

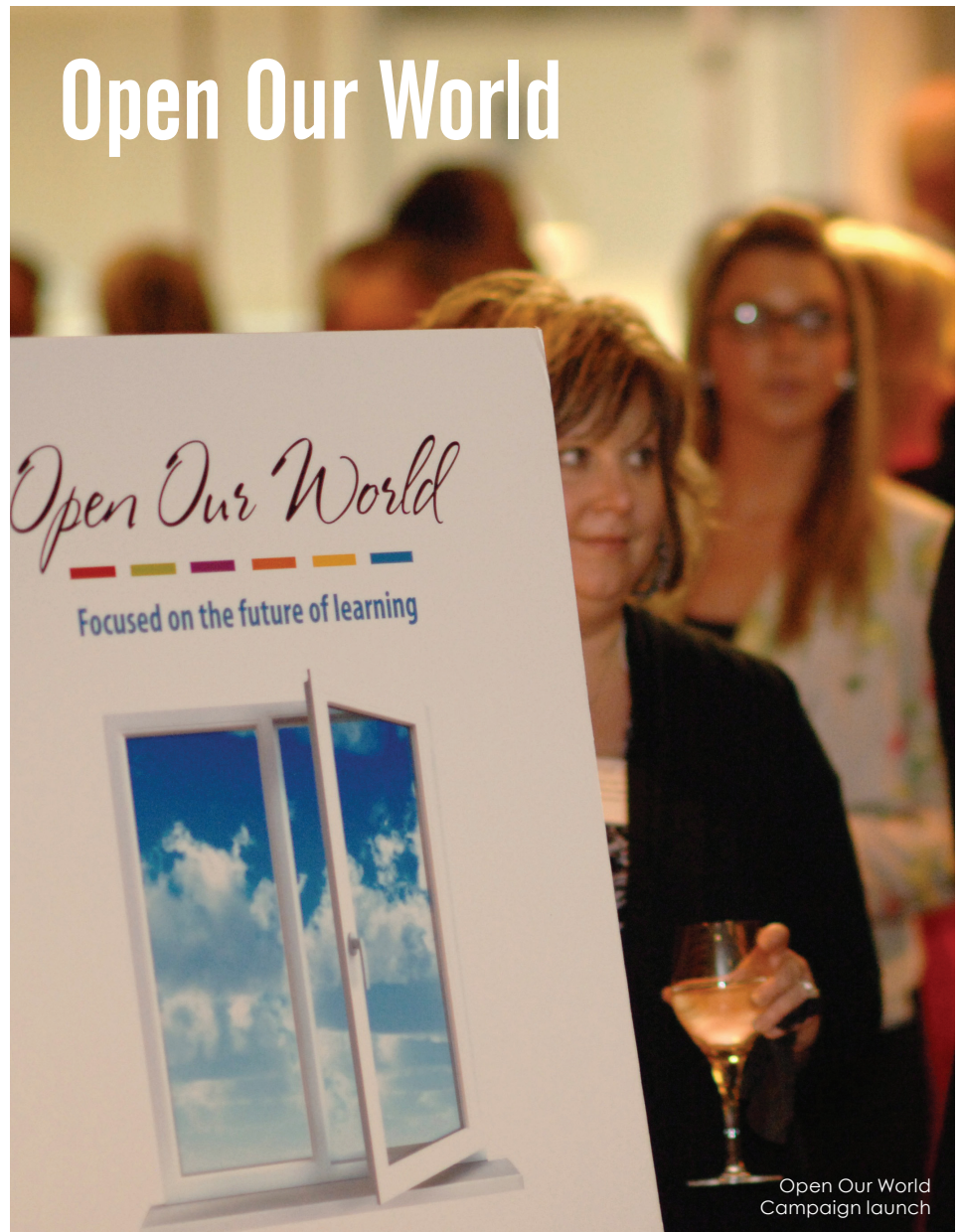
the insider

A newsletter published for everyone in the Athabasca University community

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IN THIS ISSUE:

- 2 Open Our World
- 3 AUGO II Opens
- 4 LAC 2012 Proceedings
- 4 Career Identity
- 5 Athabasca Nature Walk
- 5 Grad Student Conference
- 6 People in the News
- 7 Oilers Promote Nursing
- 7 Relay for Life



COVER IMAGE »

AU's Open Our World fundraising campaign kicked off in Edmonton on June 24. In its final public phase, Open Our World will focus on student awards, research, community service and learning innovation. See page 2.

Open Our World
Campaign launch



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

Athabasca University 

Open Our World Goes Public



AU's Open Our World Campaign launch in Edmonton.

by Erin Ottosen

AU'S OPEN OUR WORLD CAMPAIGN WENT public on May 23 and 24. Launch events held in Athabasca and Edmonton attracted about 200 friends, supporters, partners, faculty and staff members, alumni and students. A third public launch event is scheduled for June 20 at Lougheed House in Calgary.

"It's now time to announce the campaign to the public, to make people aware of our priorities and to finish the fundraising," said campaign cabinet chair Heather Kennedy, a member of AU's Board of Governors and vice-president of in-situ projects at Suncor Energy.

Initiated in 2008, the campaign, which is focused on the future of learning, has already achieved 75 per cent of its \$30-million fundraising goal, thanks to the support of over 300 donors. During its final, public phase, Open Our World will focus on four priority areas: student awards, research, community service and learning innovation.

"Athabasca University is a leader and a pioneer in flexible, accessible online learning, and we're focused on the future of learning," said Kennedy. "To lead us into that future, we need the best resources and support that we can gather. The world is changing more quickly than it ever has, and for education to keep up with that change and stay relevant and meet students' needs, which are ever increasing, it's got to be nimble, flexible, accessible and responsive. AU wants to stay at the forefront of that."

Two alumni members who addressed guests at the Athabasca and Edmonton events underlined how AU's accessibility and flexibility make a difference in the lives of students.

"Distance learning [through AU] made it possible for me to keep my job while studying and to be able to study from the community of my choice," Brian Hall told the Athabasca gathering. "Speaking for myself and, I'm sure, many of my classmates, few of us would have advanced our education had it not been for the AU distance learning format."

AU enabled Heather Ruhl, who spoke in Edmonton, to earn a degree after life events conspired against her completing her education at a traditional university. "I spent a year trying to fit in the box I thought I wanted," she said. After running into roadblocks at other institutions, she received a different response when she approached AU. "Over and over, I heard, 'We can do that. We can do that. We can do that.' And the AU experience did not stop there: my ordinary university program became an extraordinary university program."

The Open Our World Campaign Cabinet and the president and Board of Governors of AU invite you to learn more about Open Our World in Calgary on June 20. For more information visit [Open Our World](#) online.

A Few of Our Favourite Things

Guests attending the Open Our World Campaign events in Athabasca and Edmonton shared some of their favourite things about AU:

"For me, it's the whole idea that, for most of the students, this is their first opportunity in their whole family for somebody to be university-educated. Anything that makes that offering to our society is really remarkable." – James Carter, honorary chair, Open Our World Campaign Cabinet

"I love the accessibility of [AU]. I love that I can make it work with my schedule. I have to work full-time and support myself, and with a lot of other universities, it would be really hard for me to maintain a good GPA and work and get everything done that I need to do. So it's the best of both worlds." – Jacqueline Withers, student

"The programs [AU] offers hit a variety of markets, but it's really about how they reach people. I was one of those students that found a unique opportunity through the university that gave me my degree." – Melissa Blake, Open Our World Campaign Cabinet member

"One of the things that is so important to me is the openness of the university, the fact that we allow students to come to university regardless of their background, whether they have prerequisites or not. The fact that we give people a chance, take down those barriers, is what's most important to me about AU." – Kathy Williams, chair, Centre for Humanities

"The thing that I think is coolest about Athabasca University is anyone, any time, anywhere. That says it all. There are just too many people who can't do traditional learning at traditional institutions. That niche is important, and I'm glad that we fill it." – Heather Kennedy, chair, Open Our World Campaign Cabinet

"[My favourite thing is] the fact that we do whatever we can to make it work for the student.... We really do that more than many other institutions." – Brian Stewart, vice-president, (information technology), and chief information officer

AUGO II Officially Opened

ATHABASCA OFFERS VERY DARK SKIES, but they are not quite dark enough, not anymore. A new and expanded observatory, the Athabasca University Geophysical Observatory II, officially opened in May in the darker wilderness about 35 kilometres west of Athabasca.

After operating near AU Athabasca since 2003, the original observatory was experiencing too much light interference from nearby development. Stray light from the Athabasca Regional Multiplex and the new Academic and Research Centre was causing problems for the sensitive instruments that record the faint light of the *aurora borealis*.

“The original observatory was highly successful and showed what the potential of our area is, this latitude not having had a major observatory before,” said Dr. Martin Connors, Canada Research Chair in space science, networking and instrumentation.

The new larger building can also facilitate more instruments and more researchers, and it is equipped with basic living quarters so researchers can stay at the site while they are working.

“AUGO I became very crowded,” Connors said. “The new facility has a lot of room for anticipated instruments to come, and we have already had a lot of interest. The skies at the new site really are exceptionally dark. In addition, the radio noise is far less than at AUGO I, allowing us to detect the radiation belts.”

Connors conceived of the idea of the observatory in the 1980s while still at the University of Alberta. “This was when I found out about Athabasca University and felt it would be a great idea to use its special site.”

AUGO II was funded by AU, the [Canada Foundation for Innovation](#) and [Alberta Innovates](#), with a later donation from [CANARIE](#) to install high speed Internet service.

No time has been wasted in continuing the research at AUGO II. In February, even before the official opening, a group of 10 scientists from Japan made joint observations at Fort Vermilion and AUGO II, bringing with them a large amount of instrumentation for use during their stay.



(ABOVE) Dr. Martin Connors explains the working of the auroral camera seen in the background, poking up into a clear dome on the roof of the observatory. On the maintenance scaffolding behind Connors is a fan used to cool the camera during the day when solar heat comes in through the dome.

(LEFT) Senior capital project manager Wayne Ferguson (wearing antidust booties) gazes at the daytime sky through one of the observing domes of AUGO II.

“The new facility has a lot of room for anticipated instruments to come, and we have already had a lot of interest.”

The old and new observatories will continue to operate together to provide unique capabilities. “AUGO I still has our original aurora camera,” Connors said, “and we hope to keep it operating a bit longer to make joint observations. “We plan to use both of them

when the Canadian e-POP satellite (soon to be launched) flies over and photographs auroras from above.”

LAC 2012 Proceedings Online

CATCH UP ON WHAT HAPPENED AT THE **Second International Learning and Knowledge Analytics Conference**, LAC 2012, sponsored by AU's Technology Enhanced Knowledge Research Institute, in Vancouver in May.

All of the conference talks and videos are now available online at the [SOLAR website](#).



Learning analytics is concerned with the collection, analysis and reporting of data about learning in a range of contexts, including informal learning, academic institutions, and the workplace.

Lengelle Explores Developing Career Identity

REINEKKE LENGELLE, AN ACADEMIC co-ordinator in the Centre for Humanities has for the past few years been working with Dutch, Belgian and British colleagues in career development and narrative, exploring people and how they see themselves in the world, especially the working world, through writing.

Lengelle, who created the courses MAIS 616: Writing the Self and MAIS 621: Narrative Possibilities, said that in a labour market where positions, job titles, career streams and employment security are frequently in question, stories "can contribute to a sense of a stable self, help us to define and position ourselves within organizations and be a source of created meaning."

Her own experience at AU provides an example: she has been classed as a visiting graduate professor for the MAIS program, a graduate instructor for the Centre for Integrated Studies and an academic co-ordinator in the Centre for Humanities. "Although my work has not changed," she said, "these changes in labels have caused me to examine the way I perceive myself and how others may perceive me within the organization. I am still on the same stage and mostly acting a similar part, but my costume and name seems to be changing and that requires re-storying."

Lengelle maintains that people must work more poetically, that simply doing a career test or updating a CV is insufficient, although a CV is also a way of telling a particular story. "The more capable we become at accessing our creativity (in this case through creative and expressive writing, in the form of poetry, fiction, dialogue, or inquiry), the more able we are to place ourselves in the world and to adjust and restore our connection with it. In the world of work we live in now, we need stories that both anchor us and allow us to move."

Narratives at Work: The Development of Career Identity by Lengelle and Frans Meijers of the University of the Hague, published in the April issue of the *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling* includes a case study based on work done by AU student Edith Robb in MAIS 621. The study focused on Robb's experience of becoming unemployed in 38 minutes after having been employed for 38 years in the news industry.

"In our model, we would say she had to go from her first story of woe, agony and fear to a second story of empowerment and hope," Lengelle said. "She did so as she discovered through course readings and activities that writing could be restorative. Although she

was a writer by trade, she had not known or experienced writing as a transformative tool, one that eventually led her to a new and successful career."

Lengelle and Meijers were **interviewed** in May on *Career Buzz*, a Toronto radio show, about the article and their work. She, Meijers, Annemie Winters and Herman Baert also authored "**The Self in Career Learning: An Evolving Dialogue**", a chapter in *Handbook of the Dialogical Self Theory* published this year by Cambridge University Press.

Nature Walk to Seek Useful Plants and Mushrooms

ON JUNE 23, SCIENCE OUTREACH – Athabasca will present Useful Plants and Mushrooms: A Nature Walk with Robert Rogers, author of *The Fungal Pharmacy: Medicinal Mushrooms of Western Canada*.

The forests and fields around Athabasca are abundant in plants and fungi with healing properties. The walk will begin at 1 p.m. at the Muskeg Creek Chalet at 56 Street and 49 Avenue in Athabasca and end at 5 p.m. Rogers has studied plant medicines of the region for over 40 years and will share some of the edible, medicinal and survival aspects of nature. The event promises to be informative, humorous and insightful.

Rogers teaches plant and mushroom medicine at Grant MacEwan University and Northern Star College and is an assistant clinical professor in family medicine at the University

of Alberta. He is a professional member of the American Herbalist Guild, chair of the Medicinal Mushroom Committee of the North American Mycological Association and on the editorial board of the International Journal of Medicinal Mushrooms.

The author 14 books on plants of the boreal forest as well as herb-drug interactions, Rogers will autograph copies of *The Fungal Pharmacy*, his latest book, at end of walk.

Tickets for the walk, at \$30 each, are available from Athabasca Health Foods (780-675-5688) or **Science Outreach-Athabasca** (780-675-6653).



Robert Rogers



Grad Student Conference

CONSIDERING SUBMITTING AN ABSTRACT for the conference? The abstract submission deadline is **July 1, 2012**, or when the maximum number of abstracts for the program has been

received. The sooner you submit the more likely you will be to be accepted and receive funding to cover conference costs.

Athabasca University 

Faculty of Graduate Studies

STUDENT CONFERENCE

September 14 - 16, 2012
Edmonton, Alberta

Research and the Knowledge
Frontier in an Online Environment



AU People In the News

Examining the Middle Class

Dr. Alvin Finkel, a professor of history in the Centre for Humanities, “sees Alberta as a stronghold for employers, with comparatively poor social support for working women and the lowest unionization rates in the country” according to Lewis Kelly’s article “[Blue-Collar Bastion: Strong Back Still Pays Premium in Alberta](#)” in the *Edmonton Journal*.

“They kind of get you by the nuts at 18,” Finkel is quoted as saying “They own your soul. They give you this job with a decent hourly pay, and you go and buy all these man-toys and buy yourself a little cabin as well, and the banks own you. Does that make you middle class? I don’t think so.”

Top Forty

Dr. Jeff Vallance, an assistant professor in the Centre for Nursing and Health Studies, has been ranked among Medicine Hat’s Top 40 Under 40 by the [Medicine Hat News](#). The profile describes Vallance as a “fitness guru” whose work “revolves solely around the rehabilitation of cancer patients.”

“I’m a health promotion person,” Vallance is quoted as saying. “I’m looking at finding more mass-reach ways of communicating information that will help people who are going through (cancer) treatment, as well as people that have completed treatment, to be more active.”

Outstanding Leaders

An [article](#) in the *Northumberland View* highlights two AU nursing students who shared the Outstanding Leadership Award at the Northumberland Hills Hospital in Cobourg, Ont. Sharon Tripp and Amy Miedema, registered nurses in the hospital’s Maternal and Child Care Unit, are both enrolled in AU’s Post-Masters Diploma: Nurse Practitioner Program.

Ethics and Economics

Dr. Bruce Morito, a professor of philosophy in the Centre for Humanities, gave the first ever keynote address at the Canadian Society for the Study of Practical Ethics Congress 2012, held in conjunction with Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences, co-hosted by Wilfred Laurier University and University of Waterloo in Waterloo, Ont., From May 26 to June 2, 2012. He spoke on ethics and economics.

The relationship between ethics and economics in the modern age is typically viewed as external. Morito tries to show that the relationship is actually best explained by adopting a framework of interdependent arising, according to which the emergence and development of both ethical and economic relations are matters of mutual determination.

Revolutionary History

Dr. Paul Kellogg, an assistant professor in the Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies, was mentioned in a recent post by John Riddell on [Links International Journal of Socialist Renewal](#). Riddell was reviewing speakers at the Historical Materialism Conference in Toronto last month.

Going Green

A *Globe and Mail* article, “[Does Sustainability Boost the Bottom Line?](#)” on corporate environmental initiatives and risk mitigation incorporated the views of Dr. Aris Solomon, associate professor of accounting in the Faculty of Business: “Organizations with well-established sustainability policies are less subject to rising fuel prices, tightening of environmental regulations or environmental mandates from major customers. ‘It’s risk that affects the bottom line.’”

Digital Revolution

A *Voice of America* article “[Digital Revolution Shakes Colleges](#)” quotes software analyst and web educational technologist Dr. George Siemens of the Technology Enhanced Knowledge Research Institute: “It really is a very exciting time to be in education,” he said “but it is a little unsettling because we are asking big questions about will the university survive and, if it does, what is it going to look like?”

Siemens is also featured in an interview on [Tech Therapy](#), a monthly podcast of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* on why universities should experiment with massive open online courses or MOOCs. Each month, magazine’s podcast offers analysis and advice on the latest gadgets and buzzwords for professors, administrators and students.

Edmonton Oilers Support Nursing Education



GETTING THE PUBLIC LAUNCH OF AU'S Open Our World Campaign off to a great start, the Edmonton Oilers have announced that they will donate \$50,000 over the next five years to create 40 new nursing scholarships in the Faculty of Health Disciplines.

"These awards will help to address the immediate need for more access to financial

resources, particularly for post-LPN students pursuing their Bachelor of Nursing credential," said Margaret Edwards, acting dean of the Faculty of Health Disciplines.

Nursing students from central and northern Alberta will be eligible for the awards.

12 Hours to Celebrate, Remember and Fight Back

THE **ATHABASCA RELAY FOR LIFE 2012** will take place on June 15 at the Athabasca Regional Multiplex. The annual event aims to raise money for cancer research. Opening ceremonies will begin at 7 p.m., and the teams will walk all night in celebration, remembrance and to fight back.

Organizers are looking for volunteers to help prepare for the more than 17 teams that have registered. People can volunteer for the whole day or a few hours on June 15. Volunteers are needed for

- site set-up and take-down
- luminary set-up or take-down
- food services

- entertainment (assist with set up of activities)
- registration
- wherever help is needed the most

The relay is fun and fulfilling and supports the mission to eradicate cancer. If you are interested in volunteering, contact **Jill Calliou** (phone 780-675-6102).

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Athabasca University's Facebook page has over 2,000 fans. Check it out at 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 June 25, 2012. The deadline for submissions is June 15. During July and August, *The Insider* will be published once a month on July 16 (submission deadline July 6) and August 20 (submission deadline August 10).