



## November 2019 Newsletter

### President's Message

Hello Graduate Students,

Our much-anticipated annual Graduate Student Research Conference took place last month. The Athabasca University community of faculty, researchers, students, and staff came together for this inspirational and energized event where our graduate students showcase their planned, ongoing, and recently completed research. Congratulations to all our presenters and to the committee for a well-planned and organized event.

The MBA in-residence for Doing Business in the Asia Pacific Region took place in Singapore at the end of October also, which I am lucky enough to be an enrolled student and am currently in Singapore now. The beauty of being an Athabasca University student is the capability to study from anywhere. If you have not gone to Singapore, add it to your bucket list of places to go. As Athabasca University students visiting and studying together as a group, the experiential learning gained this week immersed in culture is invaluable, enriched with collaboration, site visits, face-to-face student discussions, and interacting with facilitators and presenters local to the region. While I said this last month, it is worthy to say it again. If your program has an in-residence, schedule it early so you can consider another.

Meaghan Sullivan

President

### Job Opportunity: Communications Coordinator- AUGSA

The Athabasca University Graduate Students' Association is a student-run, diverse, and multi-faceted organization that provides student services through university and government relations with the mission that graduate-level education at AU is accessible, affordable, and of outstanding quality. We are seeking a Communications Coordinator to help us spread this important message. This is a contractual position paying \$10,000 annually, with an estimated hours 8 hours per week of work. This contract commences on January 1, 2020.

#### Key Duties:

- Execute AUGSA's marketing and communication plan in line with the strategic plan;
- Advance strategies and tactics to disseminate information about AUGSA's events and advocacy;
- Produce valuable and engaging content for our website and social media that attracts our target groups;

- Manage, plan and develop internal and external communications strategies;
- Manage the implementation of evaluation and measurement tools regarding communication activities;

**Requirements:**

- Proven ability to create and execute a marketing and communications plan;
- Experience in identifying target audiences and in creatively devising and leading across channels marketing campaigns that engage, educate and motivate;
- Up to date with the latest trends and best practices in online marketing and measurement;
- Ability to work in WordPress.

**Qualifications:**

- Degree or diploma in Marketing/Communications would be considered an asset;
- Proven experience in social media marketing strategies and multi-media development;
- Strong analytical and project management skills;
- Confident and dynamic personality;
- The capacity to pay attention to detail and ensure work is consistently prioritized, completed and accurate within expected timelines;
- The ability to work collaboratively on-line with the Executive Director and other staff and must have the ability to work in a small team and work independently with minimal supervision.

We are actively recruiting for this position so if you sound like the person we have described, please send us your cover letter and resume. We thank all applicants for their interest, but only those selected for an interview will be contacted. No phone calls, please.

Please email your cover letter and resume to:

Ross Tyson, Executive Director ed@augsa.com

Deadline for Resume submission: November 15, 2019

## Awards

The Awards Committee is pleased to announce the following five **2019 Outstanding Distinction Award**

**Recipients:**

1. Nicole Parker
2. Dr. Don Zeman- Faculty Award
3. Lindsay Arneson
4. Julia Cornester
5. Jason Openo

The Outstanding Distinction Award recognizes Athabasca University graduate students who have demonstrated a high degree of leadership and engagement in their communities, their studies, and /or professional lives.

<https://www.augsa.com/resources/student-awards/>

## abGPAC- Press Release

Alberta's post-secondary student leaders are issuing the following joint statement in response to the Government of Alberta 2019/20 budget release:

October 25, 2019 Edmonton, AB - Student leaders in Alberta have worked hard to advance students' priorities to government and yesterday's budget announcement presents serious concerns

for students. Tuition increases of up to 22.5% compounded over three years, combined with a student loan interest rate hike and the elimination of tuition and education tax credits, will significantly increase the costs of post-secondary education. All these measures will have severe impacts on affordability and accessibility of post-secondary education, causing many Alberta families to sink further into debt. After all, student debt is family debt. As such, students must be included in finding innovative solutions that lessen the burden of these cost increases placed on Alberta families. While we have significant concerns about affordability and accessibility for domestic students, we must also ensure that predictability is maintained for our international students, who have had to bear the burden of unfair tuition hikes for many years. We hope to work alongside our institutions to ensure proper fiscal efficiencies are found first before relying on students to fund operations. We are also disappointed to see the elimination of the Summer Temporary Employment Program (STEP). This initiative created over 12,000 positions over the last four years, resulting in positive impacts on student finances, employability, and skills development. Its elimination will also have a huge impact on Alberta's non-profit sector which relies on this funding to create new jobs. As a result, it is necessary to find alternatives to fill in the gap left by STEP, such as ways to connect students with employers, experiences, and skill sets to contribute to Alberta's economy upon graduation.

It is unfortunate to see multi-year reductions in infrastructure investments across the province. While we understand that the current economic climate constrains available capital funding, we also know that a failure to invest in capital construction and maintenance now will only lead to ballooning costs down the line. Campus Alberta faces a \$2 billion deferred maintenance deficit over the next five years, and we cannot saddle future Albertans with the physical and financial costs of ignoring this problem.

Large-scale cuts to institutional operating grants will create cost pressures at every post-secondary institution. We expect to have a seat at the table when discussing how these cuts will be implemented. Alberta student leaders want to ensure these cuts do not impact front line instruction, student affairs, or mental health supports at our home institutions, but instead are targeted towards centralized administrative costs that have increased out of proportion to inflation and enrolment growth.

Notwithstanding the previously-stated concerns, a positive outcome from budget 2019/20 is the increased funding provided for apprenticeship training across the province. This funding will allow greater numbers of students to access retraining opportunities and re-enter the labour force, expediting Alberta's economic recovery. While we are pleased with this positive outcome, we would like to see a similar value placed on both undergraduate and graduate students' professional development as students are key drivers for economic development and innovation.

Post-secondary education represents a strong return on investment in creating new jobs and growing our economy, but in order to realize that return, our higher education system must be accessible, affordable, and predictable. Unfortunately, this budget undermines the accessibility and affordability of the system while threatening the viability of quality instruction and critical support services at institutions across the province. Despite these setbacks, Alberta's student leaders will collaborate with decision-makers to strengthen our province's advanced education sector and keep students' rights top of mind.

For media inquiries please contact:

ab-GPAC: Chris Bell - Executive Director - ed@abgpac.ca

ASEC: Emmanuel Barker - Director, Government Relations & Advocacy - advocacy@albertastudents.ca

CAUS: Jon Mastel - Executive Director - ed@caus.net

AUSU: Duncan Wojtaszek - Governance and Advocacy Coordinator - governance@ausu.org

LCSA: Jordan Ager - Executive Director - Jordan.ager@lethbridgecollege.ca

SALC: Sierra Unick - President - vsapresident@lakelandcollege.ca

The Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council, the Alberta Students' Executive Council, and the council of Alberta University Students along with the Athabasca University Students' Union, Lethbridge College Students' Association, and the Students' Association of Lakeland College collectively represent over 260,000 post-secondary students from all corners of Alberta.

### **Faculty of Business Trading Challenge:**

Interested in trading? You know, stocks, bonds, and all the rest.

Have we got an opportunity for you!

We are still recruiting for a team of student traders for the CME Trading Challenge!

Learn more here: <https://news.athabascau.ca/faculty-of-business/cme-groups-university-trading-challenge-faqs/>

### **Faculty of Graduate Studies**

The latest update from the Faculty of Graduate Studies is [here](#).

### **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>