

# the insider

A newsletter published for everyone in the Athabasca University community

Volume 2: Issue #9  
May 24, 2011

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Athabasca University 



# AU Study Finds Widespread Violations of Alberta Child Labour Laws

Barnetson's study found that, in Alberta, employers of 78 per cent of child workers and 21.4 per cent of adolescent workers are violating the Employment Standards Code. (Photo by Angelo DiCaro)

A study of Alberta child labourers by Dr. Bob Barnetson, associate professor of labour relations in the Centre for Work and Community Studies, has been getting a lot of media attention. The study, published in *Just Labour*, a peer-reviewed academic journal, shows that thousands of Alberta children and adolescents are working illegally.

“The upshot of the findings is that Alberta’s child labour laws are not adequately enforced, Barnetson said. “Children and adolescents frequently work in prohibited occupations. Employers routinely violate rules around hours of work, wages and deductions. Few complaints are filed and employers face no chance of penalty.”

If child labour laws are to be meaningful, government has to enforce them, Barnetson said, for example, by conducting random inspections and penalizing violators. “Or they should repeal Alberta’s child labour laws and face the political heat,” he said, “but enacting laws and then not enforcing them is simply deceitful.”

The purpose of Barnetson’s study was twofold: to determine the rate at which children aged nine to 11 and adolescents aged 12 to 14 were employed in Alberta and to assess the degree to which their employment complied with Alberta’s child labour laws as set out in the Employment Standards Code.

Barnetson contracted with the University of Alberta to run a survey of 1,200 Alberta homes to get data on child and adolescent employment rates and fields of employment. He then followed up by interviewing 20 minors and their parents to put the statistical findings into context and to get a sense of what sorts of violations were occurring.

The study stemmed from his experience in the Department of Employment and Immigration, Barnetson said. “We always thought there was child labour in violation of Alberta’s child labour laws, but no one knew to what extent it was happening.”

The study found that 6.3 per cent of Alberta children (8,200 aged 9-11) were employed, and that 78 per cent of them were working illegally, in occupations such as janitorial services and newspaper delivery. The remaining 22 per cent had jobs such as babysitting and yard work. Similarly 19.4 per cent of adolescents (26,000 aged 12-14) were employed, 21.4 per cent in prohibited occupations such as janitorial services, with sports teams and on golf courses.

In addition to the underage workers and workers in prohibited occupations or performing prohibited tasks, interviews revealed widespread violations of employment standards, including working too many hours (most commonly a four-hour shift on a school day), receiving less than minimum wage or minimum call-in pay and illegal payroll deductions.

Another Barnetson article, now in press, examines how child labour intersects with working alone. “Basically,” he said, “Alberta’s working alone legislation has no provisions to address the risks unique to children working alone. It assumes that there is no child labour, yet the regulatory failure of the child labour laws invalidate this assumption, so the upshot is a situation where children working alone have no protection.”

# The Paragraph Wins CNIE Award of Merit

The Canadian Network for Innovation in Education has granted an AU produced video series *The Paragraph: A Video Tutorial*, an Award of Merit in its Video category.

The tutorial, which consists of five videos with transcripts, a downloadable sample essay and four self-tests, was the brainchild of Write Site director Linda McCloud-Bondoc. “Coming across the one-page paragraph again and again in students’ writing inspired me to write the original resource,” she said. “This and other common paragraphing problems were showing up in students’ coaching assignments, so I set out to write a resource that could be modularized to deal with those issues.”

Both the Write Site and some course instructors were sending students to the resource while it was still in print form, McCloud-Bondoc said, but student feedback suggested that they wanted a video version. McCloud-Bondoc got in touch with Centre for Learning Design and Development director Dr. Cindy Ives, who arranged for learning designer Dr. Mary Pringle to work with multimedia producer Blaise McMullin and visual designer Ian Grivois to develop a script and produce the video tutorial.

Fortunately, actor Vivian Elias (an AU MAIS student) was available and perfect for the role of text-grammar guru. Colin Elliot of AU Library Services arranged for the video streaming. Jade Drewniak of Student and Academic Services set up the website, which had about 1,000 hits in 2010, its first year.

This is the second CNIE Award of Merit for McMullin and Grivois, who won in 2007 for *An Introduction to Stereoscopic and Compound Microscopes*.

Dr. Terry Anderson accepted the award on behalf of the team at the awards banquet held during the Fourth International CNIE Conference, May 16 to 19 at McMaster University in Hamilton. The CNIE is a national organization of professionals committed to excellence in innovation in education in Canada. Many of the AU professionals involved in distance learning design and education are members of the organization.



MAIS student Vivian Elias as the text-grammar guru

An AU video on how to write a paragraph has won a Canadian Network for Innovation in Education video award.

# AU Students and Alumni in the News

## Hockey Scholars

With AU’s help, the Swift Current Broncos have been selected as the Western Hockey League’s Scholastic Team of the Year. The team members achieved the highest overall academic performance during the 2010-11 season.

“It’s a great accomplishment for our organization and our partnership with Athabasca University, the Swift Current Comprehensive High School and Great Plains College,” Bronco’s assistant coach, Darren Evjen said. “To be named the best team in the league, academically speaking, is an impressive achievement for our players and is something that they should be very proud of.”

Bronco’s forward Adam Lowry, who was WHL Scholastic Player of the Year during his rookie season in 2009-10, won the runner-up trophy for 2010-11.

The full story is available in the [Southwest Booster](#).

## Linke to Lead Hothead

Peter Linke, a radio frequency identification (RFID) industry veteran who holds an AU MBA, was recently appointed president and CEO of Hothead Technologies.

Established in 2006, Hothead Technologies develops wireless solutions to aid in the detection and prevention of heat-related events and illnesses in athletes, firemen and industrial workers.

The full announcement can be found on [PR Web](#).

## Supply Chain Leader

Nicola Raycraft, another graduate of AU’s MBA program, was recently awarded the Purchasing Management Association of Canada’s 2011 Outstanding Achievement Award.

Raycraft is director of supply chain management at Jones Packaging in Ontario. “What brings me the most satisfaction is to lead a team and to accomplish company goals and objectives with my team,” Raycraft is quoted as saying in a [Canadian News Wire](#) release.

# Advancing Sustainability: Planning a Future for Resource Based Communities



Resource-based communities such as Hinton are looking to economic diversification and community development to maintain growth and competitiveness.

As natural resources are depleted, and their extraction becomes more challenging because of environmental concerns, resource-based communities have to look to economic diversification and community development to maintain their growth and competitiveness. Several AU researchers are partners in the project Advancing Economic, Environmental and Social Sustainability: An Academic/Municipal Partnership for Resource-Based Communities in Alberta, which is focusing on the development needs of two such communities, Hinton and Grande Cache, to help them achieve greater social, economic and environmental sustainability.

“Non-renewable resources by their very nature will run out,” said Dr. Aris Solomon, an associate professor in the Faculty of Business and one of the researchers involved. “Rather than live in a province or nation of ghost towns, looking after the needs of current and future generations of a community is of moral concern. One approach is to try and combine social, economic and environmental concerns into a forward looking plan.”

Hinton and Grande Cache were moving forward with sustainability plans and were looking for some assistance, said associate vice-president academic Dr. Dietmar Kennepohl, a member of the project’s administrative team. The Alberta Regional Development Network, a partnership of Alberta’s 22 publicly-funded post-secondary institutions, which was formed in 2009 to support and enhance rural development, provided some funds to help the communities develop a partnership with AU and NorQuest College.

“Our college partner, NorQuest, has a strong culture of providing foundational learning opportunities with expertise in aboriginal education, applied research and workplace solutions,” Kennepohl said. “They are also very community based. Then, there is AU’s own culture of open access and breaking down barriers, coupled with a strong sense of consensus building and experience in engaging a wide range of communities.”

AU was also looking for research projects related to the Athabasca River Basin Research Institute, and a number of faculty members had related research interests, Kennepohl said. All of these influences contributed to the three-year, \$900,000 project.

AU researchers will be examining a number of political, economic, educational, leadership and change options:

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Given the range of natural resources in the region, industry and recreation are two of the best growth sectors.

- Solomon's corporate governance and accountability research will look at the sustainable impact of corporate and industrial activity and government.
- Dr. Pat Fahy's research in education and training relates to community education interests and needs and includes workforce assessments, literacy and English-as-a-second-language training.
- Dr. Lorna Stefanick's research in community transition is exploring the political environment in Grande Cache and Hinton and will generate recommendations for mountain and resource communities experiencing change.
- Dr. Deborah Hurst's research in transition leadership development is examining community readiness, leadership

knowledge and skills transferability and the realities impacting change.

- Dr. Michael Gismondi's research involves the social economy (co-operative, not for profit, enterprising non-profit and the voluntary sector) emphasizing local control, community development and the role of local politics in the transition to sustainability.

Overall, the project pulls together researchers and communities in an effective and meaningful way, Kennepohl said.

The project's first conference, Setting the Stage, was held in Hinton on May 13, and the research team is now entering the second phase of the project.

## DBA Students Present Conference Papers

AU's Doctor of Business Administration Program enters its third year in the fall of 2011, and the Faculty of Business encourages DBA students to attend conferences in order to present their ideas and develop their thinking within their scholarly communities

According to Dr. Kay Devine, an associate professor of organizational analysis in the faculty, student participation at conferences benefits both the students and the program. "It benefits the students in that they meet more people in their area of interest," she said, "and it benefits the DBA program in terms of reputation. We are very proud of our students. Their commitment and enthusiasm are contagious."

To date, 10 DBA student papers have been accepted and presented at regional, national and international conferences:

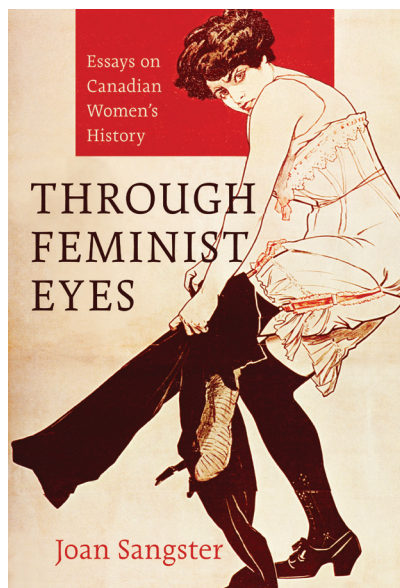
- Phil Ferguson presented "Bounded Existential Leadership" at the Atlantic Schools of Business Conference at St.

Mary's University in Halifax in 2009 and "The Conceptual Modelling of Services" at the Academy of Management Conference in Montreal in 2010.

- Colleen Grady presented "Online Teaching: DBA Perspective" at the Western Academy of Management in Victoria in 2011.
- Golnaz Golnaraghi presented "A Critical Hermeneutics Approach: CEO Speeches in the Financial Services Industry" at the International Federation of Scholarly Associations of Management in Paris in 2010 and "Critical Views Across Cultures" at the Critical Management Studies 7 Conference in Naples in 2011.
- Rosalie Hilde presented "Studying Immigrant Culture in the Workplace" at the AU Academic Research Committee Spring Conference in Edmonton in 2010.

- Janet Porter presented "Female Engineers: A Radical Call for Organizational Level Action" at the Atlantic Schools of Business Conference at St. Mary's University in Halifax in 2010.
- Derek Prue presented "Isomorphism and Organizational Culture: A First Nations Housing Initiative" at the Administrative Sciences Association of Canada in Montreal in 2011.
- Nadine Robinson presented "Treat Customers Like Royalty but Ensure the Queen is Happy" at the Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior Conference in Chicago in 2010 and "In Search of the Gift of Feedback: The Moderating Role of Trust on Retailer-Customer Communication" at the American Marketing Association in San Francisco in 2011.

# New Releases from AU Press



## ***Through Feminist Eyes: Essays on Canadian Women's History***

*In Through Feminist Eyes*, historian Joan Sangster uses a selection of her writings, published over a period of three decades, as a gateway into reflections on the themes and theoretical concerns that have shaped both the writing of women's history in Canada and her own evolution as a feminist historian. As in the original essays themselves, she brings to these reflections her distinctive combination of insight, honesty and impeccable scholarship.

Sangster is professor of women's studies and history at Trent University, where she also teaches at the Frost Centre for Canadian Studies and Indigenous Studies. Her many publications include *Transforming Labour: Women and Work in Postwar Canada* and *Girl Trouble: Female Delinquency in English Canada*.

"This is a passionate book by an author who has something to say and for whom history matters."

– June Hannam, University of the West of England



## ***Letters from the Lost***

Don't miss your last few chances to vote for Alberta Readers' Choice Award finalist, *Letters from the Lost: A Memoir of Discovery*, by Helen Waldstein Wilkes. You can vote at [Alberta Readers' Choice](#).

Also, join AU Press, Audreys Books and *Letters from the Lost* author Helen Waldstein Wilkes on Wednesday, May 25 at 7:30 p.m. at Audreys Books. After a short reading and questions from the audience, Wilkes will sign copies of the book. Join us as we come together to celebrate her ARC nomination. Everyone is welcome.

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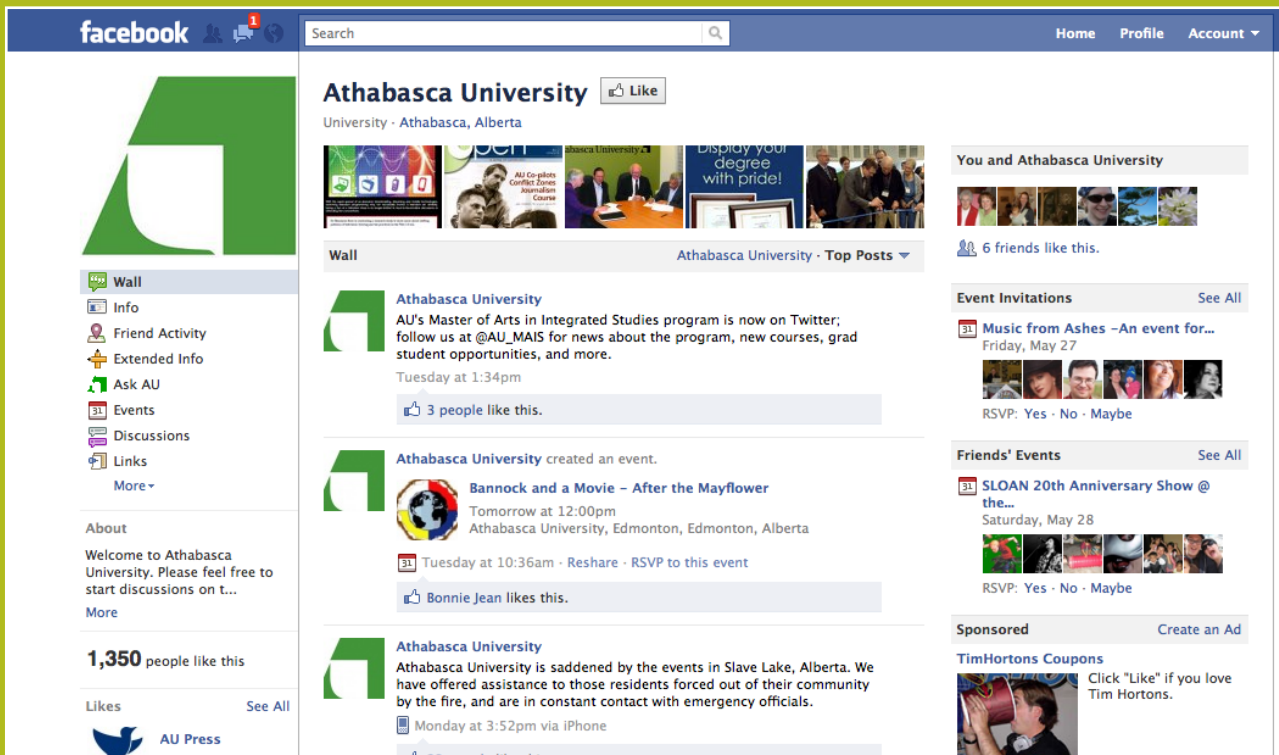
AU Recruitment Officer Shannon Demko (left) at Convocation 2010 assisting graduands with gowning.

# 2011 Convocation

As Convocation is rapidly approaching, this year on June 9, 10 and 11, the Events Office is still in need of volunteers. Responses have been outstanding with over 130 volunteers already signed up to have an amazing time. But there are still over 40 positions yet to be filled.

Anyone wishing to assist on Saturday, June 11 will likely receive their first choice as most of the positions are available. Positions available include photography, supervision and gowning academics.

Anyone wishing to have a great time and assist our graduates on their special day should contact [Christeen Jones](#) by email or by phone at (780) 675-6795.



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*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 issue of *The Insider* will be published on Monday, June 13, 2011. The deadline for submissions is June 3.



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