



THE VOICE

Vol 30 Issue 27 2022-07-15

Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You

Environments & Toxic Influences

How They Destroy Lives

Why am I Here?

A New Writer Introduction

Plus:

*Happy 30th to AUSU
AU-Thentic Events
and much more!*



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Views and articles
presented here are those
of the contributors and do
not represent the views of
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 30, Issue 27

© 2022 by The Voice
Magazine

ISSN 2561-3634

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

Happy 30th to AUSU

Karl Low



The Athabasca University Students Union is celebrating its 30th year, with an in person celebration happening at a pub in West Edmonton Mall, as well as some online events that you can find out more about on [the AUSU site](#). It's been an eventful ride for the group, which initially started off having been granted an office inside the Edmonton office of AU, an office space that as budget pressures mounted for AU, slowly ended up shrinking until eventually AUSU found its own office space, and, further on from that, discarded the idea of a specific physical office space altogether, operating now as an almost entirely virtual organization.

What started as a council of nine students gathered around an AU conference table in Edmonton with one staff member morphed into three executives and the staff member in Edmonton working by conference call with the six student councillors around the province, supplemented by email, to a couple of staff in an Edmonton office supervised by a director in another city primarily through Skype and email, supplemented by phone conferences, with an executive group across the province and country, then consolidating the

executive and staff back into the physical office, until it reached its current form: an expanded council of thirteen, with multiple sub-groups consisting of students-at-large and councillors, four executives scattered around the country and the staff all physically dispersed, operating through whatever means happen to work best for the task, whether phone or video conferencing, or occasionally physical get-togethers.

And the services provided directly to students through-out that time has waxed and waned, however, common to all of them was a focus on trying to keep the students forefront in mind through the various levels of bureaucracy at AU and the government.

And, being entirely honest, I think this group is doing a better job of it than many. I was fortunate during my term as an AUSU executive that the province was undergoing a re-evaluation of how to regulate university tuition. This gave the AUSU council of my time a great opportunity to get ourselves heard at government, and we did, presenting a counter-proposal to the universities' proposal of no tuition regulation and the larger student union communities' proposal of no tuition increases allowed at all (which I don't believe would ever have been accepted). AUSU of then proposed tuition legislation which tied tuition increases to CPI, which is what the government eventually did, and what remains in place to this day. That was my big win, but in hindsight, I think my council could have done more to directly support and connect with students while it was doing this. That's one area where I think the current council is doing very well. So kudos to them for that.

All of which is to say that you should take advantage of the events they're running. You paid for it, after all, just like you've paid for the Voice through your AUSU Membership fees. Make use of that and make a connection while you're at it. You may find it's more rewarding than you expect.

Meanwhile, be sure in this issue to check out our featured student interview, as well as our newest writer, Elisa Neven-Pugh who's coming to The Voice with an agenda that she lays out in her first article. I look forward to seeing how it goes.

Plus we've got recipes, advice, news, scholarships, thoughtful reflections and more! Enjoy the read.

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

MINDS WE MEET



The Voice Magazine recently had the chance to chat with Sean Chapman living in Maple Creek, Saskatchewan, which Sean acknowledged is “Treaty 4 territory (Cree, Salteaux, Assiniboine, Métis) and where Nekaneet First Nation is located.” Sean is currently enrolled in the University Certificate in Human Resources and Labour Relations.

Sean has lived in Maple Creek for the past 24 years. The student stated, “My career in financial services has spanned 22 years, and currently I am a Vice-President with a Big 5 bank in Canada. My wife and I have two older children (son who has graduated from university and a daughter who is working on her second university degree in the fall).”

As for Sean’s future plans? “No real plans for the education other than I wanted to take classes that were interesting and fit with what I do as a career. Basically, I wanted to challenge myself to work through some university classes since I did not attend university when I was just out of high school—prove I could do it.”

When not studying, Sean enjoys being active “running, working out, playing golf/hockey.” The student also stated, “My wife and I like to travel when we get the chance (somewhere warm usually). I’ve always enjoyed coaching sports. At harvest time I help friends combine their crops and that is always a nice get-a-way from the office.” Sean also “just finished reading *Sell from Love* by Finka Jerkovic and [is] almost done reading *No B.S. Leadership* by Martin Moore,” explaining, “Both business/leadership/sales subjects as I really enjoy reading those types of books.” During free time, Sean also binge watches *Better Call Saul*.

Sean’s wife has had a great influence on the desire to learn. “If it wasn’t for her support and encouragement, it would make it tougher to carry on a hectic career and continue to work on my studies. That, and she puts up with my grumpiness around final exam time.”

The online learning experience “has been good so far.” Sean explained, “Online is the only way I would have been able to balance the career and school. Sometimes the e-texts aren’t the greatest, or the PDF’s, but you manage through it.” However, like many students, Sean has wavered about continuing the educational journey. “Honestly, I waver just about every class, especially while carrying on this challenging career. What gets me through is that I know I started this journey, and I am bound to finish it. No quitting.”

As for the most memorable AU course? ADMIN 232: Introduction to Management and IDRL 215: Introduction to Labour Relations “were probably the most interesting so far.” Sean elaborated, “Admin was something I could draw on with my career, and I liked working with Mr. Johnston.

IDRL was just interesting because of the topic, and I had not really been around that type of dynamic in my career.” In addition, *ECON 248: Macroeconomics* “created ‘memories’ due to the challenging nature of trying to follow the course.”

If appointed new president of AU, Sean had a few ideas. “Everyone says ‘lower tuition,’ which is a fair point, but I think what the students need to see is some value for the money being spent. Valuable student-tutor experience, seamless course outlines, and consistent service levels on returning markings/communication. Of course, that is all individual perception.”

He continued, “Outside of that I would probably take the course feedback more seriously and look at overhauling some of those courses that don't really get great feedback. At the end of the day, you want your students to thrive and be successful as it only would reflect better on the institution itself.” In addition, “[i]t would be interesting to make two-year programs ‘Associate Degrees’ (which is probably a more American term). I'm not sure if any Canadian University/College calls them anything but diplomas. An ‘Associate Degree’ from Athabasca University has a pretty bold ring to it.”



Sean's most valuable lesson learned in life has been work ethic. “Just that you have to put in the work to get benefit in anything you do. I worked hard, worked smart, and was very patient in order to get to the career I have now. That goes for school, for sports, or anything. Work ethic, loyalty, and perseverance is what has put me in the position I am in,” the student explained.

And a proudest moment in life? “Well, my wife and I are very proud to have watched our two kids grow up and become university graduates, all while balancing being student-athletes—but honestly how they've just developed into such good people really makes us feel like we did pretty well as parents.”

And the one thing that distinguishes Sean from other people? “Believe it or not, I was not always in banking and finance. There was a time when I toiled as a garbage collector (garbage man) in my early 20's. Believe me, that is no slight to that type of work. It taught me to be on time, to be respectful of our citizens' properties, and to always know that you are still in the public eye and need to conduct yourself appropriately. It was also the most stress-free job I ever had.”

As a final note, Sean mentioned, “I'm just impressed with those folks in the student body that are really grinding it out trying to balance parenting, full-time work, and school. Or those that are working on tight budgets to try and complete their degrees and whatnot. They want to get themselves in positions to advance in their current careers or propel themselves into new careers. That's the work ethic I'm talking about and is to be commended.” Best of luck Sean!

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. If you would like to be featured next, do not hesitate to [get in touch!](#)

Natalia Iwanek (she/they) is currently completing her Bachelor of Arts in English with a minor in Political Science at Athabasca University.



Environments and the Toxic Influences that Destroy Lives

Alek Golijanin



The shootings that occur at a cemetery during funeral proceedings are things one might expect to see in a gangster movie, but it recently happened in Ottawa. There was a funeral taking place for a victim of gun violence, a 24-year-old who was shot to death in a neighborhood not too far from where my family and I lived when we came to Canada. Police responded to a call of gunfire during his funeral ceremony. The person who was shot was dropped off at a nearby hospital before first responders arrived at the scene.

The rising trend of gun violence in crowded areas only adds to the dilemma of the laws around gun safety and weapon violence. But long before a person decides that they want to potentially take another person's life, a lot has to take place before that thought even crosses their mind.

While these tend to be complicated situations with a multitude of factors at play, the one thing that has always stuck out to me has been this idea of a toxic culture. This is not your typical conversation about culture, but rather a form of toxicity that people who have never lived in certain environments have no idea about.

Low-Income Communities Have Dangerous Levels of Toxicity

Stating that low-income communities have dangerous levels of toxicity should not be controversial or offensive. It is stating the obvious, but the obvious does not mean that it is impossible for anything good to come out of these communities. It is quite the opposite, but it is this "toxicity" that has derailed countless futures that were full of promise.

This "toxicity" can be tied back to the social determinants of health, but I want to focus on its impact on culture, one that is both dynamic and fuzzy. This culture is the leading contributor for the correlation between people growing up in low-income communities and them embarking on a path on the far side of the law.

If that is the case, then what makes growing up in low-income communities so unique? To start, most children growing up in these areas do not have access to extracurricular activities like organized sports or school supports. There are studies that have been published on the importance of the first few hours after school and how they impact children. People living in low-income communities already have limited access to resources, which essentially spills over and impacts child development. The overall impact of growing up in a household that struggles to make ends meet is that those kids need to look elsewhere for supports, and that might be the point of weakness that experts need to focus on.

The world can be a complicated place, and it can be quite difficult for kids to make sense of it, especially for those from underprivileged households. What does make sense for these kids is seeing how other kids with similar socio-economic backgrounds experience success. Although there are many positive stories of individuals that are experiencing success in school and have careers in medicine, tech, and more, these are not the examples that are paraded on much-watched TV networks. Instead, for kids growing up in low-income communities, the media

shows them that there is a flashy life for these kids if they forgo school for sports, music, or crime. But very few kids make it in sports, and, as a result of toxic influences, it is the latter two that cause the most damage.

If you look at some of the most visible pop-culture personalities or ask youth who they listen to, you should expect to hear the names of rap artists who likely made their name by glorifying crime. That does not mean that everyone who listens to rap will decide to pursue that life, very few do, but those that do are almost always influenced by larger-than-life characters that “made it out of the struggle.” Some of that impact might be the result of a challenging home environment and not having enough positive influences that can provide valuable advice and much needed guidance.

I recently had the opportunity to attend a community crime prevention event that featured a panel of speakers who were scheduled to speak on the idea of culture in low-income communities. One of the speakers who stuck out to me had a background in sound therapy and they were pursuing their graduate degree. They spoke about growing up in a low-income community and how their friend group was influenced by hip-hop and crime movies. They also pointed out how the arts were an expression of self and how the stories that many of these personalities were telling, it was a form of self-expression, but it was also a way to mask pain and trauma. However, a message that glorifies a life of crime and a disregard for human life definitely contributes to a toxic vicious cycle.

When I think about the issues around misogyny, homophobia and other challenges that plague society, my first introduction to it all was largely through the early 2000s rap I listened to, which also permeated over to schools and various other places. Back in the 2000s, rap “normalized” these issues and certain terms or labels were simply laughing matters.

There is an article I remember reading in the newspaper back in 2012 that was titled as a “special report” which detailed the life and testimony of an Ottawa gangster who was getting deported from Canada due to him operating on the far-side of the law. I consider that special report to be one of the best stories ever written, shining a light on the dark realities of living a life of crime, but also the connection to low-income communities and first-generation Canadian households. That article touched on how most gang members did not join gangs, but rather grew into them, and the influence that hip-hop culture had on that. It does a great job to illustrate this concept of “toxicity” which has been responsible for destroying countless lives.

A Heron Gate Tale. A Cedarwood Story.

There is nothing quite like the thrill that the Heron Gate outdoors could provide. Kids fighting in low-income communities is as common as seeing empty parks in the suburbs. Although the fighting might not reach the level of “Kimbo Slice” back yard fighting, it would qualify as a fight event with some kids even fighting multiple times over the span of an hour. There were a few kids who would fight one fight after the next, and it was not uncommon to see two-on-one, or three-on-one fights.

Depending on who the older kids were interested in watching fight, those fights would start in different ways. For me, it was a verbal lead up, in a self-praise sort of way, and I would only retaliate physically as a means of self-defence. You see, I loved watching WWF and WCW, so when someone would tell me that they were “stronger” than me, I would reply by saying, “No! I am stronger than you!” I was a Hulkamaniac, and Hulkamaniacs were the strongest, so I was not going to disappoint the Hulkster.

On one occasion, while we were living in the townhomes on Cedarwood Drive, some kids that went to Charles Hulse Public School arrived from the nearby buildings, and the older kids set up fights. I was around 10 years old, and these new kids were also around my age, but they were more aggressive and eager to impress the older kids. The new kids were fighting some of the kids from our street. Then out of nowhere, one of them jumped on me. Eventually I would end up pinning him to the ground and clamping him into one of my infamous anaconda-like headlock squeezes. As fate would have it, a second kid jumped on my back, so I had to let go of my first attacker who was now watery-eyed and who I had been on top of. I knew this other kid was no bull rider, so I jumped and kicked like the two-horned beast until I had him in the same squeeze. I did not hold long, but when I let him go, he too was watery-eyed, and I told him I did not want to fight.

When I got home, I turned on my Atomic Purple Gameboy Color® and got to playing. Not long into my game my doorbell rang. One of the kids that attacked me came to my doorbell with a little box in his hand and he asked me to come outside again and play. I did not feel like leaving my home, but he offered to give me some Pokemon cards, so I conceded.

As we walked back to the field and to get the other kids, this kid opened his box and inside were knives. This kid had gone back home and came back with knives, and he was now telling me to call my childhood bestie Samer, another kid named Alex, and Mathieu, or else. Samer was the first to come outside, then we went to get Alex, but it was Mathieu who tackled the scrawny little guy armed with a box full of knives. I remember thinking Mathieu was the “man” for that and I can only describe his takedown as being something true to his Francophone heritage—a GSP-styled double leg takedown. It would not be a stretch to say that the kid from building had basically taken us hostage and wanted everyone to come back outside, until Matthieu took him out. The kid ran back to his home and without his knives or his Pokémon cards. I kept his Squirtle.

Looking back at the series of events that transpired, I am inclined to think that bringing those knives was just a ploy to get us rattled, but I am certain that he did not come to that decision on his own. He was my age, around 10 years old, and he had older siblings, who with the rest of his family had lived through the war experience in Kuwait. Someone in his family must have put that toxic idea into his little head, that the “knife approach” was what he needed to do. Eventually he did come back with someone older who was asking to get the family’s knives back.

In any case, I never took it personally, and I even hung out with that same kid on one occasion once we were in our twenties since we had some mutual friends. As Connor McGregor has said before, “It’s just business.” That was the lay of the land, although I did come to recognize many years later just how lucky I really was that my family left that environment while I was still in my pre-teens, because over 90% of the kids that I knew from that area did not have lives that turned out well. It was almost entirely the result of the toxicity of the area and the environment eventually getting the best of them.

Alek Golijanin is an AU alum who considers himself a gentleman first, a scholar second, and a combat sports fanatic third. In that order.

AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Events

AUSU's 30th Birthday Bash

Sat, Jul 16, 7:00 to 9:00 pm MDT
Hudsons Bourbon St at West Edmonton Mall
In-person
Hosted by AUSU
www.ausu.org/event/ausus-30th-birthday-bash/
RSVP through above link

All events are free unless otherwise noted.



Why Am I Here and What's My Purpose?

Elisa Neven-Pugh



Before I begin, I want to reassure that this introduction, and any following articles, will not ask you to ponder existentialism. This article is more of a critical self-reflection than an introduction. Meaning that I want to explore with you my motives and purposes for joining The Voice Magazine as a freelance writer.

I have cerebral palsy quadriplegia. Which means that, while I can feel my arms and legs, I cannot use them. Hence the motorized wheelchair in the picture attached to this article. If you just felt sorry for me, thank you for your compassion, but my personal life is wonderful. I have a great family, wonderful opportunities, and a deep faith, a more biographical sketch can be found in an earlier edition of the Minds We Meet column. That being said, I am now finally at a point in my life where I can be honest about being disabled.

Sometimes it sucks.

This is not because I have physical limitations, but rather from feeling invisible in the social world because of it. Like when people don't really listen to me because

of my speech delay and making assumptions before they get to know me. Or when pop-culture tells me I'm unlovable (Ingham, 2018). A major pet peeve!

Then there's the construction workers who make "accessible" bathrooms and other places I can't get into because of my big mechanical trunk. Let's just say I have to plan my schedule well when it comes to personal care.

And then there's the reason that I decided to write: courses that have seemingly every perspective except for from people with disabilities—it needs to change.

I know so many brilliant people with different ability levels that can bring new perspectives, yet, many of these brilliant individuals feel they have no voice. It's almost like they have become what pop culture says. That is, miserable, alone, and self-destructive (Ingham, 2018). One friend told me that we live in the basement of society and eat cheese and crackers compared to shrimp upstairs. This might not be so bad, but he also said that, basically, we can only get people to come down and eat with us but not ask for help upstairs—and this is where I take issue. This is because my own experience has taught me that if we stay persistent in asking for help we can be heard. It's shown by this magazine willing to help me in making the issue public.

In short, I sometimes feel like I'm watching people like me die emotionally and spiritually and it breaks my heart. At the risk of sounding narcissistic, I feel like I was giving a scholarship in circumstances that give me the opportunity to be more than my chair and able to be "upstairs". Yet, after discovering invisibility syndrome, I can't ignore the suffering my people go through even if they don't feel like they can fix it themselves. I have to build an elevator of awareness. And I have to do it now!

The thing is, I can't do it alone. I need your help to give us a voice. And yet I can't do that if you don't see me as a person.

I know that, sometimes, it won't be easy, but I will always try to tell you the truth. I do so in the hopes that we can change this world so that my friends feel that there is hope that they will be heard and that they can enjoy life outside the family unit or accessible summer camps. Because that is when we will truly be able.

References

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Why You Shouldn't Be Eating Instant Noodles Every Day

Xine Wang



We love instant noodles for the convenience and satisfying taste but is it worth the hit to our health?

The iconic idea about meals for students is that they have never been without ramen. We think about the starting student slurping some microwavable bowl of ramen noodles. Don't get me wrong, I am probably the most inappropriate person to write about not eating ramen noodles because I love them. Even when I'm no longer starving or have other options for meals, I sometimes will choose a bowl of instant noodles as a snack. While we may understand why eating instant noodles are bad for us, we may not always act on it (or, rather, not act on foregoing opening a new pack of ramen noodles).

Here's some more in-depth explanation of why you may be putting your health in jeopardy with instant noodles.

Insanely High Sodium Levels:

Think about your average home cooked meal. Even if you're a fan of seasoning, you would never dump an entire teaspoon of salt into your food, right? Well, many instant noodles actually contain more than your entire day's worth of necessary sodium. According to the FDA, about 2300 mg per day of sodium is the recommended daily intake. This is

equivalent to approximately just one teaspoon. I took a look at some of the popular instant noodle brands on grocery store shelves and they often range from 60% to 90% of your daily recommended intake. This is important because long-term higher sodium causes higher blood pressure, and strain on kidneys, heart, and other organs.

Of course, you're probably already aware that you're overdosing on sodium with just one pack of instant noodles, but did you also know that sodium is only one problem in the equation when looking at health detriments of instant noodles.

High in Fats

Instant noodles are higher in fats (especially trans fats) than most other foods. A quick peek at the popular instant noodle brands that I have in my pantry include 45% of your daily value of trans fats. Higher unhealthy fat and cholesterol content in foods increase risk of heart disease over time. Fats we get from nuts, veggies, and natural sources are healthier and can reduce the risk of heart disease. However, fats from processed foods

Nutrition Facts
Valeur nutritive
Per 1 pack (100 g)
pour 1 paquet (100 g)

Calories 470		% Daily Value*
Fat / Lipides 21 g		28 %
Saturated / saturés 14 g		70 %
+ Trans / trans 0 g		
Carbohydrate / Glucides 61 g		
Fibre / Fibres 1 g		4 %
Sugars / Sucres 2 g		2 %
Protein / Protéines 10 g		
Cholesterol / Cholestérol 0 mg		
Sodium 1920 mg		83 %
Potassium 200 mg		4 %
Calcium 10 mg		1 %
Iron / Fer 0.75 mg		4 %

* 5% or less is a little, 15% or more is a lot
* 5% ou moins c'est peu, 15% ou plus c'est beaucoup

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only increase calorie intake without adding meaningful nutrients like fiber, vitamins, and minerals to your body.

Breaking Down Instant Noodles

Another interesting fact in one study 10 years ago found that the body breaks down instant noodles differently than other foods. For instance, while home cooked noodles (homemade non-processed wheat noodles) broke down completely in the digestive process, instant noodles did not. In the gut, instant noodles were largely still recognizable whereas homemade noodles are nearly entirely broken down. Although it is not conclusive from the study that instant noodles are bad for your health, it certainly raises questions as to whether instant noodles add any nutritional value to

your body as they're not truly broken down.

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

Homemade is Better Potato Salad

Chef Corey



I cannot think of a summer function that would be complete without it; even some weddings will serve potato salad. I once catered a wedding where the bride and groom wanted a summer cookout theme, and they included potato salad as one of the dishes. As I mentioned in my Hot German Potato Salad recipe, these dishes are a take it or leave it. This one is a very basic recipe, without eggs. You can add chopped boiled eggs if you like, but I like a pure potato salad.

I chose to use russet potatoes for this recipe, but in many cases, you wouldn't use russets for this type of salad because they fall apart too easily. You could also mix russets with yellows OR add purple or red with skin on for some colour. "Purple?" you ask. Yes, purple, or as they are known in some areas, Russian blue. I know, Russian stuff is off-limits right now, as it should be. But these potatoes are grown locally, and I prefer to call

them purple potatoes. I once used these little beauties to make a mashed potato for a competition I was in; they turned out terribly. I should have let them shine as is, but hindsight is 20/20.

I've previously looked at some of the histories of potatoes and realized how versatile they are. When you think about it, we use potatoes a lot in North America. So much so that McDonald's can even demand perfect Burbank russets, and get them. When companies like McDonald's have that much power over an ingredient, you know we must consume much of their product. Potatoes even have a song written about them. The Late 'Stompin' Tom Connors wrote a song about PEI potatoes called "Bud the Spud." Not to mention that there is a toy and movie character that are potatoes. Someone has done a great job marketing potatoes as any meal option for everyone.

I just can't stop thinking about potatoes, so let's make this recipe.

Potato salad

Ingredients:

8-9 russet potatoes - peeled, cubed, boiled
Salted water
1 tsp salt
1 tsp garlic powder
1 tsp onion powder
1 tsp paprika

1/2 tsp black pepper
1 cup mayonnaise
1/2 sour cream
2 tbsp pickle juice
2 tbsp mustard

Directions:

- 1) Boil the potatoes until they are tender. You should be able to grab one with a fork and have it come out without resistance.
- 2) Drain the potatoes and place them on a cookie sheet lined with parchment.
- 3) Cool the potatoes for at least 1 hour, if not longer; they should be cool to the touch.
- 4) Once cooled, transfer them to a mixing bowl and add everything and mix.
- 5) Cover in the fridge for 2 hours and allow the flavours to blend.
- 6) Serve it up and enjoy.

Corey Wren is a student at AU's school of business management and a stay-at-home-parent of three who graduated from NAIT's culinary arts program in 2007.

Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: LiveBright Scholarship Program

Sponsored by: Sun Life Global Investments

Deadline: August 5, 2022, 11:59 pm EST

Potential payout: \$2000

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be Residents of Canada; between the ages of 16 and 25 years or entering their first year of post-secondary education; and plan to enroll in full-time undergraduate study at an accredited two-year or four-year college, university, or vocational technical school or equivalent post-secondary school for the entire upcoming academic year. Note the eligibility exclusions listed on the [application form](#).

What's required: A completed application form, academic transcripts, proof of acceptance, along with a one-page PDF flyer on improving an organization's workforce by having an inclusive culture.

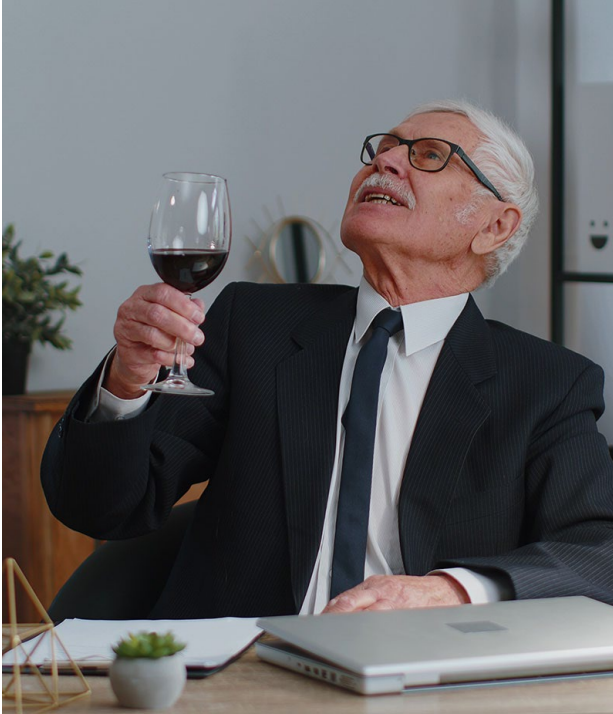
Tips: Read the [full terms and conditions](#) carefully.

Where to get info: www.sunlifeglobalinvestments.com/en/about-us/livebright-scholarship-program/



Reasons to Never Retire

Marie Well



Have you heard of successful seniors whom COVID destroyed? Prosperous seniors who lost everything, forced into senior pensions and the subsequent poverty trap. Escaping the poverty trap is challenging, whether it's a senior's pension, disability pension, or some other funding that places restrictions on how much you can earn.

That's one reason to never retire: you'll bypass the poverty trap.

But there are more reasons to never retire.

Some 80-year-olds run businesses with great success. My papa is one example. He's 84 this month and still makes a killing running his business. He has many employees, and his phone rings off the hook, which maximizes his social connections. He is also physically active in his work and has a healthy body mass. In sum, his job keeps him young.

In fact, research suggests that the longer you work, the healthier you tend to be. Moreover, research also indicates that men who retire early die sooner than those who retire after the age of 65.

Many, if not most, people can't afford to retire. The Freedom 55 commercial, where a gray-haired senior chases a young blonde on the beach, is mostly a myth. It's media hype meant to sell insurance. The reality is that retired people often struggle to make ends meet. Food, housing, power, and clothing—it all adds up, especially once the income ends. Let's face it, maintaining a career as a senior is beneficial for meeting basic needs.

A career offers opportunities for professional and personal development. In other words, work gives meaning: learning opportunities, financial rewards, status, recognition, friendships, and many other benefits. When you are happy and fulfilled in a job, the world around you grows friendlier, too. You are held in higher esteem, have more significant social connections, and have more excellent finances to pursue hobbies you love. And working seniors can financially help others rather than depend on others for basic survival.

So what kinds of careers can seniors in their 80s claim? I saw a list that included teaching ESL, walking dogs, and performing other low-grade jobs. But you don't have to listen to any of that! You can claim a high-paying career at any age—even if you have multiple disabilities and dependency on a wheelchair. Set your sights high, whatever you do, and keep throwing stuff at the wall until something sticks. Indeed, if you can be the President of the USA at age 79, you can be more than a dog groomer or survey taker at age 80.

Old dogs can learn new tricks, sometimes even faster than younger dogs. (A habit of lifelong learning is a must for career success as a senior.) With that said, this excellent article lists six-figure jobs you can access at most any age. (Disclaimer: the paper contains a plug for the author's book.)

If you think you can work a high-paying career in your eighties, chances are you can—and likely will.



Fly on the Wall

Where the Magic Happens

Jason Sullivan



“Electricity comes from other planets” jovially declared the proto-punk songwriter Lou Reed in 1967 (online). Jupiter, a planetary marker of joviality in that it heralds the outer planets (once known commonly as the jovian planets) suggests by its swirling eye that we are in the centre of a great cosmic mystery. Colours, textures, swirls, to reduce gas giants to their components belies the joy they are to behold. Likewise, the magic of interaction with a special someone is equally devoid of meaning when reduced to chemicals and even body language. Sparks are sparks, right? And the same is true at AU when we discover a topic that really piques our heart’s intrigue.

From the personal to the cosmic, answers abound but depend on what question is being asked.

Wherever the magic of life originates, whether extraterrestrial ET fingers or in the depths of our DNA, the reality of educational success is that we have to lock into our goals and pursue them like greased lightning. There’s no incantation that can replace hard study hours. And yet few students can muster the drive to thrive on sheer willpower alone (although I suspect a few accounting degrees are based on such a hardcore ability to disavow one’s feelings about the topic). Success for many of us hinges on an almost mystical enchantment rather than on sheer rote memorization. Add to that a dollop of ineffable muchness where we learn to apply, say, our sociology learning to daily life, and, voila, the magic of the universe is there at the prestidigitation of our fingertips. that makes we humans the symbolic creatures we are.

Wherever the magic of life originates, it’s dubious to suggest that our academic accomplishments are reducible to minerals or material reality. We have to be there somehow to pull together our mechanistic urges. Who ever grasped an idea physically, anyway?

Demonstrations point to concepts and examples elucidate scaffolds of meaning but an idea itself is as wispy and mysterious as a wraith vanishing and reappearing in thin air. So, when reading that recent evidence suggests that many building blocks of life occur on asteroids that land down here as meteorites, for instance, one might want to add a grain of salt and a lick of humor.

Scientists apparently have discovered that “three of the five chemical components needed to form DNA, the molecule that carries genetic instructions in living organisms, and RNA, the molecule crucial for controlling the actions of genes” are present in space asteroids (Reuters, online). Far out, man! However, some might claim that asteroids with familiar DNA may have once been part of earth and departed ways from Terra Firma due to some unsightly collision. And anyway, even if every shred of evidence about the origins of life was illuminated and every last bit of physical evidence for the origins of life as we know it were unearthed (or *unspaced* if you will), not to mention the alchemist cauldron of interaction by the birds and the bees and the magic of reproduction, there’d still be that funnybone *something* that leads us to all the best and most memorable advances in our personal development and great leaps forward as a species. Ideas may yet be seen as the enzymes that allow the magic of human reality to ensue. And the poetry of bodies and minds transcends all the chemistry textbooks ever published, surely.

In any case, the truth about learning is that it's personal in any setting. We're not machines no matter how focused we think we are and no matter how well-oiled our academic minds seem to be. In fact, if we were machines, we'd miss the crucial creative tenet of learning: we recount what we've learned, demonstrate it, and then add something new to the mix. It's fair to say that the basic physical *stuff* of life is out there, literally, in the atmosphere and outer space—as well as equally out there within the farthest reaches of our minds. Imagination is a pretty distant place from common sense.

So too, recalling David Duchovny of *X-Files* fame, one would presume that the universe itself is composed of some sort of truth. But if the truth is “out there” what is this truth really made of? For living organisms as we know them, DNA seems to be the underpinnings of our existence, the wiring of our enigmatic lives. Yet, further down the aforementioned asteroid report and almost buried under a captivating photo, reads the phrase “The five nucleobases would not have been the only chemical compounds necessary for life. Among other things needed were: amino acids, which are components of proteins and enzymes; sugars, which are part of the DNA and RNA backbone; and fatty acids, which are structural components of cell membranes” (Reuters, online).

But even if every possible missing link was discovered, wouldn't further elements of the mystery of life yet remain unplaced? After all, what makes life real is interactional rather than indexical. A human in total social isolation would be a sad baboon indeed. So maybe we'd be a bit cracked to imagine that all that makes life worth living is reducible to chemical coding, like some old MySpace page or Sudoku chart hastily crumpled up and used as fodder for a campfire that we might better enjoy a starry night.

The magic of life and learning elides simple descriptions of the *aha* moments that make schooling fun. Few journeys are more personal than the journey of self-discovery by the addition of external elements; a foray into psychology or sociology can change our whole worldview, for instance. Or try a nature walk while pondering your AU coursework. You'll likely be changed in ways minute or, if lucky, drastic enough to pen new enunciations about the enigma of your research topic.

We're never lost in space when we're pondering our coursework. And anyway, what we do is different than what we are, regardless of where our essence comes from. Consider Joni Mitchell's famous line “we are stardust, we are golden” and it's immediate followup: “and we've got to get ourselves back to the garden” (Mitchell, online). Wherever and whomever we *are*, markers of our identity, is less vital than where we *choose* to go. Action based on beliefs allows us to achieve our academic goals and, whatever our talents or predilections, it's down to us to create and fulfill our destiny. So, whatever is the truest of the true, in space or here on our planet of blue, is a matter of perspective. It's up to us to forge a reality that includes the truth of our learning as well as the reality of our unique lives as distance students.

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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.



Beyond Literary Landscapes

Mario Vargas Llosa

Natalia Iwanek



From my early beginnings as a young introvert, the public library has always been a bit of a refuge. Years later, not much has changed, albeit with an additional affinity for endless hours spent scouring second-hand bookstores to add to my ever-growing “to-read” pile.

From one bookworm to another, this column will be underscoring and outlining various literary genres, authors, and recent reads and can serve as an introduction for those unfamiliar with these works, as a refresher for long-time aficionados, and maybe as an inspiration for readers to share their own suggested topics. Do you have a topic that you would like covered in this column? Feel free to [contact me](#) for an interview and a feature in an upcoming column.

Who

This column serves as an introduction to works of Mario Vargas Llosa, a reminder of some of the author’s classics, and as an

inspiration for further reading.

Students who enjoy Vargas Llosa’s novels may also consider the works of Julio Cortázar, author of *Hopscotch (Rayuela)*, Jose Saramago, author of *The Stone Raft (A Jangada de Pedra)*, and Jorge Luis Borges, author of *Labyrinths*.

Author Mario Vargas Llosa was born in 1936 in Arequipa, Peru. He received The Nobel Prize in Literature in 2020. His 1963 novel *The Time of the Hero (La Ciudad y Los Perros)* is believed to be one of the leading works of the Latin American Boom years. The Boom years began during the 1960s, and featured a variety of literary works by a variety of authors, often in exile. The genre of Magic Realism was often seen in these works, which “is characterized by the matter-of-fact inclusion of fantastic or mythical elements into seemingly realistic fiction.”

What

Some of Vargas Llosa’s well-known novels include *The Feast of the Goat (La Fiesta del Chivo)*, *Death in the Andes (Lituma en Los Andes)*, and *The Time of the Hero (La Ciudad y Los Perros)*.

Where

Many of these works take place throughout Peru.

When

These works often take place during the 20th century.

Why

Students may consider the works of Vargas Llosa if they are interested in learning more about Peru’s history, culture, and traditions, as well as learning a bit about the Latin American Boom Years and Magical Realism.

How

AU’s wide range of diverse courses make it easy to study this topic in depth. Courses related to the works of the Mario Vargas Llosa are available in a variety of disciplines, including one’s that may fit into your Degree Works. (Always check with a counsellor to see if these particular courses fulfill your personal graduation requirements!)

AU students interested in learning more about this topic may consider SPAN 301: Intermediate Spanish II, a senior-level, three-credit course, which “reviews and further develops basic language skills acquired in First Year Spanish.” (Students should note that this course requires SPAN 300: Intermediate Spanish I, and at the time of writing was under revision.)

Students may also consider SPAN 330: Textual Analysis and Composition, a senior-level, three-credit course, which “has been designed to target reading and writing skills while increasing vocabulary and improving grammar.” (Note that this requires SPAN 301: Intermediate Spanish II as a prerequisite.) Happy reading!

Natalia Iwanek (she/they) is currently completing her Bachelor of Arts in English with a minor in Political Science at Athabasca University.



Unearthing classic articles from previous issues of The Voice Magazine

UK's prime minister Boris Johnson announced his resignation this month. We dug deep into the archives to find a pair of articles from when Johnson was the Mayor of London.

Hop on a Boris. S.D. Livingston recounts her first visit to London. "The famous red double-decker buses are everywhere, but so are something called Boris bikes. Nicknamed after London's mayor, Boris Johnson, they're part of the city's first large-scale public bike-hire plan." This World: Home and Away, Part 1, August 26, 2011.

Boris the party-pooper. Mandy Gardner highlights an unpopular restriction on public drinking in London. "With recent legislation allowing for 24-hour bars, the UK seemed to be completely relaxing its alcohol laws in favour of the idea that if people are given their alcoholic freedom they will eventually learn not to abuse it." International News Desk – In Foreign News: Drinking banned on London's Tube trains, June 6, 2008.

Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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



AthaU Facebook Group

Low blow. An ENGL 211 student is shocked by a low mark on the first essay. Other students offer their insights and advice for succeeding in this course.

Discord

Your last minute has evaporated. Discussion in the #general channel is dominated by the glitch that prevent AU course registrations on July 10. AU later extended registrations until July 13th.

reddit

Join the 9-to-5 club. A prospective student wonders if it's possible to pursue an AU degree while working full time, and students that have done—or are doing—just that weigh in with their experiences and some advice.

Twitter

@austudentsunion tweets: "We are turning 30! Help us celebrate AUSU by sharing a time when AUSU supported you along your student journey. Maybe you won an award or bursary, attended an event, or were elected to sit on council! You could win one of 3 x \$100 Amazon GC 5 x ProctorU codes 5 x SWAG!!!" www.ausu.org/2022/07/ausu-turns-30/

How to Prevent Workplace Sexual Harassment in the First Place

Marie Well



I worked at a place that had some pretty bizarre practices. The most outstanding was their insistence that workplace hugging and embracing between men and women, however disturbing, was the accepted norm. When I complained the following day, I was escorted to a taxicab and told never to return. So, I refused the taxi and walked home instead. And I filed a complaint with a government agency that took action.

Despite all the Web-related information on workplace relationships, I was hard-pressed to find an article discussing how to bypass workplace sexual harassment altogether. So, I decided to write one based partly on feedback I received from The Marriage Foundation.

Here are some rules I like to safeguard yourself against work-related sexual harassment:

Dress conservatively. A "me-to" policy that encourages women to dress provocatively is faulty. Conservative dress is, I feel, a much better choice to ensure a professional workplace distance. I once worked for a company with a wise "no cleavage" policy. The policy reminds me of the jokey father who dressed in short shorts that exposed part of his butt cheeks to show his daughter how silly the style was. No one needs to see anyone's "junk" exposed, whether it be boobs, butts, or thighs. Let's face it: if a person dresses in a way that would lure sexual attention, that's the kind of attention they are likely to receive.

Never speak about or acknowledge anything personal; keep it to work. I'm lucky because I now have very decent employers with high integrity. But sometimes, the conversation steers into personal ones, like discussions on rag-top convertibles and road trips. The Marriage Foundation says never to acknowledge anything personal, and I do believe this is the best policy available. Steer the conversation back to work should it go off the rail.

Interact as briefly as possible. If you don't need to meet with your employer or colleague, don't. For instance, don't do after-work events together if you can avoid them. Don't spend extended time alone in the office with your employers or colleagues, either. Only interact when there is a work-related urgency for doing so.

Do not make eye contact. The rule is not to physically touch unless it's a handshake, but not making eye contact is also vital. Minimize eye contact at work to prevent yourself from being a target.

Stay busy. Staying busy is perhaps the most important rule of all. You are at work to work. The more you absorb yourself in your career, the more valued you become as an asset to the company. Plus, your time is occupied with work rather than idle conversation, and idle talk can often downgrade to flirting or other serious issues.

Nothing is worse than sexual harassment in the workplace. It's no fun feeling afraid of going to the washroom for fear of being followed by the opposite gender. So, protect yourself by preventing sexual harassment in the first place. After all, it's best to be appreciated for your brain and not your body.



Caring Through Cancer

Dear Barb:

A close friend of mine has just been diagnosed with breast cancer. I am not sure what stage it is at, but I think it is advanced since she has had surgery and has to have chemo and radiation. She is only thirty-five and has two little kids. The diagnosis has been traumatic for her and her kids. Her ex-husband has been incredibly supportive as have her parents. I want to do what I can to support her, but I am at a loss for what to do. Do you have any advice on how I can be a supportive friend and help her and the kids during this tough time?

Thanks so much, Cara.

Hello Cara:

Everyone would appreciate a friend like you. There are many ways you can aid your friend during her treatment and healing journey. However, it can be difficult to know how to help someone while not overextending yourself.

Offer help in areas you are comfortable with, for example, if you enjoy cooking, offer to prepare a few meals and freeze them so they will be available on treatment days. Even if your friend does not feel like eating her kids still need to eat.

Chemo affects people differently; some people are very fatigued, and others may be sick to their stomach. You could offer to take your friend to her doctor's appointments, and either stay with her, or pick her up when

she is done. Also offering to babysit her children would remove a huge worry for your friend. Of course, housecleaning is another way you could help out.

These are some of the things you can propose, but that doesn't mean she will accept. Some people are very proud and find it hard to accept an offer of help. They feel psychologically better if they maintain a sense of stability in their lives. If this is the case, you can just be a supportive friend. Be there to listen to your friend's feelings and don't hesitate to shed a few tears together. For many people this is just as important as preparing a meal or cleaning their house.

If your friend is religious offer to pray for her or add her name to a healing group through your Church or religious organization. Finally, it is crucial that you take care of yourself, or you will not be any good to your friend. Eat well, always get a good night's sleep and at the very least go for a walk every day. I hope this information is helpful and I wish your friend all the best on her healing journey. Thank for your email.

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
Universal Basic Ignorance

Wanda Waterman

I BEEN THINKIN' 'BOUT THIS UBI
 EVER'BODY'S
 TALKIN' 'BOUT,
 AN' I THINK
 I'M FOR IT.



I'M TOTALLY
 AGAINST IT!

WHAT FER?



WE'D JUST WASTE IT.
 THINK ABOUT IT.
 WHAT WOULD YOU DO
 WITH AN EXTRA 1000
 BUCKS A MONTH?



WHY, I'D INVEST
 IN LOTTERY
 TICKETS!



YEAH, BUT THINK
 HOW BIG
 THE JACKPOT WOULD BE
 IF I WAS PUTTIN' IN
 A THOUSAND BUCKS
 A MONTH!

SEE, THAT'S MY POINT!
 YOU ALREADY BUY
 A TICKET
 EVERY FRIDAY!



AU SU

UPDATE

COMMUNITY. RESOURCES . SERVICES



Celebrate with us July 11-15th as we turn 30!

We have a fun-filled week planned, including contest giveaways, a special AUSUnights Virtual Student Social: 90s Retro Edition, and an in-person AUSU Birthday Bash with Student Council at Hudsons on Bourbon St. in West Edmonton Mall!

[RSVP to the AUSU Birthday Bash!](#)

Date: July 16th, 2022

Time: 7:00 p.m. MST

Venue: Hudsons

Bourbon Street—WEM

Contact: ausu@ausu.org



Did AU Know?



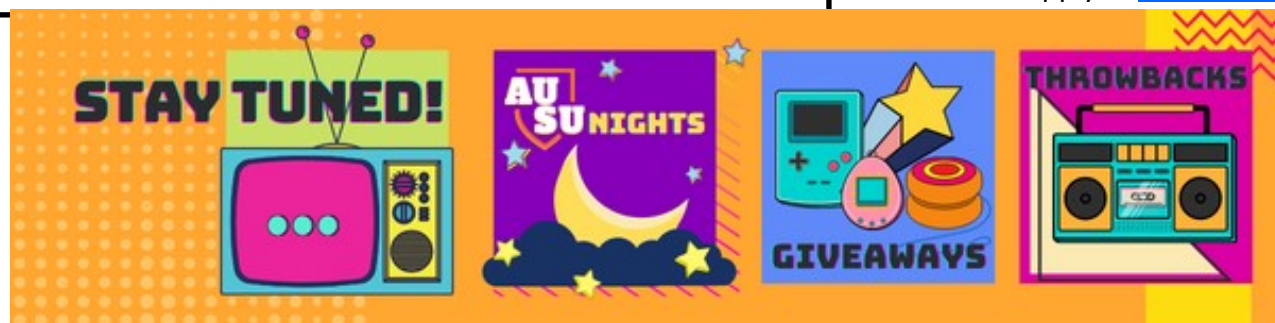
**Athabasca
University**

**Compassionate
Grading Policy
Extended**

AU recently announced they are extending their temporary compassionate grading policy until at least Dec. 31, 2022.

The policy, introduced last Aug, supports students whose studies have been disrupted by the pandemic by allowing them to select one course to go unweighted and not included in their GPA, recorded instead as a pass.

Find more on the flexible grading option and how to apply at athabasca.ca.



Provided by

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Publisher	Athabasca University Students' Union
Editor-In-Chief	Jodi Campbell
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www.voicemagazine.org

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

Contact *The Voice* at voice@voicemagazine.org.

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ISSN 2561-3634