

NAITSA SENATE ELECTION: VOTING OPENS OCT. 11

NAIT NUGGET

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IN THIS ISSUE

3 STUDENTS COOKING IN CAT

There's a new food option in CAT, and surprise: it's run by students! Read about the Culinary Arts students serving up international flair at One World.

10-17 SENATE CANDIDATE SPREAD

Be informed and choose the right Senator for you! See who is running and read what they are about. Voting is open via your student portal from October 11-17.

19 FORMER STINGER COACHING OOKS

Adika Peter-McNeilly, who used to play for the Edmonton Stingers, is taking over the men's basketball team, and he's got plans to get the team in winning shape.

A shift to Brightspace

By Sukhamjit

When students started classes in Fall 2024, they were met with a new learning management system (LMS): Brightspace. This was no surprise to some students, but for many, it was an unexpected change. Many students were left wondering why the institution felt the need to shift away from Moodle and what this new platform had to offer.

Where it started

As Mark Schneider, Director of LMS Transition, told the Nugget, “As a polytechnic and an institution, we need to readily innovate.” A good practice in the LMS world is to review the system every five to seven years, Schneider explained. Moodle had not undergone a review in “probably 12 years.” NAIT started reviewing their LMS before the COVID-19 pandemic, but the review took a backseat as the institution focused on bigger priorities, like shifting learning models during lockdown. Post-COVID, the review continued, and NAIT hired an independent firm to do a needs analysis. As Schneider explained, the intent was not to move away from Moodle, but just to conduct a review of the LMS system. After surveying students, instructors and staff, NAIT identified the requirements their LMS should have, and essentially held an open call to see which platform would suit the institution’s needs.

“We took the feedback from our users and formulated some criteria for going into a formal evaluation, and invited every LMS major player to come to the table and see which one can best address the needs of our staff and students that were identified,” said Schneider. “Ultimately, Brightspace won the competition.”

Why Brightspace

Schneider explained that one of the primary things identified by the needs analysis was a mobile-friendly experience. “We had staff that pretty well couldn’t do anything on mobile devices with regards to Moodle,” said Schneider. “They were still having to grade things on desktops, they were still having to walk from the classroom to their office to do things. So mobile connectivity for both students and staff was absolutely paramount.”

In terms of mobile functionality, the Brightspace Pulse app is rated highly by users, with a 4.4 on the Google Play Store and 4.8 on the App Store. Another feature of Brightspace highlighted by Schneider is the user accessibility and accommodation it allows. “Our new LMS is really a student-first platform. It’s one that’s designed to allow for simple things like checking of content to see if it’s accessible to students with visual impairments,” he explained.

Among his favourite features, Schneider placed the user support of Brightspace at the top. Moodle didn’t offer built-in support, but through Brightspace, students can access help at any time, any day of the year. “In our previous LMS it was always confusing. Where does the student go for support? When the student’s trying to access an assignment on Saturday at 11:00 at night, and it’s due on Sunday morning, who do they reach out to?”

“Not to say that’s the best practice, but that’s what was happening in Moodle. Now we have 24 hours, seven days a week, 365 days support,” explained Schneider.



A mockup of Brightspace.

Photo via D2L

Differences in capabilities

Moodle was an open-source LMS, which meant it took a lot of work for instructors to set up their course pages. This led to inconsistencies as instructors with varying degrees of tech expertise designed their courses. But with Brightspace, a third-party software, Schneider said it’s a lot easier for instructors to set up their courses.

“Instructors had to go through an incredible amount of effort to get their sites to a point where they had an engaging appearance as well as remained informative to students ... there were inconsistencies in a lot of course sites. There were course sites where section A01 of a course and 02 of a course, even though it’s the same course, these LMS sites looked very different.”

Brightspace also has a number of features that Moodle did not, like the ability to host quizzes and assignments on the platform. This leads to a natural question: Will more and more quizzes and exams be integrated into the LMS itself instead of relying on publisher sites? Schneider revealed that while it is “super easy” to build quizzes in Brightspace, instructors are free to use whatever resources they think are the best to deliver their course and that the decision is their own.

“Tuition is high, wages are low, living costs are high. It’s the nature of where we live. This is where opportunity can be sought to help reduce student cost,” said Schneider. “I think that responsibility is something that is in the domain of instructors and needs to be strongly considered. And quite frankly, needs to be encouraged, not strongly considered.”

Schneider is hopeful that moving forward the dependence on publisher resources will reduce, with the faculty eventually moving things to Brightspace. “I think the hope is that it will take time for us to get there, by providing a medium where things are inherently easier to develop for the student, in a built-in LMS solution. I think faculty will get there, but it’s going to take time.”

Yet, it is unlikely that publisher products will ever be completely eliminated. “There are certain scenarios where a publisher product is best,” explained Schneider. Still, starting is the hardest step in any process.



NAIT NUGGET

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Students now cooking in CAT

One World gives new lunch options for NAIT and hands-on experience for culinary students



A student works during the lunch rush at One World.

Photo by Skylar Boissonnault

By Sukhamjit

CAT students now have another option for their lunches: NAIT's Department of Culinary Arts and Professional Food Studies recently reopened One World, a kitchen run by first-year culinary students. The kitchen debuted on Sept. 5, right next to Subway in the CAT Mainstreet. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, One World was operated by an external food contractor, but it was shut down during the pandemic and never reopened. Karen Kwong, a Culinary Instructor who leads the students in One World, explained that the space wasn't being used, so NAIT proposed the program take it over. "We thought, why not divide the class in half and serve the students of CAT and the staff of CAT?" said Kwong.

This structure is unique to NAIT, where half of the first-year students serve cafeteria-style food at One World, and the other half run breakfast and lunch at Fresh Express. The second-year students practice more sophisticated dining at Ernest's at NAIT. One World focuses on lunch that students in the line cooking class prepare. For many students, it is their first experience in a fast-paced environment. "This class is the first intro to real-life cooking ... a lot of these students don't have experience or are very green, and this is the class to teach them how to work in a kitchen in the span of a lunch hour or breakfast to serve people quickly," said Kwong. The students also learn multitasking,

communication, organization, cleanliness and certain techniques to cook faster.

Because the work is part of their course outcomes, students working at One World don't get paid—their focus is on getting students experience serving customers. One World shares costs with Chartwells, so the end price of items is out of Kwong's hands. But, the class spends time discussing how to make sure their food is affordable for students. "We're very mindful about what food we're putting out there, what kind of ingredients we're using," shared Kwong. "You won't see AAA tenderloin steaks on the menu, but occasionally I have coconut shrimp, for example. That is something that you don't necessarily see everywhere, but it's an affordable item."

As the name suggests, One World features "international flair" options, including rotating chef specials that guests have been loving. "The first week was kind of rough, because not everyone knew about us. But once word got out, I think they saw what menu items we were doing, how things are always rotating and changing. It gave people some excitement to come and check us out."

"People are loving the idea of coming back and seeing what the special is."

One World is open Tuesday to Friday from 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Find them in CAT Mainstreet, next to the Subway.

NAIT unveils new crosswalk celebrating Pride

By Amy St. Amand

A crosswalk in the Zone G parking lot outside E building has a new addition; NAIT debuted a painted Progress Pride flag on the pavement on Sept. 26. NAIT Associate Vice President Facilities Management and Development Eduardo Sosa said in an emailed statement that the project has been in the works since early 2024.

“We were pleased to have the opportunity to complete the installation recently, taking advantage of favorable [sic] weather conditions following the completion of summer construction projects in the area.”

Crosswalks such as these are just one way NAIT shows its inclusivity, said Sosa. “We recognize that our campus community comprises individuals with a wide range of backgrounds and beliefs, and we strive to create an environment where everyone feels welcomed and supported.”

The painting of the crosswalk corresponds with NAITSA’s Fall Pride week, though the connection is purely coincidental. This is the first time NAITSA has hosted Pride Week in the Fall; Pride is typically celebrated on campus by both NAIT and NAITSA in March. “We felt there was a gap of waiting to celebrate Pride until March, so Pride Week in October was created,” said Sara Farrar, NAITSA Assistant Events Manager. To mark their celebrations, NAITSA partnered with the Pride @ NAIT club and hosted activities during the first week of October, including board games, colouring pages and karaoke.

While there was no official unveiling ceremony for NAIT’s new crosswalk, a NAIT media spokesperson told the Nugget an event to recognize the crosswalk is “still in the works.”



The crosswalk is located outside the E building.

Photo by Amy St. Amand

4 low-cost therapy options for students

Editorial by Avalina Zenari

As school rolls back into session, student expenses mount, and schedules are filled to the brim. The stressors of life are challenging and different for everyone, whether they are financial or emotional. If you’re finding yourself overwhelmed by the hustle and bustle of balancing your commitments, it’s important to know that you are never alone.

Counselling and therapy can provide the tools necessary to learn and effectively deal with stress in your life. It’s reassuring to have someone to talk to that will ease you through challenges and supply guidance. Unfortunately, counselling has become quite expensive. The Psychologists’ Association of Alberta recommends charging \$220 per session!

What if there was a way to access this support without the elevated cost? There are solutions that can help you make it through this tough seasonal transition period so that you can grow into your best self this semester. Here are four low-cost therapy options that won’t break the bank.

Accessible services on campus

NAIT offers no-cost counselling services for all students and staff. All sessions are personalized to fit the needs of every individual as NAIT prioritizes a culture of diversity, inclusivity and respect. Appointments can be scheduled through the MyNAIT Student Portal. There is an option for in-person or virtual meetings with appointment times available throughout the day, even morning and evening periods. Urgent and same-day appointments are available when requested. Through your NAITSA benefits, you can also access myWellness, a platform that offers mental health assessments and low-cost online counselling. NAITSA also offers Peer Support, where you can talk to highly-trained students about mental health.

CMHA drop-in sessions

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) provides many resources and opportunities to aid with all aspects of mental health and well-being.

The Drop-In Single Session Counselling program is a no-cost therapy session offered to all individuals, regardless of situation. The sessions are held at multiple locations across the city including select Edmonton Public Library locations and support centers like SAGE, PRIDE and The Family Centre. Times are flexible and a full schedule is available on the CMHA webpage.

Sliding-scale sessions

There are several clinics in Edmonton that offer sliding-scale pricing for therapy. Prices are often based on household income, though some clinics have sponsors and are able to offer group sessions for free. Momentum Counselling Services offers single sessions or brief ongoing therapy from \$40 to \$200, depending on income. Find a sliding-scale therapist near you using the Affordable Therapy Network—a website dedicated to connecting Edmontonians with lower-cost rates for mental health support.

BetterHelp online therapy

What’s unique about this platform is that there are four communication methods available to suit diverse needs and preferences. You can communicate with a therapist through messaging, live chats, video conferencing and audio calling. The level of accessibility is off-the-charts as sessions can be anywhere and anytime. BetterHelp also helps you match with a therapist that may be more suited to discussing specific topics related to you. Sessions on BetterHelp are not as affordable as some other options in this article, but they still start at a lower cost than comparable therapy services.

It’s important to utilize the services available to you to get help when you need it. Always prioritize your mental health and don’t be afraid to reach out for support.

If you ever need an immediate connection, reach out to Kids Help Phone at 1-800-668-6868 or the CMHA Crisis Line at 9-8-8 for assistance 24/7.

Ooks Life going mobile with new app

By Amy St. Amand

Students can access campus life, events, clubs and more a lot easier, thanks to a new mobile app version of Ooks Life. NAITSA soft-launched the brand new app late in September after learning about it at a conference. Brayden Shopland, NAITSA VP Internal, routinely heard from students that they wanted an app to engage in campus life. And while Ooks Life is available on phones via internet browsers, the user experience isn't ideal—it often loads slow and doesn't allow users to browse events easily like NAITSA wanted.

"The user experience is not amazing," said Shopland. "When you click into an event, go to RSVP, you click the back button and it spits you back out at the top of the page. It doesn't put you back where you were. Let's say you were three pages deep, it doesn't bring you back to that third page."

The app, however, is designed to be used on smartphones—something that 97.1 per cent of people aged 25-44 have, according to a 2021 study by Statistics Canada. Shopland believes the app will allow for more convenient browsing of upcoming events, allowing students to connect with campus life more easily. "Now with the app it takes 10 seconds. Like once I unlock my phone, there's the Ooks Life app, click on events, and it literally shows you the upcoming events for today."

The app acts like any other social media platform, including a discovery page where students can make connections and see feed posts from other students and staff. There are also community chats, where students can discuss interests, sell textbooks, ask questions or connect with students in similar situations. There's a chat for mature students, one for students with kids and even one highlighting networking opportunities in the city.

But like any social media platform, NAITSA has already begun thinking about safety. Anyone on the app is required to log in with their NAIT credentials, and when making a new account, users are required to agree to follow the student code of conduct. NAITSA has also flagged certain words to help moderate the site.

"You can have the social media aspect to your life and be involved and know what's happening on campus, without having to have Instagram or Facebook or whatnot. You can just use this one app and it's a safe environment," Shopland explained.

"We have flagged words and we track those, we monitor those to make sure that people aren't hating on people here ... at the end of the day, Ooks Life is not for any of that. It's to create community here on campus, to share culture, to share events, to find something that you might enjoy doing."

While the app was not initially a line item for the 2024/25 year, Shopland believes the value is worth the cost. Not only is the app built by a company partnering with Navengage, the company that already runs the Ooks Life website, but the servers that host the data are in Canada, which Shopland said was important to NAITSA.

NAITSA also had the chance to help shape the app for their purposes; while the app has been used in U.S. post-secondary schools, Ooks Life is the first Canadian usage. "Our staff here, especially in Campus Life, they are having a huge hand in the way that this app is being built. So that way it can fit the needs of our students," said Shopland.

"We make sure that when we spend money on software, it is for the right reasons, that it will benefit the students ... so we went in and there's always some budget to be moved around."

The app is currently in a soft launch phase, though NAITSA is encouraging students and staff to join and start using the app. There are currently over 175 users on the app, with more joining each day. And because the app is still in soft launch, students have the opportunity to suggest new features or report bugs. "If they see something in the app that doesn't look right, doesn't feel right, doesn't work right, they can let us know and then we can go to the developers and say, 'Hey, this isn't working and we need it to change.'"

While students slowly start joining, Shopland and the Campus Life team are busy educating NAIT departments on how to effectively use the app and creating buy-in for various departments. "We don't want to spam students on the community page, so a lot of educational pieces there about how to use the app ... that's going to be the big thing from Campus Life going forward, is just maintaining things for now before we grow too out of control."

Students can find the Ooks Life app available on both the App Store and the Play Store. For help or troubleshooting, email ookslifesupport@nait.ca.

New EDI space opening on campus for connection, resources

By Amy St. Amand

The Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (OEDI) now have their own space on campus to host events, build community and more. The OEDI Community Resource Centre, located in T110, opened its doors to students and staff in an open house on Oct. 7. The centre is a result of an ongoing conversation about how the OEDI can connect with the NAIT community.

"Often we're behind the scenes. Often we're on policy, on trainings, and we have just been trying to wrap our brains around what it means to turn and do a community first model," explained Manager Daley Laing.

Having a physical space will allow for opportunities for connection, explained Alisha Shah, a Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator. "Right now it's the physical connection, coming together ... they can come and connect with their EDI Outreach Well-Being Leaders, who are students themselves, for those peer-to-peer connections."

The team hopes having a more accessible space will increase access to EDI resources and help connect students and staff with other areas of NAIT that support EDI objectives. "The idea or the dream is that when we have Pride Month in March, there's that larger capsule of things that NAIT does, but how can we bring those conversations in T110 and run programming that features that?" explained Shah.

Both Shah and Laing agreed that having EDI-focused spaces on campus is important for all students, regardless of their lived experiences or how they identify.

"We need to hold these spaces in an institution as NAIT more than ever, so folks can see themselves in the system," said Shah.

"And the system can also take stock of what needs to be changing as we go forward and to unpack in those conversations that are essential."

"Just having a place where you're not alone ... student and staff well-being, psychological safety, to have a place where you can come where no one will doubt your experiences based on your identities or your past, your families, all those pieces, is really important," added Laing.

Students can visit the centre on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m., and Tuesdays from 12 p.m. - 3 p.m. are focused on staff. Dates and times are also featured on Ooks Life.

Strengthening community ties one rope at a time

Club feature: Construction Engineering Technology C lub



Gary Stroich Bridge Building Competition at Whitemud Park on Sept. 21.

Photo provided by Caleb Smeding

By Sanjiyven Alfred Joseph

Less than a month into the semester, the Construction Engineering Technology Student club has already gained a platinum distinction in NAITSA Campus Clubs' GIV'ER program—a way to recognize clubs who give back and make an impact in their community. Reaching platinum this early in the semester is a noteworthy achievement, especially since it's the second-highest level, and the club did it all with one event: the 49th annual Gary Stroich Bridge Building Competition at Whitemud Park on Sept. 21. "The goal is to string two large ropes across the river, and then have 30 people across the river on those ropes going back and forth," said the President of the club, Caleb Smeding.

The competition proved to be a successful one, as the club amassed over 2000 pounds of food for NAITSA's Emergency Food Centre and the Edmonton Food Bank. The large sum was obtained by placing a donation requirement of 75 pounds per team to participate in the competition. "We had so many student teams this year," said Smeding.

The motivation behind the club's participation in charitable events is straightforward. "We have an opportunity to do good things for the community, so why not seize the opportunity," said Smeding. He also acknowledged the involvement of the construction industry, that "enjoy putting teams together" for the bridge building event. "They are a large part of the reason as to why we got as much food donated as we did."

And just like walking on ropes, drawing parallels between the construction industry and giving back to society is a balancing act. Since it is largely a

private industry, Smeding shared that it is up to these individual companies to determine their ways of contributing back to society. But as Smeding puts it, "There is no end to the charity that we in the construction industry can do to give back to our communities."

While the bridge building competition is one of the major events the club participates in, Smeding shared that the club is laying the groundwork for several other events.

"We are just right now in the stage of gauging what our peers are interested in and hoping that we can do a team building event and a fundraising event each month."

Potential activities in the pipeline include a dodgeball competition, blood donation and a bowling event.

Moving forward, Smeding's primary focus is to build more positive relationships between industry stakeholders such as architects, contractors and skilled trades. And for potential members, Smeding is looking for participation, communication and enthusiasm. "And maybe 10 pounds of food to donate," he joked.

Students can follow the Construction Engineering Technology Student Club on Instagram for more updates at @conengtech. And in the words of its President: "We have great opportunities here ... to make connections, give back to others and really build lifelong relationships."



MOUTHING OFF: WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE FALL ACTIVITY?

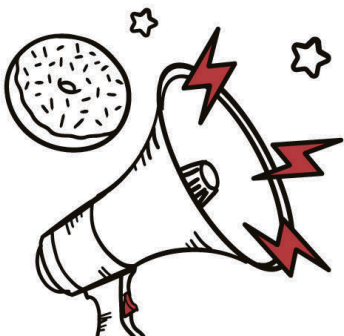
"Baking and watching movies."
-Alayna Moud
Laboratory and X-Ray Technology Combined

"My favourite thing to do during fall is to see live comedians with my best friend. It's become our tradition every year."
-Kevin Paradis
DMIT, Web Design

"Pumpkin carving is my favourite fall activity."
-Cullen Snyder
DMIT, Computer Software Development



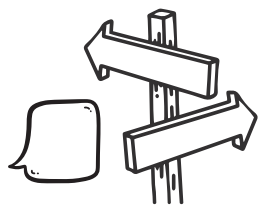
Photos by Skylar Boissonnault



HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?

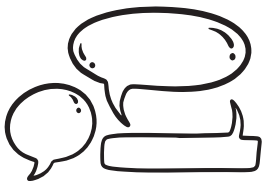
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CLUBS CORNER

A high-spirited October awaits



By Sanjiyven Alfred Joseph

The spooky season is here. Some of us may be haunted by paranormal activities and paragraphs of assignments, while the rest of us may suffer from ‘FOMO’ (fear of missing out) and loneliness. Worry not. Like Casper the friendly ghost, NAITSA Campus Clubs is here to boo-st your spirits and help you connect with people across the campus.

To quote Claudia Basic, Campus Clubs Support Specialist: “Our biggest goal is to just help make connections between students. It can be a really lonely time for some people, so we just hope to facilitate friendships.”

Basic also emphasised how easy it is “getting to know people in a friendly environment.” Currently, there are 150 club events live on Ooks Life and a historical \$121,000 in available grants. So Basically speaking (no pun intended), Campus Clubs is about to get friendlier, with a bunch of enriching and thrilling upcoming events.

Jolly-old Club at the Pub

Club at the Pub might have been around for a long time, but it stays true to the phrase ‘old is gold.’ These events are funded by NAITSA, and every Wednesday a different club gathers at the Nest to meet potential new members, catch up with existing ones and have a relaxing time. According to Basic, all you have to do is “show up and enjoy.” Beverages, burgers and bountiful events await you at the Nest. That is a lot of B’s, but Club at the Pub is certainly an A-grade opportunity to unwind and mingle.

October’s Club Elevation Series

Learning occurs both in and out of the classroom. While studies can be a serious endeavour, the Club Elevation Series ensures that club executives receive an alternative education in a fun way, as it assists professional development and the operation of a club. For example, discover how to event plan like an expert on Oct. 16. Knowledge is free, and so are the various incentives and swag items that you will receive upon reaching different milestones of attendance. Not a bad deal if you ask me.

Introducing the newborns

You might end up with stitches if you call crochet knitting. Just kidding. I am

sure that the founders of the Crochet Corner at NAIT won’t nitpick if you don’t know the difference. But if you genuinely want to know more, the Crochet Corner at NAIT is one of the eight new interest clubs that have been formed. The other clubs include the Young Workers for Peace, Quiz Bowl Club, WIA NAIT, Chinese Bible Study Fellowship at NAIT, Latinos at NAIT, Poetry Society at NAIT and the Nigerian Student Association. And we can’t forget about the latest addition to program clubs: the Supply Chain and Management Club of NAIT.

Latino rapper Pitbull said in a song that “one is a company, two is a crowd and three is a party.” With NAITSA Campus Clubs, three members is all you need to form a new club. If the 91 listed clubs and counting do not pique your interest, pick two other like-minded friends, access Ooks Life and “Pitbull Yell” your way with excitement once you have successfully registered your new club. The more the merrier—and this applies to both registering a club and being a member of one. As stated in the NAITSA Clubs handbook, “there is no limit to the number of clubs you can join as a regular member!”

Not too late for Club Showcase

The NAITSA Club Showcase is happening on Nov. 6 and 7. If your club is keen on attracting new members, introducing cool events and exposing the club to a larger audience, Clubs Showcase is a great platform to do so. Be sure to register before the deadline on Tuesday, Oct. 29 at 11:59 p.m. by filling out the form available on the Ooks Life website. November might seem like a long time away, but even the supernatural will tell you that time and tide waits for no body, literally.

To sum it up, Basic personally wants people to get involved and join clubs. “Doesn’t matter which club, doesn’t matter if you go once a year to a club meeting, just get out there and meet new people.” And whether it is irony or a spooky coincidence, the first letter of each subheading of this article forms the word “join”. So, ghosts aside, find your people now and allow Campus Clubs to be the clarity you need in a month of mystery. For more information, visit ookslife.ca or drop by the NAITSA office at O108.



Club at the Pub photos from 2023 and 2024.

Photos via Campus Clubs

The Nugget's guide to public transit etiquette

By Hugo G. Diaz

Using public transit in Edmonton is stressful enough as it is, with buses running late or not showing up at all, bad drivers colliding their cars with trains and safety issues at bus and LRT stations. We can all contribute a bit to make this experience better. Here are some tips.

Standing in line

If you come from a place where lines are common, you may notice how people crowd around the bus door as soon as it arrives. At rush hour this can be especially uncomfortable. We should be kinder and give priority to groups that require a seat: elderly people, pregnant women, small children and anyone who requires a space or a seat before us.

Taking up space

You and your stuff definitely take up space. If you walk with your backpack on without being careful, you may end up hitting someone. Take it off your back while standing on public transport, especially if the area is crowded. Also, your backpack does not get its own seat—save space for others.

'Please' and 'thank you'

Just taking off your backpack may not be enough. Asking for permission and using polite words with others will help you get along better with those you share a space with on public transportation. Remember, overreacting in difficult situations breaks down good communication and could lead to awkward moments or even conflict. Be careful with the language you use.

Warning signs, hello?

There is signage throughout all ETS vehicles and stations. While we may have moments of distraction, we should be more conscientious of these rules. For example: placing your feet on the front seat. It is clearly stated that you should not do it, and your shoes have been in contact with the floor. By placing them on the seat you show a lack of consideration for the people who will use them after you. The body language of someone who puts their foot on the seat in front of them can be also perceived as aggressive or rude. Following signs helps everyone stay comfortable and safe.



Despite posted signs, many people put their feet on seats on busses and LRTs.



Photos by Hugo Diaz

Drivers are human beings just like us

Yes, they are! They have good and bad days and they are trying to do their job the best they can. If you think otherwise, yelling at them or insulting them is not the way to complain. Empathy is perhaps the best tool in most cases.

Personal hygiene and civility

This topic has been very hot in recent weeks, so we will be concise and with general rules that apply to everyone. Humans need to wash or shower regularly to protect themselves from certain types of bacteria and fungi that could spread if they don't keep themselves clean. You don't smell your own odours because you are used to them and that is a scientific fact. While there is no set rule, taking a daily or every-other-day bath or shower and putting on clean clothes is usually the perfect combo to avoid any comments or rude faces (or sunflowers dying when you walk by them).

Making noise

And last, but not least: for Pete's sake, use headphones when listening to music, watching something or making any video or audio calls.

Do not forget we all share this city and its resources, and we want other Edmontonians to perceive NAIT students positively on public transit and beyond. Respect and tolerance are key.



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@NAITNewsWatch



naitsa | SENATE ELECTION

2024/2025

When you vote in this election you will be voting on the candidates that represent your campus zone, where you are designated to take the majority of your classes.





ZONE 1 Neil Fleming

Hello, my name is Neil Fleming, and I am a candidate for Senate for zone 1. I am currently in the IHET full time program (Industrial Heavy Equipment Technology). I was elected as your Senator for the 2023/2024 semester in zone 1. I would really like the opportunity to continue the great work that the board did on the last 2 semesters. My mission is for all Nait students to have the best experience while you're advancing in life with your future designed careers ahead of you. My experience as a Senator I have supported

students at Nait with all the information that is needed for your advancement at Nait. For an example not many students know about the Health and Dental program. This program supports Nait students in so many ways and I really encourage you all to use it to the maximum extent possible. If you see me in the hallway and have any questions just talk to me. I always have time to support you.



ZONE 1 Hailey Hirsch

Hello y'all My Name is Hailey Hirsch

I am running for senate in Zone 1 and super excited to be here running for senate, I am currently in the CNC program here at NAIT.

For those who don't know what a senate at NAIT let me tell you all about, it is essentially questioning everything about how the budget is spent or how problems are solved on campuses.

So we ensure everything is running smoothly and nothing falls in between the cracks and I love to solve problems and

as senate I would like to hear all your concerns and bring them up to people who can fix them.

If you ever have a concern I'll be in the N building and would love to hear from you about anything feel free to come find you if you ever have a concern and I'll do my best to find the person who has all the information on how to fix the problem

I wish you all fantastic day and please vote for me Hailey Hirsch hopefully the next senate of Zone 1



ZONE 1 Isaiah Melder-Dunphy

Brothers and Sisters of NAIT! Do you know your rights? Do you know your senators, or that you even had one? Do you know where the budget money is going? Do you have ideas for the student association but don't know where or how to reach out?

My name is Isaiah Melder-Dunphy and a vote for me is a vote for your rights as a student!

From budget funds being spent unwisely to missing amenities and neglected facilities, I will talk to the council and members in order to fight for your rights. Are higher ups not fulfilling their role or arbitrary bylaws you don't want or

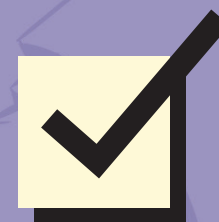
understand? I will personally hold them accountable and take action on your behalf!

Have you even seen or heard about your senator or council members? What do they do for you and why are they here? Transparency matters, I will help provide this information and take steps to make it easier to get in touch with and share your ideas to the council. I vow to work and fight for you. This is my promise to all students!

Your thoughts matter! Your money matters! YOUR VOTE MATTERS!

SUPPORT YOUR CANDIDATES FOR SENATE BY VOTING!

[NAITSA.SIMPLYVOTING.COM](https://naitsa.simplyvoting.com)



no photo

ZONE 2 Juveria Anjum

Hello everyone,

I'm Juveria Anjum, a second-year international student studying lab research and biotechnology. During my time at NAIT, I've actively volunteered and connected with many of you, which has inspired me to run for the NAITSA Senate.

As an international student, I've experienced the challenges of adapting to a new environment, and it has strengthened my belief in the importance of diversity and inclusion. I've seen firsthand the value of building a supportive community where everyone's voice is heard and respected.

As part of the NAITSA Senate, I will play a crucial role in approving bylaws, overseeing representation, and ensuring

the annual budget is managed responsibly. I am committed to fulfilling these responsibilities with dedication and ensuring student interests are prioritized in decision-making.

My experiences working closely with students, faculty, and staff have given me a deep understanding of our community's diverse needs. I'm passionate about contributing to the growth of our campus community, and I'm always open to hearing your ideas and concerns.

If you see me around campus, feel free to stop and ask any questions you have. Let's work together to make NAITSA more engaging and inclusive. Vote for Juveria!

Thank you for your support!

ZONE 2 Blake Philbrick

Hello there!

I may be nervous about running for senate but I'm just as excited about it too!

The main reason for this anxiety is because I want to be of great service to the student body, Though I may not seem like much I do hold great pride in wanting the best for those around me including my fellow students!

Being a part of senate would be an incredible opportunity to not only grow as a person and leader, but to find a direct way

to help the student body. Voting me into senate would allow me to bring any concerns, obstacles, and challenges that students have directly to Naitsa Executive Council.

I can assure you that we will hold them responsible so that they will find solutions to your problems! So please vote for me for senate governance of zone 2!

Your best interest is my best interest!

Thank you for reading!

And vote **Blake Philbrick** on **October 11th to 17th, 2024!!**

ZONE 3 Jhenson Garcia

My name is Jhenson Reynel Garcia, but you can call me Reynel. I am a DMIT student at NAIT.

When you vote for me, you are not just putting anybody.

The student you are putting on that Senate is someone you will see around campus. Someone who sees the things you do. Someone who walks the same paths as you.

The greatest asset of the Senate, and of NAITSA, is **you**: the students that walk around campus. Because whether it's the availability of student mental health services, campus safety and security, and up to the future career connections and paths you will take, **you**, and only **you** can make these changes happen at NAITSA.

You're putting someone who wants to know you, so that when you vote for me, you vote **you** into the Senate.

Our Executive Council makes these changes happen because of **your** power, and when you vote for me, I will ensure that your power works towards the right direction: **you**.

I will ensure that the Executive Council works for **you**.

If you've seen me around campus, chances are that I've seen you.

So **when you vote Blue, you vote you**.

ZONE 3 Anthony Hoang

ANTHONY HOANG, THE GOAT, THE ILLUSTRIOUS

Over the course of my life, I've been trying to cultivate my aura to a high degree. I wasn't always like this, I used to be shy. It felt so hard to speak at times. However, there were people in my life that built me into the person that I am now, speaking out and helping me talk. I believe that us students in the DMIT program need to keep management accountable, and so I'm a voice for the voiceless.

REASONS WHY I'M THE GOAT, THE ILLUSTRIOUS:

- As a person who visits Business at UofA, I connect with people, talking about business, all that.

- I believe that I'm a qualified guy, I was the Vice President of Technology for my Junior Achievement Company, a business program made for high school students.
- I've worked in Customer Service sector for 2 years, so I can relate to people.
- I think I'm a charismatic, confident guy, really enjoy asking questions about the things I care about.
- I'm a hella approachable guy, so if you got any concerns, I'm able to talk about it with the executive council. I can talk about life and talk about deep topics.



ZONE 3

Mankaran Kullar

Hello! I'm Mankaran, and I'm excited to announce my candidacy for a Senate position at NAITSA. I am passionate about effective governance and believe in the importance of transparency and active engagement within our academic community.

The Senate is responsible for overseeing the governance of NAITSA, focusing on key duties like bylaw approval, annual budget oversight, and ensuring proper representation within the association. My commitment is to foster an inclusive environment where every **student's voice is heard and valued**.

My goal is to collaborate with fellow Senators to uphold our institution's values and priorities. I would be honored to have your support as we work together for a vibrant and accountable governance system at NAITSA.

Thank you!



ZONE 3

Marco Savatteri

Make an Impact: Vote Marco Savatteri for Senate!

The NAITSA Senate plays a crucial role in shaping our student experience by approving bylaws, budget allocations, and ensuring accountability in the decision-making process. As a Senator, my responsibility will be to ensure that those making significant decisions for NAITSA act in the best interest of students.

As a first-year student, I understand the challenges of balancing academics, finances, and personal well-being. I believe that every student deserves a supportive environment that fosters growth and success. Whether it's

advocating for better student resources, ensuring your fees are used responsibly, or supporting initiatives that enhance student life, I will work to make sure your voice influences key decisions.

With your vote, we can create a lasting, positive impact on life at NAIT. Let's ensure that every student feels heard and valued in shaping our community.

Vote Marco Savatteri. Together, we'll make an impact!



ZONE 3

Jugraj Singh

JUGRAJ FOR THE WIN
PUT YOUR VOTES IN!

Hello everyone, I'm Jugraj Singh, a Digital Media and IT student at NAIT. Being a student at NAIT, I am an active volunteer with the Student Orientation team, NAIT Student Life, and the International and Intercultural Community Centre. Additionally, I serve as both a Student Life Peer Mentor and an International Peer Mentor, helping new students navigate campus resources and offering guidance.

Since starting my studies at NAIT, I've engaged in various activities and events, connecting with domestic and international students from diverse backgrounds. Moving to a new country and adapting to a different culture has

enriched my experience and deepened my commitment to the community.

My involvement has given me valuable insights into student needs, motivating me to run for a position of the Senate. I am dedicated to upholding the NAITSA Bylaws, approving the annual budget, and ensuring the Executive Council stays accountable to students.

I believe in good governance and the importance of being our collective voice. I'm ready to take on the responsibilities of this Senate position, and I kindly ask for your support — Vote Jugraj Singh for a strong leadership at NAITSA.

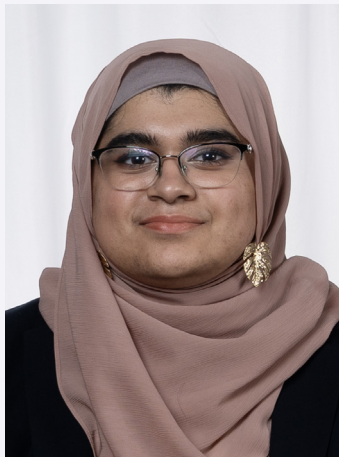
Thank you!
Jugraj Singh



ZONE 3

Victor Titus

Hello, my name is Victor Titus, I am running for senate in Zone 3. One of the things that I enjoy on campus are the events that get held like the Oaks Life Mixer. I would like to try and advocate for more events like this. One of the main responsibilities of senate is approving the annual budget. from my experience, if you don't get to the event right as it starts, there is almost no food left. By helping approve the budget, I can try to make sure there is enough. Vote for me between October 11th and October 17th.



ZONE 4 Mariam Arain

Hey NAIT Students!

I'm Mariam Arain, a fourth-year BBA Marketing Co-op student, and I'm thrilled to be running for NAITSA Senator! I'm not just a student—I'm also a passionate advocate and community leader. I've had the privilege of speaking to the Mayor and City Council about pressing community issues, collaborating with the Edmonton Police Service, and being part of Enactus NAIT, where I helped create projects that made a real difference in people's lives.

I'm all about turning ideas into action, whether it's promoting diversity, enhancing student resources, or planning engaging events. I believe that every student's voice should be heard, and I'm committed to bringing your

ideas and concerns in the Senate. Let's work together to make our time at NAIT even more memorable and impactful!

How Can You Play a Part?

- **Vote:** When the time comes, cast your vote for me and let's make some noise in the Senate!
- **Spread the Word:** Share my campaign with your friends and classmates.
- **Engage:** Got thoughts, ideas, or concerns? I'm all ears! Let's chat about how we can create an inclusive and dynamic campus community.

Let's make this term unforgettable—together!



ZONE 4 Sakhi Das

Hey NAIT!

I'm **Sakhi Das**, and I'm thrilled to be running as a Senate in **Zone 4** for 2024-2025!

Fun fact: *Sakhi* means "**friend**," and that's exactly how I plan to take my governance—as a friend who listens, supports, and acts.

I've contributed over 40 hours volunteering both on and off campus because I genuinely love giving back and connecting with others. I love teaching, I enjoy tutoring my friends in subjects, I'm good at (because let's be real, we all do better when we help each other out!).

I'm a big fan of theatre and was part of a group called *Sarvsaksham*, which means "fully capable of everything." It's a great reminder that "we cannot live our lives twice, so let's make it worth it in one go!"

Above all, I believe in kindness. "If I can't make someone's day better, I'll make sure not to ruin it either." That's the mindset I'll bring to the Senate—positive, uplifting, and focused on making NAITSA even better for all of us.

So, if you're looking for a friend who's here to make a real difference (and maybe bring a little extra sunshine), **vote for me, Sakhi Das, Zone 4.**



ZONE 4 Carson Ewanik

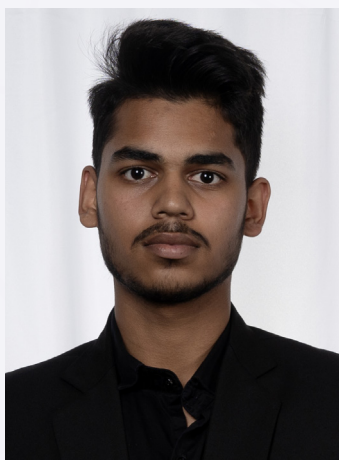
Hello everyone, my name is Carson Ewanik, and I am excited to announce my candidacy for the NAITSA Student Senate.

I have been at NAIT for four years and am set to graduate with my BBA in Marketing this year. Like many of you, I have had my concerns throughout my time at NAIT. If elected, I will be tasked with reviewing the NAITSA budget. Additionally, I will be responsible for holding the executive council accountable for their allocation of the funds received from the NAITSA fees that we all pay. My goal is to ensure

that NAITSA is spending our money on things that matter to the students.

If I'm not at NAIT you can often find me watching football or hockey. I am also an avid music fan who is always looking for new song suggestions! If you see me at school, I would love to stop and chat!

Feel free to reach out to me at any time! I look forward to meeting you and working together to create positive change!



ZONE 4 Garv

I'm Garv, a student at NAIT currently in my **3rd semester** of the diploma in **Business Administration - Accounting**. Currently I am **international peer mentor** and **event coordinator with Indian Fusion Cultural Club**, allowing me to connect with students and understand their needs. As a student at NAIT, I have volunteered on campus for over **160 hours** at various events with different departments, including **NAIT International, Well-being, and Student Orientation**.

Why me?

- **Bylaw and Budget Oversight:** As an accounting student, I have the skills and knowledge to carefully review and analyze the budget, ensuring that **NAITSA's financial**

decisions benefit all students and align with your best interests.

- **Ensuring Accountability of the Executive Council:** I will actively hold the **Executive Council** responsible for their decisions and actions, aiming to create an environment where **transparency and fairness** lead to meaningful improvements in student life.
- **Providing an Unbiased Voice:** I will voice the rights, needs, and concerns of all students fairly and without bias.

My dedication is to advocate for your interests with **integrity and fairness** because **I care for you**. By holding the **Executive Council** accountable, we can ensure they prioritize initiatives that truly enhance our **student experience**.



ZONE 4

Bohdan Kyriienko

No article.



ZONE 4

Danielle Libunao

Hi! I'm Danielle Libunao, and I'm thrilled to be running for Senate this 2024/2025 term!

WHERE ARE YOUR NAITSA FEES GOING?

As your Senator, I'll make sure your fees are spent where they matter most—your student experience. Senate, the heart and governing body of NAITSA, exists to make sure the student voice is heard, and your money is used wisely. With many candidates running, I stand out by offering more than just promises; I'm bringing real experience to the table.

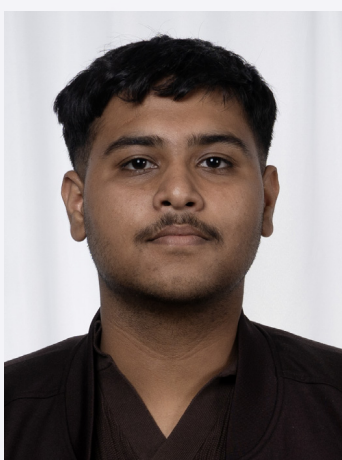
WHY CHOOSE ME?

Having served in the Senate and currently on NAIT's Board of Governors and multiple committees, I know

how to make sound decisions that benefit students. My HR background enables me to build solid relationships with the EC team, ensuring they stay accountable and responsive to us students. I'm personable, adaptable, and focused on delivering a **real impact**.

WHY YOUR VOTE MATTERS?

Your time at NAIT should be memorable, fun and full of opportunities. I assure you that NAITSA will focus on what students need—whether it's support, community, or resources. With inflation increasing along with tuition, I'll advocate for transparency to ensure every dollar improves your student experience. Vote for **Danielle Libunao**, and let's connect!



ZONE 4

Ujwal Modgill

Hello fellow NAIT students!

My name is Ujwal Modgill, and I'm a second-year Business Administration accounting student at NAIT. I'm running as a candidate in the upcoming Senate election for the 2024/25 term.

I'm 20 years old and proudly from Punjab, India, a region known for its vibrant culture and diversity. As an outgoing person, I enjoy meeting people from different backgrounds, which helps me expand my perspective and grow as an individual.

In this role, I will help approve NAITSA's annual budget, pass bylaws, and ensure the executive council is held

accountable. This aligns perfectly with my skills as an accounting student, offering me the chance to contribute to meaningful decisions that impact both NAIT students and the organization.

I'm committed to making sure the decisions we make are informed and serve the best interests of the NAITSA community.

Feel free to say hi if you see me on campus—I love connecting with new people and hearing your stories!

Vote for me as your student senator!



ZONE 4

Robin Murillo

Hello NAIT Students,

The best thing in life is having an opportunity and embracing it!

My name is Robin Murillo and I'm a business student running for a seat in the NAITSA Senate to ensure that the mandatory fees we pay to NAITSA each semester are spent in the best interest of the students.

Your Senate is the governing body for the NAIT Student Association. The senate holds accountable, the Executive Council, their decisions and its bylaws.

Throughout my time in NAIT, I have seen countless opportunities offered to enhance your experience at NAIT. Unique and memorable opportunities to try new things to **CONNECT** with people and getting **INVOLVED**. I would ensure that NAITSA continues to put these things as a **FIRST**.

I'd be honored to serve you as your Senator and work towards your success.

If ever you see me in campus, feel free to say hi and let's make it a memorable one!

**ZONE 4**
Steve Vy

Hello there! I am Steve Vy

Born in Manitoba, raised in British Columbia, and the rest of my time in Edmonton, Alberta, I am attending NAIT as a 3rd year Business Administration student. My journey across provinces has given me gratitude and appreciation for Canada, including the people at NAIT.

I've been trained under two federal government departments: Transport Canada and Immigrations, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. Involvement with public service and catering to clients has fueled my desire to take on the role of governance. I offer a lending hand whenever possible to achieve a common goal.

My time as a Campus Clubs Coordinator has taught me that service to students is paramount. The leadership, passion, and involvement I have had allows me to fully understand the value of a positive hands-on student experience.

Without fear or favour, I will be an unbiased voice in the NAITSA Senate. I will govern, monitor, and ensure accountability is held across the executive council.

As I continue my journey making new connections, I thrive on developing new relationships and hope to inspire others to do the same. If you happen to see me walking by, say hello!

**ZONE 4**
Austyn Wilson

Hello fellow NAIT students, my name is Austyn Wilson! I'm excited to announce my candidacy in this year's NAITSA student senate election!

I'm currently in my fourth and final year as a BBA Marketing student, like many of you when I first started at NAIT I had no idea what the senate did! They are required to approve bylaws, review and approve the annual budget, and provide representation oversight when it comes to the Executive Council. I believe my education here at NAIT has given me the tools to do this to the best of my abilities!

Now a little bit about me! Over the last year, I've really gotten involved on campus with things like the marketing club, case

competitions, and other campus events which I have found to genuinely enrich my school experience! When I'm not at NAIT you can find me hanging out with friends, traveling, and during the months of September to May, I'll definitely be watching hockey! But aside from that I am truly a yapper! If you see me around campus, please stop and say Hi! I'd be happy to chat and address any of your questions or concerns! I'd really appreciate your support!

ZONE 5

There are no candidates in your Zone, therefore no voting will occur.

If you have any questions you may reach out to NAITSA's Deputy Returning Officer, Marina Bruno at dro@naitsa.ca.

No Candidates

YOUR VOICE! YOUR VOTE!

[NAITSA.SIMPLYVOTING.COM](https://naitsa.simplyvoting.com)



VOTE FOR YOUR NAITSA STUDENT SENATOR

ONLINE VOTING OPEN
OCTOBER 11 - OCTOBER 17 AT 4PM

HOW DO STUDENTS VOTE? Cast your vote online here: naitsa.simplyvoting.com

VOTING INFORMATION BOOTHS

Main Campus
NAITSA Office O108

Main Campus
near Fresh Express

HP Centre 1st floor
near Bytes

CAT 2nd floor
near the student lounge

CAT 1st floor
near the Crossing

Main Campus X-wing
near the bookstore

South Lobby Kiosk

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [NAITSA.CA/ELECTIONS](https://naitsa.ca/elections)

*Celebrate
With Us*

Thursday, October 17 | 4:45PM | NAITSA Office (0108)

Join us for the announcement of unofficial election results.

Behind the success: Soccer star's journey to Player of the Year

By Isaac Day

The Oaks men's soccer team is looking to turn the tide after two consecutive second-place finishes, and team captain Peter Jones is central to that ambition. As the 2023/24 Alberta Colleges Athletic Conference (ACAC) North Player of the Year, Jones brings skill and leadership to the field, inspiring his teammates to push for greatness. Under the guidance of Head Coach Jeff Paulus—who previously led the team to a national championship in 2011—Jones is determined to lead the Oaks to a title this season.

Jones was born into the sport of soccer; at five years old he already knew that soccer was his passion. “My dad played soccer, so it made it easy ... I looked up to my dad, and I wanted to be like him.” Jones now plays at NAIT alongside his younger brother, Choosen—a relationship he appreciates. “He’s looking up to me. So, I have to lead by example ... but he [Choosen] also knows what to do, he’s very talented himself.”

With the team losing gold for the second consecutive year, the road back to winning it all will be challenging. However, the Oaks captain believes this season the team has learned from their past experiences and are ready to climb the mountain once more.

“We are more focused because we know what we have to do to get there again,” Jones said. “The last two seasons we have lost in the finals. So, we know we have to be locked in. We all have to be pursuing the same goal ... together.”

The program has started the season on fire and were named a top 15 school in the Canadian Collegiate Athletic Association men's soccer rankings. Jones said that a crucial part of their early success is a result of the team's community and

brotherhood.

“I think we are brothers off the pitch, even at school, every day, we are all together ... because we know if we want to be successful on the pitch, we have to have that friendship and brotherhood off the pitch as well.”

Jones is proud to be an Ook not only for the team's “winning culture,” but because of the personal growth that has followed. He was once the person who “didn't talk to anybody,” yet his coaches saw his potential and named him team captain. “The NAIT coaches have brought success that has really developed me as a person,” Jones explained.

The midfielder has accumulated a strong resume during his time in blue and gold, starting 23 games and winning the 2023/24 ACAC North Player of the Year. Still, Jones says that winning a championship is his number one priority. “It would be a dream to win for NAIT. All the individual accomplishments don't really represent the team aspect,” he said. “They pushed me, they're the ones who made me win the Player of the Year. It's not just by myself, it's by the team as well.”

While Jones is thankful for the efforts of the team and coaches, he attributes all of his success to God and his faith.

“My faith is the foundation that I was built upon really. Everything I do is for the glory of God ... sometimes I don't feel like going 100 per cent, but I know I'm not doing it for myself; I'm doing it for Christ, I am doing it for my teammates, for my coaches and for NAIT as well. I have a lot of people



Peter Jones (left) attributes his success to his team, family and God.
Photo via NAIT Oaks

to represent.”

Entering his final year, Jones is hungry to finally break through and win his first championship. With a young team, the captain recognizes he will play a pivotal role in guiding his squad—and rookies—through the regular and post-season.

“Coach always says, if you come to NAIT, you come here to win,” Jones explained. “We have a winning coach here. He tells us to do the right thing: stay out of the club, stop drinking during the season, focus on your goal ... you have to sacrifice right now to win.”

As Jones and the Oaks begin their climb to the top, he believes the team has to keep the fire from the past two years alive if they want to raise another banner at the end of the season.

“We have to push them to also be hungry ... we have lost two years in a row now and we can't do that again, we have to get it this year!”

Men's hockey team embrace 'less mistakes, more pace' motto for 24/25

By Geono Aloisio

The Oaks men's hockey team returns to the ice after a disappointing quarterfinals loss to the Concordia Thunder ended the team's 2023/24 campaign—the first time they've entered a season without last season's medal since 2011.

Head Coach Scott Fellnermayr believes while the loss was disappointing, it allowed the team to take a step back and re-analyze their roster construction.

“It [the playoff loss] doesn't sit well, and you reflect a lot. If you exit early, you get a lot of time to think, and you end up picking apart everything,” Fellnermayr said. “There is a big turnover on forwards, but the ones that are coming back, they remember it. They feel like I do as well ... we will do

everything to avoid having that feeling again.”

Fourteen fresh faces will join the program after a significant roster overhaul due to several important players' graduations—including two of the team's top three-point scorers last season, Bjorn Robinson and Bryce Osepchuk.

“There's some chemistry already. There are some guys that haven't even played together before, and they seem to be gelling,” said Fellnermayr. “There's still a lot to be determined, but I'm really happy with a lot of the new guys.”

The new faces will need to hit the ground running, as the Oaks' first four games of the season are against last year's first and second-place teams,

Briercrest College and Red Deer Polytechnic. Expectations for the group will be high. “We've been to the final every year that I played here and every year that I've coached here,” explained Fellnermayr. “We want to win, and we're used to it ... there are no excuses.”

As the season approaches, the men's team will be on the hunt for banner number 18. With a lineup that will see many new faces, the team's new motto is “less mistakes, more pace,” which will be crucial in deciding the Oaks' fate early this season. The Oaks' season starts on the road against Briercrest before returning to NAIT for their home opener against Red Deer Polytechnic on Oct. 26.

Former Edmonton Stinger named men's basketball Head Coach

By Geono Aloisio

The Oaks have named former Edmonton Stinger Adika Peter-McNeilly as the new Head Coach of the men's basketball team ahead of the 2024/25 season.

The program announced the two-time Canadian Elite Basketball League (CEBL) champion as the team's bench boss in a press release on April 12, stating Head Coach Jordan Baker would leave the program to become the Head Coach and General Manager of the Edmonton Stingers.

"NAIT Athletics has enjoyed having Jordan as our NAIT men's basketball coach the past three seasons," said Director of Athletics & Recreation Jordan Richey in the press release. "While his time at NAIT may have been short, he has had a lasting impact on our program moving forward."

"NAIT Athletics would like to thank Jordan for his time with us and wish him luck with his new role with the Edmonton Stingers."

Peter-McNeilly joins the team after a five-year playing career in the CEBL with the Edmonton Stingers, where he won two league championships and was named the 2021 CEBL Sixth Man of the Year.

Peter-McNeilly said he is "feeling amazing" ahead of his first season as the Oaks' Head Coach.

"It's a great feeling every single day that I get to go and practice and coach these guys and make them better student-athletes on and off the court," he explained. "My older brothers have been coaches, so I've been dabbling a little bit with that community ... and it just felt right that coming towards the end of my career, I wanted to get into coaching."

Going from player to coach in a matter of months, Peter-McNeilly has had a quick turnaround after he suited up for the Stingers for the final time in July 2024. Now, the new men's Head Coach has a tall task ahead of him in his first season. The Oaks men's team have failed to medal at the Alberta Colleges Athletic Conference Championships (ACAC) since they won a national title in 2016.

The team has seen a notable drop-off in regular season success in the following years, posting a combined 33-15 record from 2016 to 2018 and then finishing 50-54 since the 2018/19 season. While the shift to coaching may have some challenges, Peter-McNeilly feels he can use his experience on the court to help put the program back on the right track.

"It's gonna be a little bit difficult, and I've accepted that it's going to be a little bit of a challenge just being a first-year Head Coach," he shared. "I think it's

about establishing a culture, and that's [one of] the first things that I've done and [what] this whole season is going to be about, how do we establish a culture and identity?"

"We want to be good right now. But the key is how we sustain it every single year and how we elevate every single year."

After NAIT's elimination in the divisional playoffs, Peter-McNeilly will face pressure to improve the team's results on the court. The journey to becoming a powerhouse in the ACAC again will not be easy given the club's recent struggles in the postseason. But the new Head Coach hopes his experience and knowledge at the professional level will play a crucial role in building the Oaks' return to the top.

"Eventually, you want to win the national championship. Eventually, you want to win an ACAC championship. Are we ready right now? No ... so for us, can we make the playoffs this year? That is our goal. Anything happens when we get to that playoff mark," he said. "I want to win the championship ... eventually I want to get there, hang a banner up there [in the rafters], but right now it's just chipping away those little goals."

"It's making sure that as you're coming back every year, we're getting better. So our second-year athletes are coming back for the third year and getting better," said Peter-McNeilly. "It's a process. It's not gonna happen right now, but eventually, we're gonna get there."

The basketball season begins on Oct. 25 against the Keyano College Huskies. Visit the NAIT Oaks site for full schedule details.



Adika Peter-McNeilly is the new Head Coach for the men's basketball team. Photo via NAIT Oaks

Women's hockey team ready to defend ACAC title

By Geono Aloisio

The women's hockey team is set to return to the ice for a new season fresh off their first Alberta Colleges Athletic Conference (ACAC) title win in nine years. While the championship celebration is over, the team's memories of the program's historic accomplishment remain fresh.

"It's definitely a humbling experience anytime you're able to complete the ultimate goal of any group within our conference," said Head Coach Brendan Jensen. "The feeling as far as a coach goes is the same as the players: pure elation and joy to see a group that had grown together ... walk away with the championship."

Eleven recruits join the blue and gold after several players departed in the offseason. The change will be a challenge for the team after having 19 returning players last year, but Jensen views the influx of new talent as an opportunity.

"I think it brings some fresh perspective," he shared. "For those veteran players, we're leaning heavily on them to show those first years, some of the transfers that we have from U Sports and NCAA, the ways that we do things in Oaks women's hockey."

The Oaks have three goalies on the roster for 2024/25 including Aurora Van Wormer, who played as last season's backup goalie. However, entering the season, the crease is "open for the taking."

"We kind of have a three-headed monster back there [in net] ... we'll see when conference play starts if someone steps up to take the ball and see how far they can run with it."

The Oaks will have 12 returning players from last year's championship squad, including the team's top two scorers, Cassidy Shandro and Cheyenna Harden, who scored a combined 52 points.

"I know it's going to be a challenge for us this year, especially with the people that we lost last year, but we think that we have a group that is able to contend once again," Jensen said. "The group that we have and that we've assembled so far is definitely hungry ... we're going to try our darndest to get back there at the end of the finish line and then see what happens."

The season begins on Oct. 10. The team will raise its 2023/24 championship banner on Oct. 12 for the home opener against Olds College.

Agent Double-O-K

The double life of our very own mascot, a spy we never knew

By Sanjiyven Alfred Joseph

They say birds of a feather flock together. Ironically, these birds also share the same initials: JB. I am sorry Justin Bieber, you can sing “That Should Be Me” all you want, but you’re no James Bond or Jason Bourne. According to an anonymous source, there is *one* bird that flies with these spies.

Introducing NAIT’s very own spy extraordinaire, agent Double-O-K, AKA Born. Jan Born. Although there are many rumors and conspiracies surrounding the truth behind the Ook’s real name, our sources have suggested the most believable theory: since Agent Ook celebrates its birthday in January, it is hence named “Jan Born.”

Around campus, you may recognize the Ook as the huge lovebird that greets NAIT students with groovy dance moves, often obliging stopping for pictures. Most recently, you would have seen the Ook moonwalking and breaking it down at Nest Fest. However, staying true to the term ‘night owl,’ Agent Ook moonlights as a spy, utilizing its superior wing-leg coordination to waltz through baddies around town.

One might wonder how someone who occasionally juggles balls on campus to keep students entertained manages to juggle two contrasting jobs. To begin with, it has a bird’s eye view (literally) of everything that happens. Also, Agent Ook may have cheekily stolen some of NAITSA’s free student handbooks, allowing it to plan its time between being a mascot and a spy agent.

So, do not mess with the mascot. Its fluffy face and bright yellow beak might be charming, but when it turns on its spy mode, you would NOT want this bird to peck you. Agent Ook is also well trained in MMA. And no, it is not mixed martial arts. It is Agent Ook’s very own Madly Moving Arms. Countless villains have fallen flat when Agent Ook starts to flutter.

Other spies may be well-equipped with sophisticated weapons and devices, but just like its name, Agent Ook keeps it simple. It does not shoot, it hoots, which is enough to scare away potential threats. And forget pepper spray; Agent Ook has its very own feather spray to ward off bad people and bad vibes. The source of the spray is a mystery, but is rumored to be from between the fluffy cheeks of Agent Ook. Again, since Agent Ook secretes the spray secretively, sources cannot confirm if the cheeks referred to are the ones on top or the bottom.

A spy without a vehicle is like a bird without wings. The irony is, despite having enormous wings, Agent Ook cannot fly. Forget a Bentley or an Aston Martin, Agent Ook has its own bus. It may be unconventional, but it works perfectly as a disguise. And since Agent Ook is known for schooling his enemies, it is only practical that it transports them back to their cells by bus, something James Bond could never do with a two-seater Bentley.

Thus, whether as a spy or a mascot, we can count on Agent Ook to be the ‘beak-on’ of hope that we need to keep us safe and sane. And, if you get the chance to buy Agent Ook a drink, remember: shaken, not stirred is the preference of his lesser-known colleague, James Bond. For Jan Born, it is sky juice. Poured, not bottled.



Illustration by Jaida Han @miaowani



Halloween drinks to get in the spirit

Photos and words by Skylar Boissonnault

When I think of fall, I think of cozy cocktails that are perfect to sip on while watching spooky movies. Or ones that are easy to make in big batches for when the whole crew comes over for some drinks and carving some pumpkins. When you think of cocktails they might scare you, but these ones are made to be beginner friendly like Casper and impress all your friends while you're at it! And if you don't own a cocktail shaker that's totally okay—a mason jar works perfectly. The ingredients used in these are easy to find, and you might even already have some in your fridge.

Several recipes need some brown sugar cinnamon syrup, which is easy to make. Take 1 cup water, 1 cup brown sugar and 2-4 cinnamon sticks. Boil it all together until the sugar fully dissolves. Wait to cool, then store in an airtight container. This will easily be good for a month, if you don't use it up first!

Fall Cherry Cobbler

This one might sound scary with the egg whites, but I promise you it's worth a try. And if you can't get behind egg whites, or you're vegan, you can buy a miraculous foamer that will do the trick. The eggs give a creamy taste that perfectly matches the cherry. Impress your friends with a crème brûlée top by torching sugar and cinnamon!

Ingredients

- 1.5 oz egg white
- 0.5 oz cinnamon rye
- 1.5 oz cherry whisky
- 0.75 oz lemon juice
- 0.5 oz brown sugar cinnamon syrup
- 3 dashes of cherry bitters

Instructions

Dry shake the egg whites in a shaker until foamy. Add the rest of the ingredients with ice and shake together with egg white. Strain into glass. To garnish, shake cinnamon and sugar on top of egg white. Torch with kitchen torch to melt the sugar and crisp the top!



Squash Ghouls

Shout out to the pumpkin spice ghouls out there! I immediately thought of carving pumpkins with a bunch of friends with this drink.

It's the ultimate squad goal, or as I like to call it, "squash ghouls."

I'm a sucker for a dirty chai latte, so why not make it pumpkin and boozy?

Ingredients

- 2 oz pumpkin cream liqueur
- 0.5 oz coffee liqueur
- 3 oz chai tea

Instructions

Add all the ingredients to a shaker and shake until cold. Strain into a glass. Garnish with a star anise in the center.



Sweater Weather

Sweater Weather really makes me want to cuddle up with a good spooky movie. With apple cider vibes that come from the apple sauce, this drink has the option to keep it boozy or adding some mix to tone it down.

Ingredients

- 1.5 oz spiced rum
- 0.5 oz cinnamon rye
- 0.5 oz brown sugar cinnamon syrup
- 2 spoonfuls of apple sauce

Instructions

Add all the ingredients to a shaker and shake until cold. Dump into glass and top with ice. I like to garnish this one with a burnt cinnamon stick. Just make sure to blow it out before drinking. If this one is too boozy for you, feel free to top with soda or ginger beer!



Autumn Vibes

While not completely unheard of, you don't see sangrias made with whisky very often. But guess what, here is a white sangria made with whisky! You can also do red wine, but I would use a cherry whisky rather than a rye whisky.

This makes one glass of sangria, but can easily be doubled or quadrupled to make more for a sharable pitcher!

Ingredients

- 2 oz rye whisky
- 2 oz white wine
- 1 oz apple cider
- 1 oz orange juice
- 0.5 oz brown sugar cinnamon syrup

Instructions

Add all the ingredients to a shaker and, you guessed it, shake until cold. Dump into a glass and top with ice. Garnish with apple slices, cinnamon sticks and any other whole spices like cloves or star anise.



Mon-stars world tour: Creatures from across the globe



Photo via Canva

By Fraser Sockett

From the dankest forests of North America to the darkest, deepest, coldest ice caves of Antarctica, folktales have captivated mankind for eons. Here is a list of the scariest mythological creatures from each continent.

North America: Wendigo

Lurking in the forests of North America, or perhaps even the River Valley, this Indigenous tale from the Algonquin tribes is a terrifying spirit of insatiable hunger. Often described as a skeletal figure with antlers, it is a symbol of greed and isolation. The spirit is said to possess humans in their dreams, causing them to give in to trying the forbidden flesh: cannibalism. According to Britannica, this occurred in Alberta when a hunter was found guilty of murder in 1879. He dreamed a wendigo told him to murder and eat his family.

South America: El Culebrón

A fearsome giant snake-like creature with the head of a calf guarding the hidden treasures of the Chilean and Argentinian forests, El Culebrón often casts a shadow of fear over anyone who refuses its offer of wealth. All that glittering gold will only cost you your soul.

Europe: Black Annis

Black Annis is the satanic seamstress of England that lives in a cave under a great oak tree. According to legend, this blue-faced hag has iron claws and prefers to dine on human veal, but she may not say no to some aged “soylent green.” She would often tan the skin of lambs and children by hanging skins on a tree before turning them into a stylish belt for herself.

If you ever have a dinner date at a place called Black Annis’ Bower Close, stay home and put out some protective herbs, as Hell has no wrath like an ugly witch scorned.

Asia: Jorōgumo

Imagine walking down the street one night and a beautiful, seductive woman wants to take you home. She brings you back to her home, which is filled to the brim with fetish and kink gear. Then, she turns into a giant spider and devours you despite using your safe word. This was not the “Sucker For Love: First Date” roleplay you were hoping for. A Jorōgumo is essentially that: a monster who does not respect safe words. I think I could change her, but I also have minor arachnophobia.

Africa: Kishi

Now imagine you are at a bar and a handsome, charming man takes you back to his place. All the walls are decorated with weird, furry art featuring hyenas. He turns around, lifts his long, luxurious hair, and a hyena face jumps out and mauls you. Kishi is the gender and creature swap of a Jorōgumo. Don’t worry, you only have a one per cent chance of that happening. Or not. There is not much research on the Kishi.

Australia: Yowie

The Yowie is a large, hairy ape-like cryptid that walks the bushlands of Australia’s Outback. Wait, isn’t that just Bigfoot, a Yeti or the skunk ape of Florida? Why do we have so many variations of Bigfoot?

If he exists, then a Kishi must exist as well.

Antarctica: The Penguin

According to some internet conspiracy theories, birds aren’t real, and a flightless bird that survives in freezing temperatures sounds pretty mythological. Plus, this bird also shifts forms—into Danny DeVito, Robin Lord Taylor or Colin Farrell, that is.

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HARD

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(if what you need is answers to sudooku)



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8 COVERS YOU DIDN'T KNOW WERE BETTER THAN THE ORIGINAL

By Danielle Libunao

Are you a music enthusiast? No matter which genre you’re a fan of, stay tuned. This list contains classic and trendy tracks that are actually covers—and they’re even better than the originals. Even if you may not agree with all the choices, you just might discover your new favourite song.

NAIT GOLF TEAM TAKE HOME 4 MEDALS AND QUALIFY 6 FOR NATIONALS

By Geono Aloisio

NAIT’s golf team finished their second regular season at the Alberta Colleges Athletic Conference (ACAC) Championships on September 24 with four medals, and six golfers qualified for the Canadian Collegiate Athletics Association (CCAA) National Championships in Toronto.



Art by Krystelle Manzano



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