



# Athabasca University Students' Union

## Annual Report 2020

For the fiscal year spanning October 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019





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The data in this report refers to the 2018/2019 fiscal year spanning October 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019. For verification and explanation of all financial data, contact the AUSU VP Finance and Administration at [vpfa@ausu.org](mailto:vpfa@ausu.org) or the Executive Director at [executivedirector@ausu.org](mailto:executivedirector@ausu.org).

Email [ausu@ausu.org](mailto:ausu@ausu.org) if you have any questions pertaining to this report.

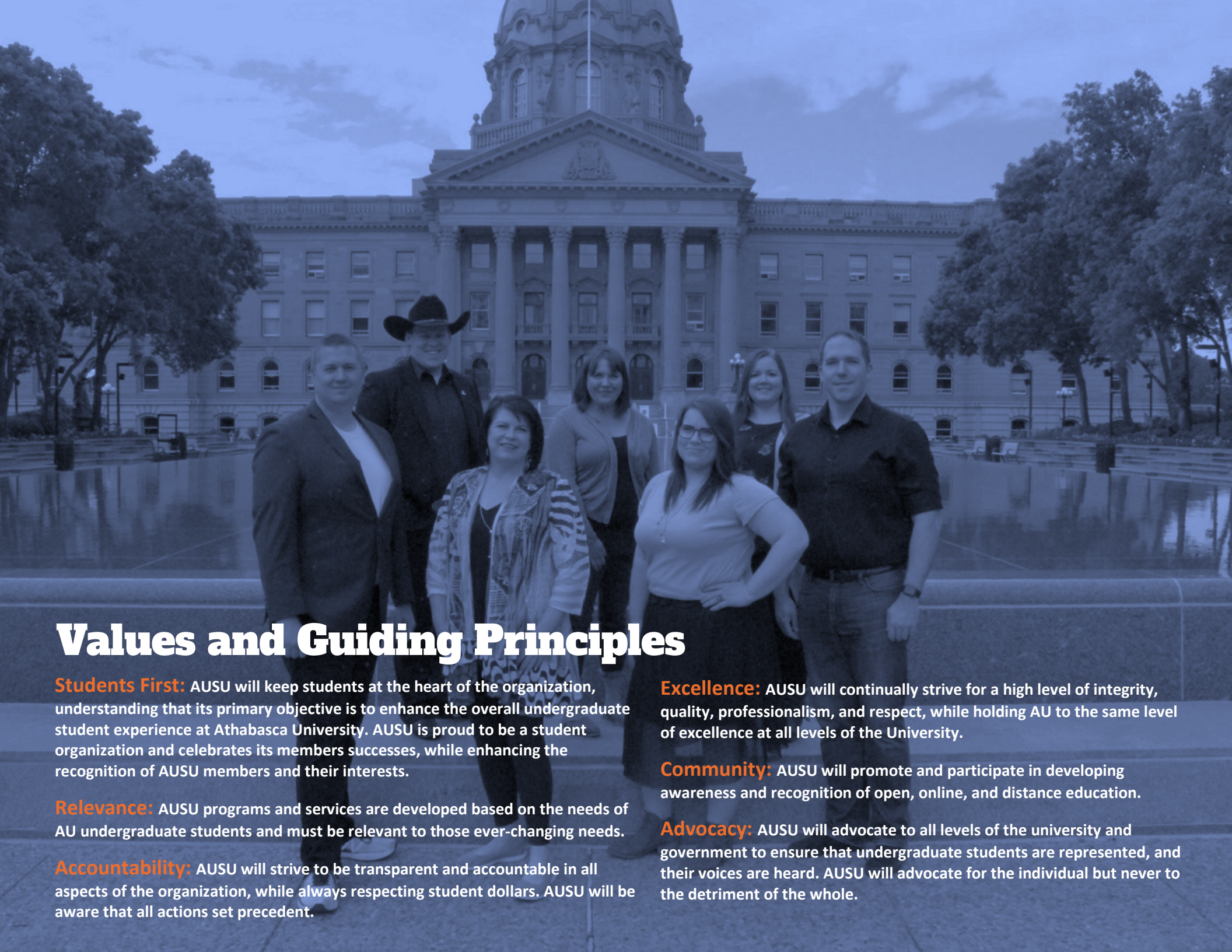


Left to Right: Councillor Amanda Lipinski, Councillor Mark Teeninga, VP External & Student Affairs Natasha Donahue, President Brandon Simmons, Councillor Darcy Fleming, Councillor Josh Ryan, and Councillor Lisa Orcheski, taken at the Alberta Legislature Grounds in June 2019.



Left to Right: AUGSA President Meaghan Sullivan, AUSU VP External & Student Affairs Natasha Donahue, and AUSU President Brandon Simmons as Board of Governors representatives with the Alberta Minister of Advanced Education Demetrios Nicolaides at Convocation 2019.





# Values and Guiding Principles

**Students First:** AUSU will keep students at the heart of the organization, understanding that its primary objective is to enhance the overall undergraduate student experience at Athabasca University. AUSU is proud to be a student organization and celebrates its members successes, while enhancing the recognition of AUSU members and their interests.

**Relevance:** AUSU programs and services are developed based on the needs of AU undergraduate students and must be relevant to those ever-changing needs.

**Accountability:** AUSU will strive to be transparent and accountable in all aspects of the organization, while always respecting student dollars. AUSU will be aware that all actions set precedent.

**Excellence:** AUSU will continually strive for a high level of integrity, quality, professionalism, and respect, while holding AU to the same level of excellence at all levels of the University.

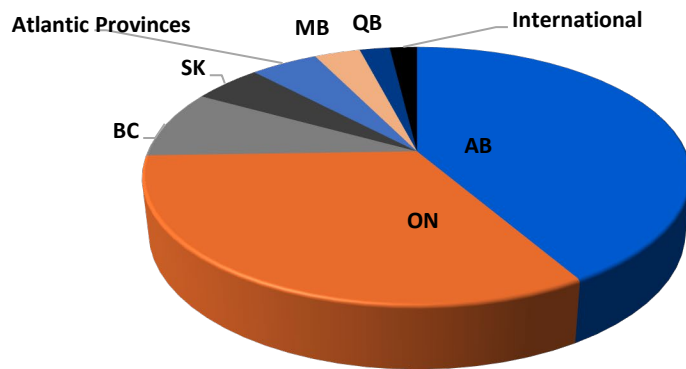
**Community:** AUSU will promote and participate in developing awareness and recognition of open, online, and distance education.

**Advocacy:** AUSU will advocate to all levels of the university and government to ensure that undergraduate students are represented, and their voices are heard. AUSU will advocate for the individual but never to the detriment of the whole.



# Demographics

AUSU represents a unique demographic of students. Since Athabasca University is an open, online institution, AUSU's membership is spread all across Canada, and over 80 countries around the world.



**38k**

Unique undergraduate students annually

**26k**

Unique undergraduate students per month (average)

**30.9**

Average age of AUSU members

**68%**

Percentage of AUSU members caring for dependants

**73%**

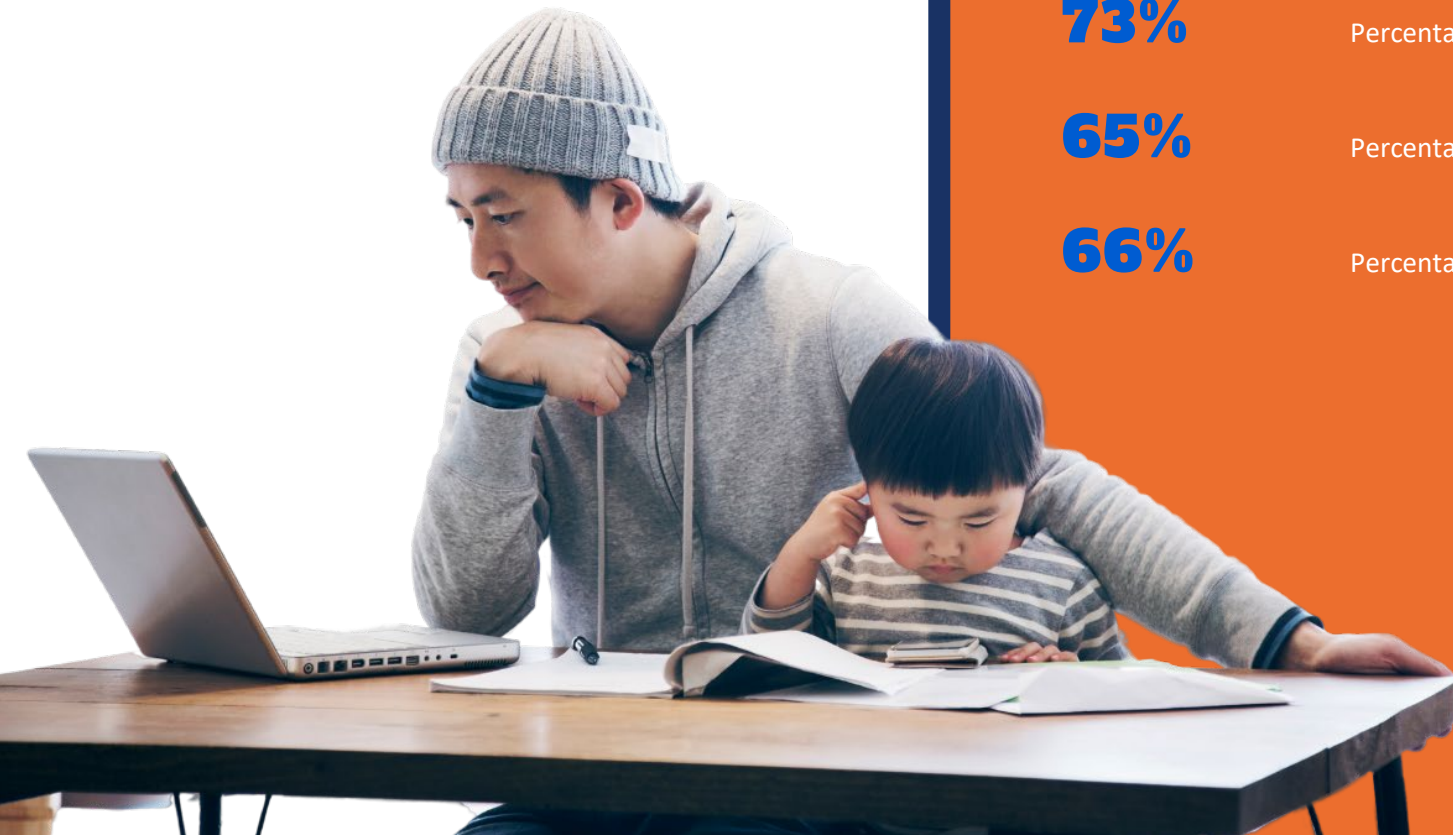
Percentage of AUSU member who work during studies

**65%**

Percentage of AUSU member who are female

**66%**

Percentage who are first in family to earn degree





# Highlights of 2018/19



Left to Right: , AUSU VP External & Student Affairs Natasha Donahue, AUSU President Brandon Simmons

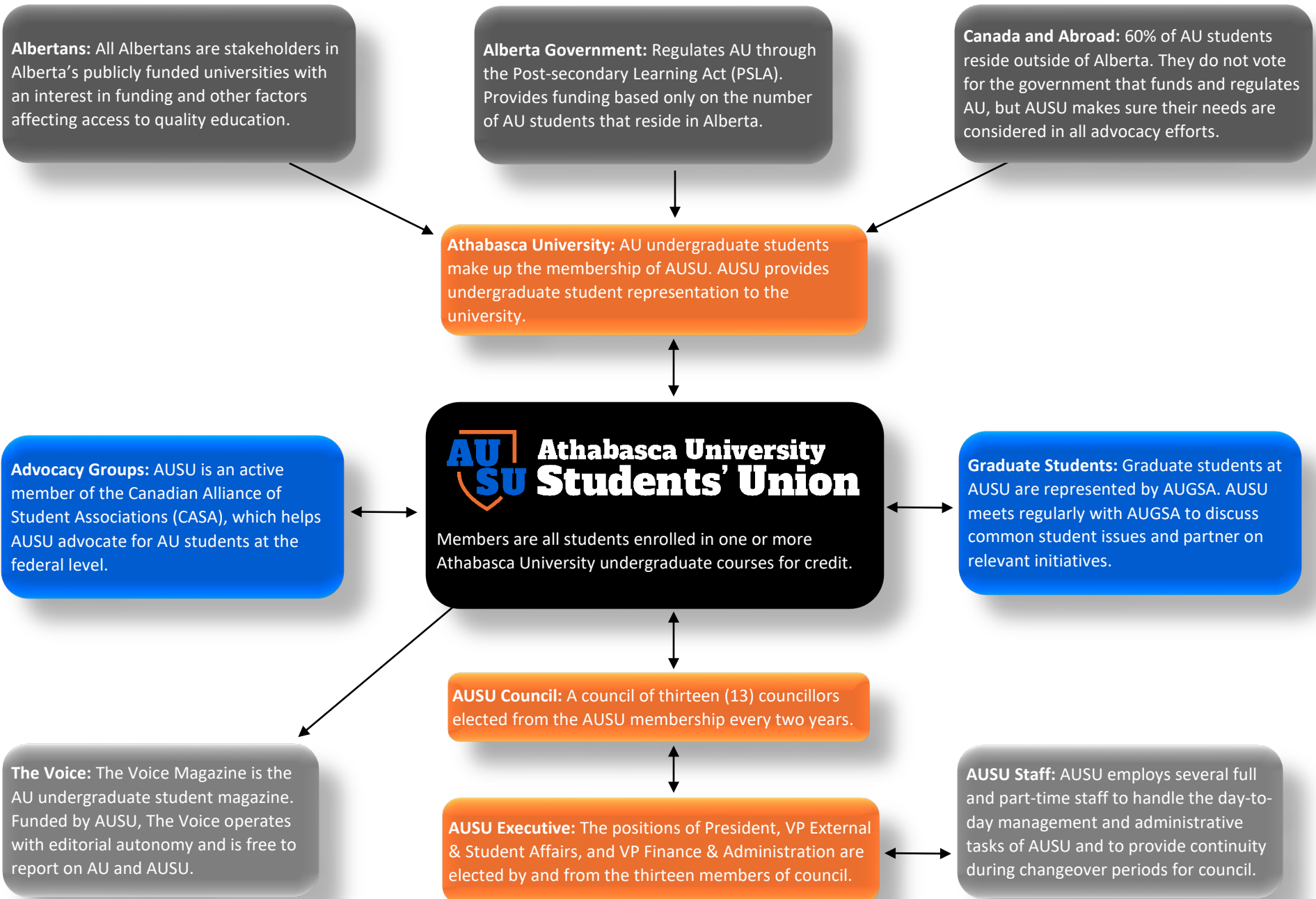


Left to Right: , AUSU VP External & Student Affairs Natasha Donahue, Edmonton MLA and Alberta Advanced Education Critic David Eggen, during an AUSU Open Mic Podcast recording session

- ✓ Encouraged students to participate in democracy by launching **Get out the Vote** campaigns for the Alberta Provincial Election and Canada Federal Election.
- ✓ Launched a new **AUSU Student Advisory Committee** to gain more student feedback for the leadership of AUSU and its stakeholders on important student topics.
- ✓ Rebranded with a bold **new logo and website** to better represent ourselves as the Athabasca University Students' Union and provide easier access to our members services.
- ✓ Launched a **new LinkedIn Learning** service upgrade to provide AU students with free, customizable video-training from industry leaders.
- ✓ Developed a new **AUSU Open Mic Podcast** with episodes featuring interviews, info, news, and tips for AU students.
- ✓ Worked with the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations to launch a campaign demanding **government action on Mental Health**.
- ✓ Had extensive consultation with the university during the development of the **new AU Learning Framework**, which will set the direction for AU learning now and in the future.
- ✓ Ran numerous contests, prize giveaways, and social media campaigns to help foster an **online student community**.
- ✓ Held successful and engaging **council and executive committee working retreats** to develop AUSU's annual goals, priorities, and budget as well as foster teambuilding.
- ✓ **Advocated extensively** on behalf of AU students to the University as well as to Provincial and Federal governments.
- ✓ Worked on building a framework of **support for Indigenous students** both within AUSU, the university, and across Canada.



# Organizational Structure





# Message from the President

This has been a very eventful year for AUSU, and one of significant growth and increased engagement. Over the year, Athabasca University saw a 10% increase in course registrations, which means our AUSU membership continues to grow as more students find their way to AU. This growth is exciting, as are the other major initiatives that we worked on throughout the year. Within AUSU we made some big shifts with our meeting structure as we moved to the Zoom video conferencing system, which has significantly increased our face-to-face engagement at our meetings.

Another exciting change at AUSU was the creation of the Student Advisory Committee (SAC). This new committee is chaired by the president and consists of 10 students at large, which represent each faculty at the university. This has provided AUSU with the improved ability to obtain direct student feedback in an efficient and effective manner. We pride ourselves on being the voice of AU students, and this committee has certainly enhanced our ability to represent you!

In 2019, AUSU continued its work with the university to develop the new [AU Learning Framework](#), which will set the direction for what AU learning will look like in the near future and 50 years from now. This has been an exciting time as we were able to share feedback that we have been hearing from students for years and ensure that it is incorporated into the future growth plans of the university. Priority topics throughout this review included course navigation consistency, enhanced online learning features, as well as improved academic service standards and financial aid support for students.

Another fantastic project is the development of a new mobile app that will feature everything you currently enjoy on the app AUSU has provided for years, along with AU registration elements such as course info, grades, and registration options. One of the major concerns that we have been hearing from members is the lack of connectivity with AU, so the new app will not only allow students to connect with one another, but will eventually allow easy integration with the university's systems, and will be accessible from your mobile device or web browser.

These are just a few of the projects that we have been working on with AU to improve the overall student experience at AU. We have also been developing a new tuition framework that will focus on affordability, accessibility, and predictability in years to come.

Other projects from the past year include the development of our AUSU Open Mic Podcast and YouTube channel, enhanced student mental health services, as well as the collaboration of a new AU space plan, which will include a new AU Students' Union space at the heart of it. Still in the planning phase, this new space will provide students with community, student engagement, study space, as well as a student lounge for all the above activities.



Left to Right: VP External & Student Affairs Natasha Donahue  
President Brandon Simmons, and VP Finance & Administration  
Brittany Daigle.



Student advocacy is also a huge element of what we do for you at the AU Students' Union, both internally at all levels of AU, as well as externally to the municipal, provincial, and federal governments. We continually work hard to play an important role in our federal advocacy group CASA ([Canadian Alliance of Student Associations](#)). We partnered with CASA to launch the #StudentsLetsAct mental health campaign, the federal election #GetOutTheVote campaign, and I had the pleasure of earning an elected seat of the CASA board of directors in 2019, which has provided me with many opportunities to bring the unique AU student perspective into our decision-making throughout the year.

Unique to 2019 was the development of our provincial advocacy plan. After building strong relationships with the two provincial advocacy groups, AUSU moved forward with an independent plan to bring AU student needs to the table here in Alberta, where the decision-making takes place regarding tuition rates and institutional funding for AU. With a recent change in government, it has been a very eventful year; however, we have been able to secure many meetings with MLAs, including the Minister of Advanced Education. In these meetings we have been able to help educate MLAs on the unique nature of AU and raise concerns over the inequitable grant funding that AU receives annually. Overall this work has been going great, and we will continue to fight hard for AUSU student members.

Finally, this conclusion of my annual report is bittersweet as it will be my last annual report as an AUSU councillor and executive. I have been with AUSU since 2015, and have absolutely loved the opportunity to see how far both AUSU and AU have progressed over that period. Amazing things have happened in just a few short years, and I know that even greater things are yet to come.



**Brandon Simmons**  
**AUSU President**

*Message from the President*





# Teamwork

## 2019 Council Retreat

The 4th annual AUSU council retreat was another great success for AUSU! The students council joined together from across Canada to meet face to face for a 3-day whirlwind working and team-building weekend.

In an online university environment where creating community can be a challenge, the retreat offers the benefit of building on the team culture at AUSU. Council and staff brainstormed and planned for the upcoming year, including setting advocacy priorities, budgeting, and discussing communication strategies. Following the retreat, council and staff worked hard on executing the ideas and following through with the vision that was set by the student council. Some highlights of the retreat include:

- ✓ Student social event bringing together AU students from across Canada.
- ✓ Student service overview and new opportunity discussions.
- ✓ Member engagement review and brainstorming.
- ✓ Meeting with AU AVP, Student and Academic Services, Dr. Alain May.
- ✓ Meeting with AU Chief of Staff, Gilbert Perras.
- ✓ Brainstorming and prioritizing advocacy initiatives.
- ✓ Policy and budget development and planning.
- ✓ Overview of AUSU strategic plan and executive work plans.
- ✓ In-person public council meeting.
- ✓ Hosted a recording of the "AUSU Open Mic" podcast.
- ✓ Council team building and networking.

*Top Photo, Left to Right: Councillor Lisa Oracheski, Councillor Amanda Simmons, Executive Director Jodi Campbell, President Brandon Simmons, Councillor Darcie Fleming, VP External & Student Affairs Natasha Donahue, Athabasca University Chief of Staff Gilbert Perras, Councillor Josh Ryan, Councillor Mark Teeninga*

*Bottom Photo, Left to Right: Councillor Amanda Simmons, Executive Director Jodi Campbell, Councillor Darcie Fleming, Councillor Lisa Oracheski, President Brandon Simmons, Athabasca University VP Student & Academic Affairs Dr. Alain May, Councillor Josh Ryan, External & Student Affairs Natasha Donahue, Councillor Mark Teeninga*





# Executive Retreats

The executive retreats are a critical part of planning out the work carried out by the executive team. While a lot of executive work is done remotely, the opportunity to meet in person enables the executive and staff to work more effectively and facilitates working relationships throughout the year.

The AUSU executive retreats provide the opportunity to:

- ✓ Develop annual executive workplans that outline strategies to achieve the goals set by council in the AUSU Strategic Plan.
- ✓ Develop priorities and advocacy strategies for the year.
- ✓ Assess organizational performance and financial accountability.
- ✓ Review membership feedback and develop new initiatives and services.
- ✓ Transition in new executives and prepare them for the work ahead.
- ✓ Face-to-face meeting with AU administration and government officials.

*"I just want to send a message of thanks and appreciation for the work you're doing over at AUSU. The executive team is solid and I feel you've been excellent advocates for all AU students. Everyone contributing to your site and outreach opportunities deserves kudos, I see a lot of effort going into that and it's exactly what many of our students need: connection. Keep hitting it out of the park, AUSU!"*

- 2019 Email from AU Community member



Left to Right: Governance & Advocacy Coordinator Duncan Wojtaszek, President Brandon Simmons, VP Finance & Administration Brittany Daigle, Athabasca University VP Public Relations Kristine Williamson, Executive Director Jodi Campbell, VP External & Student Affairs Natasha Donahue



Left to Right: Executive Director Jodi Campbell, (former) VP External & Student Affairs Melinda Goertz, President Brandon Simmons

Teamwork



# Advocacy & Representation

Student advocacy is a top priority for AUSU, so we compiled our Advocacy "[Top 9 from 2019](#)" to celebrate some of our success. This list highlights just some of the work done by your AUSU team in 2018/2019.

- ✓ Ran a provincial "[Get out the Vote](#)" campaign to encourage Athabasca University students to vote in the 2019 Alberta Provincial Election.
- ✓ Worked with the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations to run a Canada-wide "[Get out the Vote](#)" campaign to encourage students to vote in the 2019 Federal Election. AUSU student members really stepped up with over 1500 pledges during the campaign...our highest GOTV engagement ever!
- ✓ Partnered with the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) in a Canada-wide [#StudentLetsAct](#) campaign for students to sign letters to Parliament outlining the urgent need for action by the Federal Government on student mental health.
- ✓ Partnered with 75 other students' unions from across Canada, representing 1.3 millions students, in a [joint advocacy effort](#) on behalf of students in Ontario. This press release to the Ontario Provincial Government was monumental in getting changes made to the Student Choice Initiative and developments threatening post-secondary student funding in Ontario.
- ✓ Worked with our partners at the [Canadian Alliance of Student Associations](#) (CASA) to bring the needs of distance students to the Government of Canada, including:
  - Meeting with dozens of MPs and Senators about issues facing Canadian students.
  - Presenting to the House of Commons & Senate Finance Committees.
  - Getting substantial investments from the Government of Canada for post-secondary students, including \$630 million for student work opportunities and \$800 million for Indigenous access to education.
  - Creating an interest-free grace period for Canada student loans.

*"I greatly appreciate AUSU's advocacy on our behalf... The changes to grant/loan funding will greatly impact me and my colleagues. Your efforts speak volumes about your care and concern for your students, and I am very appreciative of this."*

- 2019 AUSU Student Email Testimonial





- ☑ Represented AU students as members of the Athabasca University Board of Governors, General Faculties Council, and 20 university committees, as well as had many meetings with university administrators to discuss key issues such as:

- Increasing the use of open educational resources and working to pass those financial savings down to students;
- Expanding university services to include mental health support, career services, and working to reduce wait times around student inquiries;
- Limiting tuition increases for out-of-province and international students; and
- Implementing the Imagine Plan that will increase the quality of education for all students.

As the year progressed all Alberta post-secondary institutions came under increased scrutiny and decreased funding from the Government of Alberta and AUSU worked hard to limit the impact on students.

- ☑ Championed our own independent provincial advocacy work to bring the unique needs of distance students to the Government of Alberta and other provincial governments across the country. There is no other institution quite like Athabasca University in Canada, and showing that value to our provincial partners has brought some meaningful results.
- ☑ Consulted with the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance about ways we could aid in [advocacy efforts on behalf Ontario students](#), which makes up over 30% of AUSU membership.
- ☑ Joined with Indigenous student leaders across Canada in the [inaugural CASA indigenous conference](#) to address barriers for Indigenous People, began facilitating policy developments for an inclusive post-secondary system, and opened dialogue with the university on the creation of an Indigenous Student Circle and extra support for Indigenous students.



November 2018 Advocacy Week Closing Ceremony of Centre Block of Parliament with the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations and Members of Parliament in Ottawa



AUSU President Brandon Simmons attending the Alberta Government Tuition Review and Bill 19 announcement in 2018

# Advocacy & Representation



# Services & Resources

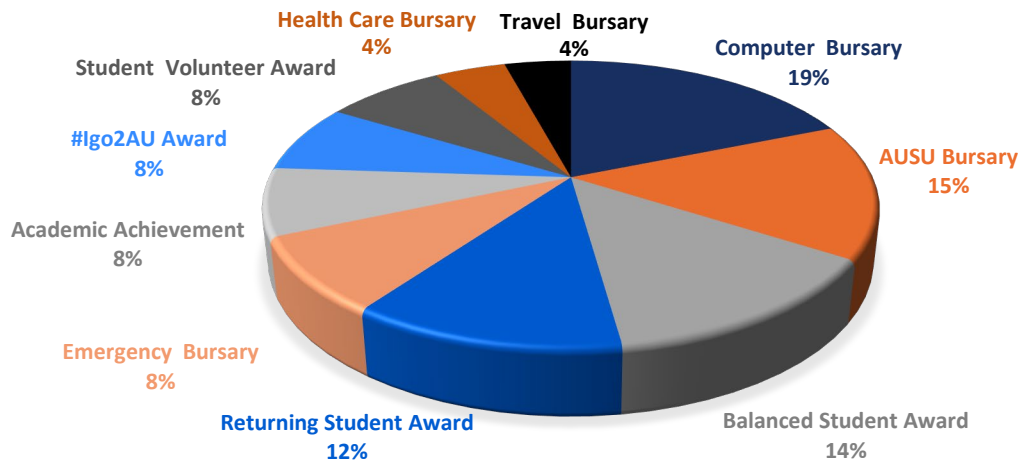
AUSU members are spread out all over Canada and the world, so our services are all designed to meet the needs of distance learners. AUSU listens carefully to the members needs to determine what services to prioritize. To address the preferences of the membership as identified in our annual services survey and on social media, AUSU started offering additional awards, increased our communications efforts, and investigated service partnership options with the university to save our membership dollars.

## Awards & Bursaries

AUSU continues to make improvements to the AUSU Awards and Bursaries program to address the needs of our membership, and ensure the funds are all being distributed to deserving students. This year, the committee made numerous changes, including:

- ✓ Formally adopted the #igo2AU Award from a pilot to a regular cyclical award.
- ✓ Reallocated unused funding to provide an additional award in 2019 Awards cycle.
- ✓ Increased the number of Computer Bursaries awarded each year.
- ✓ Added a total of \$4,600 additional funds to the Awards and Bursaries budget.
- ✓ Approved the adoption of a New Student Bursary to be piloted in 2020.

One of the best parts of the awards committee involvement is reviewing the awards applications, which contain many unique and amazing personal stories from fellow AUSU members. During 2018/2019, **AUSU awarded a total of \$65,635 to some very deserving applicants!**



**\$65,635**

**Award & Bursary Funds  
given to Members**

## Discounts & Resources

**1,947**

Pharmacy Discounts site accessed

**3,415**

Eyewear Discounts site accessed

**3,063**

Career Resources site accessed

**6,330**

Peer Course Reviews accessed

**2,098**

AUSU FAQs & Quick Links accessed



# LinkedIn Learning is now available.

Sign up for access to 10,000+ on-demand courses to help you learn more and achieve success.



Provided FREE for AUSU members.

*Free LinkedIn Learning!*

In 2019, AUSU's Lynda.com service upgraded to [LinkedIn Learning](#)!

The new and improved LinkedIn Learning platform provides all AUSU members with free access to thousands of online courses taught by industry experts in technology, software, creative, and business skills, with a personalized learning experience, insight based recommendations, and a simple direct sign-in with their AU email address.



LEARNING  
WITH Lynda.com CONTENT

## Student Support

AUSU has a dedicated team of experienced staff and executives that support Athabasca University students throughout their studies and direct them to resources and services available to them. AUSU continues to develop relationships with the staff team at AU to ensure that student needs are being met. We also regularly advocate on behalf of individual students when issues arise that impact their student experience.

Students can contact AUSU by email at [services@ausu.org](mailto:services@ausu.org), by phone at 1-855-497-7003, through our [website](#), or on social media.

*"I am so grateful for having the support of AUSU... You have impacted my life more than you know. I have no words to convey my gratitude, thank you just doesn't seem like enough."*

- 2019 AUSU Student Email Testimonial

**35,087**

LinkedIn Learning videos  
viewed by AUSU members

**2,318**

Hours spent on LinkedIn  
Learning by AUSU members

*Services & Resources*

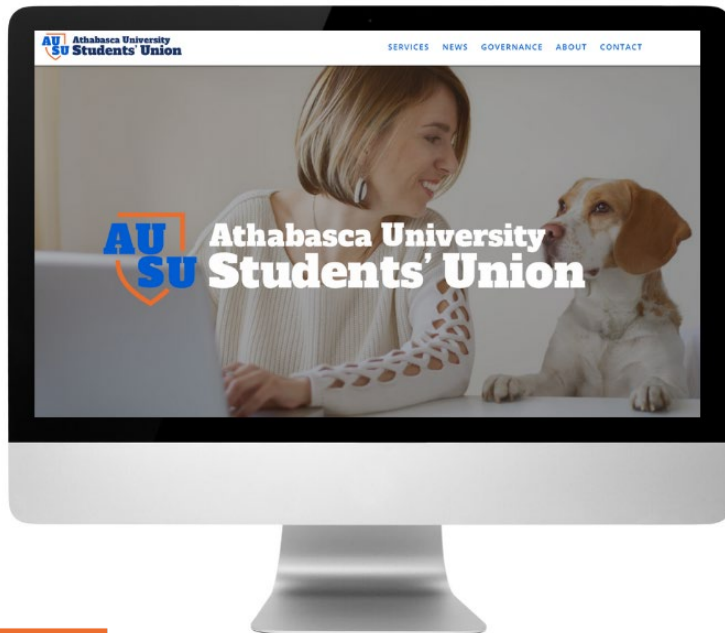


# Member Engagement & Communications

AU students are spread out all across Canada and around the world. With such a widespread membership, virtual communications are AUSU's primary means of connecting with our membership. AUSU is always working on improving our communication efforts and member engagement, including increasing our social media presence, hosting more events and contests, providing a mobile app, e-newsletter sent to all AUSU members, welcome emails to new students, and more!

## New Logo and Website!

In 2019, AUSU developed a **new logo** to better represent our connection to Athabasca University students, and launched a **new website** with an improved design and layout. It also provides a more engaging and visual representation of our organization, our members, and our student council!



223,273

Total Visits to the AUSU Website



AUSU has started a [YouTube channel](#) as a way to visually engage our members! We plan to have more great content in 2020 so stay tuned!

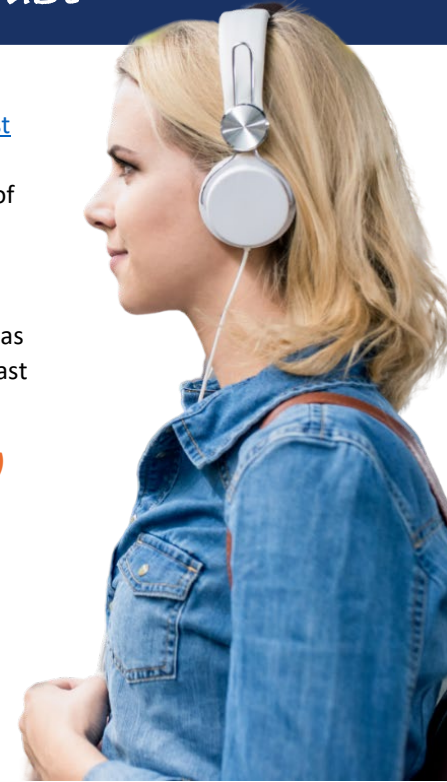
## AUSU Open Mic Podcast

AUSU launched a NEW AUSU [Open Mic Podcast](#) in 2019! It is a free podcast for Athabasca University students, with episodes on a range of topics such as interviews, services, resources, advocacy, tips for students, updates on our current initiatives, and more. Giving a physical voice to the work we do throughout the year has been extremely rewarding, and we've had a blast doing it as well!

Available on: (search "AUSU Podcast")



- ☒ Spotify
- ☒ Apple Podcasts
- ☒ Google Podcasts
- ☒ Pocket Casts
- ☒ voicEd Radio





*Follow us @AUStudentsUnion*



**3,426**  
Total Followers on  
Social Media



**15,264**  
Total Engagement on  
Social Media



**513,827**  
Total Impressions on  
Social Media



The Voice Magazine is the official publication of the students of Athabasca University. Its weekly online edition features student interviews, articles, and news stories created by AU students, for AU students. Check out The Voice at [voicemagazine.org](http://voicemagazine.org).



**60,928** Total Visits to The Voice website

## AUSU Mobile App

AUSU's mobile app has a thriving campus community! It is a great way to connect with students, access services and resources, and keep on track with your studies. Check out the AUSU mobile app at <http://athabasca.ca/campusapp.com/>.



**45,922** Chats & Messages sent in the App

**151,930**

AUSU E-newsletters  
opened by AU Students

**21,011**

Welcome Emails sent  
to new AU Students

**908**

Congratulatory Cards  
sent to AU Graduates

*Member Engagement & Communications*



# Financials

After experiencing a great deal of growth in the past couple years, 2019 was a year for AUSU to settle into that growth and really mature as an organization. Our processes are constantly being refined and this is allowing the students' union to step up our services in a number of areas. The following financial information will provide our student members with an overview of the students' union and the activities that were undertaken throughout the fiscal year. With the year-end audit complete, we are proud to operate under another balanced budget that had us kicking off some unique initiatives such as the AUSU Open Mic Podcast, enhancing our social media presence, as well as launching the new student mailout, that all had the intention of bringing us closer to AU students.

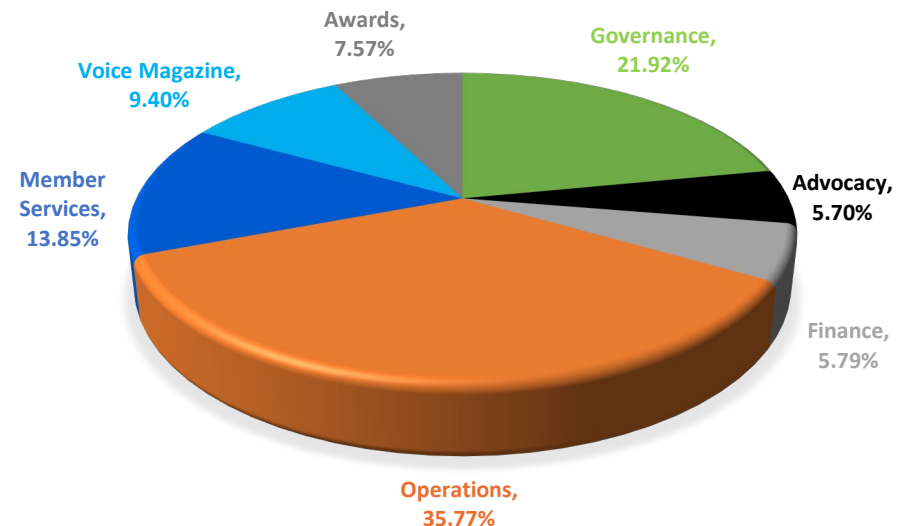
The following financial details provide a summary of the investment portfolio and breakdown of the expenses incurred during the 2018-2019 fiscal year, from October 1st, 2018 through to September 30th, 2019. AUSU members will also be able to review the final audit report and audited financial statements that have been prepared by the firm Kingston Ross Pasnak (KRP).

Student needs are always at the forefront of everything we do at AUSU - this includes our advocacy efforts both internally and externally of the university, always respecting student dollars when managing the organization, as well as keeping the student voice at the table of all decisions being made at AU.

Monthly reports are posted at [www.ausu.org](http://www.ausu.org) and questions can be directed to [executivedirector@ausu.org](mailto:executivedirector@ausu.org).



**Jodi Campbell**  
**Executive Director**



# 2018/2019 Budget

REVENUE		
Membership Fees	Operations	838,500
Investment Income	Operations	15,000
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>		<b>\$853,500</b>

EXPENSES		
Insurance Expenses	Operations	1,500
Telephone, Internet, Administrative Expenses	Operations	6,500
Executive, Teleconference, and Staff Meetings	Operations	4,000
Member Association Fees	Operations	800
Office Supplies and Furniture	Operations	4,500
Office Lease and Parking	Operations	41,000
Office Hardware, Software, Computer Maintenance	Operations	8,800
Staff Professional Development	Operations	6,000
Reference Materials	Operations	500
Staff Expenses	Operations	231,700
<b>OPERATIONS - TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>Operations</b>	<b>\$305,300</b>

Website Maintenance, Upgrades	Member Services	21,500
Postage & Courier	Member Services	11,500
Gifts, Donations, and Contests	Member Services	2,650
Convocation	Member Services	7,000
Info/Promo Publications/Grad Letters	Member Services	22,000
Newsletter	Member Services	3,700
Lynda.com	Member Services	36,000
Mobile App	Member Services	7,500
Student Survey	Member Services	400
Meet & Greets	Member Services	1,200
AUSU Promotions & Social Media	Member Services	4,800
<b>MEMBER SERVICES - TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>\$118,250</b>

The Voice Magazine	The Voice	80,200
<b>The VOICE - TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>Operations</b>	<b>\$80,200</b>

Emergency Bursary	Awards	4,000
Computer Bursary	Awards	12,600
Travel Bursary	Awards	4,000
AUSU Bursary	Awards	10,000
Returning Student Award	Awards	8,000
Student Volunteer Award	Awards	5,000
Academic Achievement Award	Awards	5,000
Balanced Student Award	Awards	8,000
#igo2AU Award	Awards	4,000
Other Awards and Bursaries	Awards	4,000

<b>AUSU AWARDS - TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>Awards</b>	<b>\$64,600</b>
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Bank, Payroll, and Investment Fees	Finance	16,950
Accountant Fees - Audit	Finance	23,500
Book Keeper Fees	Finance	4,500
Amortization	Finance	4,500

<b>FINANCE - TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>Finance</b>	<b>\$49,450</b>
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Election Expenses	Governance	5,000
Executive and Council Working Retreats	Governance	23,500
Councillor Hardware, Software, & Prof. Development	Governance	5,000
Executive, Council, and Committee Honoraria	Governance	131,800
CPP Expense - Council	Governance	7,500
Executive Benefits	Governance	11,800
Lawyer Fees	Governance	2,500

<b>GOVERNANCE - TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>Governance</b>	<b>\$187,100</b>
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Internal Advocacy	Advocacy	1,000
External Advocacy	Advocacy	4,000
Advocacy Group Membership Fees	Advocacy	18,000
Delegate Travel and Delegate Fees	Advocacy	25,600

<b>ADVOCACY - TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>Advocacy</b>	<b>\$48,600</b>
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<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$853,500</b>
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<b>BALANCE</b>	<b>\$0</b>
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KINGSTON  
ROSS  
PASNAK<sup>LLP</sup>

CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANTS

Suite 1500, 9888 Jasper Avenue NW  
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 5C6  
T. 780.424.3000 | F. 780.429.4817 | W. [krpgroup.com](http://krpgroup.com)

## **INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT**

January 16, 2020  
Edmonton, Alberta

To the Members of Athabasca University Students' Union:

### **Opinion**

We have audited the financial statements of Athabasca University Students' Union (the "AUSU"), which comprise the statement of financial position as at September 30, 2019, and the statements of changes in net assets, operations and cash flow for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the AUSU as at September 30, 2019, and the results of its operations and cash flow for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations (ASNPO).

### **Basis for Opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of our report. We are independent of the AUSU in accordance with ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### **Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements**

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with ASNPO, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the AUSU's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the AUSU or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the AUSU's financial reporting process.

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Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Athabasca University Students' Union  
(continued)


**Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the AUSU's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the AUSU's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the AUSU to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

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**Kingston Ross Pasnak LLP**  
Chartered Professional Accountants

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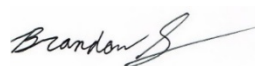
**ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION**

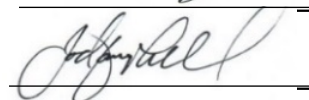
**Statement of Financial Position**

**September 30, 2019**

	2019	2018
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>CURRENT</b>		
Cash (Note 4)	\$ 283,037	\$ 225,015
Marketable securities (Note 5)	1,017,234	850,464
Accounts receivable	90,056	85,101
Prepaid expenses	12,712	9,937
	1,403,039	1,170,517
<b>EQUIPMENT (Note 6)</b>	<b>8,904</b>	<b>15,302</b>
	<b>\$ 1,411,943</b>	<b>\$ 1,185,819</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>		
<b>CURRENT</b>		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 22,321	\$ 24,450
Deferred student fees	126,409	118,328
	148,730	142,778
<b>LEASE COMMITMENT (Note 7)</b>		
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Unrestricted	1,148,751	919,235
Internally restricted	105,558	108,504
Invested in equipment (Note 8)	8,904	15,302
	1,263,213	1,043,041
	<b>\$ 1,411,943</b>	<b>\$ 1,185,819</b>

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD

 Director

 Director

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**ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION**  
**Statement of Changes in Net Assets**  
**For the Year Ended September 30, 2019**

	Unrestricted	Internally restricted	Invested in equipment	2019	2018
<b>NET ASSETS -</b>					
<b>BEGINNING OF</b>					
<b>YEAR</b>	\$ 919,235	\$ 108,504	\$ 15,302	\$ 1,043,041	\$ 1,000,590
Excess of revenue over expenses	226,570	-	(6,398)	220,172	42,451
Approved use of restricted funds (Note 8)	2,946	(2,946)	-	-	-
<b>NET ASSETS -</b>					
<b>END OF YEAR</b>	\$ 1,148,751	\$ 105,558	\$ 8,904	\$ 1,263,213	\$ 1,043,041



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**ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION**  
**Statement of Operations**  
**For the Year Ended September 30, 2019**

	Budget (Unaudited) 2019	2019	2018
<b>REVENUE</b>	\$ 838,500	\$ 921,748	\$ 702,375
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Staff wages and benefits	231,700	222,972	188,516
Council wages and benefits	155,100	139,627	130,575
The Voice	80,200	75,255	73,605
Awards	64,600	64,593	62,365
Member services	46,700	42,400	66,703
Office	42,000	42,291	42,823
Advocacy	48,600	37,327	35,211
Computer	37,800	36,460	13,056
Communications	29,900	27,839	11,539
Professional development	36,000	26,574	23,572
Administration	45,900	25,594	20,302
Professional fees	30,500	24,356	20,009
Amortization of tangible assets	4,500	6,398	7,129
	853,500	771,686	695,405
<b>EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES FROM OPERATIONS</b>	(15,000)	150,062	6,970
<b>OTHER INCOME (EXPENSE)</b>			
Unrealized gains on marketable securities	-	50,496	12,249
Interest income	15,000	15,207	11,916
Dividend income	-	15,193	9,969
Other	-	-	1,347
Loss on sale of marketable securities	-	(10,786)	-
	15,000	70,110	35,481
<b>EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES</b>	\$ -	\$ 220,172	\$ 42,451

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**ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION****Statement of Cash Flow****Year Ended September 30, 2019**

	2019	2018
<b>OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Cash receipts	\$ 924,874	\$ 701,351
Cash paid for suppliers, employees, and awards	(769,278)	(716,427)
Interest paid	(913)	(1,215)
Cash flow from (used by) operating activities	154,683	(16,291)
<b>INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Dividend income	15,193	9,969
Interest income	15,207	11,916
Purchase of marketable securities	(859,575)	(423,363)
Proceeds of disposal of marketable securities	732,514	405,883
Cash flow (used by) from investing activities	(96,661)	4,405
<b>INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH</b>	58,022	(11,886)
<b>CASH - BEGINNING OF YEAR</b>	225,015	236,901
<b>CASH - END OF YEAR (Note 4)</b>	\$ 283,037	\$ 225,015

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# ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION

## Notes to Financial Statements

Year Ended September 30, 2019

### 1. AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE

On March 18, 2004, Athabasca University Students' Union ("AUSU") was incorporated under the Post Secondary Learning Act. AUSU is administered by a board of directors and its principal purpose is to provide for the administration of the affairs of the Athabasca University undergraduate students, including the development and management of student institutions, the development and implementation of a system of student governing principles, the promotion of the general welfare of Athabasca University undergraduate students and the furtherance of the values inherent in an open University as well as of life-long learning. AUSU is a non-profit organization under the Income Tax Act (Canada) and, as such, is not liable for payment of income taxes.

### 2. ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE

AUSU receives substantially all of its revenue from Athabasca University as legislated under the Alberta Post-Secondary Learning Act section 95(2)e that provides for the "maintenance of the association by the levy of membership fees on its members". Should Athabasca University substantially change its dealings with AUSU subsequent to legislative changes permitting such, management is of the opinion that continued viable operations would be doubtful.

### 3. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The financial statements were prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations (ASNPO). Significant accounting policies observed in the preparation of the financial statements are summarized below.

#### Marketable securities

Marketable securities are recorded at fair value. AUSU's marketable securities consist of fixed income investments and equity investments.

#### Equipment

Equipment is stated at cost or deemed cost less accumulated amortization and is amortized on a straight line basis over its estimated useful life at the following rates:

Website	Five years
Furniture and equipment	Ten years
Computer equipment	Three years

In the year of purchase, amortization on equipment is taken at one half of the normal amount.

Equipment acquired during the year are not amortized until they are available for use.

#### Deferred student fees

The AUSU records student fees at the beginning of a course's progression. Some of the fees received prior to year end relate to courses which commence in the next fiscal year. These fees are classified as deferred and recognized as revenue one month subsequent to the start of the course to which the fees relate.

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# ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION

## Notes to Financial Statements

Year Ended September 30, 2019

### 3. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (*continued*)

#### Revenue recognition

Student fee revenue is recognized one month subsequent to the start of the course to which the fees relate once funds from the students have been received by Athabasca University and collection by AUSU is reasonably assured.

Investment earnings are recognized as revenue when earned and collection is reasonably assured.

Other income, such as merchandise sales are recognized when the goods are transferred to the customer at which time collection is reasonably assured.

#### Contributed goods and services

The fair value of donated materials and services cannot be reasonably determined and are therefore not reflected in these financial statements.

#### Financial instruments

All financial instruments are initially measured at fair value, and, unless otherwise noted, the AUSU subsequently measures its financial instruments at amortized cost.

#### Not-for-Profit Financial Statement Presentation

The AUSU presents net assets invested in equipment as a separate category of internally restricted net assets.

#### Measurement uncertainty

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amount of assets and liabilities, disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the period. Such estimates include the collectibility of accounts receivable, estimated useful lives of equipment and deferral of student fees. Actual results could differ from these estimates.

### 4. CASH

	2019	2018
Cash	\$ 177,479	\$ 119,639
Internally restricted cash	105,558	105,376
	<u>\$ 283,037</u>	<u>\$ 225,015</u>

Internally restricted cash is intended for the use towards expenses related to The Voice magazine operations in accordance with resolutions made by the Board of Directors.

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**ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION**  
**Notes to Financial Statements**  
**Year Ended September 30, 2019**

**5. MARKETABLE SECURITIES**

	2019	2018
Canada Government Bonds (bearing interest at 1.15% to 6.35%)	\$ 326,205	\$ 286,019
Canadian Common Stock	212,383	188,498
Canadian Corporate Bonds & Debentures (bearing interest at 2.43% to 7.85%)	215,911	167,362
US Common Stock	211,756	189,686
Canada Treasury Bills (bearing interest at 1.55% to 1.63%)	50,979	18,899
	<b>\$ 1,017,234</b>	<b>\$ 850,464</b>

Foreign marketable securities are presented in Canadian dollars.

**6. EQUIPMENT**

	Cost	Accumulated amortization	2019 Net book value	2018 Net book value
Website	\$ 19,404	\$ 11,642	\$ 7,762	\$ 11,642
Furniture and equipment	16,813	15,671	1,142	2,413
Computer equipment	15,180	15,180	-	1,247
	<b>\$ 51,397</b>	<b>\$ 42,493</b>	<b>\$ 8,904</b>	<b>\$ 15,302</b>

**7. LEASE COMMITMENT**

AUSU leases premises under a long term lease that expires on March 31, 2021. Under the lease, AUSU is required to pay base rent and a proportionate share of utilities, property taxes, maintenance and other related costs for the leased premises. Future minimum lease payments are as follows:

2020	\$ 20,222
2021	10,186
	<b>\$ 30,408</b>

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**ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION**  
**Notes to Financial Statements**  
**Year Ended September 30, 2019**

**8. RESTRICTIONS ON NET ASSETS**

	Opening balance	Approved transfers	Approved expenses	Ending balance
Health & Dental	\$ 3,128	\$ -	\$ (2,946)	\$ 182
The Voice	105,376	-	-	105,376
	<b>\$ 108,504</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ (2,946)</b>	<b>\$ 105,558</b>

AUSU internally restricts net assets for the purpose of student development, special projects, The Voice operations, infrastructure and research. These internally restricted amounts are not available for other purposes without approval of the Council.

The Health and Dental fund is designated towards covering the bursary awards granted by AUSU. During the year, Council has approved \$2,946 (2018 - \$7,699) to cover bursary awards granted in the year.

The Voice fund is designated towards expenses related to The Voice magazine operations as approved by Council. No expenses were approved in the year (2018 - \$3,274) to cover The Voice operations.

**9. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS**

AUSU received \$921,748 (2018 - \$702,375) related to student fees (recorded in revenue) and deferred revenue of \$126,409 (2018 - \$118,328).

AUSU paid \$5,000 (2018 - \$5,250) related to convocation sponsorships to Athabasca University (recorded in member services expense).

Recorded in accounts receivable is \$90,056 (2018 - \$85,101) for student fees due from Athabasca University for the month of September 2019. The parties are related through their connection to the Athabasca University students. There was no requirement for an allowance as at September 30, 2019 (2018 - nil).

AUSU provided \$4,570 (2018 - \$2,063) in tuition payments to cover up to two undergraduate Athabasca University courses per executive officer as per the AUSU compensation guidelines (recorded in council wages and benefits expense).

AUSU paid \$3,975 (2018 - \$3,765) in writer fees for writing services provided by Councilors (recorded in The Voice expense).

Recorded in accounts payable is \$400 for writer fees due to Councilors for services completed in September 2019.

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ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION  
Notes to Financial Statements  
Year Ended September 30, 2019

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10. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

AUSU is exposed to various risks through its financial instruments. The following analysis provides information about the AUSU's risk exposure and concentration as of September 30, 2019. Unless otherwise noted, the AUSU's risk exposure has not changed from the prior year.

*Credit risk*

Credit risk arises from the potential that a counter party will fail to perform its obligations. The AUSU is exposed to credit risk from the Athabasca University as effectively all of the AUSU accounts receivable are from the Athabasca University. AUSU is economically dependant upon the Athabasca University (Note 2) for the majority of its revenues and is protected by provincial legislation which mitigates this risk.

*Interest rate risk*

Interest rate risk is the risk that the value of a financial instrument might be adversely affected by a change in the interest rates. In seeking to minimize the risks from interest rate fluctuations, the AUSU manages exposure through its normal operating and financing activities. The AUSU is exposed to interest rate risk primarily through its investment in marketable securities.

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# Ahead for AUSU!

AUSU is looking forward to another great year in 2020! Here's a few highlights of the work we have planned for 2019/2020:

- ✓ Increased advocacy regarding tuition increases and performance-based funding models for post-secondary institutions in Alberta.
- ✓ Development of a policy regarding access to education for Indigenous Learners in Canada and advocacy for increased Indigenous student support.
- ✓ Working with the university to mitigate the impact of funding cuts to students and advocating for improvements to student support services.
- ✓ Improved career services for members.
- ✓ The launch of a New Student Bursary.
- ✓ A new and improved Peer Course Review survey.
- ✓ Partnership with the university to launch an improved student mobile app including more academic integration.
- ✓ More AUSU Open Mic Podcast episodes and YouTube videos.
- ✓ More student socials with students across Canada.
- ✓ Continued commitment to providing support, services, advocacy, and an online community for the undergraduate students of Athabasca University!



Left to Right: Calgary-Buffalo (Athabasca) MLA Joe Ceci, VP External & Student Affairs Natasha Donahue, and Athabasca University VP University Relations Kristine Williamson



Left to Right: VP External & Student Affairs Natasha Donahue and President Brandon Simmons at Athabasca University Convocation 2019.

*"Your help was instrumental in a very stressful situation...I'm happy to say that I will remain with AU because of the excellent support I received from AUSU."*

- 2019 Comment from AU student

# Stay Tuned!





**www.ausu.org**

**ausu@ausu.org**

### AUSU Office

301 Energy Square  
10109 106 ST NW  
Edmonton AB T5J 3L7

**Direct Line:** 780.497.7000  
**Toll free:** 1.855.497.7003  
**Office hours:** Mon-Fri 9:00 – 4:00

### Social Media



[twitter.com/AUStudentsUnion](https://twitter.com/AUStudentsUnion)



[facebook.com/AUStudentsUnion](https://facebook.com/AUStudentsUnion)



[instagram/AUStudentsUnion](https://instagram/AUStudentsUnion)



[linkedin.com/company/AUStudentsUnion](https://linkedin.com/company/AUStudentsUnion)

### The Voice Magazine



[www.thevoicemagazine.org](http://www.thevoicemagazine.org)

### AUSU Mobile App



<http://athabasca.campusapp.com/>

### AUSU Executive (2018-2019)

Brandon Simmons (**President**)  
Natasha Donahue (**Vice President External and Student Affairs**)  
Brittany Daigle (**Vice President Finance and Administration**)

### AUSU Council (2018-2019)

Darcie Fleming	Amanda Lipinski	Joshua Ryan
Melinda Goertz (former VPEX)	Lisa Oracheski	Mark Teeninga
Christine Hudder	Alice Namu	Julian Teterenko (former)

### AUSU Staff

#### Executive Director

Jodi Campbell [executivedirector@ausu.org](mailto:executivedirector@ausu.org)

#### Communications and Member Services Coordinator

Donette Kingyens [services@ausu.org](mailto:services@ausu.org)

#### Governance and Advocacy Coordinator

Duncan Wojtaszek [governance@ausu.org](mailto:governance@ausu.org)

#### Administrative Assistant

Jamie Mulder [admin@ausu.org](mailto:admin@ausu.org)

#### The Voice Magazine Editor

Karl Low [karl@voicemagazine.org](mailto:karl@voicemagazine.org)

