

# ***THE VOICE***

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## **QUOTE OF THE WEEK**

***"We either make ourselves miserable, or we make ourselves strong. The amount of work is the same."***

***--Carlos Castenada***



## **A Bug In Your Ear... Nominations for Honorary Degrees**

Athabasca University Governing Council invites nominations for the following Honorary Degrees:

***Honorary Doctor of Athabasca University***  
***Honorary Doctor of Science***  
***Honorary Doctor of Letters***  
***Honorary Doctor of Laws***

Candidates should be persons who have distinguished themselves in education, science, the arts, public service, or other areas, and who have contributed significantly to endeavours consistent with the mandate and purpose of Athabasca University.

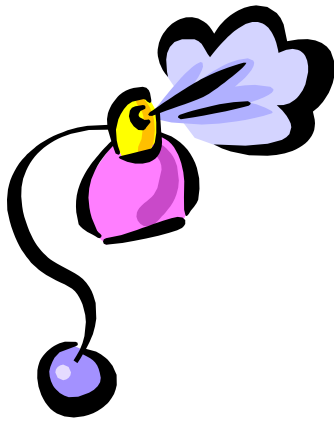
Nomination letters, which include the rationale for the nomination, a résumé of the nominee, and any supporting documents, must be received by Monday, December 3, 2001. The nominator must include their address and signature. All nominations should be marked "Personal and Confidential" and should be addressed to:

Carol Lund  
Office of the Governing Council  
Athabasca University  
1 University Drive  
Athabasca, Alberta T9S 3A3

For additional information, contact Ms. Lund at the above address or by phone, (780) 675-6271, by fax, (780) 675-6450, or by email, [caroll@athabascau.ca](mailto:caroll@athabascau.ca)

Honorary degrees will be presented at Athabasca University's 25<sup>th</sup> Convocation Ceremonies to be held in Athabasca on Friday, June 7, and Saturday, June 8, 2002.

Athabasca University is a leading open university specializing in individualized distance education. We offer complete graduate and undergraduate degree programs, and university certificate programs to more than 26,000 students annually.



## **Perfume: Easy Does It. Tamra Ross Low**

Recently I have spoken about different forms of air pollution, including pesticides, herbicides, and marijuana and cigarette smoke. I'm concerned about all of these, but they are not the only offenders. What really sends me packing time after time is strong perfume.

I suffer from chronic migraines. A severe migraine can last for 4 or 5 days, during which I am sometimes bed-ridden, and always very sick. A number of things set off migraines, but many of them are under my control. Perfume, however, is not.

The other day I came across ticket stubs from a Calgary Opera performance my husband and I took in a couple of years ago. We saw Don Giovanni at the Jubilee Auditorium in the worst seats possible – dead centre of the back row of the top balcony. I wouldn't recommend those seats to anyone. They are really crammed in back there. The seats were not the main problem, though.

On either side of us sat elderly women, thickly lathered in perfumed talc. Scented powder is the worst – it is exceedingly sharp and drifts into your nose and eyes. Old ladies just love this stuff. Sadly the sense of smell wanes with age, and accordingly, scents are applied more thickly to compensate. My sense of smell, however, is just fine.

The man in front of me that night – a dapper fiftyish Hispanic gentleman – wore enough cologne to conquer the lavender aura of the golden girls on either side of us. Given the closeness of the seats I was all but in his lap, my knees nestled firmly on either side of his (thankfully) clean-shaven nape. At one point I think I lost my breath, and I spent much of the performance fanning myself with my program. Clearly I was not alone. The lady beside cologne-man leaned precariously to her right for most of the night. I think I inspired her, because soon she too started fanning with her program as well. After intermission she did not return to her seat.

It might have been funny if I hadn't been on the receiving end of a monster migraine. I also missed much of the performance as I was shifted in my seat, gasping for clean air. This was my

first opera, and the performance was excellent. I would highly recommend taking in a performance if you ever get the chance – the sets, the production, and the singers were all top-notch.

I'm not the only one bothered by strong perfume. Many people have mentioned it, and it is a known headache trigger. Calgary Opera is aware of the problem – their [website](#) section on opera etiquette mentions avoiding "strong perfume or cologne" because "many people are highly sensitive ... and others are allergic." In California there are now restaurants that are 'scent-free zones.' In these establishments any level of scent is disallowed, even the subtle ones from scented soap and hairspray.

I'm not as sensitive as the people who use these restaurants must be, but I feel for them. There has been a sharp increase in environmental illness recently, and sensitivity to scents is one symptom. Smell is a chemical sense, which means that to experience a scent, your nasal membranes have to absorb molecules of it. Perfume is not a passive accoutrement, like jewellery, it is truly interactive and invasive. Scents are also extremely personal. What smells scrumptious to one person is sickening to another. Giorgio, one of the world's most prestigious perfumes, makes my teeth ache.

I have a few words of advice for perfume wearers. The type of scent is an important factor. Natural scents, from fruits and herbs, tend to be less irritating than florals. Perfumes are often blends of a hundred or more individual ingredients, some of them synthetic. Try wearing essential oils, like the ones you can get at the [Body Shop](#). I like the vanilla and the sandalwood. Musk can be less irritating, but for animal welfare reasons, I don't recommend it.

Easy does it when you apply. Go for subtle – real subtle. Perfume is supposed to be sexy, right? So what's sexy about someone's eyes watering when they get close you? Men, please wash your hands after splashing on aftershave of it will linger on everything you touch. This can be a huge turn off, especially if touch your date's food or drink. A strong scent might make her think twice about getting close, but a light one that is only detectable from close quarters can be very intimate and enticing. Smell may be our most powerful sense: it has been shown to evoke stronger childhood memories than any other. Subtle scents are very effective. Remember, pheromones are undetectable but very effective. Very strong perfumes were in vogue when cities didn't have sewer systems and bathing was considered optional. Most of us don't stink that bad anymore. What are you trying to cover?

Ladies, most men hate strong perfume. Have you seen how people react when someone wearing a lot leaves a room? Do you want to be that person? Your scent might linger longer than you are aware, especially in small rooms. Bank vestibules that contain instant tellers almost always reek of perfume. Department stores are the worst, though. I swear one of these days I'm going to plow one of those babes with the sample spritzers who spray first and ask later. The stores are becoming aware of the problem, however. I even saw a TV report giving guidelines for how sensitive customers could shop when there is less scent by coming first thing in the morning, before people start spritzing the testers.

There is nothing wrong with scent, per se. In fact, I love aroma's – especially great smelling food. Moderation is the key, and natural is always better. The [Migraine Society](#) has recently found that certain natural scents (peppermint tea works for me) may even ease migraines symptoms, while others promote relaxation.

## FED WATCH!



By Karl Low

### The Lessons We Don't Learn

International Trade Minister Pierre Pettigrew is [announcing](#) a series of seminars that will "help Canadians sell more effectively to the United States Government". This announcement coming only several days after the United States Government imposed a set of taxes on softwood lumber that has already forced British Columbia companies to close up shop and put hundreds of people in BC out of work.

Rather than working on how to sell more to the United States, Canadians should be concerned with becoming a more self-sufficient country. According to Minister Pettigrew's office, Canada is more dependant on international trade for our GDP than any other country. With the softwood lumber industry suddenly seeing the pain that can come from this type of dependence, maybe it's time we stopped trying to make everything for the U.S. and instead start supporting ourselves.

Key examples of this can be seen in the way that our farmers sell grain down to the United States where it is processed and turned into pasta, and then sold back to us for an enormous mark-up. This kind of dependency serves very few Canadians.

In the mean time, Industry Minister Brian Tobin is concentrating on such things as the [Lobbyists Registration System](#) and on [appointing](#) members to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. Both worthy things, but have little to do with encouraging Canadian industry. Perhaps if he instead looked at a marketing program to encourage people to buy Canadian goods and products then Canadians wouldn't suffer so much when U.S. lobby groups talk to their Congress.

### Alberta Government Worries about Low Unemployment Rates

A new report called "Prepared for Growth: Building Alberta's Labour Supply" has been [released](#) detailing strategies for attempting to cope with an unemployment rate that has fallen under 4%. I guess the days when politicians promised a job for everybody that wants one have fallen by the wayside. After all, if the labour market gets too tight, corporations might have to stop getting rid of their benefit programs in order to attract employees. Heck, the wealth of a company might have to go more to the workers who create the product or service rather than to executive CEO perks and stock options.

Of course, typical of the Alberta Government, the way that we look to increase the labour force misses some of the most basic problems. In the [report itself](#) (pdf file) the area with the lowest unemployment (0.3%) is Registered Nurses and Nurse Supervisors. Also on the list of lowest unemployment are Teachers and Professors. Now which two areas is the Alberta Government

most notable for cutting funding in? On the other side of the coin, Alberta's Economic Development Ministry is getting more funding to increase foreign investment in Alberta.

So it seems we have the Government not increasing incentives to work in public service professions, attempting to encourage further investment from foreign countries in for private/profit areas, and then worrying that they won't have enough workers to do essential public work such as teaching our kids and caring for our sick.

Someone should tell the left hand what the right hand is doing.

## **Sears and the Spirit of Christmas?**

The Ontario Government is looking at a bill that will give eligible families a tax free cheque for \$100 for each child under seven years old. The government is hoping it will be able to send the money out by early December. A nice Christmas present that they expect will cost about thirty seven million dollars. Sears Canada Inc. has chosen to [chip in](#) another ten dollars as well. The catch? The families will have to exchange their \$100 cheque for \$110 dollars of Sears Gift Certificates, which can only be spent at Sears. In return, Sears gets an amazing marketing opportunity, including having the Ontario Government promote them. Not a bad investment on Sears' part.



## **PORTABLE COMPUTERS**

**by Wayne Benedict**

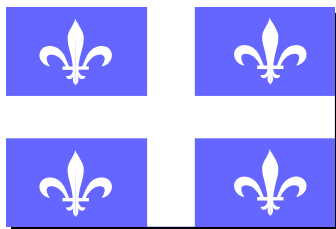
I work as a Locomotive Engineer; therefore, I spend a large proportion of my life away from my home and family. I have spent innumerable hours transposing work that I had composed with pen and paper into my desktop computer upon my return home. Each time that I was taken up in the tedious task, I would lament my lack of a portable computer. But I could never bring myself to spend the money on a second computer system.

The economic aftermath of September 11, 2001, coupled with unreasonable and inequitable American trade sanctions, have delivered a mortal blow to British Columbia's economy. My employer has been hit extremely hard and I have recently found that my seniority is not what it was several months ago. Ergo, I now find myself away from home much more than before. A couple of weeks ago I came to the conclusion that if I was to continue as an effective union officer, university student, and writer, I would have to break down and buy myself a portable computer.

After several days of research, I found the system that I felt was the correct balance between functionality and economy to suit my purposes. I settled on a Toshiba Satellite 1800 and I'm writing this article utilizing it right now. I was surprised at the extensive features that this unit comes with for the price (\$1799.00 plus tax at Future Shop). It sports an Intel Celeron 1 GHz central processing unit, a 13.3" TFT-Active Matrix screen, 128 MB 144 pin RAM (presently doubled to 256 MB for free through a purchase incentive at Future Shop), built-in 20 GB HDD/1.44 MB floppy/8X DVD-24XCD ROM drives, 16MB Video, Full Duplex 16bit Stereo Sound, 56K V.90 Data/Fax Modem, 10/100 Ethernet LAN NIC, and Touchpad. Interfaces include: Serial; Parallel; Infrared; 2 USB; TVOut; either two Type II or one Type III PC Card slots; PS2 mouse/keyboard port. Windows XP Home Edition comes preinstalled on this 7 pound machine, which is protected by a 1 year international warrantee.

I brought the unit home in the afternoon and by evening I had networked it with my desktop system and had everything running smoothly. I am extremely happy with my purchase and have found that it has made my workload much more manageable by eliminating duplication. It is now a simple process to transfer work that I do while away onto my desktop computer through the network LAN (or over the Internet with new features that come with Windows XP). I must admit that it makes work a whole lot more fun as well.

You can compare this with other portable computers at the Future Shop web site <http://www.futureshop.com>. Another site where I have found reasonably priced computer components is <http://www.ncix.com>, an online supplier based in Vancouver, B.C.



## **FROM MY PERSPECTIVE: MONTREAL & THE CAUT CONFERENCE ON ONLINE LEARNING - PART A**

**by Debbie Jabbour**

Over the last few weeks I've written articles that have tackled issues that were uncomfortable, articles I did not particularly enjoy writing, articles that perhaps many did not enjoy reading. However, in the interests of keeping Council more open and accountable, I felt it necessary to speak up. Parts of being on Council have been difficult and stressful. Other parts have been extremely educational, challenging and enjoyable. This past week I was fortunate enough to have one of those educational and enjoyable experiences.

Some weeks ago we made a detailed proposal to Council regarding the CAUT Conference on Online Education, and it was decided it would be a valuable initiative to send representatives. The VP External, Shirley Barg, and myself, were able to adjust our work schedules in order to attend; and with notebook and laptop in hand, we headed for the airport at 4 AM Thursday morning. I was quite excited about the opportunity to visit Montreal for the first time, although I knew from previous experience that conference schedules usually left little room for sight seeing.

By the time we reached our hotel in Montreal it was after 5 PM the same day, and the first session was early the following morning. Although tired from traveling, a walk through the streets of Montreal could not wait, and it was a perfect evening for it. Shirley met up with a friend, and while they were visiting, I headed up to Sherbrooke.

I walked past McGill University, and although it was dark, the striking old brick facade and the unique structure of the buildings impressed me. The street was filled with people, mostly young university students, and I stopped briefly at a bookstore nearby. The shelves were lined with course textbooks and university-type readings, and I felt a pang of guilt at not being back in the hotel room studying. As I looped back towards the hotel I heard the sound of jazz music and was drawn to a building on the corner, lit up with rows of xmas-style hanging lights. The music filled the street seductively and I walked around the building to find the entrance. My first night in Montreal and I had found a jazz club!

By this time, however, the long traveling hours were catching up, and I knew I needed to be wide-awake for the conference, so I did not linger long.

From the West, Quebec has always been perceived as a bit 'different' from the rest of Canada. I had heard the stories about how unfriendly Quebecois could be to tourists who did not speak French. We had practiced all the essential French phrases prior to leaving, "ou est la sal de bain" (where is the bathroom), and "donne moi un tasse du biere, si'l vous plais" (please give me a beer) - not necessarily in that order! I was unsure what to expect, but my fears were immediately allayed. Without exception everyone was extremely friendly and helpful, and without exception, everyone we came into contact with was either bilingual or multilingual. The waiters especially were all very funny, very friendly, and seemed to love their jobs!

The next morning we found an excellent Arabic restaurant nearby where we enjoyed an unusual breakfast - the best donair I've ever tasted! As we walked back to the hotel with our coffees, I insisted to Shirley that while in Montreal we had to try out something we could not do here in Alberta. I had always heard that you can easily identify the tourists in Montreal because they stand at the corner and wait for the walk light, while native Montrealers cross whenever they please. She was a bit hesitant at first, but after we crossed against the light a few times became as confident as me at 'not acting like a tourist'. However, on the last street corner before our hotel, we discovered that acting like a tourist was perhaps the more prudent course. The light was yellow, and we Albertans assumed we had plenty of time before it turned red. However, Montreal yellows are not Alberta yellows! Shirley and I were halfway across when the light turned green for opposite traffic, and cars surged forward. Being much more agile than myself, Shirley managed to sprint across the road, narrowly escaping being run over by the oncoming traffic. I jumped back to the curb, spilling my coffee all over myself. We had a good laugh over it, but were much more careful about our jaywalking after that, especially when we noticed that Montreal drivers were as bad as the pedestrians when it came to observing stop lights!

Montreal is a city made for walking, and each evening after the conference we took advantage of this. Shirley has a real knack for striking up conversations with strangers, and everywhere we went we talked to people, impressed by their friendliness - from people sitting next to us in restaurants to artisans in the Old Montreal market.

Something I found quite striking about Montreal was the contrasting imagery. The architecture and buildings were studies in opposites; ancient brick churches side by side with dramatic

modern office buildings. Late one night we walked back to our hotel after a dinner at an Italian restaurant on St. Denis, along St. Catherine (a street that is filled with people night and day). We walked past strip clubs with brilliant neon signs advertising every 'sin of the flesh', side by side with exclusive designer clothing shops and souvenir stores. On virtually every street corner there is a church. We were bemused by one brilliantly lit open shop entrance across from a strip club. The sign above proclaimed "United Church", but it looked like the entrance to some after-hours club. When we rounded the corner, however, we were confronted with a huge old brick church surrounded by an iron fence. The street outlet was just a side entrance - perhaps intended to entice the guilty participants in the pleasures of the flesh across the street to indulge in a little late night repentance!

Old Montreal was...old! The cobblestone, narrow streets; the tiny alleyways, the brick buildings, horse drawn carts; all gave a sense of going back in time to some pre-Revolutionary European city, and made me feel like I was a player in Les Miserable. We shared a chuckle about the "commercialization of the church" when we passed the cathedral of Notre Dame and observed the huge banner advertising, "laser shows" across the front!

On our last night in Montreal, Shirley's friend took us out to dinner at an out of the way Greek restaurant in a residential area - casual atmosphere and great food. She is a lovely young woman, originally from Turkey, and with true European hospitality insisted on treating us. Afterwards she drove us up to Mount Royal and we had a look at the city at night from high above. It was absolutely stunning! The eerie whiteness of the Olympic stadium in the distance, the church spires dotting the city, the multi-faceted brilliantly-lit office towers downtown, the wide blackness of the St. Lawrence beyond - I found myself wishing I could spend some serious time and get to know this unique part of Canada. It really brought home to both of us that Quebec is truly a valued part of Canada, and that we should be proud to be part of a country that can embrace such amazing contrasts and still remain one united nation!

Next week: the CAUT conference embraces Luddism



## **The Hypocrisy of the Harris Government**

**by Orville Lloyd Douglas**

Here is a pop quiz: Where in Canada can transgendered people have reassignment surgery? The answer, surprisingly, isn't Ontario. In fact, any province west of Ontario, and Newfoundland, are the only places in our so-called "democracy" where reassignment surgery is possible. There is also the systematic discrimination that Ontario's transgendered people face in terms of housing, education, and employment. Ever since 1998, the only way a transgendered person in Ontario can have the surgery is if the individual can afford it.

The argument of the progressive conservative Harris government, as presented by Mike Harris, stated that the general public supported them over this controversial issue due to the cost of the services. The public feels that it isn't important enough to be on OHIP.

According to Maxine Peterson a psychological associate and facilitator of the Clarke institute's gender identity clinic, "only six to eight people have been approved for surgery per year. Generally, the patient would have to fly to England to have the operation. The cost per person is 9000 pounds, which is equivalent to \$22,000 Canadian dollars. And with 6 to 8 surgeries a year that's about \$200,000." When asked her opinion regarding how society considers people having sex reassignment surgery as immoral, Ms. Peterson states "the general public values normality." The Ontario provincial government's argument was it "didn't want to fund surgery that is considered a lifestyle choice." Ms. Peterson continues that it is a false argument since "the government pays for treatment for cigarette smoking, and for people that have drinking problems."

An alternative option, however, is in the Far East. Ms. Peterson says "there are two surgeons available in Thailand, and the surgery costs \$6,000. The hospitals are modern and professional but OHIP doesn't pay for the surgery at a private clinic." Some transgendered people have to overcome huge personal difficulties in order to attain a sense of self worth, and have resorted to dealing with the dilemma themselves -even though it is risky. "I know that some people are going to the black market and buying hormones such as estrogens and testosterone that they can't get thorough the Clarke Institute. It is risky since people may take an unreasonable amount of the hormones." When asked what kind of person would do this? Ms. Peterson answers " the kind of transsexual that believes they know what is best for themselves."

There is resentment in the transgendered community against Ms. Peterson, since she is a person that has some clout at the Clarke Institute, and is not seen as doing enough to help those in need. When asked if she should be doing more, Ms. Peterson responds that " I have made my perspective vocal that the government should reconsider. I have also talked to the media as well." But is that enough?

After all Peterson had her surgery in the early 1990s in Montreal when OHIP still covered it. Now that her life is stable, could it be a question that it is irrelevant to her? "There is no conflict of interest, and there is no discipline guidelines if I had chosen to protest," argues Peterson. " The government is responsible for eliminating the surgery from OHIP in 1998. Due to the health restructuring commission that the government appointed the Clarke institute was amalgamated with two other hospitals. Therefore, there is less money to assist our patients. It was the government's idea to save money."

In addition there is a social phobia of transgendered people that makes the situation for the reinstatement of the surgery into OHIP difficult.

"The American psychiatric association argues that only 1 out of every 31,000 people are transsexual. Trans-sexual people face discrimination and we don't have a lot of political power. Also, many in society don't understand gender dysphoria. Gender dysphoria is a gender discontentment and unhappiness. It is not a gender depression that they were born with biologically - it is the opposite of euphoria."

The question remains: it is now the year 2001 and still the discrimination continues. What can be done? I contacted Keith Norton the Chief commissioner at the Ontario Human Rights Commission. Although he did not have time to be interviewed he did send me a letter stating his perspective. In the letter Mr. Norton states, " I have written twice to the Minister of Health requesting that the Ministry consider reinstating funding for sex reassignment surgery."

He continues "In 1998 we (Human Rights Commission) began research and held consultations and meetings with members of the transgendered community, selected officials and health professionals. This work led to the development of a discussion paper entitled "Towards a Commission Policy on Gender Identity" that was released in October 1999. The Commission has also developed a policy on Discrimination and Harassment because of Gender Identity. This policy, released last June, states that the human rights complaints of discrimination and harassment based on gender identity will be accepted under the grounds of sex."

So folks, there you have the answer: there is still a lot of rhetoric and no action. Given the fact that sex reassignment surgery now costs thousands of dollars due to the loss of OHIP, only people that can afford the surgery will prosper.

## ***Here's your chance to get involved!*** **AUSU Student Council Elections 2002'**

Dear AU Student:

Hey! Have you ever wondered how you can get involved with your Students' Union? Here's your chance! It's Election time again and AUSU (Athabasca University Students' Union) is anxious to meet the new Council. So, what are you waiting for? Get to your post-office today and send in your nomination for new Council!

As in the By-Laws, Article 11\_Elections, Section 2 under Nominations: it states "Any Active Member in good standing may submit to the Council a self-nomination together with the individuals written consent to act, if elected".

"Member in Good Standing" means an individual who is a member of the Association in any of the categories of Membership prescribed in the By-Laws, has paid all fees and has not been subject to disciplinary action from the University or the Association.

Deadline for self-nominations/nominations is December 22/01. Students must submit their nominations and the individual's written consent to act, if elected. Their nomination must also include student's name, I.D. number, address and/or e-mail address.

All self-nominations/nominations will be acknowledged after the closing date.

Nominees will be given an opportunity to withdraw their name from the slate of nominees, provided that withdrawal is received by the end of January.

Any student submitting nominations must be a registered student of AU at time of nomination and as well as the close of the Election. A Council member must be a Student throughout his/her term on Council. Students, as defined by the Athabasca University handbook, or those who are currently enrolled in an AU course, or who have completed a course within the past six months.

Thanks,

AUSU (Athabasca University Students' Union)

**As The Voice would like to encourage the active involvement and participation of all students of AU regarding student government, please feel free to submit campaign material to the Voice to be shared with your AU peers. (Campaign articles will not be subject for payment).**

## **Campaign Platform for JASON MORRIS**

My name is Jason Morris. I am running for Council in the upcoming 2002 AUSU elections. I'd like to start by thanking the editor of the Voice for giving candidates in the upcoming election this important opportunity to talk to AUSU's members directly. I know that all of you need and want to make informed decisions, so I've taken some time to prepare this document. It gives some background information on me, and outlines the specific things that I will endeavour to do as an elected councillor.

### **Who Am I?**

I started my BSc Computing and Information Services degree program in January of 2001. My beautiful wife Maja is a BSc Nursing student at the University of Alberta in her final year. I have lived in and around Edmonton since birth. I was a BSc Engineering student at the University of Alberta for a short while in 1995. My previous experience with "bricks-and-mortar" post-secondary institutions has reinforced my belief in the quality of the service that Athabasca University and institutions like it provide.

I was a students' union council member for all three years of high school. In the first year I was a delegate to the Alberta Student Leadership Conference, in the second an organizing committee member and master of ceremonies for that same conference, and in the third year a delegate to the National Student Leadership Conference. I also redrafted the constitution of that union. At the University of Alberta, I was an active member of the first-year engineering students' association.

After leaving the University of Alberta, I was trained as a network administrator, and worked for a number of Edmonton computing firms before accepting a job as Informatics Technician with the Government of Canada, working in a minimum-security jail in Hobbema, Alberta. A year later I took a job working at the Cross Cancer Institute as a Support Analyst, and later accepted a different job in the Alberta Cancer Board as Systems Analyst.

Immediately after starting my first course at AU in January of 2001, I decided to continue my involvement with student organizations. In March of 2001, shortly after volunteering with AUSU, I was appointed to Students' Council. I have chaired committees of the Council ever since.

## **What will I do?**

I have four major goals for my two-year term in Council. First, I will drastically improve [www.ausu.org](http://www.ausu.org), turning our web site in the international standard for distance education students' unions. Second, I will save you money by eliminating the waste from the handbook/planner. Thirdly, I will get AU and distance education students on the political radar in this province, in the country, and in the world. Lastly, I will get the AUSU administration on its feet, and ensure that you can see what we're doing, and tell us when we're not meeting your expectations.

## **Improve AUSU.ORG**

**I was instrumental in the improvements to [www.ausu.org](http://www.ausu.org) in the last year. As councillor, I will continue to improve our website, providing advanced services in collaboration with Athabasca University CIS, including making ours the first totally interactive online student union newspaper.**

Collaborating with AU's CIS department, I will work to implement seamless services that connect you to students with similar interests, enable you to keep track of your classes, your marks, and your friends through the web, and keep you up to date on the services that AU and AUSU provide.

I will also work toward reducing the duplication of web design and hosting services by moving the Voice, our student newspaper, to the front page of [www.ausu.org](http://www.ausu.org), allowing you to interactively write new articles for the paper, and comment on the articles that your fellow students write.

## **Eliminate Handbook/Planner Waste**

Vice President of Student Services Norm Greenfield wasted over \$30,000 of your student fees this past term in the printing of the Student Handbook/Planner. As councillor, I will see to it that these books will be printed in a way that does not cost our members money, or not print them at all.

Due to a single complaint from a single student about a single quotation in the original printing, all of the quotations were removed in the reprinted version except for one on the very last page, which read, "The important thing is not to stop questioning. – Albert Einstein." Well, I'm questioning whether or not this book should even exist.

Even if mistakes hadn't been made, Council fully expected the printing of the book to lose money. Their efforts to recover some of the costs through advertising were ill founded, and poorly executed. Among the incredibly few that were printed were advertisements for industrial trucking services, and a company that sells transistors.

The Council should have known that these books would not be used. AU students don't have the sorts of strict schedules that other university students have. In addition, many of us are students

at other universities that already provide these books. We are now hard pressed to find a place to store these books that by the end of 2002 will be useless for anything but kindling.

I support providing online scheduling services over the [www.ausu.org](http://www.ausu.org) website. However, as not all of our members have constant Internet access, I can see how this handbook fills a need. Therefore, as councillor, I will see to it that if these books are printed, it will be in a way that does not penalize members that don't benefit from them.

## **Get AU onto Government Radar**

It is rumoured that at a meeting with the Alberta Learning Minister he was heard to utter, "...our three universities." I don't want to know which of the four Alberta universities (Alberta, Calgary, Athabasca, and Lethbridge) the Minister had forgotten. As councillor, I will ensure that the desires of Athabasca University students are on the political radar of all levels of government.

AUSU is anticipated to become, within the next few years, the largest students' body in Alberta. Nevertheless, the increase in distance education students has made little if any perceptible impact on learning policy in this province.

As councillor, I will ensure that AUSU plays the role it deserves in promoting the unique concerns of distance education institutions to all levels of government. I will also ensure that AUSU works with the Council of Alberta University Students to persuade the Government of Alberta to amend the Universities Act and the Athabasca University Regulation to ensure that all students' unions in Alberta receive equal, fair, and guaranteed representation in their respective universities.

## **Make AUSU Government Transparent/Consistent**

AUSU's bylaws were written nine years ago and, despite numerous efforts, have not been revised since 1996. Even the bylaws we do have are not being followed. As councillor, I will ensure that the operations of AUSU are open, transparent, and in accordance with our bylaws.

Our bylaws require that the Vice-President undertake a review of the bylaws annually. For five years now, this review has failed to result in any changes. The bylaws need to be rewritten from scratch, and as councillor, I will make sure that it happens, and that it happens in such a way as to ensure they will be effective for a very long time.

I will also ensure that the current bylaws, policies, and proceedings of AUSU will be documented and maintained on [www.ausu.org](http://www.ausu.org), and made easily available to all students. It is your right to know what your representatives are doing, and the rules under which they operate. AUSU Members have been kept in the dark for far too long.

## **Summing Up**

I take a great deal of pride in the opportunity to be so deeply involved with AUSU. I think it has the opportunity to provide valuable services to the students of AU, and to really enhance the learning experience. I also think that we, as a university, are on the forefront of what life-long learning will mean to our children and to our grandchildren, and that as such, we have an opportunity and a responsibility to make sure that we get it right. I say let's improve AUSU today, and improve education forever.

# Election Platform of Darren L. Kereluk

## Introduction

Before I go into what I propose to do if I was elected to Council, I want to offer you a bit of a warning. If you are seeking somebody that is pleasant, knowledgeable, levelheaded and likely to tell you everything that you want to hear 100% of the time, then I am most certainly not your type of candidate. I would respectfully encourage you to move on and consider one of the other fine candidates running in this election. I am not a professional politician, nor am I much of a “people person”. I make mistakes—plenty of them, as I am sure that one of my detractors will surely point out to you. One of the things that I can say that I am proud of is my almost compulsive need to work for both ideas and people that I believe in, such as distance education and my fellow students at AU. DON'T GET ME WRONG, I am far from being perfect or successful at this, much like my ACCT 253 final, my “average” in this is roughly 43%, but my heart, such as it is, is in the right place. If you've read this far, I would like to thank you and encourage you to keep on reading. If what I have written bores you, or makes you so frustrated that you can't read any more of it, I'd like to apologize for taking up your time. Frankly, I don't like to listen to politicians, amateur (like me) or otherwise, so I wouldn't blame you if you ran away screaming!

## Core Concept

“Let he who is without sin throw the first stone” goes a phrase in the Bible. I must admit that I've thrown quite a number of stones in the past, a couple of which should have been thrown, but many of which should not have even been taken off of the ground. I've learned that being in this perpetual state of attack is not only unhealthy for me, but also for those with whom I have to work with, and for those who I am trying to help. Nothing is ever accomplished by being in a permanent state of war, nor by being incessantly insulting to people. My “core concept” for operating my campaign for election is that I will not engage in mudslinging of any kind no matter how many times I am accused of having pulled a “hissy fit”, as one former colleague used to term it, called inept, bumbling, or even some names that I cannot write down here (use your imagination and pick one!) because of the wholesome family nature of *The Voice*.

## Me, and Why I am Running

My name is Darren Kereluk. I live in Kamsack, Saskatchewan, a community of some 2100 souls that is located approximately 300 kilometres north east of Regina, or 440 kilometres north west of Winnipeg. I've been an AU student since September 1998 taking a Bachelor of Administration in Health Administration. In terms of my experience in student government, I was on AUSU Council and Executive from March 2000-March 2001 as Vice President-Student Academics and Services. While I am happy with having raised the profile of the Students' Union within AU Central, I am going to be brutally honest by saying that I was totally clueless about political intrigue and people skills, both of which had an adverse affect on the performance of my duties at the time. I have been on the Student Academic Appeals Committee since January 2000. I enjoy this work quite a lot because I get to have a direct and positive effect on people's academic careers.

Why am I running? I'd be lying to you if I said that power and honoraria hadn't crossed my mind. Well, they have, but I am not so delusional or corrupt as to view your Union dues as my own personal bank account. After all, it is the Athabasca University Students' Union, not the Darren Kereluk Students' Union. My duty, if elected, would be to see that YOUR interests are

represented before the powers that be, not the other way around. I mean, if the Administration at AU wants to raise your tuition to the maximum allowable by law, I think that it is my responsibility, as well as that of my potential future colleagues, to try and see why such a measure is being considered, with a few to mitigating any ill effects of such an action. If doing such a thing means voting against a pet project of AU administration, or voting against a “proposed” budget, then so be it. My *raison d’être* in mentioning all of this is that my reason for running far exceeds any consideration of money and power.

### **Promises, Promises and More Promises**

One of the things that I’ve noticed about politicians in general is the fact that so very few of them operate with any great degree of consistency. People that are served by elected bodies need to know that if they are made certain promises by their representatives that these promises will be carried out in a manner that is consistent as possible. If there is some reason why a promised undertaking cannot be made, then the public (in AUSU’s case, the student membership) should be informed forthwith. My particular promise for this situation is to ensure that my fellow colleagues and I, as well as any other parties involved in a particular transaction, are all fully aware of the full legal, financial and moral implications of a promise before it is made at all. In other words, everybody has to be operating from the same playbook, with the understanding that if changes are to be made, that the people directly involved know what form a resolution of the problem will take. Additionally, the members of AUSU must be notified of major changes that are likely to affect them—after all, as AUSU students, we all have a right to know. If elected, I want this concept of contingent consistency to be codified in a Policy, so that everybody involved knows what his or her rights are, and so that AUSU members can be kept fully informed of these changes as they happen.

There are some ongoing problems with the Bylaws of the AUSU. While some interesting and constructive changes have been to the version that is currently floating about, no mention has been made about direct election of the Executive, nor why there needs to be three Vice Presidents. Executive members in the current Council, with the exception of the President are “Acting” positions created by Council versus being legislatively sanctioned ones according to the Bylaws of 1996. If the 1996 ones that are to be followed, both for current operations and the 2002 elections, then the only people who legitimately could claim to have any legitimate claim to their positions as Executives are the President, Vice President (currently Vice President Academic) and the Secretary-Treasurer (currently operating as the Vice President of Finance and Administration). I have not come across anybody else that is on the Executive is there under the authority of any of the Bylaws of 1996. Such people are entitled, though, to any honoraria for extra duties that are authorized by a resolution of Council. These good people are not to blame for these problems, because the Bylaws which they (and earlier, I) were left with were a disaster. Bylaw revisions are very hard to do owing to the complexity of issues and number of people that are affected. Because of the rather dispersed nature of AUSU’s membership, more people need to get involved in order to bring about a proper semblance of legality and clarity to the Bylaws. I propose the establishment of a special Bylaw Committee of AUSU whose mandate shall be to solicit public input into Bylaw revisions, and then report to Council with their recommendations. Ideally, Council will have approved the revisions and any modifications to them by the beginning of June, with an Annual General Meeting of the membership to be held in mid July. The AUSU’s legal counsel would then do a final review of the draft 2002 Bylaws and forward them to Alberta Registries for approval before the end of summer. The problem is that the longer AUSU, Council and Executive gets bogged down in procedures, definitions and clarifications, the less time that they all have to get out and meet with as many of you as possible to find out

what your concerns are. It's very well and good to rely on the *Voice* and the AUSU website to provide day-to-day information and elicit your comments on it, but students occasionally need to see their representatives out amongst them in order to feel the pulse of student thoughts.

With regard to putting AU and AUSU in the hearts and mind of people within Premier Klein's cabinet, this is something that has to be undertaken with the greatest dispatch, keeping in mind that this is not the sum total of the equation. The Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS) is a nice touch in terms of basic representation of AU students to Alberta Learning, but should your funds be used to equally fund projects for which you do not receive equal benefit? This is something that I want the next Council to consider. Based on recent figures, less than half (47%) of AU's undergraduate students currently live in Alberta, so the focus of the new AUSU Council needs to be increasing pressure on the governments in which the other 53% of the student population lives in order to ensure that AU's funding base is much more broader than the Government of Alberta and student fees. The pressure is on student fees right now, as I am sure that you all will agree. If elected, I would like to see an external affairs committee established with representatives of the student body selected to lobby their governments on a day-to-day basis to help fund "their" students at AU. My "selling point" for AU would be is that it is much more cost efficient to "buy" the AU model than to build additional facilities and pay the associated overhead costs for them. If other provinces begin to fund their students in a more direct manner, this would free some of the pressure on the already strained budgets of AU students. I would also like to see that all governments, including the one in Ottawa, modify their student aid programmes to reflect the 6-month contracts that are in place at AU in order to give our students a better chance to finish their coursework properly, without worrying about meeting a 4-month deadline. Keep in mind that AU students are rather unique in that they are often juggling careers, families and school responsibilities at the same time. When I explain the idea of computer multitasking to people, I always point to the average AU student as a "real life" example of this concept. This is a topic that I approached the University on in the past, and it is something that I would want to do the same in the future if I was elected.

The last plank of my "basic election platform" is for AUSU to reach beyond Alberta's borders to the rest of Canada to show our fellow students that their students' union cares about them and wants to hear what they have to say. It is only logical to make some attempt at reaching out to out of province students, since they compose more than half of the student body. While I am not suggesting in the least that AUSU cease sponsoring social events in Edmonton and Calgary, it must begin to hold these types of events in places where there is a sizable AU student population. This does not mean, of course, that I am suggesting that Council hop on the plane and visit every last community in Canada. It does mean that when Council is holding a retreat, it should consider planning it for a place where there is a significant number of AU students, such as in Vancouver or Toronto. For example, it means that if I was elected, that I would need to get more involved in promoting AUSU within Saskatchewan. I travel a lot through the province as it is, so making time to meet with my fellow Saskatchewan AU students to discuss their University experience and their students' union at no cost to the AUSU treasury for travelling, since I would have been making the trip regardless.

## **Conclusion**

My dear friends (now I am really starting to sound like a politician!), I've done like many other politicians that have come before me, and probably after me, and wrote a lot but told you nothing. I am very imperfect. Like other politicians, I have glossed over most of the major issues that need to be discussed in the name of brevity. I am very imperfect. I will have my full

platform available to discuss with you by the time that this article is published. If you have any questions for me, or wish to find out more what I am about, I welcome your emails at [dlk\\_2002\\_ausu@yahoo.ca](mailto:dlk_2002_ausu@yahoo.ca) I am very imperfect. If you aren't too wild for me as one of your representatives on AUSU Council, but would like to talk with me about my close personal friends Bipolar Disorder II (ultradian rapid cycling type) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (primarily inattentive type) please feel free to drop me a line about these subjects as well. By the way, keep in mind that I am very imperfect.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM AUSU:**

### **AUSU Job Posting**

# **Chief Returning Officer**

**The Athabasca University Students' Union represents AU students and their interests. The Union strives for a fair and accessible election process for members to the Students' Council. To this end, AUSU is seeking a student to fulfil the role of Chief Returning Officer for the year 2002 AUSU General Election.**

#### **Position Duties and Responsibilities**

The CRO's responsibilities, as outlined in AUSU policy, include arranging for a secure post office box, receiving, collecting and maintaining ballots in a secure location, overseeing counting of ballots with two (2) Scrutineers March 16, 2002, notifying candidates of results and conducting the appeal process as required.

The CRO reports to the General Manager of AUSU and AUSU Students' Council.

#### **Selection Criteria**

- Applicants must be currently registered as an AU student.
- Applicants must be bondable.
- Applicants must have strong organizational and logistical abilities.
- Applicants must be able to analyze and apply policy to ensure a fair election process.
- Candidates in the 2002 AUSU General Election are ineligible for this competition.
- Candidates must be able to operate out of the AUSU head office, located in Edmonton, AB.

**Remuneration**                      \$500 stipend

**Application Deadline**              Wednesday, Jan. 12, 2002

**Apply to** the AUSU office at #306 North Tower, Seventh St. Plaza, 10030-107 St., Edmonton, AB T5J-3E4 ph. (780) 497-3413 or toll free (800) 788-9041 ext. 3413 or e-mail [clynch@ausu.org](mailto:clynch@ausu.org)

For an application form or more information, please contact the Edmonton office of AUSU at (800) 788-9041.



## UNTITLED ART SOCIETY ANNOUNCEMENT

Up coming shows in the Main Gallery

**KOOL:** Holly Schmidt and Christine Klassen  
November 15 to November 30. Opening November 15th, 8pm

**IN THE BACK OF THE FRONT OF MY MIND:** Tim  
Rechner  
December 6 to December 21. Opening December 6, 8pm

**BIG ALBERTA SKY:** Pictures of Home: An Exhibition of Photography by Todd Korol,  
Bradford Uphill and Mike Drew. Curated by Wendi Jenkins.  
January 6 to 26, 2002. Opening: January 10, 2002, 8pm.

Untitled Art Society +15 Window Space in the Performing Arts Centre

**PIECES OF A PICTURE:** Ryan Hamilton and Tanya Mastrobuono  
December 1 to January 26. Opening December 13.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Untitled Art Society's Gallery will be open on Fridays from 1pm to 4pm and  
on Saturdays from 12 noon to 5pm. 4th floor (Box 16), 319 10 Avenue S.W.  
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

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### **Are you an Artist? AUSU supports the arts!**

AUSU is interested in purchasing original works of art from students for use in promotional purposes. These promotions may include: gifts from AUSU to graduates at convocation, tokens of appreciation for volunteers, special presentations, etc.

The works of art must:

- be created by an AU Student
- be within a value range \$0-\$500.
- be accessible or easily transportable to Alberta

If you are an artist of any kind who creates a product you feel we would be able to use for such a purpose, please contact [djabbour@ausu.org](mailto:djabbour@ausu.org). Supply a brief description of the art object, a picture if you have it, and its market value.

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### **WRITE FOR THE VOICE!**

Fill on our online application at [www.ausu.org/voice/write.html](http://www.ausu.org/voice/write.html) or contact Tammy Moore at [tmoore@ausu.org](mailto:tmoore@ausu.org).