

# NAIT NUGGET

Wednesday, August 20, 2025  
Volume 66, Issue 1

thenuggetonline.com  
@thenaitnugget



the  
**Orientation**  
issue

cover by Chinny Feb Taleon



# NAIT creates interim VP HR, Students and International position



Clayton Davis (right) with NAIT President and CEO Laura Jo Gunter at Flynn's retirement party.

Photo via NAIT Content Collective

By Amy St. Amand

In November 2024 when the departure of NAIT's former (and first) VP Students and Campus Life Gerard Hayes hit the internet, students were shocked. "We'll really miss you in the hallways," one student shared on a post on the NAIT Students' Association's Instagram account. Another student was sad to learn about Hayes' departure. "You were so supportive," the comment reads.

NAIT never officially announced that Hayes was no longer in the role, and the students' association took to social media to share their disappointment with how NAIT handled the transition, voicing concerns about how not filling the role may impact student well-being.

Almost a year later, the role still hasn't been filled in the traditional sense. Instead, NAIT has combined the portfolios of Human Resources, Students and International and selected Clayton Davis, who's worked at NAIT for over 20 years, for the role on an interim basis.

Davis is not new to the world of HR — he's been NAIT's VP HR for years, which gives him a unique insight into the institution's operations. While the Students and International part is new to him, he thinks there's a lot of overlap that will help him tackle these three big portfolios.

"HR is very relationship based," Davis told *the Nugget*. "It's all about people, human beings, relationships, relationships, relationships. Students and International is a lot of the same ... the getting to know people, what are your priorities, what aren't your priorities and how do we support you?"

Instead of focusing solely on employees, Davis now has to shift gears to think more about what today's NAIT students need. Topics like equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and mental health are more prevalent for a modern student, and with complications for NAIT's international students due to changing legislation, there are many priorities his team has to look at.

"EDI is so prominent in everything we do. How do we make sure we move that forward? And then we have a government that's doing things like, 'here's a new bill that you have to implement.' And it's like, how do you balance that?"

Each of these buckets — Students, International and Human Resources — could be its own portfolio, but Davis believes in his team and will rely on their strengths. "Each of these portfolios has a really, really strong leader and I'm going to be leaning heavily on all of them," he said. "It's really broad, it's a big portfolio. There's a lot going on, and it's not getting quieter anytime soon." Underneath Davis is Petrina Ferreira, Interim Associate VP Student Experience; James Aldridge, Associate VP International; and Jodi Edmunds, Interim Associate VP Human Resources.

But there is a benefit to combining the portfolios, Davis said. "There's rarely something that will happen to a student or staff member that isn't connected ... now we can just kind of coordinate all of it."

Davis is only in the role interim, meaning he won't be in it forever. It's not yet clear if NAIT will return to a VP Students and Campus Life role or move in a different direction. The first step, however, is consultation.

"We need to reaffirm what are the priorities, what best services the students, students' association, the organization," said Davis.

"That might be something totally new. That might be a blend of both ... so it is interim as we figure out what the future holds, and we don't want to craft the future without the students' input."

Davis couldn't share a timeline for filling the role more permanently, but did emphasize that NAIT is looking for the right person over a fast hire. "It does us no good if we bring in the wrong person. We want to keep things moving forward."



# NAIT EDI office renamed to Centre for Community and Belonging

By Josh Gwozdz

Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) has become a controversial topic over the last decade. And while global politics polarize the subject further, decisions being made closer to home brought some of those global concerns to NAIT.

The University of Alberta renamed their EDI office in January this year, while NAIT quietly changed theirs in May. Visitors to NAIT's former EDI page online now see the words "Centre for Community and Belonging." CCB Manager Daley Laing said the decision to rename the office is part of a larger strategy, not a concerning trend.

"The goal of this name change is actually to make our work more approachable and more engageable," said Laing. "It isn't about EDI going anywhere. This is about actually making it more possible and more meaningful for students to connect with us."

Part of the CCB's commitment to NAIT is ensuring students and staff feel safe to be themselves on campus no matter what. Laing said the new name encompasses what they do better than just EDI does.

"Equity, diversity and inclusion set a very clear idea of what we're doing, and we're still doing it. But this actually opens up the door," said Laing. "EDI is going nowhere. Equity, diversity is still here. We're still doing the work, you'll see the strategy still on the website. It was more the sense of Equity, diversity and inclusion can feel like jargon. It can be challenging for different communities, different people to connect with."

James Wiebe, a NAIT Business student and President of the NAIT chapter of the Trans Equality Society of Alberta, echoed Laing's sentiment.

"Really, it's more of a name that expresses what they are, not the strategies that they use to be what they are," said Wiebe. "But at the same time, I understand where people might get nervous."

After the switch at the U of A, a student wrote an editorial in their campus paper, *the Gateway*, expressing worries that the name change signalled a move away from EDI. But Laing notes NAIT's name change would have happened one way or another to accommodate more people making use of the office's services.

"The name change is happening across North America, but it was already brewing in the sense of how do we better connect with international students? How do we better connect with students who maybe see EDI and associate it with other things?"

Laing spent over a year talking to students and stakeholders about making the office more accessible and less hidden by policy or jargon. The name change was prompted by NAIT senior leadership, but it was clear EDI would still be the centre's focus.

"It definitely was led by our office with very clear communication from leadership, senior leadership in those conversations that equity, diversity, inclusion is going nowhere," said Laing. "We just put a bigger umbrella above it, which to me is great."

Laing added that students and staff most impacted by the name change were informed ahead of time to avoid confusion or potential interruption of services.

"Those who would be most impacted by the worry of like 'Wait, is EDI going somewhere?' were already in the loop."

NAITSA VP Internal Teaira Current said the name change is a surface level one, advocating for proper messaging to inform students and staff the centre



The Centre for Community and Belonging has moved to E134. Laing hopes it will be more accessible to students in this location. Photo by Amy St. Amand

remains committed to enhancing the NAIT community.

"Regardless of a name change, it's still the same centre where they can find these resources and where they can find the sense of community and belonging there," said Current. "As long as the essence of it stays true and it's in front of everybody and they know where to go, I think that is the most important part of that."

***"EDI is going nowhere. Equity, diversity is still here. We're still doing the work, you'll see the strategy still on the website."***

Laing acknowledged NAIT's lack of initial publicity regarding the name change, saying the CCB plans to launch an awareness campaign called "Your Story, Your Space" in October once students have had time to adjust to the new school year.

"The focus of everything pointing at students for the next year is like, come to our centre. Even when we're at Service Fair and CAT, if you bring your flyer here, you get a treat, so that people come to our space and come into the space."

The CCB is located in room E134 on campus, near the Nisôhkamâtôtân Centre and the gym. The office used to be located in NAIT's administration building, away from most students. Laing hopes a student-centered location will help turn the area into one where students feel safe and comfortable sharing their experiences.

"The room change is going to be massive. Like already we get so much more people traffic and engagement and that sense of this turning the E-hallway into a vibrant student hallway."

Laing encouraged students to visit the CCB during their office hours from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Thursday. "I really want students to feel like they can come and chat with us. That's why we have an open door," said Laing.

Ultimately, while the EDI name has changed, their services have expanded and their goal remains offering support for all populations at NAIT. Students can learn more about the Centre for Community and Belonging by following them on Ooks Life, stopping by E134 or attending their open house on Oct. 8.



# NAIT, academic staff association to continue mediation in Fall; strike still possibility

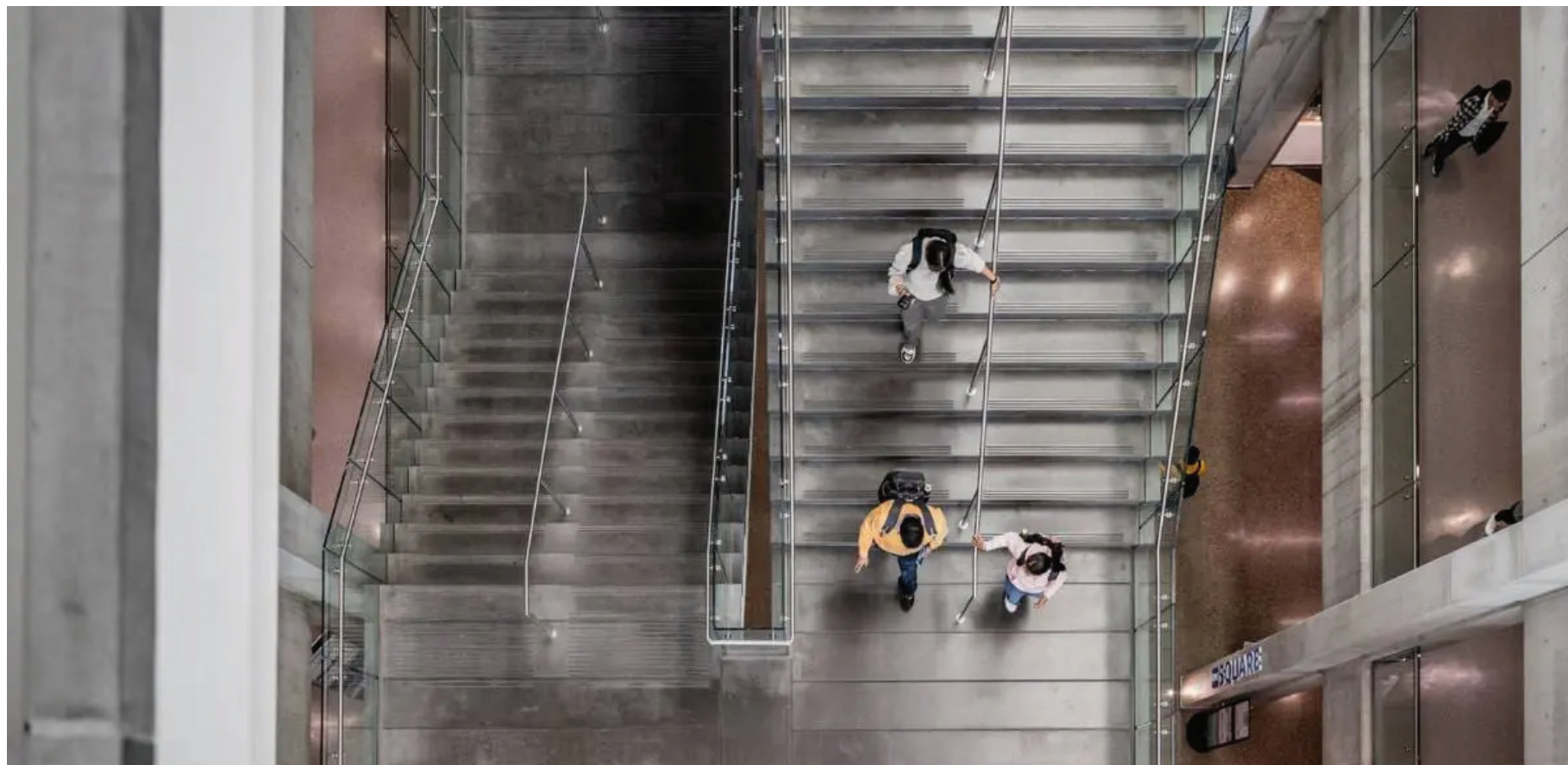


Photo via NAIT Content Collective

By Amy St. Amand

NAIT and their academic staff association (NASA) have been bargaining for almost a year, but with dozens of proposals unresolved and voluntary mediation on pause until the fall, the path to a new agreement remains uncertain.

Now, as the two sides begin negotiating an Essential Services Agreement (ESA) — which mandates what NASA members would continue working if they go on strike — disagreements over workload proposals, scheduling delays and miscommunication have complicated discussions.

## Where things stand now

NAIT and NASA remain involved in voluntary mediation, an informal, non-binding process where a government-appointed mediator helps both sides work toward an agreement. They originally started discussing workload issues at the end of April, but the focus has now shifted to negotiating the ESA after confusion over whether NASA had withdrawn from mediation.

According to an emailed statement from NAIT, the mediator informed them near the end of the last session that NASA no longer wanted to continue voluntary mediation.

NASA President Shauna MacDonald told *the Nugget* that NASA did not formally withdraw.

After receiving NAIT's proposals — “none of which fixed workload at all,” she said — NASA proposed negotiating the ESA then moving to formal mediation. Their goal was to get the ESA finalized before their next mediation session on May 27. NASA said NAIT could not make that happen, so after consultation with their bargaining committee, NASA decided to continue with involuntary mediation while still negotiating the ESA.

In a post on NAIT's staff portal obtained by *the Nugget*, Jodi Edmunds, NAIT's Director of Employee and Labour Relations, called the discussion during mediation “thoughtful,” and said NAIT's proposal “was acknowledged as a genuine effort to address NASA's concerns.” The post did not specify who

acknowledged the proposal. NAIT's statement said they are “pleased that NASA is willing to continue voluntary mediation,” and that NAIT remains “committed to continuing negotiations in good faith.” NAIT was not able to accommodate an interview with *the Nugget*.

## NASA prepared to strike if necessary

Several steps would need to occur before NASA could legally strike: they need to finish negotiating the ESA with NAIT and get it approved, then move to formal mediation. If no agreement is reached during that process, NASA could then hold a strike vote. And even if members voted in favour of a strike — which MacDonald believes there's a high chance they would — NAIT could still return to the table and reach a settlement.

Still, MacDonald emphasized that NASA's goal is to sign a collective agreement that is good for their members. “In order to do that, we have to be prepared to go on strike if the employer pushes us to that point.”

And strikes can be a powerful tool for leverage, said Dr. Jason Foster, a professor at Athabasca University who specializes in Human Resources and Labour Relations. “Broadly, the purpose of strikes is to place economic and political pressure on the employer ... it's really the only tool workers have, is to remove their labour.”

NAIT said that they believe it's too early to speculate on a strike. “We do not want to pre-determine what may happen in the collective bargaining process,” the email stated.

NAIT and NASA met on May 21 and June 10 to start ESA negotiations. Their next bargaining session will be on Sept. 22.

“NAIT's goal remains clear: to negotiate a fair and future-focused agreement that recognizes the value of our academic staff while maintaining the agility and sustainability of our academic programming,” Edmunds said.





# NAITSA SENATE ELECTION 2025/2026

**NOMINATIONS OPEN AUGUST 27 – SEPTEMBER 24**

**DISCUSS AND MAKE DECISIONS ON BIG PICTURE  
ISSUES THAT CONCERN NAIT STUDENTS**

- 12 student Senators will be elected
- 10 meetings throughout the year & sub-committee meetings that include dinner
- Honorarium up to \$744
- Leadership Experience & Professional Development
- Your position will be recognized on your Student Involvement Record
- Most meetings will be on Wednesday evenings

**INTERESTED IN BECOMING A SENATE MEMBER?  
NOMINATIONS CLOSE AT 4PM, SEPTEMBER 24**

For more information and to download an election Nomination Package, visit [naitsa.ca/elections](https://naitsa.ca/elections)



# The Nugget's guide to free sh\*t on campus

By Amy St. Amand

It's the first day of school, and you're ready to take on the world. Morning classes are going well, until it's lunch and you realize your food is still sitting on your kitchen counter. You're too hungry to wait until you get home hours later, so you resign yourself to grabbing something quick and cheap on campus. Only, nothing on campus is really cheap. And you only have \$50 to last until your next paycheck. You need to get gas on the way home, so really, you only have \$20 to spare. But you promised your sister you'd get slurpees after her soccer practice tomorrow. So now you're left with \$12 and the gnawing worry that you're forgetting some other thing that will require money, because that's always how it happens, isn't it? You're down to your last few dollars and you have to make some tough choices. Do you eat, or do you pay rent? Do you grab a coffee with your new friends after class, or do you refill the prescription you've been putting off? You think to yourself, "Take on the world? I just need to take on this week!"

As a fellow (former) broke student turned adult with cash to spare, I'm here to tell you that there is so much free stuff on campus when you know where to look. If you have to decide between eating or paying bills, a free lunch can be what gets you through the week. Even if you're lucky enough to not have to make some of these decisions, life is expensive and we could all use a few more bucks in our pockets.

Before I reveal my secrets, a word to the wise: don't be a jerk. Don't take more than you need, treat the people giving you free things with respect and remember that they don't owe you two stickers just because you paid your student fees. If the event says you need to stay for the whole thing to get the free food, do it and pay attention. Worse things have been shut down because one guy ruined it for the rest of us, so please be a responsible free-stuff hunter.

## Ooks Life

If you're unfamiliar with the platform, you can peruse campus life and events on Ooks Life. It also has a nifty feature that toggles events offering free food! When browsing events, check off 'free food' under the categories section and voila! A list of events that fill your tummy and nourish your brain. The first few weeks of school are especially fruitful; welcome week activities almost always have some sort of free element. Get free pancakes on Sept. 2 and 3, or free ice cream on Sept. 17 and 18.

Because it bears repeating: make sure you read the event description to understand what is required to get the noms no-charge.

## Getting involved isn't just good for your resume

If your wallet is empty but you've got time to spare, consider volunteering on campus or getting involved with clubs. "But Amy, I'm broke, shouldn't I spend my spare time earning money?" To that I rebuttal with the old improv adage of "yes, and!"

Yes, volunteering does not actually give you money to fix your broke-ness. And, volunteers often get meal vouchers, free shirts or other goodies for their time! For example, if you volunteer at NAIT's orientation, you get a coupon for a free meal at the end of your shift. If you get involved with NAITSA Campus Clubs, you can attend one of their lunch and learn events to improve your club through things like grants and funding.



Food tastes best when it's free! Pancake breakfast from Fall 2025.

Photo via NAITSA

## Play a game or two

If games are set up at the CAT Quad or in the halls, chances are you'll get something if you participate. It could be a granola bar or a sticker, but occasionally there will also be giveaways for external prizes, like at NAIT Athletics and Recreation's Rec Days, where participants will be entered to win a campus rec prize pack. They also often host intramurals or tournaments with free entry for students.

NAITSA hosts Nest Fest at the CAT Quad each year. It's essentially a giant outdoor party, and while the food and beverages aren't free, they are cheaper than you'll find at a nearby bar or restaurant. There are also lots of opportunities to win prizes by playing games.

The Nest also hosts various events, like Dirty Bingo, where if you're lucky, you can win adult toys or other fun prizes. Sometimes it pays to participate!

## Student perks & deals

This category isn't free, but a deal is a deal. NAITSA offers discounted tickets for things like Cineplex movie tickets, Galaxyland and more. There are also tons of discounts available for NAIT students, like 10% off drinks and 20% off food at the North Edmonton Canadian Brewhouse. You can also score 15% off regular-priced items at the Shoppers Drug Mart at Kingsway with your NAIT OneCard. Find even more discounts and deals at [naitsa.ca/student-services/perks-and-deals/](https://naitsa.ca/student-services/perks-and-deals/)

## Recurring free stuff:

- *Wellness Wednesday*: once a month, NAITSA stations massage therapists across campus for free five-minute massages.
- *Treat Trolley*: various departments do this style of promotion, where they walk around campus with carts loaded with snacks and tell you about their services. If you take a minute to listen to their pitch, you are rewarded with free goodies! Find the dates and times on Ooks Life.
- *Healthy Start Breakfast*: another monthly event, NAITSA's Service Hub teaches you about the MyWellnessPlan while you sip a coffee or tea and eat breakfast snacks! Dates and times on (you guessed it) Ooks Life.
- *OWL Book Swap*: trade in your old books for new ones and don't pay a dime! Hosted by NAIT Student Life, the first one takes place on Sept. 24.



# HERE'S WHAT YOU MISSED!

## Find more content at [thenuggetonline.com](https://thenuggetonline.com)

Catch up on the stories of the summer and stay informed about what's happening in the NAIT community.

Want to write for *the Nugget*? Join our Masthead Contributor team. Stop by *the Nugget* office in O105 or visit [thenuggetonline.com/write-for-the-nugget](https://thenuggetonline.com/write-for-the-nugget)



### 4 INNOVATORS RECEIVE NAIT HONORARY DEGREES

As students prepare to convocate, NAIT has chosen four people to receive their highest honor: an honorary degree. Holger Petersen, Brent Hesje, Carol Moen and James (Jim) E.C. Carter received diplomas during convocation at the end of June.



### 'WE'RE STUCK': STUDENTS, INDUSTRY LEFT IN LIMBO AFTER NAIT PAUSES CANADA'S ONLY ACCREDITED COURT REPORTING PROGRAM

NAIT paused the Captioning and Court Reporting program —along with 17 others— and students, industry and alumni think it will have a big impact on Canadians and the industry as a whole.

### STUDENTS VOTE 'YES' FOR 2026 SPRING U-PASS

Students have made it clear: they want a spring U-Pass. From June 7-11, students voted in NAITSA's first ever spring U-Pass referendum. 26.1% of eligible students voted, and the referendum passed in an overwhelming majority with 90.1% of voters saying yes.



### NAIT PRESIDENT BACK FOR 2 MORE YEARS

Laura Jo Gunter will stick around for another two years, NAIT's Board of Governors decided. The President and CEO was reappointed on July 14.

### NAIT PAUSES 18 PROGRAMS FOR INTAKE

NAIT has paused 18 programs for intakes across the institute as part of a "comprehensive program review." 16 of 18 programs will not accept students starting in Fall 2025, with two programs pausing as of 2026/27.



### WOMEN'S SOCCER TEAM LAUNCHES FIRST-EVER OOKS INVITATIONAL EXHIBITION SERIES

Women's soccer teams across Western Canada have a new option to get ready for their season, thanks to the Ooks. For the first time, NAIT has invited teams to the Ooks Invitational Exhibition Series to face off in a series of preseason games.





**KELSEY KLIPARCHUK**  
Digital Content



**ALLEAH BOISVERT**  
Senior Editor



**RAFAEL LUIS FLORES**  
Opinion Editor

# MEET THE NUGGET STAFF



**JOSH GWOZDZ**  
News Editor



**ROIEL CARLOS**  
Video Editor



**GEONO ALOISIO**  
Sports Editor



**PIA VISTRO**  
Digital Content







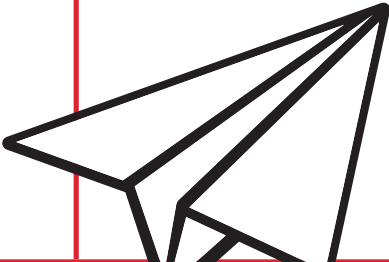
**CHINNY FEB TALEON**  
Graphics Editor

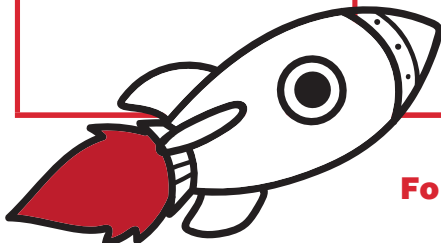




# September

## Monthly Events

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<div>1</div> <div></div> <div></div>	<div>2</div> <div>Pancake Breakfast 9:30 a.m. - 12 p.m. South Lobby</div> <div>Join the Nugget Info Session 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. O105</div>	<div>3</div> <div>Rec Days 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. CAT Crossing</div> <div>Pancake Breakfast 9:30 a.m. - 12 p.m. CAT Quad</div>	<div>4</div> <div>Dirty Bingo 4 p.m. - 7 p.m. Nest Eatery</div> <div>Join the Nugget Info Session 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. O105</div>	<div>5</div> <div>Rec Lounge 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. E128</div> <div>Sept. 6: Ooks soccer game 12 p.m. Strathcona Athletic Park</div>
<div>8</div> <div>Monday Morning Smudge 8:15 a.m. Nîsôhkamâtôtân Centre (E121)</div> <div>Petting Zoo 10:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. CAT Quad</div>	<div>9</div> <div>Meet the Ook 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Entire Campus</div> <div></div>	<div>10</div> <div>Writing Centre Open House 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. U213</div>	<div>11</div> <div>Nest Fest 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. CAT Quad</div>	<div>12</div> <div>Nest Fest 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. CAT Quad</div>
<div>15</div> <div>Gentle Flow Yoga 12:05 p.m. - 12:50 p.m. S112</div> <div>Campus Clubs Mixer 4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. CAT Crossing</div> <div></div>	<div>16</div> <div>Faith Chat 10 a.m. - 11 a.m. Bytes Cafe (W building)</div> <div>How to Think like a Journalist 12 p.m. - 1 p.m. O1vo8A</div>	<div>17</div> <div>Back to School Brainfreeze 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. CAT</div> <div>Masthead Pitch Meeting 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. E102</div>	<div>18</div> <div>Throwback Thursday 4 p.m. - 7 p.m. Nest Eatery</div> <div>Centre for Community and Belonging 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. E134</div>	<div>19</div> <div>Ready, set, make! Intro to Library Makerspace 11 a.m. - 12 p.m. U310D</div> <div></div>
<div>22</div> <div>Wellness Circuit 10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. South Lobby</div>	<div>23</div> <div>3 v 3 basketball tournament 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. NAIT Gym</div> <div>How to: Make Candles 4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. Location TBA</div>	<div>24</div> <div>OWL Book Swap 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Location TBD</div> <div>Esports Landing 2 p.m. - 4 p.m. South Lobby</div>	<div>25</div> <div>Free DMIT Drop-in Tutoring 5 p.m. - 7 p.m. W2o3</div> <div>South Asian Fusion Night 4 p.m. - 7 p.m. Nest Eatery</div>	<div>26</div> <div>Kickboxing 12:05 p.m. - 12:50 p.m. S112</div>
<div>29</div> <div>National Day for Truth and Reconciliation Flag Lowering 9:15 a.m. Flag Pole Plaza</div>	<div>30</div> <div>National Day for Truth and Reconciliation</div>	<div>1</div> <div>Healthy Start Breakfast 7:45 a.m. - 10 a.m. CAT 182</div> <div></div>		<div></div>



For more events, info and to RSVP, head to [ookslife.ca](https://ookslife.ca)



# Driving to NAIT? Here's my advice as a former 'resourceful' parker



Photo via NAIT Content Collective

By Alleah Boisvert

When I was a NAIT student, skipping the bus and driving to campus felt... luxurious. Unfortunately, the cost of parking was also quite luxurious, so I often found myself scrounging through residential areas near campus, hopelessly trying to find free street parking without a time limit. In hindsight, the amount of times I sacrificed convenience (and being on time for class) to save \$13 probably wasn't worth it. Still, I knew I wasn't the only student doing this; every "sneaky" spot I found would eventually get sniped. Commuting doesn't have to be a nightmare, though. It just takes planning and consideration — something I admit I wasn't great at. But lucky for you, I've compiled all my hard-earned NAIT parking knowledge into this handy guide so you don't have to learn through trial and error like I did.

## U-Pass? Kinda useful

If you're taking at least one on-campus credit course, you've already paid your Universal Transit Pass fee. It's a student transit pass that allows you to use provided public transit in Edmonton, Strathcona County, St. Albert, Beaumont, Fort Saskatchewan and Spruce Grove. It's a mandatory fee that makes public transit affordable for students, and it's the most cost effective commute option at \$180 per semester. That being said, long bus commutes can be daunting, so I understand (and appreciate) those who don't mind paying the collective fee and driving anyways. If you don't find the U-Pass useful, the following advice will be.

## Start your scouting early

Whether you're parking on the street or using one of NAIT's parking facilities, give yourself ample time to arrive. Driving around residential neighbourhoods like Westwood and Spruce Avenue to score a good spot is time consuming. And if you are paying for parking on campus, optimal spots get snatched up first. Before driving to campus, use NAIT's student parking map so you're familiar with where you can park and how long walking to class will take from each zone. If I had always planned for 20 minutes of buffer time after finding a spot, I could have avoided the stress of rushing to class after scrambling for parking. To quote my mom, "Do as I say, not as I do."

## Read the signs or suffer the cost

NAIT Parking Services is diligent in their enforcement. Once, my morning scramble for parking ended in my car getting towed. I didn't give myself enough time to arrive and missed the reserved parking sign. There are parking zones reserved for staff and students who pay for monthly passes, and I took someone's spot. After finishing a tough exam, coming back to a missing car and paying over \$100 was a total day ruiner. The towing service was nice enough to give me a student discount, but the City of Edmonton won't be as generous with parking violations in residential areas, and neither will residents if you park on their private property. Oh, and Kingsway Mall? They eat NAIT students for breakfast — don't do it!

## Free is far, so dress for the weather

Any free and unlimited residential parking in the area is going to require walking. If you're set on avoiding paid parking, you'll probably have to sacrifice convenience and comfort. When I found free residential parking with no time limit, it was usually four or more blocks away from campus and already lined with cars. Sometimes, it's just not worth it. However, if you only have one class, using the two-hour limited street parking can be advantageous if you move before getting ticketed by the city.

## Treat yourself to paid NAIT parking — but make it worth it

If you're paying to use NAIT's daily or hourly parking, try to find a parking zone close to your class. And if you know you're going to use the paid parking facilities frequently, consider a parking pass. Monthly costs range from \$95 to \$215, but powered parking and a no-tow guarantee feels great.

## Bottom line

Free parking near campus is slim pickings, and finding it takes grit. Don't expect to roll up to campus and instantly score a spot where you can park for more than two hours and pay nothing. Between you and me, you're more likely to either be late to class, slip and fall on a patch of ice or get a parking violation. And if you do find a free, unlimited and legal spot to park... don't reveal your secret.



THE ULTIMATE NAIT  
PARKING MAP

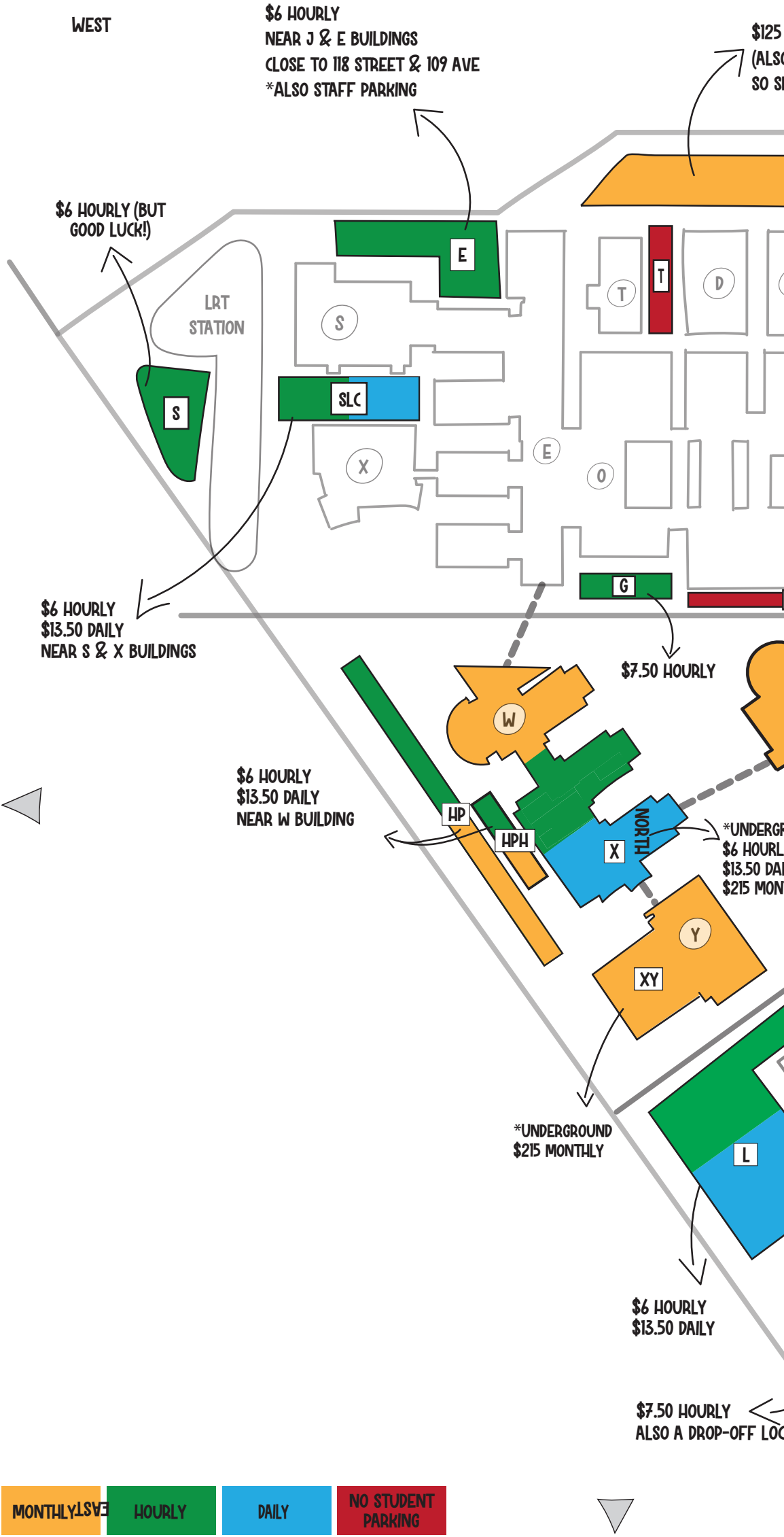
brought to you by the Nugget

If the article on the other page didn't indicate, parking at NAIT can be complicated. NAIT does have their own parking maps, but we wanted to simplify it for you. But please, don't take our word for it — make sure you read the signs before parking anywhere! Things may have changed since this was printed and we don't want you getting a hefty ticket because of outdated information.

Legend

MONTHLY	HOURLY	DAILY	NO STUDENT PARKING
---------	--------	-------	--------------------

W = BUILDING NAME X = PARKING LOT NAME







Photos via NAIT Ooks

# State of the Ooks

By Geono Aloisio

Summer is over, and school is back in session. And that means the Ooks are also back! After nearly every program made playoffs last year, each team has storylines to follow entering the 2025-26 season. So, here is how the Ooks are looking ahead of the upcoming season.

## Men's basketball

*Head coach: Adika Peter-McNeilly*

*Player to watch: Kohl Wedman*

The men's team had one of the best turnaround seasons at NAIT last year, going from 9-11 in 2023-24 to finishing 14-6 in 2024-25. The only part missing was the playoff success. The Ooks finished sixth in the Alberta Colleges Athletic Conference (ACAC) championships — a slight drop from their fifth-place finish the year prior. Last season, only three players returned from 2023-24. The Ooks will keep some familiar faces, but there will be new additions with the team's top two scorers Omar Farah and Peter-Aluk Deng departing.

## Women's basketball

*Head coach: Kiera Lyons*

*Player to watch: Payton Neilson*

It was a long road back to the playoffs for the women's basketball team after winning the national title in 2022. The team finally clinched a playoff berth last season, led by Payton Neilson — one of only two players who remained from the championship-winning season. The Ooks just missed the podium at the ACAC championships, finishing fourth. But the team will retain most of their core players, and that will play into their hands if they make a run at an ACAC title.

## Men's soccer

*Head coach: Jeff Paulus*

*Player to watch: Peter Jones*

The men took home the program's first ACAC championship since 2018-19 before losing 4-3 in the bronze semi-final to the Champlain Saint-Lambert Cavaliers at nationals. With returning players like Peter Jones, the ACAC North Soccer Player of the Year, and standout rookie Jameson Kleizk, who scored the second highest number of goals in the division, it should be another title-contending year on the pitch for the blue and gold.

## Women's soccer

*Head coach: Dhee Govender*

*Player to watch: Jyla Micael Erandio*

The women finished with a record of 7-3-2 for the third consecutive year in 2024. However, unlike the past two seasons, the Ooks did not make the playoffs due to the ACAC playoff hosts taking their spot.

With Jyla Micael Erandio returning after a team-leading 10 goals last year and the Ooks having only two players beyond their third year, another season of experience (plus the preseason's Ooks Invitational Exhibition Series) could help push this team to the top of the division.





### Men's hockey

*Head coach: Scott Fellnermayr*

*Player to watch: Tyler Blocha*

2024-25 was a disappointing end once again for the men's team. NAIT lost to Concordia in the first round for the second time in two years after leading 1-0 in the three-game series both seasons.

On the bright side, the team did fairly well despite significant roster turnover. Another year of experience could help the team, but the two first-round exits are a concern.

### Women's hockey

*Head coach: Brendan Jensen*

*Player to watch: Hanna Paquette*

The Oaks set a record for most points scored and assists recorded by a team in a single season last year, yet the campaign did not end with a championship. Despite finishing 19-6-1, NAIT fell to Red Deer in the first round.

Reigning rookie of the year Kelly Stanford put the conference on notice after a 30-point campaign in 2024-25 and seems poised to do so again this year. The team will add 11 new players this season but lost their top 2 scorers, so overcoming the roster turnover will be one of this team's challenges out of the gate.

### Men's volleyball

*Head coach: Phil Dixon*

*Player to watch: Josh Watson*

Since head coach Phil Dixon took over in 2023-24, the men's volleyball program has reached unprecedented heights. From winning the team's first ACAC championship since 1976-77 and their first-ever national title in 2024, the team was on a magical run during Dixon's first season at the helm. Last season did not end the same way, though. The Oaks did not earn an opportunity to defend their national title after finishing fifth in the ACAC playoffs.

However, NAIT will host the 2026 Canadian Collegiate Athletic Association (CCAA) volleyball nationals this March, giving them an automatic spot in the tournament. The Oaks have a golden opportunity to fight for another

national title, with most of the team's players from the 2024 national championship run still on the team.

### Women's volleyball

*Head coach: Erminia Russo Thorpe*

*Player to watch: Rachel Mallett*

Last season, the women's team clinched a playoff spot for the first time since 2019-20. And after this turning point season for the program, 2025-26 has potential for the team to take the next step. Two core players last season were Lexi Gedny and Rachel Mallet, who should return to the roster for 2025-26. Gedny finished top five in the ACAC for assists, and Mallet finished top five in the ACAC for kills and was named ACAC North Rookie of the Year. With some playoff experience and a strong foundation built around high performers, the team is positioned for another playoff run.



Photos via NAIT Oaks



# Sustainability spotlight

## Re:Plenish Zero Waste



Photo Credits: Renata Medeiros, Instagram @replenish.zerowaste

*Sustainability Spotlight is a collaboration between the Nugget and NAITSA's Sustainability Committee. Each month, the committee interviews a sustainability expert to learn more about their journey. This month features Meghann Law, co-owner of the zero waste refillery Re:Plenish.*

*Answers have been edited for clarity.*

**NAITSA Sustainability Committee: Was there a moment or experience that sparked your interest in sustainability?**

**Meghann Law:** I don't think that there was an individual moment in time that caused an interest in sustainability for me. I grew up in the 90s, which was a time certainly of mass consumption. It was kind of a lifestyle to aspire to. My parents maybe didn't agree with that, so I think that the idea of sustainability and consuming less was something that I was always aware of.

And over time, as I got older, I just became a lot more aware of the amount of stuff that I consumed, or my friends consumed, or kind of the culture that drove that. And as I became more aware of it, I kind of wanted to do something about it. So, in my late 20s is when I started Re:Plenish.

**NSC: What is your process when choosing your suppliers?**

**ML:** So all of our suppliers have to check a lot of boxes, and that's a little bit tough. The first thing we do is identify a need. We wait until enough people have asked for something, like toilet bowl cleaner has been asked for enough, and now we have to source it.

Then we look within Canada, because we always source Canadian. After that, we need to make sure that those Canadian suppliers are willing to supply in bulk.

Then we need to make sure that they are ethical companies, that things are biodegradable, that we're using ingredients that are as safe as they can be for us and the earth, and that depends on what the product is and what kind of availability there is. For some things like laundry soap, there's lots of choices out there. For other things those choices are a little bit more limited.

We start with this wide net and then we funnel it down and down and

down and down, until we end up with a few things that we think might work. And then we look at pricing. Are we going to be able to ship it here? And then we make our final pick.

**NSC: What is the biggest challenge you've faced as a sustainability-based business?**

**ML:** The biggest challenge that I think that we've faced has honestly been running a business. The sustainability piece of it comes pretty naturally. Once you've drawn your lines in the sand and said, 'Everything needs to be Canadian,' that actually simplifies it. We just work within those bounds, and that is the part of the business that we are passionate about that we really enjoy that drives us forward.

What's hard is that myself and the co-owner do not come from a business background. We started the store with zero business acumen, so when it comes to our bookkeeping, accounting, cash flow, and hiring and all of that, that takes up a lot of our time and a lot of our effort and a lot of our brains.

**NSC: Have you faced any skepticism or pushback from customers or suppliers?**

**ML:** I think a lot of the pushback comes more in a form of apathy or even helplessness from people where they feel like individual choices don't make a difference. But I think there's

always a reason to be optimistic, and I think regardless of how you feel about the climate crisis, the worst thing that can happen if you shop here is you create a little less garbage and there's nothing wrong with that.

**NSC: Have you seen a shift in customer awareness or behaviour?**

**ML:** Since we've been open, the zero-waste lifestyle has changed. In 2020, I remember all the viral videos about, 'I only make a jar's worth of waste in a year,' or 'I'm living this extreme low zero-waste lifestyle.'

I think that we've moved away from that kind of sensationalism and we're now just fitting ourselves into people's lives in whatever way works for them. This is for everyone, and this is apolitical. This is if you want to create a little less waste, if you want to use products that are safe for our watershed, if you're concerned about your own health and the products that you use, it's a place to be. So, I think the biggest shift in the perception of zero waste and the awareness of zero waste is just that it's not an extreme. It's an ideal.

**NSC: What small change would you encourage individuals or businesses to make?**

**ML:** The change I would encourage people to make, on one hand is a very small change, but on the other hand is a very big one.

But it's just kind of being critical of your consumption in every way that you consume. So anytime that you are consuming something just stop and think am I taking more than I need? When you're buying skincare products, are you buying a whole bunch of them because you've been influenced to try everything? Are you taking more than you need? Are you creating more waste than you need to?

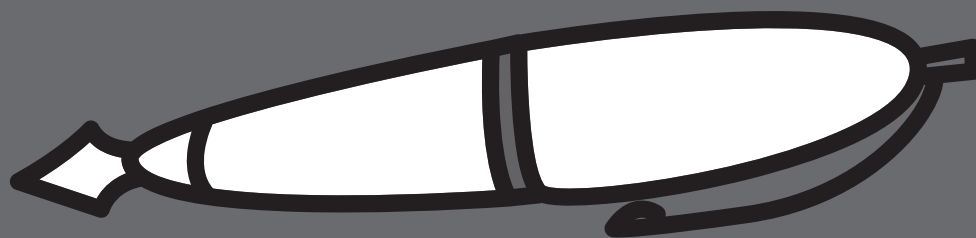
And then your life will kind of change around that. And it'll change in terms of the physical things that you consume, in terms of the media you consume, and I think it kind of changes your outlook on the world too.

Visit Re:Plenish at their storefront at 9912 77 Ave NW, or shop online at [replenishzerowaste.ca](http://replenishzerowaste.ca). For more sustainability spotlights, check out the NAITSA Sustainability Committee's organization page on [Ooks Life](http://OoksLife.com).



# JOIN THE STUDENT MEDIA TEAM

DEVELOP YOUR STORYTELLING SKILLS,  
MAKE AN IMPACT ON CAMPUS & GET PAID!



SCAN TO LEARN MORE





