself, this should be started when you have finalized your research questions, chosen your methodology and written about half of the literature review .... This will give you enough background

knowledge to plan your questionnaire/interview questions and get your supervisor's approval and suggestions before you finalize your theoretical part. This allows you to start working on the empirical part as soon as the literature review is done" (21%).

And if you don't know what a literature review is, it's the scope of what is known about your topic. Your sources for the literature review will be from, of course, published academics, but mostly from academic thought leaders. You can even contact high profile people, like a president of an organization, and cite one-off commentary. The key is to keep the sources credible.

So, start early on your surveys, observations, interviews, or other empirical data collection methods—but not too early.

### **Tip #3: Do the following to back up your files.**

Petteri Sahlman (2012) advises, "Let's talk about file management. This is very simple really. There are basically two rules: 1) Save a new version daily 2) Backup everything. You should have a dated version of your work for each day you are working on it, for example thesis-0822.docx where 08 refers to the month and 22 to the date. Why is this format cool? For a few reasons: it allows you to roll back to older version (or a part of it) if that is necessary and you will see the progress easily" (23%).

I prefer to label all my documents in the format of year-month-day-shortenedtitle-draft1. For instance, 2020-11-04-literaturereview-draft1. But, if not a thesis, try starting your labeling system with the course name: COMS201-2020-11-04-PlatoEssay-draft1. This system will ensure your current draft stays at the top of your prior drafts.

But be sure to create a folder for each course: COMS201, and put inside that folder subfolders, such as, "COMS 201 Term Paper."

That's easy file management, but what about backups?

Petteri Sahlman (2012) states, "Creating backups should also be a no-brainer. A friend of mine lost more than 50% of her literature review because her computer broke down and she had no backups. It is extremely frustrating to write same things twice. So use USB-drives, TimeMachine (if you have a Mac) and remember to send it to yourself by email occasionally so you have it somewhere easily accessible for sure. Also, install DropBox. It is completely free and works amazingly. You can use that as an additional backup folder or you can just create your thesis folder in DropBox and have it store everything automatically" (22%).

You can buy an external hard drive for \$90, too. It might just have more storage space than your laptop. I bought two thin external hard drives, each the size of a wallet. And I back up all my files on both of them. These external hard drives work exactly like USB sticks.

So, those are three tips to planning and organizing a thesis—and even an essay. One thing you never want to happen is to lose your best essays. Back up those beauties. They're your ticket into grad school. And organize them because, should you decide on grad school, tidy files tame the deadline beast. And, lastly, pace your empirical research to rocket your originality.

Ah, you've got the edge.

### *Reference*

Sahlman, Petteri. (2012). *How to write a masters thesis fast: Practical productivity tips for students*. [Kindle Unlimited]. Retrieved at amazon.ca.





Dear  
Barb

Barbara Godin

## Stepping Out

Dear Barb:

*My husband and I have been married seven years and are the parents of two young girls. Our marriage has been good, for the most part. We have had the usual problems with a hectic lifestyle and two young children and now with the virus things are more stressful. I always thought we would make it, until recently, now I'm having my doubts. I discovered some pretty good evidence to indicate that my husband has cheated on me. I don't know 100%, but every indication says something is going on with a co worker. I am devastated, but I don't want my marriage to end. I want my girls to have their parents in their lives and to have a stable life. On the other hand I cannot tolerate my husband messing around. I am not sure if I should confront him, or keep this to myself and hope it is a one time thing and that it will be over soon. I have not told anybody about my suspicions because I don't want people to think poorly of husband. Desperately in need of advice. Thanks, Katie*

Hey Katie:

Thank you for sharing your very personal situation. Learning your spouse is cheating is one of the most difficult challenges a marriage can experience. Obviously, you seem to know what direction you want to take, but you don't know

how to achieve it. The first thing you have to do is confront your husband; you need to know if this was a fling, or is he involved in a relationship with this other person. You both have to be on the same page for your marriage to be successful. It is extremely important that your husband is remorseful and understands the pain and hurt he has caused to you and your marriage and if he is not, there is slim to no chance that your marriage will survive this infidelity. You have to be able to believe that this is not going to happen again, and, if he does not feel remorse, you'll always doubt.

Most importantly, will you eventually be able to forgive and trust your husband, or will this always be in your mind. These are all things that you will be able to decide once you both discuss what happened and why. If you are not able to resolve the underlying reasons for this, even if you do stay together, your children will sense something is not right with mom and dad. Staying together for the children is not always the right thing to do. Whatever you both decide, marriage counselling is vital to the survival of your marriage. I hope this helps. Good Luck in the future Katie.

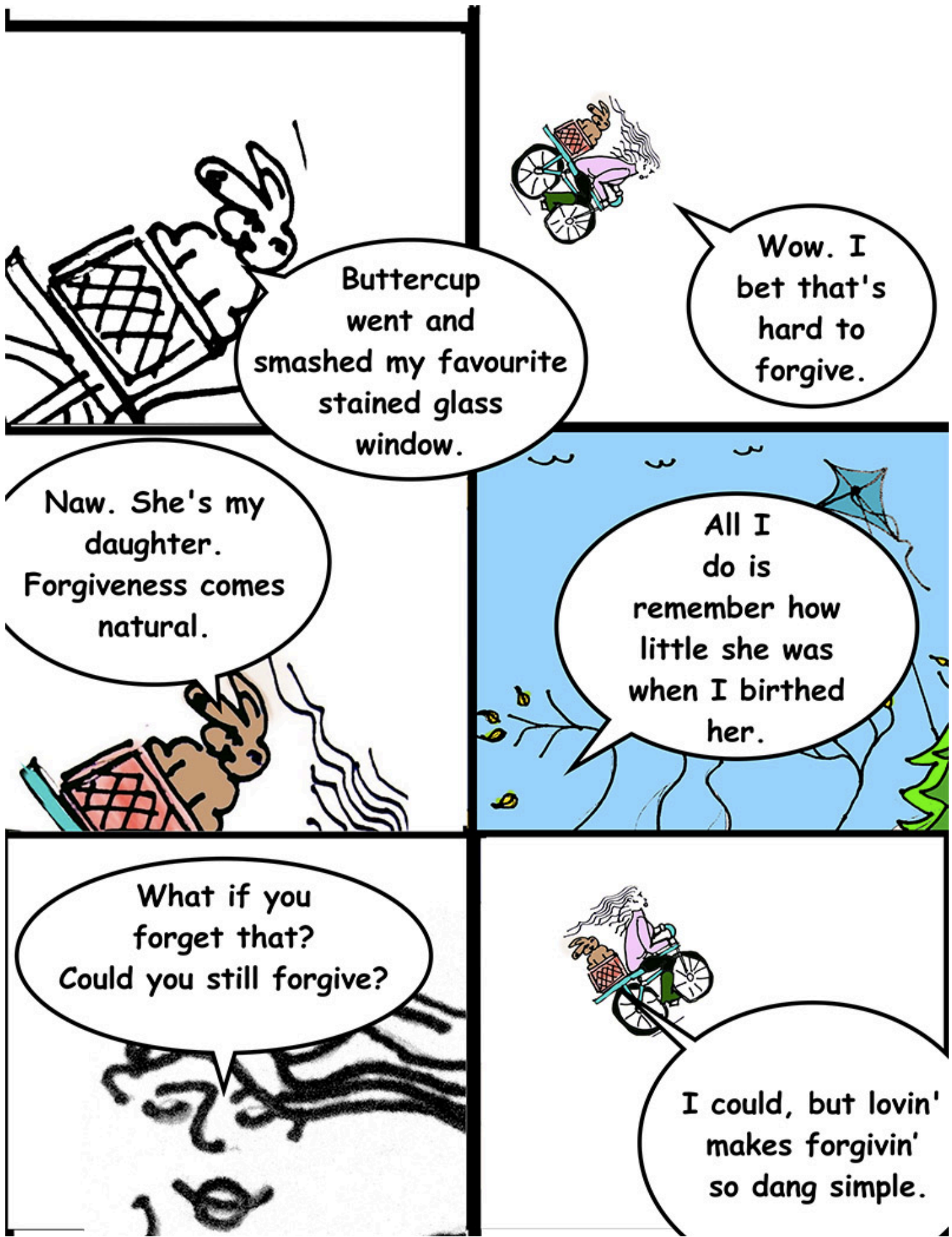
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**Poet Maeve**  
**Remember and Forgive**

**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](mailto:services@ausu.org) with any questions about this article.

## IMPORTANT DATES

- **Nov 15:** [Dec degree requirements deadline](#)
- **Nov 18:** [AUSU Public Council Meeting](#)
- **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](#)

## Alberta Post-Secondary Review

The Alberta Government is currently working on a review that will shape the future of post-secondary education. Since Athabasca University is an Alberta institution, changes made to the Alberta post-secondary system impact all AU students, no matter where they study from.

AUSU made a series of recommendations for the Government of Alberta that will make the post-secondary system more affordable, more efficient, and higher quality for all Athabasca University students.

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

View AUSU's submission to the Government [here](#).



## New AUSU Open Mic Podcast [AUSU Student Services are Expanding](#)

In our latest Open Mic Podcast episode, AUSU discusses some of the new and existing services it offers to AU students, including [scholarships and bursaries](#), [resume services](#), [peer course reviews](#), [LinkedIn Learning](#), and many others, including the podcast itself.

Join VP External and Student Affairs Stacey Hutchings and AUSU staff as they take a deep dive into the services available for free to all AU undergrads from AUSU!

[Click to Listen to this Episode](#)

## Take our Survey for a Chance to WIN!

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](mailto:services@ausu.org) with any questions.*

**Deadline to take the survey: Nov 25, 2020**

**Take the AUSU  
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Enter to win up to \$1000!



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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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<b>Publisher</b>	Athabasca University Students' Union
<b>Editor-In-Chief</b>	Jodi Campbell
<b>Managing Editor</b>	Karl Low

**Regular Columnists** Barb Godin, Natalia Iwanek, Barbara Lehtiniemi,  
Jason Sullivan, Wanda Waterman, Xin Xu and others!

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

Contact *The Voice* at [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org).

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ISSN 2561-3634