

the insider

A newsletter published for everyone in the Athabasca University community

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Trojan Discovery

COVER IMAGE »

Asteroid cake and planetoid cookies were served at AU Athabasca on July 28 to celebrate the first anniversary of Dr. Martin Connors' discovery of Trojan Asteroid 2010 TK7. See [page 4](#).

(Photo by Bromley Chamberlain, Athabasca Advocate)



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

Athabasca University 

Open Knowledge Environment Project Wins Innovators Award



AU'S GROUNDBREAKING OPEN KNOWLEDGE Environment Project has won one of *Campus Technology* magazine's 2012 Innovators Awards, in the Leadership, Governance and Policy category.

In 2009, AU committed to becoming an online virtual institution and developed the visionary concept of the Open Learning Environment, an Information and Communication Technology Capital Plan designed to realize that commitment. The ICT capital plan aims to create a flexible, rich and collaborative working and learning environment with innovative tools based in a fully digital online infrastructure.

The Open Knowledge Environment Project, which ran from June 2009 to October 2011, was a first step in the realization of that plan. It included more than 30 sub-projects geared to enhancing the university's technology infrastructure and upgrading skill sets and ICT processes across the institution.

According to Brian Stewart, vice-president (information technology) and chief information officer, the project's relatively short timeline helped create a powerful change dynamic. "The available funding gave the university only about two years in which to enact changes," he said, "and that provided the shot in the arm to follow through with concrete programs. It created a dynamic and the impetus to move forward."

The project greatly speeded the development of the university's ICT infrastructure, including desktop virtualization, synchronous web conferencing, research collaboration, tutor portal, VOIP communications, course content management, online assessment, student program planning and course evaluation.

These developments are now enabling new learning tools to be advanced. Initiatives being explored by AU include learning and academic analytics, simulation, gaming, immersive environments and visualizations, as well as synchronous conferencing, social networking, collaboration technologies and the use and creation of open educational resources, areas of expansion that will reflect the all-digital environment.

The goal, said Stewart, is to "provide a rich, digital and adaptive environment that will best serve our students, our faculty and our staff as we move fully into the online realm."

The Open Knowledge Environment Project was funded by the Government of Canada's Knowledge Infrastructure Program with matching funding from the Government of Alberta.

The goal, said Stewart, is to "provide a rich, digital and adaptive environment that will best serve our students, our faculty and our staff as we move fully into the online realm."

AU Grad Students Receive Technology Futures Awards

SHU HAN (WILLIAM) CHANG, IRETI Falinlede and Steeve Laberge, three MSc IS students whose research focuses on information and communication technology, are the first AU students to receive the Alberta Innovates – Technology Futures Award. Each has been awarded \$10,000 a year for two years.

Chang is doing research in ubiquitous learning with a mobile augmented reality system that delivers on-demand instructional services. Fakinlede works with anthropomorphic pedagogical agents that can easily be adapted by educational practitioners to create rich interactive learning environments catering to the social and motivational needs of students. Laberge is working with intelligent games in an educational context to motivate learners and enhance learning.

AU has been given the opportunity to offer this award for the first time in 2012. A second call for applications will occur later in the year.

AU has been given the opportunity to offer this award for the first time in 2012. A second call for applications will occur later in the year. The Faculty of Graduate Studies will send notices to all graduate directors at the appropriate time.

The Alberta Innovates – Technology Futures Award supports academically superior graduate students working toward a master's or doctoral degree. The award is designed to enable such promising students to succeed in areas of scientific research that are strategically important to Alberta.

Major Moodle Upgrade Coming in September

AU WILL BE UPGRADING ITS MOODLE Learning Management System on September 5 and from September 11 to 13, 2012. This major upgrade, from Moodle 1.9.7 to Moodle 2.2, will significantly change the appearance and functionality of all online courses and the manner in which users interact with them. The upgrade will allow AU to keep pace with advancements in Moodle development and will provide an up-to-date architecture for internal development.

An upgrade schedule for each Moodle site or centre was circulated to staff at the beginning of August. A centre-by-centre schedule will be released later in August, and students will be notified about the upgrade at the beginning of September. Additional messages will be circulated over the next couple of months outlining the details of the Moodle upgrade.

This major upgrade ... will significantly change the appearance and functionality of all online courses and the manner in which users interact with them.

As implementation of the new version of Moodle grows nearer, staff training will be provided for co-ordinators, academic experts, tutors and markers. Training schedules and resources will be sent out shortly.

A **Moodle 2.2 Orientation Site** should be available by the final week of August, and **Moodle 2.2 project documentation** is available now. The gap analysis documents cover some of the differences to be encountered in Moodle 2.2.

If you have any questions about the implications of this upgrade, please email moodle-om-group@athabascau.ca.

Celebrating the Anniversary of the Trojan Discovery



Dr. Martin Connors presides in serving asteroid cake and planetoid cookies. (Photo by Bromley Chamberlain, Athabasca Advocate)

A CELEBRATION WAS HELD AT AU ATHABASCA to mark the first anniversary of the publication, in *Nature*, of Dr. Martin Connors' discovery of the Trojan Asteroid 2010 TK7.

Connors said the discovery of the Trojan asteroid has meant a lot to him both personally and professionally since he has been working on the project for about 20 years. "Most people did not think they existed, but in the face of them being hard to find, one had to question this," he said.

The research was generally fruitful, he added, as he found a number of related types of asteroids during the search period and since he has been at AU. "We also have been working on the AU Robotic Telescope largely to look for asteroids, and that is now close to fruition."

The paper has already been frequently cited, Connors said. "We have been working on follow-up studies, including one being done this year by AU summer student Marc-Olivier Lajeunesse, hired under the NSERC USRA program. However, as always, asteroids are a bit of a secondary activity, and I have been

working a lot on auroras and, of course, the new auroral observatory."


The asteroid was first detected by Connors and colleagues Paul Weigert and Christian Veillet using NASA's Wide-field Infrared Survey Explorer (WISE) satellite launched in 2009. The discovery was confirmed using the ground-based Canada-France-Hawaii Telescope in April 2011. Prior to the discovery of 2010 TK7, Trojans associated with Jupiter, Neptune and Mars had been known to exist. Its discovery proved that they are also to be found in stable orbits like that of Earth.



A Celebrated Retirement

A RETIREMENT PARTY WAS HELD IN JULY to celebrate A.J. Fraser's years at AU. During the celebration, he posed with members of the Application Team that he supervised: (left to right) A.J. Fraser, Ruth Blakely (Apps Team alumni member), Brent Moroz, Jackie Terrien, Rob Campbell and Suzanne Aardema. Missing from the photo is Asaad Jamil.

Graduate Students Building Community

Athabasca University 

Faculty of Graduate Studies

STUDENT CONFERENCE

September 14 - 16, 2012

Edmonton, Alberta

Research and the Knowledge
Frontier in an Online Environment



AU'S FIRST **GRADUATE STUDENT CONFERENCE** will be held in Edmonton from September 14 to 16. The conference theme is Research and the Knowledge Frontier in an Online Environment. The **registration** deadline is September 5, 2012.

Dr. Terry Anderson of AU's Centre for Distance Education will present the Friday evening keynote address, "Living, Learning and Researching in a Networked Era."

The idea for the conference originated in research, carried out by Dr. Pamela Hawranik, dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, Dr. Deborah Hurst and Dr. Martha Cleveland-Innes, which showed that students felt isolated at times. "The planning committee, made up of staff and grad students, also did a survey of our graduate students asking about interest in the conference, and the support was overwhelming," Hawranik said. "The conference is also an extension of the education series the Faculty of Graduate Studies has been organizing and expands the opportunities for students to meet each other, learn about writing for publication and building community."

The conference will emphasize online education and focus on how research can be conducted in a distributed environment. Participants will be attending and presenting both virtually, through Adobe Connect, and in person. Poster and presentation schedules are available on the conference website. Virtual posters will be loaded on Saturday and displayed continuously.

The Athabasca University Graduate Students' Association has been involved in hosting the opening reception. "We know that our

The conference will emphasize online education and focus on how research can be conducted in a distributed environment. Participants will be attending and presenting both virtually, through Adobe Connect, and in person.

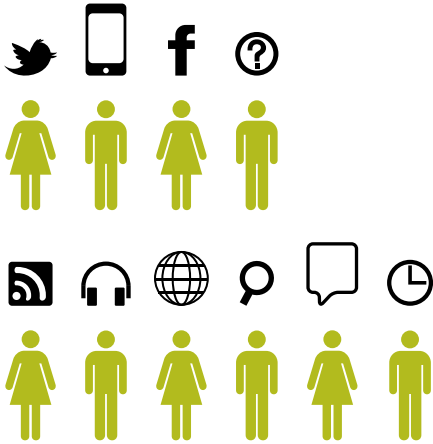
members really value opportunities to meet one another face-to-face and to meet faculty, staff and other members of the AU community," AUGSA president Amanda Nielsen said. "Hosting the opening reception allows us to give our members an opportunity to meet one another and for us to meet them and get to better know the people we represent."

Given the distributed nature of AU, this opportunity for graduate students to present their work is extremely valuable, Nielsen said. "Opportunities to present virtually are still rare at academic conferences, despite how inexpensive and easy-to-use the technology has become."

The conference will showcase research that is being carried out at AU, Nielsen said. "Unfortunately, some people still harbour a belief that distance education isn't serious and that AU graduate students aren't doing real research. Obviously, this isn't true. The FGS Conference will highlight the work that is being done by graduate students at AU and provide those students with experience presenting their ideas and receiving feedback from their peers. I hope that this conference will also result in more AU graduate students presenting their work at other conferences."

Hawranik believes the conference will create more of a sense of community among grad students. "It will give participants an opportunity to meet students from other programs, provide them with information on how to publish and present, skills that should accompany graduate studies, and give them a chance to show off their work and enhance their enthusiasm for being part of a great university."

Optimizing Resources through Data Analytics



IF YOU ARE WONDERING WHAT ALL THE BUZZ surrounding data analytics (data mining, big data, machine learning) is about and how it can be an effective tool to improve your competitiveness, reduce your costs and optimize your resources, you will want to attend one of two three-hour workshops being presented by AU and Alberta Innovates Technology Futures, in collaboration with the Alberta Innovates Centre for Machine Learning. The identical workshops will be held at AITF Edmonton, 250 Karl Clark Road, on September 27 from 9 a.m. to noon, and at AITF Calgary, 3608 33 Street, on September 28 from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.

AU is focusing much of its research on the important and emerging area of data analytics. Researchers are exploring artificial intelligence, machine learning, social network analysis, ubiquitous computing and analytics for organizational capacity development. Through the Technology Enhanced Knowledge Research

Institute, AU researchers work with local and global organizations to improve the use of data analytics and technology to enhance organizational productivity.

This interactive workshop will answer participants' questions on the types of tools, techniques and skills required by employees, and how analytics can be incorporated into organizational decision-making when considering new initiatives. What do the terms big data and analytics mean, and what is the value point? How should an organization get started with analytics? How should it manage business intelligence and data? What is the role of the decision makers and the IT staff and how to bridge the gap?

Online [registration](#) is now open. For more information, contact [George Siemens](#) or call Deanna Douglas at 1-866-569-8042.

Openness in Education

THE CENTRE FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION is offering the master's course [Openness in Education](#) (CDE 622) in the fall of 2012. This course, which should be of interest to AU faculty and staff members who are seeking to understand rapid innovations in open online learning, will be taught by the CDE's newest faculty member, Dr. George Siemens.

The course will be available for credit through AU and externally as a massive open online course (MOOC). Please contact [Siemens](#) directly or [Dr. Rory McGreal](#) for further information.

Athabasca University was founded on the ideas of openness and equity of access. As the

concept of openness continues to evolve, so will AU's role as Canada's Open University.

As many within the AU community are aware, AU holds the UNESCO/Commonwealth of Learning Chair in Open Educational Resources and is a member of the [OER University](#) and the [Open Courseware Consortium](#) founded by MIT. A key role of the OER Chair is to contribute to and lead discussion on how openness in education affects AU and other universities.

More information is available at the new [AU Open Education website](#).

Examples of AU OER are available at the [AU Open Courseware website](#).

More than 300 research papers on the value and impact of OER are available at the [AU OERKnowledgeCloud](#).

The last decade has seen the development of numerous open initiatives in education, ranging from MIT's OpenCourseWare Project, to open scholarship, open educational resources, open journals and more recently, massive open online courses and initiatives like [EdX](#) and [Coursera](#), which follow in the path of the OERu.

Rural Linkages: Safe and Healthy Rural Communities

IN EDMONTON ON SEPTEMBER 28, AU WILL host the conference Rural Linkages: Inter-collaborative Practice for Safe and Healthy Communities. The conference will explore human services in rural Alberta and how they relate to safe and healthy communities.

Alberta is a large province with much of its population residing in rural areas some distance from large cities. That presents challenges for service delivery and impacts quality of life, health and safety.

The focus of the conference will be on opportunities to collaborate on rural development across human services and on integrating research, practice, education and community

The focus of the conference will be on opportunities to collaborate on rural development across human services ...

needs. Human services include community development, health care, education, mental health, social services, wellness and recreation.

Presentations will showcase rural human service projects, community programs, research, training and service delivery for community development. The conference will be an opportunity to explore health and safety issues, current needs, challenges and gaps in human services, fostering vibrant communities and addressing shortages.

Funding for the conference has been provided by [Alberta Rural Development Network](#). For more information, visit the [Rural Linkages conference website](#).

Creating Rural Connections: ARDN Conference 2012

THE ALBERTA RURAL DEVELOPMENT Network (ARDN) in partnership with The Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation (CRRF) and Olds College is pleased to announce the third annual Creating Rural Connections 2012 Conference and Tradeshow: *Regional Realities and Approaches*.

When: October 11-13, 2012
Where: Olds College, Olds, Alberta
Register online: [Registration form](#)
Conference website: [CRC 2012](#)

Rural community members and leaders, researchers and academics from post-secondary institutions across Canada, representatives from all levels of government and rural community-based organizations will come together to examine how regions impact rural development.

Regions. What are they? Do they matter? How do they affect rural communities in Alberta and across Canada?

- from <http://www.ardn.ca/news-events/creating-rural-connections-2012/>

Our **keynote speakers** — Rob Greenwood, Dave Ivan, Peter Kenyon, June Holley, and Cornelia Butler Flora — are academics and authors, coaches and coordinators, and enthusiasts and experts in the realm of community development.

Check the [CRC 2012 site](#) for updated information including the [conference agenda](#) and list of accommodations. *Book your rooms early as availability is limited!*

Hope to see you there.

Questions? Please contact:
Joy Vonk, Operations Manager
Alberta Rural Development Network (ARDN)
Tel: 780-449-1006 ext. 221
operations@ardn.ca
www.ardn.ca

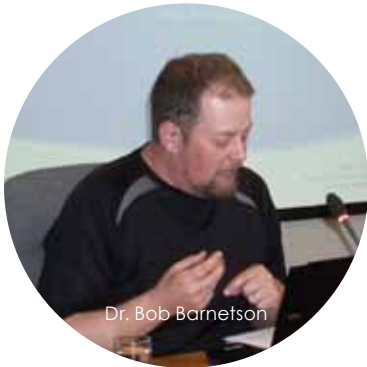
Arts and Science Research Speaker Series Update



Allison Kydd

ON APRIL 20, **ALLISON KYDD** OF THE FACULTY of Humanities and Social Sciences led a thought provoking discussion titled “Cultural Appropriation or Honouring the Experiences of Others: The Writer’s Dilemma,” through which she explored cultural ownership and the roles and responsibilities of writers with respect to cultural descriptions and depictions.

During her presentation, Kydd used readings from her forthcoming novella *Emily via the Greyhound Bus* (Thistledown Press, Saskatoon) to ground discussion and provide context.



Dr. Bob Barnetson

On May 18, labour relations professor **Dr. Bob Barnetson** presented “Trading Workers’ Health for Profit in Alberta Workplaces” as part of the Oil and Democracy project spearheaded by Dr. Lorna Stefanick and Dr. Meenal Shrivastava.

Barnetson described reports of injuries due to unsafe working conditions and inadequate enforcement of occupational health and safety rules and suggested a link between provincial governments and employer-friendly labour laws driven by the political and economic power of Alberta’s oil and agricultural industries.



Dr. Douglas P. Hube

On April 5, in a special presentation, **Dr. Douglas P. Hube**, professor emeritus of physics at the University of Alberta, presented “Transits of Venus – Triumphs and Tribulations,” just in time for the historic event on June 5.

Please visit the [Centre for Research website](#) for recordings of these three talks and those of past presentations. Thanks to all the presenters at this year’s Arts and Science Research Speakers Series for another successful year.

“The Arts and Science Research Talk series was started in 2005 to provide a venue for Athabasca faculty to share their research with the University community.

We also envisioned a space where graduate students, tutors and visiting speakers could present their work.”

- quote from <http://research.athabascau.ca/dissemination/arts-and-sciences/>

Religious Occupation in New York

DR. JAY SMITH OF THE CENTRE FOR SOCIAL Sciences spent July in New York City as a Coolidge Scholar at the 2012 CrossCurrents Research Colloquium. He has been working on a research-writing project studying the relationship between religion and social movements, in particular the Occupy Movement, especially Occupy Wall Street.

“Religious involvement—Christian, Jewish, Muslim and other—in Occupy was fairly extensive but underreported by the media and ignored by most social scientists,” Smith said. “Yet, the United States has a long history of religious involvement in progressive causes, Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement being but one example. I’m conducting research (including use of Columbia University and other libraries in New York) and interviewing religious figures involved in Occupy Wall Street.”

In New York, Smith was able to get a bird’s eye view of the dynamics of the movement from interviews with leading participants. “Surprisingly, I found that despite Zuccotti Park, ground zero of Occupy Wall Street, being broken up, there is still a lot of ferment and movement activity occurring in New York City and across the United States, all with considerable religious engagement,” he said.

The Coolidge Awards are named after William A. Coolidge, the principal benefactor of the program. Each Coolidge Scholar works on his or her own project and also benefits by being able to collaborate with others. The collegial relationships that develop within the group are a crucial element of the program and one of its distinctive aspects. Competition for the award was high, with just 14 scholars out of 110 applicants from Great Britain, Ireland, Canada and the United States selected. His selection is a recognition of the quality of scholarship at Athabasca University, Smith said.

“The study of the role of religion in the Global Justice Movement, an eclectic network of globalized social movements organized in opposition to contemporary global corporate capitalism, has been characterized by what I describe as an intellectual blindness,” Smith



“I argue that if religion and spirituality are invisible in the struggle against neoliberalism, it is because too few social scientists have taken the time to look at the issue.”

said. “I argue that if religion and spirituality are invisible in the struggle against neoliberalism, it is because too few social scientists have taken the time to look at the issue. This is particularly true of the Occupy Movement, the central focus of this research project. Systematic research still needs to be conducted to indicate just how extensive the relationship between religion and the Occupy Movement is.”

(PHOTO ABOVE) Jay Smith (back row middle) with classmates at Auburn Seminary, one of the host institutions, along with Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary.

SSHRC Scholarships Support MAIS Research



Sharone Daniel, at her June wedding in Brazil, carried in on a traditional Indian palanquin.

MAIS STUDENT SHARONE DANIEL RECEIVED two Social Science and Humanities Research Council scholarships, a Canadian Graduate Student (Master's Level) Scholarship and a Michael Smith Foreign Study Supplement, this past year to support her final project.

Daniel's research deals with the influence of social networks and relationship ties on cyber activism in Brazil. "I'm attempting to understand the function and importance of the Internet within political campaigns and the role that social networks play when it comes to participation," she said.

Daniel has followed a campaign, launched in November of 2011, to increase evangelical Christians involvement in environmental issues and to pressure Brazil to take definitive action during the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro this past summer.

Daniel's research deals with the influence of social networks and relationship ties on cyber activism in Brazil.

Much of the campaign communication was carried out online and resulted in the creation of a group called Igrejas Ecocidadãs (Churches of Eco-citizens), an active Facebook page and an online petition addressed to Brazil's president. The petition was delivered to the chief minister of the President's General Secretariat just before the conference.

"Given the growing use of the Internet in social movements around the world, from the Arab Spring to the occupation of Wall Street, I feel it's important that a separate study focusing on the importance of the Internet in social movements be conducted," Daniel said.

Daniel will be studying under a professor from the University of Campinas in Brazil.

AU People in the News

Comparing Interpretations

THE **MODERNIST VERSIONS PROJECT**, co-directed by AU communication tutor Dr. James Gifford, recently received a \$200,000 SSHRC Partnership Development Grant.

The project aims to advance the potential for comparative interpretations of modernist texts that exist in multiple forms by digitizing, collating, versioning and visualizing them individually and in combination. Its primary mission is to enable new critical insights that are difficult without digital or computational approaches.

The project involves the University of Victoria, University of Texas at Austin, Trinity College Dublin, Fairleigh Dickinson University and Dalhousie University.

Diane Y. Stewart Scholarships

THREE LONDON, ONT., HEALTH CARE professionals who are studying at AU recently received Diane Y. Stewart Endowed Scholarships. Jeanette Fidler, a registered nurse in the London Regional Cancer Program, is pursuing a Master of Nursing degree; Pinkal Gandhi, a registered nurse in a general surgery sub-acute medical unit, is pursuing a Post-Masters Diploma-Nurse Practitioner, and Brooke Read, a registered respiratory therapist in a neonatal intensive care unit, is pursuing a Masters of Health Studies.

Diane Y. Stewart, former executive vice-president of University Hospital in London, retired in 1993. In recognition of her significant contributions to the hospital, an endowed scholarship was established in her name at London Community Foundation to provide financial assistance to support staff throughout all programs and departments of London Health Sciences Centre with education that contributes to professional development.



A Tennis Player to Watch

AU STUDENT MILOS RAONIC MAY BE TAKING a break from his studies at the moment, but it's a full court press for his professional tennis career.

Ranked twenty-third in the world, after upsetting several top 10 players, Raonic made a strong debut at the London Olympic Games and recently advanced into his first Master's quarter-final at the Rogers Cup in Toronto.

Born in Montenegro and raised in Thornhill, Ontario, the 21-year-old started playing tennis at the age of 9. For the past two years he has been coached by former Spanish pro Galo Blanco.

Raonic and his coach were interviewed recently for **Canadian Press** and **National Post** articles. Watch for an upcoming feature story on AU's Banner News.

Transforming Post-secondary Education

IN A FEATURED **GUEST POST** ON *ONLINE Learning and Distance Education Resources*, Dr. Tom Carey, an adjunct professor in the Centre for Distance Education and a research fellow with TEKRI, reviewed the Government of Ontario's June 27 discussion paper on transforming post-secondary education.

Huffing and Puffing

DR. GEOFF VALLANCE OF THE CENTRE FOR Nursing and Health Studies was quoted in the *Medicine Hat News* about the importance of physical activity. The paper reported on a recent study published in *The Lancet* (Volume 380, Issue 9838, July 21-27, 2012) that lack of physical activity is as deadly as smoking.

"I think everyone knows the importance of being active and ultimately it is a personal responsibility to be active," Vallance told reporter Gillian Slade. "Physical activity is like a drug. You feel so much better when you can get to the top of the stairs without huffing and puffing."

AU People in the News

Online Education for the Masses

Margaret Wentz quoted TEKRI associate director George Siemens in her *Globe and Mail* [column](#) about free online education.

“Siemens thinks the biggest initial impact will be on students in China, India and other parts of the world with limited access to good-quality higher education. Mass online courses could bring higher education to hundreds of millions of people. There will also be plenty of appeal for older learners, curious retirees and people who don’t need or want the kind of immersive university experience that’s so important when you’re 20,” Wentz wrote after pointing out that Siemens had helped create the first mass-education online course in 2008.

Tech therapy, the monthly tech podcast from *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, rebroadcast an [interview](#) recorded last year with Siemens about why universities should experiment with inviting tens of thousands of students to participate in their online courses for free.



Elizabeth Bassendowski (front)

A Lifelong Learner

IN 2002, AT THE AGE OF 84, ELIZABETH Bassendowski completed an AU BA with a major in history. She holds the record for being one of AU’s oldest graduates. Bassendowski recently passed away in Emerald Park, Sask., at the age of 93.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her name may be made to AU (Development and External Relations, 3rd Floor, 1040 7 Ave. SW, Calgary, AB T2P 3G9, 1-800-788-9041), to the William Albert House Resident Fund (333 Emerald Park Rd., Emerald Park, SK. S4L 1C9) or to the Canadian Cancer Society (61B Ross St. W., Moose Jaw, SK. S6H 2M2).

Photo above taken at the Convocation 2002 ceremony: <http://cde.athabascau.ca/staff/mkoole/convoc02/underg/undergrad7.php>

Massive Hype

DR. RORY MCGREAL OF THE CENTRE FOR Distance Education responded to a *University Affairs* [column](#) by Leo Charbonneau about “the massive hype” of massive open online courses. McGreal wrote “Recent MOOC hype does not mention that they originated in Canada, including the term. Athabasca University has been delivering massive online courses for many years and is a member of the OERuniversity, which is a consortium of 19 higher education institutions on five continents. It supports the assessment and accreditation of learners who study using open resources online.”

Older and Online

AU MBA STUDENT RANJAN BAINS WAS featured in a recent *Globe and Mail* [article](#) on the growing number of older, working professionals pursuing online MBAs.

“I wanted the flexibility of studying when I had the time,” Bains said. He organizes his studies around his day job, completing assignments for individual and group work at lunch, in the evening and on weekends.

The article also quotes Dr. Deborah Hurst of the Faculty of Business. As student demand for online learning grows, she said, so does the impetus for collaboration among institutions. “It is more difficult to try and create a blended program or some sort of online option when you are not set up to work that way.” Among several collaborations, AU recently signed agreements with universities in Brazil and Singapore to offer online programs tailored to doing business in their respective regions.

AUGSA Supports Open Access



Open access to scholarly materials is important not only because it means that information and research data can be shared more freely, thereby advancing the pace of research, but also ... to keep post-secondary education affordable.

THE **ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY GRADUATE Students' Association** believes that open access to scholarly information and an increased use of open educational resources are vital to ensuring that Canadian post-secondary education remains both affordable and of outstanding quality. Our commitment to open access has become even stronger in light of the recent issues affecting Access Copyright's proposed fee increase and model license agreement. We are proud that AU decided not to sign the model license agreement, an agreement that we feel is bad for students and academics and one which would have forced the university to pass increased administrative costs on to students.

Open access to scholarly materials is important not only because it means that information and research data can be shared more freely, thereby advancing the pace of research, but also because of pragmatic benefits, such as helping to keep post-secondary education affordable. To graduate students, the cost of education is just as important as the ability to easily access scholarly information for research. By increasing both the quantity and quality of scholarly materials published under open access licenses, the costs of education will remain affordable without sacrificing quality.

It is for these reasons that the AUGSA is a member of the **Right to Research Coalition** and an active member of both the **Canadian Alliance of Student Associations** and the **Alberta Students' Executive Council**, all of which are interested in advancing the open access agenda.

Open access was made a top advocacy priority for the coming year at CASA's recent Policy and Strategy Conference. With significant input from the AUGSA, CASA has developed an open access policy which calls upon the federal granting agencies (SSHRC, NSERC, CIHR) to adopt a policy ensuring that all publicly funded research be made available in an open access format so that the public has free and open access to the research it

has funded. Recognizing that delaying the public release of data is sometimes necessary, the policy allows for a six-month embargo on scientific publications (NSERC and CIHR) and a one-year embargo on social sciences and humanities publications (SSHRC). The policy also calls upon the federal government to enact legislation requiring these agencies to adopt such a policy.

In addition to calling upon the granting agencies and the federal government, the CASA open access policy calls upon individual authors to publish in open access journals or deposit their peer-reviewed manuscripts in open access repositories. Post-secondary institutions are encouraged to adopt policies that mandate their researchers to publish all of their post-refereed manuscripts in an open access format.

The AUGSA's president, Amanda Nielsen, was recently elected vice-chair (secretary) of CASA. As a result, the AUGSA will be very active in advocating CASA's open access policy to members of Parliament and to the granting agencies. The AUGSA will also be encouraging AU to increase its already strong support of the open access movement by strongly encouraging AU researchers to publish all of their post-refereed manuscripts in an open access formats.

ELLA Seeking Instructors for Highly Motivated Students



ELLA's roots go back to 1972, when the U of A's Faculty of Extension began offering an annual spring program for adults 50 and over.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA'S MARGARET-Ann Armour has won many awards for her work in improving the situation of Canadian women in science and technology, but for sheer enthusiasm and passion for learning, the students who impress Armour the most are folks over 50. That is why she relishes being an instructor for the Edmonton Lifelong Learners Association, which offers a variety of courses to about 400 students in the University of Alberta Education Centre each May. (See the [ELLA web page](#) for the types of courses offered).

"It's just wonderful," said Armour, who has been known to tell ELLA students that she would like to put them in a first-year chemistry class so the students could see what engagement in a course really means.

ELLA's roots go back to 1972, when the U of A's Faculty of Extension began offering an annual spring program for adults 50 and over. In 2001, when budget constraints forced the faculty to terminate the spring sessions, the students stepped up. Volunteer driven, ELLA now runs the program in a unique partnership with the university.

ELLA is always seeking high-quality instructors. Courses are non-credit, with no exams or required homework. Single-period, 70-minute courses in computerized smartrooms run five days a week for a total of 17.5 hours. Several double-period art instruction classes are also offered. ELLA's 2013 Spring Session runs from April 29 to May 17. Instructors receive \$1,250 per course.

Interested instructors are encouraged to contact one of the following sub-committee chairs for further information: [Jill Swann-Lussier](#), humanities; [Dawna Dey-Harrish](#), fine arts; [Liz McCord](#), sciences.

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