

# Athabasca University Students' Union

ANNUAL REPORTS • 2005 SUMMARY FINANCIALS • COMMITTEES & CLUBS • PLANNING

Annual General Meeting 2006  
Report to the Members



# AUSU

## FINANCIAL REPORT AND AGM INFORMATION

All data refers to the 2004/05 AUSU fiscal year, beginning October 1, 2004, and ending September 30, 2005. Planning information is for the 2006/07 fiscal year, beginning October 1, 2006, and ending September 30, 2007.

For verification and explanation of all financial data, please contact the AUSU VP Finance at [vpfa@ausu.org](mailto:vpfa@ausu.org).

The Annual General Meeting of AUSU will be held September 28, 2006, at: 6:00 pm at 1200, 10011 109th Street, Edmonton, AB. Teleconference lines will be available for all students who request one and who live in an area with access to the teleconferencing network. Inquire with [ausu@ausu.org](mailto:ausu@ausu.org) for more information.

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# Welcome from the president

This fiscal year has been a time of great change for both AUSU and AU. What began as a small, rural university has blossomed into the largest university in Alberta and an institution that is recognized worldwide for excellence in distance education. Our reputation overseas, in particular, continues to grow and our recent accreditation in the United States provides us with opportunities that no other university in Canada or the US can provide.



Our Students' Union, formed in 1993 by a small group of energetic, forward-thinking students from around the world, was once the only students' association in the world representing a population entirely composed of distance education students. Today, we're being contacted by fledgling groups from around the world who want to know how we have grown and prospered while representing our widespread group. AUSU, as a whole, has become an incredibly professional organization drawing increasingly skilled and visionary individuals who are keen to represent their fellow students.

The 2006 AUSU Council election proved to be exceptional in many regards. First, the largest number of nominations in AUSU history were received for the 2006 – 2008 Council. Eighteen members from across Canada self-nominated for the election, representing British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, and New Brunswick. We even had one candidate from the US state of California. Ontario members boasted the highest proportion of nominations with 9 out of 18 hailing from that province. In the end, nine individuals were elected to council, including four from Alberta, four from Ontario and one from British Columbia, creating a council that for the first time in AUSU history consists primarily of students from outside of Alberta. The inclusion of more councillors outside of Alberta has been, in part, made more viable due to our successful lobbying for Athabasca University to allow university committee representatives to teleconference to more meetings.

It is also interesting to note that the election results closely match the current AU student demographics, with Alberta and Ontario neck and neck for the highest number of AUSU members and B.C. currently ranking third highest. AUSU council for the 2006/08 term

consist of: Real Beaulieu (Nepean, ON), Lonita Fraser (Hamilton, ON), Joy Krys (Edmonton, AB), Huma Lodhi (Waterloo, ON), Karl Low, Mac McInnis, and Lisa Priebe (all of Calgary, AB), Barb Rielly (Westport, ON) and Sarah Whaley (Surrey, BC).

A major achievement this year has been the realization of a Health and Dental discount program for AUSU members, which we offered for the first time in spring 2006. The program, arranged through Ingle International and Imagine Financial Ltd., will help students obtain health and dental coverage as well as supplement current third party coverage. It is available to students in almost all Canadian locations, allows students to include all members of their families, and provides continuing coverage after studies conclude or during a hiatus. AUSU will continually assess this new program over the upcoming year to ensure it meets the needs of our membership, and we are in constant contact with the insurer to tweak the program and enhance the information that is provided to students through both our, and the insurer's, web sites.

Substantial operational and governance changes were also implemented over the past year, including: a revision of the current committee system; significant updates and revisions to the AUSU policy manual; and changes in communication flow and delegation of authority. In addition, a new part-time Office Assistant was hired to help address the increasing work load within the union and process requests for our 2005/06 Handbook/Planner —the most popular publication in our history.

Relations with the university continue to be positive, particularly in light of the hiring of a new university President and VP Academic. AUSU council continues to work with the university to help improve communication processes to ensure that our members' voice is heard.

Over the coming year, council intends to focus on our external relations, including developing more links with our Ontario counterparts as well as forging new relations with various departments of advanced education across the country. Internally, AUSU will be looking to revamp and improve current programs including the current Mentor program and our Groups and Clubs system. To follow the success of the 2005/06 Planner, we are hard at work on the 2007 edition, and will continue to advertise AUSU to new members through our very successful postcards in AU course boxes.

We hope to hear from you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Priebe', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Lisa Priebe  
President

# AGM 2006

# agenda

Athabasca University Students' Union

13th Annual General Meeting

Date: September 28, 2005.

Time: 6:00 P.M. MST

Location: Suite 1213, Edmonton Learning Centre, Teleconference

1.0 Call to Order and President's Welcome

2.0 Confirmation of Notice of Meeting

3.0 Approval of Agenda

4.0 Approval of September 2005, AGM minutes

5.0 Annual Financial statements as at September 30, 2005

5.1 Appointment of Auditor for 2005-2006 Fiscal year

6.0 Presentation of AUSU Annual Activity Report

7.0 Adjournment



**AUSU**  
Athabasca University Students' Union

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**AUSU AGM 2006!**  
September 28 at 6:00 pm MST

The 2006 AUSU Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held on September 28 at 6:00 pm MST. All members are invited and encouraged to attend via free teleconference which can be accessed from almost anywhere in the world. At regular council meetings, only councillors may speak and vote, but at a general meeting all members have a vote on all agenda items. AUSU will also present the annual financial report for the 2004/05 fiscal year and discuss this year's operating budget. A copy of the annual report, which will be presented at the meeting, will be available for download shortly. Watch this space for updates.

Remember, if you are currently enrolled in an AU undergraduate course in progress or have been in an AU undergrad course that ended less than six months ago, you are a member of the union. For more information on membership and how you can attend this year's AGM, contact Lorianne in our office at [ausu@ausu.org](mailto:ausu@ausu.org). We'd love to "see" you there.

**Rate Our Service**  
Click Here

**Student Login**

ed in as Tamra  
[Member Info](#)

**Rate Survey**  
Webcast

h the webcast of  
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8.3  
%  
(4)

and couldn't  
attend

Yes, though  
I wasn't a  
grad this

29.2  
%

Screenshot of the front page of AUSU.org, showing the 2006 AGM announcement. Notice is enlarged and highlighted for legibility. This notice was posted prior to 21 days before the meeting, and remained on the AUSU.org front page until the date of the meeting.

The AGM was also announced via flyers, posted in the Edmonton Learning Center and the Calgary Learning Center. This flyer is reproduced below.

# AGM 2006 Meeting Notices

Athabasca University  
Students' Union

Join us September 28 at 6:00 p.m.

Find out what your Students' Union has been doing for you at the **2006 Annual General Meeting**

This meeting is open to all AUSU members  
(members include all current AU students, and those who have been in a course ending in the last six months)

Attend by teleconference for free from almost anywhere

All attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions or comment

**www.ausu.org**  
*Your Voice, Our Future*

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**Annual General Meeting 2006**

Contact [ausu@ausu.org](mailto:ausu@ausu.org) or call  
1-800-788-9034, ext 3413 for information

Visit [www.ausu.org](http://www.ausu.org) for updates



# AGM 2005

# meeting minutes

## ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION

### Annual General Meeting

19:00 (MST), October 3, 2005

Teleconference

**Councillors Present:** Lisa Priebe (Chair), Joy Krys, Karl Low, Lonita Fraser, Shannon Maguire and Mac McInnis

**Staff Present:** Tamra Ross Low (AUSU Executive Director)

**Members:** Sandra Livingston, Caryl Klein, Elizabeth Cousar, Kristine Astop, Sarah Whaley, Barbara Rielly, Zoe Williams, Peter Tretter.

**Record of Minutes:** Lorianne Slauenwhite, Office Manager (non-member)

**1.0 Meeting called to order at 18:09 MST by President and Chair; Lisa Priebe**

**2.0 Confirmation of Notice of Meeting**

It was confirmed that a notice of the meeting date and time was posted on the AUSU website Front page in the third week of August, posters were placed in the CLC and ELC, a notice was placed in AUSU News, which was mailed to all members, and an additional notice was placed in The Voice Magazine.

**3.0 BIRT the agenda be approved as amended**

Ammendments included: fixing numbering and chaging the date from May to February.

-L. Fraser / E. Cousar

-Carried-

**4.0 BIRT the minutes of the February 2005 SGM be approved as submitted**

- L. Priebe / T. Ross Low

-Carried-

**5.0 BIRT AUSU appoint Cass and Fraser as auditors for the 2004/05 annual audit**

- K. Low / S. Livingston

-Carried-



(one abstention P. Tretter)

T Ross Low noted that Cass and Fraser did an excellent job of this year's audit and that they are being more thorough and attentive to our needs than our previous accountants. One benefit of this firm is that they specialize in non-profit organization accounting.

**6.0 BIRT the Bylaws of AUSU be amended as indicated in the attached document.**

-K. Low/ M. McInnis

-Carried-

There was an informative discussion regarding changes between council, staff and members.

**7.0 Presentations of AUSU Annual Activities and Reports.**

**8.0 Open Forum Discussion period declined by members**

**9.0 Meeting adjourned at 18:25 MST**

# vp external report

Greetings members,

This past year at AUSU has been an exciting one, both for me and for Council as a whole. Becoming more familiar with my role as VP External and Student Affairs, to which I was re-elected this year, has meant a greater ability on my part to attend to the needs of our members, and put the knowledge I have gained into practice to continue to serve our members' needs.

Externally, the most significant development of the past year has been our participation in the Alberta Government's *A Learning Alberta* (ALA) research project, initiated by the new Post-Secondary Learning Minister to revitalize the Alberta post-secondary learning system. AUSU submitted a comprehensive proposal to the ALA Steering Committees, including a set of recommendations for improvements to the system that we believe will serve the needs of students of Athabasca University and in general. We're pleased that many of our recommendations were reflected in the final set of recommendations made by the ALA committee. You can find these finalized documents on the government of Alberta web site, should you be interested in more detailed information, or you can contact our office for more information. As part of our continuing efforts to promote Athabasca University (AU) to the government and general public, we are considering offering a more detailed report to the ALA team that highlights how AU can fulfill some of the recommendations made by the ALA steering committee. We have great hope that many of the suggestions found within the finalized ALA reports will come to fruition.

We have spent quite a bit of time debating the Maclean's Magazine university rankings, and the lack of representation that AU (and other distance education opportunities within Canada) receives. We have determined that, based on this lack of representation and current debate about Maclean's reputation amongst other institutions, we will not pursue inclusion in the magazine's annual ranking reports. We are researching other areas in which we might increase AU's, and thereby our own, visibility nationally.

A major change this year was our withdrawal from CAUS - the Council of Alberta University Students. Though we still support many of CAUS's initiatives on behalf of Alberta students, we found we were increasingly working at odds with the group in our attempts to include the issues of Distance Education students and our very large student population outside of Alberta. At this time, we feel that the interests of our members would be better served by lobbying independently while we continue to support CAUS's initiatives in serving the interests of Alberta students.

This past year, our research efforts have included:

- studies of awards programs and fee structures at other institutions to see how they compare to those at AU;
- the potential of helming an organization that would act as an interprovincial transfer

- credit association, in the hope that it would eliminate the problems now existing in transferring credits from one university or college to another, across provincial borders;
- research into distance education-related organizations in the United States and overseas;
  - and general research into distance education, educational organizations and institutions, and general interest items that bear on AUSU's work for our members.

Two items of great interest are our ongoing communications with overseas institutions seeking to start up an international open university and distance education students' organization, and AU's accreditation by the *Middle States Commission on Higher Education* (MSCHE) in the United States, which will make transferring credit to an American university under their aegis a much simpler matter. This makes AU the very first university in North America that holds both US and Canadian accreditation, and also improves our international reputation and prestige. I'd also like to note that the AU position of Executive Director, External Relations is currently vacant, and has been expanded and renamed the VP Advancement. AUSU has been promised a representative on the selection committee for this position and we look forward to ensuring that we represent students on yet another key hiring committee.

Many of our future plans involve continuing the research projects mentioned above, and ongoing efforts to improve and foster communications with education-related organizations nationally and internationally. We are building a database of organizational contacts that we hope will aid us in our endeavours to find ways to improve the services we provide to, and actions we take on behalf of, our members.

One final note: As it currently stands, our Council membership now proportionally represents the student body of AU, with a member from British Columbia, four members from Ontario, and four from Alberta. AU's current statistics show that these are the greatest areas of student registration from inside Canada.

I have been pleased to be part of Council over the past year, and hope the next year will be even more profitable for our members than the last.



**Lonita Fraser**  
**Vice-President External and Student Affairs**  
**September 2006**

# vp finance report

This report is a summary of the consolidated financial statements of AUSU for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2005. The complete statements and their notes are included in the following pages. The purpose of this summary is to highlight key points from the statements.

AUSU had planned to have a balanced budget during this fiscal year. However, this was not realized, primarily due to expenses being significantly lower than projected, and AUSU finds itself in the enviable position of posting another significant surplus.

In particular, AUSU achieved surpluses in the following areas:

- Only one issue of the AUSU newsletter was produced and mailed over the financial year. Since then, AUSU has streamlined the production of *AUSU News* to allow at least two issues to be delivered to the membership each financial year.
- Councillor honoraria were significantly lower than projected, primarily due to a number of Councillors leaving their positions early.
- Events and Programs expenses were cut nearly in half. The primary expense in this area has always been Convocation. AUSU Council decided during this year to significantly reduce our contribution to AU's convocation for a number of reasons, including investigation of other universities demonstrating that convocation is typically not funded at all by other students' unions, and questioning the benefits to our membership of providing a service to members only as they were ending their membership with the organization.
- Office expenses were significantly lower than expected, with the projections in budget formation including anticipated expenses of an office move and possible separate office rental that did not materialize due to AU being willing to assist with the move and provide more space than initially indicated.
- Significant savings were also found in the student handbook, as providing our own handbook on student request, rather than providing one mailed automatically in conjunction with AU allowed us to realize savings on production as well as increased control of content so that it was more relevant and useful to the membership. Also, having the book designed in-house saved on potential contractor fees.
- The Student Award expenses were also significantly lower than projected. This occurred because of difficulties in attaining a proper Academic Achievement awards list that matched our stated criteria, as well as lower numbers of applications for emergency bursaries and computer bursaries than expected. AUSU is continuing to seek a remedy to our information request problems and hope of having a list of winners for our past Academic Achievement awards soon so that we can finally disperse these funds.
- Finally, web site expenses were also significantly lower than was expected, primarily because the bulk of the work was completed and billed after the close of the financial year. Additionally, AUSU staff has worked significantly with the contractors to reduce our costs and provide better functionality on the front and back ends of the web site.

Put together, these savings, as well as other less significant ones, resulted in expenses being over \$100,000 less than expected. To say AUSU enters the next year in a healthy financial position is an understatement, and Council is working on finding ways to use this surplus effectively and create better and more varied services for the membership.

On the administration side, the 2004/2005 financial year saw the leaving of our then Office Coordinator Christine Lynch, and council opted to retain two full-time staff in place of the three we had previously, while retaining additional part-time help. This also prompted significant updates to our personnel policies, streamlining them so that they could be used in a reasonable time frame. Christine was replaced by Lorianne Slauenwhite, first as a temporary employee, then as full-time staff, and AUSU is discussing the addition of a third full-time staff member now that we've had time to assess our needs.

Additional changes to AUSU over the last fiscal year include a significant streamlining of our operations, with several committees disbanded. It was recognized, for example, that changing Council policy should be the core duty of the elected Council members, not a Legislative committee composed of interested members of the student body. Additionally, this was also the year where the Council began to more strongly define its role as directors of AUSU through policy management, and divide that from the day-to-day administration of AUSU by professional staff.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karl Low', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Karl Low  
Vice-President Finance and Administration  
September, 2005

# AUSU 2004/05 financial report

## Statement of Financial Position

From the Auditors

Cass and Fraser  
of Edmonton Alberta

for the financial year

beginning October 1, 2004 and  
ending September 30, 2005



# Athabasca University Students' Union

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FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

SEPTEMBER 30, 2005

# Athabasca University Students' Union

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SEPTEMBER 30, 2005

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info@cassfraser.ca  
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## AUDITORS' REPORT

To the Members of:  
Athabasca University Students' Union

We have audited the statement of financial position of the Athabasca University Students' Union as at September 30, 2005, and the statements of operations and changes in fund balances for the operating fund and capital replacement reserve fund for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the corporation's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform an audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation.

In our opinion, these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the corporation as at September 30, 2005, and the results of its operations for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles for not-for-profit organizations.

*Cass & Fraser*

Cass & Fraser Chartered Accountants

Edmonton, Alberta  
February 7, 2006

# Athabasca University Students' Union

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

AS AT SEPTEMBER 30, 2005

	2005	2004
Current Assets		
Cash	\$ 463,147	\$ 343,709
Accounts receivable (note 3)	46,480	47,768
Prepaid expenses	96	484
	509,723	391,961
Equipment	4,135	8,476
	\$ 513,858	\$ 400,437
Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable	\$ 4,745	\$ 7,860
Prepaid student fees	68,048	64,584
	72,793	72,444
Net Assets		
Invested in equipment	4,135	8,474
Internally restricted	-	122,349
Unrestricted	436,930	197,170
	441,065	327,993
	\$ 513,858	\$ 400,437

# Athabasca University Students' Union

## STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

FOR THE YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2005

	2005 Budget	2005 Actual	2004 Actual
Revenues			
Student fees	\$ 416,401	\$ 410,208	\$ 387,255
Advertising	-	1,787	(341)
Interest	4,500	4,908	4,358
Other	1,050	101	4,176
	421,951	417,004	395,448
Expenses			
Advertising	5,200	3,487	320
Amortization	5,000	4,340	3,888
Bank charges	200	245	195
Club expenses	2,000	-	475
Committee expenses	2,563	2,201	2,479
Computer expenses	10,500	-	-
Council meetings	4,000	3,183	2,896
Council and other honoraria	28,800	19,152	29,428
Election	1,000	-	500
Events and programs (note 4)	14,400	7,596	12,868
Executive honoraria	42,000	41,500	42,000
Insurance	1,250	1,135	1,248
Newsletter	53,000	34,601	25,177
Licenses and permits	400	-	-
Office expenses	24,400	14,622	27,083
Professional fees	7,000	5,978	7,389
Representation expenses	19,200	8,640	4,240
Salaries and benefits	61,860	56,272	54,248
Student awards	44,500	28,688	39,310
Student handbook	30,000	17,597	41,967
Subscription fees	500	608	5,069
The Voice	52,520	52,001	44,378
Website	11,500	2,086	12,507
	421,793	303,932	357,665
Revenues over expenses	\$ 158	\$ 113,072	\$ 37,783

# Athabasca University Students' Union

## STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS FOR THE YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2005

					<u>2004</u>
	Investment in Equipment	Internally restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Total
Net Assets, beginning of period	\$ 8,474	\$ 122,349	\$ 197,170	\$ 327,993	\$ 290,210
Excess of revenues over expenses	-	-	113,072	113,072	37,783
Removal of internal restrictions	-	(122,349)	122,349	-	-
Equipment purchases	(4,339)	-	4,339	-	-
Net Assets, end of period	\$ 4,135	\$ -	\$ 436,930	\$ 441,065	\$ 327,993



# Athabasca University Students' Union

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## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

SEPTEMBER 30, 2005

### 1 Purpose and Income Tax Status

The objectives of the Athabasca University Students' Union shall be to provide for the administration of the affairs of the Athabasca University undergraduate students including:

- a) the development and management of student institutions.
- b) the development and implementation of a system of student governing principles;
- c) the promotion of the general welfare of Athabasca University undergraduate students;
- d) the furtherance of the values inherent in an open University as well as of life long learning.

The Association is a non-profit organization under the Income Tax Act, and is therefore exempt from income taxes.

### 2 Significant Accounting Policies

#### (a) Revenue Recognition

Student fee revenue is recognized in the year to which the fees relate. Revenue from special activities is recognized when the function to which the revenue relates has been completed.

#### (b) Contributed Services

Volunteer services contributed on behalf of the corporation are not recognized in these financial statements due to the difficulty in determining their fair value.

#### (c) Use of Estimates

Under generally accepted accounting principles, estimates are permitted in some circumstances. For example, in the determining the useful lives of assets, or in the accrual of liabilities and receivables, where the actual amounts are not yet known but can be reasonably estimated. It may be possible that when the actual results are known, they will differ materially from the estimated amounts.

# Athabasca University Students' Union

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

SEPTEMBER 30, 2005

### (d) Capital Assets

Capital assets are recorded at cost. Amortization is provided on the straight line method with expected lives as follows:

Asset	Rate
Office furnishings	10 years
Computer equipment	3 years

### (e) Financial Instruments

The Association's financial instruments consist of accounts receivable and accounts payable. It is management's opinion that the corporation is not exposed to significant interest or credit risks arising from these financial instruments. The fair value of these financial instruments approximate their carrying values.

## 3 Accounts Receivable

Accounts receivable are comprised of the following:

	2005	2004
Athabasca University - students fees	\$ 46,480	\$ 47,768
	\$ 46,480	\$ 47,768

## 4 Events and Programs

Events and programs consist of the following:

	2005	2004
Convocation	\$ 7,596	\$ 12,868
	\$ 7,596	\$ 12,868

## 5 Statement of Cash Flows

A statement of cash flows has not been presented as it would not provide any additional meaningful information.

# Athabasca University Students' Union

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## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

SEPTEMBER 30, 2005

### 6 Comparative Figures

Certain comparative figures have been reclassified to conform to the current year's presentation.

### 7 Approval of Financial Statements

These financial statements have been approved by the Board of Directors.

## AUSU Activity Report 2005/06 priority activities

### **Tutor of the Year**

AUSU has launched its first annual Tutor of the Year contest, for which nominations are still being accepted through our web site form; AUSU council and staff are excited about this opportunity to recognize the best academic staff at AU, and help promote better service by recognizing tutors who are providing students with the kind of support that they need and desire; We are considering complementing this new award with an award for the best AU support staff person; It has also been discussed that we may want to poll students to determine which tutor and/or staff person has provided the least valuable service.

### **Postcards**

Our newest advertising media are colourful postcards placed in the boxes of every AU course that is shipped out; Previously, we placed a flyer in the boxes but feedback indicated that few students were noticing it. Some debate occurred over whether a postcard would be worth the additional cost, but the response to these cards has been overwhelming and necessitated the addition of another, part-time staff member to handle additional requests; The postcards were instrumental in advertising our new Handbook/Planner, and we will continue to use these cards to advertise new services to members.

### **Internet Radio**

A very preliminary discussion has taken place regarding the possibility of AUSU forming an online radio station for members.

### **Expanded Staffing**

In addition to our two regular, full-time staff, we have also hired a part-time assistant to handle the increasing workload that has occurred as the awareness of AUSU increases among the membership.

## AUSU Position Policies

AUSU has reviewed its position policies and updated them based on new research and the input of the new council. A second review of these policies will begin shortly;

Position Policies remain online in the official policy manual so that members can remain apprised of how AUSU is representing their interests;

These policies and the coming priority survey will form the basis for AUSU lobbying over the coming year;

AUSU plans to continue creating Position Policies for future issues to enhance the transparency of union operations and ensure that all of council is working toward the same goals.

## External Activities

A submission was made to the Alberta Government's *A Learning Alberta* Steering Committee to highlight the concerns of Alberta students and students of distance education. In addition, we collaborated on a submission by CAUS, and were the only university SU in Alberta to make an independent submission;

A press release was issued following the final report of the ALA committee to highlight the recommendations that we believe are particularly beneficial to our members and students in general;

AUSU is examining difficulties that occur for some members who register for AU courses through Mount Royal College;

Investigating the viability of a partnership with an Ontario-based lobby group, as the second largest concentration of AUSU members is in that province;

AUSU executive met with key AU executives and department heads in a summit meeting this past February. In the meeting we had an opportunity to highlight the concerns of our members and our goals for the coming year.

## Separation from CAUS

Considerable time was spent this past year discussing the relationship between AUSU and CAUS—the Council of Alberta University Students;

Increasingly, our focus differed from that of CAUS which represents only Alberta students, few distance education students outside of AU, and in general, a much younger student population with more focus on issues like dorm spaces, parental support, etc.

CAUS demonstrated a reluctance to support or promote distance education, though AU students comprised nearly 37,000 of the 85,000 students which CAUS represented;

Ultimately, AUSU decided that the funding provided to CAUS was not providing the best possible representation for AUSU members, though we continue to support many of CAUS's initiatives;

Unfortunately, a lengthy legal battle ensued over our CAUS fees, which CAUS felt were outstanding but our lawyers and a professional arbitrator deemed were charged without basis as CAUS had not been adhering to the fee guidelines in its registered bylaws. Due to an anticipation of even greater legal fees that

would exceed our original billing, and a desire to maintain good relations with the universities that have membership in CAUS, we ultimately chose to pay out the contested fees in full.

We have indicated a willingness to provide financial and other supports to CAUS on many subsequent initiatives. To date we have not received a reply but look forward to working with other Alberta students' groups in the future and believe that collaboration between our groups can be highly beneficial on key issues.

## **AUSU.org Media Relations Area**

A new section on the AUSU web site provides access to documents of interest to the media;

All AUSU media releases will be archived in this section so that members and media may access them at will;

Significant enhancements to the AUSU Intranet has streamlined appointment planning for all AUSU Councillors and Staff, and provided enhanced access to council documents for our remote members, who can access them via a password-protected secure storage space.

## **Management Audit**

AUSU reviewed its management structure to ensure that it is appropriate for an organization of AUSU's size and funding structure;

Our governance model has been modernized to separate the policy-making tasks of council, and the administrative tasks of AUSU staff;

New policies have been created better defining the governance model and delegation of authority;

A new Office Assistant has been hired, and AUSU is considering adding another full-time staff member over the coming year to focus on lobbying and research.

## **Election 2006**

A new election policy was approved prior to the 2006 AUSU election;

A call for candidates went out in December of 2005, and a general election was held in March of 2006. The new council took office in April and will govern AUSU operations from April 2006 through March 2008;

A challenge was brought forward to the Edmonton Police, regarding candidacy for the AUSU election. The complaint was reviewed and we were notified that our election policy is appropriate and contains satisfactory complaint mechanisms, and that all matters were handled according to the policy. No grounds for a case were found and the matter was concluded.

## **Health and Dental Discount for Members**

AUSU completed drafting an agreement with a major Canadian health and dental insurance provider to provide discounted rates for AUSU members;

The new plan is now available to members in most locations across Canada;



A plan for Quebec residents is also being pursued;  
The new plan allows members to select the amount of coverage that they desire, and offers coverage comparable to that offered by other major health insurance providers, but at discounted rates;  
Coverage on this plan can continue beyond graduation and during a hiatus in study, and can also extend to cover all members of the students' family;  
The plan is currently being advertised through all available AUSU media, including a postcard placed in the boxes of AU courses.

## **AUSU Scholarships and Awards**

AUSU continues to encounter difficulties in obtaining a list of the winners of our Academic Achievement awards from the AU Registrar's department. A formal complaint has been filed with several AU executives and we have been assured that our pending requests —some of which have been outstanding for more than one year—are being processed immediately and that action is being taken to ensure that all future requests are fulfilled in a timely manner and adhere to our criteria. AUSU will continue to aggressively pursue this issue and we are determined to provide these awards to our members as advertised;  
AUSU Funding is available for any student who needs to travel to attend AU labs or practicums or to attend a conference relevant to their field of study;  
AUSU continues to provide computers for students in need, in the form of a computer bursary given out once every four months;  
AUSU continues to provide emergency funding to students in extreme need.

## **AUSU Advocacy**

AUSU has seats on many AU committees, as detailed on the committee representation list below in this document;  
AUSU has assertively sought and obtained positions on every key hiring committee for AU executives this year;  
AUSU has successfully lobbied AU to add teleconference options for more AU committees, which has allowed us to sit on more committees and select representatives who do not live in Edmonton.

## **The Voice Magazine**

Significant updates to the Voice web site have been completed, including a new system for viewing back issues online, and more upgrades underway and nearing completion;  
The update to the Voice web site, which will include a new system for displaying events, scholarships, internships, etc., will mark the completion of the first major step toward bringing in a new working editor who will solely focus on the Voice;  
Third Annual Voice Writing Contest a success. Entries were strong and many were received in both categories. Unexpected delays were incurred in judging

when The Voice lost contact with one of the panel, but a past judge stepped in and quickly completed judging, with much appreciation from The Voice; A Voice reporter/photographer was sent to this year's convocation to take pictures of the ceremonies.

## **AUSU News**

The sixth and seventh editions of AUSU News were mailed out in 2006 to 36,500+ AUSU members worldwide;

Newsletters contained an announcement of this AGM and our Tutor of the Year contest, as well as the introductory notification about the AUSU Health and Dental plan.

## **AUSU Mentor Program**

The response to our call for mentors has slowed considerably;

AUSU is planning on revamping the program this coming year to improve the service.

## **Study Buddy Program**

The program has served a large number of students since its inception in late 1996, and continues to be a very popular program of AU.

## **Student Handbook/Planner**

The 2005/06 AUSU Student Handbook/Planner was released in July of 2005. It is the first planner produced entirely by AUSU for AUSU members since 2001; Planner contained 18 months of calendar pages, to remain useful until the end of 2006;

The new planner format was much smaller and more durable so that it could be carried in a purse, bookbag or large pocket;

This has been the most popular edition of the AUSU planner, and we are now designing a new planner entirely in-house for increased control of the content and layout to better meet our members' suggestions and requests. The new planner will only be for one year. The previous planner was designed partially by our staff (the Handbook portion), and included some stock printer's pages (the planner section);

The smaller format will be kept but the page count increased to allow additional room for members' to write down appointments and mark dates.

## Policy Review

A thorough review of the AUSU operating policies is nearly complete;  
Policies will be reviewed regularly to ensure that they do not become outdated or irrelevant. A mandatory review date is now part of every new policy;  
Personnel policies have been fully revamped to allow the organization increased flexibility;  
New financial policies have been developed to increase accountability and to simplify procedures. These are currently being examined by Finance Committee before submission to council for final review and approval.

## Groups and Clubs

Some new AUSU Student Groups and Clubs were launched;  
Free web-space and web design provided for AUSU clubs;  
AUSU clubs have private forums on the AUSU system, and can maintain their own forums by adding members without having to go through the AUSU webmaster;  
AUSU is considering expanding options for Groups and Clubs to include public forums and seeking ways to increase active membership.

# Activity Report

# AUSU council committees

COMMITTEE	CHAIR	MEMBERS
Finance	Karl Low	Lisa Priebe, Mac McInnis, Sarah Whaley, Zil-E-Huma Lodhi
Awards	Lisa Priebe	Lisa Priebe, Sarah Whaley, Real Beaulieu, Joy Krys, Barb Rielly
Personnel	Lisa Priebe	Lonita Fraser, Karl Low (non voting)

# Athabasca University and external committees

COMMITTEE	STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES
<b>AU Governing Council (AUGC)</b>	Lisa Priebe and Lonita Fraser
Finance Subcommittee	Lisa Priebe (AU Appointed)
Honorary Awards Subcommittee	Lisa Priebe (AU Appointed)
Institutional Advancement Subcommittee	Lonita Fraser (AU Appointed)
<b>AU Academic Council (AUAC)</b>	Karl Low
Student Academic Appeals Committee	Lisa Priebe
Student Awards Committee	Lonita Fraser
Student Services Group (SSG)	Tamra Ross
<b>Miscellaneous Ad-Hoc Committees</b>	
1234 Course Renumbering Committee	Tamra Ross
Course Materials Committee	Karl Low
Middle States Accreditation Self Study Task Forces	Tamra Ross (Student Admissions), Karl Low (Legislative). The project concluded in 2005.
Moodle Implementation Committee	Tamra Ross
My AU Steering Committee	Tamra Ross
Registrar Search Committee	Karl Low
Vice President Academic Selection Committee	Lisa Priebe (completed)
Vice President Advancement Search Committee	Pending
<b>Miscellaneous Standing Committees</b>	
AU Staff Awards Committee (SDRMASE, PATME & CCMATE)	Tamra Ross
AU Strategic Budget Advisory Committee	Lisa Priebe
au.world Editor's Group	Tamra Ross
Bryon Paege Memorial Award (CUPE)	Lonita Fraser
Center for Learning Accreditation Steering	Pending
Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS)	Lisa Priebe, Lonita Fraser & Tamra Ross (membership not renewed)
Strategic University Plan Steering Committee	Karl Low
Sustainability Committee	Pending

## MAIN OFFICE

Athabasca University Students' Union  
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Edmonton, AB T5J 3S8  
TEL: 1-800-788-9041 ext. 3413  
FAX: (780) 497-7003  
[www.ausu.org](http://www.ausu.org)  
[ausu@ausu.org](mailto:ausu@ausu.org)

## COUNCIL

Lisa Priebe - President  
Lonita Fraser - Vice President, External & Student Affairs  
Karl Low - Vice President, Finance & Administration  
Sarah Whaley  
Zil-E-Huma Lodhi  
Real Beaulieu  
Barb Rielly  
Mac McInnis  
Joy Krys

## STAFF

Tamra Ross - Executive Director/Voice Editor  
Lorianne Slauenwhite - Office Manager  
Becky Beepat - Office Assistant

AUSU Represents more than 36,600 Athabasca University students world wide. AUSU members are defined as all students of Athabasca University who are currently enrolled in an AU undergraduate course, or who have been enrolled in an AU undergraduate course with an end date within the last six months (if extensions are purchased, the extended end date is used to calculate membership).

For more information about AUSU and its programs, please see [www.ausu.org](http://www.ausu.org), or call our office.  
This booklet prepared for AUSU by Tamra Ross.  
Errors and omissions excluded.

Graphics and design by Tamra Ross Low, © AUSU, 2006



# AUSU

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