

THE VOICE

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Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You

Defunding the Police, Part III

Systemic Barriers to Systemic Challenges

Students? What are Those?

Alberta Government vs. AU. Again.

*Plus:
Where Dragons Live
Anti-aging Skin Hacks
and muchmore!*



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Hey! Did you know the Voice Magazine has a Facebook page?
No kidding! We also do the twitter thing once in a while if you're into that.

Editorial

Students? What are Those?

Karl Low



You've probably already heard that AU has a new President, with the board unceremoniously announcing the dumping of Dr. Peter Scott late Wednesday afternoon. The new President is Dr. Alex Clark, who, previous to this, was AU's Dean of Health Sciences.

No new hiring process was conducted, and the change in leadership apparently came as a surprise to the rest of the Executive team at AU. While Dr. Clark was a candidate during the previous search, apparently a strong one if you believe the ~~Minister~~ Chair of AU's Board of Governors, it occurs to me that there was a reason he was passed over in favor of Dr. Scott, yet his new appointment does not seem to have involved any consultation with anybody on the previous hiring committee, including the academics or your student representatives. And let's not forget that over half the board who has now appointed him wasn't even around during the first search. Not that it matters, apparently it wasn't even thought important to contact all of the Board members about the vote.

But was he passed over for perhaps some significant reason? Unfortunately the AU Board, or to be more accurate, the fresh appointees of Advanced Education Minister Nicolaidis, don't care. For all we know, maybe he was passed over because he views the students as secondary. After all, in his first mailing to everyone, he notes, "I will work to prioritize supporting and growing our people, our resources, and our processes for continued success." Note something missing there?

It's you.

He wants the University to be a success, but the students who determine that aren't listed as part of what he prioritizes. If you dig into some of his other work, you'll see that this is a consistent trend. Reading through the rest of his recent email, students are barely mentioned, only as a part of the various groups that are "involved" with Athabasca University.

Do I think this means he doesn't think of students at all? Or worse, that he views them as some sort of obstacle? No. While his priority is obviously fellow academics, as that's where the bulk of his writing, as well as his personal business lies, he does have some columns that suggest academics change things so as to provide some benefits for students, such as their mindset. But do I think the experience of students is something near the top of his mind at any given point in the day? Let's just say that I've not seen much evidence of it.

Of course, there's lots about building community. He notes, in fact, "... that we can have an active presence that benefits the local community." Because those 3,000 people that make up the local community of Athabasca absolutely deserve to be benefited by the tuition funding of more than 30,000 students or so who attend AU. The town's done so much for all of them, after all.

But hey, maybe everything will be just fine. Maybe even more executives won't leave as did AU's vice-president of finance and its chief human relations officers did. Maybe Dr. Dron is wrong about many faculty and staff preparing to leave. And maybe Sir John Daniel is also incorrect when he said this would cause "the collapse of the university in the short-to-medium term."

And maybe it's time for every Albertan student and AU staff member to write their MLA and demand Nicolaidis resignation if they want to have a chance keeping their seat in the next election. It's too late to fix what's been done, but it's not too late to show that there are consequences for the politician that does it.

In the meantime, please enjoy the rest of the read.

MINDS

WE

MEET



The Voice Magazine recently had a chance to chat with Usman Gill (he/him), a Post Diploma, Bachelor of Commence in Accounting student, currently in his final semester, from Calgary, Alberta. Usman hopes to continue on to the CPA program following graduation.

Usman let us know a bit about himself stating, “Well my professional name is Manny Gill but my friends and family call me Usman. I work for the Federal Government full time and also work part time with Apple. I currently live in Calgary. I came to Canada back in 2013 from Pakistan for education and fell in love with the mountains and decided to stay here.”

He had some great study tips for fellow AU students. “I register for 3 or 4 courses at the same time and then take approximately 1 month for each course. I focus on one course to keep track of my progress easily and to make sure I can absorb all the same information at once. It helps me understand the subject better. In the beginning of my degree, I tried to divide my day or week for all 4 courses but by the time I would get back to my first course in a week, I would forget what I had studied before.”

He also had some great advice for new and prospective students. “I wish I had started to use all the tools available online for better essay writing such as Grammarly. You

can write a great essay with amazing ideas and reference but then lose marks on grammatical mistakes and spelling errors. When you write a 2500-word essay, mistakes can be made which then affect your mark. I wish I had known about the Athabasca App as well. The app helps connect with students from same courses and programs. Since this is an online study, consulting with other students through the app helped me a lot.”

When he is not studying, you can find Usman working or spending time in the mountains. He continued, “We are so lucky in Calgary that we have mountains an hour away from us. I make full use of this opportunity to go skiing in the winter and hiking in the summer.”

Usman also recounted his most memorable vacation was to “Dubai in February 2020.” He reminisced, “The biggest reason it was memorable was because I did not have to deal with -30 temperatures in Calgary. The weather there was amazing. I love dune bashing and we did so much of it there. I used to watch videos of it before and then I was there doing it myself. Amazing!”

Usman also finds time to read in his busy schedule. He shared that *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho and *The Corporation* by Joel Bakan have been influential books in his life. “They both are different books, but they really make you think about the things around you,” he explained.

He credits his brother-in-law with having the greatest influence on his desire to learn. “My brother-in-law is an accountant and happens to be tax lawyer as well. He started his career as an accountant but later found that so many of his clients had tax challenges. He then went back to school to earn his law degree. He is a true inspiration when it comes to learning new things.”

Usman’s experience with online learning has been positive so far. “I think all universities should offer all of their courses online for students like myself, that do not have the time to go to university in person. It just helps: study on your own pace, and cuts the cost of living close to university and commuting there. The only thing I do not like about online studies is when I have a question, I must wait for someone to get back to me. I can’t just raise my hand to ask a question or go see my professor.”

His most memorable AU course has been TAXX 301: Taxation I, in which he “learnt everything there is about personal taxes.” He continued, “It helped me with my careers as well. Most Canadians deal with taxes every year but lack the basic knowledge on how credits work. I wish everyone can take that course.”

As for communication with AU course tutors? “Communication with tutors is time consuming but it has always been easy. They are always clear about their instructions.”

When asked about his first project if he were the new president of AU, Usman would reduce the communication gap between students and AU. “I see every day on the AU App that students repeatedly have the same questions like course end dates, exams, supplemental exams and etc. Either university doesn’t have enough and clear instructions about it or it takes a long time to get in touch with someone like a tutor,” he explained.

The Voice Magazine also asked Usman which famous person, past or present, he would like to have lunch with, and why. He chose “Chicken parmesan with Steve Jobs.” He continued, “All the articles and stories I have read about him just make me wish I was able to meet him. Steve Jobs has truly been, in my opinion, the inventor of something that has changed the world for better. His ideas may have been fueled by business mindset but apart from that he came up with a product that challenges the status quo.”

As for his most valuable lesson learned in life? “When you compare yourself to someone, see what they don’t have. We live in an age of internet. We see people with nice big houses, money, cars, vacation and so much more and then compare our life with them and get depressed. What we should focus on is what we have today. Someone on Instagram with a mansion may be fighting for his/her life right now but we don’t see that.”

And his proudest moment? “My proudest moment in life was when I earned my first pay-cheque and I handed it to my parents as a ‘thank you’ to them for everything they have done for me.” Best of luck Usman!

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

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

[blue rare]
Where Dragons Live

Oliver Moorcraft-Sykes

A Telegram from a Ghost Ship



Perhaps it is the state of the world these days, or merely my inner state of mind, or some combination of the two, but lately I have been feeling adrift. More accurately, the need to *be* adrift. To cut myself free from the present place and time in the hopes of finding diversion, escape, maybe even transcendence. Distance, at the very least, from the here and now.

It's a familiar feeling to me. I suppose I was born to it, this ingrained restlessness. I suspect it's the spirit of my dead father wandering through my soul. He was a lifelong sailor and ceaseless traveler; a man always trying to outrun demons that were as indelible and ever-present as the tattoos on his forearms.

Over the years, I have found lots of different ways to escape from mundane reality. Often, it has been geographic travel, in the form of road trips and plane trips. But much more significant have been the inward journeys (both healthy and unhealthy) by means of music, love, art,

writing, and drugs.

Of course, you can't hope to travel any great distance, especially inwardly, without the risk of becoming lost. I've repeatedly stumbled into some unwise and forbidden places. Many times in my life I have felt close to drowning in the terrible-but-beautiful darkness of my inner life. I am a hapless sailor aboard a ghost ship, adrift on a strange sea within my own head. Finite and small as this liquid realm is, it is also somehow fathomless: a place of sudden whirlpools and bottomless trenches, treacherous currents and flashing teeth. An invisible ocean the size of a snow-globe, yet holding tempests of feeling and tsunamis of memory.

Time and again, when my soul rises to the surface to catch its breath, it will be pushed under by some rogue wave of recklessness, melancholy, or dangerous joy. Just when I've reached the shore, I'm called back into dangerous depths by the golden-throated sirens. I know their songs are suspect, but they are too enchanting.

Like many sailors, I have a secret fear of the sea, but also an irresistible, romantic longing for it. I don't want to live inland, safe and dry in some gated suburb of the mind. Even at the risk of madness or self-destruction, I want to travel to the uncharted places where dragons live, and where foaming oceans cascade off the edges of the world.

I know I am not alone in this; there are many other single-handed sailors like me. Sometimes we see the lights of each others' vessels glowing through the fog. Like Coleridge's Ancient Mariner, we are all bound for weird places, each of us traveling under a curse. Our boats are leaky, our maps are suspect, our instruments are capricious. The skies above us are wild, and filled with often ill-fated stars. I don't know which, if any, of us will return safe and sound or ever be heard from again. But, if we're lucky, we may catch a glimpse of some wondrous places. If we're luckier still, perhaps we will find good companionship and the occasional welcoming harbour along the way.

Defunding the Police, Part III Systemic Barriers to System Challenges

Alek Golijanin



Last time in *The Voice Magazine*, I wrote about how I submitted a criminal complaint to the Ottawa Police Services Board (the Board) focusing on organized crime and an illegal online gambling ring, and how I subsequently identified shortcomings with how the Board had ‘handled’ my initial criminal complaint.

By the end of this article, readers should be able to understand why it can be more significant to focus on the structures around policing rather than police budgets, and how it only takes the actions of a few people who are in positions of consequence to damage the integrity of our institutions, unintentionally or not.

Connecting with elected officials, the Law Society of Ontario, and oversight bodies

After receiving the Board’s response to my previous email, where they had avoided addressing whether they ever actually dealt with the complaint I raised, and had returned

to their same talking points, I had no choice but to start escalating my complaint and connecting with representatives from all three levels of government, as well as oversight bodies. The Board was trying to justify their ‘handling’ of my criminal complaint under the guise that I had informed them that I had filed a criminal complaint with the RCMP and that they had no involvement in, nor responsibility for, the investigation of alleged violations of the criminal law. Also they noted that the Board was precluded by the *Police Services Act* from directing the Chief in respect of “*specific operational decisions or with respect to the day-to-day operation of the police force.*” But all of those explanations were meaningless because they did not apply in this situation; I had not filed a complaint with the RCMP, merely noted that their lack of action on this situation made it no surprise that people would avoid the Board and go directly to the RCMP. Neither had I requested or suggested that they direct the Chief in that manner, but merely that my complaint and concerns be forwarded to the police so that an investigation could be started while avoiding the “connections” that those involved in the ring said they had.

Had the Board handled my criminal complaint as their protocols required them to, I would have heard from the appropriate policing agency, and we would have gone from there. Instead, the Board was presenting the situation as if I had demanded that they be the judge, jury, and executioner, but that was not the case.

So, in July of 2021, I followed up with the Premier of Ontario’s office, select Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), with at least one member from each of the three main parties, and the rest of City Council. I was surprised that the Liberal MLA responded and connected me with another Liberal MLA who had a legal background and with whom I would further discuss the matters.

Around the start of 2022 is also when I heard back from the Law Society of Ontario (LSO), connecting with a general law clerk, before being escalated to their counsel from their Professional Regulation Division. I had approached them because of how the Board had said its lawyer had advised them against acting on these matters. However, so far as I was concerned, this was not a typical legal dispute; this was an oversight body that was entrusted by the province

for all municipal policing matters, and it was being provided faulty legal opinions, by an LSO licensee, and there was the potential to seriously harm both the institution of policing as well as the public good.

Unfortunately, the LSO stated that they were unable to accept my complaint, as it was considered to be a complaint on behalf of another party, and, since the Board's legal counsel was not my lawyer, they were limited in their scope. The LSO also stated that they did not have the legal authority to intervene in this situation, and that they could only do so if the issues were ever raised in court, and if the presiding judge made negative comments on the conduct of any licensee. Basically, there was a grey area that ensured that lawyers could do whatever was necessary to "protect their client's interests". Their reasons seemed to form what is defined as a "structural barrier" or a "systemic challenge", and it was quite concerning. It is difficult to challenge a systemic difficulty when the system to challenge it is also where the difficulty is.

With the arrival of 2022 and a few more policing scandals occurring in Ottawa, I requested to address the Board so that I could speak on the police governance model and policies related to how police services boards process and handle complaints and how that process has the potential to impact community-police relations. This time around, the executive director to the Board refused to forward my delegation request because she believed that my matter was not within their jurisdiction.

I took the time to correct the executive director by explaining that she had a narrow interpretation of my talk, and that it would segue into the issue of ethics and guidelines in policing, which also applied to police services board members. Thus, having navigated the "jurisdictional blocks", my delegation was approved, but the Board's meeting for February 2022 would get postponed after the circus known as the "Freedom Convoy" came to town.

The Board Collapses

The Freedom Convoy started to cause so much chaos throughout Ottawa's core that it had made both national and international news. There was infighting amongst all three levels of government, but the anger came down on the Board. What further complicated the situation was that media outlets in Ottawa had reported that one of the Board's provincial appointees had attended the convoy without informing the Board. Additionally, another member of the Board

AU-thentic Events

Upcoming AU Related Events

Library Chat

Tues, Feb 7, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm MST

Online

Hosted by AU Library

www.athabascau.ca/library/index.html

No pre-registration needed; access through chat box on home page

Writing Forum:

Academic anxiety and imposter syndrome

Tue, Feb 7, 12:30 to 1:30 pm MST

Online via Microsoft Teams

Hosted by AU's Write Site

www.athabascau.ca/write-site/writing-forum.html

No pre-registration needed; access through above link

Library Chat

Wed, Feb 8, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm MST

Online

Hosted by AU Library

www.athabascau.ca/library/index.html

No pre-registration needed; access through chat box on home page

Developing Your Research series

Session 4: An Intro to Citation Management

Wed, Feb 8, 12:00 to 1:00 pm MST

Online

Hosted by AU Library

www.facebook.com/AthabascaUniversityLibrary/events

Register through above link

had been leaking confidential information about in-camera meetings to a local magazine that published a story about it. Although the Board had been trending downwards for quite sometime, it really cratered with this cohort.

All three levels of government were looking to save face, but none more-so than the Board. They determined it was best for Chief Peter Sloly to resign. However, as soon as this news dropped and that the Board had attempted to hire a new police chief in a matter of days, bypassing the typical hiring process, all hell broke loose. The Premier of Ontario had all three of his provincial appointees resign while the Ottawa's City Council held an emergency meeting to remove two of the three municipal board members. Very quickly, the entire Board had been replaced. But it was the resignation of the long-serving civilian appointee, a stalwart member, who would then be recruited to sit on the Thunder Bay Police Services Board (TBPSB) and his subsequent remarks that made airwaves.

In an interview with the Toronto Star, the civilian appointee, who had served on the Board for 10 years, was quoted as saying that the police governance model was set up for failure. In a subsequent interview with the CBC, he said that police services boards needed to be better trained, provided with more resources, and protected from political interference. He also confirmed the existence of structural barriers and power imbalances in police governance and oversight, a result of having police services board members who lacked a policing background.

The Freedom Convoy had damaged the state of policing in Ottawa to the point that it had become a matter of national security, but I saw it that way well before the convoy. As I had done with each of my escalations, I had notified the Board that I would be connecting with the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians (NSICOP) and sharing the full details of my criminal complaint with them, something I had only intended to share with the appropriate policing agency. The fact that all of this had been going on for so long and without ever coming to the attention of any policing agency was deeply disturbing, and could easily be seen as another threat to national security. As with other complaints made though, each level responded to me, and all claimed essentially that it was outside of their mandate.

With the arrival of an entirely new cohort of Board members, I was required to resubmit my request to address the Board at their March 2022 meeting. However, this Board decided to revert back to in-person meetings at Ottawa City Hall and all delegations were required to be in-person. What was weird about this requirement is that Board members were permitted to participate virtually, but delegations had to be done in-person. Although the changes did not affect me, I saw it as an act that was designed to stymie public engagement and participation at Board meetings. At the Board meeting on March 28, 2022, at City Hall, I spoke about the failings of the OPSB to a packed house of concerned residents, Ottawa bureaucrats, and members of the media.

To say that this new cohort of Board members was not happy with my presentation would have been an understatement. In any case, I had followed up with all three levels of government as well as oversight bodies, and I thought that I was finished with addressing the Board, the structure around policing that was described by the civilian appointee as being "set up for failure". But a few more police scandals occurred in Ottawa, so I felt I had to register to address the new Board in its entirety.

Around the Spring of 2022, I submitted a request to address the Board at their meeting in May, but this time my request was denied. The Chair informed me that my previous presentation was outside the rules of procedure, that they had provided me with "some latitude" regarding my comments about how it was unavoidable for complaints to make their way to the NSICOP when police services boards failed to live up to their mandate, that I needed to be more specific, and

that it had to fall within the Board's authority. However, I viewed this interaction as an opportunity to address their concerns and to review my past topics with this new cohort: general community matters, body cameras in policing, cyber security, and the complaints handling process. I also used the analogy "If the shoe fits..." because I could not do anything about how OPSB members felt during my presentation, if they associated my general statements with our interactions, or with their personal lives. Once again, my delegation was approved. What I had planned to say had not changed, I just made it clear to them that I knew what the rules and the jurisdictional boundaries really were, and that I would not be easily put off by a "mistake" on their part.

At the Board meeting on May 28, 2022, at City Hall, I criticized the state of policing in Ottawa by addressing systemic inequities in policing and reminding the Board that it was unavoidable for complaints to make their way to the NSICOP when individuals in positions of consequence decided to play policing.

The Story Behind Power and Influence

When it comes to addressing the systemic barriers within our society and the structures around them, the by-product of our actions may often be resistance from those empowered by the status quo. Thankfully, the playbook on how to navigate bureaucracies and their "defence mechanisms" is available for everyone to read, but it still requires a comprehensive understanding of the various factors at play.

There is, however, something that could have helped me be more effective in my interactions with these structures. It has to do with my recent participation in another professional development program offered by the Harvard Business School that focused on social innovation and change initiatives and the story behind power and influence. The significance of this learning experience had to do with the fact that it provided participants with framework that was centered around being more effective when pursuing the betterment of society. However, I will share those key learning takeaways and more in next week's edition of *The Voice*.

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



Unearthing classic articles from previous issues of The Voice Magazine

Plenty of folks working from home probably don't need a special day for this, but February 3 is National Working Naked Day. Turn the heat up and have a read!

In the privacy of your own home office. Barbara Lehtiniemi examines the rationale behind the creation of a Work Naked day. "Since AU's unofficial motto is 'Study Naked!', AU students are plainly well-positioned to embrace the unfettered freedom of Working Naked Day." News Flash – It's Time to Get Naked, February 3, 2017.

...or not. Columnist Barb Godin gives advice to someone concerned with their neighbours' nakedness. "Another person does their gardening naked, mind you, they do have a five foot fence around their yard. But from a certain angle I can see right into their backyard." Dear Barb—Airing it Out, August 12, 2019.

My Course & Software Recommendations for 2023

Marie Well



If there is one thing I love more than learning about people's character strengths, it's learning about their hobbies. And what better way to learn about someone's hobbies and personality than seeing what courses and software they use.

With that said, here are some suggestions for courses and software that can improve life. At least, these are some of the ones I have on my 2023 agenda, except for the cooking classes.

Critical thinking course. An excellent critical thinking course helps you structure, challenge, and resolve dilemmas. I read books on critical thinking, and they seemed philosophical, adopting a particular political ideology. But a critical thinking course provides practical models that help you map out your dilemma to create win-win solutions. If you love math and logic or want to learn how to better problem-solve, then a critical thinking course will take you to the next level.

Grammarly. I think Grammarly is a great way to gain confidence in business, educational, and personal writing. This tool tightens your writing so that it reads more professionally. For example, I've noticed that my business emails typically contain many unnecessary words. But Grammarly tightens my writing to create a professional tone. The software also edits academic citations and references, although I have yet to use it in this capacity.

Cleaning services training. If you're like me, you didn't sufficiently learn the art of cleaning, despite the spotless home Mom kept. But cleaning is a skill. I realize that it doesn't take just time; it also takes an element of knowledge. So, I sought two-week janitorial custodian courses that I could complete during my work holidays. However, lessons don't seem to be offered in person for a single enrollee. So, instead, I plan on taking an online cleaning certificate program. With the money and time invested in daily cleaning, anyone can keep a spotless home.

Private Swim Lessons. Everyone can benefit from fitness skills. So, I plan on taking private swim lessons to finally learn the art of swimming. As a child, I took pre-beginners and was deemed the second-best swimmer in my group. However, our instructor failed all of us but one. So, I never learned how to swim beyond a dog paddle, backstroke, and tread. But we should never stop learning in life. And I highly recommend taking private and public fitness lessons simultaneously. After all, all our acquired skills have eternal relevance, even when we are in our 90s.

Cooking class. I found this neat site online for cooking lessons. It offers both online and private cooking classes, called Cozy Meal, and it's located at <https://www.cozymeal.com/canada/calgary>. This site looks inviting. However, I don't think I'll sign up as I typically eat raw or canned foods like salmon. But you may want to become a top-class cook. In that case, Cozymeal may be an opportunity.

You may have a completely different set of interests. Whatever you prefer is best. But I recommend you try private or group classes, as coaching can take you to the next level. After all, lifelong learning is paramount to a life well led. And what you choose to learn strengthens what makes you unique. After all, the old notion is you become what you think about.



Anti-aging Skin Hacks and What We're Doing Wrong

Xine Wang



There are so many products on the shelf for skin care these days. It's hard to navigate through the different products and ingredients.

The skin care industry is alive with many different products, treatments, and expenses. It's hard to navigate and understand what is relevant and what is not. How do we find the right skin care regimen day in and day out. Furthermore, what difference should I be noticing? What are some things that are recommended and what things are just marketing gimmicks with no proven results?

I've been a self-proclaimed skincare guru for many years. But whenever I bring up the term to friends, it sounds feminine and not quite applicable to different genders. However, skin care is not just for women. It's something that benefits everyone – and, especially with time, everyone wants to achieve healthy, glowing and youthful skin.

Use a Daytime Vitamin C Serum

Another gem of any skincare routine should be Vitamin C. Generally, I put vitamin C serum on in the morning. This ingredient is critical to collagen synthesis and also increase photoprotection. Thus I usually put this ingredient on in the morning before

my sunscreen. One key thing I've learned about Vitamin C is to not cheap out! Buying a good Vitamin C will mean you can use the product day in and day out. Moreover, you are more likely to reap the benefits of a good Vitamin C serum. Vitamin C tends to oxidize easily and thus a Vitamin C serum from a no-name company could be of little to no benefit to the skin since it's already oxidized before it even touches your face!

Use an Evening Retinol

Evening retinol should be the foundation of every evening routine. What is retinol you might ask? It is a form of vitamin A that helps stimulate collagen, reduce fine lines, unclog pores, exfoliates skin and increasing skin firmness. It boasts a huge range of benefits and is really the key ingredient with a long history of demonstrated benefits. I use my retinol every evening religiously. However there are a few caveats to using retinol. Firstly, initially starting on a retinol could cause some flaking, irritation, and redness to the skin. However, after your skin adjusts to the compound it will be able to accept even higher (potentially prescription strengths) of retinol. Secondly, when on retinol, sunscreen is a mandatory part of the morning routine. This is because retinol can make your skin more sensitive to the sun, leading to sunspots and pigmentation. Never forget to put on sunscreen when using retinol!



My favorite skincare products include retinol and sunscreen.



My skin is much healthier now with a consistent routine of retinol, vitamin C serum and double cleanse.

Double Cleanse Before Bed

This is another skincare tip that I learned throughout the years. Some days I'd feel lucky if I could even cleanse my skin once! However, makeup on the skin is one of the worst things for skin health. During the day, our skin encounters many environmental pollutants, dust, debris, and perhaps makeup that could irritate and damage the skin. Double cleansing, as the name suggests, means you're cleaning the skin twice. The first time should be with an oil or non-water based cleanser because it removes grease more easily than water. The second cleanse is with water and a gentle water-based cleanser. The second cleanse truly helps unclog pores and allowing your evening serums to penetrate deeper into the skin.

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

Music Review—Uncertain Joys

Jessica Young



Album: *Uncertain Joys*

Artist: The Subways

UK indie-punks, The Subways, have released their fifth album, *Uncertain Joys*. The album is available for streaming anywhere you get your music.

The Subways were formed in 2002, in Hertfordshire, England. The band consists of Billy Lunn on guitar and vocals, Charlotte Cooper on bass and vocals, and Camille Phillips on drums. *Uncertain Joys* was recorded and produced by Billy Lunn himself, which I think is pretty cool.

Uncertain Joys consists of twelve tracks: You Kill My Cool, Love Waiting on You, Uncertain Joys, Incantation, Black Wax, Lavender Amelie, Fight, Influencer Killed The Rock Star, Swanky Al, The Devil and Me, Joli Coeur, and Futures.

The songs “Black Wax”, “Love Waiting on You”, “Fight”, and “You Kill My Cool” were released as singles in 2022, all of which have music videos available on the band’s [YouTube](#). I have to say, the music video for “Love Waiting on You” is absolutely adorable.

I [previously reviewed](#) “Black Wax”, which starts off as the kind of heavy rock song you can feel in your bones, and I was into it right off the bat. Unfortunately, as the song progressed, I thought it fell flat. I kept waiting for *something* to happen—a drop, a face-melting guitar solo, some power from the vocals—but it never did. Listening to “Black Wax” feels like teetering on the edge of a cliff but never actually falling.

After listening to the rest of the album, it seems like this is a consistent problem with The Subways. It's not that that tracks aren't good, they're just lacking a little "oomph". I think "mom rock" is a good descriptor for The Subways. You know, the kind of rock music 40-something suburban white women listen to.

However, two of the songs in particular are especially off-putting.

The first, "The Devil and Me" seems to be a homage to "The Devil Went Down to Georgia" by The Charlie Daniels Band, or perhaps "Tribute" by Tenacious D (although The Subways don't actually acknowledge this anywhere). Unfortunately, I just don't think you can compete with either of those songs, and The Subways' version didn't seem to fit within the rest of the album's style. I didn't like it.

The second, "Fight" is an aggressive social justice anthem—or at least, it's trying to be. From a musical standpoint, for a track that was supposed to be an angry punk anthem, it was still lacking that "oomph". More importantly, this song was obviously written during the height of the Black Lives Matter movement, with lyrics like, "And, now, we all stand up/Join me, and take a knee/Say each and every name/All those who could not breathe."

I have a hard time when artists, celebrities, social media influencers, and corporations briefly jump on the bandwagon of a popular social justice issue because it looks good for the "brand". I can't find any information about The Subways doing any other activist work for Black Lives Matter, and from what I can tell, none of the proceeds from "Fight" were donated to applicable social causes. This is particularly interesting considering the line of the song, "There's no mystery to where we suddenly find ourselves/White men are getting rich off POC in cells". Are The Subways not two white women and a white man profiting off the George Floyd tragedy without actually contributing to the social justice movement attempting to create change? Food for thought.

Overall, I wasn't a fan of *Uncertain Joys*. Check out The Subways on [their website](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#).

Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

AthaU Facebook Group

Over and out. A student wonders if they can access the study guide from a previous course through myAU; replies suggest that it's not possible to go back to view older courses.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "Why is, "I don't have anything to hide," not the best mindset when it comes to data privacy? We chatted with AI ethicist [@katragram](#) for some insight on data and [#DataPrivacy](#). <https://athau.ca/3HBT34b> [#PowerEDbyAU](#)."

Youtube

Follow the leaders. A four-minute look at the recipients of the [Athabasca University 2022 Alumni Awards](#).



Fly on the Wall

The Personal Project of Enlightened Heroism

Jason Sullivan



Standing at a gas station counter there was a prod in my back. A stickup? Nope, an old acquaintance of mine from our rural valley in BC. After the usual introductions, I inquired about his employment; he informed me that new ownership had brought unwelcome changes to his workplace to which he'd expressed disapproval. Shortly thereafter he was out of a job. Bummer. I empathized with him; surely his suggestions were made with the best of intentions. Then, mere moments later at the grocery store another acquaintance saw me and was keen to describe an eerily similar affair. He'd left his former job to pursue greener vocational pastures but upon arrival noted some discrepancies among the work loads of he and his colleagues. Improvements were prescribed by

him to no avail. Shortly, smooth as an icicle sliding off of a soffit, this second acquaintance had lost his job. A trend was developing; after all, a sample size of two is enough for any social scientist to ponder some conclusions. We're built that way! To hear these two fellows tell it, seeking to create or retain enlightened thinking was a risky business. Or maybe enlightenment is by nature more idea than ego; was egoism behind these guys' workplace suggestions?

At AU we can explore these and other intricacies of the human condition; after all, our life is our classroom far more than on the captive confines of a college campus. When we deign to share our newfound knowledge problems can arise; in social sciences, no matter the evidence, facts are eternally contested terrain.

Michel Foucault, postmodern critique of the absolutist monarchy of capital "T" truth and its inextricable link to power and authority, explored the nature of enlightenment and noted Immanuel Kant's line on the topic: "obey, and you will be able to reason as much as you like" (online). Anyone can play logic games, or fantasize about philosophical riddles, but what happens when we put ideals into action? The reality of my two now-unemployed colleagues implied that silence might be golden. Or maybe a certain enlightenment about enlightened viewpoints is required.

Foucault realized that to tease out our selves from the power structures than contain us requires contextual enlightenment. To him, enlightenment's more of an attitude than a series of facts. Foucault suggested that enlightenment is more of a means to approach life than a means to change things. Enlightenment, says Foucault, is "a mode of relating to contemporary reality; a voluntary choice made by certain people; in the end, a way of thinking and feeling; a way, too, of acting and behaving that at one and the same time marks a relation of belonging and presents itself as a task" (online). Now, as McDonald's menus note: smiles are free. And that makes attitude worthless in some ways. Yet, one doesn't have to yield enchanting crystals or obscure incantations to know that the ethos we utilize affects the outcomes we achieve. A curious, actionable attitude can stoke vigorous fires under our individualized education bums. The stars of our own show, we can know that AU is helping us grow in ways unknown. Foucault summarizes this enlightened life stance: "modernity is the attitude that makes it possible to grasp the 'heroic' aspect of the present moment. Modernity is not a phenomenon of sensitivity to the fleeting present; it is the will to "heroize" the present" (online). Most AU courses allow broad swathes of life as part of our assignment research; new ways of seeing old realities are there for the taking if we choose to seize them.

A challenge remains when enlightened thought meets conscious practice. What good be our newfound critical thinking skills if no one will listen to our reasoning? Foucault stated that we must decide how mature we are about our enlightenment, and what consequences we wish to pay for our beliefs.

The Ottawa truckers protest was one example; the willingness to criticize a pet belief of our tutor hits even closer to home. If s/he's, say, a Hegelian then discussing the impossibility of epistemic edifices a la Jean-Francoise Lyotard's critique of science as a way of finding truth shall ring a dissonant note. We might even risk diminished grades unless we realize that we have crossed from well-reasoned discourse over to hallowed ground beyond the pale of ideas and into the personal privy of pure faith.

Enlightenment is contained within our selves and our egos. There's a reason that politics leads to arguments; beliefs become part and parcel to our personal selves. Academically, then, a key learning outcome is to be able to comprehend and defend a perspective from multiple, conflicting, points of view. Beliefs are, invariably the underpinning of much that we present as enlightened rationality. It's not the other way around; no matter how many facts support a thesis the feeling of certainty they induce is itself part of the ego rather than the mind, the heart as opposed to the brain. And anyway, mature enlightenment for Foucault allows for certain contradictions such as "paying one's taxes, while being able to argue as much as one likes about the system of taxation, would be characteristic of the mature state; or again, taking responsibility for parish service, if one is a pastor, while reasoning freely about religious dogmas" (online).

Anyone can debate on social media or imbibe endless hours of Ted Talks evangelism and still basically live the same workaday life as a person two generations earlier. Ironically, reason without action may seem meaningless, but is in the end no more empty than enlightenment prescribed to no avail or confusing our egos with our knowledge.

Reference

Foucault, M. (1984). 'What is Enlightenment?' *The Foucault Reader*. Retrieved from <https://foucault.info/documents/foucault.whatIsEnlightenment.en/#edn2>

Jason Hazel-rah Sullivan is a Masters of Integrated Studies student who loves engaging in discourse while working in the sunny orchards and forests of the Okanagan.

More AU-thentic Events

Book Talk—Forced Migration in Africa: The Case of Liberian Refugees in Ghana

Thur, Feb 9, 9:00 to 10:30 am MST

Online

Hosted by AU Library

news.athabascau.ca/events/forced-migration-in-africa-the-case-of-liberian-refugees-in-ghana/

RSVP through above link

MBA for Executives Webinar

Thur, Feb 9, 10:00 to 11:00 am MST

Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business

news.athabascau.ca/events/mba-for-executives-webinar-20230209/

RSVP through above link

Library Chat

Thur, Feb 9, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm MST

Online

Hosted by AU Library

www.athabascau.ca/library/index.html

No pre-registration needed; access through chat box on home page

Making Writing Accessible:

The writing process

Thur, Feb 9, 12:30 to 1:30 pm MST

Online

Hosted by AU's Write Site

news.athabascau.ca/events/making-writing-accessible/

Register through above link

Politics, Voting, & Inclusion of the Black Community in Canadian Governance

Thur, Feb 9, 5:00 to 6:00 pm MST

Online via Zoom

Hosted by AUSU

www.ausu.org/event/politics-voting-inclusion-of-the-black-community-in-canadian-governance/

RSVP through above link

All events are free unless otherwise noted.

Beyond Literary Landscapes Classic American Literature

Natalia Iwanek



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

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

Who

In continuing with my focus on classics in literature, this week this column focuses on Classic American Literature. Although various periods exist, in particular, this column

centres its attention on the 19 and 20 centuries, with a few examples of the 18 century.

Many AU literature students may be familiar with many of these well-known American authors, including Herman Melville, Ralph Ellison, J.D. Salinger, Ken Kesey, Zora Neale Hurston, Richard Wright, James Baldwin, Alice Walker, William Faulkner, Jack Kerouac, Maya Angelou, John Steinbeck, and Ernest Hemingway,

What

Some examples of Classic American Literature include *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville, *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison, *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* by Ken Kesey, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston, *Native Son* by Richard Wright, *Go Tell it to the Mountain* by James Baldwin, *The Colour Purple* by Alice Walker, *The Sound and the Fury* by William Faulkner, *On the Road* by Jack Kerouac, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou, *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck, and *The Sun Also Rises* by Ernest Hemingway.

Where

These novels are set throughout the United States, including the East Coast and the South.

When

Many of these novels take place during the 18, 19, and 20-centuries.

Why

These novels may be of interest to AU students who would like to learn more about Classic American Literature, as well as those interested in timeless themes, such as love, loss, and mourning. These novels also deal with many difficult topics, such as migration, racism, impoverishment, and classism.

How

AU’s wide range of diverse courses make it easy to study this topic in depth. Courses related to Classic American Literature are available in a variety of disciplines, including one’s that may fit

into your Degree Works. (Always check with an AU counsellor to see if these particular courses fulfill your personal graduation requirements!)

AU students interested in learning more about this topic may enroll in ENGL 344: American Literature I, a senior-level, three-credit course, which “introduces students to American literature, its history and development, and its rich variety of forms and techniques.” (Note various prerequisites are required, including ENGL 211: Prose Forms and ENGL 212: Poetry and Plays or a first year English course.)

Students may also be interested in ENGL 345: American Literature II, another three-credit, senior-level course, which “takes as its focus works of American literature written from approximately 1900 to 1950.” (Please note that the same prerequisites as above are required.) Happy reading!

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

Homemade is Better Red Beans and Rice

Chef Corey 



I have been hesitant to make this dish; I have tried so many previous times to make it work and make it taste like my sister-in-law's. Her recipe comes from her mother-in-law, who lived in New Orleans for a few years. This isn't that recipe, but I finally felt like I had gotten my recipe and method to a state where it wasn't too runny or thick.

While reading about red beans and rice, I noticed that many authors refer to this as a Monday night dish. The story goes back to when we had to do laundry by hand. The women would spend the entire day doing laundry (probably not much different from today, at least in our house); thus, red beans and rice were a perfect meal because they could put all the ingredients into a pot and let them cook on low heat for many hours. In addition, Sunday night's dinner was often ham and using the ham bone in the dish was a great way of stretching ingredients. When money was

tight, which I would guess was often, stretching ingredients into other meals was one way of getting more bang for your buck. We usually have leftovers during the week, or with meals like this one, we freeze any remaining portions and thaw them later.

I wrote about leftovers briefly in a previous article about turkey leftovers. I didn't mention it much in my meal planning article, but eating your leftovers is a great way of putting your grocery bill on a diet. Some leftovers cannot be changed, like lasagna, but a ham dinner with a bone in it can be used for red beans and rice. The ham can make sandwiches or toppings for pizza or salads. Other proteins like roast beef, chicken, or pork roast can also be used differently. Roast beef makes a great hot beef sandwich, as long as you have gravy!



Red Beans and Rice

Ingredients:

1 tbsp canola oil or bacon fat
 1 onion, diced
 1 green pepper, diced
 2 stalks of celery, diced
 3-4 cloves of garlic sliced
 1 pound of dry red kidney beans
 2L cold water
 1-2 ham hocks
 1 pound Andouille sausage
 2 Bay Leaves
 1 tbsp of Creole seasoning (you can make your own or buy some at the store)
 1/2 tsp thyme
 1/2 sage powder
 1-2 cups of cooked rice



Directions:

1. Grab a heavy-bottomed pot and turn your burner to high.
2. Add the oil or bacon grease and let it warm up for one minute.
3. Add the onions, green pepper, and garlic and sweat them stirring often for about 5 minutes. Turn your heat down to medium or low if it is starting to burn or brown. You do not want to brown the vegetables.
4. Add the celery and sweat for another two minutes.
5. Add the spices, sausage, beans, and hocks.
6. Stir for one minute, then turn the heat up to high if you turned it down.
7. Add the water and bring the mixture to a boil.
8. Once boiling, turn the heat to a simmer and cook for five hours. Stir it every 30 minutes to prevent stuff from sticking.
9. In the last 30 minutes of cooking, make your rice.
10. Serve with a bit of hot sauce if you want to spice things up.



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

How to Solve a Problem

Marie Well



I'm learning to be a critical thinker. I'd like to show you how to apply critical thinking to achieving an AU degree. You may want an undergraduate or graduate degree but feel apprehensive about pursuing one. If so, here is a process for critical thinking you may benefit from applying:

First, you take that goal—finishing a university degree—and write out all the obstacles it yields. Here is a potential list of barriers to the pursuit of an undergraduate or graduate degree:

- I don't have the time available for my loved ones.
- I must work to finance the lifestyle I desire.
- I won't be healthy on a poor diet.
- I might have anxiety attacks that thwart my goal.
- I won't have the office supplies I need to do a good job.
- I've lost the excellent study habits I once had.

So, the next step is to invert those goals into their opposites. So, this is what they now look like for getting a graduate or undergraduate degree:

- I have the time available for my loved ones.
- I finance most of the lifestyle I desire on a student income.
- I am healthy on a lower income.
- I know techniques to keep anxiety at bay.
- I have all the office supplies I need.
- I have more study skills now than ever.

So, now that we have these opposite objections, we can begin to solve them. So, the basic idea is that you now have reverse objections. And the goal is to live up to them.

To explain, let's take the first one: How might you have all the office supplies you need? You can gradually acquire all the essential office supplies you need before enrolling. As another example, how might you learn techniques to keep anxiety at bay? You could take part-time instead of full-time studies for the degree program. And, yet another example, how might you fund the lifestyle you desire but on a lower income? You could have an inexpensive home gym, a public library card, and a meditation routine. Regardless of your preference, when you take the above steps to problem-solving, you can readily see that your dreams are realizable.

So, what if you had a goal of earning a million a year, although you are presently on low-income support? Have you ever told someone you dreamed of making six figures, and they quipped back, "Why not a million?" With that in mind, here are three obstacles to the million a year salary goal.

- I need to gain the skills for leadership roles in big companies.
- I have disabilities that could hold me back.
- I only do well in remote work.
- I don't want to give up exercise to perform at my peak at work.
- I don't know what jobs will take me to that goal.

The list goes on. So, here are the opposites of the above:

- I have a solid knowledge of the skills needed for leadership roles in big companies.
- My disabilities benefit my income-earning potential.
- I do well in remote and office work.
- I exercise while I work, which helps me perform at my peak.
- I know what jobs will take me to million dollar goal.

Then, take each one and find ways to realize them. For instance, you can exercise at work by commuting on a bicycle or cycling under your desk.

So, that's the start of a way to solve problems. No problem can hold you back from trying to realize your dreams. Honestly, I believe your potential has no upper limit. And infinite opportunities are everywhere.



Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: Foundation Scholarships

Sponsored by: Children's Aid Foundation of Canada

Deadline: March 13, 2023

Potential payout: \$2500 to \$5000

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be, or have been, a permanent ward of a Child Welfare Agency for at least 12 months, or are/were eligible for a provincial or territorial extended care program such as Continued Care and Support for Youth (CCSY) or Voluntary Youth Services Agreement (VYSA); be between the ages of 18 and 30 when starting or continuing in your program; and attending or will be attending a program at a post-secondary institution, either full-time or on a reduced program due to an accommodation, for a full academic year starting in either September 2023 or January 2024.

What's required: An online application form (the details of which are only revealed after setting up a login), along with an academic transcript.

Tips: Read the [Most Asked Questions PDF](#) for tips on completing the application.

Where to get info: cafdn.org/for-youth/educational-support/





Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

The Lights of Christmas

Dear Barb:

I am a middle-aged woman who is married with three adult children. I work long hours in a busy, fast-paced environment, so I do not have a lot of extra time. Any free time that I do have I like to spend it with my family and friends. However, I have a work colleague who I briefly chat with at work, but she is asking me to have dinner and a coffee and get together socially outside of work. She has a business and I fear she might be trying to get me involved and I am not interested.

She is nice enough, but I am too busy and don't have time for my own friends, let alone a new friend. How do I tell her that I don't want to get together outside of work without having it negatively impact our work relationship?

Thanks, Judith.

Hi Judith:

That is a great question. You didn't mention whether she is a new friend, or if you have socialized with her in the past and don't want to continue. It's difficult to decline social invitations, but when your plate is full, then you have no alternative but to decline or you will be disappointing someone else. Of course, you must keep your social/work relationships cordial and friendly, and sometimes boundaries are necessary to accomplish this.

You said you believe she may be trying to get you involved in her business, perhaps you can start there. The next time she brings up the business, clearly state that you

are not interested, but be polite and friendly. You could say, "I admire your energy, but that is not something I could do at this point in my life, as I am too busy. In fact, I barely have time for my family and friends." If her goal is clearly to get you involved in her business, she most likely will not pursue getting together socially. However, if she does suggest again that you get together socially, you could mention that you may have time for a quick coffee after work. This way you are not jeopardizing your relationship, but rather are making it clear that your time is limited. You could also tell her that you would love to, but your calendar is pretty full, and you will let her know when you have time to get together. Continue to be friendly with her at work, and if you can, enjoy a quick coffee and chat, but keep it light, don't share a lot of personal information.

It's a fine line, but you have to choose your priorities.

Thank you for your excellent letter, Judith.

Email your questions to voice@voicemagazine.org. Some submissions may be edited for length or to protect confidentiality; your real name and location will never be printed. This column is for entertainment only. The author is not a professional counsellor and this column is not intended to take the place of professional advice.



Poet Maeve
Fall From Grace

Wanda Waterman

WELL, I'M NOT MAYOR ANYMORE.



SO SORRY, CHRISTY.
I KNOW IT MEANT
A LOT TO YOU.



IT WAS GREAT
WHILE IT LASTED!
AND I CAN ALWAYS
TELL PEOPLE
I WAS MAYOR ONCE!



IT DOES LOOK GOOD
ON A RESUME.
BUT WHAT IF
THEY ASK YOU
WHY YOU HAD
SUCH A
SHORT STINT?



I CAN TWEAK THE DATES A LITTLE.



OOOOF COURSE YOU CAN.





"In the end we will remember not the words
of our enemies but the silence of our friends"

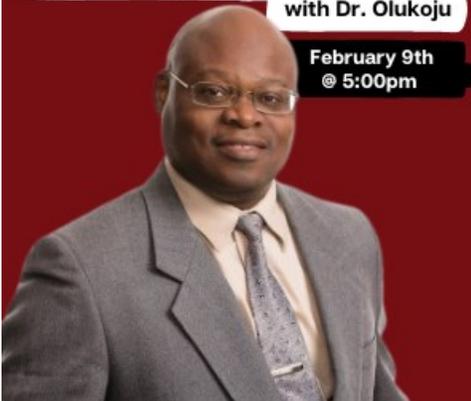
- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr

**AU
SU** February Events

**RSVP On
Eventbrite**

Politics, Voting, and Inclusion of the Black
Community in Canadian Governance
with Dr. Olukoju

February 9th
@ 5:00pm



Join us on Feb. 9 at 5 p.m. MT
on Zoom and celebrate Black
History Month with Dr. Olukoju
from AU as he discusses [Politics,
Voting, and the Inclusion of the
Black Community in Canadian
Governance](#). Dr. Olukoju holds a
Ph.D. in Public Policy and
Administration and a second in
Theology.

[RSVP on Eventbrite!](#)

Velma Morgan on
OPERATION **VOTE**
CANADA

February 15
@ 5:00pm



Then return Feb. 15 at 5 p.m.
MT to celebrate with Velma
Morgan during [An Introduction
to Operation Black Vote
Canada](#). OBVC works to ensure
that equity is activated in our
democratic institutions in order
to create opportunities for
Black Canadians to fully engage
civically at all levels in Canada.

[RSVP on Eventbrite!](#)

**AU
SU** Athabasca University
Students' Union

**2023 By-Election
BECOME A
LEADER
ON STUDENT COUNCIL**

Nominations Open February 13

**Council By-Election Nominations
Open Feb. 13**

Feb. 13 is the start of
the 2023 Student Council By-
Election with nominations opening
for all AU undergrads like
you. Voting will take place March
16-21 to fill two (2) available seats
on AU Student Council. More
details to come! Questions?
Email us at ausu@ausu.org.

Provided by

ausu@ausu.org

CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

Ph: 855.497.7003

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Jason Sullivan, Wanda Waterman, Xine Wang and others!

www.voicemagazine.org

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