



## February 2019 Newsletter

### President's Message

Hello AU Graduate Students!

With the cold and winter months bearing down, I hope everyone has a chance to spend some self care time and look after themselves. With Bell Let's Talk Day having just passed, and our partners at the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations running a concurrent campaign called Students Let's Act, mental health is at the forefront of some of our most important advocacy points.

- AU's mental health co-coordinator, Faye Gosnell, has put together a blog about mental health and AU that can be found at <https://news.athabascau.ca/words-of-the-wise/lets-talk-mental-health-and-resilience-at-au/?fbclid=IwAR3Smz8LqBWgDSRA6iJtFQdLvKVvDsWtUMQyGH-prXIGlodpUPieffa4iaY>.
- If you'd like to know more about the CASA initiative, check out <https://www.casa-acae.com>.
- And if you're interested in sharing your story, AUGSA is hoping to collect some personal stories about mental health and distance education, to use in our advocacy to AU. We can ensure that any information provided to AU is anonymous; just email [president@augsa.com](mailto:president@augsa.com).

Take care of yourself and others,

All the best,

Lindsay McNena

President, AUGSA

### Special General Meeting Announcement:

All Graduate Students are invited to attend our Special General Meeting scheduled for February 26 at 6 pm MST. The purpose of the meeting is to update our Bylaws regarding number of Faculty Representatives for each faculty on our Council. Below is the Skype For Business link for the meeting: [Join Skype Meeting](#)

### New Awards Policy Approved by AUGSA Council

Effective January 1, AUGSA has increased its Awards capacity by \$19,000 annually.

Please have a look at our new awards and bursaries policy:

<https://www.augsa.com/about/policies-bylaws/>

We are very proud to be adding to our awards a number of bursaries available to our students:

1. **AUGSA Bursaries** – (8 awards (4 per deadline) of \$1000 each totaling \$8,000);
2. **Computer Bursaries** – (5 awards of one computer valued up to \$700 each totaling \$3500);
3. **Travel Bursaries** – (\$1000 maximum each; \$4,000 initially budgeted);
4. **Emergency Bursaries** – (5 awards at \$700 maximum each for a total of \$3500)

We will still offer our five **Outstanding Distinction Awards** annually. (\$1125 each)

## Elections 2019

### Executive Committee Election Nominations

Executive Committee nominations will open on February 17 and close on February 28 at 4 pm MST. If you are thinking about running for one of our paid executive positions but aren't sure, please reach out to any of the current Executive Committee members and ask any questions that might help you decide!

Lindsay McNena, President – [president@augsa.com](mailto:president@augsa.com)

Heather DeBoer, VP External – [vpexternal@augsa.com](mailto:vpexternal@augsa.com)

Muhammad Kamran, VP Operations and Finance – [vpof@augsa.com](mailto:vpof@augsa.com)

Meaghan Sullivan, VP Academic – [vpacademic@augsa.com](mailto:vpacademic@augsa.com)

The deadline for submitting nominations is February 28<sup>th</sup> at 4pm Mountain Time. A separate email will be forthcoming on February 17 to describe the positions and will include the self-nomination form. Visit our website for added information at [www.augsa.com](http://www.augsa.com). The self-nomination form can be found: [www.augsa.com/resources/election-resources/](http://www.augsa.com/resources/election-resources/)

## Highlights of the 2018 Graduate Student Research Conference

Highlights of the 2018 Graduate Student Research Conference – Imagine: Transforming Lives, Transforming Communities

[The Faculty of Graduate Studies \(FGS\)](#) and the [Athabasca University Graduate Students' Association \(AUGSA\)](#) held another successful Graduate Student Research Conference (GSRC) in Edmonton from October 12-14, 2018. The conference provides the opportunity for AU graduate students to present their impressive research, connect with the AU community, and engage in informative presentations and discussions.

This conference was no exception, and it proved to be another energizing and inspiring conference for everyone. The GSRC was well attended by AU graduate students, faculty members, AUGSA, FGS, and numerous volunteers. Over 80 people came together in-person and virtually. Fifty

people from all over Canada attended in-person and virtual participants were from Greece, Spain, the USA, and Trinidad.

It takes a lot of commitment and organization to run this conference each year and FGS would like to thank AUGSA, Vikki Bellerose, Krystal Zahara, Kelcey Carlisle, Jonathan Smith, all of the volunteers, and our sponsors. This conference would not have been a success without your spirit and generosity.

This year's theme Imagine: Transforming Lives, Transforming Communities was based on the themes of the [Athabasca University Strategic Plan, Imagine](#) as well as those of the [FGS Strategic Plan](#). Keynote speeches and presentations highlighted some of the important goals of Imagine such as diversity and inclusion, Indigenous education and research, the potential for technology to drive innovation, and strengthening community in research and education. Bringing the AU community together to celebrate student success, foster networking, and provide an opportunity for students to share their research and refine their skills reinforced the strategic themes of FGS, which are collaboration, quality, and service.

The Interim Dean, FGS, Dr. Shawn Fraser opened the first day of the conference. Dr. Fraser welcomed all attendees and shared the generous remarks sent by the Minister of Advanced Education, the Honorable Marlin Schmidt, who would have loved to be able to attend in person. Dr. Fraser introduced our President, Dr. Neil Fassina who provided inspiring comments on the importance of graduate education and the commitment to continued student success through the Imagine plan. We are grateful that Dr. Fassina was able to join us in person. He was very energized to see the room full of graduate students and faculty. Our Provost and Vice President Academic, Dr. Matt Prineas opened the second day of the conference and provided thoughtful remarks about graduate education and the role of graduate students in the Learning Framework and the future of AU.

Dr. Prineas was kind enough to stick around for a bit longer and host a Q&A with our graduate students, which they thoroughly appreciated. It was such a hit that we are considering adding this to our program at the next conference.





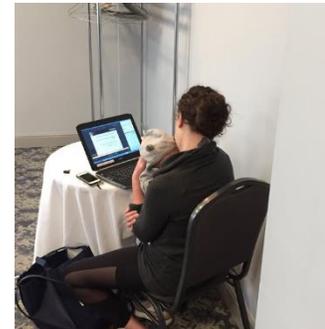
The GSRC hosted three excellent keynote speakers. Dr. Schaffer, a Professor of Computing from the University of Alberta, shared a historical overview of his research group’s role in the development of Artificial Intelligence and enlightened the crowd with his insights into the exciting future of AI. His checkers-playing program Chinook was the first computer to win a human world championship (1994), a feat recognized in the Guinness Book of World Records. Dr. Stephanie Ruel, an Assistant Professor of Business at Concordia University and a graduate of the Doctor of Business Administration program at AU, shared her research into gender equity in STEM and her experience working with the Canadian

Space Agency. Activist, therapist, and writer Mateo Huezo, a former Master of Counselling student at AU, presented his graduate research around sharing the wisdom of trans gender individuals to promote well-being in communities. Mateo has disseminated his work across the country, and continues to work with The Human Rights Commission and the Pride Centre of Edmonton. An incredible thank you to our keynote speakers for their valuable insights. Stay tuned for next year’s conference as the keynote speakers are a real highlight for students and staff.



The rest of the conference involved many exciting talks from AU graduate students from across all disciplines. These learning opportunities for students and the audience were truly invaluable.

Everyone shared in the pride these students demonstrated for their work. In addition to the hard work these students put in to their research and presentations, they are often juggling full-time jobs and family. There was even a son only a few months old that came to support his mom!



AU is extremely proud of our students and so we decided in FGS to begin a couple of initiatives to promote our students and increase their connection to the AU community. We have started a student seminar series in which a student can present their work and discuss research with students and faculty in their discipline. We also decided to take information about students in order to promote their excellent work on a regular basis through FGS communications. You can find this in our FGS weekly announcements!

Throughout the conference we were impressed by the commitment of our students to their education and making a difference in their research. We noted that students felt that the opportunity to present their work and connect with AU and other students was extremely motivating and valuable. We received many positive comments from our students:

"The conference has been a powerful experience. It has removed my fear of being more assertive and passionate about my research and presenting my work."

"I was able to meet other students in my program and I found this to be very valuable."

"The conference provided me with the opportunity to connect with the Athabasca University community."

We will be holding this conference again in 2019 and information will be available in the spring so we hope that faculty and students are able to join us again. For now, please enjoy the photos from the 2018 conference [here](#). We look forward to seeing you again soon.

**Conference 2019 AUGSA/AU Research Conference Opportunity:** With our next Research Conference planned for September 13-15, 2019 we will be looking for a conference coordinator to plan and execute this conference. Watch your emails next week for the opportunity. This position will come with a \$5000 honorarium and a lot of hard work!

#### **Course Announcement:**

INST 511 - Indigenous Knowledge and Education  
Spring session: April 29 - July 26, 2019

This course will prepare students to address Indigenous pedagogy and the construction of meaningful and accurate educational lessons for and about Indigenous peoples, including the Blackfoot, the Cree, the Metis and the Dene Tha.

To register: email Ivy at [ivy@athabascau.ca](mailto:ivy@athabascau.ca).  
Deadline date: April 9, 2019

[www.athabascau.ca/syllabi/inst/inst511.php](http://www.athabascau.ca/syllabi/inst/inst511.php)

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[www.athabascau.ca](http://www.athabascau.ca)

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Introduction. This course addresses Indigenous knowledge as a fundamental component of Indigenous education. Indigenous peoples have always had their own philosophies, teachings, and educational goals.

#### **Summer Institute:**

Alberta SPOR SUPPORT Unit presents:

## SUMMER INSTITUTE 2019

Dates: May 13-15, 2019

Location: Matrix Hotel (10640 100 Ave NW, Edmonton)

Join us for **SUMMER INSTITUTE 2019** where researchers, patients, clinicians, students, policy makers and more, gather to share insights, connect with colleagues and promote patient-oriented research.

We're working together to explore, evaluate and share the *Impact & Opportunities* of patient-oriented research. Join us for:

- an outstanding line-up of engaging speakers
- workshops on patient-oriented research topics
- networking opportunities with colleagues
- capacity building opportunities for patient-oriented research

**REGISTRATION OPEN! Go to the registration site @**

<https://secure.affreg.com/r/spor2019?1>

**Want to submit an abstract? VIEW THE CALL FOR ABSTRACTS @**

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rbNjHVGaJVWzMWqh6zGJZnJ0DB2ih7a/view>

Faculty of Graduate Studies

Weekly announcement from FGS: [https://mailchi.mp/dd7221129130/fgs-weekly-december-17-312477?e=\[UNIQID\]](https://mailchi.mp/dd7221129130/fgs-weekly-december-17-312477?e=[UNIQID])

FGS is gearing up for the 2019 Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) competition which will take place virtually on March 22, 2019. Stay tuned for updates on the [FGS website!](#)

[What is the 3MT®?](#)

Thinking about competing in this year's 3MT®? Register to attend [Creating a Successful 3MT® - Tips and Tricks](#) presented by last year's AU 3MT® winner, Kim Jones.

Scholarships for Canadian academics, students and professionals: Canada-China Scholars' Exchange Program, 2019-2020

Global Affairs Canada and the Chinese Ministry of Education are offering short-term scholarships to Canadians wishing to study abroad in China. Scholarships are awarded for studies, research, language studies or a combination of studies and language studies at participating Chinese institutions.

- **Program name:** Canada-China Scholars' Exchange Program
- **Funding organizations:** Global Affairs Canada and the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China
- **Target audiences:** Canadian students (college, undergraduate and graduate levels in Canada); Canadian faculty members and research staff at a post-secondary institution in Canada; Canadian mid-career professionals
- **Number of scholarships:** Over 20
- **Duration:** 4 to 12 months for students; and 8 weeks to 12 months for faculty members and mid-career professionals
- **Inclusions:** Airfare, tuition fees, monthly living stipend, on-campus accommodation and medical insurance
- **Deadline:** March 1, 2019

For full program details and to submit an online application, visit: [Canada-China Scholars' Exchange Program](#).

All inquiries regarding this program should be directed to: [scholarships-bourses@cbie.ca](mailto:scholarships-bourses@cbie.ca) or 613-237-4820.

Subscribe to the [International Scholarships RSS feed](#) to be kept informed of competition dates and other news relating to the International Scholarships Program of Global Affairs Canada.

### Funding Opportunities

Several external graduate awards are advertised on the FGS website.

More info on these opportunities can be found on the FGS Funding Opportunities Page:

<http://fgs.athabascau.ca/opportunities/index.php>

