

# the insider

A newsletter published for everyone in the Athabasca University community

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Emeritus professor Dr. Robert Holmberg, one of the featured speakers for ARBRI Day 2012 on March 14, outlined the background and vision of the Athabasca River Basin Research Institute.



Posted on The Landing:  
<https://landing.athabascau.ca>

Athabasca University 

# AU and TEC Edmonton Explore Opportunities to Commercialize Research



AU and TEC Edmonton, an incubator and accelerator of innovative northern Alberta start-up companies, have formed a partnership to look at opportunities for developing faculty research into commercial products and services.

According to Terry Beckman, an assistant professor of marketing in the Faculty of Business and a member of the steering committee for the partnership, Alberta Advanced Education and Technology has encouraged AU to move further into research, development and commercialization as a way of increasing research opportunities for faculty members, the university's impact on the Alberta economy and knowledge transfer to the greater community.

TEC Edmonton has worked with many research and development partners and has considerable expertise in creating university spin-off enterprises. It takes great ideas developed through university research and ultimately turns them into great companies, Beckman said.

Supported by [Alberta Innovates – Technology Futures](#) funding, AU and TEC Edmonton will identify potential commercial opportunities within the university, do market analyses for potential products and, within a year, develop a solid business plan for at least one potential AU spinoff company.

A number of important things are being developed through the partnership, Beckman said. Firstly, AU is developing knowledge of and expertise in research and development commercialization. “As we are new in this area, a big part of what we are doing, and what TEC Edmonton is helping us with, is understanding this whole area.”

Secondly, research and development commercialization processes and policies are being developed. Some of these are internal, such as a form

that faculty can use to submit their research ideas and policies affecting intellectual property rights. But others are external; for example, processes for passing projects on to TEC Edmonton or other external partners and for transitioning from research to a commercial product or company.

“TEC has taken a very hands-on approach to our projects,” Beckman said, “which I think is appropriate given our stage in this venture. They also have specialists on staff who can help out as needed; for example, intellectual property specialists, market analysis specialists, managers with entrepreneurial experience, etc. In addition, they have been good about including us in their activities, such as specialist workshops, that are of benefit in educating us about commercialization issues.”

Beckman thinks TEC is also benefiting from the relationship with AU. “For example, instead of focusing primarily on spin-off companies for research projects, we have encouraged them to include other avenues of commercialization in the process like licensing, royalties and partnerships. They seem to be quite amenable to our suggestions and are willing to apply them. And, as you might expect, they are learning more about e-learning.”

Over the next year, the steering committee will develop more formal processes affecting the commercialization of research and work to ensure that all faculty members understand the processes and how they could become a part of this initiative as they uncover new ideas through their research.

The transformation from inventor to entrepreneur has started. The committee is already reviewing some faculty submissions, but it is too soon to tell which promising ideas or research projects will develop into commercially viable products or how long that process might take.

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## AU MBA Makes *Financial Times* List

A March 12, 2012, *Financial Times* special report on online business education lists AU as one of the world's top 48 providers of online MBA programs and includes an article by AU MBA student Brigida Scholten.

The special report looks at online MBAs and how schools are struggling to stand out in a highly competitive market. AU is the only Canadian university included in the list of top providers.

Scholten, who is successfully balancing part-time study with full-time employment in an Ontario healthcare organization, profiles her experience in her article “A Path of Study that Demands Planning and Will.”

Scholten will complete the MBA program at the end of April. “Although the road I have travelled has been long and, at times, arduous, requiring discipline and dedication, the reward has been worth it,” she writes. “We live in times of profound change and I believe we do ourselves a disservice if we are not always striving to develop and improve. . . . Three years of reading, writing and reflecting have changed me. I am clearer about my goals and motivation. My confidence and determination to lead and transform an organization have never been stronger.”



# A Gift from the Heart Keeps Passion for Learning Alive

by Cathy Nickel

Emily Schuett (right) presents the Janssen bequest to AU to Tara Friesen.

William Janssen loved to learn. A self-educated pioneer and long-time resident of Woking, a small community in Alberta's northern Peace Country, he was excited by books and reading, committed to making his community better and keenly interested in young people.

When Janssen (Willy to his friends) passed away in June 2010 at the age of 85, his will brought those passions together in a poignant and meaningful way. AU was one of several local organizations he chose to support. He provided \$50,000 to enrich scholarships and bursaries. This bequest is one of the donations contributing to AU's Open Our World Campaign, set to launch publicly this spring.

"Willy was always reading and learning and always encouraging his neighbours and the kids in his life to read more and learn more," said Tara Friesen, manager of alumni relations and philanthropy. "He appreciated how AU's distance learning model made it possible for

people to stay in the community and continue their studies."

Janssen was good friends with his neighbour Krista Schuett, and he asked that Schuett's 12-year-old daughter Emily present his bequests to recipient organizations. His wishes were honoured at an AU student and alumni event on December 1, 2011.

"It was quite heartwarming," Friesen said. "Emily talked about how important education was to Willy, and it was clear that AU was very much part of a larger passion for him."

Janssen's generosity is a prime example of how, with planning, a person can support a lifelong passion and help future generations to share in it.

"These are gifts that truly come from the heart," Friesen said. "Bequest giving is an effective way to support the causes you believe in and to keep your memory alive. With

advance planning, you can look after your family's needs and also help organizations do their work."

The process is relatively simple. It begins with conversations with family, a lawyer or financial advisor and, ideally, the receiving organization. AU, for example, can help with the wording of a bequest to ensure that one's wishes are properly carried out.

"Planning your will can give you peace of mind," Friesen said. "You know that everyone is taken care of, and you create a legacy. When you give to AU, your memory lives on in the accomplishments of the students who are supported. The amount of money doesn't have to be large in order to make a difference. Philanthropy is a word everyone can embrace."

To learn more about creating your own AU legacy, email [Tara Friesen](mailto:Tara.Friesen@au.ca) or call her at 1-800-788-9041, extension 7319.

## AU Recognized as a Healthy, Happy Workplace

The Government of Alberta has honoured AU for making its workplace healthier and happier. The university was one of nine Alberta employers to receive a 2011 Premier's Award for Healthy Workplaces.

AU received an Award of Merit in the large workplaces category (1000 or more employees). The award was presented to occupational health and safety advisor Nichole Collins and instructional media designer Gabriela Husch on March 13 at the provincial Legislature.

Awarded annually, the Premier's Award for Healthy Workplaces is designed to recognize Alberta employers that provide strategies, initiatives, policies or programs that promote, support and enhance a healthy workplace and the efforts of workers to remain healthy at work and beyond through physical activity, active living and healthy eating.

Collins and Husch were selected to receive the award on AU's behalf as a result of their commitment to employee wellness. Husch was the featured employee in AU's application for the award because of the time, energy and enthusiasm she devoted to health and wellness initiatives. Collins has played a leading role in developing the health and wellness programs offered to AU employees.

More information about the Premier's Award for Healthy Workplaces is available on the [Healthy Alberta website](http://HealthyAlberta.ca).

# Arts and Science Research Talks

## Self-regulation and the Post-secondary Distance Learner

In February, Dr. Linda Chmiliar, an associate professor of inclusive education in the Centre for Social Sciences, described her recent study of the self-regulation skills of AU students.

Chmiliar gathered information on self-regulation areas that students have difficulties with, whether or not students would be interested in improving their self-regulation skills, the areas they would like to improve in and the mode in which they would prefer to receive self-regulation instruction.

All students reported difficulties in some areas of self-regulation, Chmiliar found, regardless of how successful they were in their courses. A majority indicated that they would be interested in improving their skills in specific areas, and several strategies for receiving that instruction were identified. To prepare post-secondary students for success in their learning environment, she concluded, attention should be given to teaching self-regulation skills and supporting their development.

## Social Movements and Trade Unions in an Age of Austerity

In early March, Dr. Paul Kellogg, an assistant professor in the Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies presented a historical reflection on the Days of Action in Ontario in the late 1990s.

Kellogg identified two themes that shaped the overall project: the relationship between social movements outside the workplace and union struggles themselves, and the relationship between the energetic inexperience of newly-active union members and the pessimistic institutional experience embodied in a quite developed layer of full-time union officials. Kellogg focused on the former theme, the dialectic between social movements and trade unions in the Days of Action, in his presentation.

Both presentations were recorded and can be accessed through the [Research Centre website](#).

## Upcoming Presentations

In a special Arts and Science Research Talks presentation on Thursday, April 5, Dr. Douglas Hube, professor emeritus of the University of Alberta, will be talking about the Venus Transit, a rare astronomical event that will occur in June.

The next regular speaker, Allison Kydd of the Centre for Humanities, will present “Cultural Appropriation or Honouring the Experiences of Others: The Writer’s Dilemma” on Friday, April 20.

## First AU Graduate Student Conference

AU will sponsor its first graduate student conference, Research and the Knowledge Frontier in an Online Environment, at the Holiday Inn Express in Edmonton, September 14 to 16. Participants may attend in person or virtually.

The conference theme underlines AU’s mission and goals as a leader in open and distance education. The event will highlight the work being done by AU graduate students using the latest distance technology to facilitate interactive discourse and will enable students and faculty members to discuss research in a traditional face-to-face format.

### Call for Abstracts

Please encourage graduate students from all disciplines to submit a proposal for an oral presentation or a poster, both of which can be presented either in-person or virtually. Abstracts must be submitted electronically on the [conference website](#) by April 15, 2012.

Additional information about the conference and the process for abstract submissions is also available on the website. Please refer any questions to the [Faculty of Graduate Studies](#).

## Resources Added to the Write Site

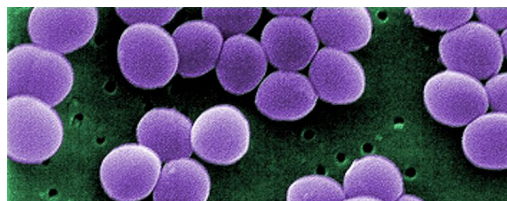
### Two new resources have been added to the Write Site.

A [new resource on using transitions](#) in writing will be useful to students who have problems with paragraph coherence or structure in their writing.

A [new glossary of grammatical terms](#) is also available. Students for whom English is a second or additional language, those taking writing courses or those trying to improve their writing skills will find it useful.

For further information, please contact the [Write Site co-ordinator Linda McCloud-Bondoc](#).

## Superbugs



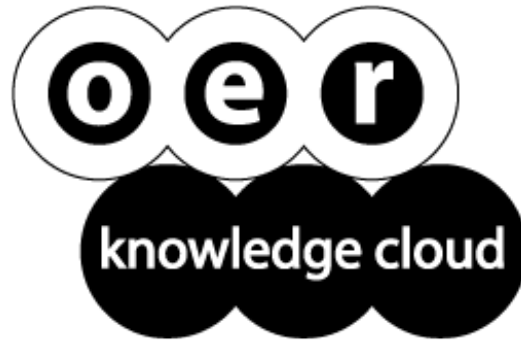
The increase of antimicrobial resistant bacteria is the subject of the next Science Outreach – Athabasca presentation to held in the Governing Council Chambers at AU Athabasca from 7 to 8:30 p.m. on April 3.

Dr. Shauna Reckseidler-Zenteno of the Centre for Science will talk about

- how antibiotics work to eliminate bacteria
- the development of antibiotic resistance
- the impact of antibiotic resistance on health and agriculture
- preventive measures that can be taken in the fight against emerging resistance

Admission is free and refreshments will be available after the presentation. More information is available on the [Science Outreach-Athabasca website](#).

# AU's Open Education Week Event a Success



AU's contribution to Open Education Week, the web-cast Open Education Resources: Opportunities and Challenges in Distance Education, featuring a panel of internationally known promoters and developers of open educational resources was held on March 8. The successful event drew more than 75 participants.

Sponsored by the UNESCO/Commonwealth of Learning Chair in Open Educational Resources, the Centre for Learning Design and Development and the Advancement Office, the webcast focused on the importance of OER in distance education. The moderator was Tracey Woodburn, and participants included Dr. Cindy Ives, Rachel Conroy, Steve Schafer, Dr. Terry Anderson and Dr. Martin Connors. Tony Tin and Colin Elliott of the AU Library showcased the new OER Knowledge Cloud repository.

Further information about the event and a podcast of the presentation is available on the [OER Knowledge Cloud](#).

Open Education Week, held March 5 to 10, was organized by the Open Courseware Consortium and featured online and locally hosted events around the world. The purpose of Open Education Week was to raise awareness of the open education movement and its impact on teaching and learning worldwide.

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## Administrative Systems Renewal Project to Increase Efficiency

The Administrative Systems Renewal Project, a \$5.1 million project launched in January by the vice-president information technology, the vice-president finance and administration and the associate vice-president academic (student services), will create a single efficient and integrated system for the university's core administrative information.

The project aims to provide university employees with an integrated administrative system, allowing for more efficient data entry and data collection and improved access to information. The system will also offer additional self-service capabilities to access finance and human resource information.

During Strategic University Plan consultations last year, a recurring theme was that AU needed a more integrated system for sharing and managing information. The systems now in use are closed, with limited functionality and restricted access, said manager of administrative information systems Tracy Boyde, who will be managing the renewal project.

AU has been using the Banner student information system since the late 1990s, Boyde said, and it is due to be upgraded to a new version. The system being used by Finance is at the end of its life, and the payroll system used by Human Resources does not meet many of the department's other system needs. This renewal project represents an opportunity to upgrade and integrate all three systems and to

provide increased functionality to the Finance and Human Resources departments and their clients, he said.

The ASRP consists of two projects: upgrading the existing Banner student information system and replacing the administrative systems now used in Finance and Human Resources with new Banner products.

A new Banner Suite, containing Banner Student, Banner Finance and Banner HR, will put all information in the same database. There will be a single entry point for inputting information and, where appropriate, data can be shared across the entire system. The Banner Suite will also contain Banner Relationship Management, a product that will improve the ability to track prospective students and aid in the development of student recruiting and retention campaigns and communication and marketing plans, Boyde said.

The project will involve many AU staff members, particularly those in Computing Services, Finance, Human Resources and the Office of the Registrar. Banner Finance will be operational by March or April of 2013 and Banner HR by December 2013. The Banner Student upgrade will be completed by February 2014.

Over the coming months, a [project website](#) will provide updates. Contact [Boyde](#), (phone, 780-675-6562) with any questions.

# Call for Nominations: Bryon Paege Memorial Award

CUPE Local 3911 is accepting nominations for the 2012 Bryon Paege Memorial Award. This annual award (\$762 this year, approximately the value of one three-credit AU course) is sponsored by Local 3911 and will be presented at the end of May. The nomination deadline is May 11, 2012.

Any AU tutor, counsellor or advisor and any AU student can nominate a candidate. Self-nominations are also accepted.

A nominee must be enrolled in an AU course or have successfully completed one within the six months preceding the nomination deadline and must have demonstrated commendable courage or resourcefulness in overcoming or coping with a particular challenge or adversity in order to pursue distance education studies. Challenges or adversities could include financial hardship, being a member of a minority or marginalized group required to adjust to mainstream Canadian academic culture, physical disability or health problems, personal loss (e.g., of a family member or a job), adjustments to a new country or culture, difficult past or present family circumstances, or other challenges that in the view of the nominator corresponds with the spirit of these criteria.

The committee will make its best effort to select a worthy recipient from among those nominated, and its decision is final.

Printable versions of this notice and of the nomination form are posted on the [CUPE 3911 website](#).

Tutor, counsellor and advisor nominators must obtain written consent for disclosure of personal information from their nominee. A model for such consent is also available on the award website. Student nominations and self-nominations must be accompanied by a written reference from a teaching, counselling or advising member of an academic community.

Questions about this award, should be addressed to the administrator, [Jackie Routh](#).

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## Benning Receives Role Model Award

Jackie Benning, a student completing an AU degree through Grande Prairie Regional College, was one of eight young people receiving Role Model Awards at the thirteenth annual Spirit Seekers Youth Conference held at Grande Prairie Regional College in February. Benning was recognized for educational achievement.

“It means quite a bit to me because it comes from the community and it comes from the youth...It’s just that recognition and being called a role model is quite an honour.” Benning told the *Daily Herald Tribune*.

“In addition to her studies, Benning, who is Métis, volunteers with local student group the Circle of Aboriginal Students,” wrote reporter Dan Ilika.

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## New from Eve Comrie: Sully’s Lucky Break

Put down your iPads and e-readers and pick up a coil-bound children’s book created by a talented crew at AU.

Sully’s Lucky Break, the second children’s book to be written by course materials editor Eve Comrie, is illustrated by Joan Sherman and printed by the talented crew in Materials Management. It will make even the most disgruntled reader smile.

Sherman’s rich and detailed illustrations bring the tale of a lonely old lady and a tiny talking deer mouse to life . . . but the story is not without its dark side.

Copies of the book are available from [Comrie](#) for \$15 each.

### Sully’s Lucky Break



Told by Eve Comrie and illustrated by Joan Sherman



# Where is This? Contest Winner

Though the most recent Where is This? photo contest riddle was very challenging, almost everyone was on the right track in thinking that the photo had an arts connection. Some contestants guessed it had been taken at the Citadel Theatre in Edmonton; others, at an art gallery. Still others guessed that it had been snapped in Toronto.

Two people correctly identified the Frank Ghery staircase in Walker Court at the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto. And, guess what? They both win fabulous prizes.

Because this was such a challenging riddle, Advancement has agreed to provide two prizes.

Kay Johnson and Gail Leicht will both receive lovely AU throws.

Thanks very much to everyone who took the time to enter. Another Where is This? contest will appear soon.

Another view of the staircase.

## Looking for Science Fair Judges

École Rudolph Hennig School in Fort Saskatchewan is looking for volunteers to judge their ninth annual Elementary Science Fair and Junior High Science Fair, both of which will be held from 1 to 3 p.m. on Wednesday, May 9.

Judges from a wide variety of backgrounds (scientists, engineers, educators, parents, post-secondary students, post-graduate students, politicians, trustees, media, retirees and members of the clergy or the military) are welcome.

Some of the students are in a French immersion program, so the school is looking for as many French-speaking judges as possible to allow the students the opportunity to practice their French outside of the classroom.

If you are available to judge, please contact the [school office](#) (phone, 780-998-2216) indicating the times that you are available. Everything that you need to judge the projects will be made available to you when you arrive at the school or, if you prefer, the evaluation criteria can be made available beforehand.



### DID YOU KNOW?

Athabasca University's Facebook page has over 1,800 fans.

Check it out at [www.facebook.com/Athabasca.University](http://www.facebook.com/Athabasca.University)

If you would like something posted onto the AU Facebook page, please contact [Michael Shouldice](#).



*The Insider* is published for AU faculty and staff members and other members of the AU community by the Advancement Office.

Please send any information or photographs for inclusion to the [co-ordinator](#). If a photo opportunity presents itself, please contact [Blaise MacMullin](#). Due to FOIP regulations, a release form must accompany all photos. Please contact *The Insider* co-ordinator for a copy of the release form.

The next edition of *The Insider* will be published on April 10. The deadline for submissions is March 30.

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