



THE VOICE

Vol 32 Issue 37 - 2024-09-20

Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You!

Foreign Interference Globally

Actions Around the World

All the Small Wonders

Happiness Can Be Easy

Plus:

Grandma's Tea Eggs

*The Academic Power of a Kind Word
and muchmore!*



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

Upheaval and Drama

Karl Low



So just yesterday, I received official notice from a member of AUSU staff that Jodi Campbell, the Executive Director of AUSU, and Chantel Groening, President of AUSU, are both no longer with the organization. In all honesty, I knew a couple of days before, when something that big happens, information has ways of getting out quickly.

While I have a few details from some of those involved, I've yet to receive AUSU's side of the matter, and don't want to start speculating until I've at least given them a chance to put together some sort of official comment, as the one thing I can point out is that this happened extremely suddenly, and with no indications that anything was amiss before it all went down, so I imagine all involved are scrambling at the moment.

That, in itself, worries me. While I can understand if a Council decides it wants to change direction, when those changes are sudden and without previous warning signs, it often indicates bad things. Because it generally means either something has already gone terribly wrong that we don't know about and the

actions are a result of that, or that something is about to go terribly wrong and students should start paying very close attention to what's happening.

But at AUSU, having students pay attention can be difficult, because the distance nature of our institution means that many students really don't have a feel for just what AUSU does and how much difference it can make behind the scenes. That's where *The Voice Magazine* tries to step in, and, if things go south, at least make what noise we can about it to bring more student and AU awareness to the issue.

Part of what can make this difficult is that *The Voice Magazine* is wholly funded by AUSU, which means that funding, and hence the magazine, can disappear overnight. For the past several years, AUSU and the Executive Director have taken pains to try to ensure the independence of the magazine, allowing us to report on AUSU Council, even when the magazine raised questions about some of what they were doing. Fortunately, that hasn't had to happen very often. I'm hoping both of these things continue, and I like to think they will. But when things are shifting rapidly, you never quite know what might end up getting side-swiped. Regardless, more on this issue is definitely to come.

In the meantime, this week, we bring back again our student interviews in "Minds we Meet", with this week's interview being an inspirational one, if you ask me. We also continue with our series exploring what countries around the world are doing about the new tactics of dis- and mis-information as part of foreign interference into their politics and governance. And then, just for good measure, as I'm wanting this to be a more uplifting issue, we've got [blue rare] taking a look at all the small things, and reminding us that there are many wonders in life all around us. We just need to take notice.

Plus, scholarships, recipes, thoughtful, inspirational, and educational articles, a virtual tour of Ghent, events, the hot topics, and more!

Enjoy the read!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karl', is located in the bottom right corner of the page.

MINDS

WE

MEET



The Voice Magazine recently had a chance to chat with Paige Loggie (she/her), a Bachelor of Arts student with a double major in Anthropology and Psychology, living in Snow Lake, Manitoba. (On a personal note, although Paige currently lives in this northern Manitoba town, she was born in the nearby mining town of Flin Flon, Manitoba.)

Paige acknowledged, “In the spirit of Truth and Reconciliation, I commit to honoring the histories, cultures, and ongoing relationships with the Cree, Anishinaabe, Oji-Cree, Dene, and Dakota. I acknowledge the land on which I live on is located within the Traditional Territory of the Opaskwayak Cree Nation and Metis Nation respectfully. This region where I stand is protected by Treaty 5 signed in 1875 and the Manitoba Act of 1870. I will always support, as I am of the Swampy Cree, the ongoing relationship with these lands, while supporting Indigenous Sovereignty and self-determination.”

Paige had some great study tips for fellow AU students. “I study best by creating goals for myself.” She continued, “I will set a certain date and time to have a lesson completed and I try to reach that goal as best I can!”

She also had some solid advice for new students and/or prospective students. “If you can start early, do it, because you will be ahead and that saves more time for a personal life. Orientation can take a bit more time to complete so if you can get through that before your official classes begin, you save time, which is key to your success.”

When she is not studying, she enjoys watching “entertaining documentaries and gossip channels,” socializing, and spending time with her family. She also enjoys reading and had a detailed answer about which books have impacted her life. She mentioned *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* by Naomi Klein, which “tells the story of how certain events, which may seem catastrophic in nature, could be by design. You will either become a conspiracy theorist or a truth seeker by the end of it. It discusses ‘how leadership isn’t always leading for the right purposes,’ but who am I to judge? It allows you to evaluate yourself and your place amongst the higher aims of larger entities vying for your attention.”

She also mentioned, “I would love to get my hands on Whitney Webb’s *One Nation Under Blackmail*.” Mentioning how she loves these types of books “because it is two females who have looked into the past and seen a pattern of behavior within our global society and how people can

learn to safely navigate life, while remaining aware and informed. I do not say I align with their personal politics, but I do love the fact that they poured their heart and soul into telling the truth as they see it.”

She elaborated, “I am Swampy Cree and have my Treaty Status only due to the fact that the politics of the day when I went to sign up for it had asked me to protest against the unfair treatment of the First Nations people, while still protected under UNDRIP. So it amazes me the lines we draw at balancing our collective wellbeing to the collective harms we co-create by our differences in culture.”



Paige had an interesting answer when asked about who in her life had the greatest influence on her desire to learn. “Ultimately, I always had a passion for learning,” she stated. “[G]rowing up, I was known as an old soul and knew the scientific names of dinosaurs before I went to kindergarten, so it was a natural progression, almost as if I was reincarnated and had known the world before I knew it, if that makes sense to you. If I had to name someone else; I would say a French immersion teacher who lived in my apartment building as a kid.” She continued, “Egyptologist Zahi Hawass, though I met him in Toronto, he is a ‘protect your energy’ statured kind of person, his research has been integral to my love of human history. Lastly, Carl Gustav Jung, he is, in my world view, the leading psychologist who has single handedly crafted modern thought and, in fact, modern day marketing.”

As for her experience with online learning so far? “Online learning has allowed me to be home with my family and be able to support their needs while I look after my own. Seeing as this is my first year as an undergrad, I haven’t found any dislikes, because I am able to live and work freely and independently, that suits me just fine!”

As for communication with her course tutors? “I love my tutors! I received a lovely welcome card in the mail from my Anthropology Tutor Dr. Laurie Milne, and I was so happy to receive something so unexpected! I can tell that Athabasca has created a warm welcome and a caring environment so students can thrive after being so surprised!”

The Voice Magazine also asked Paige what her first project would be if she were the new president of AU. She stated, “I would streamline the social spaces. I never knew there were so many apps that I needed to be a part of, plus there is a forum.” She continued, “I understand why, but when in this day and age we have other forms of social media, perhaps having a regulated space in places like those would save time and less confusion, but I’m an older mature student so keeping up with technology is or has for me always been a struggle.”

We also asked Paige which famous person, past or present, she would like to have lunch with, and why. She mentioned, “I would like to have lunch with the original members of The Smashing Pumpkins, Tool, and Alex and Allison Grey! I would have invited them over for dinner and asked them what they wanted to have ahead of time, so I can properly prep their favorite dishes!”

She continued, “It would be a dream to be able to sit across from artists who have helped to form the colors of my imagination and the freedom of my mind.” Paige had a chance to meet “Billy Corgan and Jimmy Chamberlin during an interview with Jon Strombolopolus” and was able to attend “one of the last concerts before they broke up.” “I’ve seen Tool and APC (early years) in concert many times and have actually been to an artist event with Alex and Allison Grey and watched them paint until the next morning. I would love to be in that space again, they are so powerful and influential and allow you to live empowered and expressive!”

She also told us about her most valuable lesson learned in life. “I have not lived long enough to be able to tell you the most valuable lesson learned in life, but I will tell you this. No one knows your life story more than you do. There will be people who will have plenty to say about the life you lead, but they will never hold a candle to your very spirit that stands before them. There will



be those who support you and there will be those who seek to tear you down. Embrace those who support you and those who seek to tear you down will fall away, the Creator, the Universe and all that matters to you will remember how they tried and failed. I have lived a rich life, a poor life, a life with trauma, and a life free of it. Experience it all, as there you will find so much of your worth within it, no one can take your experiences and self worth from you.”

On a final note, Paige added, “I am happy to spend time discussing topics that help the world evolve and help our people live in a

holistic way. I am hoping to move forward and support the industry of mental health so that anyone experiencing trauma or life events which may have negatively shaped them can be healed or overcome in some way.” She continued, “My student experience thus far as an undergraduate is only just beginning.” “I cannot wait to see what happens in the future and I hope my studies and future with Athabasca University supports that childhood dream I’ve had and allows for me to be a voice so the voiceless can strengthen and build a world that brings prosperity, reconciliation, and peace.” Best of luck, Paige!

At times, in an online learning environment, it can feel like you are all alone, but across the nation and around the globe, students just like you are also pursuing their Athabasca University (AU) studies! Each week, *The Voice Magazine* will be bringing you some of these stories. If you would like to be featured next, do not hesitate to get in touch!

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



Connecting with Canada's Economic & Security Partners Foreign Interference Around the World, Part II

Alek Golijanin



Prime targets for foreign interference are the same for all of Canada's economic and security partners and they include political systems, military capabilities, trade and economic interests, intellectual property, community safety, and democratic freedoms, which is carried out by pressuring and manipulating governments, businesses, decision-makers, and communities. So we continue this series by looking at the issue of foreign interference from the points of view of Germany, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Australia. How different partners go about in addressing threats may be similar, but nuances do exist and they are rooted in government traditions, government transparency, and "prohibition"-style thinking.

From a German point of view.

Germany was one of the first countries to take measures to insulate its institutions and democratic processes after seeing what transpired during the U.S. Presidential Election in 2016. This included cyber defence initiatives (*Bundeswehr Cyber and Information*

Space Command, 2017), network enforcement of removing disinformation and hate speech in tight timeframes (*Netzwerkdurchsetzungsgesetz*, 2017), and by taking a leadership role in shaping the EU's broader strategy to combat foreign interference with disinformation monitoring and coordinating hybrid threat responses (via the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats).

Germany's approach to countering hybrid threats, including foreign interference, is centered around core departments coordinating closely together. These departments include the Federal Foreign Office (AA), the Federal Ministry of Interior and Community (BMI), the German Chancellery, the Federal Ministry of Defence and the Federal Press Office. The AA and the Federal Press Office are involved with leading the Expert Group on Disinformation, which brings together experts from those key institutions. The BMI's role is best understood as that of a coordinator that handles hybrid threats, and it has established the Hybrid Working Group (AG Hybrid).

The AG Hybrid is a part of broader efforts to counter hybrid threats, including disinformation, cyberattacks, and other tactics that blend military and non-military actions. The AG Hybrid is responsible for coordinating between government agencies, security services, and international partners to ensure that all stakeholders are prepared to handle any threats that may arise, including those to critical infrastructure, digital spaces, and other foreign influence operations.

On the topic of digital platform operators (like META, X, etc.), Germany was among the first to take the position that digital platform operators have a responsibility to take action against the

spread of disinformation, and regulations have been passed as part of the *Digital Services Act*. Germany also joined with other EU member states in voting for the *Artificial Intelligence Act*, which aims to ensure that AI systems used in the EU are safe, transparent, comprehensible, non-discriminatory, and environmentally friendly. The goal behind the legislation is to safeguard fundamental rights, democracy, the rule of law, and environmental sustainability, and to account for the potential risks of AI and the level of their impact.

From a U.K. point of view.

The U.K. has been quite active in their efforts to counter foreign interference, and it continues to have a similar level of cooperation with EU partners even after Brexit. Much of the legislative advancements on things like artificial intelligence still involve close collaboration and cooperation, but the U.K. also has more autonomy over how it implements different legislation.

In 2023, the U.K. introduced the *National Security Act 2023*, to provide security services and law enforcement agencies with the tools they need to deter, detect, and disrupt modern-day state threats. Compared to other countries, this Act stands out for the introduction of a foreign influence registry, expanding the definition of espionage laws to account for cyber and economic espionage as well as disinformation, and includes tough penalties for individuals involved in espionage, sabotage, or foreign interference activities even up to life imprisonment for the most serious offences. It also focuses on hybrid threats and non-military cover actions, a more holistic view of national security, accounting for the hybrid threats posed by cyber-attacks, disinformation, and the manipulation of public opinion. National Security Act 2023 also provides for more enhanced investigative and preventative powers for policing and public safety stakeholders. There are also measures that focus on hostile state actors who attempt to coerce and interfere with the U.K.'s democratic processes, which is why it has been described as one of the most forward-thinking national security laws found anywhere in the world.

In 2023, the U.K. also introduced the Online Safety Act 2023, aimed at protecting both children and adults that go on the internet by making social media companies and search engines more responsible for user safety, as well as a range of websites, apps, and other services (social media, file cloud storage and sharing sites, video sharing platforms, online forums, dating services, online instant messaging services). These platforms are now required to specify in their terms of service as to what the exact measures they use to prevent underage access, which has led to the adoption of age assurance technologies that can check a user's age. Additionally, the Act allows adult users to have a greater control over the kinds of content they see and who they engage with online, including the option of filtering out unverified users.

Should these companies fail to adhere to the standards set out in the Act, they can be fined up to £18 million pounds or 10 percent of their qualifying worldwide revenue, whichever is greater, and senior managers can be criminally liable in some circumstances. Additionally, in the most extreme of cases, with the agreement of the courts, payment providers, advertisers and internet service providers can be directed to stop working with different platforms and assisting them with generating money or being accessed from the U.K. The Act does distinguish between digital platforms and the demands placed on them, proportionate to their size and capacity. But specific safety measures still need to be established and there is the use of unclear threshold words like "extreme", to distinguish between the different kinds of (extreme) pornography and (extreme) sexual violence.

One thing to keep on eye on as it relates to foreign interference and artificial intelligence is that that the King's Speech (2024) emphasized that the Government would look to introduce legislation to address those who worked to develop powerful technologies, and that a consultation on this is expected to commence in the coming months.

From a New Zealand point of view.

New Zealand's approach to foreign interference is similar to how Italy approaches the matter, given how the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) has a role in managing national security risks and coordinating activity across government. Despite the similarities, New Zealand also incorporates more of a multi-sector approach to managing threats, where government takes greater responsibility in assisting different sectors with the necessary support to better protect those risks. Although many responsibilities related to foreign interference tend to intersect and are shared between agencies and departments, specific agencies and departments also have more specific priorities that are related to their functions, like the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) ensuring the resilience of research and science funding proposals to interference.

In 2023, New Zealand published a first-of-its-kind report, a "threatscape" report that provided a comprehensive assessment on the threats of violent extremism, foreign interference, and espionage. What made the report a first was the decision to than had previously been reported at an unclassified level by the NZSIS, and it also outlines how New Zealand connects into the global security environment and the steps that some adversaries may take to undermine democracy and security. In that report, the NZSIS Director-General of Security Andrew Hampton, is quoted emphasizing the role transparency plays when trying to counter national security threats, "Being more open about national security means that as a country we can develop a greater understanding and be better placed to manage risks." Additionally, the report highlighted how it was important for society to be conscious about bias and to avoid racially profiling and culturally stereotyping individuals given how foreign interference can have a specific cultural and ethnic component to it.

New Zealand has legislation that regulates the use of their citizen's personal information by tech businesses including those involved with artificial intelligence, but it does not have any legislation in place that is specific to artificial intelligence. New Zealand also has a protocol system in place to for elected officials to be able

AU-thentic Events

Upcoming AU Related Events

MBA Application Webinar

Tues, Sep 24, 10:00 to 11:00 am MDT
Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business
www.athabascau.ca/news/events/online-mba-application-webinar-20240924
RSVP through above link

Library Chat

Tues, Sep 24, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm MDT
Online

Hosted by AU Library
www.athabascau.ca/library/index.html
No pre-registration needed; access through chat box on home page

J-Series and TransLab present: Solidarity, Racial Justice, Queer and Trans Activism, and the Parental Rights Movement in Canada

Tues, Sep 24, 12:00 to 1:30 pm MDT
Online

Hosted by AU Justice and Speaker Series (J-Series) and TransLab
www.athabascau.ca/news/events/solidarity-racial-justice-queer-and-trans-activism-and-the-parental-rights-movement-in-canada

Register through above link

All events are free unless otherwise noted.

vet for potential foreign interference, from proposed investments to campaign donations, with specific security teams that work on vetting any suspected threats.

From an Australian point of view.

Australia has proven to be one of the more successful nations in countering foreign interference, recently carrying out one of the largest disruptions of covert and overt activities by adversaries. What likely made those efforts possible can be understood through statistics like how Australia's public safety stakeholders delivered security briefings to over 500 ministerial staff in Australian

More AU-thentic Events

Search Like a Pro

Tues, Sep 24, 1:00 to 1:30 pm MDT
Online via MS Teams
Hosted by AU Library
www.athabascau.ca/news/events/search-like-a-pro
Register through above link

Writing to win graduate awards and scholarships

Wed, Sept 25, 11:00 am to 12:30 pm MDT
Online
Hosted by AU Write Site and Faculty of Graduate Studies
www.athabascau.ca/news/events/writing-to-win-graduate-awards-and-scholarships-2
Register through above link

Library Chat

Thur, Sep 26, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm MDT
Online
Hosted by AU Library
www.athabascau.ca/library/index.html
No pre-registration needed; access through chat box on home page

Indigenous Heritage Speaker Series

Thur, Sep 26, 5:00 to 6:30 pm MDT
Online via Zoom
Hosted by AUSU
www.ausu.org/event/indigenous-speaker-series-2024/
RSVP through above link

All events are free unless otherwise noted.

Parliament during the 2022-2023 year. Then how government stakeholders annually grade the success of Australia's public safety stakeholders, with those grades being made publicly available on the government's website. There is also how Australia's case officers who end up working on highly sensitive matters are afforded a formal pathway to raise ethical concerns and express discomfort without career repercussions. All the success traces back to Australian legislators deciding to bring about legislative amendments to account for laws that were outdated and lacking in function.

In 2018, Australia decided to amend *The National Security Legislation Amendment Act* to amend and expanded its *Criminal Code Act 1995*, criminalising covert and deceptive or threatening activities by persons intending to interfere with Australia's democratic system and processes, or to support the intelligence activities of a foreign government. The big change expanded what constituted as "espionage" and "foreign interference", including 1) covert and deceptive or threatening activities by persons intending to interfere with Australia's democratic systems and processes, 2) supporting the intelligence activities of a foreign government. More specifically, for the act of foreign interference to be a crime under the Criminal Code Act, the foreign interference must be linked to a foreign government or its proxy.

In 2020, Australia created the Commonwealth Counter Foreign Interference Taskforce to lead operational responses to foreign interference and works to identify, investigate and disrupt acts of foreign interference. The Taskforce brings together a multi-agency team that includes the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) officers, Australian Federal Police investigators and representatives of other law enforcement and intelligence agencies. Since its inception, the Taskforce has conducted more than 120 operations to mitigate threats against different communities, political systems and classified information.

Australia's Transparency Portal is an open government initiative that provides public access to data, information, and reports related to financial performance and operations of Australian government departments and agencies. These can range from annual reports, budgetary outcomes, performance statements, and other key financial documents. The portal centralizes all the information from the various branches of government, with an easy-to-navigate interface, and makes it possible to access multiple reports from a single source. Although Australia is not the first country to adopt a transparency portal, it is a leader in making public sector performance data accessible in a centralized and simplified format.

One document of significance that is available over Australia's Transparency Portal is ASIO's Annual Report 2022-2023, and its "Counter-espionage and foreign interference" section highlights how ASIO's stakeholders, including policy makers, graded its performance. 95% of those stakeholders considered ASIO's advice, at the least, to provide context that was relevant and practical, as influencing decision-making at the highest levels of government. 64% of those stakeholders went even further, stating that the advice provided had an even greater impact.

"Prohibition"-styled thinking and is vulnerable to hostile actors.

Canada's economic and security partners are similar in how they approach foreign interference, and everyone is aligned in their efforts on countering it. Where the differences lay, between Canada and its close partners, are rooted in government traditions and the transparency of government, and "prohibition"-styled thinking. Some countries see their federal government remain in office until the new government convenes, which results in elected officials still acting in an executive capacity. Some countries publish grades on the success of their ministry, graded by government stakeholders, and what is and is not working. Some countries were quicker to address "prohibition"-styled thinking that outlawed online sports betting and ensure that when links between certain sectors and crime are identified that they are quickly remedied.

For instance, Canada's Ministers will "transfer" power over to Deputy Ministers (non-elected public officials) during the election (writ) period. Both Members of Parliament and political party heads have given testimonies at the Foreign Interference Commission about how briefings and interactions related to foreign interference were not effective, and Canada lacks grading schematics and metrics to be able to account for shortcomings. Canada was also slow to regulate online sports betting, which is one of the primary ways that elected officials and other public officials with institutional powers were exploited by hostile state actors, because of the legislative grey area that only prohibited gambling not at an establishment owned or licensed by a provincial government.

None of Canada's economic and security partners seem to have platformed the idea that national security investigations should no longer set criminal prosecutions as the "gold standard" and as a measure of success, as was suggested in the [Special Report on Federal Policing](#). Nor did they seem to lack the oversight bodies and whistle-blower protections to the degree that Canada does. Part 3 of this series will take a closer look at the implication of such absences and the difference they can make, to counter foreign interference efforts but also to promote public trust in democratic institutions.

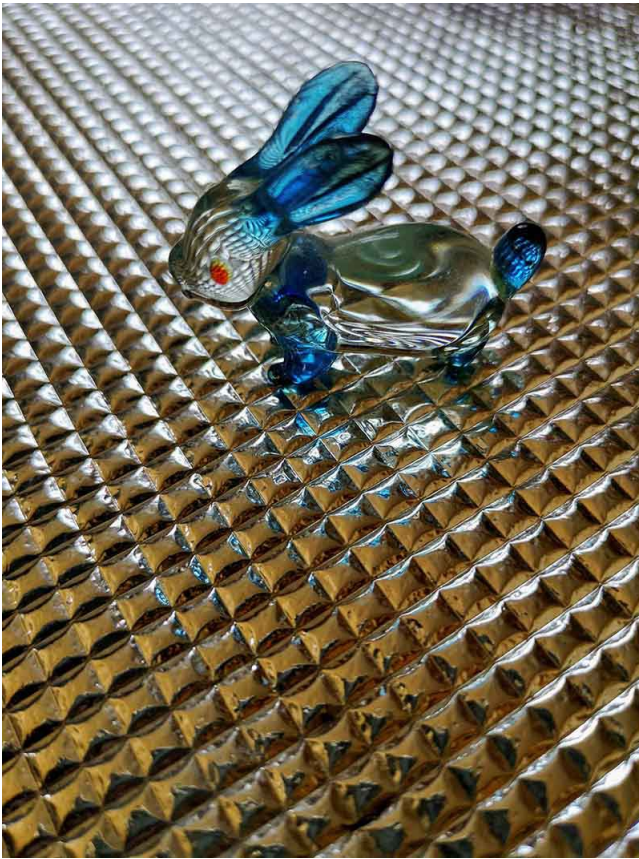
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Alek Golijanin is an AU alum who considers himself a gentleman first, a scholar second, and a combat sports fanatic third. In that order.



All the Small Wonders [blue rare]

Oliver-Moorcraft Sykes



I think, as human beings, we have a tendency to put a disproportionate amount of emphasis on all the big-ticket items that we believe will bring us happiness. The prestigious and lucrative career, the ideal partner, the perfect family, and all the trappings of success. But it's been my experience that it's the smaller, more ephemeral and idiosyncratic things to which we should pay closer attention. Tiny moments and sensations, apparently weightless, seemingly insignificant, and yet their abundance, if we choose to appreciate them, can transform the inner terrain of our lives as dramatically as an accumulation of snowflakes can transform the landscape beyond our windows. The smell of a freshly brewed cup of coffee or a newly peeled orange; a few minutes spent enjoying the feel of sunlight on your face; losing yourself for an hour or two in the pages of a good book: these are all very small but very important things.

For as long as I can remember, I have been an obsessive keeper of journals, an inveterate chronicler of personal feelings and events. I can't recall a time, at least not since middle school, when I haven't had a pen and some form of notebook at hand. Some of

these I have kept, many have been lost, and great many of them have been ripped up and burned for a variety of reasons. None of them have been meant for any kind of sharing.

Mostly, their rambling pages have been places where I've placed my hurt, my pain, my fears, my grandiose plans, my fantasies and infatuations, my petty grudges, my foolish denials, and many other kinds of cringe inducing ephemera. Thank god for paper recycling bins and backyard fire pits. The ones I like the best, though, and can't bring myself to rip out, are the small descriptions, factual and unembellished, of seemingly minor things. Sharing a cigarette with a friend, or watching my dog bury her head in the snow.

More and more, over the past few years, I've just been using my notebooks to make lists and very brief descriptions of things that gave my senses and my soul a brief lift, all the fleeting pleasures and that might otherwise fly under the radar of consciousness. The smell and feel of an Icelandic wool sweater, for example. A quartet of cardinals at the bird feeder. A fortuitous parking spot. A smoothly executed gear shift. Small acts of kindness and courtesy. Watching old couples swing dancing at a wedding. Winter winds making half-formed words on a cottage window. The click of heels on a marble floor. A blob of amber light dancing across the ceiling. Standing on a rooftop at night, watching a stream of cars flow like radiant blood through the veins of the city.

At the end of the day, I don't have any great understanding of the meaning of life, if there even is one. All I know is, taking things for granted and disregarding beauty in all of its infinite variety is a terrible squandering of the wonders we've been given.

The Academic Power Behind a Kind Word

Marie Well



Sometimes, a kind word can change the course of our lives. It can transform loss, failure, or regret into a second chance—bringing renewed energy to make our dreams a reality. With the right encouragement, the burdens we've carried for so long can dissolve instantly. Perhaps we realize that our dream wasn't meant for then—it was meant for now, inspired by all the wisdom and strength we've gained.

Recently, a kind word gave me a new sense of purpose. I'm now determined to work full-time, write, take on a second job over the weekends, and pursue a Doctor of Business Administration in the evenings. While applying for jobs, I've come to appreciate the video-recorded or text-based responses requested by online portals. Three of the past jobs I secured were due to assignments given during the interview process. I've developed a system for video interviews, from the proper outfit and lighting to using Microsoft Teams backgrounds, adding background music in Premiere Pro, and using a teleprompter with dual monitors. Creating these videos improves our chances and prepares us for live interviews. Tools like Grammarly and ChatGPT help us polish our answers for text-based responses. Writing 1,000-plus words a week for *The Voice Magazine* has made writing more natural and

effortless. I highly recommend writing for *The Voice Magazine*—even one article. It's surprisingly relaxing, especially when we pour love into our messages.

Grant Cardone advises his daughter to attend every audition possible, even when she doesn't qualify, if only for the invaluable experience. Inspired by that, I'm applying for every marketing leadership job, regardless of perceived qualifications, because the experience and insights are worth the effort. The climb is always worth it, even when we stumble. The key is getting back up.

We also need to consider applying for Métis status if we have Indigenous heritage, as it could open doors to funding for further education. My aunt mapped out my ancestry and encouraged me to claim Métis status, given our heritage. Growing up, I never questioned why my grandmother and other relatives looked 100% Indigenous; no one indicated that any of us were Aboriginal.

I needed to figure out when or how to enroll in a DBA program or apply for financial aid, so I took the plunge and applied online. I thought I'd figure out the rest as it occurs. (I once saw a female Asian martial artist who got accepted to the Olympics and said she didn't know how she'd afford it but would figure it out as she went. I liked her attitude.) When the application page indicated that enrollment was closed, I emailed the admissions office and will plan to check back regularly to see when admissions reopen. We must always persist in the face of roadblocks.

My GPA from my Master's program is just at the minimum required, although my undergraduate record is much stronger. Still, I'm hopeful. If I don't get in this year, I can find out what can be done to strengthen the application for next year. After all, quitting is the surest way to fail. So, if success is the goal, we can't give up—on our education, relationships, careers, or ourselves. The

easy way out often leads to more suffering in the long run. So, if we don't succeed initially, we must revise our approach and try again and again until we triumph.

Part of my inspiration to pursue a DBA came from encouraging words shared by our editor's partner. Those words have played over and over in my mind, motivating me. This shows that an encouraging word can create a bright future for someone. And all of us have the power to speak those words, to help each other shine like superstars in whatever we set our minds to.

Today, I received a message from the admissions office: I've been approved to apply for the Doctor of Business Administration program! They're interested in my quantitative skills. The admissions officer mentioned that the DBA program is highly competitive, so I asked her to share a list of documents needed for consideration so I could start preparing. She also provided a textbook recommendation and suggested researching the professors' areas of specialization to align my thesis topics accordingly. I recommend always getting early access to the textbook—as soon as possible—and reading the books immediately. This gives us an edge.

I've already developed a compelling thesis idea related to my industry and identified a potential supervisor. If the stars align, I could start the DBA in January 2026. Yesterday, AstraGPT, my personal ChatGPT assistant, helped me refine my thesis topic, research question, theory, and methodology. I researched to see if the topic was taken, narrowing it down. If we're pursuing a thesis, I highly recommend consulting with ChatGPT—it's like having a dedicated supervisor at our fingertips.

So, if we have dreams that have died, remember that they're always within us. They're stepping stones meant to propel us toward our missions accomplished. Whatever we've been through, including loss and failure, is part of our journey; however, there's always another chance to prove ourselves. Despite all this, the most significant proof of our success is not necessarily in our accomplishments but in the love we give, regardless of our achievements. One kind word can be more monumental than any material success imaginable.

Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: The Brandon Langhjelm Essay Contest

Sponsored by: Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms

Deadline: October 27, 2024

Potential payout: up to \$2000

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be aged 15 to 25 as of contest deadline, and must be permanent residents or citizens of Canada (or have proof of immigration status in Canada.)

What's required: An online application form, along with a short (450 characters max) bio, and a 1200-1500 word essay on one of two given topics: "Government Regulation of Artificial Intelligence (AI)" or "Government Regulation of Hate Speech".

Tips: Read the [Criteria and Guidelines](#) page carefully for info on essay content and format.

Where to get info: www.jccf.ca/essay-contest/



Grandma's Tea Eggs

Cassandra Wang



Growing up, hard boiled eggs were never my favorite. In fact, I either had to dip them in sauce or eat them while drinking a glass of milk. They were bland and flavorless. However, tea eggs were an entirely different beast. I enjoyed the aroma of tea eggs, the flavor profile that is infused into the hard-boiled eggs, and even dipping the egg yolk in the fragrant mix of soy sauce and tea. Tea eggs, also known as marbled eggs, are one of the most popular Chinese snacks and breakfast items. It is made by simmering hard-boiled eggs in a flavorful tea and spice mixture. They are known for their distinctive marbled appearance and rich, savory flavor. Here's a traditional recipe that might remind you of a grandma's kitchen:

Ingredients

- 6 large eggs
- 4 cups water
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons dark soy sauce (optional, for deeper color)
- 2 tablespoons tea leaves (black tea is commonly used)
- 1 tablespoon Chinese five-spice powder
- 1-2 star anise
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1-2 bay leaves
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- Salt to taste (about 1/2 teaspoon)

Instructions

1. Boil the Eggs:
 - Place the eggs in a pot and cover them with water. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Once boiling, reduce the heat and let them simmer for about 8-10 minutes until hard-boiled.
 - Remove the eggs from the water and let them cool slightly. Once they are cool enough to handle, gently tap the eggshells with the back of a spoon to create a network of cracks all over the shell. This allows the tea and spices to infuse into the eggs and create the marbled effect.
2. Prepare the Tea Mixture:
 - In a separate pot, bring 4 cups of water to a boil. Add the soy sauce, dark soy sauce (if using), tea leaves, five-spice powder, star anise, cinnamon stick, bay leaves, sugar, and salt. Stir to combine.





3. Simmer the Eggs:

• Add the cracked eggs to the pot with the tea mixture. Lower the heat to a gentle simmer and let the eggs cook for at least 1 hour. The longer the eggs simmer, the more flavorful they will become. Some prefer to let the eggs steep in the liquid overnight for even more flavor.

4. Cool and Serve:

• Once the eggs have reached the desired flavor, remove them from the liquid. You can serve the eggs warm or cold. Peel the shells to reveal the beautiful marbled pattern before serving.

Tips:

- For a more intense flavor and color, allow the eggs to steep in the tea mixture overnight in the refrigerator after the initial simmer.
- You can adjust the spices according to your taste. Adding more soy sauce will make the eggs saltier and give them a darker color, while more sugar can balance the flavors.
- Tea eggs can be stored in the refrigerator for several days. The flavor will continue to develop as they sit.

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

Fly on the Wall: The Thespian's Wail What's My Motivation?

Jason Sullivan



Motivation and attentiveness are twinned foils for countless creative and educational pursuits. Both sensations induce sighs of underwhelmed lassitude at the prospect of climbing another of life's hillocks, and flitting glances adrift from the scene of the present to the yawing gulf of the imagination. The history and practice of education may largely be seen as an exercise in precisely disciplining people's willingness to pay attention and desire to excel. These two productive needs are summarized in the performance artist's classic exclamation: "yes, I know the lines, but what's my *motivation*?!"

Yet, technology seems to have all the answers and holds much promise in the field of augmented learning. Recently, Oprah Winfrey interviewed Bill Gates to that end. Gates propounded that AI, like a kindly tutor bearing a spoonful of sugar and some singalong tunes, will to students provide "that personalized notion" of connection with a human

“who understands how to motivate you”. By “engaging the student in the rich way”, Gates continues, computer programs can draw out the best from their students. But what is it that makes an engagement rich, anyway? And can a tech genius, no matter his philanthropic bent, truly understand the core of human nature and transmit that core through a computer program? Let’s remember, other than in Hollywood (where a half century ago HAL the computer in the sci fi horror film *2001: A Space Odyssey* was infamous for saying “I can’t allow you to do that”) the first moment a computer spoke to humans meaningfully was by stating something any dog could emit with a minor yip: “you’ve got mail”. Supposedly, technology has come a long way, baby, and now can incite us to write, think, learn, and express ourselves in Herculean ways.

One imagines a nail-filing stenographer seated dutifully at a desk while our genius minds frenetically unfurl a series of ideas just waiting to be combined into some miracle of erudite prose. This promise of lucid clarity and renaissance expressiveness is what AI is all about. Yet, the unasked question during Oprah’s television special *AI and the Future of US* remained: how will students be better motivated by a computer greeting them with helpful hints and useful aphorisms? When you know it’s just a fortune cookie you don’t take its prognostication as seriously as if it comes from a therapist or a good friend.

Shortcut To Trust and Respect?

Just as an acronym can shorten the space between memory and memory retrieval, AI holds much promise when it comes to the brutal boredom of editing and re-composing one’s writing, a process some liken to feeling ones very soul decompose in the blue glow of a late-night computer screen. But when it comes to motivation, that soulful stuff of passion and pathos, Gates’ assertion is that computers will somehow bring the best out of our *intent*. AI will somehow inflame pupil’s desire to desire to learn.

This prospect, rather than drawing on fear induced by a teacher’s stern sound of a meter-stick slapped against the chalkboard thereby to draw attention from a localized game of tiddlewinks, seems somewhat dubious. As in the human performance arts, or even the dog and pony show performing arts, to draw the best out of a human would seem to presume that we feel human connections—affinity is a great motivator. But can we get those *feels* from a machine? Friends of mine tested such barriers of verisimilitude by dressing up a large toy doll in jeans and a shirt and placing her in a corner of their living room. At first visitors would be alarmed but, sure as a scarecrow only works for slow-witted birds of a Corvid feather, the doll was soon ignored – despite the wily grin plastered to her face.

AI will have to stretch our conscious selves beyond their normal point so as to allow us to accept and respect it as we would a teacher, and that may be beyond its present capacities. Then again, we live in a time of social media avatars and video game personas so maybe it will not be so much of a stretch for students to strive to impress a computer program as they would a beloved professor. The future is, as always, in our hands when it comes to acts of humanity including the act of interpreting the efficacy of an Other.

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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.



Cities in Six: Ghent, Belgium

Barbara Lehtiniemi

Visual, virtual visiting—six photos at a time

Ghent is in the Flemish (primarily Dutch-speaking) region of Belgium, and is that country's third-largest city. Human settlement in the area goes back to at least the Stone Age, and a permanent settlement was established by the 7th century. By the Late Middle Ages, Ghent was prospering due to the wool trade and was the richest city in Northern Europe.

Much of the medieval centre of Ghent has been preserved, and most streets in the city's centre are pedestrian only. We spent a full week exploring Ghent in early August, 2019.



Grass Quay. The Graslei, along the Leie River, is one of the medieval quays in the port area of Ghent. The modern port area is now north of the city, and the Graslei district is a culture and tourist hub. The name, Graslei (Grass Quay in English), harkens back to its importance in the wheat trade in Flanders. The equally well-preserved Corn Quay (Korenlei) is directly across the river.



Tower Row. From Sint-Michielsbrug (Saint Michael's Bridge), one photo can capture a line of towers. In the middle distance is Sint-Niklaaskerk (St Nicholas Church); to the right and behind is the Belfort (the Belfry). The third medieval tower of Sint-Baafs (St Bavo's) Cathedral is just out of sight. (The towered building at left is a former post office.)



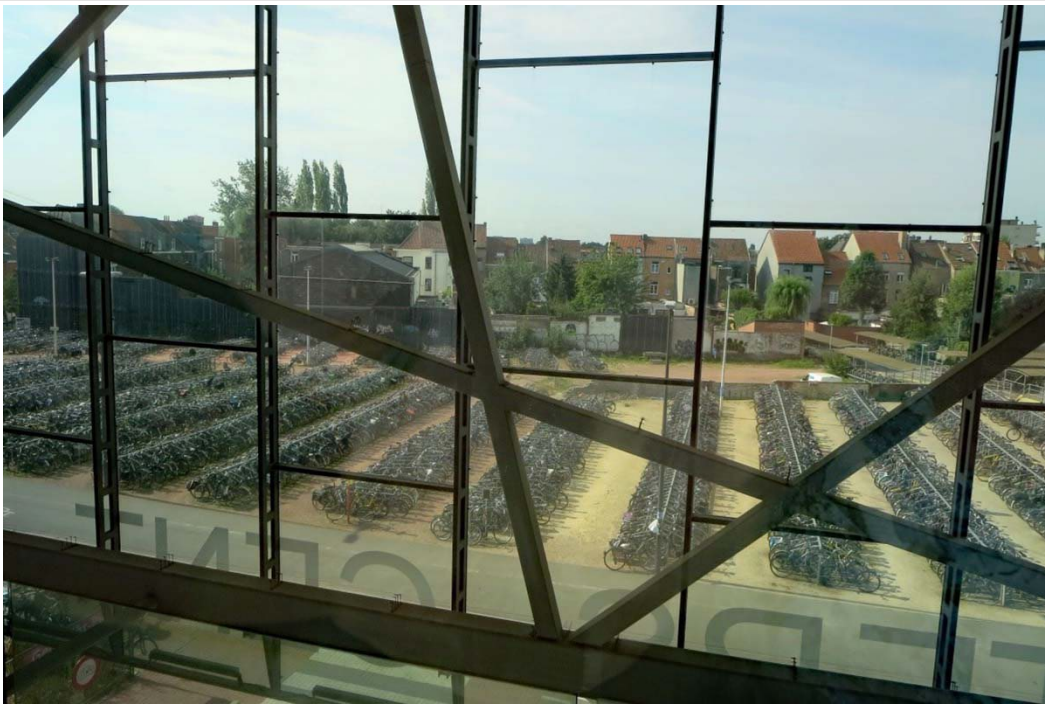
St Bavo's. The Roman-Catholic cathedral of St Bavo's is named for Ghent's patron saint (known as Sint Baaf in Dutch.) Construction of the church began in 1274 with the church replacing a 10th-century wood chapel. The cathedral houses many notable works of art, including the *Ghent Altarpiece* (formally known as the *Adoration of the Mystic Lamb*) by Hubert and Jan van Eyck. That polyptych (multi-panelled) painting was unveiled in 1432, and is considered a masterpiece of European art. The *Ghent Altarpiece*, in whole or in part, has been stolen seven times. One panel remains missing after a 1934 theft.



The Gravensteen. This 12th-century castle was the residence of the Count of Flanders ("Gravensteen" means "the Count's rock".) In 1949 this was the site of the locally-infamous "The Battle of Gravensteen Castle", when students from the University of Ghent occupied the castle to protest a large increase to the price of beer. The castle has been restored and is open to the public.



De Krook. Two rivers, the Scheldt and Leie, plus several canals, criss-cross Ghent. The waterways are often busy with pleasure craft. Hovering over a bend in the river Scheldt is the newly-built library, media centre, and research hub, "De Krook". The library provides moorings for patrons arriving by water, as well as ample parking space for bicycles.



Ride & Park & Ride. Seen through the windows of the Gent-Sint-Pieters train station, rows and rows of bicycles wait in the commuter parking lot. The morning and afternoon rush hours in Ghent are dominated by commuters riding their bicycles to work, or to the train station (where many commuters catch trains to Brussels.) Tourists can rent bikes at the train station, or in the city's centre.

Travel note: Brussels Airport, around 60 kilometres southeast of Ghent, is the nearest international airport. There is a direct 1-hour rail link from Brussels Airport to Ghent's Gent-Sint-Pieters railway station. There is rail access to many other European cities from Ghent, including Bruges, Antwerp, and Luxembourg. Ghent has extensive public transportation, and tourists can purchase day passes providing unlimited use of busses and trams.

Barbara Lehtiniemi is a writer, photographer, and AU graduate (BGS 2018.) She lives on a windswept rural road in Eastern Ontario.



Beyond Literary Landscapes

Ray Bradbury

Nat Writes

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 week, we focus on US-science fiction author Ray Bradbury.

Bradbury was born on August 22, 1920, in Waukegan, Illinois and died on June 5, 2012, in Los Angeles, California.

In particular, he is “best known for his highly imaginative short stories and novels that blend a poetic style, nostalgia for childhood, social criticism, and an awareness of the hazards of runaway technology.”

What

Some of Bradbury’s well-known works include Fahrenheit 451, The Martian Chronicles, and Something Wicked this Way Comes.

Other notable texts include The Sound of Thunder, The Pedestrian, and The Smile.

Where

Many of Bradbury’s novels and short stories take place in or near Illinois, but they also take place in various galaxies and planets.

When

These works are set mainly in the 20th century, but many are also set in the distant future.

Why

These works may be of interest to students who enjoy diverse genres of fiction, such as dystopian, fantasy, science fiction, and horror, as well as those who enjoy themes related to technology, censorship, and space travel.

How

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

AU students interested in learning more about this topic may enroll in ENGL 387: Writing Speculative Fiction, a senior-level, three-credit course, which “develops speculative fiction (SF) writing skills through a combination of strategic study and writing activity.” (Please note that this course requires the completion of ENGL 381: Creative Writing in Prose and professor approval.)

In addition, students may be interested in ASTR 205: Universe - The Ultimate Frontier, a junior-level, three-credit course, which “describe[s] the Universe as we now understand it, explain[s] how our current understanding came about, and show[s] how the scientific method forms the basis for both the tools and the theories of astronomy.” (No prerequisites are required for this course.) Happy reading!

Nat Writes is a AU graduate who enjoys writing about literature, student concerns, and education.



How Not to Get Combative on Social Media

Marie Well



I aim to show love for everyone without any sparring, although I've been trained in combative sports. Social media brings out sparring behavior, but it creates turmoil in my soul to take a strong view of one group against another. However, I care deeply about our Jewish community. I think the entire victim versus oppressor model needs to be de-emphasized in favor of a unified love-for-all perspective. This world needs models, theories, and ideas for love, not division. Once these theories take root, they can grow into beautiful, lush forests that proliferate love toward every entity in every corner of the universe. The seeds need to be planted with each of our gentle, nurturing hands.

I plan on making another theatre pre-show ad. That's because my last ad was published for free, so I promised the theatre staff I'd make another one once I started working. Yesterday, I made the video ad, and it's the most spectacular yet. Once I start working, I'll put it on the local theater's screens for a month and possibly at a

Cineplex for a week. I didn't reference the Jewish community in the ad, and the voice-over quotes are the author's, not mine, but the message applies to everyone given an unfair shake by mainstream media. The ad calls on us all to see the beauty in all people. We are all worthwhile and beautiful as we embark on our ultimate mission, which is to love and care for one another and never to be combative.

Today, I couldn't resist but show my empathy and love for our Jewish community by posting on a university forum. The forum, like many university forums, showed support for the pro-Palestine protests but didn't acknowledge the fearful environment these protests created for our Jewish student community. Our Jewish community is beautiful, inspirational, and magnificent. We all are. The mentor who brought the wisdom of unconditional love to me is Jewish. And universities are not forums for pitting the entire student body against a cultural group. Universities must, at minimum, be places for uniting people with love and support, ensuring everyone's safety. Learning takes place when people are safe and at peace, not when people walk through hallways in fear, encountering masses of students wearing full facial masks, signifying a vendetta against their culture. I can't even imagine how scary that would feel.

As a show of love for our Jewish student community, our disability community, or any other cultural group given an unfair shake by the media and university campus student unions, here is a song for us that my dear one exposed me to today: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=WsidcB-24JU>. I can't imagine how scary seeing graffiti splattered all over a campus against one's cultural group must feel. As the song says, hold our heads up high, don't be afraid, reach for the sky, because we are superstars! We love and protect one another at AU! We are all pure light and love!

And then tonight, I saw a near-death experience story about a female angel who showed unconditional love for everyone and everything, which is my philosophy. However, she had a combative side that was not clearly explained. I believe the quest for unconditional love should not be at all combative. I would love to strive to be more like Jesus and Gandhi combined, as they are unconditional love, peace, and unity without any swords.

Long ago, a friend drew a woman with armor and swords and told me I needed to be that version of a spiritual human being. She was upset because she said I had no defenses. However, I insisted I didn't want any swords but maybe wear armor. Each of us is different, and we all have beautiful strengths—every one of us—no matter what circumstances we've undergone. Everyone has emotional wounds. Everything, including the rocks, grass, and birds, deserve nothing but empathy and love. That's because if we understood everyone's life path, we'd feel nothing but love, as we are all truly beautiful. We are all on a journey to learn and to unconditionally love.

And then I thought, "Jesus, I've got to believe you still have infinite growth opportunities although you are perfection." That's because I believe our growth potential, everyone's, is infinite. And I thought about how my friend spoke to Jesus and then God in her near-death experience. I said, "Jesus, if God himself is even more magnificent, then I've got to believe you have the opportunity to grow even more perfect." I believe nothing is impossible; everything imaginable is possible, so growth and learning must have no limits, too. And then I heard and felt the most beautiful, splendid, soft, soothing laughter, which I "knew" was the voice of Jesus. I was blown away. It brought me immense comfort. Therefore, as an idealist, I assessed that I must grow into someone like that angel who unconditionally loves everyone and everything. But I need to do so without a combative side. And I suspect that unconditional love for all might be everyone's most authentic calling in the grand scheme of life.



Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

Facebook:

Thesis statement length? How long should a thesis statement be for a third-year paper for a history class is asked. Responses indicate clarity, not length, is the critical consideration; with other suggestions being that it be concise rather than precise, with a maximum of two sentences, regardless of the level.

Reddit:

Whatsapp and Concentration. Topics include a Whatsapp group for students that has nearly 100 members, and a student struggling with motivation and disinterest. Suggestions include watching TikTok or YouTube videos on course content, going to the "final grade" tab, opening

Word and the textbook learning objectives to take notes while reading, answering study questions, setting milestones with rewards and breaks, and focusing on the deadline and expense.

Twitter:

Grad student scholarships! @Athabascau reposts @ABInnovates, "The start of the school year brings a new year for the annual Graduate Student Scholarships competition. Application deadlines vary by institution at various times throughout the year. Learn more: <https://bit.ly/3XRpcNz>."

Deans' tips on how to succeed in online learning. @Athabascau writes, "New to online learning or wondering if it's a fit for you? You don't want to miss these top tips on how to succeed studying online featuring the talented deans of #AthabascaU's faculties! <https://www.athabascau.ca/news/learners/deans-online-learning-tips>."



"Passing the Baton: Welcoming the 2024-2025 AUSU Executive Committee"

AUSU UPDATE

April 12, 2024



Passing the Baton:
Welcoming the 2024-2025 AUSU
Executive Committee

The Athabasca University Students' Union (AUSU) would like to thank our outgoing 2023-2024 Executive Committee, including President Naju Syed, VP External Manmeet Kaur, VP Finance and Administration Chantel Groening (formerly Bradley), and VP Community and Wellness Natalia Iwanek. Their commitment and dedication to student success have helped guide our organization and enhance the student experience at Athabasca University (AU) over the past year. To celebrate and reflect with them, check out the latest AUSU Open Mic Podcast, "[Episode 86: AUSU Executives Wrap Up Their Term.](#)" This episode explores the wins and personal growth experienced

by your outgoing student executive leaders.

With the upcoming AUSU Council changeover meeting on April 18th, we are thrilled to [welcome the incoming 2024-2025 AUSU Executive Committee](#). Chantel Groening will be moving to the role of President, having served the past year as your VP Finance and Administration. Jan Lehmann will step into the role of VP External, eager to forge strong partnerships and advocate for our students on a provincial and federal level. Diana Ramirez, your new VP Finance and Administration, will help ensure the organization is fiscally responsible and managed effectively. And, Olivia Shepherd will take on the VP Community and Wellness role, committed to fostering a supportive and healthy learning environment for all AU students.

We are excited to see the new heights this dynamic team will reach and look forward to a year of growth, achievement, and student advocacy!

Provided by

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