

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 21 Issue 22 2013-06-14

Travelling Light

You can take it with you

City & Country

Off to rural India

E-texts

Students speak out

*Plus:
From Where I Sit
In Conversation
and much more!*



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Magazine***

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

For weekly email reminders as each issue is posted, fill out the subscription form [here](#).

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We love to hear from you! Send your questions and comments to voice@voicemagazine.org, and please indicate if we may publish your letter.



We've been receiving such great feedback from our discussion of Athabasca University's e-text initiative that we'll be publishing all related letters to the editor in our special e-text coverage. See [page 3](#) for details (and find out how you can make your voice heard)!

A BOOK IN THE HAND: AU'S E-TEXT INITIATIVE

Christina M. Frey



As the semester comes to a close, it's time to start planning your course schedule for 2013-2014. What prerequisites does your program require? How best to balance the course type and workload with work and family? How will you synch commitments with classes?

And increasingly students are also asking, *How quickly can I take my prerequisites before they make the switch to e-texts?*

Change is coming with Athabasca University's controversial e-text initiative, which will eventually replace all course materials with e-text versions. Courses will make the switch on a rolling basis, and AU has released a tentative list of classes that will soon be changing to exclusively e-text delivery.

Visit any gathering of AU students—whether in person or online—and the subject of e-texts will eventually come up. It's a painful subject, and an increasing number of students are unhappy about the switch and uneasy about the future.

While e-texts offer some flexibility, the problem is that AU, despite its commitments to accessibility and flexibility for students from all walks of life, will not be offering the option to choose hard copy texts—unless the student wishes to purchase them on her own dime. For some courses, custom e-texts, created from several sources, aren't even possible to obtain commercially; the only hard copy option is to print reams and reams of paper.

In last week's issue we highlighted some general student concerns with the decision to change course materials delivery to an e-text-only platform, and we invited students to sound off. These are a few of the letters we've received:

Student Letters to the Editor

Re: "A Book in the Hand: E-Text Initiative," by Christina M. Frey, v21 i21 (2013-06-07)

While I can understand that AU needs to trim costs in order to deal with funding cuts, they should not forget that their purpose is to serve their students.

Does the E-Text Initiative better serve their students? How?

Many students will be negatively affected by the switch to e-texts. Although those who have multiple devices on their desk and in their pockets might not be aware of this, not everyone has unlimited access to a computer. Of those who do have unfettered access, not everyone takes their computer (or mobile device) with them. A textbook is portable and available. An e-text is only available if you have a device with you. Myself, I have a laptop, which does not go with me everywhere that a course textbook does.

AU has always acknowledged that its student base is “mature.” Yes, we are. And many of us are getting to the stage in life where our eyes are significantly less tolerant. Reading a text on a screen is very uncomfortable for short periods, and impossible for long periods. I can read a (paper) book for hours; I cannot read e-text for very long. E-text will limit my capacity for AU courses dramatically, much as lower enrollment will limit AU's capacity to serve its students.

This student, and I suspect I'm not alone by a long shot, likes a paper text that I can highlight and make marginal notations in easily. I like a text that can go where I go: to the library, to the cottage, on a plane. I like a textbook that I can keep for future referral. I cannot support the E-Text Initiative. Students at the very least should have a choice -- there will certainly be some that prefer e-texts but they do not speak for the rest of us who do not.

Regards,
Barbara Lehtiniemi

Ontario

Re: “A Book in the Hand: E-Text Initiative,” by Christina M. Frey, v21 i21 (2013-06-07)

I've been a student at Athabasca for 2 years now, doing courses as work permits. I really enjoy the distance learning and the flexibility of courses.

While I do look forward to e-texts, I am a bit concerned about the loss of paper texts. I'm a medic in the Canadian forces and have on a few occasions been sent out to the field on exercises and operations while studying a course. When I would get a few hours down time I would read through my text and try to keep a steady pace going so I could finish my course on time. Most of the time when we're in the field we don't have access to electricity, let alone an Internet connection. This would make it very difficult to study from an e-text unless it was offline and available on a device which either used changeable batteries or could be charged with my pocket socket. I think the e-text is a great idea but it would also be nice to have the option to use a book at no extra cost. Even though they're heavy and make rucking harder, it's a lot better than spending hours cranking a pocket socket.

Thank you for your time.

Jared Pope

Take a look at what other students are saying, and then weigh in yourself. How do you feel about the move to e-texts? Do the benefits outweigh the drawbacks, or vice versa? How do you feel e-texts measure up in terms of cost, personal study habits, study features, accessibility, visual issues, etc.? Over the next few weeks we'll discuss these in further detail and speak with students about their concerns over how the e-text initiative will affect them. If you feel passionate about this topic—your future—make your voice heard! Email us at voice@voicemagazine.org and tell us about your biggest e-text concerns.

INDIAN WINTER, PART IV

Katie D'Souza



New development outside of Mumbai.

This four-part series chronicles the author's experiences visiting her husband's family in Mumbai, India this past winter. In this final instalment, she talks about some of the interesting occurrences during her last few days there. (To get the rest of the story, read [Part I](#), [Part II](#), and [Part III](#).)

Fogging

Just prior to our departure from Mumbai, I noticed a strange odour in the air and a fog creeping through the open window. It took a moment to realize that mosquito fogging was underway. The fogging helps control mosquito populations, reducing the

incidence of diseases like malaria and dengue fever. Dengue fever outbreaks are becoming increasingly prevalent in some parts of India, and the disease can be fatal; in fact, a popular Bollywood film director was a dengue fever victim just last year. The fogging method was a way to control the problem, but it is not the healthiest approach—it's done without prior warning to inhabitants, and no protective gear (not even a mask) is worn by the fogging operator. The drainholes continued to smoke long after the operator had moved on, and little children played with the smoke, poking sticks inside the holes.

Off to Belgaum

My husband's father's family comes from Belgaum, a 15-hour journey from Mumbai. We took a coach bus there, since it offers comfortable seats for a long journey (especially important for our small children). These coach buses are no different than those you see here in Canada. In fact, the only differences were the bus's name ("Vijay Anand," not "Greyhound"), the Hindi movie it played for the first two hours of the trip, and the pickup location: in front of many small shops on the side of a main road, under a bridge. It was actually hard to determine who was waiting for the bus and who was shopping, where the rats meandering about were headed, and who were the parents of the little boys tossing the tennis ball back and forth over us. The coach drivers desperately attempt to adhere to a rigorous pickup schedule, and although they slow down as they pass the pickup location, the bus won't stop if the driver's not flagged down by a would-be passenger.

"Although Mumbai is a popular tourist location, Belgaum is the opposite; the presence of a 'foreigner' is a very unusual event, and people were looking twice to make sure it was really true."

The bus trip is a night one, since daytime traffic would double the travel time. Unfortunately, while travelling outside of Mumbai through rural areas yields amazing scenery and animals, little of this can be

seen at night since there are no road lights. The trip involves travelling through mountainous areas alongside cargo trucks, and all night we could feel the bus pulling itself around and up the sides of these mountains, punctuated by the nonstop honking of the cargo trucks as they passed.

Punctually at six in the morning we exited the bus into a chilly Belgaum bus stop by the roadside. It's a bus stop that's shared by the local transit users as well, and there were many on their way to work. The unusual presence of a *salwar*-clad Canadian (myself) at the stop yielded distinct interest, and rickshaws packed with people slowed down to stare. The local transit bus also seemed to have trouble leaving the stop once the passengers were packed inside. Although Mumbai is a popular tourist location, Belgaum is the opposite; the presence of a "foreigner" is a very unusual event, and people were looking twice to make sure it was really true.

In many ways, it seemed a whole different world than Mumbai. Although almost everyone can speak English, it isn't widely used in Belgaum; Kannada is the official language of choice. It is distinct from Hindi, and even has its own script.

Belgaum is more rural than Mumbai. It's not uncommon to see cows or buffalo on the road and steers pulling carts through the popular Khade bazaar marketplace. In the marketplace, the pricing is, as you would expect, much lower than in Mumbai, though of course bargaining is still the way to go (except in high-end British stores). Outside the marketplace, monkeys are a common sight, and many people live in large bungalows, not flats.

Overall, it's a refreshing experience after the busyness and excitement of Mumbai, and the pace and attitudes of rural India contrasted with those of the big city present a multi-layered picture of India that so few North Americans really hear about.

This series has attempted to create an image of the real India, but there's no substitute for an in-person visit. India is truly a fascinating place, with customs and practices so different from our North American norms. If you're seeking a unique adventure, consider travelling to India. You'll never forget your experiences there!



A drive through rural India.

GREGOR'S BED

Wanda Waterman



Recent Discoveries from the Realm of the Experimental and the Avant Garde

Film: *You Ain't Seen Nothin' Yet* (*Vous n'avez encore rien vu*)

Director: Alain Resnais

Cast: Pierre Arditi, Sabine Azema and Lambert Wilson along with Mathieu Amalric, Anne Consigny and Michel Piccoli

Genre: Art House, Drama

*"Orpheus with his Lute made Trees,
And the Mountaine tops that freeze,
Bow themselves when he did sing...
In sweet Musicke is such Art,
Killing care, and griefe of heart,
Fall asleepe, or hearing dye."*

William Shakespeare

The Ancient Revisit an Ancient Myth and Get Lost in it Once More

Before dying, a director has left his butler with detailed instructions. He's to invite a group of older actors to view a video of a new performance of a play of his, a play they've all acted in at one time or another. The videotaped play is performed by his new young acting company, La Compagnie de la Colombe. The older actors are supposed to critique the play, but instead they start acting it out themselves.

Alain Resnais was 89 when he directed this film. One of the few living progenitors of the French New Wave, his meditation on the myth of Eurydice and Orpheus is astoundingly original and insightful.

The lovers in the film-within-the-film are desperately seeking their true selves—in art, in music, in pleasure, in ideas, in love—but they find themselves only to abandon themselves. Classic narcissists, they don't know who they are, and when they encounter their true selves they're ready to die.

In the original myth, Eurydice is stung by a viper. Serpents appear often in hero myths, usually symbolizing the danger the hero faces in thinking of himself as bigger than life—entitled to rise above morality and obligations—and a failure to trust fate.

The women who play Eurydice are fraught with anxiety, shame, and a desperate paranoia of anything from the outside that might threaten the love relationship. Their love for each other is so insular, so exclusive, and so defensive that it threatens its own fruition. It's this paranoia that leads to Eurydice's demise.

Resnais and co-writer Laurent Herbiet used material from two plays by Jean Anouilh—*Eurydice* and *Cher Antoine ou l'Amour rate* as the basis for this film. For the play seen on the screen, the one the actors are viewing, Resnais asked director Bruno Podalydès to direct it independently in order to maintain a distinction between his own direction and that of the film-within-the-film. This made the results harder to control, but ultimately all the more exciting.

In a universe where human beings are underlings of a destiny they can't control, illusion is a popular means of diversion. Illusion can be a good thing as long as it gives only a temporary respite from a truth we don't deny. Illusion can't, however, become our shield in the face of our own existential struggles.

The actors are too self-absorbed to really pay attention to the play before them, but in the end what they think of as "self" is only a mist that arrives and is quickly burned away. They reveal a very deep attachment to the play itself rather than to the performance, seeing the play as a means of finding their true selves. The play is their only shot at immortality. The onion's layers are peeled off to reveal simply more layers and in the end, nothing.

Wanda also penned the poems for the artist book They Tell My Tale to Children Now to Help Them to be Good, a collection of meditations on fairy tales, illustrated by artist Susan Malmstrom.

DID YOU KNOW?

Convocation



Here at *The Voice Magazine* we'd like to extend our heartiest congratulations to all new graduates! We wish you all the best as you take the next step in your educational or professional journey.

If you were unable to attend Convocation or your graduation is still far off and you want a preview of your own big day, Athabasca University's [Convocation page](#) is a good source of information about Convocation weekend.

Although videos from the 2013 ceremonies are not yet available, you can access [photo galleries](#) and [video coverage](#) from past years.

And watch for our *Voice* coverage of Convocation, coming later this month. We'll have photos, addresses from graduates, and more!

IN CONVERSATION

Wanda Waterman



Daniela Nardi

On the Crest of a New Mediterranean Wave

Daniela Nardi, scheduled to appear at the Montreal International Jazz Festival on July 5 and 6, is a Toronto-based singer-songwriter whose third album, Espresso Manifesto, is a vibrant, full-bodied jazz tribute to the songs of Paolo Conte. She's the first female singer to tackle these songs, and this groundbreaking album, recorded in Italy, involves some of the finest Italian jazz

musicians (including Fabrizio Bosso, Fausto Mesolella, Michele Rabbia, Gabriele Mirabassi, and Luciano Biondini. (Read the Voice review of her album [here](#).) Recently Daniela took the time to speak with Wanda Waterman about her music, her past, her future, and why Italian creativity periodically awakens and inspires the Western world.

The camera loves Daniela Nardi. She's just as beautiful in person, but in a different way; her photos present a glamorous, vivacious Venus, but in person she's more of a Minerva, a lovely, sage woman with an ageless tranquility, with the sad eyes and charming smile that we find so endearing in many Italians.

Early Obsession with Music

Daniela remembers a happy childhood in Toronto, as the daughter of Italian immigrant parents. She spoke Italian until the age of five, but after starting school it became less necessary ("My parents were both fluent in English," she says)—although she never really forgot her mother tongue.

Music wasn't a huge part of family life growing up. Her father was a businessman, but her mother had always dreamed of being a singer and was quite ready to foster her daughter's musical passion.

What started Daniela on her musical journey? Oddly enough, a chance occurrence: "My mother was driving me somewhere and the radio began to play a song by the Osmonds. I immediately said, 'I want to take piano lessons!'"

Her mother was a bit taken aback by this sudden announcement, but quickly got to work finding a piano teacher for her daughter. The first teacher wasn't exactly praiseworthy, but to Daniela's credit she maintained her love of music, ploughing on until she found an instrument—the bass guitar—that came naturally to her.

She chose to study music at York University because they offered a greater diversity of courses, including jazz and world music. She doesn't regret it; York turned out to be extremely beneficial in terms of education and connections.

The Italian Connection

It was only in the last few years that Nardi returned to her ethnic roots in an effort, as she puts it, “to reinvent myself creatively.”

Why did she choose to record the songs of Paolo Conte? The man is iconic for Italians, his lyrics rich in imagery, irony, and humour—and no woman has ever recorded them. She remarks on a reluctance, from some Italians, to listen to her versions of songs that have gained an almost sacred status within Italian culture. *Why should we listen to you when we can listen to him?*, they say. But it’s a different story when they hear her sing. Her renditions add a rich female dimension while retaining the virility of Conte’s songwriting style, and at the same time bring his songs to a younger and wider audience.

The New Italian Wave

Every so often Italy exerts a phenomenal influence on world culture, high and low. The exciting creative output of Fellini, Ponti, and a host of Italian immigrant fashion designers, singers, actors, and poets heavily influenced pop culture in the 1960s.

We’re due for another wave, and I don’t see it as a coincidence that Italian Ambassador to the US Claudio Bisogniero declared 2013 to be the year of Italian culture in America. The swelling number of engaging jazz recordings and new movies I’ve been seeing from Italy have borne this out. Daniela appears to be part and parcel of a new period of Italian influence.

She sees this happening herself. *Espresso Manifesto* was an idea whose time had come, and thus when the project commenced, everything magically fell into place: an idyllic rural sound studio in Umbria, ingenious engineers, a small host of brilliant Italian jazz musicians, and, best of all, the kind of resonant synergy that guarantees a smooth and fruitful creative process.

Coming Up: the Montreal International Jazz Festival and a New Album

“At the jazz festival I’ll be doing songs from *Espresso Manifesto* and also a couple of Ron’s [her husband, maestro Canadian jazz pianist Ron Davis] songs to give me break,” she says.

What’s next on the horizon for Nardi? Her fertile mind is currently incubating ideas for a new album of Italian songs she’ll mostly be writing herself. “I could just go back and do a bunch of traditional songs, but that’s been done so much.”

What will does it take to maintain such a high level of artistic output? “Space and time,” Daniela smiles. “I’m hoping to soon have more of both.”



ANTBOY IN: POLITICAL ASSASSINATION



GREETINGS, ANTBOY. I'M SCOURING THE NIGHT IN SEARCH OF A MISSION.

WHAT KIND OF MISSION?



POLITICAL ASSASSINATION. IT'S BACK IN STYLE, YOU KNOW! I WANT TO WIPE OUT A FEW BAD SEEDS FOR THE GREATER GOOD.

YEAH. HERE'S THE THING. THOSE BAD SEEDS USUALLY HAVE CHILDREN AND FRIENDS WHO DON'T THINK THEY'RE SO BAD.



SO WE SNUFF THEM OUT, TOO! IT WORKED FOR NIXON, DIDN'T IT?

NO, ACTUALLY.



WHO CARES? EVERYONE'S DOING IT NOW!



... YOU HAVE A LOOOOONG PIECE OF TOILET PAPER STUCK TO YOUR HEEL. WHEN YOU CAME IN YOU LOOKED LIKE A FLYING MAYPOLE.



WRITTEN BY WANDA WATERMAN



Preserve the Tradition

As I write this, we've just returned home from the annual *provody* ceremony at the Ukrainian Orthodox church a couple of miles from here. It is an important part of the Orthodox faith and something we've done since Roy's parents died in the early 1980s.

For six weeks after Ukrainian Easter (which can fall any time from early March to late April, depending on the lunar calendar), priests make their rounds to their various parishes to celebrate this special service for the dead.

If your church is getting the morning service, including Divine Liturgy, it can take several hours. Other churches get the abbreviated afternoon service because of how the scheduling works out. In either case there is a procession to and service at the cemetery. Traditionally prayers are said, holy water sprinkled onto the *pomana*, and names of the deceased read from the *pomennyk*. Today, for the first time in my memory, the blessing was done inside the church because of rain.

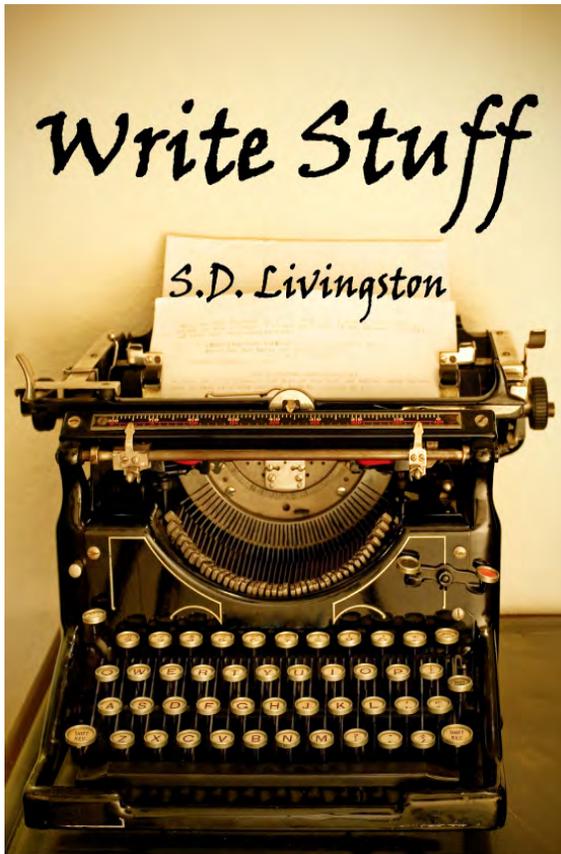
The *pomana* is the ceremonial presentation of food items, sometimes done with a candle in memory of the deceased person for whom and on whose behalf the recipient is asked or expected to pray. It may include a *kolach*, or round braided bread; pieces of fruit; and sweets. If I prepare a *pomana* for Hilary to receive, I make sure there are no allergens in the ingredients; if Grady is the recipient, a package or two of *Cars* candies and other treats are included.

Normally, before walking up and down each row in the cemetery and blessing each grave, headstone, and *pomana*, the priest reads dozens of names from the stack of *pomennyks* (a little book in which families list the names of their dead). The procession around the cemetery includes a man carrying a cross, another carrying a holy banner, and the choir singing. The priest pauses at each grave, says a few words of prayer for the deceased, and then blesses it with holy water. His assistant carries a pail of water and a *Kadylo*, or censer for the incense that is so much a part of the Orthodox faith.

These days a potluck meal often follows in the church hall or basement, or families head home or to a restaurant to eat. Back in the day, though, individual families set up complete meals right at the graves of their relatives. It involved tables and folding chairs, great food, and a gallon of wine. Getting a *pomana* was (and is) an honour and a treat.

Of course the danger today is the dwindling number of people attending church and keeping these customs and traditions alive. Will there be anyone there to visit our graves once we're gone? Will it matter to them or to us? I don't know, but for now we do what we can to preserve the tradition, from where I sit.

Hazel Anaka's first novel is *Lucky Dog*. Visit her [website](#) or follow her on Twitter @anakawrites.



Writing on the Go

School kids might be able to put away their pencils and head for the park, but that doesn't mean everyone gets the summer off from their keyboards. For most of us, the writing continues, whether we're tapping away on an essay, book, or that report for the boss. And while tablets are great for surfing the web, they can fall short when it comes to getting some real work done. Here are a few ways to turn your tablet into a workhorse and still travel light.

The problem with serious writing on a tablet isn't the screen size or the horsepower. It's the keyboard. Onscreen keyboards are great, but if you're ever tried typing anything more than a Tweet or text, you've soon realized the headache it would be to write an essay on one. So how do you add a keyboard without adding bulk?

The most obvious option is a case and keyboard in one, and there are plenty of choices, whether you've got an iPad, Microsoft Surface, or Android tablet. They're convenient—but that convenience comes at a price, and it can really drive up the overall cost of your kit. Even the off-brand ones start around \$50, and most name-brand case-keyboard combos are about \$80 and can run well over \$100.

A second option is to attach an external keyboard via Bluetooth. Most tablets are Bluetooth enabled, and a quick online search will give you plenty of options and video tutorials. For instance, this [Macworld tutorial](#) offers ideas that cost as little as \$30. And for the popular Google Nexus tablets, here's the official [help page](#).

If you're not a fan of wireless keyboards, there's also the option of using a wired keyboard. It's a surprisingly easy and inexpensive choice as long as your tablet has a USB port. (This isn't quite as simple on the iPad, but it is possible.) For other tablets, if you've already got a basic USB keyboard lying around, the only extra item you'll need is a USB on-the-go cable. It's a short cable that connects a standard USB item to a micro-USB port, and this [YouTube tutorial](#) is just one of many that will show you how to get things set up.

Those are all good alternatives that will make your writing tasks go more smoothly, but for truly lightweight writing on the go you just can't beat a solid onscreen keyboard app. There are plenty in the various app stores, and many of the most popular ones are either free or allow you to download a free trial. Believe it or not, these apps can make a huge difference in your typing speed, even though the screen size is the same.

If you don't believe it, here's a great one to try for Android tablets: [SwiftKey](#). I was amazed at its ease of use, even on my smart phone, and it supports up to three languages at one time. At a price of \$3.99, it sure beats the much higher cost of a case/keyboard combo.

Whichever option you choose, make sure you ask questions and check compatibility before investing too much time or money. But with so many choices available, it's easy to travel light and still get some serious writing done.

S.D. Livingston is the author of several books, including the new suspense novel Kings of Providence. Visit her [website](#) for information on her writing (and for more musings on the literary world!).

CLICK OF THE WRIST

All About Dad

It's Father's Day this weekend, and the grills are firing up—or the fishing tackle's been stashed in the back of the pickup. However you choose to celebrate the day—or not—enjoy this miscellany on dads good, bad, and in between.

Bad Dad

Not all dads are great at fatherhood, and some are spectacularly bad. These are a few small-screen bad dads we love to hate.

Dads and Ads

Traditionally, marketing execs for children's products and items for the home have geared their advertising toward women, portraying men as incompetent at cleaning and child care. No more; shifting domestic dynamics mean that more men than ever are managing home affairs and are proud of it. This *Toronto Star* article describes how the world of advertising is slowly getting on board with the reality of modern families.

Stuff Dad Says

Not *that* dad—of Tumblr fame—but a selection of celeb dads who have their own varied takes on fatherhood. Click through the slideshow for wit and wisdom from Prince William, Sean Penn, Elton John, and more.



AUSU UPDATE



Dear Members,

You may have recently seen information on the internet speculating about the future of Athabasca University. These reports suggest that the Alberta government may broker a merger between AU and University of Alberta, and that this may result in drastic changes to the services and programs offered to students AU students.

We want you to know that AUSU is aware of these rumours and is actively investigating the source – we will keep you informed as we know more.

We can tell you that AU is governed via a bicameral structure with two main governing bodies: the General Faculties Council (formerly Academic Council) and the Board of Governors (formerly Governing Council). AUSU has representatives on both of these governing bodies and we can confirm that there has been no formal discussion of a university merger among these groups. The AU president, Frits Pannekoek, has also assured the press that there is no truth to the rumour. On behalf of our members, we are seeking more information from the Board of Governors, the minister, and AU executives.

At this time we simply have no evidence that a merger is being seriously considered by AU, the U of A, or the Alberta government, and we note that among the many committees and working groups of AU, planning and development for the future continues as usual.

We know that our members are worried and want more information. We will update you as soon as we know more. At this time we do not feel there is any reason for students to worry or make changes to their study plans.

Do not hesitate to contact our office if you wish to talk about this or any other issue affecting AU students.

AUSU.

This column is provided by AUSU to facilitate communication with its members. *The Voice* does not write or edit this section; all content has been exclusively and directly provided by AUSU, and any questions or comments about the material should be directed to ausu@ausu.org.

CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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www.voicemagazine.org

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

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

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