

# THE VOICE

Vol 26 Issue 39 2018-10-12

**Savouring Autumn**  
The Sensual Delights

**After the Wildfires**  
Returning to the Scene

**In Conversation**  
with Calvin Arsenia

*Plus:*  
*FotW: Over the Mountain*  
*The Finest Art*  
*and much more!*



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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



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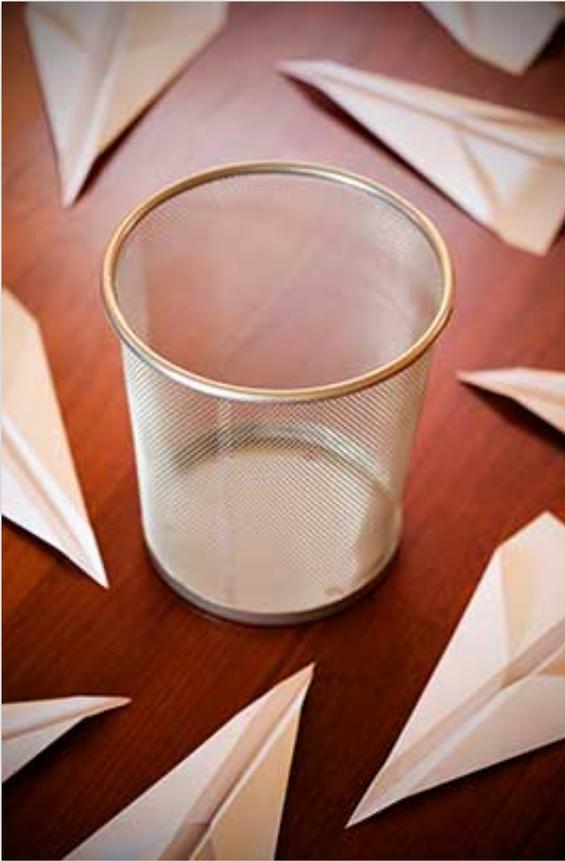
**Hey! Did you know the Voice Magazine has a [Facebook page](#)?**

No kidding! We also do the [twitter](#) thing once in a while if you're into that.

## Editorial

### Creeping up on Halloween

Karl Low



We're not quite half way through the month, but I know from past years that if I haven't started thinking about Halloween by now, odds are it'll be here before I get a chance to.

This year is an interesting one because it is also the 200th anniversary of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. While that might not seem terribly notable, it's interesting in relation to AU because AU has a whole symposium planned for Halloween which you can attend either live in Edmonton, or on Facebook Live during the morning/early afternoon on October 31.

Halloween is a time of sensations. Of course, there's the fun of the safe scare during Halloween itself, but also the change in the weather, the strange confines of the costume, the sweetness of the Halloween candy and the endless array of Pumpkin Spice menu items that pop up across the land.

In keeping with that, this week's Voice magazine is very much about sensation.

Our feature article, for instance, is a look at the sensations of Autumn. Specifically, activities and things you can do to maximize your own experience of it. I'll admit, this sounds a bit off the beaten path for our features, but with

so much winter settling in so early, I thought it'd be a good to have a bit of a reminder and some ideas on how we might snap ourselves out of the snowy blues and maybe our studies for a moment to recharge.

We also have another look at the wildfires in BC, as Deanna Roney goes to explore just what's left in the aftermath of the area near her. And while, unfortunately, she didn't send me any photos, her words paint a picture of devastation and yet hope that are definitely worth a read.

Beyond that, the Fly on the Wall takes us over the mountain to see what we can see, and from there explores the notion that what might look, at first glance, as a long string of just the same thing, it is in the differences that we can ignite our spirit, whether as the bear from the nursery song, or as students facing course after course to reach their graduation goals.

And then Darjeeling Jones with the Porkpie Hat looks at what might just be the finest art. Contemplating how music can lead one to find meaning, while Wanda Waterman gives us a great interview with alternative folk artist, Calvin Arsenia, to find what drives him to make music and more.

Plus, we of course have our usual selection of advice, scholarships, events, social media updates, and everything you need to keep you connected with what's going on with AU students!

Enjoy the read!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karl".

## Savouring Autumn's Sensual Delights

Tara Panrucker



The cooler month of October has arrived on our Canadian soil and perhaps with it an early winter blizzard. But snow and studies shouldn't prevent us from enjoying everything the autumn season has to offer. From unleashing your wildest Halloween costume ideas to enhancing your yoga session with a pumpkin scented candle, fall is the ideal time to relish all our blessed senses. Touch, taste, inhale, hear, and see all the pleasures this chapter presents.

### TOUCH

- Enjoy the satisfaction of carving a pumpkin and scraping out all its gooey guts. Squish the pumpkin flesh between your fingers. Be sure to separate the seeds for a tasty sensual pleasure for later.
- Grab some buddies for a friendly game of touch football. Get physical and competitive outside in the invigorating fall air and feel study stress dissipate.
- Dig the rake out of the garage and clean up the yard. Jump with abandon into a big pile of leaves and embrace your inner child.
- Gather up every warm, soft, plush throw you have and wrap yourself in comforting warmth on a chilly fall evening.
- Invite all your friends for a night out of dancing and fall drink specials at your favourite local pub. Play darts or pool and forget about school work for an evening.

### TASTE

- Clean and season all the pumpkin seeds to roast in the oven for a nutritious fall snack. Toss the seeds with soy sauce, lemon juice, chili powder, hot pepper sauce, cumin, and salt. Spread on a baking sheet and heat up the kitchen by roasting them at 250 degrees for about an hour, until dry. Crunch away!
- Be hands-on and go apple picking in a local orchard and bake an apple crisp like Mom used to make.
- Stock up on seasonal fall produce and roast up a big batch of colourful fall vegetables or bake a heart-warming squash soup—divine.
- Nothing says fall like a big hearty pot of chili. Try ground turkey or veggie chili and freeze some for busy school days.
- Prevent colds naturally by regularly imbibing in a hot drink with boiling water, lemon juice, honey, and ginger. Sip and savour in your favourite mug.

### SMELL

- Indulge in the heavenly scents of a fall candle like cedar wood or caramel apple in your study area. Be sure to place on a safe surface away from pets.
- Bake a spicy pumpkin pie from scratch. Be sure to share and impress your family.
- Try different spices in your choice hot drink, like cinnamon, cloves, cardamom, or nutmeg. Breathe in; breathe out.
- Indulge in a new Shea butter and prevent dry winter skin in the process. Let delicious flavours from coffee bean to French vanilla satisfy your senses.

- Invest in a diffuser to humidify your home and invigorate your senses with peppermint, bergamot, and orange essential oils. I attest this helps me stay focused.

## SOUND

- Leave your desk for a stroll among the trees on your next study break. Really listen for the sound of leaves wafting to the ground to touch down softly in a brilliant mosaic of colour.
- Go to your local library to study in blissful peace and quiet.
- Download new tunes you generally wouldn't listen to like Reggae or Jazz – you may be surprised at how relaxing an accompaniment to study these can be.
- If you are lucky enough to live near bodies of water, take advantage on your next hike or walk. Listen to the wisdom of moving water gurgling or crashing ashore before winter comes and freezes it solid. Go with the flow.

## SIGHT

- Take a country drive or city park tour and look at the amazing display of foliage. Remember to snap Instagram-worthy photos.
- Get completely lost inside a corn maze. I don't think this one would be much of a challenge for us more directionally-challenged folks.
- Collect fall leaves and design a beautiful centerpiece for your coffee table.
- Visit a dog park and watch the furry beasts go wild with freedom and exuberance. Smiles and laughter guaranteed.
- Binge on a horror-fest of your favourite scary thrillers. More entertaining if you coerce your easy-to-scare friend to join in on the shivers.

Autumn is a glorious season to witness; a season of nature showing us how to shine bright and then—let go. Remember to steal a serene fall nap or two as well. The hectic season of Christmas is coming, after all. But first, design your own Oktoberfest!

*Tara Panrucker lives on Vancouver Island and is seeking a General Arts Degree at AU.*



# Scholarship of the Week

## Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

**Scholarship name:** The UCT Scholarship Program

**Sponsored by:** United Commercial Travelers

**Deadline:** November 15, 2018

**Potential payout:** up to \$2500

**Eligibility restriction:** Applicants must be students or teachers pursuing university or college degrees or certification to work with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. See [full eligibility criteria](#).

**What's required:** A completed [application form](#), along with a brief résumé of work experience, mailed to UCT's Fraternal Department.

**Tips:** Read the [Program Guidelines](#) carefully. Leave plenty of time for snail mail.

**Where to get info:** [www.uct.org/uct-in-action/scholarship-programs/](http://www.uct.org/uct-in-action/scholarship-programs/)



## After the Wildfires



### Deanna Roney

From where we live, the edge of the burn, where the wildfires stopped, was about 50km by road. Over the weekend, we went for a short drive to see what they'd left behind. On our way out, we saw a few bears, and I was thrilled to see they had survived. It was a bit heartbreaking to see a black bear wandering through a dead forest, but it was still thriving and looking healthy.

A few years ago, there was a fire on the other side of town, up a popular mountain for hiking. We hiked through there the summer following the fire, and while the trees were burnt,

white, and unstable, the forest floor was filled with wildflowers—life. The Nadina wildfire didn't leave much of anything behind. The trees had been ravaged and killed by the pine beetle years before and were already unstable, so while the fire burnt the trees fell and in some areas there was quite literally nothing left. The ground was grey with ash and there wasn't a tree left standing, the occasional charred stump stood out, the entire area wasn't like this, in other spots it looked more like the mountain fire—dead, burnt, but standing.

This area is part of the Fraser watershed, and this year there was a larger than normal sockeye salmon run that came up the rivers. We were able to see the river from areas where it would have normally been completely hidden by trees. But now, there was a clear view to the bottom, to the river. Flying through the blackened trees, gorging on the dead fish, and perched on a charred stump, were dozens of eagles. I was surprised to see anything moving in the blacked forest, but it was nice to see, even at the heart of it, animals thriving. To see that the salmon survived long enough to spawn and feed the many animals that rely on them—and that the number that came through this year was so much higher than last year's run, a year when the other food sources that the animals rely on (berries, leaves, etc), especially the bears so they can prepare for hibernation, is all but lost.

As we drove along, both sides of the road were burnt as far as we could see. We know that it carried on much further than that, but over ridges what we saw was a fraction of the devastation. In the middle of burnt trees, there were patches of lush green. Where planted blocks survived. The trees were probably 10-20-years-old, but they were still so green that they didn't burn—and the fire fizzled out. The edges of these blocks were singed and red, but beyond that they were lush.

There was a lot of controversy about how these fires were handled this year. With so many large, hot, fires burning in this area it was difficult to contain. And, while we heard the number of hectares, heard how far it traveled overnight or when the wind picked up—while we could see the bank of smoke, or couldn't see the neighbours because the smoke was so thick, the extent of these fires is unimaginable until you see them. Until you drive through and see that in areas there is nothing left. But the forest will recover, the animals are already coming back.

*Deanna is an AU graduate who loves adventure in life and literature. Follow her path on the writing journey at <https://deannaroney.wordpress.com/>*



## In Conversation with Calvin Arsenia

Wanda Waterman



Alternative folk artist [Calvin Arsenia](#) is an intensely inventive creator and a truly original mind, mixing genres and instruments (including the Celtic harp) to create vibrant, engaging music. He recently released the single, “[Headlights](#),” from his project-in-process [Cantaloupe](#), a mix of music, art, and performance. In “Headlights” he describes his difficult ascent to the wisdom that happiness isn’t contingent on finding the right person to “complete” you. Recently Arsenia was kind enough to answer our questions about what brought him to where he is.

### What kind of childhood did you have?

My childhood was quite mild. I was the middle child of three boys who were 6 and 7 years apart from me on either side. I spent a lot of time playing with bugs and mud and singing songs to myself about bugs and mud and flowers. I also used to paint a lot. Creativity was a huge part of daily life. And I was often barefoot.

### What role did music play in it?

Music was around my house, but not necessarily in the most obvious way. I know so many people who have strong, vivid memories of their parents playing records and introducing their children to “the greats.” For me, singing was just as easy as breathing.

My mother played gospel music on the weekends, and my father played slow jams when he fixed the car or did yard work. At least these are my earliest memories. After that I learned acoustic guitar and played contemporary folk music in church — a lot of four chord songs that could go on for hours and often did.

### Were you trained in music or did you teach yourself?

By around 13 or 14 years old I’d found a community of musicians who mentored me in guitar and piano. They were just a bit older. I had great training in school and church choirs alongside that. In college I studied theory and classical voice with some very brilliant professors and loved it!

### Who—or what—has been the best influence on you as an artist? As a human being?

It’s becoming clearer that the church has had a lasting affect on the things I hold dear in the place of music and performance. Playing with the influences of unseen intention and ceremony have become such a crucial part of the process of bringing this music to audiences.

I’ve cried to the sounds of technically horrendous musicians who give their whole heart to a performance. The heart is the most important part.

### How do your songs come to you?

Normally songs come to me when I’m musing about things or people or events that have affected me emotionally. Usually I’m in motion, walking or otherwise. Usually away from my

instruments. It comes to me like cleaning up a spill with a paper towel—I feel I collect the songs from the ether.

### **What's the story behind the song "Headlights?"**

Jametatone's J Ashley Miller hosted a private outdoor ambient music event earlier this summer. Another musical guest, Ryan J Lee, invited me up to sing over a loop he'd written. While I was kind o' cooing nonsensically over the chord progression, J Ashley saw headlights coming down the driveway (latecomers to the event) and said:

"The headlights look the same. Are you in or out?"

This sentence really affected me and the ideas began to flood my mind that many things remain true about ourselves regardless of relationship status. I still have to grocery shop. I still have to pay bills. I still have to cook dinner for me, even if you're not going to eat it. I have a responsibility to provide for this body that provides for me.

We took a field recording of that happening into the studio and tried to distill it into something that retained and captured all the magic that night. I'm really happy with how the song came together.

### **Did anything funny or weird happen while you were creating *Cantaloupe*?**

My previous work was all about idealized romance. Then, after, having a couple of — let's just call them "rough encounters" — I feel my expectations for relationships have changed drastically. I don't want to say I'm jaded because I still find myself wanting that magic, silly, stupid kind of love, but I know now it's not the end-all-be-all of life.

Also, I was very surprised by the piece called "Palaces" that we wrote for this album. It speaks about the love of music and creativity. Without the assistance of a coy muse how can I keep creating?

"My callouses are palaces in times of peace and castles in times of war." This has become a little bit of a mantra for me recently.

### **The meaning of your lyrics, your arrangements, and the fact that you've learned how to play several instruments suggest a richly solitary life. Is this accurate? Do you have a strong need for periods of solitude each day?**

Music has always meant community to me. Most of the music I consume is live music from my friends who I support in the different music scenes so I can't say that I prioritize alone time. That being said, when I'm alone there's a constant trickle of new sounds, new music, new arrangements that are available to me. Trivial life (emails, paychecks, laundry, etc.) so often upsets this flow, but what can you do?

I hope I get to a place where I can spend more time in solitude creating safe spaces through sound and ceremony.

### **How did you discover the importance of loving your true self? How did your life change after that?**

Self hatred has dampened the lights of many bright people. I'm always wanting others to shine and to be loved and feel loved and to give love to me and others. and I take very seriously the responsibility of my role in that chain. I love the people who have invested their lives into me. I feel I have to honor their investment by not handing the light they gave me over to self-hatred and depression. Self-love is the only other option. This is very different from narcissism.

### How do you regenerate after giving yourself heavily to your art?

I like to cook for my friends. :)

### What conditions do you need in your life to maintain your creative flow?

New spaces to adorn with sound, smells, food, and light. It's always exciting to present music in a way that's tailored and in respect of the physical space. This is a big part of my creative process. Really energizes me.

Also, thinking about things that have been left unsaid. As a lyricist, I'm always hunting for ways to reassign meanings to familiar phrases or ways to have the listener do an aural-doubletake. Little Easter eggs make the process really fun and interesting for me.

### Are there any books, albums, or films that have influenced your work?

*Letters to a Young Poet* by Maria Rainer Rilke

### Do you follow a spiritual path that informs your art?

The Christian upbringing ultimately still influences my spirituality, however I feel the modern church and the vision that Jesus had for the church are at odds with each other. I try to treat people fairly and as individuals, take responsibility that there are lasting ramifications for my words and actions, and create space for transcendence in my life and others around me.

### If you had an artistic mission statement, what would it be?

Creating moments of transcendence, one pluck at a time.

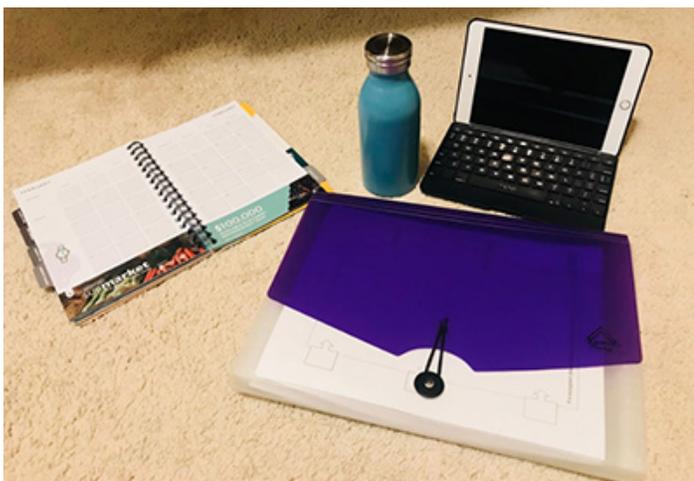
### What's next for you?

I'm ready to start composing more. This process has been very energizing to me.

*Wanda also writes the blog [The Mindful Bard: The Care and Feeding of the Creative Self](#).*

## Top Five Organizational Tools Every Student Should Have

Xin Xu



To keep entropy low and to stay on top of things during the year, it's critical we have a reliable system to fall back on. While every student has their unique way of organizing their work space and meeting deadlines, I've noticed that certain survival tips have remained unchanged despite the ever-changing dynamics of being a student. I decided to ask my peers, friends, seniors and family members for items they believe would be pivotal for any university student. Five items came up time and time again. Do you use any of the following items?

### Filing folders (accordion folders):

For loose papers or handouts that tend to get lost, accordion folders provide a catch all and have saved me numerous times when my organizational system has begun to clutter. Having well-

labelled folders ahead of time means saving you the time from having to dig through piles of loose leaf.

**Additional hack:** Organize your filing folder with tab labels so you can find the right documents and papers fast!

### Wall calendar:

Having a physical paper to scribble on not only helps you visualize your weeks and months ahead, but it also helps commit an event to memory. Personally, I like to use colorful pens and mark special events, exams and deadlines on my wall calendar.

**Additional hack:** cross out days of the week as they pass, so it not only helps you stay on top of homework but gives you extra motivation to get through the week.



### Colorful post-its

At the beginning of the school year, my fellow student friends and I have an annual shopping spree at the local dollar store where we stock up on colorful note paper and post-its that will come in handy for the exam season (as well as year-round). Color post-its are great ways to remind ourselves of to-do lists, ideas for new projects and even self-care tips.

**Additional hack:** use color coded post-its to help you remember events.

### Paper agenda:

Many students today resort to mobile phones or laptops to keep track of major deadlines and course schedules, however paper agendas still have a purpose. Having shadowed many professionals over the course of my degree, something I've noticed is that almost everyone in a senior level at the workplace has a hand-held agenda. While digital calendars are certainly useful, putting ideas and schedules to paper solidifies our memory for those events as well.

**Additional hack:** cross out the items you've completed to keep track of your accomplishments.

### Filing boxes:

For items that are less urgent but perhaps important to keep around such as student loan documents, credit card statements, pay stubs, I usually file away in card box filing boxes. For me, I invested in 4 of these boxes from Ikea and have been using them since the first year of my degree.

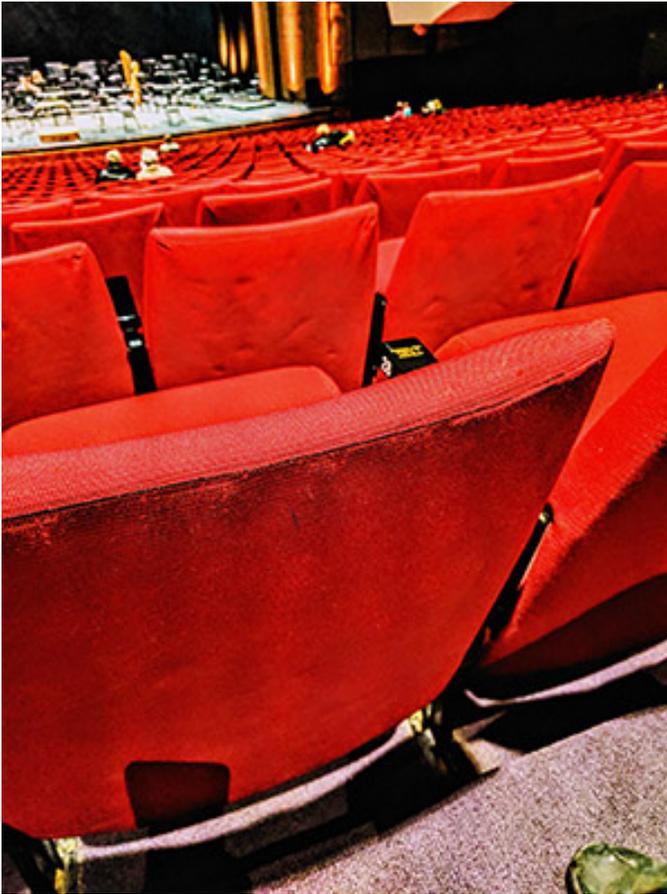
**Additional hack:** Ensuring the boxes are alphabetized will let you find your files faster!

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



## Porkpie Hat The Finest Art

Darjeeling Jones



I was recently sitting in the serene darkness of the Winnipeg Centennial Concert Hall, watching and listening to Daniel Raiskin, the WSO's new music director, conducting Gustav Mahler's Symphony No. 1. As a first impression, Raiskin seems brilliant, a maestro of the classic Russian style, dramatic, bold, firmly in control of and in sync with the formidable orchestra. Like many remarkable conductors, he seems to combine the physical grace of a dancer, the focus of a bullfighter, and the nuanced charisma of a Shakespearean actor. The work itself is like a spellbinding polymath, alive with dynamic variation. It is perpetually shifting, beautifully honed gears; by turns ethereal, jubilant, haunting, melancholy, and searingly powerful. Sometimes as glittering and fragile as a Faberge egg, other times a raging aural tempest. From the otherworldly bassoons to the apocalyptic tympani, it's a full meal deal for the entire orchestra.

Physically, I was sitting there, but my mind and soul were transported. Watching Raiskin's pale hands moving in the shadows and light of the stage, I had the strangest idea that it was though he were performing some occult rite. It was as though the music were not being made by flesh and blood musicians, but rather it was being coaxed out of thin air, the way a vaudeville magician might produce a rabbit from a hat. It was as though he were plucking the notes from the darkness, pulling them toward him, intuitively shaping them.

I thought, in that moment, what a rich, vibrant substance music has always seemed to me. It is the shining thread that has wound its way through my life. Pearls on a string, hundreds of them, all glowing. Twelve years old, lying in the darkness of a foster family bedroom, listening to Bowie singing Golden Years, suddenly realizing that perhaps there was more to life than fear and depression. Years later, watching Talking Heads performing Life During Wartime, David Byrne's strange, unsettling yelp burrowing its way into the fleshy part of my brain. Gritty, sensual French Quarter marching bands. Uncanny, absurdist pieces composed for theremin and string quartet; Gothic Quebecois folk songs; opulent operatic sorcery; hypnotic desert polyrhythms.

It occurred to me in the resonant darkness of the concert hall how very diminished my life would have been without the intense experience of music. As much as I love food, art, dance, books, and film, no form of culture has been so important to me. I suspect many people feel much the same. One of the oldest, and surely finest, tricks humanity has ever pulled off. The way it tickles the brain, ignites the blood, shifts the soul. For many of us, it does far more than provide a soundtrack to the events of our lives. It generates a current, crackles through the knob and tube wiring of our days, lights the moments up from within. If there is a doorway into a better, stranger, more beautiful and delightful world, I believe the best place to catch a glimpse of it might be between the bars of a song.





**Brittany Daigle**

**Course Exam**

*AU courses, up close*

**Course Exam**

**ENGL 308 (Indigenous Literature in Canada)**

**Brittany Daigle**

ENGL 308 (Indigenous Literature in Canada) is a three-credit, upper level English course that begins with the origins of Indigenous literature in the oral tradition and leads to contemporary Indigenous writing in English. The course also examines related areas such as findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), released in 2015. The assigned readings from the TRC will explain a lot of the topics and themes found in Indigenous literature. ENGL 308 has two introductory English courses: ENGL 211 (Prose Forms) and ENGL 212 (Poetry and Plays) as the prerequisites and there is a challenge for credit option if students are interested. Students should be aware that this course just underwent revision.

Indigenous Literature in Canada is divided into eight units, one essay weighing ten percent, two essays worth twenty-five percent each, and one final exam weighing forty percent. The course progresses from oral literature and stories from the oral tradition through written poems, stories, and drama, to two novels. The final exam for this course must be taken online with an AU approved exam invigilator at an approved invigilation center. To receive credit for ENGL 308, you must achieve an overall grade of at least “D” (fifty percent) and at least “D” (fifty percent) on the final exam. Students should note that all assignments are required to be submitted in order to pass the course.

Dr. Paul Huebener joined Athabasca University in February of 2015 and is the course coordinator for ENGL 211 (Prose Forms), ENGL 302 (An Introduction to Canadian Literature), ENGL 308 (Native Literature in Canada), ENGL 491 (Directed Studies in Literature), and ENGL 492 (Research and Writing Projects in Literature). And for the Athabasca University Master of Arts in Integrated Studies program he coordinates LTST 605 (Current Issues in Literary Studies). He begins, “I am an Associate Professor of English. My primary area of research is Canadian literature, which is a field that involves the study of Indigenous literature. Before coming to Athabasca University, I taught at McMaster University and the University of Calgary.”

He describes English 308 as “a senior-level course that provides an introduction to Indigenous literature in Canada. The course begins with a general introduction to Indigenous literature and then leads students into the study of a wide range of texts, from traditional stories, to twentieth-century poetry and drama, to Katherena Vermette’s 2016 novel *The Break*, which was shortlisted for the Governor General’s Award and was a Canada Reads finalist.”

When asked to provide some insight into the structure of the course, including the assignments and the final exam, he states “The course has three essay assignments involving literary analysis (the first assignment calls for seven hundred and fifty words and the other two are fifteen hundred to two thousand words). Students also write a final exam, which asks students to discuss important passages from the assigned texts, respond to analytical questions that have arisen during the course, and write a short essay on the assigned novels.”

He continues, “We provide students with a recommended study schedule for completing the course in less than six months, although students have the option to proceed more quickly if they wish. As with any self-paced course, students who consistently follow a regular study schedule will have the best results. Your tutor will be available to help with any challenges that arise.”

Shawna Marie Cunningham is one of the course authors and has taught ENGL 308 at AU since 1999. She also taught the first pilot version of the course in 1993 at Yellow Head Tribal Council with standard class delivery. As stated in her bio, “Shawna has taught Indigenous literature courses for Mount Royal College, Yellowhead Tribal College, Athabasca University, and the University of Calgary. Shawna received her bachelor’s degree from the University of Lethbridge in 1987, where she majored in Drama and minored in Native American Studies. In 1995, she was awarded her master’s degree from the University of Alberta in theatre history and criticism; her research study focused on the aesthetics and relationship between traditional oral literature, trickster mythology, and the dramatic literature of Tomson Highway. Shawna is currently working through an education doctorate degree program in learning and curriculum at the Werklund School of Education at the University of Calgary.”

When asked for advice for any students that are currently enrolled or who are about to enroll, she provides her thoughts, stating “I think it is important for students to be open to other ways of knowing and relating to the world, and to have a sincere interest in Indigenous people’s history and culture. It is also important to understand that Canada is vast, and there is a great deal of diversity amongst Indigenous peoples across the country in terms of language, culture, spiritual belief systems, and lived experiences. A great deal of traditional knowledge of Indigenous people is embedded in the oral tradition or traditional oral literature of the people. Likewise, the lived post-colonial experience of Indigenous people is often reflected in more contemporary Indigenous literature.”

Dr. Huebener would recommend the content of this course to all Canadians, stating “If Canada is to work towards reconciliation with Indigenous

### **Graduate Student Research Conference - Edmonton**

Fri, Oct 12, 6:00 pm to Sun, Oct 14, 12:00 pm  
Holiday Inn Conference Centre, 4485  
Gateway Blvd, Edmonton AB  
In-person and online  
Hosted by AU Faculty of Graduate Studies and AUGSA

[news.athabascau.ca/events/graduate-student-research-conference/](https://news.athabascau.ca/events/graduate-student-research-conference/)

Register online at above link; \$200+GST for in-person and \$50+GST for online

### **2018 Distinguished Alumni and Volunteer Service Award Winners - Toronto**

Mon, Oct 15, 5:30 to 8:30 pm EDT  
The University Club of Toronto, 380  
University Ave, Toronto ON  
In-person and online  
Hosted by AU

[news.athabascau.ca/events/help-us-celebrate-the-2018-future-alumni-award-and-volunteer-service-award-winners/](https://news.athabascau.ca/events/help-us-celebrate-the-2018-future-alumni-award-and-volunteer-service-award-winners/)

For in-person attendance, register online at above link;  
online Facebook Live event runs 6:30 to 7:30pm EDT at [facebook.com/AthabascaU](https://facebook.com/AthabascaU)

### **APA Style and What Graduate Students Need to Know**

Wed, Oct 17, 2:00 to 3:30 pm MDT  
Online  
Hosted by AU Faculty of Graduate Studies  
[www.eventbrite.ca/e/apa-style-and-what-graduate-students-need-to-know-tickets-50361096395](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/apa-style-and-what-graduate-students-need-to-know-tickets-50361096395)

Register online at above link

### **Bannock and a Movie "Our People Will Be Healed" Part 1 of 2**

Fri, Oct 19, 12:00 to 12:50 pm MDT  
Athabasca University, Peace Hills Trust  
Tower, 12th floor, Room 1222,  
10011 - 109 Street, Edmonton AB  
In-person; limited seating

Hosted by AU Centre for World Indigenous Knowledge and Research  
[indigenous.athabascau.ca/documentation/OurPeopleWillBeHealed-part2.pdf](https://indigenous.athabascau.ca/documentation/OurPeopleWillBeHealed-part2.pdf)

Register by phone (780)428-2064 or e-mail [ivyl@athabascau.ca](mailto:ivyl@athabascau.ca)

*All events are free unless otherwise specified*

people, an understanding of Indigenous cultures is of fundamental importance for all Canadians. Studying literature is an excellent approach in this regard because Indigenous narratives, from traditional stories to contemporary novels, allow readers to engage with diverse forms of cultural experience and meaning.”

When asked what he believes that students will take away from this course, he states “Students in this course will develop an understanding of the literary elements of the assigned readings, such as theme, symbolism, and narrative form, and they will also learn how Indigenous literature develops a range of values and political concerns. For instance, the course looks at how certain texts challenge the assumptions of colonization.”

While he didn’t note a specific part of the course that students struggle with, Dr. Huebener notes that “This course assumes that students have already completed introductory-level coursework in the study of English literature. If a lot of time has passed since the student has filled that prerequisite, they may want to refer to an analytical writing guidebook to refresh their skills. Working closely with your tutor is always a good idea.”

He also spoke about the recent revision and how it improved the course and what changes were made overall, stating, “Shawna Marie Cunningham is a longstanding author of the English 308 Study Guide, and the new revision of the course is co-authored by Joan Crate, who taught literature and creative writing at Red Deer College for many years and is also a poet and novelist herself. This revision includes updated commentary and new texts, and it incorporates the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that was released in 2015.”

Whether ENGL 308 is a required course for your degree or program, or if the content discussed above is of interest to you, this course will have you immersed in fresh new content surrounding Indigenous literature in Canada!

*Brittany Daigle is 22 years old and completing her BSc in Computing Science & Information Systems with AU from Toronto, Ontario.*



## **Fly on the Wall: Over The Mountain, Over The Hill? Finding Intelligible Bounty Amidst Sensory Sameness.**

**Jason Sullivan**



“No one here gets out alive” proclaimed a biography of Jim Morrison (Hopkins, Sugerman). No matter our personal age we must accept that the year is waning and the life of summer has fled. Autumnal chills with claustrophobic auspices may leave us feeling listless and trapped by the enforced hibernation of winter life. Even our AU studies might feel stagnant, particularly compared to K-12 students who pass through their years with astonishing speed. Compared to the swiftness of their youthful scholarly alacrity, our educational existence may seem like a nursery rhyme as old as the

hills: timeless and unchanging and kind of vacant. In times like these we need not wilt where our forward momentum wavers. Instead, we may take a trail of instruction from a certain bruin of Mother Goose yore: the bear who went over the mountain.

Let's daydream out to a bucolic foothill meadow. Faint strains of an elementary school choir waft by. They're singing the tale of an enterprising Ursid explorer who pitched out from familiar but stale inclines in pursuit of discovery and adventure. Here's the antediluvian lyrics:

*The bear went over the mountain, (x3)*

*To see what he could see*

*To see what he could see, (x2)*

*The other side of the mountain, (x3)*

*Was all that he could see*

*Was all that he could see, (x2)*

*The other side of the mountain,*

*Was all that he could see!" (Kididdles)*

Apparently, there's nothing out there? Maybe we're all stuck in our proverbial podunk existence as distance students? A simple message, but perhaps not so straight and narrow after all. One might be forgiven for recalling Karl Marx's infamous quote about industrial capitalism rescuing commoner peasants from "the idiocy of rural life" (Marx, 1848). But please *bear* with me a moment. What might the bear, and the spirited bear within each of us at AU, be dreaming of after gazing thoughtfully out over rolling hills as far as the furry eye could see?

Pioneering spirit apparently vanquished, we may assume that the bear turned puffy tail and, with back slumped, moseyed on down to the local bear saloon for some windfall apples and a spot of nostalgia about a time before the fateful realization that there's *nothing different out there*. Or perhaps the bear in question might get a bit misty-eyed and recall the Bible phrase that goes: "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly." (The Bible) Perhaps rather than feeling time wasting away and stolen from our grasp we shall be reborn out of the ashes of boredom into creative expressivity leading to unbounded academic success. After all, on a blank canvas of similitude we may paint to our heart's content.

When considering a void stemming from solitude amidst insufferable sameness, the philosopher Hermann Cohen was said to pronounce that:

*"In place of the one and universal Nothing, which, like the Zero, was permitted to be really nothing more than "nothing," in place of this veritable "non-thing", he posited the particular Nothing, which burst fruitfully into the realities" (Rozenzweig).*

But sameness is found in reality only if we restrict our gaze to the gravest of oversimplifications, like saying (as did Plato, another story that!) that *all trees are basically poor carbon copies of the ideal capital 'T' Tree*. His absolute forms were absolutely non-existent if existence is restricted the physical realm; yet, as when a picture seems worth a thousand words only because ideology conjures up meaning seemingly out of thin air, it's our expectations of archetypes that flow them forth for us to see in the world around us. Everybody gets what everybody wants. Or thinks they want. In fact, as soon as we notice more of the same, more forest, more mountains, more of our own small town, we can choose to be invigorated by all that is different and changeable: the seasons, new course material, our own maturing selves.

Much of our daily life provides fodder for evaluation, inquiry and research as we proceed through a dazzling array of courses. These include our social interactions, our business

encounters and our natural environment: it's all *grist for the mill*. In a sense being a distance student is to always-already have entered the domain of General Studies because our real lives are never far from our scholarly selves. AU doesn't lead us to feel *institutionalized* so much as *re-energized* by an injection of new brain material each time we crack the books. Physical consistency in our homes, offices and libraries may define our existence, it's true. But our imaginations are piqued in the most magical of ways and we really can become lost in our studies.

*So back to the bear...*

What might the bear have pondered in the moment that it gazed aloft over treetops as far as the eye could see? Maybe it got all forest-philosophical in a bear kinda way. Perhaps it, and by it I mean we star-crossed scholarly wanderers, might ask: *why does the tree grow?* The *why*, far from a meaningless and impertinent question with no bearing on actual life, cuts to the quick of existence. A *why* begs explanation at a root level, the level upon which our thoughts, dreams and identities emerge. Like amorphous first memories and their clarified later accounts (not to mention jumbled non-sequitur amalgams) the reason *why* life happens at all hangs in the gallows of our mind like a Hallowe'en garland of ephemeral-yet-effective plastic spiderweb.

Perhaps this bear, this apex predator, also felt a certain foreboding uncertainty as it looked out over what appeared to be more of the same but wasn't. After all, the phrase *all that he could see* begs emphasis on the *all* as much as on *what* he sees. Is the *all* many things that are the same or many things that are different from one another? To answer why perchance a tree grows is to also ask the timeless question: *why is there something rather than nothing?* Cohen saw the nothing as a fruitful cornucopia. Instead of there being nothing out there, or more of the same thus amounting to a blanket elimination of difference, the infinite space between individual things and their general identities suggests that when we see homogeneity we may find variety: *schooling teaches us that the devil of knowledge is in the details of evidence*. When no longer reduced to the abstract hieroglyphics of numbers, a blade of grass, a solitary pine cone, a trickle amidst some underbrush, any experiential pinprick can convey meaning weighted as though it were a whole universe in itself. Like a microscope of the mind, our learning allows us to investigate facets of our existence and the world around us anew.

As a testament to our human capacities for flourishing opening out of a seeming abyss Franz Rosenzweig comments on the abilities of Cohen to vigorously elucidate the world he saw:

*"In his speech there was something like a volcano under smooth ground. When for a time it had spun on in rigorous objectivity and the listener saw the flow of thoughts pass calmly under the mighty head, there would suddenly erupt at some point, completely unannounced, impossible to calculate or anticipate in advance, the firestream of personality...a single word, a brief sentence of five, six, words: and the flowing river would have expanded into an overflowing sea; through the web of thoughts there shone the world reborn in the human heart. It was just this perfectly unexpected quality of these eruptions that gave them their compelling force. The boiling up of pathos from its subterranean sources, wholly unprepared for; the close proximity of the coolest thoughts and of the most passionate feelings..."* (Rosenzweig, 248)

From places similar in the past, perhaps for our whole lifetimes passed until this point, we may look out from personal promontories and discover new interpretations both of ourselves and others. Athabasca gives us wings of imagination and confidence that we may achieve goals both pedagogical and private; with lifelong education there is always so much more inspiration all around from which to learn and express.

And beyond this, out past a horizon that surpasses our individual courses and transcends single years, lies the fact that our lives themselves are a journey that constantly, but deliciously, borders on incomprehensibility. As Jacques Derrida states about the search for truth, understanding and

finality: we may never be “able to define the unity of its project or its object” so much as we invariably and naturally “proceed by wandering” (Derrida, 43). Let's wander joyously, fellow students!

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## The Creative Spark Hone the Art of Writing Ditties

Marie Well



If you live to write or love to sing, then you'll treasure writing ditties. And if you ever wrote a winning essay, you could be filthy rich writing lyrics.

As a teen, I'd scrawl several songs a day—mostly when I felt glum. But my hillbilly voice constrained my song writing. I could scarcely sing outside four notes in the key of E minor—the saddest key of songstresses.

And my singing instructor, a Frank Sinatra look-alike, hid when his student overheard me croak Barbara Streisand. Yet, he gladly showed off my studio-recorded tunes to his students. You see, when I crooned in studios, I changed from Dr. Jekyll to Mr. Hyde, from Willy Nelson to Rihanna, from Marge Simpson to Justin Bieber. Yet, when my brother played my studio songs to a music agent, the agent scoffed, “She needs singing lessons.”

Yet a decade ago, I sung like the angels—in my dreams. During a dream, I sang a dazzling Christian ditty that my dream-self wrote. When I awoke from the dream, I started singing the hymn while jotting down the lyrics. The ditty was spot-on for my voice. The song could've been a number one hit. But I had not a single recording device. So, I scrambled to stumble upon my old synthesizer. Nowhere. Sadly, I caved in and went to bed, that beautiful song forever gone.

The good news? Songwriters don't need to sing. You can learn to write ditties through simple rules cited in Pamela Phillips Oland's book *The Art of Writing Great Lyrics*:

- Songs are like stories: they have a beginning, middle, and end. They have dialogue from one or more characters.
- Songs should sound like straight-talk, not Shakespeare's schoolmarm: “If you twist your words around just to get a rhyme, you've immediately turned your song into a poem.

Rewrite the sentence so it sounds more the way people really talk and come up with a rhyme for the new end word” (4%).

- Don't stuff big words into songs: “Sometimes we want to show off our vocabularies by using important-sounding words and phrases, but what these actually do is cut the songs off from their potential audience” (10%).
- And song words should sound pleasing, not jarring: “You must consider the sound of a word and decide whether it works well in a song or whether it sounds ugly when sung” (9%).
- So, play with sweet-sounding syllable accents: “Use the dictionary to check which syllables are emphasized or accented” (5%).
- And make sure the stressed vowels don't choke the throat: “If you're a singer, be aware that you should be emphasizing the vowel sound and not the consonant” (location 10%).
- Adjectives can make your songs satisfying: “Your choice of adjectives ... can turn an ordinary song into a fascinating song, a mediocre idea into a heart-stopper” (7%).
- And try crafting original lingo: “We also have to invent metaphors and similes” (location 11%).
- Most importantly, many songs express themes of love: “Read anything and everything to do with relationships .... Then when you write songs, you will have a literate and interesting gift to give your listeners” (9%).

The next love-song I'd write would be titled Coffee Brews Cusses, Not Kisses. Yes, caffeine kills a romantic mood. As does my best Beyoncé.

Thus, hone the art of writing ditties to let your lungs to be met with bouquets, not boos—and to watch your wallet burst with dough.

## The Fit Student Kick the Cancer

Marie Well



Knock down your risk of cancer by munching garlic and onions, by swallowing daily citrus fruits, by chomping Brussel sprouts, by shaving your x-rays to once a year, by avoiding the sun, by quitting smoking, and by steering clear of electrical wires, says author Vernon Coleman.

I add beware of cell phones. I'm sure it was a cell phone that fried the nerves in my friend's thumb. She wore a hand brace for weeks. So, could cell phones fry not only your thumbs but your brains, too? Lately, I've heard of many cases of brain cancer. And I wonder who's funding the research on risks of brain cancer for cell phone users. My guess is Apple.

And what's with all the women aged 45-plus stricken with breast cancer? I know at least six women with breast cancer.

And I'm next, given all the radiation I get from breast cancer screenings.

My doctor went gung-ho with screenings. During the past two years, she marched me to nearly fifteen X-rays and ultrasounds—plus a biopsy and an MRI. And found nothing. But recently she had a change of heart. I should cut back the zaps to just one ultrasound per screening, she said. But I did better than that: I scrapped all but one screening a year. After all, X-rays in excess might cause cancer.

Author Vernon Coleman recommends no more than one breast cancer screening a year coupled with frequent self-examinations.

He also says the cancer industry wastes donations on finding cures. Prevention, he says, makes better sense. So, if you are a nursing student, if you have a loved one with cancer, or if you eat the Western diet, you should read Coleman's book *Power Over Cancer*. I cite his ideas below:

- Don't waste the glut of funds on seeking cures, says the author: "It is invariably easier and more effective (and, in the long run a great deal cheaper) to prevent illness than it is to try and cure it" (location 164 of 1449, 11%).
- Seeking cures pads wallets in the cancer industry: "If the cancer industry spent its income on explaining to people how to avoid cancer, there would be little or no place for research laboratories and a great many scientists would be put out of work. Worse still, if the cancer industry reduced the number of people dying of cancer, its own income would fall" (location 197 of 1449, 14%).
- And what good has billions of dollars thrown at finding a cancer cure done? "Billions of dollars are spent each year on cancer research, but treatment, using the traditional methods of choice (surgery, chemotherapy and radiation therapy), has done nothing to improve overall mortality rates" (location 142 of 1449, 10%).
- So, aim to prevent cancer in the first place: "It is fairly wide known, I think, that cigarettes, sunshine, asbestos, and X-rays cause cancer. But it is less widely known that fatty foods and meat cause cancer. And it is less well known that fiber and green vegetables help protect against cancer" (location 95 of 1449, 6%).
- And be wary of frequent mammograms: "And several studies have suggested that the radiation accumulated through yearly mammograms might actually be causing breast cancer" (location 389 of 1449, 27%).
- You are at risk for cancers if you eat a Western diet: "Breast cancer could have been turned into a relatively uncommon disease, instead of one of the major killers of women, if politicians and doctors had been prepared to take on the food industry ..." (location 336 of 1449, 23%).

Avoid lung cancer: don't smoke or vape. A year ago, I entered the final round of interviews at a tobacco company. The interviewers puffed on special heated-not-burned cigs. And the company boasted the goal of a smoke free future. So, I told the interviewers I'd host meetups to help smokers quit. The key interviewer scoffed, "Our goal is not for people to quit. We don't care about being healthy." He patted his round belly, and laughter pierced the smoky room. When I probed about the smoke free future, he leaned back, puffed his cig, and shook his head.

I wonder who funds lung cancer research. My guess is tobacco companies.





Dear  
Barb

Barbara Godin

## Thinking About the Costs

*Dear Barb:*

*My wife is driving me crazy! She wants to get a cat and we already have two dogs. Our dogs are both getting older and I was looking forward to being able to travel without having to find someone to take care of our animals. We have a camper so we can take the dogs with us, but it won't be so easy with a cat, because of the litter. Our animals suffer from separation anxiety, so we can't leave them anywhere and most of our family and friends are busy with their own lives, so I hate to ask them. It's not that I don't like cats, but another animal is a big commitment of at least 15 years. Two years ago we had to put our cat down and I know my wife is really missing having a cat, but I don't think it's a good idea. I want my wife to be happy, but I just don't think this is the best thing for us right now. Hopefully you agree with me and then I can show her this column. Thanks, Len.*

Hi Len:

This is something you and your wife have to discuss. I really can't weigh in on this, other than saying, if you have had a cat already, you wife obviously knows all that is entailed and still wants to undertake the commitment. Perhaps you and your wife can write down the pros and cons of having a cat and this will help you both come to a resolution. Thanks for writing Len.

*Dear Barb:*

*I am a single mother of a three-year-old son. My oldest sister has a thirteen-year-old daughter who babysits my son occasionally. I pay her for babysitting, but I will admit I don't pay her what I would pay someone who wasn't a relative. My sister does not think this is right. She says I should pay her daughter the same as anyone else. What do you think?" Thanks, Barb.*

Hey Barb:

Thanks for writing. Have you talked to your niece about what she expects to be paid for babysitting your son? This would be a good place to start. Babysitters usually have expectations for what they want to be paid. Does she babysit for others and how much do they pay her. She may be perfectly happy with what you are paying her. Many people say a job is a job whether family or not, but I believe we do tend to give our families a break when possible. So, I would say, how much you pay your niece is between you and your niece. Hope this helps.

Follow Barb on twitter @BarbGod

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Poet Maeve  
Dumbing Down the Spiritual

Wanda Waterman



Trouble with spiritual types is sometimes they try to bring the supernatural down to their level.



Please don't tell me they turned the talking circle into a gossip fest again.



Worse. They threw all their bras into the sacred fire and danced around topless, chanting, "Let it free your body, let it move your soul."



Wow. Need any help?

Naw. Told them I got a Victoria's Secret subscription. They won't be asking me back.





**AUSU**  
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## Changes to AU Course Materials

In the fall of 2013 AU began the process of replacing hard-copy textbooks for all undergraduate courses with e-text versions. Implementation has been staged in

The results will be shared with members in an upcoming newsletter.

## A New Era at AU - A New AU president

After two terms in the Office of President, Dr. Frits Pannekoek is retiring. Last week, in recognition of his contributions to distance education, the University of South Africa (Unisa) granted him an honorary Doctor of Literature and Philosophy award. AUSU congratulates Dr. Pannekoek on this great honour, and the recognition it brings to AU as a world leader in distance and open learning. We wish him all the best over his final weeks in the role of president, and in all his future endeavours!



We had hoped by now to be able to announce the selection of the presidential search committee for a new, full-term president; however, as a suitable candidate has not yet been found, AU has instead appointed an interim president: Dr. Peter MacKinnon, formerly of the University of Saskatchewan. Dr. MacKinnon has also served as chair of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) and on the Science, Technology and Innovation Council of Canada. We look forward to working with him over the coming year! **Convocation travel information**

AUSU wants to make sure this year's graduating class has a fantastic convocation. To make this happen, we're providing free transportation via bus or limo service to take people from Edmonton to the Athabasca Multiplex each day of convocation 2014. This applies to those graduating from AU undergraduate programs, and their guests (some limits may apply).

We've also arranged hotel discounts in Edmonton.

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