



THE VOICE

Vol 29 Issue 24 2021-06-18

Interview in Progress

AUSU 2021 By-Election Candidates

Finding Mother Goddess

How an AU Course Changed a World

Fly on the Wall

Hoi Polloi

Plus:

*Dear Barb: For The Love of Dog
Course Exam: ENGL 140
and much more!*



CONTENTS

The Voice's interactive Table of Contents allows you to click a story title to jump to an article. Clicking the bottom right corner of any page returns you here. Some ads and graphics are also links.

Features

Interview in Progress: *AUSU By-Election 2021 Candidates*4

Articles

Editorial: *By-Election 2021*.....3
Finding Mother Goddess: *How an AU Course Changed My World*..12
Overcoming.....19

Columns

Fly on the Wall: *Hoi Polloi*.....14
Course Exam: *ENGL 140 (English Language and Writing Skills)*.....16
The Struggling Student Rants: *If Your Phone Doesn't Ring*.....20
Dear Barb: *For the Love of Dog*.....22

News and Events

Student Sizzle15
AU-Thentic Events17
Scholarship of the Week.....18
Vintage Voice.....18
AUSU Updates24

Comics

Poet Maeve: Right to Liberty23

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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

By-Election 2021

Karl Low



This week, our feature article is an interview with not one student, but nine of them! In this case, it's nine of the eleven candidates running in the AUSU's 2021 By-Election (or is it now a Bi-election, since it's happened twice this term?)

We sent out a quick set of interview questions to the candidates and gave them a tight deadline to get back to us with the answers, nine of them managed to do so, and so we're printing their answers verbatim as our feature article. With almost half of the thirteen seats up for offer, this election could significantly shift the direction and priorities of AUSU Council, so it's important that you have a reasonable idea about who you're voting for and why. We made our questions a mix of mostly AUSU related, but threw in a couple of personal ones for good measure. Let us know if you found it helpful or if there's something else you wished we would have asked; we'll keep that in mind for the Tri-Election (let's hope there isn't one!).

So take some time, read up on [the candidates](#), check out [the candidate forums](#), and in general get as good an idea as you can about who you're going to select for those six seats. Then be sure to vote.

Also this week, we're featuring Jessica Young telling us about the course that changed her view of the world, and the Fly on the Wall is back to his regular favourite subject, an exploration of what AU does to our own self-identity.

Meanwhile, as I write this, Premier Kenney is announcing that on Canada Day basically all restrictions due to COVID will be lifted in Alberta. Requirements to mask inside or maintain social distancing will be removed. Businesses will be allowed to fully re-open to the normal customer limit, and life will, he hopes, return to normal just in time for a big party to celebrate his triumphant conquest over the disease. And it may even work.

But am I weird in noting that I don't really mind the masks or the social distancing? I did miss being able to eat at a table inside, but people being more respectful of each other's distance didn't strike me as such a bad thing. As for masks, it was simply another fashion accessory, I've got a small selection now, and I meant to pick up a couple more, but I'm afraid it will be perceived as odd if I keep wearing them after Canada Day. Then again, maybe I'm not the only one who thought that way and some people will continue wearing them.

Besides, even if COVID-19 is no longer capable of sending the vaccinated people to the hospital, there's still good reason to want to avoid getting it if you possibly can. After all, having chicken pox when you're young makes you susceptible to getting shingles when you get older. And COVID-19 is still way too new for us to have any idea of what and how serious any long term effects it might have will be. So maybe I need to keep wearing the mask anyway, so that other people feel comfortable doing it too if they have a desire to. We may end up like some of the countries in Asia, where mask-wearing isn't seen as odd, but rather just another choice some people make. If that helps us all stay away from getting this disease, I'm in favor.

And don't forget that we also have news, course reviews, advice, scholarships, comics, events, and more!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karl', written in a cursive, flowing style.



INTERVIEW IN PROGRESS

In just a few days (June 24th, watch your e-mail), AUSU Council will begin accepting votes for the current by-election. With six seats available on Council, that's just under half the total votes, nearly enough to change the entire direction that Council is going, so it's important that you consider who want to take those seats as they'll have a major impact in the direction and priorities that AUSU chooses to follow. Fortunately, with eleven candidates vying for those seats, you do have some options. So to help you decide who's going to best represent you, we sent a few questions to each of them. Candidates received the questions by Wednesday, June 16, and informed that answers needed to be in by early morning today, June 18. So, they didn't have a lot of time to research (or honestly, even edit) their answers. We're hoping that leads to some real talk to help you pick which candidates are the ones you think make the best fit.

We also suggested to the candidates they keep their answers fairly short, because if they all responded, it would make for a huge article that is probably going to lose some people.

Of the eleven candidates, we received responses from nine of them by the deadline. Their answers are printed in the order that we received the responses, with no editing at all other than making the formatting work. If there's no answer for a candidate under a question, it's because that candidate decided not to answer that question.

So, without further ado, let's see what the candidates had to say!

**What faculty are you in, if any, and how much longer
do you expect to be studying at AU?**

Eva Notter

BA - Psych major. I hope to complete my program by 2023, and haven't decided on a grad school yet!

Leah Campbell

I am in the Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences and currently in my fourth year of my program. I hope to graduate in the June 2022 convocation - if all goes according to plan!

Jesse Poriz

I am in the Faculty of Business and expect to be studying at AU for two more years.

Cassandra Mackay

Humanities and social sciences. I hope to graduate in the fall of 2023.

Amy Mayer

I am hoping to complete my BA in Sociology within the next two years.

Marley Curtis

I am a political science student in the Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences. I will graduate with an undergraduate degree in April 2023!

Joel Palyga

I am currently a student in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. My major is in political science. I am also pursuing a minor in philosophy as well.

Diedra Mahabal

Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences and I expect to study at AU until Spring 2023.

Dur-E-Najaf Syed

I am in the Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences! I hopefully plan on finishing my studies in two years.

**Aside from tuition, what do you think is
the most important issue AUSU needs to address for students?**

Eva Notter

Increased communication between staff and students, and an update to online course packages.

Leah Campbell

As an out of province student, I find that sometimes it is hard to feel included. Inclusiveness and accessibility are important issues that I think need to be addressed on an ongoing basis as technology and life circumstances are constantly in flux. In the wake of the global pandemic, focusing on increasing the abilities of the online learning platform is a must as the world will undoubtedly rely more and more on virtual experiences.

Jesse Poriz

I feel that with everything that is going on in the world at this time, the most important issue that AUSU needs to address is additional student supports.

Cassandra Mackay

Improved contact with tutors.

Amy Mayer

I think there are inefficiencies with how AU currently delivers their textbooks. Students should have the choice of hardcopy or softcopy books when possible.

Marley Curtis

One of the things AU struggles with the most is communication with students. Part of this is the result of being an "online" school; it is always going to be more difficult to connect with the student body here than at a regular university since AU students are scattered across the world, come from drastically different walks of life, and all have very different goals and aspirations. But I think there is a lot of room for improvement.

The COVID-19 pandemic showcased what a lack of communication infrastructure can result in: 7-10 day wait times for emails from administration, calls backed up for months, and phones completely disconnected with no plan as to how to deal with the hundreds of messages being left by students. When a disaster struck, AU “ghosted” the entire student body instead of engaging in deliberate communication and supporting them. That didn’t need to happen.

Unfortunately, the lack of quality communication standards demonstrated by the highest levels of administration trickles down to other aspects of life here at AU: I have had TAs take over one month to mark assignments this year, and completely ignore emails and phone calls (during office hours). When connecting with classmates is nigh impossible due to the online format, it shouldn’t be equally impossible to get a hold of the people who are supposed to be there to support you. Being a student at AU feels like being adrift on an ocean. I want to change that.

I joined the student advisory committee when I first enrolled way back in September 2020 (it feels like a decade ago), only to find that some of the students involved in the AUSU have the same low standards for communication. As a member of that committee, I went 4 months without receiving a single communication as to what I could contribute to or what was expected of the SAC. When I finally reached out to ask if my email had been left off a list or forgotten, I discovered that it had not. It was just par for the course to sign up to committees like this in the AUSU and do nothing (I was told SAC members could expect to get maybe 2-3 survey-esque emails per academic year). I think this is a symptom of the general tolerance for communication faux pas exhibited by administration and is not the fault of AUSU students. How can they be expected to have higher standards than the university itself? Students who WANT to help, and excuse my language, “get sh*t done,” can’t even get a hold of the necessary people or know where to look. For example, how many students reading this know about the AU student app? I only found out about it thanks to a brief mention in the AUSU student council candidate package, and I’ve been actively looking for ways to get involved since day one.

There are many, many, many problems to be fixed at Athabasca University. I think the obscene lack of communication between administration and students, students, and student orgs, and even students and students will be the easiest to address, and so that’s where I’m going to start if I’m elected.

Joel Palyga

Tuition is obviously a large issue for Athabasca University students, as well as the collective community of post-secondary students in Alberta and Canada. However, increasing diversity and inclusion, as well as continuing the campaign to defeat systemic racism is rightfully at the forefront of the political dialogue. I am proud to say that AUSU has done a phenomenal job in addressing these issues thus far. We all know that we have a lot of work left to do and it is up to each of us to positively contribute our voice to the conversation. If elected, I intend to expand and continue to work to ensure we always strive to be inclusive and supportive as we all undertake our higher education studies.

Diedra Mahabal

To make all sorts of volunteer positions available to help with both academic development and career endeavours to AU students.

Dur-E-Najaf Syed

I think accessibility is an important issue that needs to be addressed. Besides tuition there are a lot of extra fees one must pay in order to further their education here, whether it be costs for exam proctoring or just general school supplies. The students union should help to make school more accessible.

What's the best part of an average day for you?

Eva Notter

My dog Max

Leah Campbell

Family is of utmost importance to me, so any time spent with my two children, and my spouse – oh, and my cats – is time well spent. Laughing is my favorite thing, and living with two constant goofballs (the kids, not the cats!) makes it a daily occurrence in our home.

Jesse Poriz

Spending quality time with my wife and 5 kids, they are my everything.

Cassandra Mackay

Honestly? Signing into AU...I love learning!

Amy Mayer

My favourite part of my day is picking up a book and relaxing at the end of a big day.

Marley Curtis

When my cat wakes me up by “singing the song of his people” as his food bowl is only $\frac{1}{4}$ full and he is basically starving to death. Just kidding! It's the cup of coffee I make after filling his food bowl, and the beautiful silence that follows.

Joel Palyga

I LOVE the early morning hours. I find it is my most productive time of the day. I always wake up early, usually around 4 or 5, and spend my morning studying, meditating, and journaling. Additionally, I adore sitting and sharing a cup of morning coffee with my lovely partner.

Diedra Mahabal

The best part of an average day for me is being able to sit down with my family members for dinner as we enjoy each other's company and discuss how good of a day we each had whether the topic is school, work, exercise/fitness or caring for our dog.

Dur-E-Najaf Syed

My favourite part of the day is taking long walks through the forest!

If there was a new service, program, activity, or degree you could convince AU (not AUSU) to offer to students, what would it be?

Eva Notter

For myself: More options for graduate programs relating to psychology

For everyone: The option to choose between e-text or hardcopy textbooks

Leah Campbell

It would really benefit me if somehow law school could be offered strictly online! This type of degree does not necessary fit with an online platform (at the moment). The ability to study law online would make the degree more attainable to people (like me) who cannot move to attend school where it is offered due to family and other life responsibilities.

Jesse Poriz

With all the diversification of careers that are taking place , I believe that AU should offer dual degrees to help students be better prepared for their prospective employments.

Cassandra Mackay

I'm wanting to get my bachelor of education after this degree and think it would be neat if AU offered that so I wouldn't have to switch schools.

Amy Mayer

I would like to see an honours BA program. I would recommend this because some universities require it for entrance to their Master's programs.

Marley Curtis

Oooh this is a great question. Since communication is a big issue for AU, especially as an online school, I would like to see more virtual opportunities for students to connect. Other schools have clubs and hobby groups, and I don't see why AU can't either. How cool would it be to get to connect with other AU students in your city over a shared passion and maybe even meet up in-person? Real study groups that exist outside of lesser-known WhatsApp invitation-only chats would be nice, and advocacy groups as well.

Joel Palyga

I would love AU expand the philosophy minor into a major. We have great professors and tutors who have assembled some top-notch philosophy courses. It would be fantastic to see that continue to grow. Moreover, I truly believe deep philosophical thought and critical thinking skills are imperative to navigating the extremely complicated world we have today. Providing an increasingly comprehensive study of philosophy will help prepare students to undertake the many difficult challenges of the future!

Diedra Mahaba

A new service that I would convince AU to offer students would be an online/virtual tutoring service that teaches more up-to-date, relevant, and step-by-step tutorials on proper MLA and APA citation. Perhaps bringing students on board.

Dur-E-Najaf Syed

I think that there should be a way for students to select their instructors for certain courses. Unfortunately sometimes you get stuck with instructors or tutors that you don't really mesh well with and that can greatly hinder your success in the course. Students should get more freedom to choose, similar to in-person universities.

**What's going to be the biggest challenge
for you should you get elected?**

Eva Notter

I anticipate the learning curve, I have never been a member of student government before

Leah Campbell

The biggest challenge for any student council is being able to identify the right course of action for a particular problem. Evaluating solution options will be a group effort, including potentially differing opinions. The eclectic nature of the council will allow for creative problem-solving efforts, and I know hard work will go into ensuring voices are heard and that everyone is provided an equal opportunity to express themselves.

Jesse Poriz

Although this may use up some of my family time, I have always felt the need to serve the communities that I am a part of.

Cassandra Mackay

I'm shy. I'm going to have to come out of my shell some more but don't worry I can do it!

Amy Mayer

I believe a big part of AUSU is advocating for our students. So I think my biggest challenge will be connecting with students because our AU community is spread out over many communication mediums. But I would be honoured to be given the opportunity to try to connect with as many students as possible.

Marley Curtis

Figuring out where the communication issue is originating and convincing administration that solving it should be priority #1.

Joel Palyga

My biggest challenge will be juggling my various priorities. Luckily, I have become very adept at time management (through much trial and more error) and feel extremely confident in my ability to excel in my studies, support my family, and represent the AU student body.

Diedra Mahabal

The biggest challenge for me if I get elected would be to not bite off more than I can chew in other words take on too much.

Dur-E-Najaf Syed

Finding ways to implement all of my ideas!

**Is there a program or activity AUSU does now
that you think it should expand?**

Eva Notter

AUSU has several career resources, and also provides webinars I've received links to. I think this could have potential for expansion to include some sort of alumni-student mentorship program, whatever that could look like.

Leah Campbell

There is always room to expand on awards and bursaries! With one of the largest student bodies at any Canadian university, AUSU needs an abundance of awards and bursaries to remain relative (competitive).

Jesse Poriz

I think the AUSU should expand on programs related to the mental health issues that are facing our student body; everyone student needs to feel safe, secure, and equal.

Cassandra Mackay

The monthly socials. I haven't been in ages due to volunteering in my community at the same time. However I feel like these should happen more often (ex. Trivia one week, study session another week, an ordinary social the third week...a different type of social each week so there's something for everyone).

Amy Mayer

I would like to see our AUSU mobile app updated. It is a great communication tool for the AUSU, but some features are not functioning inefficiently. Areas that could improve are the search feature and the classes and schedule features.

Marley Curtis

The AU student app has so much potential, but it seems to have ~30 active users out of a student population of ~30,000. Its existence is essentially a secret, but it should be the focal point of student connection and where the clubs and advocacy groups I mentioned before could bloom!

Joel Palyga

I think it would be great to continue expanding mental health resources. The past 18 months or so have been a great challenge for many of us. It is important that we ensure that we continue to have a caring, safe, and helpful community when addressing our mental health. I believe we all have it in us to succeed, but we always will find a point in our journey when we need the supports to help us do so.

Diedra Mahabal

AUSU should expand on the outside services and resources to help students out financially such as Student Price Card (SPC) memberships and also providing full access to learning services like Grammarly, Inc., and Adobe Acrobat Reader DC.

Dur-E-Najaf Syed

The scholarships and bursaries should be expanded to help more widely cover the costs of education for more people. As well, the AUSU should better advertise all the great services they offer!

**Is there a program or activity AUSU does now
that you think it could cut back?**

Eva Notter

None that I can think of, but I may have a different answer with more experience.

Leah Campbell**Jesse Poriz**

Absolutely not, all the programs and activities that AUSU puts on are valuable and worthwhile.

Cassandra Mackay

I feel as AU has students so geographically far apart, anything AUSU can do to make us feel closer and more united, especially during this pandemic, is a plus. The last thing we need is for the AUSU to cut back on anything.

Amy Mayer

I currently do not know of any programs that AUSU could cut back on, but I believe that a cost/benefit approach is best when these discussions are made. The AUSU must make sure that they use their efforts and resources to produce the most significant benefit for our fellow students.

Marley Curtis

I don't know enough about other faculties and programs outside of my own to speak about where cutbacks should occur. I could say ___ program or activity should be cut, simply because I don't understand that activity or like that field of study. That would be silly, wouldn't it? This is something AU needs to be asking students about their own programs and analyzing data to figure out.

Joel Palyga

I have not come across a program or activity that I have felt is unnecessary with AUSU, which speaks volumes to our past council members, and those who currently serve on student council.

Diedra Mahabal

No there is not a program that AUSU does now that I think it could cut back on.

Dur-E-Najaf Syed

No.

Outside of AU, what's your passion?**Eva Notter**

My passion is helping people and seeing their lives visibly improve as they gain new knowledge and tools to help themselves.

Leah Campbell

I am passionate about learning, being in nature, self-expression through the written word, working on bettering myself each day, and ensuring I am providing a good role model for my children.

Jesse Poriz

My passion is for Papua New Guinea. My wife is from there and I have fallen in love with the people and their culture. My plan is to relocate there after graduation to start a non-profit child and youth program.

Cassandra Mackay

My faith. I know there's people of all faiths on here so I'll keep this vague but I've been struggling with my faith for a few years and recently had an experience that reignited my faith in me so that has to be my biggest passion right now.

Amy Mayer

My passion is the outdoors. I love to hike, canoe and camp, and I'm excited about the warmer weather.

Marley Curtis

I am a politics and grass-roots advocacy nerd. I volunteered on both the provincial election and federal election and have remained involved with my local MLA since. I am the president of an executive team that supports him, and together we develop strategies for engagement and fundraising. Municipal elections are coming up in Alberta this fall! A few days ago, I joined the campaign team of a city council candidate who is shaking things up and making headlines in a very good way (their platform is youth-focused). The very next day I joined the campaign team of another city council candidate who has an all-female team. I am going to be busy getting them both into office in October, but I am passionate about putting good people into positions where they can do good things and I believe they both will make excellent council members and help solve some budgetary issues Edmonton has had since... forever.

In my spare time I am a gamer and a crazy cat lady. I spent hundreds of hours on ARK: Survival Evolved and way too much time mastering Fortnite before I gave it up when the map changed for the umpteenth time. My very vocal cat, Nikki, has a following of almost 15,000 on Instagram (@nikki_forest_cat) because he walks on a leash and is very adorable while doing so. I enjoy taking him and my spouse hiking in Banff, Drumheller, and Jasper in non-pandemic years.

Joel Palyga

Living so close to the mountains gives me a paramount opportunity to be able to quickly step away from urban life and connect with nature. Both my wife and I are avid hikers and campers, and love to spend our days taking in the beautiful country we live in. However, when my legs are sore from all the hiking or we don't have time to head out to the mountains, I will bury myself in a history or philosophy book.

Diedra Mahabal

My passion outside of AU is to elevate myself and others in all that we do. I find this comes from a place deeply within each of us. As for me it is simply just being a better person by building new or repairing old relationships and setting aside time for the individuals who humble me the most.

Dur-E-Najaf Syed

My passion has always been to help people in any way I can!



Finding Mother Goddess How an AU Course Changed My World

Jessica Young



When I enrolled in WGST333: Goddess Mythology, Women's Spirituality, and Ecofeminism at Athabasca University, I had no idea what I was signing up for. The most experience I had with goddess mythology was the watered-down versions of myths that I read as a child. I had taken a few women's studies courses prior to this, but I had never even heard the word ecofeminism, and, despite being raised Catholic, I wouldn't consider myself a very spiritual person. Truth be told, I signed up for the course thinking I would get an easy A to boost my GPA—what I got was a journey that changed my perception of what it means to be a woman and a child of Mother Earth.

The first significant understanding that I have gained is that of the Paleolithic and Neolithic time periods and the humanity that was shown by the people of these eras. With my limited knowledge of these time periods, I envisioned violent barbarians. Instead, I read

about people who showed no evidence of war, created beautiful sacred cathedrals in the womb of the Earth, honoured animals, and sweetly buried their children in egg shaped coffins awaiting their rebirth. This has shown me that there was (and can still be) a better way for humans to exist.

The second understanding I gained is the extent that the patriarchy has warped mythology over the centuries to justify themselves and aide in the subordination of women. I have always heard the proverb "history is written by the victors", and yet I never thought to apply this to mythology or religion (it seems I also underestimated how deeply history and mythology are intertwined).

In this case, the victor was the patriarchy. The beautiful story of Mother Goddess—one that celebrates and values love, equality, unity, and life—was rewritten over and over again with violence, alienation, and hierarchies.

Finally, I have gained an understanding of the relationship between women and the environment, and how this is connected to the patriarchy: “the domination of women and nature because of their perceived inferiority is the basis for the hierarchy of male and female—and also the domination of other groups that are seen as close to nature and thus inherently inferior” (Leah and Wells, 2018, Unit 7). Ecofeminism is the marriage of feminism and deep ecology. Deep ecology “asks us to move from human-centeredness to an awareness of our inter-relatedness with all of life” (Leah and Wells, 2018, Unit 7) – questioning the premise of industrial society as opposed to solely treating the environmental symptoms of capitalism (Leah and Wells, 2018, Unit 7). While ecofeminism shares many of the principles of deep ecology, it adds the perspective that the issue is not necessarily derived from human-centeredness, but with man-centeredness, and “concerns itself with the twin domination of women and nature” within our patriarchal system. Ecofeminism also examines climate change, environmental degradation, and the oppression of women through an intersectional lens, acknowledging that women in the margins of society will be most affected by (and are often blamed for) these issues (Leah and Wells, 2018, Unit 7).

As a solution, ecofeminists seek to transform our current Western culture to one of life-sustaining mutuality (Leah and Wells, 2018, Unit 7). Elements of this culture would include reconstructing patterns of male-female, racial, and class relations; reshaping our basic sense of self in relation to the organic life cycle of growth, disintegration, and new life, and reshaping concepts of God, from a transcendent male consciousness to the immanent source of life (Leah and Wells, 2018, Unit 7). The reawakening of goddess and earth-based spirituality may be the way to do so—“by realizing our own divinity, we may also appreciate more fully the sacredness inherent in our bodies, and our relationships with each other and Earth” (Leah and Wells, 2018, Unit 7).

After being deeply moved by one of my assignments on the Ancient Egyptian Goddess, Isis, I became genuinely interested in learning about Earth-based spiritualities and what they have to offer me as a woman and as a mother. I learned about “the impact that different views of spirituality have on women’s ability to live confident, creative, and respect-filled lives” (Leah and Wells, 2018, Unit 1) and this is something I want for myself and my daughter. The empowerment that comes from Earth-based spiritualities perception of pregnancy and childbirth as sacred is unmatched, especially in a society that judges mothers and their bodies so harshly.

After my final research project on Paganism, I was directed to a local Unitarian church that welcomes Paganism and earth-based spiritualities by the wonderful course tutor (and author of the course), Dr. Ronnie Joy Leah. I highly recommend this course—you might be surprised how much you get out of it. I can’t wait to explore this new-found chapter of my life!

References

Leah, R. J. Wells, R. (2018). *Goddess Mythology, Women’s Spirituality, and Ecofeminism (Rev. C3) Study Guide*. Athabasca University.

Jessica is completing her Bachelor of Human Resources and Labour Relations degree while pursuing her passion for writing and drinking coffee.



Fly on the Wall

Hoi Polloi

Jason Sullivan



Discovering a New You Through Discourse at AU

Being a bit contrarian is in the nature of studying at AU—we're unique attendees at a unique university. Off-campus, as it were, oxymorons such as *adult student* pervade our cultural atmosphere. We've aged out of youth but aren't quite willing to be normal, *hoi polloi*, mass culture consumers of life as labouring for wages and then spending our paycheques. There's more to life than those necessary realities, right?

To want more than a humdrum life draws us to education, not only for more job choices or a fatter pay bundle, but because—instinctively, intuitively—we know that new and better unknowns await us if we're willing to work for them. We want more and

better and that involves discovering new meanings fresh understandings of the world and our place in it. Meanings seem to sway out from our identity as adult students just as the idea of adulting itself implies more responsibilities and less teenage angst. But wait, are sensations of responsibility and angst so different?

You can't take it with you, society seems to say. Growing up means shifting our brains away from asking big questions. Or does it? And yet, just when we might feel ready to throw in the towel on our critical thinking skills, Athabasca emerges as a focal point of our lives. With a wave of a wand of learning, all that seemed wrong with the world seems to make sense again and we feel right justified in thinking ourselves away from rote routines of normality. After all, sometimes the lamest ontological status of all is to be *well-adjusted*. As Jiddu Krishnamurti put it, "it's no measure of health to be well-adjusted to a profoundly sick society" (Santayana, online).

Electing a New Purpose

Even a single elective in sociology is enough to teach us that we become read into normality and learned into adulthood. Perhaps we've been trained to abandon raw curiosity in favour of rote, rat-race busywork, where the ends justify the means, and life is lived in pursuit of materialistic somethings rather than prosaic whimsy. Maybe that's why we returned to school; it was time to grow up and stop trying to impress the world or our childish expectations of what it means to grow up. Life seemed too bland, too banal, too predictable before we began our post-secondary career. Our sense of adventure seemed to have taken flight leaving us with laundry to fold and insurance payments to pay. Fun seemed over, *finito*, and left us brandishing nothing but a wilted sense of self-worth. Well, never fear, the social sciences are here to rescue us from alienation and *anomie*. And post-modernism, despite what the meme-ocracy tries to claim about its nihilism or relativism (easily disputed by the fact that reality is many, not one, and truth is what we make of it), provides a liberatory baseline from which to parachute against gravity and into a scholastic stratosphere that no Jeff Bezos rocket could ever hope to attain.

What's the Subject? You!

Jacques Derrida describes a process whereby we lose our passion for learning and novelty in favour of a discourse of productivity and belonging. We learn to think, abide, and inhabit a subjectivity where we simultaneously feel lost and found, understood and mute. Narratives of

social expectations suddenly seem stale. If we speak and act how others wish us to then we are repaid by others with purpose and positive results. And if we stray away from the norms of norms we are cast to the wind like an old party balloon by the great other of social expectations. What seems normal and natural, when it comes to daily life and values and narratives of success, takes hold of us right when we might be attaining new heights of academic vigour. Derrida notes that, as soon as we bypass our expectations, life appears to have almost never been lived; like a dead language or a desiccated flower petal. "Natural language carries and touches within itself the sign of death; it pertains to its body to resound and in so doing to raise up its natural cadaver to the height of the concept, to universalize it and rationalize it in the very time of its decomposition." (Derrida, 16) Concepts like adulthood wither away in the face of our awakened minds. To reanimate the zombie within us all, and to avoid becoming a mindless member of mass society, is one of those intangible potentials that AU provides. The hope of being a new you at AU propels us forward, or it certainly has provided a nice boost to this *Fly on the Wall*. As Pericles stated in his time, "freedom is the sure possession of those alone who have the courage to defend it" (Pericles, online). Our liberty to learn, and the time to do it, is precious and may be our most priceless possession of all.

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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.



Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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



AthaU Facebook Group

Yikes! Tuition hikes! A student posts the amounts of their increasing tuition fees over the past few years; some responses point the finger at AB gov't cuts to education, coupled with the removal of tuition caps.

reddit

Quiz relief. A student wonders if a four-quiz course will require extra invigilation hassles; others are quick to point out that only exams require invigilation, not quizzes.

Twitter

@aulibarchives tweets: "Interested in what borrowing privileges you have at AU Library? Have a look at our loan rules: library.athabasca.ca/UsingLibCollection.html#borrowing."

YouTube

The #AthaU21 party continues, with [Congratulations messages from AU Team](#).



Course Exam

AU courses, up close

Karen Lam

Course Exam

Karen Lam

ENGL 140 (English Language and Writing Skills)

If you have a course that you would like to see a Course Exam article written for or you recently took a course that you would like to recommend to other AU students, please feel free to reach out with the course name and number, and any questions or feedback you may have. We'll be happy to write about it in our next Course Exam article.

ENGL 140 (English Language and Writing Skills) is a course designed “for students who need to revise or upgrade their grammar skills to ensure accuracy of communication before proceeding with other courses or post-secondary students.” The course explores a thorough and systematic review of grammatical structural and when to use it in the appropriate situations. The course examines grammar from an ESL perspective, however it is also recommended for students who are native speakers of English looking to improve their grammar skills.

Who Should Take This Course and Why

For this course, we had the opportunity to speak with Dr. Michael Volek, the Course Coordinator for ENGL 140. When we asked Dr. Volek who he would recommend the course for he stated, “ENGL 140 is designed for students who want to ensure that they have a strong foundation for the writing tasks they will face in their programmes. It is especially recommended for ESL students who may not have mastered the grammar, and for mature students whose writing skills may have grown rusty in the years they were out of the classroom. It is also recommended for students who haven’t had a lot of exposure to writing or who have struggled with it in the past.”

Dr. Volek also elaborated on the importance of the English grammar, especially in University; “Knowledge of English grammar is essential for students who want to reach their full potential as writers. Writing at the university level is complex. Students are expected to convey sophisticated ideas and construct persuasive arguments, which may span 10s or even 100s of pages, and, without a solid grasp of the grammar, students can struggle to express their ideas clearly and effectively.”

When we asked Dr. Volek about the audience he recommended the course to he mentioned, “This [course] is often apparent in students who speak English as a second language (ESL). But even Native English speakers may have an incomplete grasp of the grammar, as relatively little time is spent on it at the elementary and secondary level.” Therefore, whether you are a native speaker or not, and are looking to improve your grammar, this course is recommended for you!

Course, Assignments and Final Exam Details

This course consists of eight modules: verb tenses, modals and related expressions, passive voice, gerunds and infinitives, nouns/pronouns/and agreement, noun and adjective clauses, adverb clauses, and conjunctions and other connectives.

The course has eight assignments that are worth a combined total of 64%. There are also eight quizzes worth 8% in total, along with a reflective paragraph assignment that is worth 8% as well. There is an online final exam for the course that is worth the remaining 20% of the overall mark. Students must achieve a minimum grade of 50% or higher on the final exam along with a composite course grade of at least 60% to pass the course.

How to Be Successful in the Course

Introducing the Course Coordinator – Dr. Michael Volek

Dr. Michael Volek has been working at Athabasca University since the fall of 2013. Along with ENGL 140, he coordinates all the other foundational (100-level) writing skills courses at AU (ENGL 145, ENGL 155, ENGL 177, and ENGL 189). Dr. Volek also tutor MAIS 606, which is a graduate-level writing course, and he coaches at the Write Site.

Dr. Volek graduated from McMaster University in 1993 with a B.A. in Philosophy before setting out for Okayama, Japan, where he worked for many years as an English instructor. In 2003, Dr. Volek returned to McMaster to complete an M.A. in Philosophy, followed by a second M.A. in Applied Language Studies from Carleton University, and finally a Ph.D. in English from UBC, which he completed in 2014. Dr. Volek's academic interests concern the intersection of theory and praxis in discourse studies with the work of Mikhail Bakhtin, which was the topic of his doctoral research. But despite his focus on theory, he considers his vocation to be teaching, and he takes the greatest pleasure in guiding student-writers on their academic path.

Dr. Michael Volek's Advice for the Course

"The biggest obstacle students face in the study of grammar, I think, is the unfamiliar vocabulary. Before they can grasp the rules and conventions of writing – for example, "subject-verb agreement" – students need to learn what a "subject" is, and what a "verb" is, and so forth. And this can sometimes feel tedious and overwhelming. The good news is that grammar is natural and intuitive (especially for native speakers), so once students get past the vocabulary, it is not such a struggle to understand the concepts, and their command of the language can grow at a surprisingly fast pace."

Questions?

If you have any further questions regarding the course, please do not hesitate to contact the Course Coordinator at mvolek@athabascau.ca. Happy studying!

Karen's taking her Computing Science degree at AU, learning French and Korean, and is into K-pop, SF, and politics

AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Events

Bannock and a Movie June Edition: Two Spirit Stories

Jun 1 to Jun 30, Online

Hosted by AU Nukskahtowin

www.athabascau.ca/indigenous/bannock-and-a-movie/index.html

Access through above link

Unapologetically Ambitious: An Interview with one of Silicon Valley's First Female African American CEOs.

Sat, Jun 19, beginning 1:00 pm MDT

Online, On-demand

Hosted by AU

news.athabascau.ca/events/unapologetically-ambitious-an-interview-with-one-of-silicon-valleys-first-female-african-american-ceos/

Register through above link

Faculty of Business Undergrad Program Orientation for New Students

Tues, Jun 22, 12:00 to 1:00 pm MDT, Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business

news.athabascau.ca/events/faculty-of-business-undergraduate-program-orientation-for-new-students-20210622/

RSVP through above link

Pandemic insights: revealing the essential of heritage conservation.

Thur, Jun 24, 3:00 to 5:00 pm MDT, Online

Hosted by AU, ICCROM, and IIC

news.athabascau.ca/events/heritage-conservation-essentials/

RSVP through above link

ATTACH webinar series: Health Care System and Health Care Policy

Fri, Jun 25, 12:00 to 1:00 pm MDT, Online

Hosted by AU and CIHR SPOR-funded

ATTACH study

news.athabascau.ca/events/au-library-webinar-au-has-a-library-an-introduction-to-library-resources-and-services-2-4-2-2/

Register through above link

The Grad Lounge

Fri, Jun 25, 5:00 to 6:00 pm MDT

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.

Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: 8th Annual Cover Guy Scholarship

Sponsored by: The Cover Guy

Deadline: June 30, 2021

Potential payout: \$1000

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be currently enrolled, or going to be enrolled, in a program at a university, college, or trade school, in Canada or the United States, for the upcoming school year.

What's required: An email with contact and school info, along with an article of 500-1000 words on the topic of hot tubs and/or backyard experiences.

Tips: There's plenty of info on the website to help you research the essay topic.

Where to get info: www.thecoverguy.com/en-ca/the-cover-guy-annual-scholarship/



Unearthing classic articles from previous issues of The Voice Magazine

Sunday, June 20 is Father's Day, but many of our writers didn't need a holiday to share memories of their fathers.

Lies I tell my Daddy. Carole E. Trainor dives into the pool of emotions that accompany visiting Dad in the nursing home. "I tell him that soon I am going to build a house for all of us—for all of his children, and him." His Shirt and Tie, January 19, 2005.

A labour of love. Shirley Barg shares excerpts of her father's memoirs in this three-part series. "My father, Peter Kutsak, turned 83 last January. Eight years ago, he sat down in front of a computer for the very first time in his life and taught himself how to use Word Perfect." Sharing the Memoirs of My Father's Life, July 24, 2002.

Overcoming

Marie Well



Have you ever noticed that almost every motivational clip features athletes? You see athletes training in the gym, disabled athletes pushing beyond limits, and athletes almost giving up but moving beyond.

You also hear the mantras, “Don’t quit,” and, “Pick yourself up,” and, “Do it when you don’t feel like it.”

Controlling our physical beings is a big part of overcoming. When we master our bodies, we better master other areas of our lives.

When I joined the university wrestling team for a short stint, I had went from anorexic couch potato with a belly, barely able to run ten steps, to a muscular and lean being. But what I want to convey is the turning point. It’s difficult to express, but it’s like going from an exercise atheist to spending every free moment in the gym. The more you focus on exercise, the more it becomes a raging desire. And, at some point, resistance morphs into passion, like

waking up from a lifetime of blindness to see a cherry-colored sunrise.

And that goes for most anything in life. But it doesn’t have to be physical exercise. It can be academic ability or career growth.

Consider the academic who never studied, always joking in class, expected to drop out, but, who later in life, became focused on school, taking night classes and studying every free moment. The student achieves more than even his closest friends thought possible. His secret was fixating on a goal until it skyrocketed into momentum.

Or consider me, the disabled high school dropout. I gained a master’s degree and a high paying career, although I now, more than ever, need to keep my thoughts purely positive.

That’s the thing about the subconscious. You’ve got to be really selective with your thinking. You’ve got to condition yourself for success. You’ve got to train your mind to repel self-doubt and insecurity.

And never give up. That’s why Buddhist monks do so much meditation. They train and tame their mind to surrender always to the light.

Anything worthwhile takes intense discipline and constant vigilance, requiring we watch and correct our every thought. With constant discipline, we can take comfort in the knowledge that we are morphing into our ideal selves. We have no limitations except the limitations we place on ourselves.

When you reflect back on your successes, the thought of that momentum will still shock you, even though you walked those steps until you ran the sprint. Sports, academics, careers—it doesn’t matter. Forging a positive path always exceeds the cost of being stuck in neutral or reverse. Don’t let those little slivers of doubt plant seeds. The only thing that can defeat you is your thinking.

Remember, J.K. Rowling, who wrote Harry Potter, was on the dole in England. Using her brain, creativity, and persistence, she now may be wealthier than the queen. So every day, think, “I’ve

got to get a thimble of water.” At the end of week, you’ll have a cup of water. But, as humans, we are already mostly water. So, we’ve already got within us what we seek.

To discover that momentum, don’t think of the end result, just think of that thimble of water.



The Struggling Student Rants

If your phone doesn’t ring, it’s likely me.

Angela Pappas



The inventor of the telephone—Alexander Graham Bell—spent a great part of his adult life in Canada before moving on to the US (Ross, 2001). These years eventually resulted in the phones some of us remember as being attached to the wall with a curly cord. If you were lucky, that cord was long enough for you to sit down and chat also. Once Bell managed to patent the phone and show the Queen how it’s done, he started putzing around with wireless technology. Yes, it all started in Canada! Yet Canadians have been paying some of the highest wireless rates in the world since the invention of the cell phone. According the 2020 Edition of Price Comparisons of Wireline, Wireless and Internet Services in Canada and with

Foreign Jurisdictions, which analyzes telecommunications pricing in Canada each year, Canada has the second highest mobile costs in the world—second only to Japan—while the EU and Australia are the cheapest. It’s a well-known secret among Canucks that it’s cheaper to own a carrier pigeon in our country than it is to pay for monthly cell phone and internet plans.

Arun et al. explain how the original mobile phones were called “car phones” and created so people could talk while they drive (2019). These phones were bulky—similar to a foot-long sub from Subway. If my memory serves me correctly, these car phones were attached into leather briefcases because their operating system and battery were too large to fit into the phone itself. When going on a road trip you would take your briefcase with you, as you would your luggage and purse. These car phones were also extremely expensive. Only those working in the C suite could justify the cost—the silver-haired CEO types we see in Hollywood productions, cruising down the Pacific Coast Highway in a company-provided Ford Thunderbird.

Cell phones as we know them today, no briefcase attached, made their debut in Canada in 1985. Victor Surerus was the first cellphone customer in Canada at that time; open-handed Victor paid about \$10,000 a year for his cell phone contract with Bell. We most certainly cannot label Victor as a spend-thrift. While there are now approximately 61 phone carriers in Canada, Chodorowicz, and Sciadas explain how the main players have always been Rogers Wireless, Bell Mobility, and Telus (1998), the three of whom have been going at it like hyenas fighting over a lone zebra carcass. These “hyenas” had costs to bear, however; it wasn’t all unicorns and rainbows. Canada

is a vast country, spanning from one ocean to another. The cost of building out the infrastructure for wireless communications was not cheap and these cell phone giants were not building towers and diggings for lines out of the goodness of their hearts. They were—and are— in the business to make a buck. As a result, when asked to justify their pricing strategy, the few cell phone carriers in our country have blamed the sparsely populated layout of our land. However, one would think that 30 years later these networks have matured and more than recouped their costs. It's also a bit of a head-scratcher how other countries and continents, such as Australia for example, have larger geographical challenges than Canada but manage to offer faster network connection speeds and much cheaper to boot!

Another absurdity that makes you stop to think are two-way charges, also known as the 'receiving party pays' plan structure. The total cost of a call or text message is split into two, between the caller and the recipient of the call. This means that, while in the US and Canada you typically have to pay to both send text messages and make phone calls, as well as receive them. This is, indeed, labelled "absurd" for those in other countries and a practice generally unheard of. Imagine my surprise when returning to Canada ten years ago and I found out that if I have a flat tire in the middle of a prairie highway, not only can I not phone someone for help without being charged, but they also can't phone me without charging me a pretty penny for being out of the city perimeter. Better to wait for the coyotes I suppose and call 911 free of charge. This is attributed to the fact that the numbering system in North America is geographical—like landlines. You are charged based on your physical location at the time of the call. In other countries however, there are designated 'area codes' for cell phone numbers versus land line numbers. This practice has seemed to disappear in recent years; I'm not certain if our sympathetic carriers finally decided to listen to the public outcry.

Many argue that Canada's telecommunications industry needs to be regulated, while others argue that it's the competition—or lack thereof— that is the true culprit. There is simply not enough competition in Canada to force these three to lower their prices. According to a report by the Canadian Radio, Television, and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), the three firms together control some 90.7 per cent of Canada's wireless market. Three decades after their initial takeover, the hyenas have learnt to get along better; at least, in the public eye. Yet, they continue to hoard the fly-infested carcasses and guard the water hole so no one else can get near without paying the price. This is why I say it's now time to let the lions through for some healthy competition.

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Angela Pappas is a part-time AU Certificate student who enjoys learning and discussing anything personal finance and personal development related.



Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

For the Love of Dog

Dear Barb:

Hi, I enjoy reading your columns and find some issues really hit home, so I thought I would write. My husband and our two boys just moved into a new neighbourhood. When we viewed the house we noticed there was a dog in the yard next door and since we all like dogs, we didn't see it being an issue. However, two months of living here the dog is definitely an issue and not for the usual reasons. The dog doesn't bark all day, or cause any noise problems, but rather is very quiet and seems unhappy. The family rarely pays attention to the dog; sometimes it doesn't even have water. They leave it outside in all kinds of weather and it has no shelter. If it's raining it goes under the porch. I can't imagine what happens to the poor dog during the winter. I was speaking to the neighbor on the other side and he doesn't seem to want to get involved. At times when it was quite warm out and the dog had no water, we filled up his water bowl. I don't want to have problems with my neighbors, but I am quite upset about the situation and so are my husband and boys. I don't know whether I should talk to the owners, or call the humane society and report them. I can't just leave the poor dog in that situation. It is obvious it is not happy or safe. Can you suggest something that I can do that will not lead to animosity between us and our neighbors? Looking forward to your response Kim.

Hi Kim:

Animal cruelty and neglect is a very important issue that must not be ignored. Leaving a dog outside unattended for long periods of time is not okay. There are many hazards a dog could be exposed to such as weather conditions, either heat or cold, also it could be attacked by another animal and have no place to go for protection among other things. Aside from these threats dogs are social animals and could become lonely or bored if left alone for long periods of time, which could result in destructive or aggressive behaviour. You obviously are aware of these factors and are looking for a way to help this poor dog, without becoming enemies with your neighbor.

Sections 444 to 447 of Canada's Criminal Code constitute Canada's primary federal animal protection legislation. The Code prohibits causing "unnecessary pain, suffering or injury to an animal or bird" and "causing damage or injury by wilful neglect".

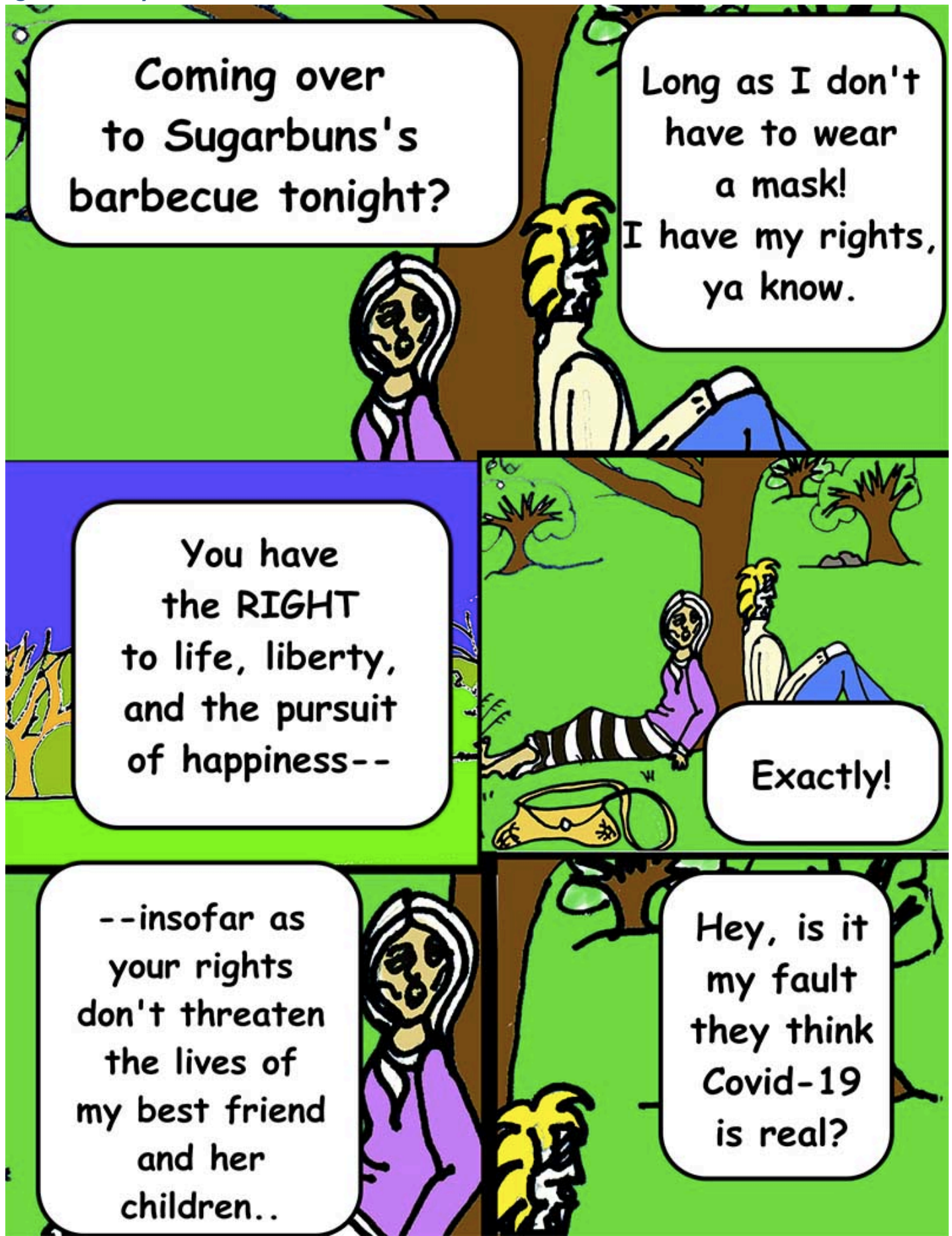
It is probably not a good idea to confront your neighbors. Animal abuse or neglect can be reported to your local SPCA or Humane Society and if you request, your identity can be kept anonymous, and your neighbours will not know who reported them. More people need to come forward and report animal abuse, as someone needs to speak for those without a voice.

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
Right to Liberty

Wanda Waterman



This update is provided by AUSU. The Voice does not create or edit this content. Contact services@ausu.org with any questions about this article.

IMPORTANT DATES

- June 10-23: [AUSU By-Election Campaign](#)
- June 18-25: [AUSU celebrates Pride](#)
- June 24: [By-Election voting opens](#)
- June 28: [AUSU Annual General Meeting](#)

STUDENT COUNCIL BY-ELECTION

GET INVOLVED
MAKE A
DIFFERENCE.



Meet Your Candidates!

The nomination period is closed and it's time to meet your candidates! [These AU students](#) are eager to get involved, gain experience, and represent fellow learners as part of [an amazing team!](#)

[Check out the candidate bios](#) and then [visit the 2021 By-Election Forum](#) to learn more about your candidates and ask them questions.

Now that the candidates are set, your chance to vote by email will arrive in your inbox on June 24th with voting open until June 28th at 11:59 pm MT.



The Indigenous Circle represents Indigenous students at the Athabasca University Students' Union, as well as the greater AU community and advises AUSU on various matters through the lens of Indigenous students.

We are looking for up to thirteen AU undergraduate students, who identify as Indigenous, to [join the Indigenous Circle at AUSU](#).

Duties include attending Indigenous Circle meetings held at least four times a year, reviewing proposals and providing feedback, and reducing the barriers to education among AU's Indigenous learners.

To join the Indigenous Circle, email your resume and a summary of why you are interested to Governance and Advocacy Coordinator Duncan

Wojtaszek at governance@ausu.org. You must be a current AUSU member and self-identify as Indigenous to apply.



Happy Pride Week from your AU Students' Union!

We've planned a week of recognition and celebration starting Friday, June 18th, including interviews, suggested reading, community highlights, a Pride-themed Open Mic Podcast, and more, so tune in on all our channels!

We're also hosting an amazing social media contest you don't want to miss! Follow us on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), & [Twitter](#), and visit our website [here](#) for details!



AUSU will be hosting a formal [Annual General Meeting](#) on June 28th, 2021, at 5 pm MT.

All students are welcome to attend! Join AUSU Council and staff to review the [2021 Annual Report](#), audited financial statements, and highlights and achievements from the 2019/2020 fiscal year.

If you have any questions about the event, please contact governance@ausu.org.

CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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www.voicemagazine.org

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